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ANNUAL REPORT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN 2019

Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2019

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

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

EMN activities are focused on topics related to migration of third-country nationals. The activities are implemented through national contact points in all EU Member States and Norway in coordination with the European Commission (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs).

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

Reference documents and information from the following central state administration authorities have been used to compile the report: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

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

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Preface

The report informs about the most significant changes, developments and activities in the field of migration and international protection in Slovakia in 2019. In the Slovak Republic, the report is a unique publication of its kind which annually maps all areas of migration of third-country nationals.

The report forms part of the EMN Synthesis Report with the same focus which is prepared at EU level, summarising the findings of national reports compiled by EU Member States and Norway on the basis of common specifications. Since 2015, the Synthesis Report fully replaced the European Commission's Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum. The report feeds also into EA-SO's Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2019 as well as EMN Country Factsheets 2019.

The Synthesis Report and the individual reports of EU Member States and Norway are available in English on the European Commission website www.ec.europa.eu/emn. The report of the Slovak Republic is published in Slovak and English. Both versions are available on the website of the Slovak EMN National Contact Point www.emn.sk.

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List of Abbreviations and References

AMIF – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AVR – assisted voluntary return(s)
AVRR – Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme
BBFP PFP – Bureau of the Border and Foreign Police of the Police Force Presidium
CEAS – Common European Asylum System
CEDC – Central European Defence Cooperation
CFC – Children and Family Centre(s)
CFC Medzilaborce – Children and Family Centre DLAŇ in Medzilaborce
COI – country of origin information
Coll. – Collection of Laws of the Slovak Republic
COLSAF – Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
COMIN – Community Centre for Work and Knowledge Mobility
COOPSEC – The Cooperative Security Agreement
CPD MIO SR – Crime Prevention Department of the Office of the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic
CR – the Czech Republic
DBFP – Directorate of the Border and Foreign Police
DFEA MIO – Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior
EASO – European Asylum Support Office
EASO IPSN Tool – Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs
EC – European Commission / European Community
ECHR – European Court of Human Rights
ECRI – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EEA – European Economic Area
ELA – European Labour Authority
EMN – European Migration Network
ETIAS – European Travel Information and Authorization System
EU – the European Union
EUCPN – EU Crime Prevention Network
EUTF – European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa
FAD EPS MoI SR – Foreign Aid Department of the European Programmes Section of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
FPD – Foreign Police Department
Frontex – European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GNI – gross national income
IC MoI SR – Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
IN – Internal Directive
IOM – International Organization for Migration
IS – information system
ISAD PFO – Information Systems Administration Department of the Police Force Presidium
ISF – Internal Security Fund
IS SOCS – Social services information system

IVO – Institute for Public Affairs
JIT – Joint Investigation Team
Labour office(s) – Office(s) of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
MEKOMIC – Inter-Ministerial Expert Committee for Labour Migration and Foreigners' Integration
MIC IOM – IOM Migration Information Centre
MoESRS SR – Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic
MoFEA SR – Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic
MoI – Ministry of Interior
MoI SR – Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
MoJ SR – Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic
MoLSAF – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
MO MoI SR – Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
MS – EU member state(s)
NC SR – National Council of the Slovak Republic
NUCIM BBFP PF – National Unit to Combat Irregular Migration of the Bureau of the Border and Foreign Police of the Police Force Presidium
NVIS – National Visa Information System
ODA – Official Development Assistance
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLSAF – Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
o.z. / OZ – civic association
PDCS(s) – Police Detention Centre(s) for Foreigners
PF – Police Force
PFP – Police Force Presidium
PMVRO – the Platform of Non-Governmental and Development Organizations
PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder
RCMS – Readmission Case Management System
SAMRS – Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation
SO SR – Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
SPCSG – socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship
SR – Slovak Republic
SSPI – Slovak Security Policy Institute
TCN(s) – third-country national(s)
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USA – United States of America
V4 – Visegrad Group
UAM(s) – unaccompanied minor(s)
UK – United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN – United Nations Organisation

Explanation of symbols (not applicable to **table 4** in the Annex):

(:) – Data unavailable

(-) – The phenomenon did not occur

Methodology and Terms

Methodology and Elaboration

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

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

In terms of methodology, the report uses secondary research and has a descriptive nature. The report for Slovakia is based on available expert publications, statistics, legislation, Slovakia's policy documents, internet sources and media monitoring¹. Significant sources of information were reference documents and information obtained from the following state administration bodies: MoI SR (namely BBFP PFP, MO MoI SR, Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior, Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the MoI SR, FAD EPS MoI SR, Public Administration Section of MoI SR and Crisis Management Section of MoI SR), MoLSAF SR, COLSAF (through MoLSAF SR), MoFEA SR, Ministry of Justice of the SR (through FAD EPS MoI SR), General Prosecutor's Office of the SR (through FAD EPS MoI SR), Statistical Office of the SR and IOM. Materials, publications, and websites of other state, European, international and non-governmental institutions also represent important sources of information. The report also refers to several EMN publications and activities.

Each chapter uses also media releases as sources of information. The text therefore contains links to media references to migration topics and activities carried out by public administration, nongovernmental sector and international organisations.

