



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Slovakia

2019

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>

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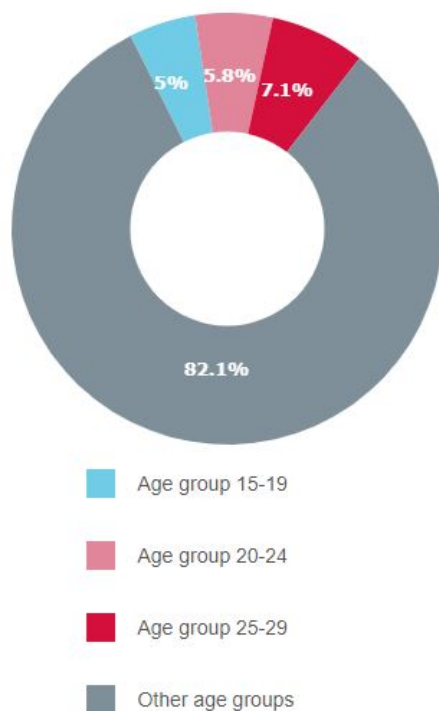
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Slovakia

Young People in Slovakia

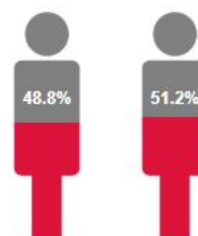
Ratio of young people in the total population on 1st January



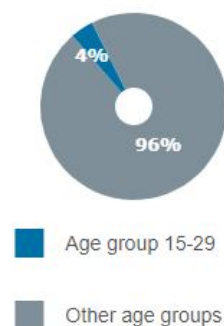
Total number of young people:

976 640

Ratio of men and women in the youth population



Ratio of young immigrants in all immigrants from non-EU countries



Youth Policy in Slovakia

Slovakia with its high number of young population belongs to the youngest countries in the European Union.

Official youth policy has existed since 1992. Current Government in its [Manifesto \(2016-2020\)](#) promotes better conditions for the wellbeing of young people and development of their potential, especially through educational and training opportunities outside school classes, support of young families, young farmers and new opportunities for young people employment.

Slovak main statement of youth policy is contained in the [Strategy for Youth \(2014 – 2020\)](#). Promotion of youth is primarily responsibility of Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (MESRS). Due to transversal nature of youth policy, different Ministries are responsible for particular policy fields that affect young people. Age range for youth policy is 0 – 30 (Strategy for Youth), but different Ministries can address different age ranges as well, depending on the peculiarities of their fields. [IUVENTA - Slovenský inštitút](#)

[mládeže](#) (IUVENTA- Slovak Youth Institute) is the institution of MESRS responsible for various activities concerning youth policy preparation and implementation.

The municipalities are generally responsible for all citizens (including young people) and their task is to implement national policies (concerning also young people) in their territories. Local committees dealing with different themes including “youth” are working at all local governments.

Work with young people and their upbringing is divided between public (NGOs) and state sector (e.g. youth centres.). Public sector is represented by non-profit organizations, some of them working only with children and youth. In 1990 [Youth Council of Slovakia](#) was established, having currently 25 member organizations with more than 60 000 membership base.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

Children and youth as the target groups are on the agenda of more than 10 public institutions - in particular ministries. Youth policy in Slovakia is coordinated by the **Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic** (MESRS). Youth policy is defined in the **Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014-2020**, which reproduces the core themes of the EU Youth Strategy 2010 – 2018 (1.3). IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute is the National Agency for Youth (1.4).

Cross-sectorial cooperation on youth policy issues is ensured by two expert groups: the Interministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth (YWGY) and the Committee for Children and Youth. The National Action Plan for Children is a basic document for mapping and reporting the tasks and activities of all ministries in connection with the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols at the national level (1.5).

Implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for 2014-2020 is evaluated in the regular **Youth Reports** (1.6). Funding of youth work is partly covered by the **Programmes for Youth** (MESRS), a significant long-term source is represented also by the EU Youth Programs since 1998 (1.7).

Local and regional self-governments constitute their own youth policies on their territory (1.4).

1.1 Target population of youth policy

Various age limits for “youth” have been defined by Slovak legislation ([National Report on Youth Policy in the Slovak Republic, 2005](#)) hence „youth” as the official legislative term has been introduced only for purposes of the [Act of Youth Work Support \(2008\)](#), in which the age of youth was defined from 0 to 30 years. It created the legal condition for activities including the children and young people from very early age (e.g. activities of young parents and their children).

The Slovak legislation further recognizes similar terms: minor and under-aged.

Term “minor” describes a person aged 15 – 18 ([Criminal Code, 2005](#)). Minors have increased legal protection but they are also the subject to certain restrictions. Persons younger than 18 years of age must not (among other things) play slot machines and must not be engaged in gambling at casinos. Minors are protected also by the [Act on Advertising \(2001\)](#).

The term „under-aged” describes a person who has not reached 15 years of age. They are subject to a number of legal restrictions and regulations, some of which allow them to be employed under specific circumstances ([Labour Code, 2001](#)).

[Criminal Code](#) took over the definition of the term “child” from the Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. “Child” is a person younger than 18 years of age, unless this person gains legal maturity (based on marriage) before turning 18 years of age.

[Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children \(2005\)](#) uses terms „dependent child” (up to 18 years) and „young adult” (from 18 to 25 years).

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

Youth Law does not exist in the Slovak legal system.

Scope and contents

Youth Law does not exist in the Slovak legal system

Revisions/updates

Youth Law does not exist in the Slovak legal system

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

[Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020 \(2014\)](#) (thereinafter referred to as Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020) /Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre mládež na roky 2014 – 2020/ was introduced in April 2014 as government's decree and came into force in June 2014.

Scope and contents

Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 aims to contribute to improving the quality of life of young people, particularly through the personal development of young citizens of the Slovak Republic as cultured personalities who are prepared to work in a constantly changing democratic environment and utilize their creative potential in practice and active participation in society.

Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 values and approaches:

- Cross-sectorial approach. Youth policy as the outcome of cooperation among institutions, whose remit involves measures affecting youth.
- Participation. Youth policy prepared in cooperation with various key players and consulted with young people.
- Inclusiveness. Youth Strategy is based on human rights' respect and protection in a multicultural society and on prevention of all forms of discrimination.
- Solidarity between generations. The need for solidarity and dialogue between generations for the sake of sustainable development and in order to meet the needs of various groups of population.
- Considering the real needs: Young people engaged in creation of measures. The Strategy is built on reflection of young people's and experts' actual needs and opinions in individual areas.

Pillars of the Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020:

- a) Investing in youth (creating opportunities for young people in various fields)
- b) Youth empowerment (support of young people to become holistic, independent adults etc.)

Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 defines strategic objectives in following **nine thematic areas**:

- education,
- employment,
- creativity and entrepreneurship,
- participation,
- health and healthy lifestyles,
- social inclusion,
- volunteering,

- youth and the world (global issues),
- youth work.

Objectives of individual thematic fields:

Education:

- Support an inclusive model of education (formal and non-formal education) by means of following tools: legislative changes, validation of the outcomes of pedagogic and andragogic competences for qualifications in children and youth's education, financing of providers (accredited by law) and encouraging a complex inclusive environment within the life-long learning.

Employability

- Introduce systematic career guidance and thus increase young people's orientation at the labour market
- Improvement of public employment services.
- Focus on vocational education as one of the main preconditions for young people's successful entry to the labour market.
- Support of employers in new jobs' creation with a view to increase number of jobs for young people.

Creativity and entrepreneurship

- More information on programmes-and-projects' possibilities focused on development of young people's entrepreneurship and identification of high-quality, functioning and sustainable programmes and projects.
- Support entrepreneurial education
- Encourage entrepreneurial culture by altered perception of businessmen and businesswomen on the base of spreading practical and positive information on their achievements, their benefit for the society and on possibilities of new enterprises' establishment.
- Support existing and create new mentoring programmes for young people with innovative entrepreneurial ideas.

Participation:

- Encourage innovative forms of young people's participation in society, at the national, regional and community level.
- Encourage a respectful and partnership approach to young people in the school environment at all stages of the educational system.
- Create qualitative standards of youth participation at national, regional and local level.
- Ensure young people's participation by means of information and counselling in the matters that concern them
- Encourage e-Democracy and ensure delivering information to young people in a comprehensible language in order to engage a greater number of organised and unorganised young people in participation.

Youth and the world

- Global issues (Global Education) - to create opportunities for youth and develop their motivation to engagement in global challenges' solution at local and national level by means of youth activities.
- Encourage and recognise contribution of youth's and youth workers' mobility and develop international cooperation with an aim to support transition of know-how from

other countries, increase the quality of youth work and increase awareness of interconnections between local actions and their global impacts.

Health and healthy life-style

- Enhance young people's health by strengthening health promotion and health protection, which includes mainly awareness of prevention of diseases, injuries, violence and delinquency, as well as healthy life style education.
- Create conditions for an effective cooperation among all sectors (horizontally and vertically) and by means of a society-wide approach support, protect and enhance young people's health.

Social inclusion

- Continuously study and evaluate trends, factors, forms and consequences of young people's social exclusion and complexly map needs of young people affected or threatened by social exclusion.
- Define the content and extent of the measures, tools and services aimed at elimination and prevention of young people's social exclusion.
- Improve the quality of existing measures and mutually interconnect existing measures, tools and services and create, test and introduce new services focused on elimination and prevention of young people's social exclusion.

Volunteering

- Engage in volunteering as many young people from various groups as possible by means of creating varied voluntary opportunities reflecting young people's current needs and trends within volunteering and ensure young people's sustainability in volunteering.

Youth work

- Support in a long-term period (also financially) activities leading to recognition of youth work's value and its benefits and thus communicate youth work's benefits towards various target groups.
- Encourage youth work's interconnection to the current needs and challenges faced by young people in the Slovak Republic.
- Support cooperation of various institutions and entities active in the field of youth work, emphasising the involvement of local and regional governments, in order to ensure a wider impact of youth work in society.
- Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 is dedicated to all young people, putting equal importance to each and every need of individual young people or specific groups. Thematic priority Social inclusion underlines inclusiveness as one of the value of Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

[Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic](#) (thereinafter referred to as MESRS) bears the responsibility for preparation, coordination of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policy.

Other tasks of MESRS concerning Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020:

- guarantees implementation of Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 in the following areas: education, participation and youth work;
- creates conditions for systematic development of youth work (outside the formal education process);

- manages and directs activities of the Interministerial Working Group for State Policy in the Field of Youth (further IWGY);
- supports research activities that are related to preparation of the Youth Report.

Evaluation of Youth Strategy

Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 is reported to the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport on a yearly bases. Reports (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018) summarise activities of individual youth policy actors, especially such elaborated and implemented in cooperation of various sectors.

Mid-evaluation of Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 was commenced in 2017. Evaluation results were submitted to the negotiation of Government of Slovak Republic in the form of Youth Report 2018 ([Správa o mládeži 2018](#)).

Some Youth Strategy thematic fields, such as Education, Employment and Social Inclusion, have been reflected in [the National Reform Programmes of the Slovak Republic in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018](#).

Revisions/updates

In 2019 the process of preparation of new national Youth Strategy started. Working group consists of umbrella organisations active in youth work and youth policy such as National Youth Council, regional Youth Councils, Association of Leisure-Time Activities Centres etc. Preparation is coordinated by the MESRS, Youth Department.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

Core legislative documents defining goals, principles, values, system of implementation, monitoring and evaluation have been adopted at national level. These documents are binding for relevant bodies active at all levels, including regional and local level, still the measures chosen in order to reach the objectives may vary.

Documents regulating youth policy at the national level:

- [Act on Youth Work Support \(No. 282/2008 Coll.\)](#)
- [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the Years 2014 – 2020](#)
- [Conception of Youth Work Development 2016 - 2020](#).

Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 introduced *Interministerial working group for the state policy in the field of youth* (thereinafter referred to as IMGY). See section [1.5 Cross-sectorial approach with other ministries](#).

Regional Authority Offices (Úrady samosprávnych krajov) in seven Slovak regions take decisions on regional youth policy. As provided in the Act on Youth Work Support, it is their obligation to elaborate regional concepts of youth work support (e.g. [Trenčín, 2016](#)), but wider youth regional strategy is not mandatory.

Some of the regions (e.g. [Prešov Self -Governing Region, 2015](#)) have adopted their own regional youth policy strategy/conception. Although it's thematic fields are identical to the national strategy, planned measures differ from region to region.

[Special survey](#) conducted by MESRS in 2015 on the youth policy implementation at regional and local level showed that 91% of local authorities did not establish any separate department for youth or youth policy. Youth policy issues are mostly integrated into agenda of their employees responsible for education or social affairs.

Youth policy implementation at national level is coordinated by the [Youth Department of MESRS](#), which:

- is responsible for preparation of conceptual and normative materials in this field,
- issues attestations of professional competence to carry out specialized activities in the field of youth work,
- is responsible for methodological management of Leisure-time centres/Youth Clubs,
- is responsible for international cooperation in the field of youth,
- manages financial support for youth work.

Parliamentary Committee in charge of youth issues

Committee on Education, Science, Youth and Sports

Chairman: Mr. Ľubomír Petrák

[Committee on Education, Science, Youth and Sports](#) negotiates the acts and other legislative rules in the field of education, youth, science and sports, supervises the observance of laws and executes the control activity in listed fields. It also participates in supervision of the EU funds use in the field of education

Main Themes

As far as the thematic priorities are concerned, the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 follows the structure and the themes of the EU Youth Strategy: education, employability, social inclusion, creativity and entrepreneurship, participation, youth and the world, participation, health and healthy life-style, volunteering and youth work. Previous document on the national youth policy ([Key Areas and Action Plans of the State Policy](#), 2008) included 16 different areas, which were difficult to follow and evaluate.

One-year-long preparation process preceded elaboration of current Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020. It included issuing of [Youth Report 2014](#), which collected all accessible information sources from research and contemporary studies, as well as consulting with young people and youth workers living in all seven regions of Slovakia. Specific thematic groups were established, involving experts (including young experts) and representatives of the relevant youth NGOs. The consultation's results were considered in the final content of Slovak Youth Report 2014 and presented to the public on [National Conference on Youth 2014](#), both organised by MESRS and in cooperation with IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute.

Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 has been adopted with a vision to support all young people, no specific groups have been highlighted. Social Inclusion section underlines the basic principle of Youth Policy to reflect the needs of young people in vulnerable life situation and to develop and implement specific measures, tools and approaches for these specific groups.

The National Agency for Youth

[IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute](#) is an independent governmental organisation managed and financed by MESRS. It belongs to the oldest institutions responsible for youth policy implementation since the fifties of the 20th century. During the last decade of the 20th century IUVENTA has completely changed its original agenda which was mainly methodical support provided to one mass children and youth organisation – Socialist Union of Youth.

IUVENTA:

- manages administration of national grant programmes for youth and Erasmus+ (Youth Chapter);
- coordinates research activities connected to youth policy preparation;
- prepares Youth Reports ([2010](#), [2014](#), [2018](#));

- provides services to the Youth Department of MESRS (e.g. coordinates working groups during preparation of various documents, such as Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020, Act on Youth Work Support, Conception of Youth Work Development, etc.);
- supervises youth consultations;
- is a seat of [EURODESK](#);
- nominates experts to various expert groups of European Commission and Council of Europe (e.g. [European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy](#));
- coordinates national and international rounds of [traditional school subjects' competitions](#).
- Cooperation of IUVENTA and MESRS is regulated by [contract](#):
- on activities in [the field of national youth policy implementation](#) (including activities of the National agency Erasmus+ for youth and EURODESK and other tasks decided by MESRS, e.g. expert groups, preparation of new legislation, consultations with young people, publications and methodical guides, etc.) and
- on activities [connected to school subjects' competitions](#) for pupils attending primary schools and students of secondary schools.

Yearly financial allocation for IUVENTA, resulting from the above contract is approx. 1.5 million EUR; the amount of finances is slightly increasing every year.

#Policy monitoring and evaluation

- The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MESRS) is responsible for co-ordination of the youth policy preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- MESRS monitors and evaluates mainly programmes in its area of responsibilities;
- key documents of current Slovak youth policy such as Strategy for Youth 2014 -2020 and Programmes for Youth were based on evaluation of previous ones: [Key Areas and Action Plans of the State Policy in Relation to Children and Youth in the Slovak Republic for 2008 – 2014](#) and [financial programmes ADAM](#) (Activities of Children and Youth, 2008 -2014).
- IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute commissioned external independent evaluation consisting of analyses of final reports, consultations with youth workers, different experts and youth people themselves.
- mid-evaluation of financial programmes 2008-2014 and discussion about new generation of funding programmes took place at [public consultation in 2012](#).
- The results of evaluation of former youth policy document (2008 -2014) were presented in the form of Youth Report 2014 during [National conference](#).
- Monitoring of Youth Strategy implementation is made under coordination of [IMGY](#) and presented on the web site of the Ministry (2015, 2016, 2017). Evaluation of Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 in the second third of its validity was delivered in the [Youth Report 2018](#) and presented in the [National Conference in June 2018](#).
- Committee for Children prepares regularly annual report of [National Action Plan for Children with updates for upcoming year](#).

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

Youth policy in the Slovak Republic is based on the principle of cooperation among sectors and various stakeholders.

There are two mechanisms:

- [Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth \(coordinated by MESRS\) IMGY](#)
- [Committee for Children and Youth \(coordinated by MLSAF\)](#)

Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth (hereinafter referred to as IMGY) has been established by the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 as a body responsible for coordination and communication among various stakeholders dealing with youth-related themes/issues. Similar government body has existed since 2008.

IMGY meets twice per year, but in period of preparation of strategical documents IMGY meets as needed. One of the agreed procedures is to organise small working groups of IMGY members according to the topics and expertise. [IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute is the service institution for IMGY meetings.](#)

#IMGY

- consults, proposes and evaluates the objectives and measures related to the national youth policy,
- seeks effective and complex preparation of the measures directed to the Strategy's implementation and with a view to evaluate fulfilment of these measures,
- assesses and comments the measures for the Strategy's implementation, which require coordination of partial activities of several entities,
- assesses the accepted proposals and submits its own proposals of the measures for implementation of strategic objectives,
- offers a space for exchange of information concerning fulfilment of the measures within the Strategy's implementation in individual areas. (Youth Strategy, part 6.6)

IMGY consists of representatives of regional authority offices, governmental institutions, umbrella youth organisation, employers and unions, as follow:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic,
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic,
- Regional Self-government Offices (8 regions) (Úrady samosprávnych krajov)
- Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (Združenie miest a obcí Slovenska),
- Union of Slovak Towns (Únia miest Slovenska),
- Confederation of the Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (Konfederácia odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky),
- Association of the Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic (Združenie informačných a poradenských centier Slovenskej republiky),
- Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities (Úrad splnomocnenca vlády SR pre rómske komunity)
- Youth Council of Slovakia

- Student Council of Higher Education (Študentská rada vysokých škôl),
- Asociácia CVČ SR (Asociácia centier voľného času),
- Association of Regional Youth Councils (Asociácia krajských rád mládeže),

#Committee for Children and Youth

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic facilitates activities of the Committee for Children and Youth (Výbor pre deti a mládež) being one of the committees of the Governmental Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (Rada vlády pre ľudské práva, národnostné menšiny a rodovú rovnosť).

It gathers together the representatives of various ministries, local and regional governments, as well as non-governmental non-profit organisations.

Since 2013 this committee elaborated the **National Action Plans for Children** (Národný akčný plan pre deti) representing basic instrument for targeted and coordinated actions for implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols at the national level.

The implementation of National Action Plan for Children (NAPC) was **completed and stopped** in 2019. Analysis of experience has shown that most of the tasks of the plan were carried out through other instruments and that the NAPC continuation could cause duplication. The special working group continues to elaborate the strategic challenges of the NAPD that have not been solved so far through:

- incorporation strategic challenges under Agenda 2030 in the document 'Vision and Strategy of Development of Slovakia by 2030' (*Vízia a stratégia rozvoja Slovenska do roku 2030*) and with regard to the prepared investment programs and projects of the National Investment Plan of the Slovak Republic for 2018-2030 (*Národný investičný plán SR*)
- identifying the approach to address the remaining strategic challenges within the Committee on Children and Youth.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 considers research and youth policy cooperation to represent its key values, together with cross-sectorial approach, participation and inclusion. By participation it is understood, that the youth policy would be defined in dialog and in cooperation with researchers and experts in order to secure evidence-based youth policy. Participation also reflects the dialogue with young people during the whole process of youth policy-making. Data gathered by various researches created the source of background information for Youth Strategy 2014-2020. Its evaluation is presented in the form of Youth Reports, therefore research data are required to prove the reliability.

In general there are two terms used in youth policy: „knowledge-based youth policy“ and „youth policy based on the real needs of young people“. The first term is used for the creation of youth policy in cooperation with experts on the topics and experts on the youth as the social group. The second term encompasses consultations with young people as the starting point of youth policy. However, the official definition on „knowledge-based youth policy“ is not available in the Slovak legislation and official documents.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

MESRS as the coordinator of youth policy maintains regular cooperation with representatives of youth research.

The representatives of youth research are members of Inter-ministerial Working Group on Youth Policy (IMGY) - main coordinating body for youth policy in line with the Youth

Strategy's 2014 - 2020 aims and principles. The obligation to keep youth policy updated by data from youth research is delegated to IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute, which acts as Secretariat of IMGY (Source: [Contract MESRS and IUVENTA for 2018 part 2.2. h](#)).

Mechanism of cooperation

- a. [Online database of youth researches](#)
- b. Involvement of youth researchers in youth policy documents' preparation and evaluation.

The online database of youth research, formally called [Data Archive of Youth Research \(DAYR\)](#), has been running since 2006. Archive contains academic and ad-hoc research projects and surveys. Surveys and research projects are divided into two catalogues. Surveys based on mainly representative samples of youth in the Slovak Republic are collected in the Data Catalogue. [The Data Catalogue](#) allows the access to the survey list ordered by the year of data collection. Identification sheet of the survey enables direct access to the abstract, brief conclusions, research documentation (questionnaire), methodological procedure (sample, representativeness), to the data file and references to the publication of the survey results. Regional surveys or research projects without formalised identification sheets are placed in [the Surveys – Data Catalogue](#) (Prieskumy – katalóg dát).

Researchers were involved in preparation of the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 as regular members of expert working groups. Data from various surveys are incorporated into the evaluation documents on youth policy: [Youth Report 2010](#), [Youth Report 2014](#) and [Youth Report 2018](#).

National Statistics and available data sources

There is no centralised/integrated and regularly updated statistical system on youth in the Slovak Republic.

No specific indicators have been established for the youth population.

Policy themes informed by research

Regular scientific data from the official research projects and surveys are provided in the field of education, employment, health and social inclusion. Official data from other fields of Youth Strategy 2015-2020 (culture, participation, volunteering etc.) focused on youth are not available.

Data on Education

Although MESRS is responsible for coordination of youth policy preparation and implementation, the majority of scientific research financed by MESRS is dedicated to the area of basic and applied research in education, pedagogy, creative and performing arts and other sciences linked to specific higher education institutions and the Slovak Academy of Science. MESRS runs two agencies to provide financial support to academic research: [KEGA](#) and [VEGA](#). Not all research projects supported by KEGA and VEGA are focused on youth.

Other surveys linked to Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 such as employment, health and wellbeing, social inclusion etc. are provided by other key players such as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development etc. in the sphere of their influence and their remit.

Data on Employment and Social Inclusion

In 2015 the main topics of interest were [youth unemployment](#) and [young people with disabilities](#) and their access to labour market. Research projects were carried out mainly by [Institute for Labour and Family Research](#).

Data on Health

[Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic](#) supports surveys and research projects focused on children and youth in the following fields (see Department of Children and Youth Hygiene):

- protection of health of children and youth,
- trends in physical growth and development,
- prevention of risk behaviour,
- special problems of minority groups

In 2015 the [Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic](#) (run by the Ministry of Health) carried out [surveys](#) focused on drug abuse (TAD – Tabaco, Alcohol, Drugs) and regular data collection for ESPAD - European School Survey on Alcohol and Other Drugs, injuries of children 3 - 10 years old and monitoring conditions for physical education of pupils at elementary and secondary schools. Data are currently analysed and interpreted for the reports.

Emerging issues

In 2016 far-right national populist neo-Nazi political party in Slovakia reached the legitimate number of voters and became a part of Slovak National Parliament. Since then various surveys ([2016](#), [2018](#)) showed that 20% of young people were strong supporters of radical movements. In 2017 – 2019 some state and public institutions conducted researches and started the discussion about extremism and radicalisation of Slovak youth with better knowledge of motivation, profile, background and other characteristics of young radicals (or other young people who support them).

Young People and Risk of Extremism ([Mladí ľudia a riziko extrémizmu, 2017](#)) conducted by Institute for Public Affairs focused on values and attitudes of young people in light of their potential extremist preferences. Strategical Policy Institute was engaged in topic extremism, radicalisation and paramilitary groups ([Mládež, radikalizmus a polovojenské organizácie, 2018](#)) and correlations / motivations between them. In 2018 MESRS financially supported qualitative survey of Open Society Foundation focusing on the [causes of radicalisation of young](#) (14 – 18 years old) Slovaks (e.g. family background, the desire to belong somewhere, simple solutions to complicated problems etc.). The ambition of MESRS and IUVENTA is to use information and knowledge from researches and survey to Strategy for the prevention of radicalization through youth work.

Evidence-based evaluation of youth policies

Since 2010 the youth policy has been evaluated in the form of youth reports. The first [Youth Report 2010](#) was prepared in order to evaluate individual areas of then [in force national youth policy document](#). Youth Strategy 2015 – 2020 included Youth Report as the tool for official monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes and impacts on sectoral policies and their complementarity.

National Youth Reports

[Youth Report 2014](#) has been prepared in order to evaluate national youth policy, its outcomes and impacts in the period between 2011– 2013. The Youth Report 2014 was also the starting point for a new youth strategy preparation. Youth Report 2014 was established on the basis of information regarding the status of youth in the Slovak Republic, which was obtained from research and surveys. [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020](#) was prepared with regard to the findings of the Youth Report 2014.

[Youth Report 2018](#) was adopted by The Slovak Government on the 13th of June. Wide discussion on the finding of Youth Report and on the further priorities of national Youth Strategy took place during National Conference on Youth ([Národná konferencia 2MB](#)).

Other data providers for some thematic fields of Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020.

The main providers of data on youth in Slovakia are MESRS (by activities of the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (thereinafter referred to as CVTI), the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Available statistics, updates and accessibility by various key players in youth policy:

- [Demographic data on youth](#) - annually updated, available on the web-site of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
- [Data on education](#) – annually updated, available on the web-site of CVTI,
- Data on youth NGOs annually updated, available on the web-site of CVTI,
- Data on Youth Information Centres annually updated, available on the web-site of CVTI
- Data on youth criminality_ in annual publication of CVTI – Children and Youth in Numbers, available on the web-site of CVTI
- Data on youth sport - annually updated, available on the web-site of CVTI.
- [Data on employment](#)– monthly updated, available on the web-site of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
- Other data sources:
- Data connected to Implementation of Convention on the Rights of Child (e.g. state welfare benefits, injuries, child deaths, foster-care institutions, abuse and neglect of children, allowances for disabled, integration of children with special educational needs into the educational system etc.) – periodically updated reports by the [Committee for Children and Youth of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality](#)
- [Longitudinal representative surveys of CVTI](#)_(previous Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education) aimed at human rights in a school-and-family environment, social - pathological phenomena in young people’s lives, drug consumption, lifestyles and value orientation, political and civic participation of youth etc.

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

The Slovak government does not have any specific line of funding for research on youth explicitly supporting evidence-based youth policy-making.

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

A specific budget is regularly allocated for youth policy implementation at the central level. The Youth Department operates within the structure of the MESRS bearing responsibility not only for coordination of the youth policy implementation, but also for related budgetary issues. Thus the Youth Department covers the costs occurred when [developing European and international cooperation in the field of youth](#), as well as the costs connected to elaboration of various analyses and studies. The State, through budgetary provisions of the MESRS, provides yearly financial contributions to [IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute](#) in order to undertake activities helping in youth policy implementation.

In 2013, the MESRS adopted the [Programmes for Youth for 2014 – 2020](#) providing financial support to the bodies developing activities and projects in the field of youth work and youth policy implementation. Calls for projects are being published regularly within the Programmes, specified further within the following sub-programmes:

- [SUPPORT of Youth Organisations \(funding regular activities of the youth NGOs\)](#);
- [PRIORITIES of youth policy \(funding projects submitted according to the actual themes, such as e.g. the structured dialogue; the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU](#)

theme: talent and potential of young people; support of the EU basic values in the context of actual societal challenges; building of the quality systems in youth work and production of evidence on the youth work impacts);

- VOICE of youth (funding projects of bodies ensuring representation of the young peoples´ needs at the national and regional levels);
- SERVICES for youth (funding projects of bodies developing youth information and counselling services and services in the field of youth volunteering);
- COMMUNITIES for youth (was launched in 2016 - first projects focused most on aggregation of local and regional data on youth and youth policy were granted);
- EVIDENCE on youth (was launched in 2017).

The calls for projects proposals are being published regularly on the official web sites of the MESRS and IUVENTA – acting as the Agency for the MESRS ensuring all the administrative issues connected to assessing, monitoring and evaluating of the submitted projects. Contracting and granting is ensured by the Youth Department. MESRS. The grants are provided on a yearly basis (financial year equals to calendar year).

The total number of children aged 5 – 15 living in a particular municipality, as well as the total number of young people aged 15 – 18 living in a particular Slovak region are being considered during calculation of the income tax shares for every and each municipality and county in Slovakia, providing also financial sources for their interest-based (out-of-school) education. Thus the youth policy implementation has been reflected in the budgets of authorities at local and regional level; still they are autonomous when taking decision on the use of allocated funds. The research “[Survey on the Youth Policy at Regional and Local level 2015](#)” has confirmed that not all the allocated funds have been used by the municipalities for the sake of youth policies implementation. Some of them provide funding to Youth Centres, the others have adopted grant schemes devoted to youth only and some have only supported youth activities within existing granting schemes. Only few municipalities provide funding consisting of combination of the above listed alternatives.

Information on the specific budget allocated to youth policies at central level (MESRS):

§ the budget in 2015: 3.5 million EUR

§ the budget in 2016 3.5 million EUR

What is funded?

The financial sources of the Programmes for Youth for 2014 – 2020 provide funding to various stakeholders, but mainly to the youth NGOs. The eligibility criteria, as well as the quality indicators have been identified by the Youth Department in a very active communication and cooperation with the representatives of the youth NGOs and other stakeholders. External experts are invited to provide written assessments on submitted projects and grant requests. Their views are being considered by the members of the selection committee, which produces final proposal for funding to the Minister of Education, Science, Youth and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

Funding within the Programme for Youth for 2014 – 2020 is available on the basis of the [Act on Youth Work Support](#) provisions. These provisions request submission of:

- identification of grants applicants;
- [grant application](#) in a compulsory format available on the web;
- [applicants´ financial reports](#) in a compulsory format;
- applicants´ annual report;
- clearance of tax and insurance.

During the assessment of a project and grant application submitted within the sub-programme “SUPPORT of youth organisations”, the experts check all the eligibility criteria

and whether and to what extent the quality indicators have been met by an applicant. The successful applicants are granted various financial amounts according to the “points” they were awarded during the assessment in three categories – basic standard criteria, higher standard quality indicators and implementation of the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020.

The projects and grant applications submitted within other sub-programmes are being also assessed by the external experts in line with the methodology packs containing information on criteria valid for each sub-programme. The experts have been trained on a regular basis in order to deliver high quality outputs.

Financial accountability

All the beneficiaries are subject to audit by the Internal Audit Unit of the MESRS, according to provisions of the [Act on Control in State Administration](#). Two or three beneficiaries use to be randomly selected to present their accounts for checking. In case of identification of any discrepancies the beneficiary is obliged to pay back the entire misused finances to the MESRS or to the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, in accordance with the valid financial regulations.

Use of EU Funds

The European Social Fund was used in the programming period 2007 – 2013 to support national projects in the field of youth policy and youth work within [the Operational Programme Education](#).

[National Project KomPrax](#)

Project KomPrax – Competencies for Practice was aimed at young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers, according to provision of § 2 of [the Act on Youth Work Support](#) in order to acquaint them with competencies (such as communication and presentation skills, team work, project management, etc.) useful for their full participation in social and economic life. More than 12 thousands participants took part in the project educational activities directly, but the project has affected more than 24 thousand people via small community-based projects (granted by an amount up to 200 EUR) implemented by the project participants. Research activities were implemented throughout projects’ realisation in the period 2011 – 2015 in order to gather information on young people with fewer opportunities. The project also provided space for many activities aiming at the [recognition and validation of non-formal learning in youth work](#), such as “Declaration on Recognition of Contribution of Non-formal Education in Youth Work” (Pešek, Dudáč and Tomanová, 2012) currently supported by more than [100 various stakeholders](#), regional round tables and national conference, as well as national [competition for creative young people on the topic of recognition](#).

[National Project Praktik](#)

Project Praktik – Practical Skills through Non-formal Education in Youth Work was aimed at innovation in youth work. The projects objectives were to enhance the quality of interest-based activities in youth work and thus ensure the development of practical skills; to create the space for youth leaders to participate actively in the preparation of activities and to guarantee the know-how transfer from youth workers to youth leaders. Seven topic centres were established within the project implemented from 2013 till 2015 in seven Slovak counties, elaborating on the following topics:

- healthy life-style promotion;
- practical use of ICT promotion;
- development of practical skills while working with small tangible materials;
- search and support of talented young people;
- support and development of experience-based activities in environmental education;
- support and development of education towards citizenship and multiculturalism;

- support and development of global education.

About 250 youth workers and 250 youth leaders took part in project educational activities and consequently prepared educational activities for more than 2400 children and young people. New methodologies for interest-based education in youth work were elaborated in the form of videos and distributed to youth workers.

Project KomPrax: more than 6 million EUR

Project Praktik: around 4 million EUR

There are no evaluations of the youth-related initiatives/activities/programmes funded through EU schemes.

There is no information on planned measures in the field of youth policy to be supported through EU funds available.

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

Slovak Republic currently cooperates in the field of youth with following international partners:

- Cooperation Programme for the years 2015 – 2017 in implementation of the cooperation agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of Flanders.

Main policy areas of cooperation: exchange information and documentation regarding youth policy, youth work strategy, experiences and practical solutions in the field of non-formal and informal education and youth work. Exchange of experts, responsible civil servants and youth workers.

- Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia 2012 – 2016.

Main policy areas of cooperation: general youth policy, youth employment, youth entrepreneurship, youth participation, youth and health, social issues on youth, youth volunteering, youth culture, youth information, youth and leisure, youth and environment, youth in rural areas. Exchange of experts, responsible civil servants and youth workers.

International cooperation

- In 2015 Slovak Republic initiated the signing the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministries of Countries of Visegrad Group Responsible for Youth and the Ministries of Countries of Eastern Partnership to European Union Responsible for Youth in Youth Field.

Main policy areas of cooperation are defined in Framework Action Plan 2015 – 2017: exchange of information on youth issues; provide information on youth programs, youth policy, national legislation, and regional programs for youth, various structures working on youth matters, experts, researches as well as the exchange of experience in the field of youth affairs. Exchange of experts, responsible civil servants and youth workers.

None activities or reports provided yet.

- Cooperation in the field of youth in the Council of Europe is coordinated by the MESRS. Representatives of MESRS participate in regular Conferences of European Ministers responsible for youth and in meetings of European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). Cooperation is also manifested by the active participation in the activities and events organized by the Council of Europe in support of youth (for example policy reviews, the summer language courses, summer schools etc.)

1.9 Current debates and reforms

Preparation of Slovak Youth Strategy for 2021 -2028 (**Stratégia SR pre mládež na roky 2021 – 2028**)

Working group consisting of umbrella organisations and representatives of MESRS and IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute started its work in September 2019. So far the main vision of young person was defined as well as some thematic fields.

The (draft) vision of the young Slovak in the Strategy:

- he/she acts sustainably, morally and responsibly,
- he/she has key competences needed for life,
- he/she is an active part of the community,
- he/she thinks critically and creatively,
- he/she knows his/her rights,
- he/she cares on his/her physical and mental health.

Implementation of Youth Strategy 2021 – 2028 is planned in the framework of two action plans (defined at the beginning and in the mid-term of the Strategy existence).

In 2019 and 2020 umbrella organisations prepare round tables with other organisations and institutions in the regions and define together key indicators and milestones in individual thematic fields.

National Youth Conference is foreseen for June/July 2020.

Amended Act on Youth Work Support in 2019

The amendment introduced several important changes:

- establishes the Youth work coordinator at local and regional level,
- lecturer in youth work,
- adjusting the responsibilities of regional and local authorities in the field of youth work
- introduces the Youth Parliament Institute and the Quality Label "Modern Youth Center"
- and other minor adjustments to the part accreditation and financing youth work from the state budget.

The amendment to the Act is effective as of 1st January 2020.

Source: IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

The **first evidence of volunteer activities** in Slovakia can be found in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, volunteering is an area that needs sustained support for its development. The period of socialism (1948 -1989) stopped the development of the volunteer sector and jeopardized its principles. After the revolution in 1989, the civil society and, in particular, the civil associations that were forbidden by the Communist regime (2.1) again came to the fore.

Volunteering has been lacking the legislative framing. Since 2008, „**youth volunteering**“ was introduced in legislation as a result of incoming European Union Youth programs (in particular the **European Voluntary Service**). **Act on Volunteering** exists since 2011. Platform of Voluntary Centres and Organizations, which brings together active non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders is a strong partner of the **Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport in the Slovak Republic** and the **Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic** – the most important public sectors influencing the development of volunteering (2.2).

The largest program supporting international youth volunteering is Erasmus + and all previous EU Youth Programs since 2000 (2.6). Young people in Slovakia can get information on volunteering opportunities through the several portals provided mainly by volunteer centers. There is also a tradition of **Volunteer Week** and the regular **awards to volunteers** for their valuable work at all levels (2.7).

2.1 General context

Historical developments

History of volunteering in Slovakia is closely linked to the history of civil society development. Nowadays, two lines of civil society exist ([Brozmanova-Gregorova and Hirt, 2006](#)), while volunteering (including youth volunteering) has been developed within:

- a) Organisations fulfilling public benefit aims (e.g. social and charity related activities);
- b) Organisations developing mutual benefit and associative life of citizens (mutually beneficial activities, outreach and social aims).

From Middle Ages to 1918

The first civil society organisations were linked to the activities of church and middle class. These were aimed at assistance to poor people, etc. Such activities were voluntary, philanthropic and individualistic, but often incidental (Kováčiková, 2000). Target groups care was not sufficient and it encouraged development of so-called brotherhoods and guilds, which functioned on the principles of solidarity and mutual help.

In the middle of the 19th century, the national movement represented a strong impulse for establishment and development of several associations, while student associations were significantly developed ([Brozmanová, et al., 2009](#)). After the unsuccessful revolution aimed at recognition of independence of Slovaks in the Austro-Hungarian Empire the majority of associations ceased to exist. All associations were kept under state surveillance and they were obliged to get registered and submit statutes. Till 1860, only few associations were approved, some functioned secretly (Dudeková, 1998).

The national cultural organisation Matica Slovenská started to operate in the sixties of the 19th century. Despite the official restrictions it influenced the establishment of various associations. Young people representing the middle class participated significantly in its activities.

Restrictions towards freedom of associations and assemblies became more intense during the World War I. Associations were paralysed; many people were under police surveillance.

From independent state towards the communist regime (1918 – 1989)

The period of the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918 – 1939) has also been called 'the age of associations'. The freedom of associations was guaranteed by the Constitution. The number of voluntary associations increased enormously. Social and health associations were strongly positioned. Mass associations operating in the whole territory of Slovakia were established (Buerkle, 2004).

Voluntary work tradition was interrupted by the military occupation and the World War II., and later, by the establishment of a socialist state – Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Any activities of associations were purposefully and systematically reduced or strictly controlled (Tošner and Sozanská, 2002).

After 1945 the activities of about 10 thousand associations involving more than half million members were renewed. Associations recognised by the military totalitarian regime were dismissed within the whole Slovakia, but some organisations such as Matica Slovenská, Živena (organisation supporting women), various good causes and fire services maintained. These organisations were obliged to change their Statutes (Dudeková, 1998).

In 1945 uniform mass organisations were created by the decision of the communist government: for trade unions (ROH), women (Živena), sport (Sokol) and youth (Czechoslovak Socialist Union of Youth). All the other associations were obliged to become their members. From 1948 the leading role of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was established. The existing associations were changed to "voluntary organisations" by law and thus forced to become a part of the "approved" organisations or terminate. The usage of terms, such as association or assembly was cancelled as well as voluntary membership and inner democracy. The property of associations and foundations was nationalised. "Civil organisations" were given political tasks to build a socialist society. From 1948 the third sector lost independence from state and practically did not exist. Space for voluntary activities was offered mainly in secret activities of Catholic Church and in some environmental organisations and some groups of Socialistic Union of Youth (Dudeková, 1998).

According to some authors volunteering (including youth volunteering) had (or acquired) three forms during socialism. The first one was 'socialist volunteering' supported by the state and ideology. Activities were aimed at welfare services. The second form of volunteering was 'pragmatic volunteering' motivated by careerism, fear of penalties, reciprocity, but also by escape into a social micro-world (e.g. activities in small informal organisations aimed at children's leisure). The third type of volunteering was recognised as 'dissident', which was offered by the Church and dissident organisations (Frič and Pospíšilová, 2010).