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

¹ IOM as the coordinator of the EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic in cooperation with a news agency has been carrying out weekly media monitoring of migration and international protection issues since 2012. The media monitoring is used for preparing EMN publications.

Terms and Definitions

The expert terms used in this report largely correspond with the definitions in the *EMN Migration and Asylum Glossary*.² In case the definitions from this Glossary cannot be used for some terms, the terms are used pursuant to the national or EU legislation (regulations, directives).

Special attention in this report should be paid to the term *foreigner*, which under the Slovak legislation, namely Art. 2(2) of the Act on Residence of Foreigners³, is considered anybody who is not a national of the Slovak Republic. According to the EMN Glossary, a foreigner, in the EU context, is a person who is not a national of an EU Member State, and, in the global context, a person who is not a national (native or citizen) of a given state. The Slovak legislation, however, defines a foreigner who is not a national of an EU Member State as *third-country national*⁴. In this report, the term foreigner is therefore mainly used in texts and statistics which are related to or are kept in compliance with the national legislation. In such case, the term foreigner corresponds with the definition under Art. 2(2) of the Act on Residence of Foreigners, and not with the definition in the EMN Glossary.

The term *migrant* is also used in the report, which, unlike the definition in the EMN Glossary⁵, is used as a synonym of the words foreigner or third-country national.

Terms *irregular* and *illegal* are considered as synonyms in the report and their use depends on the specific context. The Slovak legislation uses the term *illegal*.

Terms *migration crisis*, *refugee crisis* and *migration situation* are used in the text as synonyms. They refer to the situation since 2015 which occurred in the EU as a result of significant increase of the number of asylum seekers from third countries.

² Asylum and Migration Glossary 6.0 – a Tool for Better Comparability (2019). European Migration Network. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/alien_en (consulted on 01/04/2020).

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

⁴ Under Art. 2 (4) of the Act on Residence of Foreigners, a third-country national is anybody who is not a national of the Slovak Republic or an EU national. A third-country national is also a stateless person.

⁵ According to the EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, migrant is defined as follows: "In the global context, a person who is outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. In: Asylum and Migration Glossary 6.0 – a Tool for Better Comparability (2018). European Migration Network, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_en (consulted on 01/04/2020).

Executive Summary

The report informs about the most significant changes, developments and activities in the field of migration and international protection in Slovakia in 2019. In the Slovak Republic, the report is a unique publication of its kind which annually maps all areas of migration of third-country nationals in the context of EU policies and legislation. The report describes also context of legal migration, international protection including asylum, unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups, integration, citizenship and situation of stateless persons, border control and management, visa practice, irregular migration including migrant smuggling, countering trafficking in human beings, returns and readmissions, as well as migration and development. In the annex, the report presents also selected statistics which are not collected at EU level.

In 2019, there were no significant organizational or institutional changes in key state administration departments related to migration and international protection. In 2019 topic of migration of third country nationals was again part of the political, media and public discussion in Slovakia. The topic of migration also occurred in the election campaigns to the European Parliament, for the President of the SR and parliamentary elections campaign in 2019. Cooperation of the V4 countries in the area of migration continued in 2019, as well as international cooperation and implementation of EMN activities in Slovakia. Researches on the attitudes of Slovaks towards foreigners and attitudes of young people towards different groups of residents living in Slovakia were realised. These researches showed high level of mistrust of Slovaks towards foreigners. On the political level and in media the biggest attention was devoted again to labour migration from third countries to Slovakia.

In 2019 Slovakia did not transpose any new EU legislation, which would directly concern migration of third country nationals. In 2019 Slovakia adopted legislative changes in the area of migration by amending the *Act on Residence of Foreigners*⁶ (amendments effective from 1 January 2019 and 1 December 2019), the *Act on Employment Services*⁷ (amendment effective from 1 January 2019), the *Act on Asylum*⁸ (some provisions were cancelled from 6 March 2019) and *Act on State Citizenship*⁹ (amendment effective from 1 December 2019).

In 2019 SR continued in particular to implement the measures listed in the *Strategy for Foreigners Labour Mobility in the Slovak Republic*. The *Strategy* was adopted in October 2018 as a reaction to the ongoing demand of employers for foreign employees from third countries, in the situation of long term low unemployment rate in the country. The number of first applications for temporary residence permit for the purpose of employment increased again. In this regard the personnel capacities at consular sections of the Slovak representations abroad were reinforced, more specifically in those territories, where the number of applications increased. Illegal employment of foreign workers via foreign agencies remained a problem.

In 2019 the SR adopted legislative changes in the field of legal migration by *amending the Act on Residence of Foreigners and Act on Employment Services*. Apart from other things, these amendments allowed the temporary employment agencies residing in the SR to temporarily assign

TCNs to work in professions with a shortage of labour and the frequency of updating the *list of professions with a shortage of labour* to be increased from once a year to four times a year.

In 2019, the SR continued to approve preventive measures in case of the so-called 'No-deal Brexit', to develop working holiday programmes, and launched a new online booking system at the Foreign Police. In 2019, the SR signed *two agreements at the government level on mutual recognition of education certificates – with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China*.

Regarding the cross-sectional strategic documents, the SR in 2019 started the preparation of *update to the Migration Policy for 2020*, which should act as a framework for individual migration related areas in the following five-year period, i.e. until 2025. The SR also started preparing the *programme for implementation of Asylum and Migration Fund for 2021 – 2027 programming period*. In June 2019, the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted the *Act on Census of Population and Housing 2021*. It will help with gathering data on Slovak citizens by their country of birth, citizenship, age and sex, previous residence abroad or year of arrival into the SR.

In 2019, the SR did not pass any changes in the legislation regarding international protection. The level of asylum seekers and the number of asylums granted in the SR remained low even in 2019. In 2019, the MO Mol SR, which is responsible for the international protection and refugee integration agenda, paid special attention to the topics of safety and protection of human rights of asylum seekers in the Mol SR asylum facilities. In this respect, the MO Mol SR prepared an internal methodology for social workers entitled *Social Workers' Competences to Avoid and Solve Critical Situations*. Efficiency of provision of interpretation services in terms of the time availability and of the increased number of interpreted languages also improved in 2019. A number of decisions of the Supreme Court of the SR and of the Constitutional Court of the SR concerning international protection provision were issued in the SR in 2019. The SR did not conduct any relocation, nor did it implement any resettlement programmes or humanitarian admission programmes for third-country refugees. In 2019, the MO Mol SR was also assessing the finalization of the project concerning the integration of 149 refugees (25 families) from Northern Iraq who were admitted in the SR on humanitarian grounds in 2015.

UNHCR has prepared *learning materials for the junior and senior sections of elementary schools in the SR* designed for the teachers working with various groups of migrant children as well as for students, helping them to increase their awareness of international protection and refugees. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of its existence, the MO Mol SR published an *information brochure describing its competences and tasks*.

Following the amendment to the legislation of 2018, the Foster Home for UAMs in Medzilaborce transformed to a Children and Family Centre DLAŇ in Medzilaborce (CFC Medzilaborce) as of 1 January 2019. Measures adopted in 2019 led to an increased quality and scope of care for UAMs. Partly as a result of the increase in the number of UAMs, both material and personnel conditions in the centre were improved and a position of a cultural mediator was created. Professional capacity of the CFC Medzilaborce staff was improved through various educational activities. A measure was introduced according to which in case of doubt concerning the age of migrants a bone examination shall be carried out to determine their age before their placement in the CFC in Medzilaborce. This measure helped to partially eliminate the long-term problem of migrant placement in cases when their minor status could not be clearly proven. An Expert Commission for the Support of Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Education, Work and Society

⁶ Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to some acts

⁷ Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to some acts

⁸ Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and on changes and amendments to some acts

⁹ Act No.40/1993 on State Citizenship of the Slovak Republic

was established as an advisory body within the structure of the Parliamentarian Committee of National Council of the SR on Human Rights and National Minorities. In order to improve the quality of services provided to vulnerable persons the MO Mol SR prepared a methodological guideline *Social Workers' Competences to Avoid and Solve Critical Situations*.

Aiming to support integration of foreigners, MoLSAF SR started to update the Integration Policy of the SR in 2019, focusing on the foreigners' integration in the labour market. Some self-governmental authorities became more actively involved in foreigners' integration activities, partly thanks to the implementation of the *KapaCITY – support for migrant integration on the local level* project focused on improving the integration of third-country nationals at the municipal level. The IOM MIC continued in 2019 to provide comprehensive legal and labour counselling services as well as language and professional education to foreigners in the SR. Language education was also provided by civic associations Mareena and Studia Academica Slovaca. A number of non-governmental organizations, in coordination with the MO Mol SR, implemented integration activities for persons granted international protection.

Regarding the prevention of discrimination, the SR started to prepare the *Concept of Combating Radicalisation and Extremism for Years 2020 – 2024*. The MO Mol SR and non-governmental organisations organized several events in order to inform the public, improve the general public awareness on migration and prevent discrimination. These included, e.g., preparation of the Facebook page named *Hoaxy a podvody* (Hoaxes and Deceptions) in cooperation with the Police Force of the SR website administrators, organization of lectures and debates in schools and during various festivals, continuation of the staging of *Nová scéna* Theatre play on the refugee topic together with a relevant discussion, or „*Migration Compass*“, an online podcast prepared in cooperation with the magazine „*tyždeň*“.

In 2019, the SR did not adopt any significant changes related to citizenship of third-country nationals or stateless persons. As of 1 December 2019, the Act on State Citizenship simplified the administrative process of citizenship application submission for third-country nationals.

In 2019, the SR adopted the *National Strategy of Integrated Border Management for 2019 – 2022*. Several objectives stemmed from the strategy, which Slovakia will have to fulfil in the area of European integrated border management.

In 2019, the SR participated in the international COOPSEC 2019 exercise alongside the Central European Defence Cooperation partner countries. On the national level, an interdepartmental cooperation training *Nový Horizont 2019* (New Horizon 2019) was held. A third evaluation of the level of correct and full application of the Schengen acquis related to returns, to the area of personal data protection in the visa process and to the area of visa policy by the Slovak Republic by EC experts was performed.