Revolution 1989 – present day

In 1990 a law was adopted, which guarantees the right to free assembly. For a long time denied right for self-determination resulted in establishment of many political parties and non-governmental organisations. Together with the development of civil society the phenomenon of volunteering has been developed, too.

Youth volunteering was dealt within one of the first complex national youth strategies ([National Youth Policy Conception till 2007](#)) first from 2001, in connection with Youth Participation. The arrival of the European Union programmes in the youth field, in particular in terms of European Voluntary Service, raised this topic of international volunteering and the adoption of relevant legal documents.

[The Act on Volunteering \(2011\)](#) and [The Act on Youth Work Support \(2008, amended in 2019\)](#) were adopted with the aim to define volunteering and youth volunteering in particular (more in "Definition and Concepts").

Main concepts

The definition of „youth volunteering“ has not appeared in the Slovak legislation yet. However, other terms such as „youth volunteer“ or „voluntary service in youth work“ are sufficiently covered in legislation.

[The Act on Volunteering](#) provides, first of all, legal status of a volunteer and legal relations in providing services, activities and other performances to volunteers. The Act influences youth volunteering through defining the minimal age for voluntary engagement to 15 years and through clear distinction of volunteering and practical training during education (especially in social services or social care areas).

[The Act on Youth Work Support](#) defines who is a youth volunteer and what a voluntary service in youth work is.

On the basis of the above-mentioned Acts and a complex research (Brozmanová, et al., 2009, Brozmanová, Siekelová, Šolcová, 2018) it is possible to define youth volunteering in Slovakia as **conscious unpaid activities provided by individual persons aged 15 – 30 years on the basis of freedom of choice for the benefit of other people, society or environment, except for family members and household of a volunteer.**

Based on the latest research on volunteering carried out among young people in 2017 we can observe a rising trend of young people´s participation in formal volunteering. While in 2011 within last 12 months only 25.7% of young people aged 15 up to 30 years were involved into volunteering within organisations (Brozmanová Gregorová et al., 2012), in 2017 it was already 50 % of young people. (Brozmanová Gregorová, Siekelová, Šolcová, 2018).

The greatest space for the involvement of volunteers is provided by non-governmental organisations followed by communities, municipalities and state administration organisations. To the most frequent areas, in which young volunteers operate, belong the field of environment, sports, health and social services. (Brozmanová Gregorová, Siekelová, Šolcová, 2018).

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Main actors

Youth volunteering in Slovakia is not strictly regulated by the public authorities. Several institutions are involved into its management:

1. [Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic](#) (thereinafter referred to as Ministry) Youth Department ([Odbor mládeže](#)) coordinates preparation and implementation of youth policy, including youth volunteering. [IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute](#), an organisation managed directly by the Ministry, develops particular activities supporting youth volunteering. IUVENTA administers Programmes for Youth (national grant programme), as well as the EU Erasmus+ Programme for the field of youth and sport. IUVENTA provides mainly education, conceptual, information, research and supportive activities in the field of youth volunteering, e.g. [Youth Report 2010](#) and [Youth Report 2014](#) and [Youth Report 2018. Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth \(2014 – 2020\)](#), National coordinator of the European Year of Volunteering (2011), etc.

2. Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, notably [Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Development of Civil Society](#) (thereinafter referred to as Office). Although the area of „youth“ volunteering is not explicitly listed among the Office competences, it is implicitly included in many priorities and activities developed by the Office with the aim to implement [Strategy of Civil Society Development in Slovakia till](#)

2020. The Ministry of Interior is responsible also for the legal issues regarding volunteering.

The above listed public authorities play roles of conceptual documents creators in the area of youth volunteering development and, being the case of the Ministry, also the role of financial support provider in the field of youth volunteering development in youth work.

These authorities do not take initiative in activating organisations to reach aims and fulfil measures in the area of youth volunteering development. This task belongs to non-governmental organisations autonomously developing their activities.

3. Among main actors representing non-profit sector in the field of regulation and implementation of youth volunteering have been recognised the following ones:

Platform of Voluntary Centres and Organisations (thereinafter referred to as Platform) was established in 2011, both as a result of activities organised within the European Year of Volunteering and activities of voluntary centres (existing in Slovakia since 2009). The Platform aims to support creation of the favourable environment to support volunteering in all its forms and areas. Some examples of the Platforms' activities are mentioned here: building of voluntary centres, advocacy for volunteering towards government and public administration, supporting creation and development of volunteers' coordinators in non-governmental and public organisations, promotion of volunteering as a tool of non-formal education and as a tool for preparation of young people for the labour market.

Youth Council of Slovakia (thereinafter referred to as RMS) gathers 33 non-governmental organisations devoted to children and youth and engaging more than 40 thousand members. RMS represents the interests of members towards government and public administration, networks organisations, guarantees exchange of information and experience, organises education. RMS represents the Slovak Republic in the European Youth Forum.

Another significant element of volunteering infrastructure in Slovakia is represented by volunteer centres. The volunteer centres are service organisations. Those centres interconnect volunteers and organisations, promote volunteering, provide training courses, consultations and supervisions in the field of volunteers management, they network volunteering organisations, develop companies' volunteering, visualise the societal value of volunteering, create cross-sectoral partnerships between volunteering organisations, self-government and companies as well as they carry out researches in the field of volunteering – they observe development and trends in that area. Youth belong to primary target group in all volunteer centres.

Children's and youth volunteer organisations such as Slovak Scouts, Christian organisations e.g. DOMKA (Salesian Youth Association), eRko (Association of Youth Christian Companionships), INEX or smaller organisations having local effect and providing leisure-time activities to children and young people, such as „Žabky na prameni“ (Slovak for „Frogs on the well“), MO Plusko, DO Fénix etc. are important key players in development of volunteering.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations is standing as an expert, advisory, coordination and consultation body of the Slovak Government in the area of non-governmental non-profit organisations and civil society development.

A good example for a cross-sectoral cooperation within youth volunteering is the creation of the Strategy of Children and Youth Volunteering Education, which was adopted by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport in April 2018. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport assigned the Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organisations with elaboration of the conception and also allocated financial resources for its creation. Subsequently the representatives of the Ministry, IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute, the Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organisations, several national non-governmental organisations, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic

Government for the Civil Society Development, as well as primary-and-secondary-school teachers – these all actively participated in creation of the conception

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a National Strategy

There is no independent national strategy on youth volunteering. A strategy for the development of youth volunteering is included in the content of two strategic documents:

[The Strategy for Youth for years 2014 – 2020 in the Slovak Republic](#) (thereinafter referred to as the Youth Strategy) was adopted by the Slovak Government on 23rd April 2014.

[Strategy of Civil Society Development in Slovakia till 2020](#) was adopted in 2012. Important part of the Strategy is development of volunteering in Slovakia.

Scope and contents

Youth Strategy 2014- 2020

The strategic aims for youth volunteering:

- To involve as many young people representing various groups as possible through creating of diverse volunteering opportunities in reaction to the actual needs of young people and trends in volunteering;
- To ensure sustainable integration of young people in volunteering.

The other aims of youth volunteering activities are as follows:

- To link volunteering and formal education;
- To support recognition of skills of young people gained through volunteering by the institutions representing formal and non-formal education sectors and the labour market;
- To ensure visibility of volunteering for both, the individuals and the society and to raise awareness of the value of volunteering;
- To support volunteering of youth people with specific needs;
- To create tools for support of organisations working with young volunteers so they are ready to react to specific needs of young people;
- To create conditions (financial, personnel, organisational) for long-term voluntary programmes engaging young people;
- To support cross-border mobility of young volunteers.

The Youth Strategy emphasises a need to create measures according to various needs, including the needs of specific groups.

[The Strategy of Civil Society Development in Slovakia till 2020 \(Action plan for 2017 - 2018\)](#) covers the issue of youth volunteering through the Program of Support for Volunteering and Volunteer Centres from 2013. In 2018 the Strategy of Children and Youth Education for Volunteering was adopted. The goal of this strategy is to create prerequisites for the implementation of education for volunteering at all levels of education, to define the objectives and principles of education for volunteering and to set up measures for its implementation. The strategy and its introduction into practice should help volunteering to become a natural part of lifestyles of people and communities in Slovakia, and thus connect formal education with real life.

Responsible authority

[Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic](#) bears responsibility for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of [Youth Strategy](#). By

its resolution 192/2014 the Slovak Government approved the creation of *Interministerial working group for the state policy in the field of youth (further IMGY)*. The group's members take an active part in delivering on the Strategy objectives through the particular measures and special-purpose projects and prepare yearly reports on the current state of the Strategy implementation for the above ministry.

The Programme on Support of Volunteering and Volunteering Centres has been created under the auspices of the [Governmental Plenipotentiary for the Development of Civil Society](#) (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic). The Plenipotentiary bears an advisory role for the Slovak Government. It has not been stated in the Programme who bears responsibility for its implementation, coordination and monitoring.

Revisions/ Updates

Neither the Strategy for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020 in the Slovak Republic nor the Programme on Support of Volunteering and Volunteering Centres have been revised, yet.

Other official documents containing guidelines on youth volunteering

Youth volunteering is a subject to legislation of two acts: Act 406/2011 on volunteering [[Zákon č. 406/2011 Z. z. o dobrovoľníctve](#)] and [Act 282/2008 on Youth Work Support](#) [[Zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou](#)].

[Zákon o dobrovoľníctve](#) (The Act 406/2011 on volunteering) has been adopted by the Slovak National Council and entered into force on 1st December 2011. The Act provides legal status of volunteer and legal relationships in delivery of services, activities and other performances to volunteers. It defines who is and who is not a volunteer and what is and what is not a voluntary activity. It also provides who may and who must not be a beneficiary of voluntary activities and sending organisations, including their rights and obligations in relation to volunteers and elements of a contract on voluntary service.

[The Act 282/2008 on Youth Work Support](#) has been adopted by the Slovak National Council and entered into force on 1st September 2008. The Act defines (or clarifies) who a youth volunteer is, what is voluntary service in youth work, what elements must be included in a contract on voluntary service and what obligations are relevant to organise working with volunteers in the field of youth work.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

There is not a single National Programme for Youth Volunteering in Slovakia. The topic of youth volunteering has been included in the content of the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 Programme on Support of Volunteering and Volunteer Centres (2013).

Youth volunteering is a subject to legislation of two acts: Act 406/2011 on volunteering [[Zákon č. 406/2011 Z. z. o dobrovoľníctve](#)] and [Act 282/2008 on Youth Work Support](#) [[Zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou](#)].

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a contract on voluntary service and what obligations are relevant to organise working with volunteers in the field of youth work.

Funding

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic provides specific financial support to youth work development through the Programmes for Youth. Being one of the key topics of the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020, youth volunteering has become also one of the Programmes' objectives. Yearly financial allocation for the Programmes, reserved to support the entire Programmes' objectives including youth volunteering, represents 2.3 million EUR.

The programme called 'SERVICES for Youth' is a primary programme within this area. A subsidy in the amount of 645 231.00 Euros was assigned for the development of services in the field of youth volunteering at the regional and the national levels in order to support 25 projects (2014- 2017, source: [Záverečné protokoly](#)/Final Protocols from Selection Panel). Three projects within the 'PRIORITIES of Youth Policy' programme were also primarily targeted at volunteering and were supported with an amount of 56 056.00 Euros. Part of financial allocation within the programme 'SUPPORT of Youth Organisations' is also allocated and targeted at the support of volunteering as well as education towards volunteering (volunteering is a natural part of youth work in youth organisations). Other financial sources for youth volunteering support are represented by the Erasmus+ programme, private foundations and donors.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

There are no official statistics on youth volunteering in Slovakia. Slovak Statistics Office gathers the data on volunteers every year, but with no reference to their ages. Thus the only information source provides the representative research from 2017 (Brozmanová, Siekelová, Šolcová, 2018).

Compared to 2011, the participation of young people has significantly increased especially within formal volunteering. Over the last 12 months, 50 % of young people were involved in formal volunteering, and 47.5 % were providing assistance without any organization arranging their assistance (informal volunteering). Young people being active in formal volunteering are also active in informal volunteering and vice versa.

Long-term and regularity characterise the style of volunteer engagement of youth. About 80 % of young volunteers have been involved in volunteer activities for more than 12 months, and more than 60 % have been volunteering at least once a month.

The largest areas, in which young people volunteer, are the environment, sport, health, social services as well as children and youth organizations. More than half of youth volunteer assistance is provided by non-governmental non-profit organizations, 12.2% are engaged in volunteer activities within schools.

The most frequent activities carried out in volunteering rest in the organization and coordination of leisure activities for children, youth, senior citizens, clients in social services facilities, further in organizing or assisting in the realization of activities or events (e.g. promotion of the organization, its mission, selected topics) and activities related to preservation, protection and restoration of the environment, animal welfare and wildlife protection.

Youth volunteering is differentiated in terms of gender, education, socio-economic position, housing and membership. Formal volunteering significantly involves more women, young people with university degree, coming from towns, secondary and tertiary school students, and members of organizations. Informal volunteering involves mainly women, young people with higher education, and members of organizations. The length and frequency of volunteer activities increase proportionately with volunteers' increasing age.

In the information sources on volunteer opportunities, direct resources predominate. The most common form of getting information about volunteer opportunities is information from people with whom a young person is in close contact, i.e. friends, family, acquaintances and relatives. For young people involved in volunteering, teachers were the source of information on volunteering possibilities in 16 % of all cases.

Young people are motivated to volunteer for altruistic, egotistic and normative motives, with no significant differences between them.

The most important barriers in engaging young people in volunteering are lack of time, lack of information, and lack of assistance.

Support to young volunteers

Support to young volunteers is provided on the basis of the [Act on Volunteering](#) and the [Act on Youth Work Support](#). There are obligations for hosting and sending organisations provided in both the acts:

- Ensuring equipment for volunteers (in particular work clothes, personal protective equipment and professional equipment);
- Ensuring health insurance for volunteers, if agreed in a contract on voluntary service;
- Conclusion of contract on professional indemnity insurance in respect to voluntary service.

The Act on Volunteering is even more specific and provides also the ways of ensuring volunteers diets, accommodation, transportation, etc. Except of these obligations, sending or hosting organisations after reaching an agreement with a volunteer may pay their voluntary insurances (sickness insurance, occupational pensions, unemployment insurance). The aforesaid options have not been applied in practice, due to insufficient financial means in organisations.

Quality Assurance (QA)

There are no official mechanisms for monitoring and quality assurance of youth volunteering in Slovakia. Youth policy, including youth volunteering, is being assessed occasionally through the assessment of Youth Strategy (2010, 2014, 2018), but regular monitoring and quality assurance do not exist.

There are no official documents defining quality standards in the field of youth volunteering in Slovakia.

Minimum obligations of organisations, when sending and receiving volunteers have been defined by the legislation within the [Act on Volunteering](#) and the [Act on Youth Work Support](#). No public institution monitors whether and to what extend these obligations have been respected by organisations working with volunteers.

Thanks to financial support provided by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, the Quality standards for management of volunteers were created in 2014 by [the Volunteering Centre in Banská Bystrica \(NGO\)](#) in cooperation with [the Platform of Volunteering Centres and Organisations \(NGO\)](#). General standards have been defined relevant to work with any target groups, including young people. These standards were implemented in 176 organisations (2018) within a project of the Platform of Volunteering Centres and Organisations financed by the aforesaid ministry. [The standards](#) have been aimed at the following areas of work with volunteers:

- Coordination of volunteers;
- Legal and ethical framework;
- Financial and material resources for volunteering;
- Team integration;
- Duties and profiles of volunteers;

- Recruitment and selection of volunteers;
- Training of volunteers;
- Communication with volunteers and their support;
- Appreciation and recognition of volunteers;
- Evidence, documentation and evaluation of a voluntary programme.

The procedures for external assessment of these standards have also been defined. But the implementation of standards has not been included in any legislation, it is rather a matter of individual organisations – their aspiration to acquire quality label and thus communicate their quality work with volunteers to the donors and general public.

Specific standards for the field of youth volunteering have been included in the process of accreditation for sending and hosting volunteers in the framework of the European Voluntary Service within the EU Erasmus+ Programme. These standards are valid for all countries and their assessment is guaranteed by the National Agency of the EU Erasmus+ Programme for the field of Youth and Sport established in Slovakia in IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute.

Target groups

Young people aged 30 years or less have been defined as a target group by official documents related to youth volunteering in Slovakia ([Strategy for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020 in the Slovak Republic](#)). Volunteering of young people with specific needs has been mentioned in the provisions of the aforementioned Strategy, but only as “worth to support”, with no particular measures included. Specifications for the term ‘young people with specific needs’ also have not been defined (or clarified) in the Strategy itself, but it is mentioned in the Programmes for Youth ([Programy pre mládež](#)) supporting youth work and youth volunteering as follows: ‘young people with fewer opportunities (mládež s nedostatkom príležitostí) are those young people who for various reasons do not have equal conditions for their personal development in comparison to most children and youth in the society. The lack of opportunities can be caused by educational, social, cultural, health, economic or geographic disadvantage or other form discrimination.’

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

Within the EU programmes in the field of cross-border volunteering, the Slovak Republic takes part in the European Voluntary Service (Erasmus+), since 2018 European Solidarity Corps and in the Programme EU Aid Volunteers and in the Programme EU Aid Volunteers.

The Programme of **European Voluntary Service** (EVS) and **European Solidarity Corps** is administered by the [National Agency of the EU Erasmus+ Programme for the field of youth and sport](#) in Slovakia located at IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute. The programme has been assessed regularly. For the EVS, specific quality standards have been defined for sending and hosting organisations, which must be respected within accreditation.

In July 2018, the first organization was accredited for sending volunteers within the **Programme EU Aid Volunteers**. The Programme is managed and monitored by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Other Programmes

Programme **SLOVAK AID** enables young volunteers aged 18 – 30 and experts to be sent to developing countries within official development aid. The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic coordinates the programme and it is implemented by the [Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation](#) established by the specific [law](#). Participating countries: Afghanistan, Kenya, Moldova, South Sudan, Albania,

Belorussia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo and Ukraine. Volunteers and experts may be sent to any country listed by the OECD Development Aid Council. Programme regulations and sending processes have been described by the [Programme document](#). There have been no specific requirements for volunteers set by the Programme. Groups of young people, e.g. with fewer opportunities, are not likely to take part in the Programme.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

The [Act on Volunteering](#) and the [Act on Youth Work Support](#) provide also legal status for foreign volunteers in Slovakia. Only volunteers from selected countries need visa. The list of such countries can be found in [Council Regulation 539/2001](#). A volunteer staying in Slovakia needs a temporary residence authorisation. Residence of foreigners is provided by the [law](#). More information is available on the webpage of Borders and Foreign Nationals Police of the Slovak Republic. <http://minv.sk/?pobyt-cudzinka>

Slovak Police Force Presidium – Authority of Borders and Foreign Nationals Police keeps statistics of legal and illegal migration to Slovakia including statistics on temporary residence authorisation for volunteers. These statistics are available on the webpage of the [Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic](#)

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute provides information on various opportunities for young people, not only on volunteering, using the basic instrument [EURODESK](#) – European Information Network, in which Slovakia participates, too. IUVENTA has been managing the European Union programmes for youth since 1998. IUVENTA has contributed to popularization of the youth volunteering and European Voluntary Service by [means of various publications](#) focusing on the recognition of volunteering and its impact, building up the competencies of organizations working with young volunteers and also by developing volunteering with vulnerable young people especially Roma.

As a specific contact point we can mention regional Volunteer Centres, which exist and enable young people to receive information. Regional volunteering centres were established first in Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Prešov and Nitra. In 2015 the new centres emerged in Trnava, Trenčín, Žilina, and the one in Košice was re-opened. In last years, the MESRS made financial support available to the centres via the Programmes for Youth within a specific programme called 'SERVICES for Youth'. All the above-mentioned regional centres, except the one in Banská Bystrica, have linked their [online databases on volunteering opportunities and on volunteers](#).

The Platform of Volunteering Centres and Organisations provides information on volunteering, it manages campaigns and provides networking opportunities for various organisations. The Platform was financially supported by the government resources in last years.

The nation-wide portal <http://dobrovolnici.ludialudom.sk/> People to People is managed by the non-profit organisation ĽUDIA ĽUĎOM, n.o.

ZIPCEM - Association of Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic ([Združenie informačných a poradenských centier mladých v Slovenskej republike](#)) promotes on its website the opportunities for local young people to become short term or long term volunteers.

There is also internet portal www.dobrovolnictvo.sk managed by C.A.R.D.O. The portal was established in 2007. The portal has been established thanks to financial support of the MESRS, but its functioning is not supported by the government at present time.

Key initiatives

72 hours; Youth Council of Slovakia (2012, 2014)

The three-day marathon of volunteering is aimed at active involvement of young people in local projects and awareness raising on the importance and contribution of voluntary activities for the local communities. The individual local projects are supervised either by a national organisation, or by a non-governmental youth organisation or by a non-formal group of young people. More than 3 700 volunteers took part in a project in 2014 through participation in 119 projects for more than 48 000 hours.

“Volunteering for all” (2014) was an information campaign organised by the Platform of Volunteering Centres and Organisations. It also included an initiative aimed at participation of disadvantaged young people in volunteering. More than 500 people interested in volunteering registered on the campaign webpage by filling in a simple form and they contacted volunteering centres. The project provided opportunities for particular short-term and long-term volunteering in organisations and communities to 69 young people with fewer opportunities, aged less than 30 years. One would identify unemployed young people, people with disabilities, former drug addicts and socially excluded young people among them.

‘Volunteering Days’ have been organised since 2009 by C.A.R.D.O. This activity takes place during the third September weekend with the aim to ensure better visibility of volunteering and its benefits and to recruit new volunteers. The purpose of the activity is to find an agreement on how to publicise (or advertise) volunteering and to enable people to gain positive experience with volunteering. Numbers on participation and activities are available on the webpage, but only for the year 2011.

‘Volunteering Week’ has been organised since 2013 initially as regional campaign of the Volunteering Centre in Banská Bystrica with the aim to raise awareness of volunteering, involve more people in volunteering, create space for presentation of volunteering organisations, make the activities of volunteers more visible and raise the volunteering status. Progressively ‘Volunteering Week’ has become a national campaign with all the time rising number of participating individuals, companies, NGOs. In 2018 the Volunteering Week was being organised throughout the entire Slovakia. Between 16.-22. September 2018 there were 6129 people involved in the Volunteering Week, which is the highest number since the event full of good deeds is organised in Slovakia. More than 300 organisation prepared the volunteering-related programme and the volunteers worked disinterestedly 14 182,5 voluntary hours.

Activities for recognition of volunteering and appreciation of volunteers´ activities

Youth Council of Slovakia awards the prize **‘MOST’** every year in various categories. The award represents moral appreciation of young volunteers´ activities and supports their visibility.

‘Heart on Palm’ ([Srdce na dlani](#)) represents an initiative of the National Volunteering Centre (SAIA – SCTS). This initiative has been developed further and it has been incorporated into activities of regional volunteering centres in Prešov, Banská Bystrica and in some other regions of Slovakia. ([Brozmanová, et al., 2009](#)). The nation-wide award **‘The Volunteer of The Year’** ([Dobrovoľník roka](#)) is organised by the C.A.R.D.O. In 2018 in co-operation with SlovakAid and with financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and under auspices of Minister M. Lajčák.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

There is no policy framework for recognition of skills gained through volunteering.

Existing arrangements

There is no official mechanism for recognition of skills gained through volunteering.

The online tool [D-skills for employment](#) represents a pilot initiative and it is a result of the project VOLWEM – Volunteering as a Way to Employment . D- skills is the pilot project which can potentially lead (in the future) to national system of skills validation. Self-assessment is available to those volunteers whose organisation participate in D-skills project. There are strict quality standards for organisation where young people (but not only young people) can volunteer and not many organisations are ready to go under such scrutiny.

D-skills has two levels: certificate issued by Matej Bell University which validate experiences suitable for employment and confirmation document for acknowledgement of volunteer experience in more general way.

This tool enables volunteers to realise, name, record and prove competences gained or developed in volunteering. Their skills assessment is accompanied by photographs, videos or by other output related to volunteering. The questionnaire is verified by a coordinator from an organisation providing volunteering opportunities for the particular volunteer. The gained competences are recognised by the committee established at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. A certificate listing relevant competences is issued subsequently. The online tool D-skills for employment was made officially accessible in the beginning of 2015. More information is available in [Manual D-skills for employment](#).

Spectrum of opportunities for gaining experiences as volunteers are much wider in Slovakia and various documents are given to volunteers. Many young people use Youthpass as the evidence of volunteering experiences especially from European Voluntary Service.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The Strategy of Children and Youth Education for Volunteering was adopted in April 2018. Within the Strategy several measures related to the implementation of the Strategy in practice were accepted. The creation of *educational programme for teachers* at the different type of schools for education for volunteering, which was based on the service-learning strategy can be considered as the most significant.

In 2019 Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations is preparing the Methodology how to implement education for volunteering in schools. Platform also gained accreditation for the educational program Service-learning in education for volunteering and has started to offer the education for teachers.

In Autumn 2019 MESRS started with the preparation of new Strategy for Youth for the next time period.

In 2019 the Action plan for implementation of the Strategy for Civil Society Development was adopted. In the Action plan there are two tasks focused on volunteering. The first is focused on the legislation in volunteering and needed changes in this area and the second one is the preparation of the financial mechanisms, which will support long term volunteer programs.

The non-profit sector and civil society research, which started its implementation in 2018 under the auspices of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic Government for the Civil Society Development, mapping volunteering from the point of view of the organisations as well as ordinary citizens is also considered as significant. The research is carried out within the project called 'Better Public Policies through Better Knowledge of Civil Society' ([Kvalitnejšie verejné politiky prostredníctvom lepšieho poznania občianskej spoločnosti](#)) which is financed from the European Social Fund under the „Effective Public

Administration" programme. The results of the research are expected to contribute to changes in public policies in several areas including the area of volunteering.

Ongoing debates

Ongoing debates in the youth volunteering are connected with the preparation of the new Strategy for Youth, changes in legislation and preparation of the financial mechanism for the support of long-term volunteering. .

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In Slovakia, the overall unemployment rate is 6,42 % (September 2017), but the **unemployment rate of young people younger than 25 years of age is nearly 14%**. Yearly, almost 30 000 of young people leave the country in search for education and work abroad (3.1).

The **Youth Guarantees Implementation Plan** is the most complex strategy to strengthen youth employment in Slovakia. Close co-operation of employment, education and economy sectors is inevitable base for significant change in this field (3.2).

Projections of the labour market development are produced and relevant information is transferred to educational institutions under the management of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in the Slovak Republic (MLSAF) and the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (MESRS). There were some important tools introduced to lower insufficient correlation between education and the labour market needs and between education and the labour market demand (National Occupation Framework, National Qualifications System) (3.3).

The MLSAF provides counselling services via its Labour Offices and the MESRS is focusing on career guidance within the network of schools. Non-profit sector and professional employment organizations and are very active in career guidance and counselling, too (3.4).

System of **Vocational Education and Training** has gone through significant reconstruction since 2015 (3.5).

Development of entrepreneurial skills is covered by several projects in formal and non-formal education and learning (3.8). The Acceleration Programme of **National Business Centre** is one of the example how beginner entrepreneurs can get professional guidance and access to new technologies (3.9).

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

In a long term, unemployment in Slovakia has been high. The economic crises lasting from 2008 has affected primarily the industrial and transport sectors. 190 000 people lost their jobs in the field of industrial production (2008 – 2010) (Lubyova, Štefanik, 2015). Except of industry, majority of people are employed in education, state administration, trade and transport. There are several foreign investors (KIA, Volkswagen, etc.) in the field of automotive industry.

The adverse factors:

- dropping average age of citizens,
- major regional differences in employment,
- high long-term unemployment,
- the labour force offer higher than demand,
- instability of working places/posts.

Increase of unemployment is triggered by insufficient measures in migration policy and inclusion of disadvantaged groups: including young people aged 20 – 24, low skilled people, the Roma people and elderly aged 45 – 54.

According to [official data](#) there have been positive trends recorded on the Slovak labour market over recent years. The registered unemployment rate has decreased from 8.76 %

(December 2016) to 5.09 % (November 2018). This positive trend has influenced youth unemployment which has been gradually decreasing, too.

While there were 71 878 young people under the age of 29 years registered as unemployed in Slovakia in 2016, their number decreased to 41 656 young people under the age of 29 years registered as unemployed by November 2018.

The share of unemployed young people in the referred age group on the total number of unemployed persons reached 24.23 % by November 2018. According to [EUROSTAT](#), the share of unemployed young people aged 15 – 29 years in Slovakia in 2017 was 6.7 % (7.8 % in 2016).

According to EUROSTAT, the share of young people aged 15 – 24 years not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Slovakia in 2017 represented 12.1 %, still over the EU average (10.9 %). The unemployment rate of low-skilled young people at the level of 46.5 % is still very high when comparing to the EU average (26.5 % in 2016). In 2016, there were less than half of young people under the age of 25 years registered in the system of Youth Guarantee. Almost one in five (18.2 %) of young people was registered as unemployed for more than 12 months. Considering also the increasing number of early school leavers and shortages of skilled workforce, these are the worrying developments.

Yearly, almost 30 000 of young people leave the country in search for education and work abroad. The reasons behind are schools of higher quality and better readiness of graduates for the labour market, adequate placement in the labour market, more working opportunities and higher remuneration ([Kremský, 2015](#)).

Definitions and concepts

There is no specific terminology for field of employment in Slovak legislation or practice.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Employment, including youth employment, is of competence of the state administration and belongs to priorities of the Slovak Government ([Manifesto of the Slovak Republic 2016](#))

Fundamental strategic documents in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship:

- [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for 2014 – 2020](#) (hereafter referred to as “the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020”);
- [Youth Guarantee National Implementation Plan in the Slovak Republic](#) (hereafter referred to as “the Youth Guarantee SR”).
- [The Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020](#) includes eight strategic aims in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship:
 1. Orientation at the labour market: development of career counselling;
 2. Public employment services: support of mentoring and services for specific youth groups;
 3. Vocational education and training: development of the dual education system, apprenticeships and internships;
 4. Employers’ motivation: creation of working placements for specific groups;
 5. Entrepreneurship opportunities: information on entrepreneurship support tools;
 6. Entrepreneurship literacies: development of entrepreneurship skills;
 7. Mentoring for young entrepreneurs: guidance provided to entrepreneurs during their innovative entrepreneurship projects;

8. Entrepreneurship publicity: information on successes, benefits and opportunities;

The preparation of activities connected to the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 is coordinated by the MESRS, through its [Inter-ministerial working group](#).

There are five strategic aims of the Youth Guarantee SR:

1. Enhancing youth participation in the labour market;
2. Reducing youth unemployment;
3. Specific measures for NEETs (young people not in employment, education or training);
4. Eliminating inconsistency of young people's skills and the labour market needs;
5. Prevention of early school leaving and social exclusion of young people.

Although young people are one of the groups the most at risk of unemployment, no particular public institutions dealing with youth employment policymaking exist in Slovakia.

- The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereafter referred to as "the MLSAF");
- The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereafter referred to as "the MESRS");
- The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic (hereafter referred to as "the MoE");
- Regional and local governments.

Institutions active in the field of (youth) employment and entrepreneurship:

1. **Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family** (hereafter "Labour Offices" only) are organisations of the MLSAF, dealing with implementation of employment services, cooperating with non-governmental employment services while offering opportunities for employment or practical training. These Labour Offices are managed by the [Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family](#) (COLSAF).
2. The [Labour and Family Research Institute](#) (IVPR) has been established by the MLSAF in order to carry out research of social and family, labour market, employment, employees' relations and other policies. Research results have often been used during preparation of legislation, concepts, strategies and programmes of the MLSAF.
3. **Municipalities** implement certain initiatives of the MLSAF and provide certain employment services, while they also develop their own initiatives and programmes.
4. The [State Institute for Vocational Education and Training](#) (SIOV) has been established by the MESRS in order to prepare reforms, develop projects ensuring correlation of VET and the labour market and career counselling in line with the MLSAF counselling system, as well as to provide the seat for the project of practice firms at the secondary schools (SCCF).
5. The [National Institute for Lifelong-learning](#) has been established by the MESRS to monitor educational needs and produce relevant prognoses, to provide counselling services via its own network and to implement the national qualification framework.

There are more key players dealing with the theme of (youth) employment, such as representatives of employers' associations, trade unions, churches, chambers of commerce, universities and non-governmental organisations taking part in the work of the [Solidarity and Development Council](#).

Non-governmental non-profit organisations have been engaged with solutions for unemployment, but very few of them target young people, mainly in the field of career counselling and orientation at the labour market (anchor/see 3.4).

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Cooperation on the Youth Guarantee SR implementation is described in the [cooperation agreement](#) signed by the MLSAF, the MESRS, employers' organisations, trade unions and schools.

Cooperation in the field of youth entrepreneurship development between the MESRS and the MoE ([Ministry of Economy](#)) is aimed at the creation of alternative entrepreneurship forms, loans, mentoring programmes, etc. The ESF sources of the Operational programme Research and Innovation have been utilised.

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

Projections of the labour market development are produced and relevant information is transferred to educational institutions under the management of the MLSAF and the MESRS.

There are two information sources in Slovakia containing information on the labour market needs development:

1. MLSAF and the company [Trexima](#) developed in 2014 and 2015 the ESF national project 'Projections for development of the labour market in the Slovak Republic', providing information on the structure of vacancies and on projections for offer, skills and the labour market needs until 2020.
2. The State Institute for Vocational Education and Training, in cooperation with 7 employers' associations, developed a web portal <http://www.potrebyovp.sk/> containing an interactive map of placement of graduates on the labour market (enabling selection according to school or regions) and information on projected employers' needs until 2019.

Another information sources on prognoses of the labour market in Slovakia:

"National Occupation Framework" ([Národná sústava povolání](#)) was the ESF project implemented by the MLSAF in 2014 – 2015 with the aim to facilitate correlation between education and the labour market needs and between education and the labour market demand.

Non-governmental non-profit organisations:

In 2011, [INEKO](#) developed a research of employers in order to identify qualifications, which shall be demanded during next 5 years, as well as to identify reasons for the weak cooperation between schools and employers ([INEKO, 2011](#))

[Economic Policy Institute](#) and [NEXTERIA](#) initiated the web portal "[Nemaj na saláme](#)", identifying the most employable fields of university studies.

Skills development

Formal education

Secondary schools managing authorities (regional governments, ministries) are obliged to use information on the labour market and projections of the labour market needs ([Act 324/2015 amending Act on VET](#)).

No criterion of consistency with the labour market projections has been set up within the accreditation of fields of university studies (Criteria of Accreditation/ [Kritéria pre akreditáciu](#)).

The MLSAF, in cooperation with the MESRS, publishes [information on placement of the secondary schools graduates on the labour market](#), according to regions, secondary schools, and study fields and on regional level.

Self-governing regions elaborate regional strategies for the secondary education taking into account the labour market needs ([Act on VET, § 31](#)).

The MESRS decides on fields of study and publishes the list of such, which [fell over the scope of the labour market](#).

This list is created in cooperation with the MLSAF, professional organisations and trade unions, using the following criteria:

- The unemployment rate of graduates;
- The total number of students studying the respective field;
- The associated need of employees;
- Sectorial concepts of VET;
- Regional education strategies etc.

Non-formal and Informal Education

There is no systemic offer of non-formal learning opportunities; there are only rare initiatives supported by various financial sources, such as:

- The ESF national project '[KOMPRAX – Competencies for practice](#)' was implemented by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute during 2011 – 2015 and, within the youth work field, targeted 8 thousand young people. The project was aimed at the development of their soft skills, important for successful entry to the labour market (communication skills, problem solving, responsibility, team work, etc.)
- Non-profit organisation [EPIC](#) from Bratislava develops competencies of young people through various projects, such as '[Job Interview Simulator](#)' or '[Capacities of youth workers on the field of youth employment services](#)'.
- The civic association V.I.A.C from Trstená aimed at the development of competencies of young people according to their individual needs within the project '[Domestic voluntary service for young unemployed people](#)'.

Initiatives to disseminate information on the main skills needed

Dissemination of information on the labour market and on its actual needs is guaranteed by the MLSAF and the MESRS.

Labour Offices create self-service information zones for pupils and students enabling access to portals containing information on the labour market (opportunities to enter the labour market, performance requested by the employers, etc.) and organize information fairs.

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

The MLSAF provides counselling services via its Labour Offices and the MESRS within the network of schools. Professional organisations and non-profit sector are active in this field, too.

Career guidance provided in the sector of the MLSAF:

Information and Counselling Centre ([Informačno-poradenské stredisko](#)) helps to create CV and motivation letter using templates and guides;

- provides services connected to the choice of employment and employment changes;

- provides information on further study opportunities and on professions demanded by the labour market;
- helps with selection and adaptation of personnel;
- ensures communication with the future employer

Information Fairs (Burzy informácií) for pupils of the primary schools final year are organised in cooperation with education counsellors working at schools to promote craft professions and

- to provide information on schools, fields of study and demanded professions;
- to ensure consultations with employers;
- in cooperation with [EURES Slovakia](#) to provide information on studies, internships and voluntary service abroad.

Expert Counselling Services are delivered to an individual or to a group in order to identify personal qualities and abilities and to assess competencies. Moreover, the individual action plan, containing procedures and timetables of measures for successful placement on the labour market, is produced.

Career guidance provided in the framework of the MLSAF has been financed within the Youth Guarantee SR since 2013.

Career guidance provided in the sector of the MESRS:

Centres of pedagogical and psychological counselling and prevention operating in 78 districts and employing 800 experts ([Euroguidance, SAIAC, 2014](#)) provide counselling for primary school pupils and secondary school students. These centres also organise activities in cooperation with Labour Offices, such as special information days, job fairs, consultations with parents, etc.

There are 82 *Centres of specialised counselling and prevention* employing 518 experts and providing counselling to young people with disabilities attending special schools. There are 2 119 education counsellors working at schools.

Students of the final year of secondary schools may opt for a specialised schools subject 'An introduction to the labour market'. Counsellors from Labour Offices are invited as lecturers.

400 career counsellors working at secondary schools were trained within the national project [Development of Secondary Vocational Education](#).

Activities implemented by the ministries and the COLSAF: job fairs, contacts between employers and graduates ([JOB EXPO](#), [JOB FORUM](#) etc.)

Non-governmental non-profit organisations

There is no unique system of career guidance within the non-profit sector, but some activities and initiatives:

There are 9 *Youth Information Centres* in Slovakia providing information on employment opportunities in Slovakia and abroad and on entrepreneurship;

Organisation *Tandem, n.o* provides information to secondary schools students on choice of their employment and planning of their future;

Organisation *K.A.B.A. Slovensko* implements project 'Skills and competences assessment – new career guidance and counselling approach' ([Hodnotenie schopností a zručností – nový prístup v kariérovom poradenstve](#));

Organisation *TeCeMko* provides [group counselling](#) for primary schools pupils and secondary school students

Organisation *People in need* provides career guidance to young people living in remote locations (Project Together we overcome barriers/ [Spolu ideme cez bariéry!](#));

Civic association V.I.A.C. implements project '[Compass](#)' combining career guidance with mentoring and internship;

Organisation [Alliance for Youth](#) focuses on career guidance and counselling in the field of job interviews, etc.

Non-profit organisation [EPIC](#) implements projects aimed at [enhancing of youth employability](#), such as 'Simulator of job interviews', 'Employment services delivered by youth workers' and 'Youth Employment Week'.

Umbrella professional organisations:

- *Association of education counsellors ([Asociácia výchovných poradcov](#))* works in the field of professional orientation and career education of primary school pupils and secondary schools students. It gathers employees providing education, study and career counselling.
- *Association of university counsellors of Slovakia ([Asociácia vysokoškolských poradcov Slovenska](#))* works in the field of career guidance for university students.
- *Slovak union of supported employment ([Slovenská únia podporovaného zamestnávania](#))* works in the field of career guidance for disadvantaged groups, including youth. There are 31 agencies working within this union.
- *Association of lecturers and career counsellors ([Asociácia lektorov a kariérových poradcov](#))* works in the field of professional and social status of lecturers and career counsellors and ensures their professional development.

The main users of these services:

Labour Offices provide information and counselling services mainly to registered job-seekers directly at their premises. In 2015, counselling services were provided to 78 128 young people aged 20 – 24 (15.08 %) ([Annual report 2015 COLSAF](#)).

Career guidance and information services within the school system (also in cooperation with the MLSAF) are provided to pupils and students directly at primary and secondary schools and also by visiting various activities, such as information days, job fairs, etc. In 2015, counselling services were provided to 23 450 pupils of primary schools and to 28 985 students of secondary schools ([Annual report 2015 COLSAF](#)).

All the measures are set up uniformly for all the target groups, applying individual approach according to the profile.

Funding

Complex information on financing of individual measures is not available.

Quality assurance

Currently, mechanisms for monitoring of quality of provided services are missing – mainly the numbers of clients have been monitored so far. Quality is partly covered by studies and researches of SAV (Slovak Academy of Sciences) or other organisations, such as for example SGI ([SGI, 2013](#)).

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

There are no terms 'apprentice' and 'apprenticeship' used in Slovak legislation; it only names 'a student involved in vocational education and training'.

Regulatory framework

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Slovakia is a coherent part of the Slovak educational system supervised by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MESRS).

The 'professional experience' and 'internships' have been defined by the Act 61/2015 on Vocational Education and Training /[Zákon o odbornom vzdelávaní](#) (hereafter "the Act on VET" only).

The aim of the Act on VET [amendments as of 14/06/2018](#) is to make the access to VET system more efficient for employers (mostly for SMEs). Therefore:

- a new working post of the main instructor in practical instruction/traineeship has been introduced;
- the concept of an 'enterprise school' has been introduced, providing an employer with an opportunity to train workforce also for other employers;
- some powers of regional municipalities have been withdrawn, e.g. identification of number of school classes at secondary schools;
- the system of career guidance has been described;
- the deadline for signature of a traineeship contract has been prolonged;
- a workplace for practical instruction/traineeship may be established by several employers, mainly by small and medium enterprises;
- an upper limit for a pupil's hourly remuneration for his/her productive work has been withdrawn;
- the rules applying to salaries reduction for secondary vocational schools have been amended;
- the administrative procedures applying to verification of distinctiveness of employers to provide practical instruction have been simplified;
- the share of practical instruction at the other employer or in a workshop, involved in the dual education system, has been increased.

The document National Programme of Education Development /[Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania](#) (June 2018) provides directions to the Slovak educational system for the following ten years. These are measures covering better linkage of education with the labour market:

- support of internal traineeships for teachers and trainers in the field of VET;:
- carrying out of a research aimed at tracking of university graduates, based on the CEDEFOP experience on skills management;
- development and implementation of professionally oriented bachelor studies;
- introduction of new legislation supporting the dual VET in the tertiary education, as well as introduction of financial incentives for employers.

There are three VET models in Slovakia:

1. VET is held solely at school – both the theory and practice is delivered at school and at school workshops;
2. Schools and employers share their responsibilities for VET – the theoretical part is held at school and practical training is held partly at school and partly at employers' premises. The contract on practical training provision is signed between a school and an employer;
3. Education and training is provided both at school and employers' premises – an employer may sign traineeship contracts with students prior to start of their studies

at secondary vocational schools (before the 1st September), while the employer and the respective school have also signed the contract on providing dual VET. Unlike in German speaking countries, learners are regular secondary school students, not employees of this employer. A student usually starts his/her VET at the age of 15.

According to [CEDEFOP](#), in 2017/18 there were 2 611 of pupils, 490 employers, 85 secondary VET schools involved in the dual education system in Slovakia, thus offering 82 field of studies and 2 050 learning posts.

Out of the total number of involved pupils (2 611), there were 1 252 pupils of the first grade, 953 pupils of the second grade and 406 of pupils of the third grade.

In 2018/2019, 2 923 of local training places shall be created, while the total capacity for the dual VET within enterprises is 5 857. The total capacity of certified workplaces, standing ready for the system of further education in the future, is 10 161. There is a challenge concerning small and medium enterprises, as their involvement in this field has still been very low.

The VET programmes requiring/offering traineeships in terms of dual system of VET:

- Study programmes (4 – 5 years) including practical training, which are completed by school-leaving (maturity) exam and by awarding a certificate of traineeship/apprenticeship (ISCED 354);
- Study programmes (3 – 4 years) completed by awarding a certificate of traineeship/apprenticeship (ISCED 353).

Vocational education and training has been developed by the State Institute for Vocational Education/[Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania](#), providing methodology and expertise to the secondary schools (including in the theme of vocational training). This organisation performs also the tasks of secretariat to the Governmental Council for VET/[Rada vlády pre OVP](#)

In December 2017, the [MESRS officially announced acceptance of the Slovak Qualifications Framework \(SKQF\)](#), as well as of the National Qualifications System of the Slovak Republic. It also announced finalization of the implementation process of SKQF/EQF on documents proving education levels, in compliance with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

The National Qualifications Framework includes qualifications levels according to the criteria for acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, which are interconnected with qualifications levels according to the European Qualifications Framework.

The National Qualifications System /[Národný kvalifikačný rámec](#) represents a public register including partial and full description of qualifications accepted in the Slovak Republic and required for particular professional activities relevant for a particular profession in the form of qualifications standards and evaluation criteria.

Social security coverage

Traineeship contracts must be signed between employers and secondary schools pupils in order to provide financial remuneration to pupils for their work performed within a traineeship. There are no compulsory payments or other social insurance obligations either for employers or for pupils (secondary school) and students (university) resulting from traineeships, as pupils and students do not become employees on the basis of traineeship contracts.

The system of social security is included in the Act on VET, which includes provisions concerning two types of contracts:

- Traineeship contract - template ([Učebná zmluva -VZOR](#)) between an employer and a student elaborates on the rights and responsibilities of both contract parties during the

process of the students' preparation for the occupation, content of practical training and professional competencies acquired by the student, as well as on financial and material conditions provided to the student, etc.

- Contract on dual VET - template ([Zmluva - VZOR](#)) between an employer and a secondary vocational school specifies the numbers of students and professional employees involved in education and training processes by the both contract parties, etc.

The practical training as a whole is of the employers' responsibility, which also covers all the related costs.

Guidelines on cooperation among social partners in the design

The fundamental framework of coordination and cooperation among the social partners in VET is defined by the Act on VET (§28), stating that 8 ministries (including the MESRS, MLSAF, the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, etc.) share this responsibility at the national level and the regional government offices are responsible at the regional level. Professional organisations and trade union associations are included in the coordination and cooperation framework. Inclusion of social partners in VET has been improved primarily at the planning stage, in curricula creation and in awarding of qualifications.

Participation of companies in VET is possible via the following structures:

- The Governmental Council for VET ([Rada vlády pre odborné vzdelávanie a prípravu](#)) – the supreme coordination body, delivering opinions on the Plan of labour market needs in the field of VET, elaborates the publicity plan and recommends new fields of studies to the MESRS;
- Regional Councils for VET (in all 8 regions of Slovakia), which are responsible for elaboration of regional development strategies;
- Sector Councils, which are responsible for setting of professional/occupational and qualification standards and for delivering expert opinions to the policymakers;
- Professional organisations, such as chambers and employers' associations, which have been identified as partners of educational institutions in relevant fields of studies by legislation (so called 'organisation competent in the field of VET');
- The Employers' Council for the Dual Education System/ [Rada zamestnávateľov pre systém duálneho vzdelávania na koordináciu aktivít v „duálnom“ vzdelávaní](#), which is responsible for coordinated approach in verifying employers' competence to deliver practical training and in documenting of awarded certificates, as well as for participation in elaboration of master plans, etc.

The Act on VET Amendment strengthened involvement of social partners, mainly in planning, curriculum development and the award of qualifications.

In the framework of the National Programme of Education Development implementation plan, there is a priority to support exercise of professional organisations competence concerning secondary schools fields of studies.

The link with the National Youth Guarantee

The National Youth Guarantee became a significant support tool in VET development, as it not only supported measures in the field of employment, but also accumulated financial sources and made it available for accelerated solutions in the field of VET.

There were [some national projects](#) supported within the operational programme Human Resources of the European Social Fund, offering young people aged 29 and under a professional experience or a training period:

The national project '[Practice to Employment](#)' offers a young person an opportunity to acquire or deepen his/her professional skills, knowledge and practical experience by mentoring and practical training provided by an employer, which created a half-time

working place for at least 9 months. An employer is entitled for a financial contribution if a working place/post has been created and a mentor provided, all with the aim to deepen skills, the knowledge and practical experience of a young person. One mentor may work maximum with 3 young people during a period from 3 to 6 months.

The national project 'Education of Young Job-seekers' ([Vzdelávanie mladých uchádzačov o zamestnanie](#)) strives to create opportunities for re-skilling (within the instrument REPAS+) and for the support of key competencies (within the instrument KOMPAS+). A job-seeker recording a problem in accessing labour market may choose type of training, as well as a training provider. The Labour Office shall pay the particular training fee and a financial contribution to travel and subsistence costs of a job-seeker. Implementation of the project started in July 2017.

The national project 'Graduate practice starts a career' ([Absolventská prax štartuje zamestnanie](#)) is aimed at creating opportunities for practical training and employment for unemployed young people younger than 29 (according to Art 51 of the Act on Employment Services) . The practice must last from 3 to 6 months and the working place/post must be kept for at least 9 months. 5 244 job-seekers joined and 5 543 project participants terminated their graduate practice in 2017.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

The ESF national project 'Dual Education and Enhancement of Quality and Attractiveness of VET' ([Duálne vzdelávanie a zvýšenie atraktivity a kvality OVP](#)) is implemented by the State Institute for VET (ŠIOV).

The project promotion activities are aimed at the group of:

- students, with the aim to increase their interest in life-long learning (further LLL);
- employers (mainly SME), with the aim to enhance their participation in the dual education system (increased offer of traineeships).

For the target group of parents, 3 promotion films on 10 particular professions offered by employers within the LLL as traineeships have been produced within the project and broadcasted on TV.

The LLL benefits have been promoted through internet and social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., too.

Other important aspects of promotion are various recruitment means of employers trying to gain the interest of students, such as the open door days, excursions for students, illustrations of practice of a profession, presentation of an employer at parents' association meetings, etc.

The State Institute for VET developed the new portal '[mojdual.sk](#)' devoted to pupils of 7th and 8th grades of primary schools in order to timely influence their choice of secondary studies.

[The newsletters](#) providing up-to-date information have been regularly produced within the national project implementation.

[European Vocational Skills Week took place in Slovakia](#) from September to December 2019, in compliance with the European Commission initiative of 2016. It includes events at local, regional, national and European level.

The same ministry performs duties of the National Authority for the EU Erasmus+ Programme, which represents another means of [promotion of internships and apprenticeships](#).

A significant role in promoting VET and dual education system played the ESF national project 'Development of secondary vocational education' (2013 -2015 [Rozvoj stredného odborného vzdelávania](#)) which made it possible to establish 21 practical centres of VET

with state-of-the-art equipment and to develop a [portal monitoring the labour market needs in relation to VET](#).

Recognition of learning outcomes

The dual education system in formal education includes study programmes completed by awarding a

- Certificate of traineeship/apprenticeship and followed by a school-leaving (maturity) certificate – ISCED 354;
- Certificate of traineeship/apprenticeship – ISCED 353.

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training ([ECVET](#)) has not been systematically implemented in Slovakia yet; neither it has been included in the state policy. It has only been applied within mobility projects (apprenticeships, traineeships) of the [Erasmus+ Programme](#). This helps organisations of VET to build-up strategic partnerships with other organisations and companies, in order to achieve close integration of VET and the labour market.

Funding

In 2018, there was a decision taken to allocate an amount of 556 724 424 € to implement the National Programme of Education Development, out of which 987 062 € was allocated to professional organisations in order to support the dual education system.

The ESF Operational Programme Human Resources stands as the important source of financing and provides more than 33 million € in order to implement the national project 'Dual Education and Enhancement of Quality and Attractiveness of VET' ([Duálne vzdelávanie a zvýšenie atraktivity a kvality OVP](#)). The project is implemented from January 2016 till October 2020.

Financial incentives provided on the basis of the Act on VET:

- a financial contribution of 1000 € to guarantee traineeship/practical training is particularly appealing for smaller employers;
- flat-rate expenditures deductible from the tax base are 3 200 € or 6 400 € per pupil/student, according to the number of hours of practical training provided;
- tax expenditures are possible beyond financial norms for employers and enterprise schools providing practical training in the framework of VET;
- taxable income can be deducted by tax expenditures, except expenditures on long-term assets, of 75 % or 150 %, according to the number of hours of practical training provided.

Quality assurance

The quality of traineeships is secured by the contracts, which include [provisions on specific conditions](#) to be fulfilled by employers.

The MESRS has elaborated the Report on Quality Implementation in VET, following the recommendation on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET)/[Správa o zavádzaní kvality v odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave v nadväznosti na odporúčanie Európskeho referenčného rámca pre zabezpečovanie kvality v oblasti odborného vzdelávania a prípravy EQAVET 2015](#) . Indicators provided in this report do not assess the quality of traineeships.

The State Education Inspectorate elaborates the yearly [Report on Education Status](#), which includes also audit findings concerning traineeships guaranteed by the contract partners of schools.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

There are two long-term measures available to young people in Slovakia, developed under the management of the MLSAF:

- 'Graduate practice' (Absolventská prax) is from 3 to 6 months long practice at an employer aiming at deepening of expertise and gaining of practical experience in a respective field. Such practice is targeted at young people up to 26, graduated not earlier than two years ago ([Act on Employment Services, § 51](#))
- 'Support of a first working place/post' (Príspevok na podporu vytvorenia pracovného miesta v prvom pravidelne platenom zamestnaní) means a financial contribution paid to an employer, who is supposed to create a working place/post for a young person (aged less than 26 and unemployed at least for 3 months or younger than 28 and unemployed for at least 6 months) and maintain it for a period from 6 to 12 months. ([Act on Employment Services, § 51 a](#)).

Three temporary measures have been implemented and financed in the framework of the Operational Programme Human Resources (Priority Axis 2: Youth Employment Initiative):

1. Within the national project 'Practice to Employment' ([NP Praxou k zamestnaniu](#)), mentoring and practical training is delivered to young people younger than 29 for a period at least 9 months. An employer is entitled for a financial contribution if a working place/post has been created and a mentor provided, all with the aim to deepen skills, the knowledge and practical experience of a young person. One mentor may work maximum with 3 young people during a period from 3 to 6 months.
2. The national project 'Graduate practice starts a career' ([Absolventská prax štartuje zamestnanie](#)) is aimed at creating opportunities for practical training and employment of long-term unemployed young people younger than 29. The practice must last from 3 to 6 months and the working place/post must be kept for at least 9 months.
3. Self-employment and entrepreneurship of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) younger than 29 is supported in the framework of the national project named 'Successful on the labour market' ([Úspešne na trhu práce](#)).

Several financial contributions are provided to unemployed (including young) people, in order to support work travel, work mobility (to cover the lodging costs) and self-employment.

There are also several services and support measures available also to young people, such as

- information and counselling on occupational choices;
- expert guidance, including creation of individual action plans;
- education and training of employees – new expert knowledge, skills and abilities for the labour market

Within the projects implemented in the framework of the Youth Guarantee SR in the period 2012 – 2015, there were 12 028 working places/posts created for young people younger than 29. 80 % of participants stayed employed even after termination of national projects ([COLSAF, 2016](#)).

The financial contribution provided to support first working places/posts, tested within the Youth Guarantee SR projects, has been included among provisions of §51a of the Act on Social Services.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

Currently, there are no flexicurity measures aimed specifically at young people implemented in Slovakia.

Still, some measures available also to youth – such as establishment of the 'Working time account' by the [Slovak Labour Code](#) or provision of financial contribution to all parents with no regard to their employment – have been reflected by the Slovak legislation already (Trexima, 2016). Similarly, the reform of VET has been launched. But the reform of school system has not been sorted yet and the system of life-long-learning, as well as active measures of the labour market still do not mean an essential change to young unemployed people

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Currently, there are no measures focusing on reconciliation of private and working life specifically for young people implemented in Slovakia.

Young people, equally to the other employees, are entitled to make use of shorter working hours, shared working place or home office/teleworking, which are covered by the provisions of the Slovak Labour Code.

In 2015, the national project 'Family and work' ([Rodina a práca](#)) was tested, focusing on support of the use of flexible forms of work by mothers with children younger than 10 years. The project was also aimed at several support activities, such as establishment of nurseries and children corners directly at firms, provision of financial contributions to cover cost of nannies, consultation and counselling services for employers in the field of reconciliation of private and working life of their employees – mothers. The MLSAF has announced continuation of this project during the new programming period 2014 – 2020.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Measures promoting youth employment financed by the sources of the state budget in 2015

National programmes focused on the development of active policies of the labour market and on enhancement of youth employability received funding amounting to 40 174 558 € ([COLSAF, Annual report 205, p 106, Table E](#)). Expenditures spent on two permanent measures focused on young people – 'graduate practice' and 'support of the first working place/post' – amounted to 21.6 % from the total. In 2015, the measure 'graduate practice' was used by 7 398 young people and they received the total financial contributions of 4 480 173.91 €. In 2015, the overall financial contribution supporting creation of the first working places/posts amounted to 4 223 827.43 € and it was spent in favour of 3 315 young people (2 841 younger than 25; 474 younger than 29) ([COLSAF, Annual report 205, p 13](#)).

Measures promoting youth employment financed by the sources of the ESF

There are three national project supported within the Priority Axis 2: Youth Employment Initiative of the Operational programme Human Resources, aimed at mentoring, professional practice, creation of a working place/post and support of self-employment of young unemployed people.

The total financial allocation within the Priority Axis 2 amounts to 215 910 858 €, out of which

- 72 175 259 € is allocated within the Youth Employment Initiative/ the Youth Guarantee SR;
- 122 175 259 € is allocated within the ESF;
- 21 560 340 € is allocated from sources of the state budget ([MLSAF, 2016](#)).

Quality assurance

The evaluation results of measures focused on employment solution for (not only young) people are published in Yearly Reports produced by the COLSAF and in reports of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Only the following results have been monitored, so far:

- the number of participants and expenditures spent;
- the age of participants;
- the sex of participants;
- the highest completed level of education;
- the terms of unemployment before inclusion of a participant to the respective measure;
- if relevant – the number of working places/posts created

In case of projects supported by the ESF it has also been monitored, whether graduates were still included on the labour market after the respective project end.

The following has still been missing in Slovakia:

- A systemic tool for feedback from young people participating on the projects;
- An assessment of not only efficiency and effectiveness, but also of the policies design and quality of their implementation.
- An opportunity to change a measure or terminate its financing upon quality assessment results on the level of outputs.

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

Within the support of cross-border entrepreneurship the commencing Slovak entrepreneurs can use the following state programmes, schemes and supporting institutions, which are defrayable (refundable) from the public sources.

Cross-border cooperation programmes

Cross-border cooperation programmes ([Programy cezhraničnej spolupráce](#)) are focused on intensifying of cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the surrounding neighbouring EU-countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria). Within the particular programmes they generally tackle **the area of transfer of innovations** or labour-force (work-force) mobility. Entrepreneurs are welcome to get involved in the current calls within relevant areas.

The Visegrad fund aims to promote closer cooperation between the V4 countries through joint cultural, scientific and educational projects, youth exchanges, cross-border cooperation and tourism promotion.

Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (Slovenská agentúra pre rozvoj investícií a obchodu – [SARIO](#))

The agency aims to contribute to the increase of influx of foreign investors and simultaneously support Slovak companies and firms that are oriented to the global world market. Entrepreneurs can use mainly **following services**:

- **intermediation of specific supply** of Slovak products towards international markets,

- **intermediation of foreign demands** in the domestic entrepreneurial environment (by means of the service aimed at searching of the foreign partners for Slovak companies and firms – [Business Partner Search Profile](#)).
- ensuring of the presentation for Slovak companies and firms at both - Slovak and foreign trade-fairs and exhibitions - with a view to actively promote Slovak entrepreneurial environment (for instance by organising of several events within [SARIO Business LINK](#), which take place during significant Slovak trade-fairs),
- organising and accompanying of entrepreneurial missions abroad and in the Slovak Republic,
- provision of the **consulting and educational service** [Export Slovensko](#) focused on support of Slovak products export (for instance it gathers complex information on the state support of export in the Slovak Republic including information on projects, news and events from twelve state institutions supporting export),
- creation of attractive territorial and sector-oriented projects aimed at fostering of economic cooperation and development of co-operative activities,
- exchange of information and co-operation with partner foreign organisations,
- **concentration of information on foreign markets**, international tenders and other attractive events abroad.

Slovak Business Agency (SBA)

- In the field of cross-border cooperation the SBA provides advisory services, which can be used by those interested in entrepreneurship abroad, and perhaps even by the subjects already operating at the foreign market. Some of the questions, which have already been solved successfully by entrepreneurs, are publicised on this organisation's web-site, so they are accessible to all visitors. SBA is concurrently a part of the [European Enterprise Network](#), within which it ensures access to databases for entrepreneurs:
- **Database for partnership offers** (for search of innovative technologies and partners for cooperation across the entire Europe – it contains more than 15 000 trade and technological profiles from more than 50 countries).
- In addition to the activities of the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) (EEN) SBA also carries out pilot projects to open the themes of the initiative **Small Business Act** some of which are aimed at promotion of internationalization of SMEs.

European Exchange Programme for Entrepreneurs

It is a [European cross-border exchange programme for entrepreneurs](#) providing commencing entrepreneurs with an opportunity to learn something from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other participating countries. The exchange of experience takes place during **the stay of a commencing entrepreneur in the experienced entrepreneur's place**, where they help the commencing entrepreneur acquire skills needed for running a small firm/business. The stay is partly co-financed from the EU-sources.

The European Solidarity Corps programme ([Európsky zbor solidarity](#)) administered by IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute, creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work on projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe (including activities in the field of entrepreneurship).

The National Scholarship programme of the Slovak Republic is funded by [Slovak Academic Information Agency](#). The program supports study/research/teaching/artistic mobility of international students, PhD students, university teachers, researchers and artists at higher education institutions and research organisations. It supports two-way mobility - international scholarship holders to Slovakia, as well as Slovak scholarship holders abroad.

Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry SCCI (Slovenská obchodná a priemyselná komora - [SOPK](#))

SCCI implements a broad portfolio of activities, within which it focuses also on **advisory and consulting services** for entrepreneurs, who operate or are interested to operate at the foreign market. They provide mostly **legal counselling** in the field of support and protection of business/enterprises and **counselling in international commerce**, customs and technical regulations. Services provided by SCCI are available also through a network of regional chambers (SCCI). In conclusion, it should be said that the support within the SCCI is focused rather on larger companies.

Legal framework

In Slovakia, there is no specific legislation that regulates either the stay of foreign young workers, apprentices, interns and young entrepreneurs or the departure of Slovak young workers, apprentices, interns and young entrepreneurs abroad (specific insurance, levies, work permit, taxes...).

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy Framework

In the Slovak Republic there is no national strategy directly targeted at entrepreneurial skills development. Nevertheless the theme related to the increase of entrepreneurial literacy is part of the [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2014 – 2020](#).

Formal learning

[Junior Achievement Slovensko](#) is an organisation that operates in the field of formal education on the Slovak Republics territory. It implements the following programmes called Applied Economy ([Aplikovaná ekonomika](#)) and Entrepreneurship in the tourist industry ([Podnikanie v cestovnom ruchu](#)), within which students can test their first actual entrepreneurship in a students' firm. At the time being there are nearly 800 schools and more than 22 000 students engaged in these programmes.

The vocational subject "Economic exercises/practice at a training firm" is focused on the increase of entrepreneurial skills and is coordinated by Slovak Centre for Training Firms (SCCF – [Slovenské centrum cvičných firiem](#)). This **centre is a unit of the State Institute for Vocational Education** ([Štátny inštitútu odborného vzdelávania](#)). The **training firm** operates as a real firm – it has basic departments of an ordinary actual enterprise. It provides a **simulation of activities of departments in an actual firm**, whereas students are allowed to make a mistake, which does not have such economic impact as it would have in an actual firm, but its function is solely educational.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic imposes an obligation on schools to incorporate themes of the National Standard of Financial Literacy ([Národný štandard finančnej gramotnosti](#)) into their school educational curricula. Schools can implement a project called More than money ([Viac ako peniaze](#)) aimed at **financial literacy support**, alternatively other projects. A handbook named Financial literacy 1 ([Finančná gramotnosť 1](#)) is available and is assigned for first-graders, second-graders, third-graders and fourth-graders at primary schools.

Another successful educational programme is called I think economically ([Myslím ekonomicky](#)), within which students by means of discussions, analyses and interpretation of articles/texts demonstrate and reciprocally explain **basic economic definitions, notions and principles**.

Non-formal and informal learning

[Košice IT Valley](#) plays an important role in the development of the IT industry in the Košice. The institution is an initiative of educational institutions, government and leading

IT companies. The main activities: motivation of children and youth to study and later to work in Information Technologies and Robotics; improving the quality of IT training programs offered by universities, high and elementary schools and IT businesses, etc.

Education for entrepreneurs in diverse forms is offered also by incubators and **co-working spaces** (financed mostly by private donors) within their accompanying events (lectures, seminars, webinars and so forth); as example we can mention co-workings such as [Connect Co-working](#), [RubixLab](#) in Bratislava, [Banka Žilina](#) in Žilina, [Eastcubator](#) and Creative Centre Halmiho Dvor ("Halmiho Dvor" = Slovak for Halmi Yard) in Košice. From among incubators, the University technological incubator ([Univerzitný technologický inkubátor](#)) in Bratislava can be presented as an examples.

EPIC non-profit organization whose donors are EU funds has been committed to promote social entrepreneurship. Within their projects, they prepared a page with studying materials on **social entrepreneurship**.

Another organisation that works in the field of non-formal education is Nexteria, mostly by means of its 3-year **developing educational programme Leadership Academy**, which consists of diverse courses, discussions, projects and networking events. This programme is focused not only on entrepreneurship; however its aim is development of skills, which school-leavers use also in starting their own enterprise/business.

Summation of useful information for commencing entrepreneurs is also provided by [Information youth centre](#), which on its portal sums up basic entry information on entrepreneurship.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

Ensuring of preparation of teachers, who teach subjects aimed at entrepreneurship education is carried out mainly by the non-profit organisation [Junior Achievement Slovensko](#). It offers to pedagogues/educationists a possibility to get involved in the programmes, which make the educational process playful, interesting and attractive and will bring new opportunities to students as well as to pedagogues/educationists. The programmes are designed for [primary and secondary schools](#). Except for these programmes they offer also a **teaching aid – creative cards**. Those form a compact set of didactic methods for problem-solving within teamwork.

Simultaneously the Junior Achievement Slovakia intermediates for teachers of primary and secondary schools a possibility of free access to [the biggest European database of tools and methods](#) aimed at support of entrepreneurship education.

Another subject in the field of support of educationists/teachers is the [Slovak Centre of Training Firms](#), which in the framework of its assignments implements also continuous education of teachers in training firms.

In 2007 -2008 the [Young Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia](#) initiated a project called [Quality at school, success in life](#). The project's output is [a six-textbook set](#) designed for teachers at secondary schools, which serve in pedagogical process for teaching of entrepreneurship-oriented subjects.

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

At present the [National Business Centre](#) (Národné podnikateľské centrum) founded by the [Slovak Business Agency](#) has [several programs](#) focused on initial stages of entrepreneurship:

- **The Acceleration Program** is designed for future entrepreneur who has business ideas with the aim to set up own business. The program offers individual personal or online consultation, workshops and co-working centre, through which is possible to develop a business or meet new business partners.

- **The Incubation Program** encompasses, except for the usage of offices within the incubator, also a wide scope of services resting in individual coaching, professional consultations and networking.
- **The Growth Program** offers individual consultancy and wide a range of group events focused on growing companies on the local and international market.
- **The Internship program** includes several options of travelling abroad and gaining knowledge on a global level: internship opportunities in a foreign business incubator, professional institution, technology park or attending events focused on start-up community.
- **The Creative Point** is a creative space providing new technologies suitable for prototyping - such as 3D printers, laser, CNC milling machines, scanners and plotters to develop skills and creative ideas. The aim is to support entrepreneurs by making attractive free technical and technological services available by accessing to these machines.

An initiative **Startup Sharks** is based on The Scheme for Support of Start-ups (scheme of support de minimis) and supports innovative and technological start-ups.

The program consists of 3 parts:

- The Start-up Pool within which entrepreneurs could visit international start-ups events.
- The Start-up Sea offers counselling service or training courses aimed at diverse entrepreneurship - related themes.
- The Start-up Ocean proposes an internship programme within the National Business Centre.

EIT RawMaterials provides funding and entrepreneurship coaching to early stage start-ups with a focus on idea-to-market/early-stage start-ups with relevance for the partners.

The activities are composed:

- Start-up and SME Booster – supports promising Start-ups and SMEs at regional Innovation Hubs (Co-Location Centres) to validate their business models and connects with the networks of partners.
- RawMaterials Accelerator – RM Accelerator activities improve the success rate of market entry of scalable start-ups, focusing on addressing market risk. The Accelerator also includes coaching and instructions on a pan-European level to partners of the EIT RawMaterials. RM Accelerator supports scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs in developing their concepts for raw materials innovations into market-ready products and services.

Business and Innovation Centers (BICs) are institutions for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. It is an initiative of European Commission, the private and public sectors to promote economic development and innovation potential in the European region through the following offices: BIC Banská Bystrica, BIC Bratislava, BIC Prievidza, BIC Spišská Nová Ves and BIC Košice operate in Slovakia. For example, BIC Bratislava offers services such as business consulting, financing, technology transfer, regional development, investment consulting, advice on EU programs and networking.

The main aim of the **The Technology Transfer Centre** (Národné centrum transferu technológií) at **The Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information** (Centrum vedecko-technických informácií) is the complex support in the technology transfer of institutions like universities, institutes at the Slovak Academy of Sciences and other public research institutions.

SIEA Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (**Slovenská inovačná a energetická agentúra**) through the project **inovujeme.sk** ("we innovate") created regional consultation centres aimed at providing advisory services to target groups, especially business entities, which are specialized on innovation and technology.

Organisations active in the field of development of entrepreneurship competences in non-formal field also operate within enhancing of the access of beginners entrepreneurs to information. Several of their educational activities overlap within themselves with the area of entrepreneurial education and counselling. Access to information is similarly interlinked to the financial area, since the capital-providers (mostly of the risk capital) provide together with the investment also mentoring, counselling, their know-how or contacts (it is so-called "smart money").

Access to capital

Start-ups can use a relatively wide scope of financial sources either from the **risk capital** (it is a situation, in which the capital-provider becomes one of the co-owners of the enterprise), **debt financing** (credits, microloans) or **bank guarantees**.

In the area of **risk capital** they can acquire the needed capital for their start from several private or public sources. The National Holding Fund /NHF/ ([Národný holdingový fond](#)), whose founder is the Slovak Business Agency, dominates among the public sources. This company provided financial sources to more than 140 firms in a total amount of 10 million Euros. Under the National Holding Fund there are several funds, from among which it is the Fund for Innovations and Technologies /FIT/ ([Fond inovácií a technológií](#)) that focuses itself on start-ups. This fund invests from 20 000 to 1 500 000 Euros and it reaches its investment horizon between 4 – 6 years. It specialises itself mainly in the **area of environment, sustainable energy sources, industrial innovations, e-commerce, information technologies, telecommunications and software solutions**.

Except for the aforesaid fund, there are funds in Slovakia, which came into existence within the JEREMIE initiative (Common European Sources for Small and Middle Enterprises). It is a common initiative of the European Commission (Directorate General "Regio") and the European investment fund (EIF) aiming to enhance the access of small and middle enterprises to the external financing. Funds, which originated from the JEREMIE-sources, are administered by two administrators:

- [Neology Ventures](#) - they offer the initial capital from 50 000 to 200 000 Euros and the starting current capital from 300 000 to 1 500 000 Euros for enterprises operating mostly **in the area of information and communication technologies, power engineering and medical diagnostics**.

- [Limerock](#) - maximal investment amount in one company reaches 2 750 000 Euros and the investment horizon varies from 4 to 6 years.

Another group of sources form private funds and then finances from **entrepreneurship angels**. Several entrepreneurship angels are associated in the [Club of business angels](#) ([Klub podnikateľských anjelov](#)), founded by the [Young Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia](#) ([Združenie mladých podnikateľov Slovenska](#)), [SLOVCA](#) ([Slovak Venture Capital and Private Equity Association](#)) and [Slovak Business Agency](#).

Credit financing for starting enterprises is offered by the Slovak Guarantee and Development Bank/[Slovenská záručná a rozvojová banka](#) (credits for young entrepreneurs, female entrepreneurs, young farmers etc.). As for microloans the Start-ups have the [Microloans Programme](#) ([Mikropôžičkový program](#)) available within the Slovak Business Agency. The minimum loan is 2 500 Euro and the maximum is 50 000 Euro. The payment should be paid from 6 months to 4 years.

As for providing of bank guarantees the entrepreneurs are allowed to use mainly the service provided by the Slovak Guarantee and Development Bank ([Slovenská záručná a rozvojová banka](#)). Bank guarantees are provided also for the reason of fostering formation, development and stabilisation of the Small and Middle Enterprises in the Slovak Republic, or of the sustainable energy sources.

The [European Investment Fund](#) (EIF) operates within the scope of financing for beginners entrepreneurs, which falls under the [Slovak Guarantee and Development Fund](#) ([Slovenský záručný a rozvojový fond](#)), dealing with provision of bank guarantees and risk capital.

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Special events and activities

Secondary school students involved in the subject Applied Economy (Aplikovaná ekonómia), have a possibility to present their projects every year at the national fair of students' companies called **JA Fair of Entrepreneurship Talents (JA Veľtrh podnikateľských talentov)**.

EIT Jumpstarter aims at supporting and developing idea holders and research teams turning ideas into business models. The Jumpstarter can assist idea holders that are just getting their ideas off the ground. The competition is covered by EIT RawMaterials, initiated and funded by the EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology) a body of the European Union.

Under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Information is on a yearly basis organized the competition for **the Young Innovative Entrepreneur (Mladý inovatívny podnikateľ roka)**, which is part of the worldwide Creative Young Entrepreneur Award.

TECH INNO DAY is organized by University Technology Incubator of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. It is an event where clever students could present their startups ideas. There is also possibility to discuss and get knowledge from experienced mentors and entrepreneurs.

Innovative Idea Competition (Súťaž inovatívnych nápadov) offers the possibility to young innovators join competition of innovative ideas, projects and business solutions. The event is organised by Incubator **Technical University of Košice (TUKE)** which is part of the University Science Park **TECHNICOM** ecosystem.

Networks and partnerships

Several activities for commencing entrepreneurs are provided by the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia (**Združenie mladých podnikateľov Slovenska**). It orientates its activity to exchange of experience, mentoring, networking of young entrepreneurs, financial aid during the starting entrepreneurship stages, presentation of successful, ethic, and exemplary entrepreneurs as well as entrepreneurship-practice examples, identification and removal of barriers within young people's entrepreneurship.

Creating of entrepreneurship network and organising of networking events or partnerships fall within the scope of activities of several regional **incubators and co-working spaces** e.g. **The University Technology Incubator** at Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava or **The Start-up centre** at Technical University in Košice.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

It is expected that several open calls will be published in 2017 for project proposals aimed at enhancement of youth employment, such as programmes to facilitate transition from school to the labour market, second-chance schools, etc. (MLSAF)

In 2017, the national project 'Family and work' shall continue in a certain form in order to facilitate reconciliation of working and private life of mothers/fathers. (MLSAF)

There are on-going discussions on formal creation of the National enterprise centre, which should focus on the development of an incubator programme for young entrepreneurs and on the creation of regional branches.

A new form of so called 'simple company on shares' shall be legal from 2017 on. It is meant as support measure for start-ups, as it shall only request investment of 1 € to its capital.

The national project 'RESTART for young job seekers' is planned for 2017, which shall include 30 hours of individual consultations for a young job seeker (younger than 29) and financial contributions (126.14 € during first six months of employment and 63.07 € during next six months of employment) awarded to those active young people, finding themselves a job.

Another national project shall be aimed at education of young job seekers and the one named 'Chance for youth employment' shall provide financial contributions to employers creating working places/posts for long-term unemployed young people.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

Young people from **Roma communities, people with disabilities, young grown-ups leaving the orphanages, homeless people and asylum seekers** are the most endangered groups by social exclusion in Slovakia (4.1). Measures in the field of social inclusion are being taken by public and non-public institutions (4.2).

There is **no single inclusion strategy for the youth group**. But there are **several inclusion programmes** where children and youth are important target groups e.g. in national ESF for the development of inclusive education, deinstitutionalization of orphanages, development of community centers, field social work and others (4.4).

Non-public institutions and non-governmental organizations are particularly active in the **supporting excluded groups and in fighting radicalization and extremism** (4.5).

There is a number of **information sources** and systems where **consultations and advice** can be obtained on topics such as housing, health, social assistance, also on specific groups such as people with disabilities or ethnic minorities (4.6).

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

In the Slovak Republic, **Roma young people** are the most at risk of social exclusion, facing multiple disadvantages: low level education achievements, hidden/open segregation in education, high unemployment rates, societal discrimination, inherited poverty, etc.

Young grown-ups leaving the orphanages, re-educational institutions, foster families may face barriers mostly when it comes to housing and employment.

Disabled youths (including young people with visual and hearing impairments) have been considerably disadvantaged while ensuring equitable access to education, employment, own housing, etc.

Recently, **young asylum seekers and young homeless people** have been listed among the groups of young people the most at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Definitions and concepts

Many diverse descriptions of social inclusion have been provided by political and scientific papers published in Slovakia.

A considerable attention has been paid to definition of social exclusion, being a prerequisite for social inclusion. **Social exclusion** is characterised as the inability to participate in social, economic, political and cultural life, due to the following factors: low income, poor health, inadequate education, limited contact with members of the majority population and discrimination ([World Bank et al. 2002](#))

Youth Report 2014 ([Správa o mládeži 2014](#)) provides definition of **social inclusion of young people**: it is a process ensuring that socially excluded persons or those at risk of social exclusion have been offered opportunities and possibilities helping them to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life of a society and live their everyday lives in a way, which is considered a routine. With regard to youth, this process may be understood also as a complex system of interventions leading to creation of opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities.

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

In the field of social inclusion, the Slovak Republic fully respects obligations adopted at the level of the European Union, United Nations Organisation and UNESCO. The theme of social inclusion has been developed at the governmental level and **at the level of state** and some competencies have been transferred to local or regional governments e.g. establishing of social care homes for children. (Act on the the Organisation of the Government Activities and on the Organisation of Central State Administration/ [Zákon o organizácii činnosti vlády a organizácii ústrednej štátnej správy](#)). The Governmental Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality ([Rada vlády pre ľudské práva, národnostné menšiny a rodovú rovnosť](#)) shall play the role of permanent, expert, advisory, coordination and consultative body in this field.

Main actors

The [Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family](#) of the Slovak Republic (referred to as MLSAF), bearing the final **responsibility for the field of social inclusion**, deals also with the employment strategy, labour market policy, social insurance, public social benefits, social care, social/legal child protection, social guardianship, gender equality and equal opportunities.

The [Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport](#) of the Slovak Republic (referred to as MESRS) bears responsibility for preparation, coordination and evaluation of the state youth policy. Therefore the [Slovak Youth Strategy for 2014 – 2020](#) covering also the empowerment of youth and their social inclusion, has been elaborated under auspices of this ministry.

Other state bodies and institutions involved in tackling the theme of social inclusion:

- [The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic](#) deals with social inclusion of inhabitants living in Roma communities via its Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities ([Úrad splnomocnenca vlády SR pre Rómske komunity](#))
- [Public Defender of Rights office](#), where also the Children Ombudsman operates ([Detský ombudsman](#))
- The Commissioner for Children (Komisár pre deti) ensured by [Act](#), protecting the rights of the child granted by The Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Non-governmental non-profit organisations ensuring social integration, including the youth as the target group:

- [EPIC, n.o.](#) (employment and employability)
- People in Need / [Človek v ohrození, o.z.](#) (social and community work)
- [Foundation Socia](#) / [Nadácia Socia](#) (systemic changes for socially excluded persons)
- Milan Šimečka Foundation/ [Nadácia Milana Šimečku](#) (human rights and multicultural education)
- [Foundation Pontis](#) / [Nadácia Pontis](#) (Company Social Responsibility, persons with hearing impairments)
- [Open Society Foundation](#) / [Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti](#) (participation, public voice, media campaigns)
- [Effeta, o.z.](#) and NGO Myslim / [Myslím, o.z](#) (persons with hearing impairments)
- Union of blind and visually impaired persons of Slovakia / [Únia slabozrakých a nevidiacich Slovenska](#), NGO Word / [SLOVO, o.z.](#), NGO Ambrello/[Ambrelo, o.z.](#) (persons with visual impairments)

- NGO Margaretka / [OZ Margarétka](#), Slovak union of physically disabled people / [Slovenský zväz telesne postihnutých](#), Slovak union of disabled persons / [Slovenský zväz zdravotne postihnutých](#), NGO Barlička/ [OZ Barlička](#) (physically disabled and disabled persons)
- NGO Predys / [OZ Predys](#) (learning difficulties, attention-deficit)
- Association for support to mentally disabled / [Združenie na pomoc ľuďom s mentálnym postihnutím v Slovenskej republike](#) , NGO ECHO/ [OZ Echo](#) (mentally impaired)
- [IMPACT HUB](#) (support of young entrepreneurs, including social entrepreneurship)
- NGO EDUMA/ [EDUMA, n.o.](#) (support of social inclusion via education of the society)
- NGO Divé maky / [Divé maky, o.z.](#) (development of Roma youth)

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The MLSAF facilitates activities of the Committee for Children and Youth ([Výbor pre deti a mládež](#)), being one of the committees of the Governmental Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality. It gathers together the representatives of various ministries, local and regional governments, as well as non-governmental non-profit organisations.

Moreover, the [Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth](#) has been established by the MESRS and it bears responsibility for implementation of inclusive education.

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

No national strategy on social inclusion of young people has been adopted in the Slovak Republic so far. The Slovak Youth Strategy for 2014 – 2020 stands as the only document adopted at national level, which includes specifically the theme of social inclusion of young people but individual support measures are implemented on the bases of other documents such as [Youth Guarantee initiative](#) or [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020](#) etc.

Scope and contents

No national strategy on social inclusion of young people exclusively has been adopted in the Slovak Republic so far.

Responsible authority

No national strategy on social inclusion of young people exclusively has been adopted in the Slovak Republic so far.

Revisions/Updates

No national strategy on social inclusion of young people exclusively has been adopted in the Slovak Republic so far.

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes for vulnerable young people

No actual national programmes aimed solely at social inclusion of young people currently exist in the Slovak Republic. In 2015- 2019, there were several national projects implemented contributing to social inclusion. Projects were targeted at various groups including children and young people.