In 2019, a decrease in the number of irregular migration cases was recorded; as compared with 2018, there were fewer cases of state border crossings and of irregular residence. Regarding the irregular migration routes, the number of irregular entries through the external land border with Ukraine decreased and the number of secondary transit migration from the territory of Hungary increased. The SR continued the cooperation with operational and search border unit of Ukraine based on the *Plan of Development of Cooperation between the BBFP PFP and the State Border Service of Ukraine for 2019 – 2020*. In 2019, several measures were adopted to increase the professional level and effectiveness of PF members in detecting forged and altered documents.

The National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2019 – 2023 including its action plan entered into effect in 2019. Their main objective is to introduce a coordinated system with a view to reduce criminal activity in human trafficking. In 2019, the SR created a *network of information offices for human trafficking victims*, which provide comprehensive services and counselling to human trafficking victims. Construction of special interview rooms for child victims and for other particularly vulnerable victims of crime started. In 2019, the SR simplified access of human trafficking victims including TCNs enrolled in the Provision of support and protection to victims of human trafficking programme and located outside of their place of permanent residence to the services of Social Insurance Agency branch offices and Labour Offices. Several training and preventative activities including national and one European campaign took place in Slovakia in 2019. The SR did not implement any new measures or activities which would focus directly on human trafficking victims from third countries in 2019. The number of identified human trafficking victims coming from countries outside of the EU was very low in the SR, as in the previous years. The SR continued bilateral and multilateral cooperation in combating trafficking in human beings. In 2019, the third evaluation round of the Convention of Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings implementation in the SR was launched. The Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention was included directly under the auspices of Mol SR state secretary. Statutes of the *Expert Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* were amended in 2019 while a regular working group comprised of Mol SR representatives, non-governmental sector and invited experts was established.

In 2019, a slight decrease in the overall number of returns from the territory of the SR was recorded. On the other hand, the number of assisted voluntary returns increased. Regarding forced returns, at the end of 2019, implementation of the *Forced Return - AMIF II* and *Kompas II* project was finished. They will be followed by the *Forced Return - AMIF III* and *Kompas III* projects in the upcoming period. Regarding monitoring of forced returns, the SR increased its participation in Frontex activities. Cooperation in readmission and returns to third countries was strengthened in the case of Vietnam and Sri Lanka. Within the *Voluntary return and reintegration in the country of origin* project, the IOM launched a new website for interested persons and applicants for assisted voluntary returns. Towards the end of 2019, implementation of the project was finished, and a new project will start from 2020, also implemented by IOM.

In 2019, the SR did not implement any significant systemic measures to promote development influence on migration.¹⁰ However, they continued to include migration into development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The *Medium-Term Strategy of the Official Development Cooperation 2019 – 2023* which was approved by the Government of the SR in January 2019 includes a several fold increase of official development assistance by 2030. The strategy points to the need for dealing with the causes of migration in the countries of origin and transit countries through eliminating poverty, the creation of job opportunities, and enhancing food safety. In 2019, the development cooperation of the Slovak Republic was guided by the goals, principles and priorities defined in the *Focus of Bilateral Official Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic in 2019*, as well as by the amended *Act on Development Cooperation* and the *Act on Ex-imbank*. In 2019, the SR participated in helping countries of origin or transit through SlovakAid, EU and UN mechanisms.

¹⁰ E.g. activities/measures to integrate migration into development and sectoral policies, to reduce brain drain in countries of origin or cooperation activities with third countries in the field of economic migration (such as labor mobility partnerships and the establishment of Migration and Mobility Resource Centers, cooperation with diasporas and in relation to remittances).



Introduction

The *EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum (ARM)* informs about the most important changes, developments and activities in the field of migration and international protection in Slovakia in 2019, while focusing on third-country nationals.¹¹ The report serves as a basis for European-wide EMN Annual Report¹² which in 2015 fully replaced the *European Commission's Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum*¹³. The report will be also a source of information for the *EASO's Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2019*¹⁴ and *EMN Country Factsheets 2019*¹⁵ about developments in different Member States in 2019.

The report describes changes, developments and activities at the legislative, institutional, political and practical levels in the area of migration and international protection in Slovakia from 1 January 2019 till 31 December 2019, and sets them into the context of EU policies and legislation. In twelve thematic chapters, the report describes context for migration and asylum policy developments, legal migration, international protection including asylum, unaccompanied mi-

¹¹ The description of the general structure of the political and legal system in the field of migration and international protection in Slovakia can be found in the updated version of the EMN study on Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies in the Slovak Republic from 2014. Available at <https://emn.sk/sk/na-stiahnutie-emn/publikacie-emn/item/138-organizacia-azylovej-a-migracnej-politiky> (consulted on 02/04/2020).

¹² The latest EMN Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum 2017 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/nationalreports_en (consulted on 02/04/2020).

¹³ The last 5th Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum 2013 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/5th-annual-report-immigration-and-asylum-2013_en (consulted on 02/04/2020).

¹⁴ The latest Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2018 available at: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-annual-report-2018> (consulted on 02/04/2020).