1. National project '**School open to all**' ([Škola otvorená všetkým](#))

- in 2017 -2019
- implemented by Institution for Teachers' Education and Training;
- project took place in all regions and was based on close co-operation with kindergartens and primary schools with at least 20% of Roma pupils;
- the aim: support of inclusive environments in primary schools and kindergartens;
- activities: acceleration programmes for Roma children personal development of stimulation, inclusive teams dealing with improvement of inclusive school environments established at primary schools, afterschool activities open for children with disadvantaged backgrounds, Roma parents involved into some afterschool activities as mentors etc.
- targets: 130 primary schools, 50 kindergartens, approx. 2500 Roma children /socially disadvantaged background;
- The total financial volume: approx. 29 800 000 EUR (OP Human Resources, ESF).

2. National projects from '**Take Away Package**' represent specific type of national projects and are implemented by the Office of Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. These projects ensure a complex approach to social inclusion in the field of education, field social work and community work. Marginalised Roma communities, including youth, represent the essential target groups of these projects. Projects are implemented in specifically selected 150 towns and villages in Slovakia.

2.1. National project '**Support of Inclusive Preschool Education of Marginalized Roma Children I.**' ([Podpora predprimárneho vzdelávania detí z marginalizovaných rómskych komúní I.](#))

- in 2017 -2020;
- the aim: support of inclusive environments in kindergartens;
- activities: acceleration programmes stimulating personal development of Roma children, inclusive teams improving of inclusive kindergartens `environments, Roma parents and their children groups outside kindergartens etc.;
- targets: 150 kindergartens, approx. 3000 Roma children;
- total financial volume: approx. 19 900 000 EUR (OP Human Resources, ESF).

2.2. National project '**Community centres in Towns and Villages with Marginalised Roma Communities I.**' ([Komunitné centrá v mestách a obciach s prítomnosťou MRK I.](#))

- in 2016 -2019;
- the aim: to support social inclusion and positive changes in municipalities through support of community centres and development of community work;
- activities for children and young people: preschool clubs; assistance in preparing for school and teaching; preventive activities; hobby groups, activities to support of employment or other services leading to employment etc.;
- targets: 150 centres;
- total financial volume: approx. 18 600 000 EUR (OP Human Resources, ESF).

2.3. National project '**Field social work at municipalities I**' ([Terénna sociálna práca a terénna práca v obciach s prítomnosťou marginalizovaných rómskych komúní I.](#))

- in 2016 – 2019;
- the aim: to support financial literacy, employability and employment of marginalized communities, especially Roma;

- activities: personal support on the way to integration (e.g. looking for job, help with using other services and support measures etc.);
- targets: Roma/socially disadvantaged citizens of 150 towns and villages;
- total financial volume: approx. 26 500 000 EUR (OP Human Resources, ESF).

3. National project '**Support of the Selected Social Services of Crisis Intervention on the Community Level**' ([Podpora vybraných sociálnych služieb krízovej intervencie na komunitnej úrovni](#))

- in 2015 -2019 by the Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic;
- targeted at marginalised Roma communities and the major part of project activities involves children and young people – mostly through organisation of various programmes aimed at their preparation for school and support of their personal development;
- aim: to improve the situation of the socially excluded groups or those threatened with social exclusion through the support of professionalization of the selected social services of crisis intervention at local level (Community centres, low-threshold daily centres, low-threshold social services for children and family).
- activities: social and personal services;
- targets: approx. 980 young people
- total financial volume: approx. 20 915 000 EUR (OP Human Resources, ESF).

4. National project '**Quality of Social Services**' ([Kvalita sociálnych služieb](#))

- implemented by the Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic;
- aim: support the social inclusion of vulnerable target groups through the provision of quality social services;
- targets: approx.. 1000 new and innovative social services for disadvantaged groups (including young people);
- total financial volume: approx. 3 700 000 EUR (OP Human Resources, ESF).

Funding

All above mentioned projects and programmes were financed by the European Social Funds and by national contribution from the State Budget.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance is based on ESF rules and accepted methodologies.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

www.prijatelni.sk ("acceptable for job")/Roma Employment Campaign - Fighting Prejudices

- May 2019 – ongoing
- NGO Divé maky <http://divemaky.sk/>
- The campaign invites to a special (fictitious) page that would make the CV more suitable for work interview. The page would "whiten" your photo page if it is too dark and

changes address or name if it evokes a Roma origin and increases the chances of being invited to a job interview.

- The aim is to point to the fact that a CV sent by a Roma candidate has 50% less chance of receiving a response.

Deň krivých zrkadiel 2019/Crooked Mirrors Day 2019

- 9th June 2019
- NGO Združenie na pomoc ľuďom s mentálnym postihom <http://www.zpmpvsr.sk/>
- the aim is to show the potential of the people with mental diseases;
- activities of the campaigning taking place in capital and bigger centres of Slovakia (Bratislava, Dolný Kubín, Komárno, Košice, Malacky, Nitra, Trnava)
- presentations of products and activities of target groups.

Other on-going programmes and initiatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations

NGO	Name of the initiative/ Programme	Theme	Activities
Trust Fund Telekom at Pontis Foundation	Online tlmočník (Online interpreter)	Persons with hearing impairments	Education/Training, Dialogue.
Proti prúdu (Upstream)	Nota Bene Newsletter Nota Bene Books Luggage porters	Support of homeless people	Dialogue, Training, Campaign
EDUMA, n.o. (From Emotions to Knowledge)	Online knižnica živá (Online living library)	Inclusion	Dialogue through storytelling
Unia nevidiacich a slabozrakých Slovenska (Union of blinds and partially-sighted of Slovakia)	Biela pastelka (White pastel)	Visual impairment	Regular campaign

Young people's rights

NGO	Name of the initiative/programme	Theme	Activities
OZ Equity	Som neNORMALne fér I am abnormally fair	Equity and Equality	Campaign
Nové školstvo, o.z. (New schooling)	Chceme vedieť viac (We want to know MORE)	Inclusive education	Campaign

Another programmes and initiatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations

NGO	Name of the initiative/ programme	Theme	Tools/Activities
eSlovensko o.z.	Nehejtuj.sk http://nehejtuj.sk/	Cyber bullying	Campaign
Open Society Foundation	A call for humanity / Výzva k ľudskosti Tell it to my eyes / Povedz mi to do očí BUT can not hide the hate / ALE hejt neskryje	Support for migrants/refugees	Grant programme, Campaign, Dialogue

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

School without Hate/ Škola bez nenávisťi – pilot project for elementary and secondary schools to prevent bullying, cyberbullying and hate speech.

- September 2018 – June 2019
- follow up of No Hate Speech Movement Programme (Bez nenávisťi na internete, 2011-2017);
- the aim is to create and test quality standards by the means of the certificate "School without Hate";
- certificate can be obtained by the schools where the climate and the culture support:
 - prevention of bullying and cyberbullying, hate speech
 - mutual respect in communication
 - tolerance and development of intercultural competence
 - development of social skills
 - involvement of students into projects and activities focusing on democracy, human rights, social solidarity and cooperation among various youth groups etc.
- programme is financed by MESRS and implemented by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute.
- programme is the base of National Project (in preparation) financed by EU Human Resources Operational Programme from 2020.
- pilot phase included 7 schools so far.

Radicalization of Youth? Its Causes and Prevention in Youth work – international conference

- March 2019
- Ministry of Education, Science, research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (organised by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute);
- to create platform for learning and inspiration by sharing experiences and innovative approaches to empower young people through youth work;
- youth workers, teachers from 22 countries,
- program presented outcomes of expert groups (European Commission, Council of Europe), various researches and good practices from youth work.

Living Libraries / Živé knižnice

- May – June 2019 (ongoing initiative)
- IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute
- to fight prejudices among young people by allowing them to meet people from groups frequently facing discrimination in Slovak society;
- elementary and secondary schools in the regions (2018 – Bratislava, Nitra, Žilina, 2019 - Prešov, Košice, Banská Bystrica, Trenčín).

Funding

Financing of activities run or covered by IUVENTA is through state budget of the MESRS. State subsidies in the field of youth work are provided on the basis of the [Act on Youth Work](#) Support and under conditions specified by the Programmes for Youth for 2014 – 2020. Other initiatives are covered by other donor sources.

Quality assurance

There is no quality assurance apart from the standard participants evaluation.

4.6 Access to quality services

No single information source for youth on opportunities for inclusion or on specific opportunities in Slovakia are available. Stand-alone services for young people in the field of housing, health, social services or financial literacy exist only occasionally.

Selected state policy programmes accessible by youth:

Housing

The major support of social inclusion of young people in the field of housing is provided on the basis of the Act on Social Services ([Zákon o sociálnych službách](#)):

The MLSAF may provide financial subsidies in order to

- Establish houses at the halfway (for persons after enforcement of a sentence; grown-ups leaving orphanages, etc.);
- Build apartments of a lower standard of living for low-income households;
- Help disadvantaged young adults from orphanages to cover their repayments of mortgages;
- Ensure social housing for physically and mentally disabled young people;
- Ensure independent living for young people experiencing replacement family care and state institutional care;
- Help young people to repay their mortgages by decreasing the interest rate during first 5 years of repayment period (covered by the Act on Banks / [Zákon o bankách](#)).

Social services

- Programme for community centres development;
- Programme for accessible care services;
- Programme for field social work;
- Provision on the specific beneficiary (Inštitút osobitného príjemcu) meaning that the state social payments provided to the most deprived persons are used to cover their essential civilian needs; therefore not the beneficiary, but some organisation, institution or other natural person manages these social payments.

- SOS programme for young adults ([SOS program](#) pre mladých dospelých) targeted at young people living at orphanages.

Health care

- [Programme Healthy communities](#) (Zdravé komunity) aimed at field health assistants active in marginalised communities;
- National children and adolescents care programme in the Slovak Republic for 2008 – 2015 / [Národný program starostlivosti o deti a dorast v Slovenskej republike na roky 2008 – 2015](#) of the Institute for Public Health
- National Prevention Program Healthy Heart for Slovakia / [Národný program prevencie ochorení srdca a ciev - Zdravé srdce pre Slovensko - časť pre deti a dorast](#)

Financial services

The national standard of financial literacy ([Národný štandard finančnej gramotnosti](#)) was updated by the MESRS in 2014 and it is currently implemented at all school stages. This standard provides definitions of themes, competencies and sub-competencies. A [specific web portal](#) has been developed by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic in order to provide user-friendly information to the general public.

Provision of state services in the field of social integration of young people is closely connected to assessment of the needs of social services, social payments and compensatory aid or payments. The amount of social payments is either fixed or adjusted to the level of minimum income of a Slovak citizen by a certain percentage.

Overview of a state financial aid provided to disadvantaged young people:

- Subventions for food ([Dotácia na podporu výchovy k stravovacím návykom dieťaťa ohrozeného sociálnym vylúčením](#)) may be granted to encourage healthy eating of a child at risk of social exclusion by providing lunch or other meal at kindergarten or primary school. Subventions for school articles may be granted to a child at risk of social exclusion in order to cover expenditures spent for purchase of articles needed for education at kindergarten or primary school.
- Social scholarships ([Sociálne štipendium](#)) may be granted to students attending full-time course of study at Slovak universities. Conditions, equal for all the universities, are defined by the MESRS.
- Housing allowance ([Príspevok na bývanie](#)) may be provided to the most deprived citizens in order to cover their costs of housing.
- Protection allowance ([Ochranný príspevok](#)) for seriously disabled unemployed may be granted if the most deprived citizen is not able to earn any income.

There are several information channels offering young people the opportunities to gain information:

- [Web site IUVENTA - Slovenský inštitút mládeže](#) (Slovak Youth Institute) provides information on calls for project proposals, reports, training opportunities for young people, youth leaders and youth workers;
- [Web site Sociálna politika](#) (Social Politics) is an experiment trying to disclose to the general public the expert papers on social policy, drawn in a user-friendly way and free of charge;
- [Web site MLÁDEŽ](#) (YOUTH) is a website managed by the National Youth Council, providing information on opportunities for young people, dialogue with young people on public matters, grants, volunteering opportunities and job offers in non-profit sector;
- [Web portal InfoLib](#) includes the list of information channels for users with various kinds of disabilities;

- **PARK** is a television broadcast of Slovak public service broadcaster elaborating on the themes of social and societal challenges of young people.

Young people with specific needs may follow the websites of civil society organisations, as well as specialised television and radio broadcasts. These are normally targeted at the particular population as whole (e.g. Roma people, visually impaired, hearing impaired, etc.) and do not select information appropriate to young people.

Selected information channels covering up-to-date information for specific youth groups in the field of culture, education, housing, health and social support:

Roma communities	http://www.mecem.sk http://www.gipsytv.eu http://www.romapozomatar.com http://www.rtvsk.sk (magazín So vakeres?) http://romovia.sme.sk http://www.minv.sk/?romske-komunity-uvod
Persons with hearing impairments	http://www.myslim.sk www.efeta.sk http://www.rtvsk.sk (Television club for deaf persons, interpretation of main news into sign language) www.nepocujucedieta.sk
Persons with visual impairments	www.rtvsk.sk (commented broadcasting) https://www.skn.sk (library for blind and partially sighted) http://www.unss.sk/uzitocne-info.php
Disabled persons	http://www.sztp.sk (physically handicapped) http://www.autizmus.info www.socia.sk
Replacement families	www.navrat.sk http://www.anr.sk
University students	http://cezap.sk (Centre for support of students with special needs)

Information channels of ministries and other public institutions:

www.upsvar.sk	Information on social payments to disabled, unemployed, people with low income; replacement family care; etc.
www.employment.gov.sk	Support at the labour market; protection of disabled employees
www.telecom.gov.sk	Transportation support for seriously disabled persons; state housing policy
http://www.health.gov.sk/	Preventive health examinations free of charge; thermal bath treatment for children and young people
www.socpoist.sk	Sickness benefits payments, opinion on invalidity; orphan's pensions; maternity benefits
http://www.uvzsr.sk	Information on health protection and hygiene
https://www.sfrb.sk	Housing support; mortgages for young people

Quality assurance

In case of social inclusion programmes resulting from legal provisions the standards are adopted, which need to be followed in order to obtain a state social payment. The MLSAF provides the greatest contributions to measures in the field of social inclusion. [The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family Yearly Reports](#) include statistical data of mostly quantitative performance indicators.

Any natural or legal person has the right to request data on the basis of the Act on Free Access to Information / [Zákon o slobodnom prístupe k informáciám](#)

Quality assurance may also be initiated by lodging a complaint to any of the following [Parliamentary Committees](#):

- Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee
- Financial and Budgetary Committee
- Economic Affairs Committee
- Agricultural and Environmental Committee
- Public Administration and Regional Development Committee
- Committee on Social Affairs
- Committee on Health
- Defence and Security Committee
- Foreign Affairs Committee
- Education, Youth, Science and Sports Committee
- Culture and Media Committee
- Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities Committee

Currently, quality is being monitored by the media, activists and broadly also by the non-governmental watch-dog organisations, such as [Fair-play Alliance](#), [League for Human Rights](#), [Transparency International Slovakia](#) which follow the scope and quality of social inclusion.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Policy/legal framework

[The Act on Support of Youth Work](#) limits its provisions in the field of social inclusion to responsibility of local and regional governments to support, within youth work, activities of young disabled persons. Still, it represents the legal framework enabling youth organisations to use financial subsidies, acquired within the Programmes for Youth for 2014 – 2020, in favour of health protection of young people and in line with the youth work principles.

At the policy level, there are several documents adopted in relation to youth work and its capacity to foster social inclusion of young people:

- [The Slovak Youth Strategy for 2014 – 2020](#), providing that youth work should aim at searching solutions for youth unemployment, underachievement at school, social exclusion, etc.
- The Concept of Youth Work Development for 2016 – 2020 ([Koncepcia rozvoja práce s mládežou 2016 - 2020](#)), defining the youth work principles, as follows: youth work should consider actual situation of a young person and strive to fulfil his/her needs; youth work should help young people to exercise their rights; youth work should aim at the overall life quality of young people.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

Inclusive programmes in youth work have been developed at local and regional level, normally in cooperation of local youth work actors (non-governmental non-profit organisations, leisure time activities centres) with their partners representing other sectors, such as education, employment, volunteering.

National project KomPrax – Competencies for practice ([Komprax - Kompetencie pre prax](#)) was implemented by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute during 2011 – 2015. The total volume of finances provided by the European Social Fund was 6 million €, out of which 2 million € were used [to finance small local projects](#) (up to 200 €) prepared by the participants within their training.

The project was aimed at quality development in youth work. As a result, the quality standards in youth work have been defined, making it possible to [verify and recognise key competencies of youth workers and informal youth leaders](#) acquired through non-formal education activities in youth work. Various education modules were developed within the project, aimed at several categories of youth workers, as well as youth leaders. All the training modules, while dealing with identification of needs and intercultural learning, included the theme 'support of young people with fewer opportunities and excluded groups of young people'. A training module for Roma youth leaders active in youth work represented a specific project activity. Prior to the development of these training modules, a study on education needs was elaborated, with participation of youth workers engaged with various target groups.

Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

In Slovakia, activities involving socially excluded young people have been developed mainly by non-governmental non-profit organisations, ensuring

- Regular activities involving young people with fewer opportunities;
- Information on the needs of young people with fewer opportunities and on access to them;

Instructions for youth leaders enabling them to advocate for interests of young people with fewer opportunities.

The Programmes for Youth for 2014 – 2020 ([Programy pre mládež 2014 - 2020](#)) represent the essential financial tool for support of youth organisations. The Programmes support such activities contributing to the achievement of goals defined by the Slovak Youth Strategy, including in the field of social inclusion of young people. Among the target groups of the Programmes, a specific priority has been given to young people with fewer opportunities – young people facing any disadvantage caused by educational, social, physical, psychological, economic, cultural reasons or by living in rural areas. It is not possible to determine the yearly financial allocation devoted to social inclusion. In 2019, the financial allocation equals to 1 712 321 €, providing support to [17 national youth organisations](#).

Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

Qualification 'youth worker' (kvalifikácia Pracovník s mládežou) has been included in the [National qualification framework](#), but it is not possible to acquire such qualification or confirmation of such qualification within the formal education system. Trainings and other support measures are available to youth workers within accredited educational activities prepared by non-governmental organisations and/or within an offer of national and international trainings in the field of youth (Erasmus+, Salto Youth, etc.).

Essential tasks in the field of youth policy implementation have been performed by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute, which elaborated and adopted internal 'Strategy of inclusive approach towards customers with fewer opportunities and with specific needs' in

2013. Social inclusion became one of the priority themes for IUVENTA, which resulted in production of several methodologies and [publications on Human Rights Education](#) (Ľudské práva) elaborated on the basis of experimental training projects. During 2013 – 2015, IUVENTA was implementing the ESF [National project 'Praktik'](#), within which a [specific thematic knowledge centre](#) supporting educational projects in the field of social exclusion of young people has been created.

Financial support

The most important part of youth work has always been happening at local level – in cities, towns and villages, where young people actually live. The state financial subsidies (MESRS) are provided to such trans-regional and national youth non-governmental organisations, which register their active branches at local level. As far as other financial sources are concerned, the current system of gathering information on tax incomes and spending at regional and local levels does not allow identifying the volumes provided by municipalities for the sake of youth work supporting social inclusion. The research 'Municipalities and Youth 2015' ([Samosprávy a mládež 2015](#)) has proved the fact, that the most finances are usually provided to organise sport activities for children and young people (67 %), followed by local cultural actions (27 %). This does not exclude activities with possible aim of social inclusion of excluded groups of young people.

The most well-known public donation project supporting activities of children and young people (including structures active in youth work), often aimed at social inclusion, is 'An hour for children' ([Hodina deťom](#)) organised by Children of Slovakia Foundation.

Quality assurance

No standards for the field of social inclusion in youth work or national register on youth organizations providing such services exist in Slovakia.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Currently, two spheres of interest have been progressing in Slovakia – **Roma young people** and **young people with low education level**.

At the level of state policy, there are **no approaches towards sensory disabled young people** (persons with visual and hearing impairments), young people experiencing communication barriers, young people with learning difficulties, young people with physical and other health disabilities, young people growing-up outside their biological families.

Education of parents of disabled children remains a challenge, as a complex support system for parents including social learning, upbringing and development of a child is missing.

In relation to integration and inclusion, a new need has arisen, inspired by a foreign experience – to **transform special needs schools into training centres**, ready to:

- Organize preparation of pedagogues for integration of pupils and students with certified special needs;
- Provide practical training to university students of special and general pedagogy in the field of integration and inclusion;
- Ensure education of parents in the context of early remedial actions for a child with sensory or combined disability;
- Ensure preparation of sensory disabled students for their integration at universities.

New **Youth Report** published in 2018, provides information on the progress in policies implementation within past four years. Social inclusion is included in the report content and there were various experts of social inclusion invited to cooperate on preparation of this chapter.

5. PARTICIPATION

Voter turnout in Slovakia is low in the long-term perspective. First voters are the most active ones - **60% of the first-time voters** 18 -21 ears of age took part in the last parliamentary elections in 2016. The topic to lower the voters `age periodically appears in debates but any official steps towards this measure have not been taken yet. **Political parties usually do not have official `youth wings`**, but some youth organizations play currently a role of unofficial young supporters of some political parties (5.1).

Youth and their interests and opinions are represented by several official organizations, for example by the **Youth Council of Slovakia and Regional Youth Councils** as well as organizations representing **university and secondary school students** (5.3). The greatest opportunity for young people to influence the development of legislation is **during preparation of strategic documents** by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. It is also supported by the fact that the Ministry is responsible for preparation and creation of youth policy in Slovakia. **Consultations with youth** are held on regular basis although they **are not designed as official system** with approved methodology (5.4).

There is no separate national youth participation strategy but theme `Participation` is a part of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for 2014 - 2020. Support for multiregional youth organizations is ensured in particular via **Programmes for Youth** (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic) that ensure their sustainability by supporting their infrastructure and contributing to their activities with multi-annual grants (5.5).

In addition to compulsory subjects in formal education, e.g. **Citizenship education**, so called **Students School Councils** are established at secondary schools as a platform for the development of competences in active participation (5.7). Non-formal learning in the area of participation is the domain of non-governmental organizations that can use the **Voice of Youth** Programme (in particular, the activities of Regional Youth Councils). To support local youth policy, **Community for Youth** Programme operating within the Programme for Youth to support local youth policies, mainly for regional and local self-governing offices (5.8).

5.1 General context

Main concepts

The term „youth participation“ is anchored in the legislation ([Act on Youth Work Support](#)) as active involvement of youth in the process of planning, deciding and implementing of events and projects in the field of the societal and economic life.

Institutions of representative democracy

The Slovak Republic is a parliamentary democracy.

The supreme authorities are as follows:

- the National Council of the Slovak Republic (159 deputies elected for 4 years),
- the Government of the Slovak Republic and
- the President of the Slovak Republic.

Slovakia is a **centralised country** consisting of 8 counties and around 2,000 communities. At the head of the communities and the counties there is an elected regional or local self-government.

Participation in the elections is **voluntary**. **A proportional electoral system** is applied in Slovakia; the citizens vote on the basis of ballots, which they deliver to the ballot boxes

in person or they can post them. The citizens vote in approximately 6,000 polling districts during the elections Act on Conditions of the Exercise of Voting Rights/[Zákon o podmienkach výkonu volebného práva](#)).

People with Slovak nationality living abroad or Slovak citizens who are abroad during the elections dates can use the right **to vote by post**. They have to send request to the local self government office and they will obtain all documents in advance (35 days before the election date).

The voting right is **not transferable** onto another person.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

The citizen of the Slovak Republic can take part in elections (from the local level up to the EU-level) from the age of 18 years (Act on Association in Political Parties/[Zákon o politických stranách](#)). The same age limit must be reached also regarding participation in a referendum.

Discussions on decrease of the voters' age limit are being carried out; nevertheless the official solution of this question in the form of a specific parliamentary negotiation or a referendum is not planned within a short-term time-horizon.

Concerning young people's participation in elections no special measures exist – possibilities such as voting in a hospital or while a home treatment, voting in a prison and the like are available for them equally as for other groups of citizens.

The voters' age is not monitored in official poll statistics. In the Parliamentary elections in 2016 the number of first time voters (age 18 - 21) was 190 000. 60% of them took part in the election ([the exit poll statistics](#)).

Young people as political representatives

Candidate at national election must be 21 of age and has permanent living address in the Slovak Republic. (Act on Conditions of the Exercise of Voting Rights/[Zákon o podmienkach výkonu volebného práva](#)).

Young people can become members of a political party from the age of 18 years (Act on Association in Political Parties/ [Zákon o politických stranách](#)).

Officially, no political party has a so-called youth wing.

Some political parties support their political youth organisations, which are allowed to gather young people from the age of 15 years. Political parties in the Slovak Republic do not have mass memberships (mass base of members) and the same situation is also in youth political parties.

Information on membership (base of members) of the political youth organisations is not officially available.

The biggest youth political organisation „Young Social Democrats“ close to the leading „SMER“ political party had approximately 1,200 members; „Via Nova“ related to the strong Hungarian minority MOST-HÍD party had around 850 members ([Štefančík, 2010](#)).

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

The National Youth Parliament does not exist in the Slovak Republic.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

Youth Council of Slovakia ([Rada mládeže Slovenska](#) – referred only as Youth Council) has been operating since 1992 as an independent, non-profit organisation.

- Youth Council does not have regional branches (structures).
- The existence of the RmS is not guaranteed by any legislation.

Composition

Youth Council brings together national and transregional youth organisations and represents their interests. Youth Council connects 25 children's and youth organisations, which operate on the territory of at least three districts, have minimum 100 members and three quarters of their members are supposed to be younger than 30 years. They all together involve more than 60 000 children and young people.

- The supreme body is General Assembly.
- Board of Directors is the executive body of RMS, which manages the RMS 's activities in the period between the sessions of the General Assembly.
- The Board of Directors consists of the Chairman and another four up to six members.
- Members of the Board of Directors are elected for three years, whereas 1/3 (one third) of the members of the Board of Directors resign every year.
- Maximally two representatives of each member organisation can be elected in the Board of Directors.
- The age limit of the members of the Board of Directors is not set (given).
- The Board of Directors is summoned/convened according to the need.
- he Board of Directors does not carry out any special activities aimed at higher inclusiveness or accessibility (Charter of Slovak Youth Council/[Stanovy RmS](#)).

Role and responsibilities

The aim of the activity of the Youth Council is to represent its member organisations, defend young people's situation in the Slovak Republic and increase the quality of youth work. The Youth Council operates especially in the field of education, participation, social inclusion and volunteerism.

Main areas of the activities of the Youth Council:

- service, education, networking and information activities for member organizations and young people;
- actions to influence public policy relating to young people and youth organizations;
- activities to improve the quality of work of youth organizations, their staff and volunteers;
- scientific research, publishing and other activities necessary for the organizational, financial, material and content provision, successful management and promotion of the above activities.

The Youth Council is non-formally considered as the supreme representation of the youth. Its representatives are invited in diverse committees and expert groups. They can propose various changes and documents, comment various acts and measures. Their decisions and conclusions are not formally binding or mandatory for the policy-makers.

Funding

The Youth Council is financed from the public sources. Every year it receives a contribution – institutional support from the programmes of the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The Board of Directors is responsible for finances

to its members, in case of a financial contribution from official grants from the public sources – to the donors.

Regional youth councils

- Youth Council of Žilina Region ([Rada mládeže Žilinského kraja](#))
- Youth Council of Bratislava Region ([Rada mládeže Bratislavského kraja](#))
- Youth Council of Trnava Region ([Rada mládeže Trnavského kraja](#))
- Youth Council of Košice Region ([Rada mládeže Košického kraja](#))
- Youth Council of Trenčín Region ([Rada mládeže Trenčianskeho kraja](#))
- Youth Council of Prešov Region ([Rada mládeže Prešovského kraja](#))

Higher education student union(s)

Student Council for Higher Education of the Slovak Republic (SCHE)

Student Council for Higher Education of the Slovak Republic ([Študentská rada vysokých škôl – ŠRVŠ](#)) is established by the Act on Higher Education ([Zákon o vysokých školách §107](#)) and is the highest representative body of the university students in the Slovak Republic.

- an independent and autonomous body;
- unites representatives of all universities (public, state and private ones) – 35 universities (2015);
- the supreme body is the General Assembly of the Student Council for Higher Education, which convenes at least 4 times within the academic year.
- the Board of Directors convenes between the sessions of the General Assembly and the head of the Board of Directors is the Chairman;
- there are commissions (for instance the control commission, the legal commission etc.).
- the elections to the Student Council for Higher Education are held every two years (Statute of SCHE/[Štatút ŠRVŠ](#)).

Composition

The Board of Directors consists of the chairman, the vice-chairman and 6 secretaries. Each secretary sets up their constant working group. The elections to the Board of Directors are held every two years. The Board of Directors' sessions are regular. The Board of Directors does not carry out special activities for higher inclusiveness or accessibility.

Role and responsibilities

- represents their members' opinions and attitudes mostly towards the MESRS to various academic matters (poll of the members of the Accreditation Commission for universities, criteria for granting of accreditations, methodological instructions for preparation of accreditation programmes, commenting of strategic documents and legislation in the field of education etc.).
- its opinions are as binding as those of other apt members of the commissions and working groups;
- fosters reciprocal cooperation of university students in the Slovak Republic;
- international co-operation;
- enhancement of social conditions of university students (higher education students) such as accommodation for students/boarding, inclusion/integration of disadvantaged students etc. ([Výročná správa 2015/Annual Report 2015](#)).

Funding

Student Council for Higher Education is financed by the appropriate act from the sources of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak republic. The Board of Directors is responsible for finances to the aforementioned ministry and to their members, in case of a financial contribution within official grants from other public sources – to the donors.

School student union(s)

There is no official and stable organisation uniting secondary school pupils'/students' interests. These organisations are led by young people themselves and they strongly depend on young leaders' personal initiative. They usually have regional remit or they bear a form of a youth initiative representing the interests of a certain group of students. Example from the previous years - Secondary School Parliament of Slovakia – at present-time not existing.

Slovakia's Secondary School Students Union (Stredoškolská študentská únia Slovenska)

- a civic association led by young people
- an independent organisation of superregional significance;
- supreme body is congress
- the Board of Directors consists of the chairman, the general secretary, the vice-chairmen for communication and campaigns, media and marketing, foreign affairs, coordinators for particular regions and control bodies;
- the Board of Directors manages the organisation and coordinates the preparation of activities;
- the organisation tackles the theme "inclusiveness", nevertheless it does not carry out special activities for its higher inclusivity or accessibility.

Role and responsibilities

- to unite and networking Students School Councils and to defend their interests;
- focused on organising of activities within non-formal education for members of the Students School Councils (media and marketing, citizenship and activism and other).
- can give proposals and comments to the measures of the local and regional self-governments, as well as the state and public administration concerning mainly the youth policy.
- organisation currently does not have an official status of the official partner for policy makers.

Funding

The organisation is financed only from its member's contributions or from grants. The Board of Directors is responsible for finances to their members, in case of a financial contribution within official grants from other public sources – to the donors.

Other bodies

Regional initiative [STUDENT – Aliancia stredoškolákov](#) – existing since 2014 (Banská Bystrica, Trenčín regions). Most activities in 2016 – Petition for reflection of needs of secondary school students in [Act on on State Administration in Education and School Self-government](#).

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

There is no prescriptive mechanism for consultations with young people in the Slovak Republic.

The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic via the Plenipotentiary for citizens' society has been implementing the [Initiative for Open Governance](#) since 2011. In 2014 the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted a [manual on involvement of public into creation of public policies](#). The manual forms standards and at the same time it brings methodologies of the public's more effective involvement in the creation of public policies.

Levels of consultations

Some youth consultations (designed for young people) have been continuously incorporated into the national youth policy preparation processes since 2001. The majority of consultations involve young people aged 14 up to 25 years.

The consultations on the national youth policy are organised at the national level. There are no specific guidelines from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic concerning the youth consultations.

The consultations on regional and local youth policy depend on decision of the respective regional or local government. Most of the towns and communities with population of young people lower than 10 thousand have not introduced any formal mechanism for consultations of youth policy issues with young people ([Local Authorities and Youth, 2015, T-16](#)).

Consultation method

Referring to consultations on the national youth policy organized by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute on behalf of the MESRS, the methodology has been continuously developed since 2001.

A general pattern on two-level consultations with youth has been developed and applied:

- Regional meetings with young people in order to collect young people's needs and expectations as well as their ideas on planned measures and tools followed by meetings with regional youth work and youth policy representatives.
- National working groups – young people and representatives of youth organizations (anchor/see National Youth Council) or institutions working with young people are invited together with other stakeholders.

In some cases online consultations for all involved parties are incorporated into the methodology (including young people). Online consultations are frequently used within the Structural Dialogue.

Young people are invited to consult all national-youth-policy-related themes relevant to their knowledge, experiences, age etc. Traditional themes to be consulted are education (formal, non-formal and informal), participation, volunteering, entrepreneurship, health, well-being and youth work. Topics, such as employment and social inclusion, are more complex and majority of young people participating in the consultations do not have personal experience or their own opinions on possible solutions.

Regularity of consultation

Consultations with young people are not regular, they are always linked to the preparation of important documents (strategies, evaluation, legislative acts etc.). Youth consultations (consultation with young people) were held within preparation, mid-evaluation and/or final evaluation of important youth policy documents:

- In 2000: National Conception on Youth Policy towards Children and Youth till 2007/ [Konceptcia mládežníckej politiky do roku 2007](#)

- In 2007: [Key Areas and Action Plans of National Youth Policy 2008 – 2013](#),
- In 2008: [Act on Youth Work Support](#),
- In 2009/2010: [Youth Report 2010](#),
- In 2013/2014: [Youth Report 2014](#),
- In 2013: [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020](#),
- In 2012 and 2014: preparation and evaluation of a financial tool to support youth work ([Infokonzult 2012](#), [Infokonzult 2014](#)),
- In 2015: Conception of Youth Work Development 2016 - 2020 / [Konceptcia rozvoja práce s mládežou 2016 - 2020](#) .

Actors

Consultations usually involve two groups:

- Young people from youth organisations
- Young people from communities, youth development groups or school parliaments.

Youth organisations are represented by:

- Youth Council of Slovakia/[Rada mládeže Slovenska](#)
- [Association of Regional Youth Councils](#)

Active young people from community youth development groups or school parliaments are identified and contacted through financial schemes of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and by the National Agency of the EU Erasmus+ Programme. In the period 2011 – 2015 they were identified also by the Thematic Youth Centres established in 7 counties (out of 8 Slovakia's counties; the Bratislava county was not involved) within implementation of two National Projects "[KomPrax](#)" and "[PRAKTIK](#)" financed from the European Social Fund. Young people were invited to participate and contribute mainly to regional consultation groups.

Specific target groups

Representatives of the specific target groups are occasionally involved in consultations, as for instance young people from rural areas during preparation of the youth policy documents 2007 – 2014. Needs and expectations of young people with fewer opportunities are usually identified by youth workers working with specific target groups and are presented in working groups; e.g. thematic field "Social Inclusion" in Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020. Young people from migrant backgrounds have not been included yet. In 2016, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities started organising of local round tables with Roma youth.

Public authorities

The consultations at the national level usually involve:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic as the main coordinator of youth policy preparation and implementation,
- IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute as the Youth Agency,
- various ministries' representatives, policies of which influence young people's lives,
- Regional Authority Offices' representatives (self-governments /VUC/) engaged in the departments responsible for youth policy (the departments may vary from region to region).

The consultations at the regional level involve various institutions' representatives, such as regional and local youth centres, regional culture centres, NGOs working (among

others) also with young people (e.g. environment, sport NGOs), church groups' representatives active in the youth policy field, active teachers and so on.

Information on the extent of youth participation

Information on young people's participation is collected only by the organisers (IUVENTA) and is usually mentioned in the final policy document. Special events, at which information on youth and youth policy was presented (including the youth consultations outcomes), were Youth Report 2010, Youth Report 2014, National Youth Conference in 2010 and National Youth Conference in 2014.

Outcomes

In a relatively short history of the development of youth consultations (with young people) in Slovakia, a general pattern on expected outcomes was created.

Young people are invited to:

- express their views on the actual situation within the discussed topic at two levels: "How is it reflected in their private lives?" and "How is it reflected in communities, in which they live?";
- provide their assessment of tools and measures for youth policy and its effectiveness (with regard to their age, background, competences etc.);
- define their visions of an ideal situation (results, approaches, settings etc.);
- prioritize the goals and proposed actions as the message to the stakeholders at the national level.

Information on young people's involvement and the summary of consultations' outcomes is recorded in Youth Report 2010 and 2014.

Public availability of outcomes

Information on young people's involvement and the summary of consultations' outcomes is recorded in Youth Reports. Feedback is occasionally provided personally via e-mails to the participants (e.g. preparation of the Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020). The consultations' young participants are encouraged to visit official web-sites (example – [Preparation of Youth Work Conception](#)) dedicated to the preparation of the documents or to contact youth leaders and moderators/facilitators of the consultations to get more specific information or to follow the process.

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

There are no top-level or large scale initiatives for young people to increase participation in dialogues or debates with the public authorities.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

There is no independent strategy focused on development of youth participation. This area is covered within the [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020](#).

Scope and contents

The [Youth Strategy 2014-2020](#) defines framework objectives for the national, regional and local level.

Key objectives of the thematic field Participation

- support of innovative forms of youth participation

- encouragement of student participation in school environment
- introduction of qualitative standards of youth participation
- encouragement of youth participation by means of information and counselling
- e-Democracy and provision of information in a comprehensible language.

The Strategy emphasises the importance of young people's with fewer opportunities involvement as a horizontal priority; it does not emphasise any special groups of young people in its part called „Participation“.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic is responsible for coordination of the state policy towards youth within the framework of the Youth Strategy.

The youth participation is an inter-ministerial/cross-sectoral theme.

No institution is legally responsible for achievement of the objectives/goals of the Youth Strategy within the field of participation.

The regional and local self-government seems to have the most possibilities. A [survey on the youth policy state of play in communities and towns](#) financed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic in 2015 was focused also on the theme „youth participation support“.

The Youth Strategy was evaluated in 2017 and presented in [Youth Report 2018](#).

Monitoring and evaluation

MESRS evaluates achievement of the objectives/goals of the Youth Strategy annually.

Sources of information for evaluation:

- thematic surveys and researches e.g. [“Self-government and youth”](#) (2015)
- opening of the COMMUNITY for Youth sub-programme supporting surveys on self-governmental policy (2016) for the purposes of the evaluation.
- an analysis of the measures from other public-and-state institutions as well as non-governmental organisations are a part of the evaluation
- youth consultations (with young people) are included.

Revisions/Updates

The Youth Strategy 2014 - 2020 was formally evaluated in the middle of its implementation, in 2017. Decisions on possible revisions or updates is taken by the [Inter-ministerial Working Group for the State Policy in the Field of Youth](#).

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

Children's and youth organisations are formed under the same conditions as other civic associations in Slovakia. The conditions are defined and anchored in a special act ([Act on Associations of Citizens](#)).

Public financial support

Most activities of the children's and youth organisations are financed from diverse public as well as private sources. The only regular source for financing of superregional or umbrella organisations and for their institutional operation is the MESRS.

In 2013, MESRS adopted the Programmes for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020 ([Programy pre mládež, 2014 – 2020](#)) providing financial support to the bodies developing activities and projects in the field of youth work and within youth policy implementation. Calls for projects are being published regularly within the sub-programme called „Support of Youth NGOs" (funding regular activities of the youth NGOs).

The funding is guaranteed for three years. 19 youth organisations were supported for 2016-2018 ([Final results of Support of Youth NGO Programme, 2015](#)). 17 youth organisations were supported for 2018 - 2020 ([Final results of Support of Youth NGO Programme, 2017](#)). Yearly financial amount is approx. 1 750 000 €.

The financial contribution is mostly focused on institutional support of the youth organisations, which must fulfil both, formal and quality criteria. Among these criteria you can find for instance Democratic structures and processes - members are allowed to influence operation of the organisation etc.

The Programmes do not finance the establishment of youth facilities, where young people can meet and get involved in projects.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

At present-time there are neither programmes nor initiatives supporting diversity of young people as members of youth organisations.

5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

Policy Framework

There is no national strategy for the field of “Learning to participate” covering the area of both, the formal and the non-formal education as well as the informal learning.

Formal learning

Social and civic competences are a part of the curriculum throughout the entire period of the compulsory school attendance. There are two approaches:

- gaining of the competences is integrated in diverse school-subjects (a cross curricular approach),
- an individual educational school-subject.

On the 1st grade of primary schools ([ISCED 1](#)) the children/pupils gain these competences by means of a so-called integrated approach within several school-subjects, mostly, however, in the subjects such as Homeland learning, Ethics, Religious education (but also within other subjects).

The 2nd grade of primary schools ([ISCED 2](#)) encompasses an individual subject Citizenship education; nevertheless these competences are being gained also within the subjects such as History and Geography (but also within other subjects in line with cross- curricular approach).

Secondary schools ([ISCED 3](#)) include an individual subject called Citizenship education. These themes are being tackled also within the subjects such as History and Geography. The other subjects contain some related themes, too.

Time allocation for an individual subject (ISCED 2 a 3A) - 1 lesson a week (approx. 33 lessons in a school-year).

Within the formal education, the thematic area “The Man and the Society” (Geography, History and Citizenship education) focuses mainly on development of the following competences:

- social and personnel
- societal and civic/citizens' competences
- initiative and entrepreneurship
- the ability to learn teaching (how to teach)

Main educational objectives (learning objectives) (ISCED 3A):

- norms of the societal behaviour and citizens' co-existence/living together,
- respect for the values of positive human/interpersonal relations,
- reverence for one's own nation as well as for other nations and nationalities and for Christian traditions,
- comprehension of historic and spacious orientation,
- gaining of the skills to know and critically evaluate/assess historic material,
- gaining of the historic knowledge from within the national and the world's history,
- understanding of the causes and the consequences of historic facts/occurrences,
- work with the information on the Slovak Republic as a part of the Earth and on the Earth as the whole,
- understanding the changes within the country made by the man,
- development of entrepreneurial skills by implementation of projects,
- handling of common situations in the personal and the societal life,
- finding one's own place and role within the society,
- gaining of orientation within the current public life of the Slovak Republic as well as in the world,
- understanding the essence (or the roots) of democracy, the citizens' rights and obligations, the recognition of the unlawful/illegitimate action and the realisation of its consequences,
- perception of problem situations, recognition of the problems and their solutions,
- expressing one's own thoughts, opinions, attitudes in a cultured way and their defence; usage of the common information and communication means.

Non-formal and informal learning

Participative structures within formal education settings

Within the Slovak educational system there are two types of structures enabling young people to participate:

- Pupil School Council ("PSC") at secondary schools,
- Student parts of the universities' academic senates.

Legislative

Secondary schools:

The Act On State Administration in Education and School Self-government (Zákon o štátnej správe v školstva), which within its section §26 <http://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2003-596#Sum> defines the Pupil School Council as an institution representing the pupils of a secondary school and communicates their interests towards the headmaster and the management of the school.

Universities:

The act on Higher Education (Zákon o vysokých školách) <http://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2002-131>, which in its section §7 defines the academic senate, in which maximally one third is represented by students; it is a so-called student part of the academic senate.

Programmes to support and develop the Pupil School Councils (PSC) and their coordinators

National level:

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth institute used to actively support the Pupil School Councils (thereinafter referred only as PSCs) in the past within its activities:

- by providing [accredited education to coordinators of the PSCs](#)
- by issuing of the methodological publications aimed at support of development of the PSCs such as for instance „A Year with a Pupil School Council“ ([Rok so žiackou školsku radou](#)).

In 2015 – 2016 IUVENTA did not carry out any activities in this field.

Regional level:

Region Youth Councils in some regions/counties cooperate actively with the Pupil School Councils at secondary schools situated within their territory.

Youth Council of tilina Region ([Rada mládeže Žilinského kraja](#))

- [education for the new members of the PSCs](#)
- promotion of the PSCs via the [Contest „Olympiad of the PSC“](#)

Youth Council of Prešov Region ([Rada mládeže Prešovského kraja](#))

- provision of support to the Secondary School Parliament of the Prešov Region (representatives of the PSC from the secondary schools from the Region’s territory)
- activity for the members and coordinators of the PSC, for instance [conference on support of the volunteering](#) on the schools territory.

Youth Council of Košice Region ([Rada mládeže Košického kraja](#))

- Activation of municipality’s, students and youth parliaments – conferences on youth 2016.

Youth Council of renčín Region ([Rada mládeže Trenčianskeho kraja](#))

- education for members of the PSCs

Measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society

At present-time there are no measures as a part of the educational curriculum for a mandatory or a voluntary service for a community.

Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers

Currently there is no legislative framework supporting co-operation among schools, youth organisations and providers of youth work and there are no programmes following such an aim.

Supporting non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences

[Programmes for Youth 2014 -2020](#) financed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic are focused on development of young people’s societal as well as citizens/civic competences.

Programme SUPPORT of the Youth Organisations:

- it fosters democratic processes and principles within youth organisations as well as the financial supports of the direct activities aimed at active citizenship development

Programme VOICE of youth:

- it funds the umbrella representative organisations, which finance activities related to active citizenship at both, the regional and the local level within institutional support
- the Programme encourages also the national and the regional activities within the Structural Dialogue through supporting of a special [project run by the Youth Council of Slovakia](#).

The Programmes are primarily aimed at the encouragement of young people with fewer opportunities, without any specification.

The Programmes are financed from the state budget. The yearly allocation of the funds represents around 2 million Euros.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

There is no constant and unique system of evaluation of the quality of the non-formal education within development of both, the societal and the citizens/civic competences.

Educators' support

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute supports strengthening of competences of teachers, trainers and youth workers by preparing of educative training courses and by creating of methodological publications, manuals and so forth.

IUVENTA's accredited educations in the year 2016:

- creation of the local youth policies within the self-government
- youth participation within the intersection of both, the formal and the non-formal education
- REFRESH – education of the coordinators within the Pupil School Councils
- Support of active youth participation within the public life,

Support of the Pupil School Councils – methodological materials:

- A Year with a Pupil School Council ([Miháliková et al 2011](#))
- The third wave – Professional support of the Pupil School Councils ([Bošňáková et al 2006](#))

Support of participation within self-government

- The Power of the Youth ([Mičicová et al 2012](#))
- The Reading Book for Self-governments) ([Miháliková et al 2005](#))

Various youth work providers – mostly children's and youth organisations carry out diverse accredited educative training courses within the given field in the year 2016:

[Youth Council of Žilina Region](#):

- [Lecturer of educational activities for youth participation.](#)
- [Trainer of educational activities for the hate speech problems \(No Hate Speech\),](#)
- [Leader of Pupil School Council.](#)

Association of Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic

- [The Starter \(Štartér\)](#) - training course for the ambassadors of the Structured Dialogue

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

There is no single organisation/institution dealing only with providing information on democratic rights and values for young people in the Slovak Republic.

Several organisations and institutions deal with information for young people (including information on democratic rights).

- IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute is a seat of [Eurodesk](#) , which provides information from any area.
- ZIPCeM – [Association of Information and Counselling Youth Centres](#) in the Slovak Republic

Nine (9) [Information Youth Centres](#) (IYC/"ICM") provide information and counselling to young people in the regions (online counselling, personal counselling).

The Information Youth Centres and the Association of Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic are funded from the state budget in the framework of the Programmes for Youth (Programme SERVICE to the young, Programme VOICE of the young).

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

By one rope or the [Young can change the policy](#)

- ZIPCeM - Association of Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic
- a long-term project since 2015
- information and activation nation-wide campaign
- for pupils/students of the primary and secondary schools in bigger communities and towns,
- the project is a part of the national activities of the Structured Dialogue and supports its vision
- the meetings are aimed at the evaluation of the youth policy status based on young people's opinions and expectations; preparation of proposals/suggestions for the solutions and meeting the key-players/stakeholders
- the participants personal responsibility for following activities as well as mentoring and help/assistance from the side of so-called „ambassadors“ (i.e. young activists, leaders from other towns) represent an added value.

[Rights in young people's life](#)

- Youth Council of the Žilina County
- 2015 – 2016
- Information regional campaign and education for young leaders
- Assigned for secondary school students within the Žilina county
- The aim is to broaden young people's knowledge on their rights and their application in the practice

[Make decisions \(decide\) on Europe](#)

- the Centre for European Policy in co-operation with foreign partners
- 2016 – 2017

- the international activation project (funded from the Erasmus+) – meetings of young people, interactive seminars, simulation of the EU-institutions working/functioning, conference and other
- assigned for secondary school students in the Slovak Republic and in the Czech Republic
- the aim is to support young people’s dialogue with the politicians

In 2017 any national campaign targeted at the increase in young people’s participation in the elections was not organised.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

Online Living Library

- [EDUMA](#) non-profit organisation
- awareness-raising actions related to the theme “discrimination and exclusion
- 2016 – 2017
- the aim is to eliminate prejudices against groups endangered by exclusion.
- outcomes: personal video-stories (migrants, minorities, disabled, LGBT, fosterlings / nurslings from foster homes / children’s homes/ and others)

I am abNORMALLY fair

- [EQUITY](#) non-profit organisation
- public campaign involving well-known people from sport, show-business, fashion, TV etc.
- the aim is to point at the importance of equality and equity (equal treatment vs. equal approach) within diverse groups, often endangered by exclusion.
- outcomes: video-stories of well-known/famous people, contributions from students from the competition

Tell it to my eyes

- [Open Society Foundation](#)
- public campaign
- the aim is to fight hate speech in the Internet (expressions of hatred) and support of critical thinking as well as open and constructive discussion.

www.alehejtneskryje.sk

- [Open Society Foundation](#)
- public campaign
- the aim is to fight expressions of extremism within everyday communication
- outcomes: promotional videos and well-known/famous people’s stories within the theme “discrimination and intolerance”

nehejtuj.sk/

- [eSlovensko](#) non-profit organisation
- multimedia initiative for elementary and secondary schools
- the aim is education through facts and emotions – encounters with people having experienced discrimination, xenophobia or bullying (minorities, disabled people, LGBT, excluded communities and other)
- outcomes: [12 movies](#) (each dealing with a different theme of hatred) and a methodological handbook for teachers + DVD

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There is no official political framework or regulation concerning transparent communication of the policy-makers towards young people.

In 2016 – 2017 the Youth Council of Slovakia in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic will be implementing a pilot project financed from the European Social Fund (ESF) within the call of [the Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Development of the Civil Society](#) for support of partnership and dialogue between the public administration, citizens and non-governmental, non-profit organisations. The project will be tackling also the theme “communication within the implementation of youth policy between the policy-makers and young people themselves.

The theme “communication between policy makers and youth” is partly involved in several publications issued by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute focused on development of the self-governmental policy such as for instance “[Reading Book for Local Governments](#)” (Mihaliková et al, 2012), “[Power of Youth](#)” (Mičicová et al, 2012).

5.9 E-participation

In Slovakia there is no legal framework for support of e-participation of young people.

In 2016 there were several initiatives using Elections to National Council as the platform for simulation of elections for secondary schools students.

Študentské voľby 2016 ([Students’ elections 2016](#)), initiated by the [non formal group of secondary students](#). More than 800 schools were invited and 53 were actively involved.

Project “Elections and Youth” ([Voľby a mládež](#)) organised Youth Council of Žilina Region for young people from 13 to 20. From 6 980 students 2 179 took part in the project.

Association of Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic prepared [application for young people](#) for smartphones to use online services of Information centres.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

In 2018 Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport – Youth department will prepare analyses of legislation and proposal for better definition of local youth parliaments and youth councils, which currently exist as NGOs.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Young people in Slovakia do not like the fact that their schools do not prepare them for a practical life, they **lack the support of critical thinking and civic activism**, education in the field of financial literacy or presentation skills. 18% of young people from marginalized Roma communities **end their education without achieving lower secondary education (6.1)**. This is despite the fact that there are many tools and measures to support children and youth from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, children with learning disabilities etc. (6.3, 6.6).

Since the adoption of Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2011, several key actions have been implemented **to recognize the outcomes of non-formal learning** at national level - National System of Qualifications, National Qualifications Framework (6.4). Significant initiatives were implemented also in the field of **non-formal learning in youth work (6.9)**. Youth work was also the most effective platform for the development of innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly through the activities of the ESF National Project **KOMPRAKX – Competences for Practice (6.7, 4.7)**.

Media Literacy education has become more prominent in the education system since 2009. International Centre for Media Literacy was created at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, which integrates various independent projects and serves as a knowledge and education centre for schools, non-governmental organizations and general public (6.8).

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Young people in Slovakia regularly express their dissatisfaction with the quality of education and training. These shortages were identified in the framework of [the Structured Dialogue with Youth](#) in 2016:

- the methodology and way of functioning of the education system do not correspond to the current time and needs of young people,
- there is no support for the development of key skills such as critical thinking and active commitment to their surroundings and community,
- the education system does not provide enough practical skills as for example financial literacy, presentation skills and similar,
- foreign mobility is only opened for "privileged" students.

The problem of early drop-out in education and training in Slovakia is present mainly among children and young people from marginalized Roma communities. As many as 18% of Roma finish the compulsory education period without obtaining lower secondary education, e.g. without proper completion of elementary school. About a tenth of the population of the 16-26 year-old [Roma is going to end their education pathway early](#), without official certificat.

Foreign mobility of young people is mainly supported through the [EU Erasmus + program](#).

Organisation of the education and training system

Compulsory school attendance in Slovakia is ten years long, starting at the age of 6 and lasting up to end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of 16 ([the "Educational Act"](#)).

Information on formal education levels in Slovakia is available on [the Eurydice website](#).

Main concepts

Non-formal education is defined in Slovakia only within the framework of [the Act on Youth Work Support](#):

- non-formal education in the field of youth work is the further education of young people, young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers organized by educational entities in order to acquire new knowledge, practical experience and skills necessary for working with youth, enabling its participants to complement, expand and deepen their education.

The Educational Act defines concepts related to education

Of disadvantaged groups of children and young people:

- *a special educational need* is the requirement to modify the conditions, content, forms, methods and approaches in education and training for the child or pupil that arise from his or her health disadvantage or talent or its growth in a socially disadvantaged environment. These adjustments are necessary to develop the abilities or personality of a child or pupil and to achieve an adequate level of education and adequate inclusion in society,
- *pupil with special educational needs* is an individual who has diagnosed special educational needs. These needs are diagnosed by institution for educational counselling and prevention.

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport is the co-ordinator of creation and implementation of policies towards young people.

[Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth](#) serves as a platform for coordination of youth policies. (cross-ref 1.5.). [IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute](#) is responsible for administration of this platform.

[Committee for Children and Youth](#) is another mechanism of cross-sectorial cooperation, but it is coordinated by MLSAF.

Representatives of MESRS act as members of different working groups in relation to policies in [the field of culture, health](#) and others.

Governance

Governance of education and training system in Slovakia is managed at the state and self-government level (local and regional).

1. National level

[Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic](#) (MESRS) is responsible for creation and implementation of the state policy for:

- kindergartens,
- elementary schools,
- secondary schools,
- universities and institutions for higher education,
- school facilities,
- life-long learning,
- science and technology,

- state care for youth and sport.

The [Inspectorate of Education of the Slovak Republic](#) fulfils the function of the state control.

Institutions of the MESRS, responsible for individual areas of state policy in the field of education:

- State Institute for Vocational Training ([Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania - ŠIOV](#)): management of secondary vocational schools, creation of educational projects, provision of professional and pedagogical and educational activities and others.
- National Institute for Life-long Learning ([Národný ústav celoživotného vzdelávania - NÚCŽV](#)): monitoring and forecasting of training needs, the creation of tools, networks of advisory services and a network for the recognition of further education and others.
- Institution for Teachers' Education and Training ([Metodicko-pedagogické centrum - MPC](#)): methodological activities and further education of pedagogues and professional staff.
- [National Institute for Education](#) ([Štátny pedagogický inštitút - ŠPÚ](#)): development of curricula, provide the methodological and professional service for schools, promote innovative practices into the education system.
- [IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute](#) (IUVENTA - Slovenský inštitút mládeže): youth work outside of formal education system and a family and youth policies.
- [National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements](#) ([Národný ústav certifikovaných meraní vzdelávania - NÚCEM](#)): content and organisation of secondary school graduation, implementation of certified educational measurements at national level, preparation of international measurements in accordance with programmes where the Slovak Republic participates and others.
- [The list of the other institutions of MESRS.](#)

Other important stakeholders are also involved in making of the education policy:

- legitimate representatives of various expert and professional groups are members of working groups and advisory structures:

- [Slovak Teachers' Chamber](#): professional voluntary association of teachers.
- Association of Centres of leisure time activities ([Asociácia centier voľného času SR - ACVČ SR](#)): associates the employees of Centres of leisure time activities (youth work).
- Civic Association New Schooling/[Nové školstvo](#): reform of the education system in Slovakia.
- [Youth Council of Slovakia](#): represents the interests of NGOs that work with children and youth;
- [Student Council for Higher Education of the Slovak Republic](#) represents the interests of students from universities;
- [Association of the Information and Counselling Youth Centres in the Slovak Republic](#): information and advisory services for young people.
- [Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organisations](#): support for volunteering in extracurricular activities, education and [volunteer education within the curriculum](#) and others.

2. Regional and local level

Municipalities have the competence to set up and cancel schools and schools facilities([Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-government](#)):

- elementary schools

- elementary art schools,
- kindergartens,
- school clubs for children,
- youth centres/centres of leisure time activities,
- school canteens,
- language schools as a part of elementary schools,
- centres for school services,
- school dormitories.

The Offices of Self-governing Regions have the competence to set up and cancel

- secondary schools,
- elementary art schools,
- language schools except those at elementary schools,
- school dormitories,
- school canteens,
- centres for school services,
- schools in nature,
- youth centers/centres of leisure time activities with the territorial jurisdiction of the self-governing region

Self-governance at the school level is managed by:

- Council of the school or council of the school facility - initiative and advisory bodies to promote the interests of pupils, parents, teachers and others.
- Municipality school council – in municipalities where there are at least three school districts
- Territorial school council – at the level of self-governing region.
- Student school council - authority to represent pupils and their interests in relation to school management.

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

There is no ELET-related strategy at national level. This is due to the low [number of early school leavers in Slovakia \(6.9%\) compared to the EU average \(12.7%\)](#).

Partly, the ELET topic is dealt within the [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Inclusion 2020](#) as well as in the [Updated Action Plans of the Slovak Republic's Strategy for Roma Integration for period 2016 -2018](#)

Within the age range of 20-64, 75% of the majority population achieved the secondary education as the highest level of education. Among Roma population, this share is only 18%.

Action plans were prepared by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities.

The implementation of measures in the field of education is managed by MESRS, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and other institutions.

Monitoring of the implementation of the strategy is ensured by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.

Global goal for the field of Education:

- reduce differences in educational attainment among Roma compared to the average of the population by improving access to education for children from marginalised Roma communities /pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment to quality education at all levels of education.

Selected planned measures:

- increasing the participation of Roma children in pre-primary education,
- support for variable early childcare programmes,
- support for a full-day education and training system,
- second chance schools (termination of education by alternative forms),
- increasing financial support to schools where there is a higher proportion of pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment - in particular support for pedagogues and pedagogical assistants,
- to promote the smooth transition of pupils to secondary education,
- providing scholarships,
- education in the Romani language,
- qualified and sensitive diagnostics of Roma pupils atc.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

No measures are created specifically aimed at the issues related to ELET.

MESRS announced the call for proposals "Do not disqualify YOURSELF!/ [NedisKVALIFIKUJ SA!](#)" aimed at promoting life-long learning, including education programs to complement basic and /or lower secondary education.

Call for proposals in the framework of Operational programme Human Resources under European Social Fund.

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

There are no specific measures in Slovakia to address ELET issues through non-formal education and informal learning and quality youth work.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

There is no cross-sectoral cooperation in the respective field in Slovakia.

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

An overview of the system for evaluating the results of non-formal education in Slovakia is available on the [Eurydice website](#).

Academic validation in the context of non-formal education and informal learning.

[National Qualification Framework in the Slovak Republic](#) is one of the outputs of the project „Creation of National qualifications system“ (ESF, 2013 – 2015).

[National Qualifications System](#) contains 1,000 qualifications that have a defined qualification standard (knowledge, skills, competencies), evaluation standard and methodological guidelines.

[Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2011](#) and [Action Plan for Lifelong Learning 2011](#) are the basic frameworks for validating the results of non-formal education in Slovakia.

MESRS has established [Information system for Further Education](#).

- eligible institutions for verifying professional competences in the framework of individual qualifications
- currently there are 29 qualifications.

Validation of the results of non-formal education in youth work

Competencies acquired in the youth work are confirmed in the framework of [the Act on Youth Work Support](#).

The responsible institution is the MESRS through the Accreditation Committee for Youth Work ([Akreditačná komisia pre špecializované činnosti v práci s mládežou](#)).

Accredited educational establishments issue a certificate of acquired professional competence for the participants in the educational programs, upon successful completion of the examination.

Professional competence to perform specialized activities in the field of youth work is a set of expert knowledge, skills and habits obtained by study at an educational establishment or by a professional practice

The target groups of non-formal education programs include youth workers, youth leaders and young leaders.

Information and guidance

There are various networks in Slovakia that provide information and advice on lifelong learning (including validation of non-formal education and informal learning):

- a network of advisors at the Information and Counselling Centres at the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
- career counsellors at secondary vocational schools trained under the National ESF project "Vocational Education Development")
- tutors at the Counselling Centres for Adults ([Poradenské centrá pre dospelých](#)) set up by the [National Institute of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic](#) (Národný ústav celoživotného vzdelávania).
- employees of Information Centers for Youth e.g. [in Banská Bystrica](#).

Counselling Centres for Adults

- 8 centres in municipalities of Trnava, Trenčín, Žilina, Levice, Brezno, Prešov, Spišská Nová Ves and Michalovce.

Target groups:

- pupils and students, employed staff, unemployed people, parents on maternity leave, seniors

Services:

- information and counselling in the field of lifelong learning, labour market needs, current employers' needs, assistance in searching for information, analysis of educational needs, etc.
- professional guidance and education: counselling in individual or group form, focused on career, personal development, and other,

- career counselling: diagnosis of personality, career profile preparation and implementation, preparation for the labour market, analysis of educational needs, monitoring of competencies, and other and
- preparation and implementation of soft skills: training of social and communication skills, personal development education, IT skills, and other.

Quality assurance

[National Qualifications System](#) is the basis for assessing the quality of competences acquired in the process of non-formal education and informal learning.

- a public register of 1000 qualifying cards with a description of qualification and evaluation standards,
- qualification and evaluation standards will allow comparison of learning outcomes achieved through different learning pathways,
- facilitate comparisons of qualification levels in the Slovak Republic with other EU countries,
- the links between formal and non-formal education,
- qualifications in the system are described in a form of standardized learning outcomes.

More information on quality assurance can be found in 11.3 Quality Assurance in Adult Education and [Eurydice portal](#).

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

In the [Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2016-2020](#) as well as in the [National reforms programme 2017](#) the Government proclaimed support for increasing mobility of students and university staff between Slovakia and abroad.

Also [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020](#) underlines importance of youth mobility.

Strategic goal 2 in Youth and the World section: "Recognizing the benefits of mobility"

- promote and recognize the benefits of youth mobility and mobility of youth workers and develop international cooperation to promote the transfer of know-how from other countries, increase the quality of youth work, become aware of the link between local action and its global impact

Comprehensive information on the possibilities of Slovak students to study abroad (including scholarships provided by the MESRS or the Ministry of Education of the other partner country) is provided by the [Slovak Academic Information Agency SAIA](#).

More information about the support of international mobility in Slovakia:

- [Eurydice](#)
- [Mobility Scoreboard platform for both higher education and initial vocational education and training](#)
- [Cedefop platform for IVET indicators](#)

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

[Erasmus+ programme](#) is the most important tool to promote learning mobility in Slovakia.

- the part of the program dedicated to Education and Training is administered by the [Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation](#).

Within the framework of Vocational Education and Training:

- Internship for pupils 2 weeks to 12 months
- in a business compaby or other workplace (e.g., in a public or non-governmental organization)
- in a vocational school with practical training in the partner company

The grant covers all costs, including language support, special needs and extra costs.

Within the framework of University studies:

- Studying abroad
- study at a university abroad over a period of 3-12 months,
- full Master´s degree study abroad,
- Internships for students - a practice for students in a company abroad in the length of 2-12 months

The grant covers life and travel expenses.

National Scholarship program of the Slovak Republic

- students 3-10 months at university abroad
- PhD students from 1-10 months at a university or research institute abroad
- Post PhD studies 3-6 months at a college or research establishment abroad

The programme is open to students from Slovakia as well as from abroad.

The grant covers life and travel expenses.

Visegrad Scholarship Programme

- support for Master and Doctoral Studies in the V4 countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovak Republic and Hungary), the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership

The grant covers the student's cost of living, the possibility of requesting reimbursement of travel costs.

Central European exchange programme for university studies (CEEPUS)

- supports academic mobility in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe.
- short-term stays for students and doctoral students including the elaboration of bachelor, diploma, or dissertation work (1 - 2 months),
- lecture and research stays for university teachers (1 month).

The programme is intended for candidates from Slovakia as well as foreigners.

The grant covers the student's cost of living, the possibility of reimbursement of travel costs on the request.

Action Austria – Slovakia (Akcia Rakúsko- Slovensko) cooperation in science and education:

- bilateral program to promote cooperation in the field of higher education, science and research
- joint financing of the MESRS and the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy of the Republic of Austria

Scholarships:

- for students working on diploma theses 1 - 3 months,
- PhD students 3 - 6 months,

- Post-PhD students 3 - 6 months,
- Short-term stays max. 3 days,
- Summer language course

The grant usually covers subsistence and living costs. In some cases, for language courses, participants pay travel expenses themselves.

Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

At national level, there is no mobility promotion program in the given area.

The most important tool for promoting mobility in the context of non-formal education and youth work is the [EU Erasmus + Youth and Sports](#).

- administration is managed by [IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute](#).

Quality assurance

At national level, there is no quality assurance system for learning mobility outside the Erasmus + regulations.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

Target groups

The "Educational Act" defines the following categories of children with [so called special educational needs](#):

- children / pupils with health disabilities
- children / pupils with disabilities
- children / pupils sick or physically weakened
- children / pupils with developmental disorders
- children / pupils with behavioural disorder
- children / pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment
- talented children / pupils

Measures to strengthen social inclusion by type of special educational needs:

Education of children / pupils with health disabilities takes place:

- in special schools
- in special classes
- in classes or educational groups along with other children / pupils

Education of children / pupils with health disabilities is done through:

- special educational programs
- individual education programs that respect special educational needs.

Special measures taken during the educational process:

- involvement of teachers `assistants,
- special learning and compensatory aids,
- textbooks and specially adapted texts,

- the school provides services free of charge.

Education of talented children / pupils is taking place:

- in schools with a focus on the development of intellectual talent,
- in schools focusing on the development of artistic talent,
- in schools with a focus on the development of sport talent.

Education of children / pupils from socially disadvantaged environment:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport offers financial contribution for:

- wage or salary of teacher's assistants
- equipment - didactic techniques and teaching aids
- participation of pupils in activities such as trips, excursions, language courses, sports training, schools in nature and other activities
- education and training of pupils in specialized classes
- prevention the transmission of contagious diseases
- an extra charge for working with pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment

School facilities for educational counselling and prevention carry out:

- psychological services,
- pedagogical services,
- special pedagogical activities, including speech therapy and medical-pedagogical activities
- social activity aimed at optimizing the educational, educational, psychological, social and career development of children from birth to completion of vocational training

Advisory services are also provided to legal guardians of children and pedagogical staff.

All measures are funded from the state budget through the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

More information [Eurydice](#): Special Education Needs Provision within Mainstream Education in Slovak Republic.

Education of school staff is provided by [the Institution for Teachers' Education and Training](#) through educational programs aimed at promoting inclusive education such as:

- Creation of individual educational programs
- Development of competences of a pedagogical employee for work with pupils with special educational needs in vocational training
- Components of systematic school development planning in the context of the creation of an inclusive environment
- Innovative education in the field of inclusive education for children from marginalized Roma communities.

The largest financial instrument to support non-formal education with the priority of supporting disadvantaged groups is the [Programmes for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020 by MESRS](#).

Subsidies are primarily allocated to activities that support young people with fewer opportunities, e.g. young people who are disadvantaged by educational, social, physical, psychological, economic, cultural reasons or because they live in remote areas.

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

The topic of social cohesion in formal education

Education in the field of social cohesion and equal opportunities is part of the Citizenship education curriculum (ISCED 3A) and Ethics (ISCED 1, 2 and 3).

Integrated theme Multicultural education is an obligatory part of higher secondary education.

Its aim is to promote respect for cultural diversity within formal education.

Multicultural education can take place in form of:

- an integrated part of suitable subjects
- separate subject
- project,
- course.

The choice of how and when to implement integrated themes is the responsibility of each school.

An indispensable condition for efficiency and informal implementation of the topic is the use of activating, interactive learning methods.

More information can be found in „[Eurydice report on Citizenship Education in Europe](#)“:

Preparation of teachers and youth workers

[Institution for Teachers' Education and Training](#) prepares teachers through special trainings such as:

- Development of competences of the teaching staff in the field of prevention of extremism
- Using multicultural education against prejudice and racism

[National Institute for Education](#) prepares training programmes for teachers to promote inclusive education:

- *[Intercultural education in elementary school with pupils from Roma communities implemented in 2017](#)*. Training is continuation of project co-financed by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the State Budget of the Slovak Republic *[Innovative education for primary school teachers in order to increase their intercultural competences in the educational process of Roma pupils \(2013-2016\)](#)*.

Erasmus+ [Educating teachers in the area of inclusion of children of foreigners](#) (2016 - 2018). The main objective of the project is the creation of a methodological framework supporting teachers in the educational process and the inclusion of children of foreigners in schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Italy and Greece.

Open call: [Regional and multicultural education for pupils belonging to national minorities 2017](#). Call of MESRS to support multicultural education and global development projects. [12 supported projects in 2017](#) amounting to 20 790 €

National project financed from [ESF "Praktik" \(2013 -2015\)](#) has prepared the Thematic Education Program "The World Is Diversified - Supporting and Developing Education for Citizenship and Multiculturalism through the Experience", which supported the development of competences of youth workers and youth leaders in multicultural education.

The development of the competencies of youth leaders and youth workers in this area was also supported by [ESF project "KomPrax"](#) through advanced training:

- Methods and techniques of work with disadvantaged youth groups

- Mediation skills, self-advocacy and protection against discrimination

IUVENTA - The Slovak Youth Institute also provides [some of these trainings in 2017](#) for new youth workers.

Other examples of activities to promote social cohesion of NGO also in part [4.5 Initiatives Promoting Social Inclusion and Raising Awareness](#) and [4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion](#).

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

This area is not fully covered in Slovakia by any specific subject in formal education.

The integrated theme Project creation and presentation skills is a compulsory part of the [State educational programme for higher secondary education ISCED 3A](#) develops some competencies supporting innovation skills.

The goal of this integrated theme:

- learn about self-management, team management, creating the work schedule,
- get the necessary information, process them,
- look for problems that need to be addressed, name them appropriately,
- hypothesis creation, verification, and others.

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

[National ESF project Komprax](#) by IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute in 2011-2015, was the largest national initiative to support non-formal education in youth work.

Most of the children and youth organizations supported by the [Programmes for Youth](#) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic support innovation skills in their work.

However, there is no formal monitoring of the impact of these organizations' activities on the development of individual competencies. Activities of the [Slovak Debate Association](#) are an example how to support critical thinking, problem solving, argumentation, etc. Association organizes discussion clubs at primary, secondary and higher education institutions and other activities, as for example [Summer Academy](#).

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

Conception of Media Literacy Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning ([Konceptia mediálnej výchovy v kontexte celoživotného vzdelávania](#))

- approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2009 without time restriction.

The goals of Conception of Media Literacy Education:

- increasing the media literacy of all age groups of the population,
- updating media literacy competences, responsible and critical access to media,
- efficient use of media and new communication technologies,
- teach individuals "learning to learn" to use the media and new means of communication in favour of their personal and professional growth,

- protecting children and adolescents from the threats posed by media and new communication technologies in the content offer or the way of communication,
- the protection of specific groups (specific groups of adult population, seniors) from content and services that might pose a threat and those who can't evaluate the threat due to the inadequacy of media literacy,
- to prevent forms of generational "communication and information lag" (parents, teachers, specific population groups, seniors, etc.),
- to prevent any form of official exclusion due to a lack of media literacy.

Target groups: children, pupils and adults.

Competencies within the state administration in the field of media literacy education are reallocated between the resorts of culture and education.

Important subjects of media literacy education and their competencies:

- Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic - control of fulfilment of tasks and effectiveness of media literacy education,
- [International Media Literacy Centre](#) established by the [Faculty of Mass Media Communication](#) of University of Cyril and Methodius in Trnava,
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic - media literacy education in the field of formal education, accreditation of programs, education of pedagogues and others,
- colleges, universities - teacher education, conceptual activities, research,
- regulatory authorities - evaluation of the development and regulation systems in the media field with a focus on the protection of minors from specific media content,
- [Slovak Audiovisual Fund](#) - supporting activities,
- public media - production of programs, media education projects and others,
- church, civic associations, independent experts - project creation and implementation, education, research and others,
- wide public, target groups, parents - participatory activities such as declaring needs, suggestions, reporting illegal content and services and others,.

The media education assessment in practice is realized by the International Centre for Media Literacy, for example [Media and Information Literacy Policies in Slovakia](#) or [Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28, Annex 4 – National responses to the questionnaire \(2016\)](#).

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

Media literacy education:

- is an integrated theme within the State Educational Program for Primary and Secondary Schools, including vocational education,
- can be taught in various learning areas such as language and communication, art and culture, mathematics and work with information, man and values, man and society,
- according to the decision and the possibilities of the school, media literacy education can also be a separate subject, course or other school activity (e.g. short-term school campaign).

Topics of integrated media literacy education in ISCED 1/[Štátny vzdelávací program, Mediálna výchova ISCED 1](#) (examples)

- computer and Internet – understanding of risks, etc.,
- the reliability of advertising, etc.

Topics of integrated media literacy education in ISCED 2/ [Štátny vzdelávací program, Mediálna výchova ISCED 2](#) (examples)

- media reality and its effects on the personality
- Boulevard (yellow press) and serious media
- Manipulation in media, etc.

Topics of integrated media literacy education in ISCED 3 / [Štátny vzdelávací program, Mediálna výchova ISCED 3](#) (examples)

- critical and active use of media and their products
- specifics of current media
- media impact on the life of the individual and society, public opinion, media and their relations to politics (linking media content with politics)
- the use of new media, the danger of abuse and effective protection, and others.

Goals of media literacy education ISCED 3 for vocational training schools are visible in the defined key competences of the graduate such as the ability to interactively use the knowledge, information and communication technologies, communicate in the state and mother tongue.

Vocational education graduate should know:

- to identify, search, sort and process various information and information resources,
- to assess the credibility of various information sources,
- to critically evaluate the information obtained,
- to formulate, observe, sort and measure hypotheses,
- to verify and interpret the data obtained, etc.

Training of teachers in media literacy education:

- Institution for Teachers' Education and Training e.g. "Integration of Media Literacy Education into School Practice"

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

- Programmes for Youth of Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (MESRS)
- Public and opinion-forming media
- Activities of NGOs, non-profit organizations, foundations and others

Programmes for Youth of MESRS

- Programme "Priorities of Youth Policy 2018" ([Výzva na predkladanie projektov 2018](#))
- Financial subsidies for projects to support the development of critical thinking and media literacy of young people at risk of radicalism, xenophobia and extremism, in order to form attitudes and eliminate hate speech.
- [11 projects supported in 2018](#), approximately 98 000€ allocated,
- Themes and activities of supported projects: developing critical thinking and the ability to critically evaluate media information, the processing of own media content with positive values, peer activities and others.

Public and opinion-forming media

Radio and television of Slovakia (RTVS) 2010:

Media spies ([Mediálni špióni](#)) - 40 parts cycle focused on media literacy education for young people with their direct participation.

Activities of NGOs, non-profit organizations, foundations and others

NGO ŽABKY

- accredited educational programs for pupils, pedagogues,
- educational materials What I know about the media (for pupils) ([Čo všetko viem o médiách - žiak](#)), Media Literacy Education through Game for Teachers ([Mediálna výchova hrou pre učiteľov](#)), Media Education through Game for parents ([Mediálna výchova hrou pre rodičov](#)).

Salesian Media School /[Mediálna škola](#)

- accredited educational program.

Children of Slovakia Foundation ([Nadácia pre deti Slovenska](#))

- educational program [Online generation](#)

[Portal detinanete.sk](#) (Children on Internet)

- Orange Slovakia
- a project focusing on children's safety when using the Internet
- various educational and advisory materials for children and adolescents, parents and teachers.

[Portal Family and media](#)

- Catholic University in Ružomberok.
- The issue of parental media education.

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

[eSlovensko](#)

- the leading non-profit organization in Slovakia with the aim to raise awareness of the risks of new media,
- in partnership with the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic,
- awareness raising, counselling and educational activities,
- target groups: children and youth, parents and educators,
- products: websites, publications, flyers, campaigns, and more,
- seminars and workshops at elementary and secondary schools,
- free phone line for cyberbullying, reporting illegal and dangerous content on the Internet,
- [Children in the Net](#) - A Guide for parents, teachers and youth workers about the main threats of children and young people in virtual space and how to protect them.
- [SHEEPLIVE](#) series of animated fairy tales at spreading the awareness about risks of the internet, mobile phones and new technologies.

Thematic websites:

- [zodpovedne.sk](#) - Slovak Safer Internet Centre.
- [pomoc.sk](#) website providing advice for responsible use of the Internet, mobile communications and new technologies.
- <http://nehejtuj.sk/> - website on prevention of hate, xenophobic and racist behaviour on the Internet, but also in everyday life of children and youth.

- kybersikanovanie.sk - website created for interactive programme for schools on cyberbullying prevention.

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

Information system for further education ([Informačný systém ďalšieho vzdelávania](#)), MESRS provides those who interested with information on educational activities leading to extension of qualification (in individual regions of Slovakia).

[Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic \(AIVD\)](#)

More than 100 members – providers of educational opportunities out of the system of formal education.

Awareness raising initiatives

Annual event "Week of Life-long Learning" ([Týždeň celoživotného učenia](#)),

- initiative of the Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic,
- IUVENTA promotes educational opportunities within the framework of the European Union Erasmus + programme part Youth and Sports.

Information on youth work providers of non-formal and informal learning opportunities and some awareness raising initiatives on learning opportunities in youth work - see 10.7. Raising awareness about youth work.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

Learning Slovakia

In 2017, a major nationwide debate was held on the [National Education and Training Program "Learning Slovakia"](#)

- 70 aims for the next 10 years of development of educational system in the Slovak Republic.

Main proposed changes:

- To extend compulsory education to 11 years and establish its beginning at the age of 5 years
- To adapt education to the needs of the child, its talents and abilities
- To incorporate soft skills into educational programs
- To create teaching situations where pupils learn from each other within the framework of curricula
- To allow adaptation of the curriculum at the level of individual classes or teachers.
- To liberalize the market with teaching books and retain the choice of textbooks, teaching materials and teaching aids for schools

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Slovak young people are affected by health threats such as the **lack of physical movement, overweight, smoking** etc. Especially endangered are young people with poverty background (7.1).

Several strategic documents have been adopted to coordinate **the fight against alcoholism, drugs, obesity and promotion of healthy lifestyle**. Regional Public Health Authorities as network of public institutions play an important role in promoting public health in the regions (7.2).

Slovak schools participate in international projects as **Healthy School, School Fruit and Vegetables programme and School Milk programme** (7.4). The topic of mental health is no longer taboo. A tradition of regular campaigns and collections to promote mental health has been established thanks to the **League for Mental Health of the Slovak Republic** (7.5).

General practitioners, social workers, teachers as well as every citizen in the city and municipality are obliged **to report situation where the child's health is endangered**. Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family investigate individual cases and take appropriate measures to protect the child (7.6).

The development of sport, youth fitness and physical activity is in agenda of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. **Sport and work with talented youth is supported by a separate law and strategic documents**. The school facilities - youth clubs (CVČ) devote 80% of their activities to sports. **Physical education is a compulsory subject in Slovak schools** (7.2).

Organization and promotion of healthy lifestyle projects comes from active non-governmental organizations and some well-known personalities, as for example Peter Sagan (7.3).

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

In Slovak Republic, there are no complex health studies specifically targeting the youth age category.

Partial information is provided by:

- population health surveys that include youth age groups but without specific outcomes exclusively for youth,
- few partial research studies on children and youth (e.g. physical development studies).

"Health Behaviour in School Aged Children" (HBCS - Slovakia) - research conducted on 11, 13 and 15 years old school pupils in school years 2005/2006, 2009/2010, 2014/2015 and 2017/2018.

Some findings (2014/2015):

- approx. 30% of 11-, 13- and 15-year-old boys and 11-year-old girls (over 10,000 school pupils) are experiencing two or more health problems (e.g. headache, abdominal pain, backache, irritability and nervousness, difficulty sleeping, sadness) more than once a week; for 15-year-old girls it's almost 50%
- approx. one third of school pupils reported fruit consumption on a daily basis., even lower percentage is in a group of 15-year-old boys.
- less than a third of pupils reported consumption of vegetables on a daily basis, the least consumption was at the group of 15-year-old boys.

- more than 30% of pupils consume sweets every day.
- the prevalence of over-weight and obesity among pupils did not exceed one tenth in groups of girls, in the groups of boys it ranged from 7% (11-year old) to 15% (15-year old).
- about half of the group of 15-year-old and more than a quarter of 13-year-old students reported their personal experience with smoking cigarettes.
- almost three quarters of 15-year-olds and more than a third of 13-year-old students reported having personal experience with drinking alcohol.
- the number of school children who reported daily physical activity ranged between 14% (15-year-old girls) and 37% (11-year-old boys).
- 14% of girls and 18% of boys aged 15 years admitted experience with sexual intercourse.

Childhood obesity:

[Overweight and obesity among school-aged children](#) (aged 7 to 18) ranges from 17 to 26%, with girls older than 15 years it ranges to 23% depending on age.

Several surveys show that the [number of overweight children and young people is increasing](#).

Physically inactive leisure time:

- 70% of schoolchildren and youth spend more than 4 hours of free time daily working on computers, being on the Internet, watching TV, playing computer games and entertaining themselves with mobile phones.
- regularly organized physical activity is reported only by every third schoolchild.

Smoking:

- nearly every third young person aged [18-30 is a daily smoker](#).

High accident rate of young people:

- 15-20 years old young people belong to the group with the highest death rate during the accidents.

Poverty threat = the highest risk group.