¹⁵ EMN Country Factsheets 2018 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/factsheets_en (consulted on 02/04/2020).

nors and other vulnerable groups, integration, citizenship and stateless persons, control and border management, visa practice, irregular migration including migrant smuggling, counter-ing trafficking in human beings, returns and readmissions, migration and development. The Annex to the report contains also selected statistics including those which are not collected at the EU level through Eurostat or Frontex, as well as Bibliography.

The chapter *Context for asylum and migration policy developments* provides a general picture which shaped migration policies and legislation in Slovakia in 2019. This overview describes the relevant political, legislative and institutional developments, (inter-)institutional cooperation, discussions related to measure- and policy-making, media discussions, as well as wider social context that influenced different areas of migration and international protection.

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

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

The chapter *Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups* addresses mainly policies, legislation, measures and activities related to admission of and care for unaccompanied minor migrants from third countries as well as measures in the area of services provisions to other vulnerable groups.

The chapter *Integration* focuses on socio-economic integration measures for third-country nationals, including persons granted international protection. It contains also measures related to awareness-raising actions about migration, non-discrimination, integration at local level and on migration as well as integration at the local level and through civic participation of foreigners.

The chapter *Citizenship and statelessness* is aimed at policies and measures dealing with acquisition of nationality and with status of persons without any citizenship in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

The chapter *Borders, Schengen and visas* provides information about external border control and management, visa policies and measures aimed at cooperation with third countries in the field of border control and management.

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

The chapter *Trafficking in human beings* from third countries deals with the policies, legislation, international monitoring, national projects, campaigns and other activities, as well as cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels in this field.

The chapter *Returns and readmissions* follows up on the chapter on irregular migration and includes information about forced returns and readmissions as well as (assisted) voluntary returns and reintegrations.

The chapter *Migration and development* provides an overview of activities and measures to include migration into development and sectoral policies. The chapter also informs about bilateral cooperation and assistance in third countries.

The Annex *National statistics* summarises selected statistics for Slovakia on migration and international protection in 2019 including those which are not collected at EU level through Eurostat¹⁶ or Frontex agency¹⁷. The Annex shows the figures on first residence permits issued, administrative fees for residence permit applications, visas, smuggled persons, reflection periods and residence permits granted to smuggled persons, numbers of smugglers, returns and reintegrations, relocations and resettlements, figures on unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking from third countries, reflection periods and residence permits granted to victims of human trafficking, and on the numbers of traffickers.



Context for Migration and Asylum Policy Developments

In 2019, there were no significant organizational or institutional changes in key state administration departments related to migration and international protection. The topic of migration of third country nationals was, once again, a part of political, media and societal discourse in Slovakia in 2019. Migration related topics featured in the campaigns preceding the 2019 European Parliament elections as well as the 2019 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Slovakia. Cooperation of the V4 countries in the field of migration and the interdepartmental cooperation and implementation of EMN activities in Slovakia continued. Surveys mapping Slovaks' attitude towards foreigners and young people's attitude towards various groups of people living in the Slovak Republic organized in 2019 showed a high level of distrust Slovaks feel in relation to foreigners. Political discourse and media attention focused again particularly on work-related migration of third-country nationals.

2.1 Political Developments and (Inter)departmental Cooperation

Political discourse in 2019 focused again particularly on work-related migration of third-country nationals and on the cooperation of the V4 countries in the field of migration. Migration related topics appeared, inter alia, also in the pre-election campaigns before the 2019 European Parliament elections as well as 2019 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Slovakia. In 2019, the European Parliament elections and Presidential elections were held in Slovakia.

¹⁶ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics (consulted on 02/04/2020).

¹⁷ Available at: <http://frontex.europa.eu/publications/> (consulted on 02/04/2020).

Presidential elections were held in two rounds on 16 March and 30 March 2019. Zuzana Čaputová won the elections and became the President of the Slovak Republic. In pre-election surveys, the presidential candidates expressed their opinions, among other topics, also on migration related questions, in particular on the reception of refugees and the Global Compact for Migration.¹⁸

The European Parliament elections were held on 25 May 2019 and were marked by the historically highest voter turnout – 22.74%, which, however, was still the lowest among the EU countries. Six parties made it to the European Parliament – Progressive Slovakia/Spolu (Progresívne Slovensko/Spolu), Direction – Social Democracy (SMER-SD), Kotleba – PPOS (Kotleba – ĽSNS), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a solidarita) and Ordinary People and Independent Personages (Obyčajní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti, OĽANO). According to the publication by the Institute for Public Affairs (Inštitút pre verejné otázky, IVO) *The 2019 European Elections in Slovakia: Context and Results*, election results were influenced by strong polarization of the entire pre-election discourse. PPOS (ĽSNS) built their campaign on anti-immigration rhetoric and their two anti-immigration videos from Brussels were shared by thousands of people. Migration as a topic resonated most strongly with the PPOS supporters, but was not dominating the discourse even in their case.¹⁹

The official campaign before the 2020 Parliamentary elections which will be held in February 2020 started in November 2019.