- the highest risk group is the population of marginalized Roma communities.
- this population group has worse health indicators than the general population (including life-expectancy).

Suicides and depression.

There is a growing number of suicides and depressive episodes in Slovakia in pre-adolescence and adolescence, but this topic is among the least surveyed.

Main concepts

The Slovak Republic's health policy is based on concepts and outlines of "Health 2020: European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being".

Three important concepts:

- public health
- health influencing factors (health determinants)
- living conditions.

All three terms are defined by [Act on Protection, Promotion and Development of Public Health](#) (§2, No. 1, letter b, c.).

Public health is "the level of society's health that corresponds to the level of provided healthcare, to the protection and promotion of health and to the economic level of society."

Health influencing factors (health determinants):

- world environment,
- work environment,
- genetic factors,
- health care,
- protection and promotion of health
- life-style.

Living conditions:

- physical, chemical and biological factors of the environment in relation to public health,
- conditions of housing, rest, physical culture, recreation, culture and other interests,
- transport,
- providing health care and other services, nutrition and diet, state and mode of use of items in contact with foods and subjects of common use,
- conditions for the healthy development, education, mental and physical development of children, youth and adults.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The main institution responsible for the state health policy is [the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic](#) (further MHSR), managed by the Minister.

The Ministry of Health provides state administration in the following areas:

- Health care,
- Health protection,
- Public health insurance
- Further education of health workers,
- Natural healing spas, natural healing resources, natural mineral waters,
- Price policy on product prices, services and acts in healthcare and others ([Statute of the ministry](#))

Activities of the Ministry of Health:

- setting-up of various expert committees as appropriate,
- law establishment for the health area,
- creation of strategic documents related to public health, health care and other areas within its sphere of influence, including documents focused on health of children and youth (e.g. [the National Children and Adolescents Care Programme in the Slovak Republic for 2008 – 2015](#)).

In the organisational structure of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, there is no department focusing exclusively on the health of children and youth. This topic is partially covered by the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic.

[Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic](#) (further PHASR) manages 36 regional offices.

The Department of Public Health and Hygiene of PHASR is dedicated to the groups of children and youth.

PHASR's Activities and operations related to the health of children and youth:

- control of the level of hygiene in child and youth facilities (e.g. school meals),
- monitoring of the quality of drinking water,
- monitoring of the epidemiological situation,
- research and projects realization (cross reference 7.4) to promote good health of children and youth
- organisation of campaigns to protect and promote health and well-being of children and young people,
- running of [36 regional public health offices](#) focusing on reduction of life-style risk factors.

[The National Health Information Center](#) (NHIC) monitors the health status of the population and its determinants.

[The Statistical Office of the SR](#) annually processes and publishes the statistics carried out by the MZ SR and the NHIC as well as the statistics on the environment.

The Relationship of National and Regional Health Policy in the Slovak Republic

- some competencies in Health policy transferred from the state administration.
- The Office of the Self-Governing Region has its own Department of Health in their structure.
- Responsible for healthcare organization in the region such as operating times of pharmacies, region coverage of specialized medical care, healthcare facilities, etc. (e.g. [Office of Žilina Self-Governing Region](#)),
- health policy at the level of the self-governing region does not deal with children and youth as a separate target group.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic cooperates with other ministries and central institutions in these areas of Health policy:

- Health education, promotion of healthy lifestyle and protection of life and health of children and youth – cooperation with the [Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic](#).
- Health and social policy, health protection at work, in identifying diseases requiring special care - cooperation with the [Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family of the Slovak Republic](#).
- National anti-drugs policy is the result of cooperation among the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Slovak Republic and other ministries involved in the implementation of preventive and repressive measures ([Government Council of Anti-drugs Policy](#)).
- protection of the health of the marginalized Roma communities - cooperation with the [Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities of the Slovak Republic](#). The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities implements several programs and projects that are also focused on health protection, strategic documents preparation and action

plans to promote the health and well-being of residents of marginalized Roma communities, it proposes concrete measures to promote good health of Roma youth.

Mechanisms of cooperation:

- Inter-ministerial amendment procedures, in which individual ministries comment on all draft laws and strategic documents to be adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic.
- The working groups and advisory bodies of the ministries and the Government of the Slovak Republic are another form of cooperation between different sectors that create and comment on some strategic documents such as Inter-ministerial Working Group for State Policy in the field of Youth and Committee on Children and Youth, (more information in 1.5), working commission on "[Scientific and Technical Services - Modernization of Physical Education and Sport](#)" - a project for the rehabilitation of the population with emphasis on children, youth and family.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

The topic of development and support of sport is within the competence of the [Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic](#).

- The Council of the Minister on Sports ([Rada ministra pre šport](#)) is an advisory, initiative and expert body of the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic in the field of sport. Mr. Ján Krišanda, chairman of the Judo Union, was appointed vice president.
- The National Sport Center ([Národné športové centrum](#)) is the organization of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and it is aimed at talented youth and athletes in general.
- As of 2012, the Government of the Slovak Republic has been appointing a Plenipotentiary for Youth and Sport ([Splnomocnenec pre mládež a šport](#)). This position is currently held by Mr. Dušan Galis. The function of the Plenipotentiary is defined by the Statute of the Plenipotentiary ([Štatút SVMŠ](#)). The Plenipotentiary administers a separate [grant program for promotion and development of sport](#).

The Slovak Republic has three main documents covering the development of sport and state policy in the field of sport:

- [The Act No. 440/2015 Coll. on Sports](#),
- [The Conception of State Policy in the Field of Sport - Slovak Sport 2020](#),
- [The Conception of Work with Sport- talented Youth for the period 2015 - 2020](#).

#The [Act on Sports](#) is aimed to promotion and development of:

- professional sport,
- amateur sport,
- organization of sport at national, regional and local level.

The Act on Sports deals with areas related to the sports organizations, national sport federations, sport representation, the responsibilities of various bodies and institutions, the information system in sport, financing in sport and others.

The Act on Sports requires regional and local authorities to develop their own Conceptions of Sports Development on their territory (e.g. the [Conception of Sport Development in Košice Self-governing Region](#), the [Conception of Sports Development in town Martin](#)).

Local and regional conceptions of sports development are dealing with measures for:

- development of sports at schools,
- sports opportunities for general public,
- support of elite sport,
- financing of sport clubs and sport organisations,
- sport opportunities for citizens with disabilities (e.g. mobility problems, etc.)
- sport infrastructure and sport facilities in the territory,
- information system on sports,
- public award on sport, etc.

The [Conception of State Policy in the Field of Sport - Slovak Sport 2020](#) (2012 - 2020) (hereinafter as "The Conception of Sport") is the basic document that deals with the topic of promoting sport and healthy lifestyle of children and youth in Slovakia in general (Sport and Health part).

The Conception of Sport deals with other topics such as:

- elite sport support,
- sport for people with disabilities
- sport funding and legislation,
- international cooperation,
- education in the field of sport, science and research.

The Conception of Sport has two strategic objectives:

1. Healthy and active society
2. Successful representation of Slovakia

Specific objectives and priorities include:

- Sport promotion as a recommended mode of active leisure time for the general public, especially for children and young people
- Improvement of the quality of sport representation and the preparation of sportsman like youth
- Revitalization and building of a sport infrastructure and building of a National Football Stadium
- Sport promotion for people with disabilities

The Conception of Sport provides:

- an analysis of situation in individual areas connected to priorities (sport promotion, sport representations, sport infrastructure, sport for people with disabilities etc.),
- defines responsible bodies, strategic objectives,
- proposes actions to achieve them.

Key elements of Sport and Health part and its proposed actions:

- Sport for all - health-oriented physical activities, e.g. construction and development of sports infrastructure for recreational sport activities of the population, organization of events and edification, support of local sport organizations in engaging the public in sports activities and others.
- Physical and sport education at elementary and secondary schools, e.g. to increase of the number of physical education hours at schools, more attractive content of physical education lessons, educating teachers in Physical Education innovations, national competitions and projects for school sport promotion and others.

- Leisure time Sports Activities for children and youth, e.g. support for sport clubs at schools, youth clubs, low-threshold and community centers, publishing of good practice examples, teachers and youth coaches appreciation, and others.
- Sport competitions for children and pupils of kindergartens, elementary schools and secondary schools, information for public about the offered sports activities through the portal www.skolskysport.sk, organization of sport competitions as motivation for pupils to be more physically active and others.
- Sports activities for university students, e.g. improvement of sport infrastructure at universities, creation of sport centres, promotion of collective sports and others.

Target groups are:

- public
- children, pupils and students
- athletic youth
- top athletes and representatives
- citizens with disabilities

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic is responsible for the Conception of Sports' coordination and implementation.

Strategic Partners are:

- governmental and state organizations e.g. various ministries in the area of their competence,
- non-governmental field: the Slovak Olympic Committee, the Slovak Paralympic Committee, sport unions and associations, sport clubs and physical education unions, foundations,
- local self- governments (municipalities) and self-governing regions,
- schools, physical and sport education teachers,
- families,
- private sector – sponsors/donors.

The implementation period for the Conception of Sport was set for the period 2013 to 2020.

#The [Conception of Work with Sport-talented Youth](#) for the period 2015 - 2020 is another document of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic that presents:

- system of care for talented athletic youth
- key changes in the system of care identification
- further actions drafting.

The Conception of Work with Sport-talented Youth does not specify the implementation methods.

Implementation and evaluation of the Conception of Work with Sport-talented Youth being taken into action is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. There are no documents on its monitoring and evaluation available yet.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

1. Youth centres, established by the local government, offer various activities (including sports) within the hobby clubs. In 2013 youth centres were organizing 12 717 regular clubs, with [more than 80% related to physical training and sports](#).

2. Promoting and supporting sport in the towns and villages of Slovakia is generally ensured through:

- sport clubs and organizations at the local level
- support for civic associations in the form of grants from local authorities budgets,
- organization of towns sports events such as Sports Games, Challenge Day, Town Olympiads, etc.

Each town/village has its own conception of sport development in its territory (see 8.2)

There is no comprehensive statistics, monitoring, or evaluation of the current situation on the topic of promoting and supporting sport in towns and villages.

Examples of national initiatives and projects:

To school on a bicycle ([Do školy na bicykli](#)): a national cycling coordinator's campaign under the auspices of the Minister of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport from 2015 supporting the use of bicycles by children and youth. In 2016, 135 schools and more than 27,458 pupils joined with regular bicycle rides to school. Promotional activities were provided by [Peter Sagan](#) and his wife.

Grab a Ball, not Drugs ([Zober loptu, nie drogy](#)): The project is being implemented since 2012 by the non-governmental organization [Zober loptu nie drogy](#) and its goal is to involve children and young people into collective ball sports. The project cooperates with more than 12 sports clubs in Slovakia, organizes informational and educational campaigns, competitions and other sporting events, it also supports young sportsmen and sportswomen.

Physical education in schools

In addition to special departments of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, three other organizations intervene in the development of physical education in schools:

- [National Institute for Education](#) - creation of a state educational programme,
- Institution for Teachers' Education and Training ([Metodicko-pedagogické centrum](#))- training of physical education teachers and creation of methodologies for individual subjects,
- The National Sport Centre ([Národné športové centrum](#))- administration of the school sport information portal.

Steering documents for physical education in schools:

State educational programme

School educational programme

The State educational programme for ISCED 0, 1, 2 and 3 is issued by the The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

The State Educational Programme determines:

- main compulsory content of education and its layout,
- conditions for education,

- objectives,
- key competencies,
- educational standards,
- profile of a graduate,
- framework for education plan and curriculum,
- principles for the creation of school educational programmes.

State Educational Programmes for ISCED 1 and 2 were innovated in 2015 by National Institute for Education.

The State Educational Programme for [ISCED 1](#) includes 7 training areas, including "Health and Movement". In schools it is implemented within compulsory physical and sport education.

The State Educational Programme for [ISCED 2](#) includes 8 training areas, including "Health and Movement". In schools it is implemented within compulsory physical and sport education.

The State Educational Programme for [ISCE3](#) includes 7 training areas, including "Health and Movement". In schools it is implemented within compulsory physical and sport education but also biology subject.

The time subsidies for subjects of physical and sports education are determined by the framework curricula that are part of the State Educational Programme. The school decides to divide the classes into school years.

- ISCED 1 - 8 lessons (45 minutes) of physical education within 4 years
- ISCED 2 - 10 lessons (45 minutes) of physical education within 5 years
- ISCED 3 - 8 hours within 4 years.

The increase of the number of hours of physical and sports education for all three levels of education is currently being discussed to 3 lessons per week.

The School Educational Programme is issued by school, it is in line with the State Educational programme. It also sets out a framework education plan and curriculum for individual subjects (including physical and sports education), hourly subsidies, educational and performance standards, methods, teaching forms and strategies, individual thematic units, evaluation methods, learning resources and others.

In school educational programmes, schools determine distribution of compulsory hours to the years set by the State Educational Programme.

Primary schools can set classes with more hours of physical and sports education - 12 hours of so-called Sports classes focused on the development of some sports.

There are no sports classes at high schools, talented students can have an individual plan and they are sporting at clubs outside of schools.

Methods and learning resources for ISCED 1 and 2 are illustrated on [the example of school](#).

Learning resources:

- gyms and utensils,
- video projection,
- multimedia,
- professional literature, journals, encyclopedias
- basic swimming training

- ski training.

Methods:

- games, individual kinetic exercises,
- exercises with equipment,
- collective sports,
- exercise in nature,
- sports training (swimming, skiing),
- relaxation exercises,
- competitions and matches,
- performance testing, and others.

Physical activities outside the curriculum but within the school day

Schools can organize physical activities outside compulsory school lessons, during sport days, club activities, engaging in competitions at regional or national level. Schools can provide facilities (playgrounds, gyms) for an unorganized children and youth sports.

For the activities, including sports, *education vouchers* (*vzdelávacie poukazy*) for elementary and secondary school pupils can be used. [The education voucher is worth 32 €](#) (for 2019), which is the annual state contribution to the pupil's interests in education financed by the MESRS. Vouchers are used to pay trainers, buy material, transport to competitions, and others.

The Conception of State Policy in the Field of Sport - [Slovak sport 2020](#) includes a part devoted to sport outside of school: the starting point (weak infrastructure) and goals and measures (financial support for sports clubs, analysis of children's and youth's involvement in extracurricular sports activities, support for the development of sport in primary and secondary schools).

Sports competitions and activities of the Slovak Association of Sports in Schools

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic annually announces program of sports competitions for schools. Sports competitions are coordinated by the Slovak Association of Sports in Schools ([Slovenská asociácia športu na školách](#)).

Competitions have district, regional and county rounds. In school year 2015/2016, 26 sports competitions for elementary schools (4,372 schools and 18,518 participants) and 19 competitions for secondary schools (274 schools and 895 participants) were organized. The results and information are provided by a special information portal [Sport in schools](#).

Slovak Association of Sports in Schools also organizes Sports Days ([Školské dni športu](#)). Unconventional competitions are aiming to attract pupils of primary and secondary schools that were not reached yet by simple physical activities as endurance relays, jumping rope, juggling with ball, kicking penalties.

Education and methodical guidance of physical education teachers:

Training of trainers and teachers of physical and sports education takes place at sports secondary schools and universities in the relevant higher education departments.

Further education and methodical guidance of physical education and sports teachers is provided by the Institution for Teachers' Education and Training (organizing courses, publishing papers and methodologies).

The National project OP Education [Qualification Improvement of Physical Education and Sports Teachers](#) was implemented by the National Sport Centre (an organization managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic), the

project was completed in 2015 and its target group was physical education teachers at elementary and secondary schools.

Project goal: to teach the teachers to lead an hour for pupils attractively by using modern methods and tools. During the project, 141 trainers were trained at Faculty of Physical Education and Sports of the Comenius University in Bratislava. They trained other 3 259 teachers in the later stage of the project. In the project, over 1,100 schools have been involved.

Sports activity at universities

The Conception of the State Policy in the Field of Sport - Slovak Sport 2020 is also devoted to sports at universities - it contains a description of the starting point and problems, objectives and specific measures, financial support for sport at universities, building of sports infrastructure and support of college sports clubs.

Collaboration and partnerships

Information on promoting cooperation and partnerships between schools and other sports organizations at national level is not available.

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

A single conceptual document focusing exclusively on healthy lifestyle, diet and nutrition, sexual health and the fight against risky behaviour of youth does not exist in Slovakia yet.

These themes are parts of various legislative documents - acts, strategies and/or action plans.

National Action Plan for Children for 2013 - 2017 (closed in June 2019)

a joint document of key parties involved describing agreed measures focusing on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Slovakia, including health and health care.

- the measures enlisted in the document are often part of other strategic documents and are included in the agenda of various institutions.

Some of the selected objectives of basic health care, disability and social services are:

- a) Improving children's and young people's awareness of health and promoting health lifestyles
- b) Support for the prevention of congenital disabilities in children

Goals and aims of National Action plan for Children were transferred to strategical document on development of Slovakia till 2030([Vízia a stratégia rozvoja Slovenska do roku 2030](#)).

There are some **strategic documents** including the theme of healthy lifestyle and healthy nutrition (targeting children and youth among various other groups):

- [Strategic Framework for Health for period 2014 -2030](#)
- [National Health Promotion Program in the Slovak Republic, 2005](#)
- [Updated National Health Promotion Programme, 2014](#)
- [National Action Plan on the Prevention of Obesity for period 2015-2025](#)
- [National Anti-drug Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the period 2013 -2020](#)
- [National Action Plan for Problems with Alcohol for period 2013-2020](#)

#Strategic Framework for Health for period 2014 -2030

- defines the strategy of the Slovak health policy,
- approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2013;
- its implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic,
- some measures are also addressed to other partners,
- The Monitoring Committee submits reports on implementation (various actors) once a year
- The Steering Committee meets once in 6 months (representatives of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic).

The Strategic Framework focuses on health care services, it does not mention specific target groups.

The document focuses on:

- performance analysis of the Slovak health care system,
- demographic development,
- strategic goals (integrated outpatient health care, inpatient health care, public health)
- key health sector areas of concern and tools for transformation,
- monitoring system
- source of finance and others

The objectives and measures were further elaborated into separate strategies, projects and programmes as for example [Implementation strategy - Integrated health care system](#).

#National Health Promotion Programme in the Slovak Republic

- prepared by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic.
- approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic
- it has been regularly updated since 1991
- the monitoring is set for a 5-year interval and is evaluated by the expert commission
- the programme focuses on selected health determinants.

Updated National Health Promotion Programme (2014)

The document focuses on:

A. Prevention and reduction of the incidence of infectious diseases.

I. Increase in the level of public awareness of selected health determinants:

1. Nutrition and Dietary habits
2. Physical activity
3. Tobacco, alcohol and drug addiction
4. Healthy work and lifestyle determinants:

a) working environment,

b) living environment.

II. Specific measures in relation to the most prevalent chronic non-infectious conditions:

1. Cardiovascular diseases
2. Diabetes mellitus

3. Selected cancerous diseases

B. Prevention and reduction of the incidence of non-infectious diseases

The objectives and activities outlined in the document are aimed at all age categories of the population; the youth is explicitly listed in the section Alcohol, drugs and tobacco products and in the part of Cardiovascular diseases (Healthy lifestyle promotion).

[National Obesity Prevention Programme for period 2015-2025,](#)

- the document was prepared by Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
- it was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2014

The document focuses on:

- Promotion of healthy start in life
- Promotion of healthier environment at schools
- Healthier decision-making process
- Marketing and commercial advertisements' reduction for the children and youth
- Informed families
- Promotion of physical activities

Monitoring and evaluation is planned for two periods in 2020 and 2025 via reports from individual ministries on the assigned tasks and measures.

[#National Anti-Drug Strategy of the Slovak Republic for 2013-2020](#)

- coordinating body is the Government Council for Anti-drug Policy
- document was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2013

The main strategic objectives are:

- contribution to measurable decrease in drug demand and drug addiction
- contribution to the suppression of drug crime rate, the reduction of the availability of illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances,

Three cross-section themes:

- coordination,
- international cooperation,
- research, information, monitoring and evaluation

Action plans result from the National Strategy containing specific measures (2013, 2017)

The strategy is monitored by the Department of Drug Strategy Coordination and Monitoring of Drugs, which is part of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic ([Odbor koordinácie protidrogovoej stratégie a monitorovania drog](#)).

[National Action Plan on the problems with alcohol use for 2013 – 2020](#)

- prepared by the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
- adopted by the Slovak Government in 2013.

It consists of three basic parts:

1. Alcohol consumption in the Slovak Republic and its harmful effects on health;
2. Alcohol Control in the Slovak Republic;
3. Tasks of the National Action Plan on the problems with alcohol use for 2013-2020 by sectors.

The document contains specific tasks (including the timeframe) for 9 ministries, most of them are assigned to the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.

Selection of tasks and objectives targeted at youth:

- Development of a cross-sectional study on the impact of health education in the prevention of alcohol addiction among young people aged 15-29.
- Improvement of school measurements, for example school equipment to prevent problems with early or excessive alcohol use and tools to promote a healthy lifestyle for pupils.
- Expert advice aimed specifically at the prevention of harmful alcohol use. Providing of individual or group professional care to young people at risk of alcohol dependence.
- Increase the effectiveness of prevention among young people in school education.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

Activities and projects at national level are based on the [National Health Promotion Programme of the Slovak Republic](#) (2014). It includes mainly measures focused on education and active promotion of healthy lifestyle.

Apart from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic and its [36 Regional Public Health Authorities Offices](#) are the main promotion bodies.

Regional Public Health Authorities cooperate with schools, Association of municipalities and cities and other partners through specific projects and programs (e.g. projects of Regional Public Health Office in [Banská Bystrica](#)).

International projects and initiatives with the participation of Slovakia

Healthy School

- the programme for primary and secondary schools,
- the objective: prevention and disease control based on health protection strategies, health promotion and health enhancement,
- over 10 years of existence,
- various activities in schools: discussions, all-day thematic activities, pupils' exhibitions, counselling, club activities, etc.
- Themes of activities: obesity prevention, mental health, dental prevention, education for marriage and parenthood (sexual education) and environmental education,
- financing of basic activities - each schools' own resources.

Calls from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic for financing of development projects focused [on health and safety in schools since 2015](#).

2017 objectives and priorities of the Call:

- forming the pupils' relationship to a healthy lifestyle,
- protecting the physical and mental health of pupils,
- improving the psychosocial environment in schools,
- prevention of risk behaviours: violence, bullying, truancy, aggression, manifests of extremism and radicalization of pupils, delinquency, drug addictions, abuses, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking).

CINDI Slovakia:

- international programme - WHO Countrywide Integrated Non-communicable Disease Intervention Programme,
- implemented by Public Health Authority of Slovak Republic for the whole Slovakia and in regions by Regional Public Health Authorities via their [Health Promotion and Education Counselling Centres](#)
- objective: reduction of total mortality of the population to cardiovascular and tumour diseases.

#Healthy Cities

- WHO international project,
- participation of individual towns and municipalities according to their capabilities,
- objective: to improve community health at the local level,
- activities: preventive activities, diverse events,
- participating towns have developed strategic plans, e.g. Healthy city Bratislava office ([Kancelária Zdravé mesto Bratislava](#)).

School Fruit and Vegetables programme ([Školské ovocie](#))

- part of School Fruit Scheme,
- implemented since 2008,
- regular supply of fruit and vegetables to schools,
- based on the National Strategy for Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Programme for Children and Students in Schools,
- activities: discussions, lectures, open days in orchards and others,
- financing: [Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic](#) and European Union funds,
- monitoring and evaluation within the [Agricultural Paying Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic](#) (Annual Reports/[Výročné správy](#)).

School Milk programme

- implementation in Slovakia since 2004 (the accession to European Union),
- objective: to contribute to the healthy nutrition and to create healthy eating habits of children and youth by increasing consumption of milk and dairy products,
- milk machines and dairy products (cheese, yoghurts...) are delivered to schools and children and young people are provided with dairy products with discount,
- financing: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic and the European Union funds,
- monitoring and evaluation within the Agricultural Paying Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic (Annual Reports/[Výročné správy](#)).
- in school year 2015/2016 - 7 suppliers, 2 303 schools, almost 300 000 children and young people participated,
- vendors provide the programme promotion through their own sites, e.g. [TAMI](#), RAJO etc.

In 2017, the School Milk and the School Fruit and Vegetables programmes are funded under one financial scheme ([Nariadenie Vlády SR č. 189/2017](#)).

Other selected projects and programmes implemented in Slovakia

New recipes for school canteens

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic publishes updated recipes for school meals,
- objective: to make school meals more attractive, trendy and still based on the principles of healthy nutrition.

#Week LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD (Týždeň: HOVORME O JEDLE)

- organized by the [Centrum rozvoja znalostí o potravinách n.o.](#) (Centre for Food Knowledge Development – non profit),
- nation-wide activities, competitions, artwork, literary contests,
- the aim: to increase the level awareness about food and good eating habits as part of a healthy lifestyle,
- with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic.

Health on the Table 2017

- call for proposals of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic
- [support for 15 projects](#) aimed at obesity prevention in order to motivate children and young people to change dietary habits.

Projects and initiatives of the Public Health Authority of Slovak Republic in 2016:

Promoting healthier environment in schools: performing state health surveillance in schools.

Providing education for school canteens' employees: training activities in the field of healthy nutrition, operational and personal hygiene, actual legislation and others.

[Monitoring of the physical conditions of pupils in primary and secondary schools in 2016:](#) .
Areas of study: organization of physical education lessons, number of exercising and not exercising children as well as reasons for not participating actively in physical education lessons.

Monitoring project: Addictive Substance Abuse (Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs) among Children and Youth in Slovakia (ESPAD – The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs).

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

- Health education is included in the curriculum for ISCED 1, 2 and 3 in the theme "Health and Movement".
- Objective is to recognize the need for lifelong health care that includes movement.
- Focus is on basic information on healthy lifestyle.

The theme "Health and Movement" reflects in particular the topic of physical and sports education but health and healthy lifestyle topics are also found in other school subjects at all three levels of education.

In cross-disciplinary themes (not having specific school subject but being incorporated into other individual subjects) at all three levels (ISCED 1, 2, 3) there is the Environmental Education - oriented on life-threatening situations (for example in nature).

In the first stage of primary education (ISCED 1), health education is incorporated:

- a. in the school subject Natural Sciences in topics:

- obesity,
- vitamins,
- good nutrition,
- drugs.

b. In the mandatory school subject Ethics in topic health care.

In the lower secondary education (ISCED 2), health education is incorporated in the mandatory subject Biology in topics:

- man and his body (body care),
- human health and life (health and illness, external health effects, internal health effects, addictive substances and their impact on health, lifestyle, healthy lifestyle).

At the third level of secondary education (ISCED 3), health education is included in a compulsory subject Biology in topics:

- basic prerequisites for health,
- reproductive health,
- civilization diseases,
- social pathologies,
- first aid basics.

The most common methods and learning resources used in health education are:

- *methods*: explanation, observation, projects, instructions, manipulation of subjects.
- *resources*: methodological materials, textbooks, didactic equipment, professional magazines, websites, videos.

Methodological materials on these topics are created by the Institutions for Teachers' Education and Training (organization of the MESRS), non-governmental organizations or various project initiatives.

Counselling and implementation of educational activities in schools in the field of prevention against social pathology (for example drug addiction) are also carried out by the 71 state Centres of Pedagogic and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (institutions of the MESRS) in each of the Slovak regions. Centres are founded by the "School Act" as the part of the counselling and prevention system in formal education. Centres employ psychologists, social and special pedagogues as well as social workers (List of Centres/[Adresár CPPPaP](#)).

Sex Education and Personal Relationship Education

Sex education is included in the curriculum for ISCED 1,2 and3 in the theme Education for Marriage and Parenthood

This topic is based on [the curriculum](#) approved by the MESRS.

The curriculum is conceived as horizontal and interdisciplinary to be incorporated into several subjects curriculum - ethics, biology, religious education and others.

The curriculum recommends schools to create the position of a coordinator for education for marriage and parenthood, who elaborates annual plan.

For ISCED 1, the areas of education are as follows:

1. Family education
2. The principles of healthy life
3. Negative consequences of smoking and other drugs on human health and behaviour

4. Gender Equality
5. The origin and development of a human individual
6. Changes in the body of a child during puberty

For ISCED 2, the areas of education are as follows:

1. Friendship
2. Cultivated adolescence and developmental roles of this period,
3. Anatomy and physiology of reproductive organs
4. Responsible approach to sexuality, self-esteem and respect for others
5. Negative influence of alcohol, drugs and relationship dependency on sexual and reproductive health of a man
6. Safe behaviour principles

For ISCED 3, the areas of education are as follows:

1. Marriage and family
2. Parenthood
3. Intimate relationships (sexual education)

Methods of sexual education

- age-appropriate: interpretation, interview, discussion, dramatization, problem method, brainstorming, teaching equipment, discussions with doctors, fairy tales, role plays, conceptual maps creation, didactic methods (for example Sunflower, Tree of Knowledge and others).
- in the area of sexual education, schools cooperate with Centres of Pedagogic and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (institutions of MESRS) established in each of the Slovak regions.

Peer-to-peer education approaches

In Slovakia peer-to-peer activities are used primarily as a prevention of drug addiction.

They are mainly organized by non-governmental organizations or by the Centres of Pedagogic and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (institutions of MESRS).

Slovakia without Drugs, NGO ([Slovensko bez drog](#)) gives lectures at primary and secondary schools where discuss about drugs, their use and the dilemmas that young people might have such as smoking and consumption of alcohol with their parents etc. The lectures have been held since 2010 with the participation of 207,305 pupils. Pupils can opt to take on themselves the anti-drugs sheriff's oath ([Sľub protidrogového šerifa](#)). They are committed not to take drugs, talk about the danger of drug addiction, help others to make such decision etc.

Collaboration and partnerships

The legal framework for cooperation in the field of health policy is established in each strategic document (see 7.2). Specific policy initiatives and, in particular, stable financial support for cooperation and partnership building are absent.

Cooperation with schools is the precondition of several activities of the [Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic](#).

Current example of building the cooperation between pediatricians, schools and families, especially from marginalized Roma communities with help of Health Assistants is supported by the "[Healthy Regions](#)" national project and initiative (Operational Programme Human Resources).

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

The prevention through counselling and information campaigns is part of most of the [national strategy documents](#). Some of the specific measures are also targeted at children and youth. There are initiatives covering all age groups - including youth.

In the health-care sector, the dissemination of information, education and healthy lifestyle promotion is handled especially by the [Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic](#).

The Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic implements its activities aimed at children and youth through the [Department of Children and Youth Hygiene](#).

However, there is no dedicated to youth-only contact point.

The Health Counselling Offices are operated by The Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic.

- being established from 1993 in 36 districts of Slovakia at the Regional Public Health Authorities within the Countrywide Integrated Non-communicable Disease Intervention Programme (CINDI) project.
- the objective is prevention and reduction of lifestyle risk factors
- clients are mostly younger and middle-aged people.
- counselling is based on examination of the main risk factors (body height and weight, waistline and hipline, biochemical blood tests and others).

Further specialised counselling centre can be also a part of Health Counselling Offices (e.g. counselling on healthy nutrition, optimization of physical activity, support of mental health and others).

Some of the Regional Public Health Authorities establish and run [Counselling Centres for Children and Youth](#).

Their focus is on children and adolescents whose blood cholesterol levels were detected high during preventive medical examinations. These counselling centres provide advice on dietary and lifestyle habits. Medical examination results and analysis are later the basis for professional counselling focused on a specific problem area of the family.

In the area of healthy nutrition, obesity prevention and treatment, there also exist specialized **Dietary Counselling Centres** (operating under the health-care sector) that employ mainly doctors.

Nutrition Counselling Centres

Nutrition Counselling Centres may be a part of the health-care services provided within health insurance package or by a private health-care provider. Dietary counselling centres and nutrition centres are also available online, mostly as [individual private initiatives](#) or via media initiatives that cooperate with experts.

Paediatricians and general practitioners are also advising their patients on healthy lifestyle.

Information campaigns include several projects as "To school on a bike" (see 7.3), "[Healthy cities](#)", "[Healthy Schools](#)" others.

The campaign aimed on healthy nutrition is for example "[Let's talk about food](#)".

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

There is no national strategy in Slovakia to address the mental health of young people yet.

Improving the mental health of young people

There is currently no national document aimed at improving exclusively the mental health of youth.

By 2015, the [National Mental Health Program](#) was implemented in Slovakia, that partially addressed the theme of mental health of children and youth. Currently, the program is no longer in continuation.

In the [National Action Plan for Children for period 2013 – 2017](#) one of the objective is to support children's health: "to strengthen the mental health of adolescents by informing and removing barriers in relation to pupils with behavioral disorders" The responsible body is the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.

In Slovakia there is only one [Clinic of Pediatric Psychiatry](#) in Bratislava.

The League for Mental Health Slovakia is a non-governmental organization whose projects are partially supported by state funds (through grant schemes), focusing on the mental health of children and youth as well.

The League for Mental Health Slovakia implements their **own projects** or in cooperation with other organizations:

- Online Counseling Centre of League for Mental Health Nezábudka/Forget-me-not

Anonymous and free Internet Advisory service where experts offer consultations. Young people often write to get advice on their psychological problems (in schools, families)

- [Information campaigns on mental health – Days of Forget-me-not](#)

Information campaign Mental Health Days is held on occasion of World Mental Health Day. The campaign is linked to a fundraising public collection. From the yield of the collection, the organization supports the improvement of care for people with mental disorders across all of the Slovak regions.

- [Project How to cope with crises and conflicts \(2017\)](#) organized in cooperation with the Faculty of Psychology of the Pan-European University for 600 secondary school students from 20 secondary schools – providing lectures and discussions for different student groups.
- [Zippy's Friends \(2014-2015\)](#) is a program of the British organization Partnership for Children organized and [held in Slovakia](#).

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

In Slovakia, the detection of children and young people at risk of health is incorporated into the legislative documents of various ministries.

Health-care sector

Act no. 577/2004 Coll. the Extent of Healthcare Reimbursed on the Basis of Public Health Insurance and on Reimbursements for Healthcare Services ([Zákon o rozsahu zdravotnej starostlivosti atď.](#))

The aim of the measures is early detection and intervention on children and youth's health protection.

- Preventive examinations by paediatricians (general practitioners) and specialists covered by health insurance and state contributions by age (§2)
- Responsible Institution: Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.

Social and legal protection of children and youth:

Act no. 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection of Children and on Social Curatorship ([Zákon o sociálno právnej ochrane a kuratele](#)).

The aim of the measures is to prevent, detect and protect children and youth at risk of harassment, neglect, abuse, addictions etc.

- protection measures are e.g. family notifications, the obligation to participate in professional diagnostics, participation at treatment, educational programs etc. (§12)
- responsible institution: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

Education:

The Act no. 245/2008 Coll. on Education (The School Act/[Školský zákon](#))

The aim of the measures is to provide comprehensive care for children and youth: psychological, diagnostic, special-pedagogy and educational counselling and care in the form of various measures such as:

- establishment of the Centres of Pedagogic and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (§132),
- establishment of the Special Pedagogic and Psychological Counselling Centres for children and youth with developmental disorders (§133),
- creation of special job positions in schools: educational counsellor, school psychologist, special needs school educator, curative care pedagogue, social pedagogue, prevention coordinator and others. These employees are in charge of early detection and provide their services in cooperation with the Centres (§132, 133).
- establishment and operation of special educational facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of pupils with disturbed or threatened psycho-social development such as diagnostic centre; re-educational centre, curative-educational sanatorium.
- responsible institution: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic

Stakeholders

Any resident who discovers that a child is at risk for any reason is obliged to report it to an employee in a municipal or district authority or at the section of social and legal protection and curatorship in the Offices of Labor, Social Affairs and Family.

Paediatricians and general practitioners who notice children and youth-threatening warnings at preventive examinations are to contact the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family's staff.

The same procedure applies to social workers (city and municipal staff) and **teachers**.

At the local self-governing authorities offices the **departments of social affairs** are established, where cases can also be reported. Offices' employees contact the local Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (branches in each district city and in detached workplaces)

Police, when being involved contacts the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Employees of **the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family** (social-legal protection and curatorship sections) shall carry out case-by-case investigations and propose a procedure within the framework of Act no. 305/2005 Coll. On Social-Legal Protection and Social Curatorship.

Guidance to stakeholders

The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic - [Department of Drug Strategy Coordination and Monitoring of Drugs, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic](#)

- Website [INGOFROGY.SK](#),
- created for teachers, parents, teenagers and drug prevention co-ordinators in schools Institution for Teachers' Education and Training (The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic)
- services to teachers and employees of schools and school facilities
- accredited teachers training for example for the Prevention Coordinators - [List of trainings and educational activities in school year 2017/2018](#) (for example health and movement, bullying, pedagogical diagnostics, coordinator of prevention of social-pathological behaviour, current problems in prevention of social-pathological behaviour, etc.)
- specialized [e-publications](#)

The Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic

- Education intended for employees of Regional Public Health Authorities
- Project: [Creation and implementation of the training system of staff of Regional Public Health Authorities in Slovakia](#) where e-learning models focused on the issue of children and youth health were developed also. Source: ESF, 2011-2013

Target groups

- Adolescents / teenagers
- Children and young people from poor families,
- Children and young people from marginalized Roma communities
- Children and young people with behavioural disorders

Funding

- From EU sources (structural funds - grant schemes and project support, national projects)
- From the state budget resources, the budgets of individual resorts (for example the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic)
- From the state budget assigned for Self-governing Authorities (for example for social services)
- From the resources in the non-governmental sector (for example international resources, private resources)

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

There are no initiatives on health care and health facilities improvement for the target group youth at present time.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

1. Drugs Decriminalization

- The part of the [Manifesto of the Government](#) announced the preparation of a new legislation on drug offenses,

- The Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic has set up an [expert group](#) to prepare the document on the drug quantity for personal use as a basis for later legislative measures (holding small amount for personal use as a penal offense not a criminal act).

2. Increase of Physical Education hours in schools

There is a longstanding debate on strengthening the Physical Education hours from two to three hours per week.

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Cultural policy in Slovakia is created in cooperation of **several ministries and sectors**. For the development of youth cultural policy the most crucial is the cooperation of education and culture administrative bodies. An important role is being held out also by the **local and regional authorities**. They are responsible for the establishment of cultural and youth centres and their strategies and supportive approach are playing an important role for youth cultural participation (8.2).

In Slovakia, **art schooling has a long-standing tradition** - especially basic schools of arts that are platforms for development of cultural and creative interest, as well as place for discovering talents and their enhancement. A special role for finding talents have **competitions and exhibitions** under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (8.5).

Cultural vouchers are measures to support the development of cultural competences of primary and secondary school pupils. Vouchers can be used to pay for cultural events, courses etc. Part of the state funding is allocated to the support of the **cultural activities of disadvantaged groups** and to support **culture of ethnic minorities** (8.3, 8.9).

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

There is no national research, survey or statistical analysis available in Slovakia to exclusively map the participation of young people on cultural life/events.

[The State Statistical Report on Culture - 2018](#) offers some partial information on the visit rates and the production of its institutions also for the group of children and youth.

- galleries in Slovakia had 579 701 visitors of which upbringing and educational events were for 65 749 children and youth,
- theaters played 5 988 performances of which 1 998 were targeted for children and youth,
- 1 018 concerts were played, of which 118 were organized for children and youth.

[Flash Eurobarometer European Youth 455 September 2017](#) showed that 8 % of young Slovaks have taken part in activities of cultural organizations at least once in 12 months.

Main concepts

Cultural and educational activities

- Mediation of cultural knowledge,
- Securing the access for the population to culture in its broadest sense,
- Enabling to discover individual talents and predispositions,
- Cultivates, forms and educates individuals, interest groups, communities.

Cultural heritage:

An achieved compendium of cultural values (of material and spiritual culture), knowledge of science and technology, general education and culture, philosophical views, ideals and moral norms, as well as the level of interpersonal relationships.

Special-interest artistic activities:

- Voluntary, non-professional activity of an artistic character,

- Arises from natural cultural need, out of one's own interest and within one's own free time,
- Can be of an individual or collective form,
- Helps to actualize and cultivates innate or acquired skills,
- The aim is regeneration, creation of artistic values and social actualization (Source: National Educational Centre).

Interest-based education (záujmové vzdelávanie) various educational activities outside of school education as is informal and non-institutional education of youth and adults including seniors.

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The **Ministry of Culture** of the Slovak Republic is the highest authority in the formation, creation and support of the culture and art field in Slovakia.

It manages following areas:

- official state language,
- the monument fund protection,
- cultural heritage and libraries,
- copyright law,
- cultural and educational activities and folk art production,
- presentation of Slovak culture abroad,
- relations with churches and religious communities,
- support of culture in specific regions and ethnic minorities' culture,
- media and audiovisual.

No department of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is specifically addressing the issue of youth culture.

BIBIANA (The **International House of Art for Children**) is an independent organization of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic that focuses on art work designed for all age categories of children and youth.

- art by non-traditional, experimental forms of work,
- interactive exhibitions supplemented by theater performances, creative workshops, music programs,
- in collaboration with students of the Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Performing Arts.

In 2017 BIBIANA became the seat of the national section of IBBY - **International Board on Books for Young People** of non-governmental organisation UNESCO. IBBY belongs to the **Centre for Children's Literature and Reading**

The National Culture Centre (Národné osvetové centrum -NOC) is a state organization of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

- professional methodical workplace for cultural and educational activities,
- promotes the development of cultural, educational and artistic activities in local and regional conditions, particularly in the following areas:
 - artistic interests activities,

- education in culture,
- editing and publishing activities,
- research and monitoring in culture,
- exhibition and presentation activities.
- **The Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities** ([Fond na podporu kultúry národnostných menšín](#))
- the competence to award subsidies in this area was transferred from the Government Office in [2017 by the Act](#);

The main purpose:

- to preserve, express, protect and develop the identity of the cultural values of national minorities,
- upbringing and education on the rights of national minorities
- to develop and support intercultural dialogue and understanding between Slovak citizens and citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups

The Fund manages about 8 million Euros a year.

Towns and municipalities are responsible for institutions related to culture and cultural heritage in terms of:

- operation of [cultural facilities and maintenance of cultural monuments](#),
- operation of [professional theatres and support for the theatre activities](#),
- [establishment of libraries](#) (scientific, academic, public, educational or special ones),
- [establishment of museums or galleries](#).

Towns and municipalities also ensure:

- cultural activities organization,
- preservation of local cultural values and heritage, traditional folk culture and others,
- training of volunteers and professionals in the field of culture,
- art work promotion (for example, local artists support) or support of creative workers and others.

Important actors of culture, artistic interests activities for children and youth at local level are:

- 439 Youth Centres (CVC, 2019 -2020) - [facilities in schools network](#) where various interest and hobby clubs are organized; 24% of hobby clubs focused on culture and art (2013),
- 360 [Primary Art Schools](#) (ZUŠ, 2018 -2019) where children and youth can develop their talent in playing musical instruments, singing, dancing, fine arts and many others.

Self-governing regions provide:

- creation, presentation and development of cultural values and [cultural activities at a regional level](#),
- creation and implementation of the program of social, economic and cultural development of the region's territory,
- cooperation with youth centres, community centres, local cultural institutions, educational centres in the region,
- more complex projects in the field of culture on the region's territory,

- training of cultural workers,
- coordination of various cultural competitions, shows and events,
- monitoring and evaluation of culture,
- statistical data gathering from the field of culture and others.

The main non-public actors

- profit and non-profit organizations,
- active individuals involved in the development of culture.

ANTENA - network of cultural centres and organisations, which operates in the field of independent arts and culture of Slovakia.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (or its institutions and organizations) are permanent members of [cross-sectorial mechanisms in youth policy decision-making](#).

- Inter-ministerial Working Group on the Youth State Policy ([Medzirezortná pracovná skupina pre štátnu politiku v oblasti mládeže](#)),
- The Committee for Children and Youth ([Výbor pre deti a mládež](#))

In these structures Ministry of Culture is responsible for youth policy in the field of culture and various implementation measures.

Long-term co-operation of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is also in the process of creation of the [State educational programmes of the Slovak Republic](#), where Ministry of Culture gives expert views and guidelines.

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

There is no comprehensive strategy in Slovakia in the area of culture and creativity focused on youth.

The area of development of youth culture and creativity is partially covered by several legislative documents:

- [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the Years 2014 – 2020](#) (see section 1.4),
- [Strategy of the Development of Culture of the Slovak Republic for 2014-2020](#) (further Strategy of the Development of Culture).

Scope and contents

The Strategy of the Development of Culture has 7 strategic areas of concern:

- education and training for the formation of cultural needs,
- preservation and accessibility of the cultural heritage,
- supporting original art works,
- financing of culture,
- the use of creativity and culture in the economic development of Slovakia,
- research in the field of culture,
- presentations of the national culture abroad.

For young people, the most relevant area is education and training for the formation of cultural needs:

- it maintains the cooperation between cultural institutions and educational institutions in cultural education in accordance with the State Educational Programme.
- the priority is to improve the support for Primary Art Schools,
- the support for out-of-school activities focused on culture,
- the support of a system of interest activities focused on arts and culture.

The aim is to increase the demand for valuable culture by strengthening the cultural needs of children and youth.

[The Action Plan for 2018 - 2020](#) on Strategy of the Development of Culture of the Slovak Republic specifies responsible authorities and financial resources to meet the objectives of Strategy of the Development of Culture.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

- The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and its organizations and institutions
- Authorities of self-governing regions,
- Churches and religious communities,
- The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic.

Revisions/updates

The Strategy did not undergo revisions/updates since its first introduction.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic contributes to better access of young people to culture through several systematic support-measures:

- [Cultural vouchers](#)
- [Subsidies on culture of disadvantaged groups](#) (including youth)
- [Free entry to cultural institutions](#) also for marginalized groups (including youth, families with children and others)

The Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities ([Fond na podporu kultúry národnostných menšín](#))

Programme: Promotion of the exchange programmes, stays, joint training events, knowledge and artistic competitions for children and young people from different national and linguistic groups.

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic

a) [#Cultural vouchers](#)

- an annual contribution to support visiting cultural events and activities,
- can be used to cover entry fee in theaters, galleries, museums, cultural centers or library, cultural courses and others.
- value of cultural voucher is 4 € for individual pupil or student (2019).

Objectives:

- support of the relationship of youth to cultural values,

- creating conditions for the wider participation of cultural institutions in the education youth,
- review of the children and youth's interests in culture and monitoring of cultural institutions' visit rates for this age category and others.

Target groups:

- primary and secondary school pupils
- primary and secondary school teachers

In 2019, there are participating 2860 primary and secondary schools in Slovakia.

[List of schools](#) that received cultural vouchers in 2019.

Funding

- the State budget of the Slovak Republic through the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

b) #Subsidies on culture of disadvantaged population groups

Objectives:

- support of cultural activities for disadvantaged groups,
- equal opportunities promotion, integration into society support, prevention and others,
- promoting education towards tolerance, strengthening social and family cohesion and development of the intercultural dialogue.

The program supports:

- cultural activities, interests in artistic activities,
- creation of periodical and non-periodical print media,
- non-formal education in the field of culture for people with disabilities.

[2019 - Project support](#) for different groups of children and youth

- children and young people with disabilities,
- children and young people from resocialization centres,
- children and youth at risk of poverty and social exclusion etc..

Activities supported within the program:

- organization of creative workshops, festivals, tours,
- artistic work and production, exhibitions and benefit concerts etc.

Target groups:

- all groups of population, including children and youth.

Funding:

- the State budget of the Slovak Republic
- 37 900 € (for projects including disadvantaged children and youth)

c) #Free entry to cultural institutions also for marginalized groups

- by the Directive of the Minister of Culture from 2013,
- the first Sunday of each month,
- 37 cultural objects, including for example [Slovak National Museum - Červený Hrad Castle](#).

The Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities

[Programme 4.4](#): Promotion of the exchange programmes, stays, joint training events, knowledge and artistic competitions for children and young people from different national and linguistic groups.

Target groups:

- children and young people from national minorities/nationally mixed families.

Funding:

the State budget of the Slovak Republic ([2019](#))

Regions and municipalities

- ensure the development of culture and art in the region according to the relevant laws (on the general establishment) for all groups of the population, including the group of children and youth,
- the topic promoting youth creativity and entrepreneurship is also included in the Conception of the Development of Youth Work in individual self-governing regions, for example [Prešov Region](#),
- in regional strategy of development of culture, for example [Košice region](#), the group of children and youth is explicitly included in various strategic objectives and measures.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

There are no programs, policies, projects, or initiatives at national level in Slovakia that inform young people specifically about the possibilities of cultural activities.

Young people can use national information portals for youth providing a variety of information:

- <http://www.eurodesk.sk/>
- <http://www.icm.sk/>

These are funded from the State budget of the Slovak Republic and EU funds.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

Since 1992 Slovakia joined the “[European Heritage Days](#)” initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

There is no specific Slovak programme supporting young people's discovery and appreciation of the cultural and artistic heritage of European countries.

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Formal education

Cultural and creative competencies can young people in Slovakia gain in:

- [General Education/Schooling](#),
- [Art Education/Schooling](#),

General Education/schooling

The content of teaching for preschool, primary and secondary education is defined in the framework curricula in State educational programmes ([Štátny vzdelávací program](#)).

- art and culture is one of the seven compulsory education themes,

- the acquisition of competences in the fields of art and culture is also guaranteed in integrated themes for example in media and multicultural education.

Curriculum in Primary Schools ([Grades 1-4](#)): compulsory subjects Music education - 4 hours, Fine arts education - 4 hours.

Curriculum in Primary Schools ([Grades 5-9](#)): compulsory subjects: Music education - 3 hours, Fine arts education - 3 hours, Education by art - 1 hour.

Curriculum in Gymnasiums 4-5 Years ([1st - 4th year](#)): compulsory subjects: Art and culture - 4 hours.

Curriculum in Gymnasiums ([1st - 8th year](#)) compulsory subjects: Music education - 2 hours, Fine Arts education - 2 hours, Education by art - 1 hour.

The content of teaching for secondary schools is defined in the framework curricula of the [State Institute for Vocational Training](#),

- there is no compulsory subject in the field of culture and art,
- exceptions are schools of artistic interests/specialisation,
- each school can decide to include a subject, for example with a focus on art and culture in the school educational programme.

List of [State educational programmes and educational programmes for formal education](#) (kindergartens, primary schools, gymnasiums, conservatories, basic schools of arts, language schools, program for pupils with general intellectual talent, program for pupils with special educational needs, program for handicapped pupils and for vocational Education and Training).

Vocational secondary schools:

Schools with aim on utility art (graphic designer, photographer, blacksmith, restaurateur, etc.), they are both state and private ones, for example in [Bratislava](#), [Kežmarok](#), [Košice](#), [Nitra](#) etc.

Art Education/schooling

- Basic Schools of arts
- Conservatoires
- Higher education institutions with focus on art and culture

Basic School of Arts:

- departments: musical, dancing, literary-dramatic, visual, audiovisual and multimedia production,
- the studies last 8 years,
- they are governed by independent [State educational programme](#).

Conservatoires

- the studies last 6-8 years,
- they are governed by independent [State Educational Programmes for Conservatories \(ISCED 5B\)](#)

Higher Education and Universities:

- [Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava](#): Fine arts, Design, Architectural creation and restoration.
- Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava ([VŠMU](#)): Acting, Puppeteering, Drama direction, Dramaturgy, Film, Music and Dance.

- [Academy of Arts Banská Bystrica](#): Musical, Art, Theatre and Film and Multimedia studies.
- [Technical University of Kosice](#): Architecture, Design and Art.
- [Technical University of Zvolen](#) :Design of furniture, Interior design and housing

Non-formal education in the field of culture and art - youth work (extra-curricular activities)

- [Educational events of cultural and artistic institutions](#)
- [Activities of the Youth Clubs network](#)
- [Activities of children and youth organizations in the field of culture and arts](#)

#Educational events of cultural and artistic institutions:

- based on the principles of museum and gallery pedagogy.

Slovak National Gallery (SNG)

- programs for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools,
- following the curriculum of subjects such as History, Fine Arts, Slovak language, Creative drama and others.

Slovak National Gallery - [Bratislava](#)

- Themes of [programs for schools](#) - individual and group identity, personality, life of artists etc.

Slovak National Gallery - [Zvolen](#)

- Themes of [programs for schools](#), for example "Discover the world of arts" etc.

Slovak National Gallery- [Ružomberok](#)

- [Programs for schools](#), for example Ľudovít Fulla's activities / Games

Slovak National Gallery - [Pezinok](#)

- [Programs for schools](#), for example "INTO THE WILD" - artist and artist who deal with the theme of wild nature in Slovakia

[Bratislava City Gallery](#)

- Themes of [programs for schools](#), for example "Small hideouts of gothic arts".

[Kunsthalle Bratislava](#)

- Themes of [programs for schools](#), for example "Power of powerless" - Velvet revolution 1989 in the Slovak contemporary art.

[Institute of Folk Art Creativity](#)

- School of Crafts - Informal Education for Children, Youth and Adults in Folk Crafts in [Bratislava](#), [Banská Bystrica](#) and in [Košice](#) (pottery, carving, basketry, carpentry, bobbin lace work or weaving).

[LUDUS Theater](#)

- theater connected to the [primary private school of art](#),
- provides education in the literature and dramatic area,
- group teaching,
- drama training, essentials of drama creation, the basics of acting, rhythm, production, speech, work in the ensemble and role study.

[Slovak Design Center](#) (Slovenské centrum dizajnu)

- educational programmes for children and young people such as “Deti vo forme” (Children in a shape) – historical development of design of Slovak toys.

The Theatre Institute (Divadelný ústav)

- experimental laboratory “Mliečne zuby” (Milk teethes) – creative space for young playwrights,
- “Dramatically Young” - educational platform for the youngest theatre authors;

Centre for Children's Literature and Reading and IBBY:

- Programme Envoys of Reading ([Advokáti čítania](#)) - educational programme to build a culture of reading helping young people wider application in life,
- stimulation and motivation to be active in communities and to promote reading among their schoolmates and friends.

Funding: state budget, private resources/sponsors and participants' contributions.

#Activities of the Youth Clubs network (CVCĎ):

Youth Clubs (CVCĎ) belong to the network of school facilities (Educational Act).

Employees of the state youth clubs are associated in professional organization [Asociácia CVCĎ SR](#).

Youth Clubs are governed by the State Educational Programme, which has several thematic areas focused on:

- education,
- social - science,
- labor and technical,
- natural science - environment,
- aesthetic-cultural area (art, musical, literary-dramatic),
- physical and sports.

The aim of aesthetic and cultural area of the [educational programme](#) is:

- to strengthen the respect for cultural values,
- to develop the basics of relationship to classic art,
- to develop talent, creativity and specific skills,
- to show positive relation to the simple aesthetic adjustment of the environment,
- to participate in the preparation of cultural events,
- to discover beauty in everyday life.

Youth Clubs organize:

- regular year-round clubs and groups, approximately 20% of them are focused on culture and arts,
- irregular activities such as tours, cultural academies, balls, competitions, short courses.

Target group - children and adolescents from 3 to 24 years of age.

Funding:

- State budget via system of parity taxes through municipalities and towns
- Member fees of club and groups according to legislation given by the local government.

#Activities of children and youth organizations in the field of culture and art

There are no official statistics mapping activities of youth organizations in the field of culture and arts.

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

- Education of arts and culture teachers
- Further training/education of art and culture teachers
- Education for youth workers
- Education provided by National Culture Centre

#Education of arts and culture teachers

- at [universities and colleges](#) especially at Faculties of Education for example in [Nitra](#), [Prešov](#), [Bratislava](#) and others.

#Further training/education of arts and culture teachers

- provided both by [public and non-governmental organizations and institutions](#):
- The [Institution for Teachers 'Education and Training](#),
- Universities within the Centers of Lifelong Learning, for example [in Nitra](#),
- Non-governmental organizations and various companies e.g. Nadácia – [Centrum súčasného umenia](#)/Center of Contemporary Arts .

Programs and their providers are accredited by Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic ([Act on Educational and Professional Staff](#)).

Examples of programs for arts and culture teachers in 2019.

- Art techniques for the development of creativity,
- Drama education,
- Use of elements of folk art in art education etc.

#Education for youth workers

Programs and their providers are accredited by Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic ([Act on Youth Work Support, ammended in 2019](#)).

The largest provider of accredited education in youth work is IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute.

#Education provided by the National Culture Centre

The National Culture Centre [provides education](#) for cultural animator, dancer, cultural worker, hobby clubs manager etc.

Funding:

- The State budget of the Slovak Republic,
- Own resources of educational providers (donors, participants).

Providing quality access to creative environments

Measures to facilitate young people's access to the creative environment:

- [National contests and exhibitions under the auspices of National Culture Centre](#),
- [Funding of competitions under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic](#).

#National contests and exhibitions under the auspices of the National Culture Centre

Objectives: promotion of interests in artistic activities through competitions and exhibitions.

Areas where [competitions and exhibitions](#) are organized:

- folklore
- music
- drama
- artistic performances
- photography, film, fine arts

Exhibitions and [competitions for children and youth](#) in 2019:

- [Divadlo a deti](#) (Theatre and Children)– exhibition and contest of children’s theatre ensembles,
- [Eniki Beniki](#) - exhibition and contest of children's folklore ensembles,
- [AMFO](#) – contest of photographers (special category for young people up to 16),
- [Hviezdoslavov Kubín](#) – recitation of poetry and prose (children, youth and adults),
- [Mládež spieva](#) (Singing Youth) – singing choirs of children and youth,
- and more.

Exhibitions and competitions are funded by the Slovak Arts Council.

[Slovak Arts Council](#):

- [public body](#) independent from the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic,
- provides support for artistic activities, culture and creative industries,
- [open calls for projects](#).

#Funding of competitions under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

- state administration bodies, local authorities, NGOs, guilds and other legal entities may submit a proposal for the organization of a competition (proposition preparation, competition statute and others),
- the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic takes the auspices of the chosen competition and provides funding for the national round (national level),
- In 2019: [119 contests](#) at regional levels,
- 73 contests focusing on culture and arts (poetry and prose recitations, theater, dance, playing musical instruments, audiovisual works and others).

Target groups:

- children and pupils of pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education institutions,
- pupils of basic school of arts.

Funding:

- the State budget of the Slovak Republic,
- funding covers accommodation, food and organization of the competitions.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

In 2014 the [Strategy for the Development of Creative Industry in the Slovak Republic](#) was adopted. The strategy refers to the measures described in section [3.8 Development of Entrepreneurial Competences](#).

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

Young entrepreneurs interested in starting their own business in the field of culture can use the tools and opportunities described in section [3.9 Start-up Funding for Young Entrepreneurs](#)

In 2019, further calls of the Integrated Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 were open under Priority Axis 3: [Mobilizing Creative Potential in the Regions](#). The calls were not specifically targeted only for young entrepreneurs, fresh graduates and artists – but beginners were a legitimate target group as well.

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

In May 2019 the [Slovak Digital Strategy 2030](#) was adopted by the [Slovak Government](#) prepared by the [Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Informatics](#).

It also includes the preparation of program for [computerization of education up to 2030](#) where various strategic areas are defined - among them:

- introducing digital technologies for innovation and improving the quality of education,
- developing competences and skills for digital transformation.

The Ministry of Education, Science Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic provides services for better access to schools and educational facilities to the Internet and digitization of content. Annually there are some schools [subsidised for data networks](#) (with total amount 100 000 € in 2019).

[Project EDUNET](#) is to build a high-speed, secure access network. EDUNET is conceived as a framework contract for a total number of 6,700 schools and school facilities.

It is intended for:

- schools with continuous vocational training and active use of digital technologies and digital educational content in the teaching process,
- for selected school facilities where digital technologies are actively used.

The purpose of the project is to support the distribution of digital educational content, to support electronic testing of the pupils and to provide access to the Internet.

Support for the new media usage in art and culture in Slovakia as well as educational and training activities are the domain of different groups of active individuals and civic associations but partially also of some university colleges and departments

[PROGRESSBAR](#) / hackerspace: promoting the development of knowledge and skills in the fields of technology, science, art and culture,

[ATELIER Digital Media, Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica](#): utilization of new technologies and media and their creative use in artistic practice.

[NGO TRAKT](#): projects focusing on artistic activity using media and film for children and young people e.g. [Children's Festival](#), [Multifestival](#) and others.

FABLAB: open space with various technology for students, young entrepreneurs to create, innovate and learn, various donors – EU funds, universities, public authorities, international partners.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

The most significant digitization of the cultural heritage took place in 2012-2016 (contracts up to 2021) through activities of the institutions of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic:

- [Documentation and Information Center of Roma Culture](#), State Scientific Library in Prešov,
- Digital Information System of Culture of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic - [SLOVAKIANA](#),
- [Digital Library and Digital Archive](#) of the Slovak National Library.

Target groups:

- General public (including pupils and school students);

Funding:

- [projects](#) were funded by the European Regional Development Fund under the Operational Program Information Society.

Other opportunities for youth to access culture provided by NGOs:

[MONOSKOP](#) - Database of collaborative studies and works in the field of art, media and humanities. / wiki for collaborative studies of arts, media and humanities,

Target groups:

- Beginning artists, students of arts etc.

Funding:

- Donors, private sources, participation fees.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

The collaboration of institutions and organizations is generally linked to strategic and conceptual documents or laws,

- coordination structures are designed to put these strategies/conceptions into practice.

In the field of culture and arts:

- [Inter-ministerial working group](#) for the monitoring and implementation of the Strategy of Creative Industry Development in Slovak Republic,
- there are representatives from 9 ministries, the Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic and the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Examples of cooperation from [Action Plan](#) for the implementation of the Creative Industry Development Strategy in Slovak Republic:

- introduction of entrepreneurial education and development of digital skills at primary and secondary schools (cooperation of Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic and Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic),
- support activities for development of creativity in the artistic, technical and ICT fields by means of competitions at all levels of schools (cooperation of Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, National Culture Centre)

- strengthening the cooperation of vocational schools of artistic orientation and business, employers (institutions of the Ministry of Culture and the Offices of the Self-governing Regions responsible for secondary schools in their territory)
- accessibility of the digitized content of the cultural heritage to entrepreneurs and public (cooperation of Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and others).

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

There are no programs, policies or initiatives of national authorities fostering partnership among culture and creative sectors, youth organizations and youth workers.

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

At present, there are no top-level programs with this focus in Slovakia.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is engaged in supporting the culture of disadvantaged groups of the population - including youth groups, through the grant program "Culture of the disadvantaged groups/*Kultúra znevýhodnených skupín*) (see also 8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation).

Examples of supported projects:

- [DeafStudio](#) Cultural experience for children and young people with hearing impairment in Slovak sign language,
- Združenie pre ľudí s mentálnym postihom (Association for People with Mental Disabilities in the Slovak Republic), [Art Salon 2019](#)
- Klub Darujem ti tulipán ([Club I will give you a tulip](#)) - integration activities for visually impaired children and children of Iraqi asylum seekers.

Activities of non-governmental organizations:

Milan Šimeček Foundation - [Festival \[fjúžn\]](#) - cultural and social festival focused on intercultural exchange between the majority and the communities of foreigners.

8.10 Current debates and reforms

Satellite Account of Culture and Creative Industry of the SR

With a view to more efficient collection of statistical data in the field of culture and cultural industry, Slovak Government started to create the [Satellite Account of Culture and Creative Industry of the SR](#), which will provide relevant statistics on economic indicators of culture and creative industry (production, added value in the economy etc.).

Reconstruction and enlargement of Sered' Holocaust Museum

Slovak Government committed in [Manifesto](#) to complete the construction of the [Sered' Holocaust Museum](#) as an institution with the potential of education and training against all forms of intolerance, violence and extremism.

Satellites for regional monitoring of children's reading

[The Children's Literature and Reading Centre](#) (BIBIANA, Ministry of Culture) plans to create satellites in order to monitor individual regions and their work with children and youth in the field of reading. Their efforts will be to improve and intensify training activities and create a programmes and educational material that would offer complementary educational programmes for schools.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

In Slovakia, the **governance of the global issues is widely spread** among various ministries and public institutions, having in agenda development aid, sustainable development and green consumption, global development education, human rights issues and overall management of Agenda 2030. Nevertheless, **only global development education field is clearly oriented on young people** as the main target (9.2).

In global issues, the **driving force are activities and initiatives of non-governmental organisations**. Slovak Non-Governmental Development Organisations Platform is umbrella organization, influencing policy making in the area of development cooperation and raising public awareness about global issues. The members of the Platform started tradition of campaign and annual activates e.g. **Global Education Week in Slovakia** (9.4).

Practice to exchange views between young people and policy makers is short, and global issues were discussed in broader extent only during preparation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for 2014 – 2020. Although the Strategy reflects important of mobility and global education, other topics such as **green production and consumption are not included into the priorities** (9.5).

9.1 General context

Main concepts

The Slovak Republic is one of the signatories of the Agenda 2030, thus signalling the obligation to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the [Manifesto](#) of the Government of the Slovak Republic for years 2016 -2020 the Government declared strengthening the institutional frameworks for national implementation of the Agenda 2030.

At national level there are several legislative documents on global issues:

- [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 -2020](#)
- [Medium-Term Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Official Development Assistance 2014- 2018](#)
- [National Strategy for Global Education for 2012 – 2016](#)
- [National Strategy for Sustainable Development](#)

#the [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020](#)

the only one official document that deals with global issues (especially global education and international mobility) in direct relation to young people in specific chapter 'Youth and the world' (more information in section [1.3 National Youth Strategy](#)).

#The [Medium-Term Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Official Development Assistance 2014- 2018](#)

- adopted as a 5-year strategy,
- the main instrument of development cooperation planning,
- defines the vision, objectives, principles, territorial and sectorial priorities,
- is implemented through annual bilateral development cooperation guidelines,
- 10 priority countries: 3 program countries (Afghanistan, Kenya, Moldova), 6 project countries (Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Ukraine) and 1 country with exceptional humanitarian and development needs (South Sudan).

#The [National Strategy for Global Education for 2012 – 2016](#)

- Global education is the most developed aspect in the field of global issues,
- mostly in formal education, partly also in non-formal learning and work of the non-governmental organisations.

Global education definition:

- an education that emphasizes the global context in learning,
- raising awareness of global issues, developing critical thinking in these topics, deeper understanding of the areas and themes,
- reinforce awareness of roles individuals in the world.

#The [National Strategy for Sustainable Development](#) (2001)

Sustainable development definition:

- preserves the opportunity to satisfy the present and future generations´ their basic living needs while not reducing the diversity of nature and preserving the natural functions of ecosystems.

Youth interest in global issues

There is an increasing interest of non-governmental organisations to get active in the field of global issues. Nevertheless, there are very few official studies and surveys showing the complete picture of the involvement of young people in defined areas.

Survey TNS Slovakia, [Millenials+](#) from 2014

- 45% of young people consider the need for environmental protection as very crucial.
- more than one third of respondents (27%) is concerned about global warming.
- there were 40% of respondents declaring they are interested in situation in the world

[Flash Eurobarometer No. 455](#) (2018)

Comparing with the situation 3 years ago ([Eurobarometer No. 408](#)), another decrease was noted in all 3 related areas:

- Only 1% of young people were involved in activities of organisation promoting human rights or global development,
- Involvement in activities of organisations in the domain of climate change or environmental issues has decreased to 1%,
- 11% of Slovak young people aged 15 – 30 had volunteered in another European country and 3% was involved in youth projects with young people from other continents.

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Main actors

The official governance of the global issues is widely spread among the various ministries. the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic:

- youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making,
- coordination of the implementation of the [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth 2014 – 2020](#) (including the field Youth and the World),
- the global education in the formal and non-formal education sectors.

the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic](#):

- responsible for development aid.

the [Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic](#):

- the agenda of sustainable development and green consumption.

the [Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic](#):

- human rights issues.

the [Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization](#) of the Slovak Republic

- overall management of Agenda 2030.

Public actors

[IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute](#)

- the main public actor in the development of policies, programmes or actions related to youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making,
- implementing specific projects related to the global issues (currently mainly in the field of human rights and extremism),
- the institution is part of the legislation creation, direct contact with youth workers etc.

Non public actors

Many **non-governmental organisations** are active in the area of global issues, although they are not exclusively targeted at young people and their involvement in global topics.

The Slovak Non-Governmental Development Organisations Platform (Platforma mimovládnych rozvojových organizácií)

- an umbrella organisation links different NGO's active in development co-operation,
- 22 full members and 6 observers.

[eRko – Christian Children Communities' Movement](#) NGO (eRko – Hnutie kresťanských spoločností detí, MVO)

- part of the activities is directly related to global issues,
- collections of contributions for emergency services in African countries,
- support for development projects in sub-Saharan Africa,
- development and training through seminars,
- thematic meetings and publications,
- sending short-term volunteers to partner countries.

Regional Self Governments

- in the formal education sector, where appropriate, discuss with the schools in their area the school educational programmes where global issues might be mentioned.
- in the official youth policy, regional self-governments can develop own priorities in regional conceptions of youth work development (obligatory document according to the [Act on Youth Work Support](#)) e.g. [Košice regional youth policy](#) includes 13 specific reference to global issues.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There are two mechanisms on the level of youth policy (more information [in section 1.5 Cross-sectorial approach with other Ministries](#)):

- Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth (coordinated by MESRS),
- Committee for Children and Youth (coordinated by MLSAF).

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

There are no official mechanisms that would allow regular exchanges of views - formal and informal - on global issues between young people and national policy-makers.

One of the few opportunities for exchange of views between young people and policy-makers is possible during the drafting of the strategic goals when conceptual and legal documents are being prepared.

Such an exchange is not obligatory and last time the exchange of views on global issues took place when the new Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020 was created. The outcomes of the exchange views is then respected in final proposition of the 'Youth and the world' chapter. More information about the system and process in section 5.4 Young People's Participation in Policy.

Other policy documents or actions or strategies as for example National Strategy for Global Education were consulted with the NGO sector but not with young people themselves directly.

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

There is no mechanism set up that would allow regular or ad-hoc exchange of views between young people and policy makers at the international level. Young Slovaks have the opportunity for passive contribution to the surveys and consultations done by European institutions such as European Commission.

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

[The National Strategy for Global Education for 2012 – 2016](#) (Národná stratégia pre globálne vzdelávanie na obdobie rokov 2012 - 2016) is the basic framework document defining the areas of Global education:

Globalization and interconnectivity

- Aspects of globalization
- Economic Globalization - World Trade
- Sustainable development

Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Slovak Republic and the EU

- Volunteering in development cooperation and humanitarian aid
- Fair trade and ethical business
- Development, concept of development principles
- Millennium Development Goals
- Poverty and inequality
- Health: HIV / AIDS, malnutrition

- Conflicts in the World: Forms and Methods of Conflict Resolution

Multiculturalism

- Stereotypes and prejudices
- Xenophobia, racism, intolerance
- Cultural identity, cultural differences, religious differences

Environment with regard to global aspects

- Climate change

Environmental migration

- Air, water, soil
- Use of natural resources
- Alternative energy sources
- Human Rights
- Human rights and civil rights
- The rights of the child
- Gender equality
- Democracy and good governance

Formal education

Main target groups:

- Pupils and pedagogical staff in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools
- Students and academic staff at Universities

The [State educational program for ISCED 3A](#) formulates the following goals related to Global education objectives:

- to acquire the basis of general education provided by the school
- to have the interest and the need to learn outside schools
- to acquire and use effective learning strategies
- to acquire an adequate level of communication skills and cooperation
- respect for the others and responsible relationship to each other and to their health.

School subjects where global issues are integrated: History, Geography and Citizenship education.

Only few secondary schools have opened separate subject in the framework of their autonomy.

There are several obligatory cross-curricular themes integrated in all school subjects, some of them reflecting topics of global education e.g. Multicultural education, Media Literacy education, Environmental education and Protection Life and Health.

The [State educational programmes for vocational education](#) sets out even more challenging objectives similar to those of the global education:

- to acquire social and civic competences, to gain and strengthen respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and principles laid down in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- encourage pupils to better understand the world in which they live and the necessity of sustainable development,

- develop free, critical and independent thinking of pupils, their judgment and decision-making, leading to the assumption of responsibility of pupils for their thinking, decision-making, behaviour and feeling,
- creating respect for the living and non-living nature, protecting the environment and understanding the global problems of humanity,
- lead pupils to actively participate in civic life and cooperate in the development of democracy.

Non formal learning

Thanks to the financial support of the [SlovakAID Program](#), many NGOs received grants for projects in which they carried out educational activities directly at schools.

As an example, Centre for environmental and ethical education [Živica](#) (Centrum pre environmentálnu a etickú výchovu Živica) produced an comprehensive teaching methodology and software to be used on interactive dashboards named [Global development education in move](#) (Globálne rozvojové vzdelávanie v pohybe).

The main targets in the field of non-formal education are:

- children and youth in leisure activities
- general public
- the media
- public and state administration staff, politicians, deputies

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

There are no information campaigns on global issues targeted only youth funded by top-level authorities.

Nevertheless, there have been several promotion and awareness-raising activities where young people were actively involved organised by NGO, especially by the member of [Slovak Non-Governmental Development Organisations Platform](#):

- campaign Make Poverty History - Svet bez chudoby (2005), later it has been changed to Development Day in Slovakia ([Rozvojový deň na Slovensku](#)), which is organised annually since then.
- Global Education Week in Slovakia ([Týždeň globálneho vzdelávania na Slovensku](#)) since 2003,
- Campaign LIVE FAIR since 2013 ([Kampaň ŽI FÉR](#)),
- Project [TO ACT YOU HAVE TO KNOW](#) (2008 – 2011) (target group – university students)

Information providers

The only public authority responsible for disseminating information on global issues among young people is the [Slovak agency for international development Cooperation](#) (Slovenská agentúra pre medzinárodnú rozvojovú spoluprácu). The agency provides information mainly about the funding opportunities for development projects. There is no specific contact point which young people can access to receive information.

General information can be found on different websites, as for example the website of [Slovak Non-Governmental Development Organisations Platform](#) (Platforma mimovládnych rozvojových organizácií). The platform performs also advocacy work in favour of global topics. It seeks to increase the interest of policymakers, decision-makers, the media and the wider public about development aid. Platform issues a regular Bulletin Development Assistance, information and analytical materials, cooperates with journalists.

It is often complicated for non-government organisations to get their themes into the media. The platform therefore uses an effective way to change it. They find resources and then send journalists to development countries. Journalists are afterwards more motivated to inform about the global issues and problems in the world.

The platform also publish information, booklets and other materials about the different topics which may be of good use also for young people, such as [Slovak guide for development volunteering](#) (Slovenský sprievodca rozvojovým dobrovoľníctvom).

Very complex information is provided via the website <http://www.globalnevezdelavanie.sk/> run by NGO People in Need Slovakia (Človek v ohrození).

[Milan Šimečka Foundation](#) website (web Nadácia Milana Šimečku).

"[Global education in the future teacher education](#)" is a study on the level of implementation of global education in study programs of pedagogical directions at universities in Slovakia.

The authors of the publication found out whether and to what extent aspects of global education are present in study programs of pedagogical directions at universities in Slovakia, and where there could be room for improvement in the given situation at present.

The study was conducted by the People at Risk Foundation in cooperation with Prešov University in Prešov, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Trnavská University in Trnava, Comenius University in Bratislava and Pavel Jozef Šafárik University in Košice.

"[Day of Africa - Live books in schools](#)". The PDCS organization (Partner for Democratic Change Slovakia) offers the possibility to realize a live library at the secondary schools in the Trnava and Trenčín region as part of the Day of Africa celebrations.

Living books are two guests who share their personal story about Africa, where they come from, why they came to Slovakia, what they do and many more. The event should be organized in the range of 2-3 classes.

"[Long-term training for teachers of ethics and Slovak language](#)". Within the framework of the project "Learning in the Global Contexts 2", new training was conducted. The training is using the form of so-called blended learning, combination of e-learning and face-to-face training for teachers and teachers of primary and secondary schools as well as future teachers and teachers.

The objective of the project is to systematically integrate Global Learning into individual subjects so that individual themes such as climate change, migration or gender equality are easily integrated into the lessons while fully compliant with the State Education Programme.

The State Pedagogical Institute will be one of the key partners in the implementation of the International Program for the Support of Global Education called "[Increase and Innovation](#)", funded by the European Commission.

One of the first outputs of the consortium of three non-governmental organizations called Increase and Innovation is to analyze what already exists in Slovakia in this area of education, to deepen the cooperation of relevant institutions, and ultimately to introduce innovative global education methods in Slovak conditions.

Several European Union countries, including Latvia, Malta, Cyprus and Greece, should be involved in the international program Increase and Innovation.

Key initiatives

Currently, there are two main NGO´s offering the volunteering programmes for young people specifically targeted at young people.

- [NGO AIESEC](#) offers volunteering programmes in development countries. The development internships are part of the "Global Community Development Program",

which is designed for students and fresh graduates. The aim of the internship is to have a positive impact on society and to help solve the global problems of the world.

- the [GLEN programme](#) where young people can apply for the volunteering in development countries.

The financial support of the actors

[SlovakAID Program](#) is the main source of the financial support for non-governmental organisations that is available from public funding. The programme is managed by Slovak agency for international development co-operation ([Slovenská agentúra pre medzinárodnú rozvojovú spoluprácu](#)). There are no specific regular calls that would be directly targeted at young people.

The Slovak NGOs in cooperation with foreign partners use also funds of the European Commission under the [Development Cooperation Instrument](#). European projects have higher financial allocations and give the opportunity to work on multi-annual projects with greater impact on target groups.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

There is no official strategy or agency that would cover topic green volunteering specifically targeted at young generation.

The current [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth 2014 – 2020](#) does not include the topics of green volunteering, green production and related subjects among its priorities.

The financial support from state budget through the Environmental Fund ([Act on the Environmental Fund](#)) is limited and usually not directly open to youth organisations or young people themselves.

Some of the charities or grant programmes of the business sector are targeting young population e.g. the Green Education Grant Programme ([Grantový program Zelené vzdelávanie](#)) managed by The Volkswagen Slovakia Foundation.

- support of environmental and ecological education of young people in cooperation with schools, civic associations and non-profit organizations promoting environmental education for children and youth.

Green production and consumption

Areas of green production and consumption are actively developed only in the work of NGO sector.

[The Tree of Life](#) – NGO (Strom života)

- environmental, voluntary , non-profit youth organization,
- more than 30 years of history,
- offers environmental education programs, focusing on air cleanliness, water and waste management, biodiversity, global warming and energy consumption, and cultural and natural heritage protection, including restoration of technical monuments.
- organisation is entitled for the regular operating grants from the [Programmes for Youth 2014 – 2020](#) (Programy pre mládež 2014 – 2020).
- [Student Environmental Club](#) project (Študentský environmentálny klub – ŠEK)-comprehensive environmental program
- designed for young people aged 14 to 24, young people can take part and they pay for their participation by „time check“ – investing their time. Part of the activities are performed in the team, the part outside in nature, part of them at home. The training

program is designed as a part of the project which takes youngsters through practical nature conservation, gaining a knowledge about nature and its protection.

[NGO Živica](#)

- one the most active NGOs in the field of green consumption and environmental issues with clear links also to global challenges,
- targeted young people although NGO is not a youth organisation.
- education, counselling and other service in the field of environment, sustainable development and responsible consumption,
- publication of methodological materials e.g. Global education – context and critics ([Globálne vzdelávanie – kontext a kritika](#)) or [Environmental education in context \(Environmentálne výchova v súvislostiach\)](#).
- project [World in the shopping cart \(Svet v nákupnom košíku\)](#) draws attention to the consumer's way of life and its impact on the lives of people in developing countries
- interactive teaching programs for schools, courses for teachers and other educators, methodical materials and an interactive traveling exhibition.
- ŽIVICA is promoter of project „Green school“ ([Zelená škola](#)) addressing the real needs of schools and the environment, helping to make a positive change.

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

There are no national programmes or actions available that aim to promote cooperation and exchanges between organisations, individuals active in youth work in more than one continent sending young people abroad (aged 18 - 30) in order to gain experience with development issues.

The [SlovakAID Program](#) offers the financial help for sending volunteers aged 18 – 30 to developing countries, however, its main aim is to support the Slovak development aid objectives and it is not oriented on supporting the youth work between respective countries.

The only source available for youth work co-operation with other continents is the EU Erasmus+ programme through its centralised strand. As this part of the programme is centrally managed in Brussels, there is no complex information available about the scope and content of such activities between the organisations from Slovakia and those from other continents.

One of the very active organisations in this field, using the Erasmus+ funding is [KERIC NGO](#). They are known for co-operation with Latin America and Asia mainly in the field of volunteering. One of the current project [Broader](#) is aimed to support the quality of volunteering between Europe and Latin America and its content is focusing on migration issues.

Development cooperation activities

There are no public programmes or actions that aim to promote development cooperation activities among young people.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

The main challenge is the ongoing assessment of Global education and its impact in formal and non-formal education. In 2019, SlovakAid presented [Call on projects supporting](#)

[promotion of global education](#), reflecting clearly current challenges of Global education in Slovakia.

Projects should contribute to:

- involvement of institutions in the Global education process,
- capacity building of actors to implement Global education themes,
- integrating Global education topics into the education system.

10. YOUTH WORK

History of Slovak youth work is linked to the national liberation movement in 19th century when many associations raised and started working regularly with children and young people (10.1). There are two documents regulating youth work – the Act on Youth Work Support and the Conception of Youth Work Development for years 2016 -2020 (10.3).

Governance of youth work in Slovakia is managed at the state and self-government level (local and regional). Quality of youth work has been discussed for long time and in 2018 working group for final definition of quality standards was set by the MESRS. IUVENTA-Slovak Youth Institute collects and promotes various researches and surveys on youth, youth policy and youth work (10.4).

There are three positions in youth work: young leader (volunteer aged 15-18), youth leader (volunteer older than 18) and youth worker (employed professional) (10.5).

MESRS confirms quality of youth work programmes by formal accreditation connected with official certificates for participants, but Youth pass (Erasmus+) is popular tool for presenting acquired competencies through mobility activities as well (10.6).

Declaration on the Recognition of Non-Formal Education has been signed by more than 100 employers, institutions and official stakeholders and become the leading initiative to raise awareness of youth work value in Slovakia (10.7).

10.1 General context

Historical developments

(Source: Brozmanová Gregorová et al. 2018)

Youth work before 1918

The youth work before 1918 was marked by the national liberation and national unification movement from Austro-Hungarian Empire and was primarily connected with activities of various (literature, reading, charity, student and economic) associations.

Significant role in youth work development played mass sports association such as Czech Sokol, with branches in Slovakia, Czechoslovak Orol, Catholic Gymnastic Associations, the Workers' Sports Unions etc. Due to its methodology, scouting was identified among those sports and physical training organisations that had a special focus on work with young people. The first Scout troop in Slovakia was formed in 1913 in Komárno. There was great rivalry between physical training and sports organisations, not only in the sense of sports competing with each other but as a result of various ideological issues.