Internationally, in February 2019 the SR *did not join the Istanbul Commitments declaration* which governs migration related issues. The main reason was a reference in the text to the *UN Global Compact for Migration* which Slovakia did not join either in December 2018 in New York.²⁰

(Inter)departmental Cooperation and Coordination

In 2019, there were no significant organizational or institutional changes in key state administration departments related to migration including international protection. Interdepartmental cooperation and coordination in the field of migration continued in 2019 in Slovakia in particular within the following official fora:

- *Steering Committee for Migration and Integration of Foreigners*, which was held in 2019 twice – on 26 June and 11 December 2019. During the meetings, the development of migration and asylum situation in Slovakia and on EU level was regularly discussed. The meetings also covered the topics of current state of play of the preparation of the state integration programme for persons with international protection status, state of play of the new migration policy preparation, state of play of the CEAS reform discussions and the related legislative changes needed in the SR. Information on EMN activities were also provided.²¹
- *Inter-Ministerial Expert Committee for Labour Migration and Foreigners' Integration (MEKOMIC)*²², which in January 2019 worked on the *Strategy for Foreigners Labour Mobility in the Slovak Republic* and on the preparation of the new Integration Policy of the SR and discussed the matter

18 Source: Unsorted EMN media monitoring in 2019.

19 Source: http://www.ivo.sk/buxus/docs/publikacie/subory/Europske_volby_2019_na_Slovensku.pdf (consulted on 19/04/2020).

20 Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=slovensko-sa-nepripojilo-k-deklaracii-istanbulske-zavazky> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

21 Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

22 MEKOMIC is a coordination body of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR for migration and integration policy issues and also an advisory body of the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. MEKOMIC comprises experts from (central) state administration bodies implementing integration policy objectives and measures. Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to the MEKOMIC meetings as necessary.

of foreigners' integration with local government.²³

- *National Contact Point of the EMN*²⁴ in the SR²⁵, which implemented various activities in 2019 including the preparation of publications²⁶, submission of and responding to ad hoc queries, drafting of answers to ad hoc queries submitted by other national contact points²⁷, organization of seminars (e.g. the 7th EMN Educational Seminar on Migration²⁸) and other expert meetings²⁹. Said events are held annually and focus on various topics related to the TCNs' migration. They are meant mainly for policymakers and representatives of public authorities, research institutions, academia and the non-governmental sector.^{30,31}

Towards the end of 2019, the Council of Europe decided to appoint Slovak diplomat Drahoš Štefánek as the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees. The function of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees that the Ambassador Štefánek should take up on 15 January 2020 was established in December 2015 as a reaction to the increase in mixed migration to a number of the Council of Europe Member States. The role of the Special Representative is to gather information on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees by visiting refugee camps, report to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, ensure close cooperation and information exchange with relevant structures of the Council of Europe, with the countries belonging to the Council of Europe, with relevant international organizations and with specialised agencies. The Special Representative also develops proposals for actions for the Secretary General to increase the Council of Europe's assistance provided to the countries impacted by the migration crisis. His activities will also concern protection of rights of refugees and migrants, in particular children.³²

2.2 Public Attitude and Migration in Media

According to the survey conducted in March 2019, only 35% of the interviewed Slovaks tend to trust foreigners coming from other EU countries and, in case of foreigners from countries outside the EU, the number is even lower at 17.3%. The survey was initiated by the Milan Šimečka Foundation, which linked the survey results to the long-time low level of trust Slovaks hold towards "other" people, regardless whether the "others" are foreigners or not. According to the study by the Slovak Academy of Sciences, in the last 20 years only 10 to 15% of Slovak population has trusted the "other" people.³³ Prior to Slovakia's gaining its independence, the level of trust was about 20%. Approx. 55% respondents failed to correctly estimate the number of foreigners (working) in Slovakia. More than 70% of respondents, regardless of their political preferences, did not consider foreigners to be contributing to the Slovak society and Slovak economy. Moreo-

23 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

24 The European Migration Network (EMN) provides up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum with a view to supporting policymaking in the EU and its member states. The EMN is composed of National Contact Points from all EU Member States and in Norway, in coordination with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. EMN's activities concern topics related to the third-country nationals' migration.

25 The EMN National Contact Point in the Slovak Republic comprises representatives of MoI SR, MoLSAF SR, SO SR and IOM, acting as its coordinator.

26 Source: <https://emn.sk/sk/na-stiahnutie-emn/publikacie-emn> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

27 Source: <https://emn.sk/sk/aktivita-emn/ad-hoc-otazky> (consulted on 01/04/2019).

28 Source: <https://emn.sk/sk/aktivita-emn/stretnutia-a-konferencie/340-emn-zorganizovala-7-rocnik-vzdelavacieho-seminara-o-migracii-dopady-a-prilezitosti-medzinarodnej-migracie> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

29 Source: <https://emn.sk/sk/aktivita-emn/stretnutia-a-konferencie> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

30 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

31 Source: www.emn.sk (consulted on 01/04/2019).

32 Source: http://www.mzv.sk/aktuality/vsetky_spravy/-/asset_publisher/Rp2fPY0svzsu/content/vymenovanie-slovenskeho-diplomata-do-pozicie-osobitneho-predstaviteľa-pre-migráciu-a-utečencov?p_auth=ede8mYjZ&_101_INSTANCE_Rp2fPY0svzsu_redirect=%2F (consulted on 08/04/2020).

33 Source: <https://domov.sme.sk/c/22210310/focus-vacsina-obcanov-cudzincov-nedoveruje-a-nevie-odhadnut-kolko-ich-tu-zije.html> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

ver, the results also show that every seventh person in Slovakia considers the influence foreigners have on Slovak culture and traditions to be very negative.³⁴

Sociological research report *Civic Coexistence through the Eyes of Teenagers*³⁵ focused on the mapping of attitudes of young people aged 15-19 towards various population groups. Analysis of the youth's social distancing from the groups of "others" showed that the respondents declared the farthest distance from political extremists (75%). On the other hand, many respondents also distanced themselves from the groups of people whom the public opinion usually associates with the migration crisis, such as Muslims (60%) or refugees fleeing from the countries impacted by a war or famine (45%).³⁶ The report was published in 2019 as one of the outcomes of the Youth Education for Civil Coexistence project, supported by the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic and implemented by the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO).³⁷

Slovak media focused on various migration related topics in 2019. The topics that resonated the most in the media were those of work-related migration of third-country nationals and of the mixed migration flows into the EU. Slovak media also discussed migration in relation to extremism and the Presidential as well as European Parliament elections in 2019.³⁸

The comparative analysis *Exposed: Media coverage of migration in Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovakia*³⁹ published in September 2019 examined the way the Slovak, Czech and Estonian media (with the exception of tabloids and conspiracy promoting media) report on migration. Slovak media showed a more responsible approach to migration coverage and Slovak tabloids were more subtle; and disinformation did not make it into the mainstream. The report findings also indicate that Slovak media portray migration in a more diverse way than the other two countries included in the survey. Slovak media do not predominantly cover the topic of migration through the lens of the 2015 crisis and the stories of people coming to Europe from the Middle East or African countries. Media in Slovakia also pay a lot of attention to the topic of labour-related migration.⁴⁰ The educational programme *Svet medzi riadkami (The World Between the Lines)*, which participated in the drafting of the report, made it possible for the students of journalism to visit the Slovak – Ukrainian border in 2019 within the scope of the *Migrácia u nás (Migration in our country)* activity.⁴¹

According to the Slovak Security Policy Institute (SSPI) many pieces of disinformation and hoaxes brought or supported by a number of media and political actors appeared on the Slovak internet in 2019. In its list of top 2019 disinformation, the Institute included several such hoaxes related to migration which presented migration as a threat to civilisation, a security risk and a social burden.⁴²

34 Source: <https://www.multikulti.sk/clanky/cudzinci-a-cudzinky-na-slovensku-nevieme-odhadnut-kolko-ich-je-ale-nedoverujeme-im> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

35 Available at: https://globalnevezdelavanie.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Obcianske_spolunazivanie_ocami_tinedzerov.pdf (consulted on 08/04/2020).

36 Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/survey-shows-teenagers-in-slovakia-are-socially-distant-towards-muslims-and-refugees?fbclid=IwAR3XfslsLTNIHEyYqqg4UmpKgc2PqYmNcn5s3cu4prUjPATR9vEwP5jvJS0> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

37 Source: https://globalnevezdelavanie.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Obcianske_spolunazivanie_ocami_tinedzerov.pdf (consulted on 08/04/2020).

38 Source: Unsorted IOM media monitoring in 2019.

39 Source: https://globalnevezdelavanie.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/PbL_MigrationMedia_comparative_EN.pdf (consulted on 08/04/2020).

40 Source: <https://globalnevezdelavanie.sk/svet-medzi-riadkami/> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

41 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/svetmedziriadkami/> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

42 Source: <https://antipropaganda.sk/vyber-top-dezinformacii-roku-2019-podla-antipropaganda-sk/> (consulted on 08/04/2020).

03

Legal Migration

In 2019, the SR continued in particular with the implementation of measures stemming from the *Strategy for Foreigners Labour Mobility in the Slovak Republic* which was adopted in October 2018 as a reaction to the demand of employers for foreign workers given the long-term low unemployment rate in the country. The number of first applications for temporary residence permit for the purpose of employment increased again. In this regard the personnel capacities at consular sections of the Slovak representations abroad were reinforced, more specifically in those territories, where the number of applications increased. Illegal employment of foreign workers via foreign agencies remained a problem.

In 2019, the SR adopted legislative changes related to regular migration – by means of *amendments to the Act on Residence of Foreigners* and *Act on Employment Services*. Apart from other things, these amendments allowed the temporary employment agencies residing in the SR to temporarily assign TCNs to work in professions with a shortage of labour and the frequency of updating the *list of professions with a shortage of labour* to be increased from once a year to four times a year. In 2019, the SR continued to approve preventive measures in case of the so-called 'No-deal Brexit', to develop working holiday programmes, and launched a new online booking system at the Foreigners Police. In 2019, the SR signed *two agreements at the government level on mutual recognition of education certificates – with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China*.