Youth work during The Czechoslovak Republic (1918 – 1938)

Since 1918 the youth work development was linked to newly formed department in the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment including formal education, self-improvement and social care for youth issues, church etc. Most organizations established before 1918 continued with their activities. In the 1920s branches of other worldwide organisations were founded: the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). The Czechoslovak Red Cross organisation also paid great attention to children and young people through its dedicated section, Youth of the Red Cross.

The Communist Youth Union of Czechoslovakia was founded in 1921 (in 1932, activities of all organisations that were associated with the Communist Party were officially stopped), but there were many other youth organisations linked to political parties: for example, the Imperial Union of Republican Youth Agrarian Party, the Young Generation of Czechoslovak People's Party and others. Students were associated with numerous new small-size associations and organisations which also copied current political party and religious

affiliations. The central organisation was the Union of Slovak Students, formed in Banská Bystrica in 1921.

Youth work during The Slovak State (1938 – 1945)

After a declaration of autonomy and with a commitment to foreign policy in compliance with Nazi Germany, many democratic organisations were banned and associations dissolved. Czechs and Jews were excluded from association life. Associations loyal to the state formation at that time gained support for their activities. Existing associations had to be unified in organisations such as Hlinka's Guard and Hlinka's Youth, founded by the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party having monopoly in Slovak political scene. Only some associations which were administered by the church (except Jewish associations) were allowed.

Youth work in 1945 -1989

In May 1945 Czechoslovakia was renewed again and approximately 10 000 associations resurrected their activities, many committed to youth work, such as Slovak Sokol, Slovak Orol, League of Forest Wisdom (Woodcraft Folk), Slovak Scouting etc. When the government decided to create unified mass organisations (trade unions, youth unions, sports unions, women's unions), all the existing associations of the respective group had to join in. The communist totalitarian regime was imposed in February 1948 resulting in the total incorporation of existing associations under the National Front. It was prohibited to use terms such as association and associating and the basic principles of voluntary membership and internal democracy of the association were violated.

With regard to youth work, from August 1945 national Youth unions were established. Communist activists led the first Pioneer groups who were copying the Soviet Union Komsomol example. The Czechoslovak Youth Union was formed in 1949 by connecting four national youth unions: Czech, Slovak, German and Polish. At a unifying conference in 1949, the framework organisational principles of the children's organisation called Pioneer Organisation were accepted.

A reform movement reached its peak in 1968 (the Prague Spring), seeking the partial democratisation of the regime, but its progress was reversed as a result of invasion by five states' armies of the Warsaw Pact on 21 August 1968.

The reform period was mirrored in youth work. Pioneer Organisation split into two equal organisations and five other children's organisations were formed. After the army troops entered Czechoslovakia in 1968, the situation changed again. The Prague conference in 1970 renewed a unified youth organisation under the name of the Socialistic Youth Union formed by two territorial republic organisations. Independent organisations were banned. Obligatory membership in socialistic youth and children's organisations ceased only after the "velvet" revolution of 1989.

In 1960 Pioneer troops establishment within schools was recommended by the Communist Party since then youth work was a part of the school educational system. Pioneer groups, formed by troops (troop=school class) then became a part of basic school structures. Troop leaders were nominally "volunteers" – teachers, parents, factory activists – but troops they were working only under the leadership of instructors (aged 15-18). Pioneer group leaders (school employees) offered instructors help with educational methods.

Pioneer groups organised systematic work with children up to the age of 15 who were attending basic schools. From 1949, Houses of Pioneers and Youth provided space for the development of children and young people's hobbies and personal interests. There were clubs, specialised activities, ensembles and also specialists for the support of Pioneer groups' work in schools called the methodical department.

The education and training of Pioneer workers and those responsible for the training in Pioneer methods was financially and personally supported by the state. From 1950, the Central House of Pioneers started in Prague Karlín, and in 1951 the Central House of

Pioneers and Youth of Klement Gottwald was founded in Bratislava – these facilities became the methodological and educational centres for youth work.

From 1958, Pioneer Organisation had its educational system elaborated. It was a set of requirements containing tasks and specific activities. The education system was based on egalitarian principles. Interest groups (hobby clubs) started after 1966 and apart from its compulsory elements, Pioneers could learn more about different thematic fields inspired by specific professions (and they could obtain special badges) – technician, natural historian, artist, sportsman, tourist, country defender and practical girl.

Youth work after “Velvet” Revolution in 1989

The post-revolution period (1989) marked the dissolution of the mass organisation of children and young people, the re-establishment of some “old” organisations from before 1945 (such as the YMCA, Slovak Scouting etc.). Newly gained freedom was expressed in the booming formation of new children’s and youth organisations. Pioneer and Youth mass organisations were abolished in schools, though the Houses of Pioneers and Youth (renamed as Houses of Children and Youth, and later Leisure-Time Centres/Youth Centres) continued as part of schools and school facilities.

The Youth Council of Slovakia (RmS), umbrella body for existing youth and children organisations has been functioning since 1990. Initially, RmS solved issues of youth organisations’ funding, state policy towards youth and sharing premises after the previous mass youth organisation. Since 1999, RmS has been stabilised in three basic spheres: advocacy for member organisations (proceedings with state administration, municipality and institutions), service for member organisations (such as training of organisation workers, presentation of organisations) and foreign activity (representation of organisations at international forums, bilateral proceedings).

Youth policy and work with youth were influenced by the Department of Youth in the Ministry of Education. In 1992, the first post-revolution document of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, which defined the approach of the Slovak Republic towards young people (including youth work), was the so-called Principles of State Policy of the Slovak Republic towards Youth. Part of the finances originally funding mass youth and children organisations was transferred to Programmes of Protection and Support of Children and Youth, functioning from 1993 to 2007.

The Central House of Pioneers and Youth of Klement Gottwald, the present IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute – originally continued for a few years after the revolution with several work streams: methodological support of activities and clubs in Houses of Children and Youth/Leisure-Time Centres, organisation of traditional competitions in school subjects (Olympiads), and it later became the administrator of the first programmes foreshadowing wider co-operation in Europe including during the European Union accession and membership period (CEEPUS, Youth for Europe, Youth in Action, YOUTH and the present Erasmus+). Since 2000, IUVENTA has been preparing background material for legislative documents, being assigned various tasks in the youth field by the Department of Youth, (strategies, reports, grant programmes) and participating in supporting the specification of youth policy in consultation with target groups, especially children and youth organisations.

National definition or understanding of Youth Work

Official Youth Work definition in [Concept of Youth Work Development for years 2016 - 2020](#).

Youth work is a deliberate activity that responds to the needs of young people and leads to the positive development of their personality in order to be able to fully apply it in life. It is based on the principle of voluntary youth participation, partnership and mutual respect. Its role is to contribute to maturity, finding a direction in life and the self-identification of both individuals and groups. It should create space for the co-decision of young people about the issues concerning them, motivate them to engage, and thus

contribute to the building of civil society. It is implemented by people specifically prepared for this activity, actively working in this field as well as volunteers who are irreplaceable for the concept's fulfilment.

Youth work in Slovakia is conceived by various providers, prevailingly:

- Children and Youth Associations (non-governmental organisations),
- Leisure-time Centres/Youth Clubs (belonging to official state formal education system),
- Non-formal groups of young people (working mostly on short-term projects).

10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

Governance

The Main actors:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (further [MESRS](#)) is responsible for creation and implementation of the state policy and state care for youth and sport.

Youth Department (Odbor mládeže) is appointed for implementation of core responsibilities of MESRS in the field state care for youth (Statute MESRS, 2010/[Štatút MŠVVaŠ SR](#)):

- creates legal, organizational, research and economic conditions for the development and support of youth work;
- develops a concept for the education of youth volunteers, young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers;
- develops a methodology for providing subsidies from the state budget to support youth work;
- methodically guides the activities of Leisure-time centres/Youth Clubs;
- issues accreditation decisions to educational institutions in youth work;
- participates in the implementation of international agreements in the field of programs and activities in relation to children and young people;
- cooperates with the key associations and institutions in the formulation and implementation national, regional and local youth policies (Slovak Youth Council, Committee for Children and Youth etc.);
- ensures the financing of childcare and youth care from the state budget.

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute ([IUVENTA – Slovenský inštitút mládeže](#)) in one of the institutions of MESRS and its agenda comprises of:

- methodological guidance in the area of support and development of youth work,;
- provision of information for youth and youth work;
- provision of educational, methodological and information activities for youth and youth workers.
- coordination and implementation of activities to support and develop youth research;
- administration of grant programs of the MESRS (Programmes for Youth) and the European Union (Erasmus +);
- coordination of Eurodesk Slovakia – member of the European Youth and Youth Information Network;
- secretariat of the Accreditation Commission for Specialized Activities in Youth Work;

- implementation of national and international projects.

The Main public actors:

In the area of youth work there are two main public actors:

- The Offices of Self-governing Regions
- Local Governments at municipal level (municipalities).

Their responsibilities in youth work agenda are described in part [General distribution of responsibilities](#).

The Main non-public actors:

Youth Council of Slovakia ([Rada mládeže Slovenska/RmS](#) – referred only as Youth Council) has been operating since 1992 as an independent, non-profit organisation. See also [5.3 Youth representation bodies](#)

Youth Council provides in particular:

- service, education, networking and information activities for member organizations and young people;
- actions to influence public policy in matters relating to young people and youth organizations;
- activities to improve the quality of work of youth organizations, their staff and volunteers;
- scientific research, publishing and other activities necessary for the organizational, financial, material and content provision, successful management and promotion of the above activities. (Source: Charter of Youth Council/[Stanovy RmS](#)).

Regional youth councils

- Youth Council of Žilina Region (Rada mládeže Žilinského kraja)
- Youth Council of Bratislava Region (Rada mládeže Bratislavského kraja)
- Youth Council of Trnava Region (Rada mládeže Trnavského kraja)
- Youth Council of Košice Region (Rada mládeže Košického kraja)
- Youth Council of Trenčín Region (Rada mládeže Trenčianskeho kraja)
- Youth Council of Prešov Region (Rada mládeže Prešovského kraja)

[Asociácia CVČ SR](#) (Association of Youth Centres of the Slovak Republic):

- associates the employees of Youth Clubs/Centres of leisure time activities,
- their members are regularly consulted while preparing national, regional or local measures in youth policy including youth work issues,
- Association is member of IMGY and various committees in youth policy fields.

General distribution of responsibilities between top-level and regional/local authorities.

Governance youth work in Slovakia is managed at the state and self-government level (local and regional).

1. National level

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MESRS) is responsible for creation and implementation of the state youth policy including youth work.

2. Regional level

Responsibilities of Offices of Self-governing Regions are define in amended in 2019 Act on Youth Work Support as follows:

- participate in gaining and analysing of information on youth,
- support organising the youth work,
- support youth work initiatives (focussed on historic and cultural heritage of its region, country, protection of environment, youth mobility and international cooperation, informational and advisory services, spare-time activities of youth, health support and health protection),
- ensure running of educational facilities (providing youth work) and cares about their purposeful utilization,
- monitor activities of accredited educational facilities within youth work, which are established by the Offices;
- check purposefulness of utilisation of financial resources granted from its budget for youth work;
- participate in non-formal education in youth work
- support informational and advisory services for youth,
- support the youth participation.

The Offices of Self-governing Regions have the competence to set up and cancel Leisure-time centres/Youth clubs in their territorial jurisdiction (Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-government/Zákon č. 596/2003 o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve).

3. Local (municipal) level

Municipalities at their territory:

- support organising the youth work ;
- create conditions for youth work development;
- support youth work initiatives focussed on:
 - historic and cultural heritage of its region, country,
 - protection of environment,
 - youth mobility and international cooperation,
 - informational and advisory services,
 - leisure-time activities of youth,
 - health support and health protection;
- support youth participation.

Municipalities have the competence to set up and cancel Leisure-time centres/Youth clubs in their territorial jurisdiction (Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-government/Zákon č. 596/2003 o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve).

Cross-sectoral cooperation

National level

MESRS coordinates *Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth* (See 1.5.). Youth work related issues are discussed and consulted in this group as well.

10.3 Support to youth work

Policy legal framework

In Slovakia, there are 3 top-level legal documents regulating youth work:

1.) Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020

Youth work is one of the thematic fields of the Strategy, copying the structure of then-applicable EU Youth Strategy. More information on objectives, target groups etc. on Slovak Youth Strategy in [1.3. National Youth Strategy](#) a

2) Act on Youth Work Support

Act regulates:

- terminology (e.g. youth work, youth worker, youth leader etc.);
- responsibilities of ministry responsible for youth work development, regional and local authorities;
- accreditation system for non-formal education programmes in youth work at the MESRS;
- voluntarism in youth work (e.g. status of volunteer in youth work, responsibilities of the host organization, agreement etc.);
- youth work financial resources, especially subsidies from the state budget (e.g. eligible beneficiaries, purpose of subsidies provision, application process etc.).

In 2019, the Act on Youth Work Support was amended – see [1.9 Current debates and reforms](#)

3) Conception of Youth Work Development 2016 – 2021

The conception is divided into five thematic areas. Each area consists of:

- simplified description of the situation,
- the vision approaching work with youth work by 2020,
- the concrete objectives to be achieved in 2020.
- possible measures for each objectives are outlined as well.

Main objectives of youth work (defined in Conception of Youth Work Development):

- leads to the positive development of their personality in order to be able to fully apply it in life;
- to contribute to maturity, finding a direction in life and the self-identification of both individuals and groups;
- creates space for the co-decision of young people about the issues concerning them, motivate them to engage, and thus contribute to the building of civil society.

Domains of youth work:

In top-level legal documents there is no definition of youth work domains. In 2013, representatives of organisations and institutions active in youth work [defined some fields where youth work activities usually take place](#) (based on the [Council of Europe study, 2008](#))

1. extracurricular youth education
2. international youth work
3. open youth work
4. participational and peer education
5. social youth work
6. recreational activities
7. youth counseling
8. information services for youth

Principles of youth work (defined in Conception of Youth Work Development):

- voluntary youth participation, partnership and mutual respect.
- youth work is built on the current situation of a young person and seeks to meet his/her needs;
- it assists with the real application of the rights of young people;
- is directed at ensuring the overall quality of young people's life;
- works for the common good of individuals, communities and societies;
- recognizes the important role of the non-governmental sector in achieving results in work with youth;
- applies a systematic and comprehensive approach to work with youth based on partnership, cooperation and an integrated approach for all actors (young people, local and regional authorities, state and public administration, non-governmental organizations, other organizations, institutions, individuals, the business sector, the media and the whole society);
- quality work with youth cannot be implemented without adequate financial support.

Youth work activities

In top-level legal documents there is no definition of youth work activities.

In Act on Youth Work Support there is definition of activities what can be supported through system of state subsidy (implies types of youth work activities):

- interest activity within the frame of sciences, technique, culture and sport,
- talented youth in particular areas of social, sport and cultural life,
- education of youth towards protection of environment,
- education of youth towards getting acquainted with historic and cultural heritage of the community, the region and the Slovak Republic,
- getting acquainted with life and cultures of the EU states,
- organising of youth camps,
- sojourn events for youth,
- youth mobility, international cooperation and international programmes within the youth area,
- publishing of youth oriented press,
- international youth organisations membership,
- significant youth, tourism and motion – recreational events,
- educational activities for youth workers, youth leaders and young leaders,
- information on youth,
- informational and advisory services for youth,
- protection, keeping and restoring of health of youth,

Youth work providers:

Historically in Slovakia youth work is delivered by Children and Youth Organisations (NGOs) and Youth Centres (Leisure-time activities centres/Youth Clubs) as a part of public school system, as well as by non-formal youth groups.

Act on Youth Work Support defines also other legal bodies eligible to obtain state subsidy for youth work projects/activities:

- a municipality,
- upper territory unit/regional authority,
- a foundation,
- a non-profit organisation providing generally beneficial services,
- a registered church and a religious association,
- kindergarten,
- a school hostel,
- a school in nature.

Target groups of youth work:

- Act on Youth Work Support defines the age of young people up to 30,
- Programmes for Youth as the main financial source supports activities for young people at risk of social exclusion – special focus is on young people 13 – 17 years old.

Funding

Main sources of public funding

a) State budget via system of parity taxes through municipalities/towns and regional governments.

Local authorities are responsible for children (0-15). Regional authorities have responsibilities for young people from 15 to 18. These financial resources are not earmarked on youth work only, their use is controlled by the self-government, which sometimes retains part of the financial resources as its original competences (Youth Report/[Správa o mládeži 2018](#), p.81).

Youth clubs (Leisure-time activities centres) are financed via system of parity taxes as well as by member fees of club and groups according to legislation given by the local government. Members of the clubs and groups can cover annual fees through education vouchers as well (provided by MESRS). The education voucher is worth 32 € for 2019 ([Vzdelávacie poukazy 2019](#)).

b) Programmes for Youth, MESRS

Programmes supports mainly national or intraregional youth organisations ([5.6 Supporting youth organisations](#)), organisations providing youth counselling and information services. Part of the financial amount is dedicated to one-off projects focused on annual priorities, research projects and projects dedicated to local youth policy development (support of local governments in building local youth policy). In 2018 MESRS subsidised youth providers with 2 770 653 €. In 2019 MESRS distributed to youth work providers subsidies of 2,3 millions € (so far).

c) Erasmus +

European Union financial support from the beginning (at pre-accession period) became the crucial tool for youth work development. [Erasmus+ \(Youth chapter\) for 2020](#) brings 3 647 774 € for Key Actions 1, 2 and 3.

Significant role for Slovak youth work development plays European Solidarity Corps and [its contribution for 2020](#).

Conditions and requirements to benefit from public funding

State budget via system of parity taxes:

- system allows the self-governments to decide (based on its own analyses and democratic governance), what activities and purposes the taxes are used for,

- by means of legislative acts, strategies and conceptions, the State defines a common framework e.g. National Youth Strategy, Conception of Youth Work Development,
- it is exclusively on self-governments to decide what means (financed from the taxes) the state-defined goals will be achieved at local or regional levels,
- the quality assurance is also in hands of self-governments.

Programmes for Youth, MESRS

- more information on Programmes for Youth in [1.7. Funding youth policy](#).

Erasmus +

Erasmus+ is specific about conditions and requirements on beneficiaries. Each line/Key Action determines exactly who and if what conditions are met can receive a financial subsidy.

Eligible activities and target groups in funding

State budget via system of parity taxes

- eligibility of activities and choice of priority target group is fully on decision of local and regional parliaments according their needs and priorities.

Programmes for Youth, MESRS

- any type of [activities](#) defined in the Act on Youth Work Support,
- priority group is youth 13 – 17 of age.

Erasmus +

- programme supports youth exchanges, voluntary service (including European Solidarity Corps), trainings and further education, strategical partnerships etc.
- priority target groups are defined by National Agencies – generally young people with fewer opportunities are priority in all countries (e.g. young unemployed, ethnic minorities etc.).

EU funds

In general, youth work is supported by EU funds through Erasmus+.

European structural and investment funds are available in Slovakia, but the decision to allocate these resources for youth work development is exclusively on Government and priorities of the individual Programmes. Last Programme supporting youth work development was in 2011 -2015 Komprax – Competences for Practice ([Komprax – kompetencie pre prax](#)), implemented by IUVENTA.

Cooperation

As youth work is one of the main thematic fields of Slovak Youth Strategy 2014 -2020, all consultation processes during the creation of Strategy and its evaluation contained also discussion on youth work development. One of the outcome was the preparation of Conception of Youth Work Development for 2016 -2021 ([Konceptcia rozvoja práce s mládežou](#)).

In 2019, youth work stakeholders were included in:

- preparation of new Youth Strategy for 2021 – 2028 and its individual themes such as [health and well-being](#),
- working group on quality standards in youth work ([Štandardy kvality práce s mládežou](#)),
- monitoring committee on Programs for Youth (Statute/[Štatút](#)),

- regular meetings of Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth coordinated by MESRS e.g. meeting in [November 2019](#) where the main topics of discussion were amended Youth Work Support Act, preparation of new Youth Strategy for 2021 -2028 and continuation of work of MESRS in the future.

10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality assurance

Standards of quality in youth work

In Slovakia, there are no generally valid and recognized standards of the quality of youth work yet.

Conception of Youth Work Development for years 2016 -2020 defines one of its major goals 'to put into practice tools to measure and support the development of quality in youth work'. In 2018 -2019 special working group has been set with vision "to create a consensus on quality criteria and indicators in youth work, taking into account the different forms, areas, target groups and actors in youth work and taking into account European trends'. More information in [10.8 Current debates and reforms](#).

Programmes for Youth 2016 -2020

Programmes for Youth coordinated by Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport are one of the main financial sources especially for national and intra-regional youth organisations. In Programmes some qualitative criteria have been defined for Programme Support of Youth Organisations. National and intra-regional youth organisations in consultations with Ministry agreed on quality criteria and basic and higher standards of quality. Any organization that fails to meet the basic standard cannot receive state support in programme concerned.

Examples of key areas of basic standard of quality of youth organisation:

- Youth Organisation management: processes, strategy and communication (in youth work sector) are monitored.
- Youth Organisation methodology: relevance of activities, methodological documents for the activities and youth workers/youth leaders training.

Examples of key areas of higher standard of quality of youth organisation:

- Management: financial sustainability, development strategy of the organization, communication and its forms (also outside the youth work sector).
- Methodology: relevance of current methodology, background of experts, trainings, supervision, international cooperation, recognition of results and impact (focused on youth members and youth volunteers)
- Inclusion: inclusiveness of membership, integration of vulnerable groups and elaboration of tools for inclusive approaches.

Youth Clubs/Leisure-time activities centres (CVČ)

Youth Centres must meet the strict conditions for enlistment in the network of schools and school facilities defined by the Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government ([Zákon o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve](#)) concerning:

- safety, accessibility and hygienically safe premises,
- occupational health protection for the staff of the Centres and its members (children and youth);
- fire protection,

- educational program ([Výchovný program v školskom zariadení](#)), which must meet the quality standards set by the State Pedagogical Institute.

Standard of competence profiles of leaders and professionals active in youth work

In 2011 the competence profiles of **young leaders** ([mladí vedúci](#)), **youth leaders** ([mládežnícki vedúci](#)) and **youth workers** ([pracovníci s mládežou](#)) were created in consultation process with youth work organisations and institutions in the framework of ESF Komprax – Competences for Practice project (see [10.5 Youth workers](#)).

In 2015 **youth worker** ([pracovník s mládežou](#)) as the official profession was incorporated in 'National Occupation Framework' (Národná sústava povolání) with defined requirements on knowledge and specific skills such as:

- application of the principles of non-formal education and new trends in educational programs in youth work,
- development of educational programs in youth work based on needs analysis and defined goals,
- using different tools and approaches in working with young people (e.g. mentoring, leadership, coaching, supervision ...).

In 2019 **youth work lecturer** and **youth work methodologist** (Trainer of non-formal education in youth work/[Lektor v práci s mládežou](#) and [Metodik v práci s mládežou](#)) were incorporated in National Occupation Framework' (Národná sústava povolání) in line with amendment of Act on Youth Work Support.

Main mechanisms to evaluate the quality of youth work projects/programmes

Accreditation Commission for Specialized programmes in Youth Work ([Akreditačná komisia pre špecializované činnosti v práci s mládežou](#))

- the only official tool for evaluation and confirmation of the quality of youth work programs in Slovakia,
- The Accreditation Commission was established on the basis of the Act on Youth Work Support in 2009,
- it is possible to accredit training programs intended for young leaders, youth leaders, professional or voluntary youth workers,

Accreditation of non-formal education programs in youth work (2010 -2018 - [171 accredited programmes](#)):

- ensures quality standards for educational programs
- helps to generate awareness of the benefits of non-formal education in terms of knowledge, skills and the competences of young people,
- subsequently also general recognition of these benefits by educational institutions, employers and the public.

In 2019 the number of [accredited programmes](#) is 75.

The themes of programmes are as follows: methods and principles of non-formal education in youth work, project management, work with youth volunteers, the establishment and management of NGO, organization of children's camps etc.

The Inspectorate of Education of the Slovak Republic

carries out checks and monitoring of the quality of Youth Clubs/Leisure-time activities Centres as a part of the schools' system of Slovakia.

Main outcomes of quality assurance processes

There are currently only partial official mechanisms for evaluation of quality in youth work (Programmes for Youth, Commission, Inspectorate of Education), however the outcomes are already present:

- quality of work of national and intra-regional youth organisations increased according to the evaluation of project assessors in Programmes for Youth,
- wide national discussion on criteria for financing led to the definition of criteria reflecting high quality of youth work;
- institutions and organisations applying for accreditation of their programmes can get evaluation of the quality in the form of official accreditation,
- those who do not succeed to obtain accreditation can get recommendations for improvement from the Accreditation committee,
- each Youth Club/Leisure time activities Centre get report from official visit of Inspectorate of Education, where the area for development are specified; monitoring report is presented to local or regional authorities (if they are the founder of the Centre).

Research and evidence supporting Youth Work

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute is traditionally initiator of youth work and youth policy researches and surveys. Since 2006 the Dataarchive on Youth Research is the platform for collection and disposal of current researches. IUVENTA supports youth research through own budget or in cooperation with MESRS.

Recently the source of financing youth work research is Programmes for Youth, especially sub-programme Evidence on Youth, starting with its first Call for proposals in 2016.

In 2018 – the annual priority of sub-programme Evidence on Youth (MESRS) was the quality standards of youth work in Slovakia, one project was supported ([Záverečný protokol Dôkazy o mladých 2018](#)), financial contribution approx. 17 000 €. Survey was used as the baseline document for working group on quality standards in youth work (2018-2019).

Some researches and surveys were supported also in the framework of other sub-programmes of Programmes for Youth (from 2016 Priorities of Youth Policy):

- 2016 -2017: surveys of Slovak Youth Council of impact on youth work in youth organisations ([Dopady práce s mládežou](#)), quality of work in youth organisations ([Kvalita práce s deťmi a mládežou](#)) and on how young people spend their leisure time ([Trávenie voľného času](#));
- 2017: surveys on current trends among young people ([Trendy v životnom štýle mladých](#), Youth Watch in cooperation with Belgian organisation Trendwolves)

The [Slovak Centre for Scientific and Technical Information](#) (Institution of MESRS) has been for long time collecting statistical data from the youth work:

- on national youth organizations ([Občianske združenia](#)),
- on Youth Information Centres ([Informačné centrá mladých](#)),
- on Youth Clubs / Leisure-time activities centres ([Voľnočasové zariadenia](#)).

Some data are processed into comparative studies e.g. Analysis of Leisure-time activities centres in 2018 ([Analýza činnosti CVČ z roku 2018](#)) or the Statistical Yearbook on Children and Youth 2018 ([Ročenka Deti a mládež v číslach 2018](#)), where statistical data in education are supplemented by demographic data, data on unemployment and youth crime.

Participate Youth Work

In 2019 the preparation of new Slovak **Youth Strategy for years 2021 -2028** started. After first meeting of national working group consisting of national youth organisations,

MESRS and IUVENTA, the series of regional round tables with members of youth organisations were organised to create space for voice of young people themselves (e.g. [Zvolen](#), [Bratislava](#), [Trnava](#) etc.

In 2018, Slovak Youth Council prepared series of consultations on **to-be amended Act on Youth Work Support**. The main objectives of the change were the new rules on the quality of youth work and the financing of youth work. Within the project, analytical materials related to both themes were elaborated (Report / [Správa](#)) and a legal framework was proposed, which went through consultation meetings in Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Prešov and Trnava.

[Youth Report 2018](#) and National Conference on **Slovak Youth Strategy implementation (June, 2018)** involved young people into preparation of the Report and in conference itself. One of the topic of the conference was Youth Work.

In 2015 – 2016 IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute and MESRS prepared one of the most significant youth work policy document **Conception of Youth Work Development** for years 2016 -2020. Conception was prepared in wide national consultation process with young people as regular members of 3 national meetings and 8 regional consultations (web site of Preparation of Conception of Youth Work Development/[Príprava Konceptie práce s mládežou](#))

Further information on the participation of young people in general policy making is provided in section [5.4](#).

Smart youth work: youth work in the digital world

Trainings to improve digital and media literacy skills in youth work environment organised by IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute.

2019:

New trends and approaches in youth work ([ON-OFF alebo Nové trendy a prístupy v práci s mládežou](#)).

Themes of training:

- digital youth work,
- online tools (e.g. Actionbound app)
- tools for promotion, facilitation and presentation
- graphical facilitation

Use of documentary film in youth work ([Využitie dokumentárneho filmu v práci s mládežou](#))

- Accredited programme by MESRS.
- Tools and approaches how to communicate important social issues to young people using documentary film.

[Discover Youth Talents](#) (April, 2019, Slovakia)

- digital youth work was one of the topics of international conference V4 countries.
- discussion on the potential of young people and systematic promotion of the talent of young people (including those with fewer opportunities) (Press release/ [Tlačová správa](#))

Discover your competencies on-line ([Objav kompetencie online](#))

- NGO Kaspian, in cooperatin with Slovak Scouting and NGO INEX, with support of MESRS (Programmes for Youth)
- Online tool to measure the level of competencies necessary for youth work (young leaders, coordinators etc.)

Support of transmission of digital practices and technology to youth work

Portal 'pracasmiladezou.sk' (youthwork) administered by IUVENTA.

- Special section of the portal dedicated to [new approaches in youth work](#) through digital youth work
- Examples of digital youth work practice in Europe and Slovakia as well as list of resource materials and web sites.

Digital youth work is promoted in publication Innovation in youth work ([Inovácie v práci s mládežou, 2017](#)) as the accompanying material produced during Slovak Presidency European Union Council.

In Slovakia, there are currently none top-level initiatives and measures to make digital infrastructure available to youth work projects and programmes.

More information in [6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media](#)

10.5 Youth workers

Status in national legislation

Act on Youth Work Support ([Zákon o podpore práce s mládežou](#)) defines several positions in youth work as follows:

- young leader: a person of age 15 -17 and actively participates in the organization of youth activities led by a youth leader or youth worker;
- youth leader: a person of minimum age 18, who is responsible for conducting and coordination of youth activities;
- youth worker: a person who supports young people in their personal development and their knowledge, skills and competences; prepares and organizes events or programs in the field of youth work, can be in an employment relationship, conducts business on the basis of a trade license in the field of youth work or carries out voluntary activities in the field of youth work;
- lecturer/trainer in youth work: a person who develops, through educational activities, the competences of youth workers, youth leaders, young leaders and other persons active in youth work;
- youth work co-ordinator: a person who plans, directs and coordinates youth work in relation to the competences of the municipalities or regional governments in the field of youth work

Three positions linked to youth work are included in National Qualifications Framework/[National System of Professions](#) (hereafter "NSP"):

- youth worker ([pracovník s mládežou](#))
- lecturer/trainer in youth work ([lektor v práci s mládežou](#))
- youth work methodologist ([metodik práce s mládežou](#)).

NSP as a united informative system describes standard requirements for the labour market for recognised professional qualifications. The NSP defines the requirements for professional and practical skills which are needed for the work activity in the labour market. Its main aim is to create a united national reference register of national job standards.

Specific standards and criteria for persons active in youth work

Act on Youth Work Support defines two basic criteria:

- that the person has not been convicted of an offense in the past or has not committed any offenses (no criminal record, strong personal integrity);
- legal capacity of person active in youth work.

In addition, youth worker in Leisure-time centres/Youth club (centres belong to national system of education) must have prescribed qualification (at least secondary education with specialization in pedagogy), good health condition and speak Slovak language (Act on Pedagogical Employees/[Zákon o pedagogických a odborných zamestnancoch](#))

In 2015 the competence profiles of young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers were defined in the framework on KOMPRAX – Competences for Practice (ESF project, [implemented by IUVENTA](#)). In each competence there are detailed descriptions of indicators divided to several levels according to the profile.

Competences of young leader

- ability to work in a team
- ability to motivate self and others
- ability to communicate effectively
- presentation skills
- project thinking
- financial literacy
- entrepreneurship and self-development
- knowledge on non-formal education in youth work

Competences of youth worker

- ability to work in a team
- ability to work with group processes
- knowledge of youth as a social group
- ability to motivate
- conflict solving
- entrepreneurship and self-development
- ability to communicate effectively
- presentation skills
- cultural and intercultural skills
- project thinking
- organizational competences
- financial literacy
- application of organizational and legislative standards in the field of youth work
- ability to work with information
- knowledge of non-formal education concept,
- practical use of opportunities for non-formal education in youth work

Youth leader has in principle the same competence profile as youth worker with some small differences e.g. organisational competence – with meaning ‘abilities to run youth organisation’ is not included.

Discussion on quality standards in youth work is discussed in special working group – see [10.8. Current debates and reforms](#).

Education, training and skills recognition

Despite the legislative definition and definition of “youth worker”, “youth work methodologist” and “lecturer/trainer in youth work” in the NSP, there are no universities with opportunities to study “youth work” and become a professionally certified youth worker. It is possible to study, for example, social pedagogy, pedagogy for leisure-time activities, specialised didactics, animation of free time activities, andragogy, etc.

Youth workers (on voluntary basis e.g. in national youth and children NGOs) are usually prepared for this position. Many youth NGOs have specialized training programmes for youth leaders e.g. Slovak Scouting.

Youth workers in Leisure-time centres/Youth clubs have usually Master degree in Teacher Training and Education Science which can be obtained at [11 universities in Slovakia](#) (Ružomberok, Prešov, 2 universities in Trnava, Komárno, Bratislava, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Košice, Dubnica n/Váhom, Žilina).

Continuous professional development of persons active in youth work is ensured differently in youth NGOs and in Leisure-time centres.

- Youth workers (on voluntary basis e.g. in national youth and children NGO) have specialized further trainings for more experienced youth workers, usually accredited by MESRS and delivered by NGOs (see also 10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work)
- Employees of Leisure-time centres/Youth clubs can participate in trainings provided by [National Institution for Teachers' Education and Training](#).

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute is long-term provider of further education of persons active in youth work (majority with accreditation of MESRS). Portal ‘[pracasmiladezou.sk](#)’ (youth work) is the place where [updated list of trainings](#) is promoted.

All educational programmes in youth work accredited by MESRS include obligatory procedure to prove acquired competences in form of tests, practical demonstration or presentation as the basic condition to obtain final certificate.

Mobility of youth workers

In Slovakia there is no large scale programme (funded by national funds) offering the possibility for youth workers to take part in exchange opportunities, cooperation and networking. Erasmus+ is major provider of financing at national level e.g. series of [trainings for youth workers in human rights](#) (NAHRE) in 2019 organised by IUVENTA.

10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

Existing arrangements

Besides the Youthpass for participants in Erasmus+ Youth and the possibility to have non- and informal learning recognized (see [6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning](#)) there is no other formal recognition of skills and competencies gained through youth work.

Skills

There are no top level national mechanisms to recognize the skills of youth workers.

10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

Information providers

1. IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute
2. Association of Information and Counselling Centres for Youth

3. Youth Council of Slovakia (RMS) and Association of regional youth councils (AKRAM)

IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute

- provides information on educational opportunities, e.g. through [own web page](#), special information portal '[pracasmiladezou.sk](#)' (youth work), via information network of [Eurodesk.sk](#), Slovak language version of [European Youth Portal](#) and others.
- organizes own trainings and trainings supporting non-formal learning (notably within Erasmus + but also within national resources),
- provides advice and consultations on [the accreditation of non-formal education programs](#) in the field of youth work.

Association of information and counselling centres for youth ([ZIPCEM](#))

- provides a wide range of information services from various areas (brigades, counselling, education, leisure, etc.),
- an overview of active youth organizations providing opportunities for non-formal learning as part of the project "[In Good Hands - Learning non-formally](#)",
- network of Information centres for youth ([ICM](#)) provides information on current opportunities for non-formal education at national as well as regional level.

Youth Council of Slovakia (RMS) and Association of regional youth councils (AKRAM)

- [RMS www.mladez.sk](#) a [AKRAM](#) promote the activities of their member organizations, including education activities.

Key initiatives

Declaration on the Recognition of Non-Formal Education (2013)

- Within the framework of ESF National Project "Komprax - Competence for Practice"
- Initiative towards employers and formal education representatives on recognizing the importance and benefits of youth work to develop competences for the labour market and the overall personal and social life,
- Creation of functional partnerships promoting the continuity of formal and non-formal education with a view to recognize competences acquired in youth work.
- [Signature of the Declaration in 2013](#) (more than [100 signatories](#)),
- Separate publication on the issue of recognition of non-formal education in youth work ([Krok za krokom k uznaniu](#)).

Conference EMPOWER (2019)

- Continuation of the initiative to recognize non-formal education of youth work by various stakeholders,
- Signing of the [Declaration by the new 25 signatories](#),
- Examples of cooperation between different stakeholders using methods, forms or approaches to youth work.

Conference Slovak Youth Report 2018 ([Konferencia Správa o mládeži 2018](#))

- Mid-term evaluation of the Implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the Years 2014 – 2020
- Special attention paid to the discussion, in particular, to support flexibility, accessibility of systems and partnerships of all providers of education, including youth work.

Other initiatives

- [Europe Goes Local](#) - project of several national agencies Erasmus+ to support the development of quality youth work at municipality level,
- Publication [Reading Book of Non-formal Education in Youth Work \(Šlabikár neformálneho vzdelávania\)](#).

10.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Amended Act on Youth Work Support in 2019

The amendment introduced several important changes:

- establishes the Youth work coordinator at local and regional level,
- lecturer in youth work,
- adjusting the responsibilities of regional and local authorities in the field of youth work
- introduces the Youth Parliament Institute and the Quality Label "Modern Youth Center"
- and other minor adjustments to the part accreditation and financing youth work from the state budget.

The amendment to the Act is effective as of 1st January 2020.

Upcoming changes in Programmes for Youth, MESRS

- strengthening the theme of local and regional self-government policy towards youth,
- Programme Services for Youth envisages strengthening the theme of career guidance
- ensuring the sustainability of local youth parliaments through the newly established position of Youth work coordinator.

Ongoing debates

The preparation of a new Conception of Combating Extremism since 2020 (current [Conception 2015 -2019](#)) will include a stronger link to youth work.

Special working group of quality standards of youth work

[Special working group](#) was set up in 2018 and continued its work in 2019 with the aim to find consensus among youth work stakeholders on quality of youth work. [Survey](#) on quality in youth work undertaken in 2018 -2019 by NGO Youth Watch was used as the analytical baseline documents from where the discussion started.

The main areas where quality standards are defined are:

- internal organization of activities and management of organizations
- strategy and planning
- leaders, volunteers and employees
- partnerships and resources
- educational programmes / activities / services for young people
- internal and external communication

Source: IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute

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GLOSSARY

Accreditation of an educational facility is a state approval of an educational facility's competency to realise a specialised activity within the area of youth work.

Career guidance and counselling is covered mainly by two sectors – educational sector and sector of employment services. Services organised under the responsibility of ministries and/or regional governments are available to various groups of citizens and are free of charge. Services are provided both for individuals who have not yet entered the labour market and also job seekers who are looking for work, as well as for those who are currently employed (SAIAC, 2014)

Hobby education (in state educational system) is education taking place in schools and schools facilities (mainly in Leisure time centres/youth clubs). Providers of hobby education organize activities for pupils outside the classrooms whose content is focused on the hobbies, recreational, physical and social activities of pupils. Content of activities is different from the curriculum of compulsory school subjects. Hobby education is provided at least 60 hours in the school year.

Houses at the halfway provides social service for a certain period of time to a person in an unfavorable social situation who does not have secure accommodation after termination of social service provision in another facility, after termination of the substitute care or after the end of the protective education.

Leisure Time Centre (Youth Club) is a facility in the educational system where children and young people up to the age of 30 can participate in hobby education, community youth work or any other activities based on needs and expectations of young people.

Material need is a situation where the income of a household member does not reach the statutory life minimum and the members of the household are not employed or cannot work etc. Elementary life conditions is one hot meal a day, the necessary dressing and shelter.

Non-formal education in the field of youth work is the further education of young people, young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers organized by educational entities in order to acquire new knowledge, practical experience and skills necessary for working with youth, enabling its participants to complement, expand and deepen their education.

Non-formal youth group is the free alliance of minimum 3 young people (at least one is 18 years old) who prepare and implement own activities and initiatives. In Slovakia, non-formal youth groups can obtain financial support for their activities ([Youth Work Support Act](#)).

Special educational need is the requirement to modify the conditions, content, forms, methods and approaches in education and training for the child or pupil that arise from his or her health disadvantage or talent or its growth in a socially disadvantaged environment. These adjustments are necessary to develop the abilities or personality of a child or pupil and to achieve an adequate level of education and adequate inclusion in society,

Pupil with special educational needs is an individual who has diagnosed special educational needs. These needs are diagnosed by institution for educational counselling and prevention.

Social inclusion of young people is a process ensuring that socially excluded persons or those at risk of social exclusion have been offered opportunities and possibilities helping them to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life of a society and live their everyday lives in a way, which is considered a routine. With regard to youth, this process may be understood also as a complex system of interventions leading to creation of opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities ([Youth Report 2014](#)).

Youth initiative is a project where young people participate actively and directly in activities of their own design. The project is initiated, created and implemented by young people themselves.

Youth Information Centres are NGOs providing information for young people through various channels. They serve as the first point of contact for their questions. The umbrella organisation of youth information centres is ZIPCEM. They are supported by the financial scheme of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

ARCHIVE

Information from previous years can be accessed and freely downloaded through the PDF files below.

2018:

 [Slovakia.pdf](#)

2017:

 [Slovakia.pdf](#)