Regarding the strategic documents, the SR in 2019 started the preparation of *update to the Migration Policy for 2020*, which should act as a framework for individual migration related areas in

the following five-year period, i.e. until 2025. The SR started preparing the *programme for implementation of Asylum and Migration Fund for 2021 – 2027 programming period*. In June 2019, the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted the *Act on Census of Population and Housing 2021*. It will help with gathering data on Slovak citizens by their country of birth, citizenship, age and sex, previous residence abroad or year of arrival into the SR.

3.1 Statistics and Trends

In 2019, increased demand of employers for foreign workforce continued. There was an increase in the number of Ukrainians, Serbians and Romanians working in the SR. They together accounted for more than a half of the foreigners working in the SR. Approximately a third of foreigners worked in Bratislava followed by Trnava and Nitra.⁴³

First applications for residence permit in the SR in 2019 increased again. Their number was 28, 911, which is increase by 27% in comparison with the previous year 2018, when their number was 20, 989. In 2019 the SR granted 3, 559 residence permits for family purposes, 2, 955 residence permits for education and study purpose, 20, 890 residence permits for purpose of paid activities (biggest increase in comparison with 2018 from 13, 956) and for purpose of other activities 1, 507 residence permits (see **table 1** in the annexes)⁴⁴

The biggest increase in 2019 in the issued residences for paid activities (increase by almost 50% in comparison with the previous year) is related mostly with the increase in submitted new applications of TCNs for the residence permit for the purpose of employment in the SR. This is due to the continuous demand for foreign workers with low levels of qualification. In this group of labour migrants prevail nationals of Ukraine and Serbia as it was in 2018. The SR also registered significant increase in the first residences for business purpose (increase by 64%), mostly from nationals of Ukraine and Vietnam.⁴⁵

To compare the above provided data, the SR issued in 2018 altogether 20, 989 first residence permits⁴⁶, in 2017 13, 635⁴⁷ residence permits, 10, 304 residence permits in 2016⁴⁸ and 9, 332 residence permits in 2015⁴⁹. Administrative fees for the applications for residence permits did not change in comparison with years 2015 – 2018. (see **table 2** in annexes).⁵⁰

In comparison with the previous year the number of illegally employed TCNs decreased in the SR (see part 3.5 of the report).

43 Source: <https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/22190317/na-slovensku-v-poslednych-rokoch-pribudaju-pracujuci-cudzinci.html> (consulted on 16/04/2020).

44 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

45 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

46 Source: Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

47 Source: Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2018): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2017. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

48 Source: Bachtíková, I., Oboňová, S. (2017): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies. Slovak Republic 2016. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

49 Source: Bachtíková, I., Oboňová, S. (2016): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies. Slovak Republic 2015. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

50 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

3.2 Transposition of EU Legislation and Amendments of Acts

In 2019, the SR did not transpose into their national legislation any EU legislation which would directly concern migration of third country nationals.

In 2019, the SR adopted legislative changes related to regular migration – by means of *amendments to the Act on Residence of Foreigners*⁵¹ (amendments in effect from 1 January 2019 and 1 December 2019) and *Act on Employment Services*⁵² (amendment in effect from 1 January 2019).

3.3 Policies, Legislation and Measures Related to Economic Migration

Regarding the cross-sectional strategic documents, the SR in 2019 started the preparation of *update to the Migration Policy for 2020*, which should act as a framework for individual migration related areas in the following five-year period, i.e. until 2025. The SR also started preparing the *programme for implementation of Asylum and Migration Fund for 2021 – 2027 programming period*.

Among other the SR continued in particular with the implementation of measures stemming from the *Strategy for Foreigners Labour Mobility in the Slovak Republic*⁵³ which was adopted in October 2018 as a reaction to existing demand of employers for foreign workers given the long-term low unemployment rate in the country^{54, 55}. The amendment of Act on Employment Services fulfilled 14 short-term measures of the Strategy which required a change of legislation and which are to solve current lack of qualified workforce. Draft changes regarding the long-term measures of the Strategy started to be prepared as well.⁵⁶

In 2019 the MoFEA SR within the implementation of the governmental strategy decided to reinforce the personnel capacities at consular sections of the Slovak representations abroad, more specifically in those territories, where the number of applications for residence permits for the purpose of employment is increasing. Consular employees were posted to new posts created at the diplomatic missions in Delhi, Jakarta, Kiev and Beijing. Two employees were hired to the consular department of the MoFEA SR, with the aim to post them for a short period to assist those diplomatic missions where will be an ad-hoc sudden increase in visa or residence applications in the context of foreigners' employment in professions where there is a so called shortage in the SR.⁵⁷

The SR was also working on drafting the *1st action plan for implementing the measures stemming from the Economic policy strategy of the Slovak Republic for 2030*^{58, 59}. The strategy⁶⁰ was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic and defines migration as the decisive factor in future population development and as related to the solution of lacking domestic qualified labour

51 Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to some acts

52 Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to some acts

53 Available at: <https://www.mpsvr.sk/files/slovensky/uvod/informacie-cudzinci/strategia.pdf> (consulted on 21/01/2020).

54 National Bank of Slovakia in their analysis stated that the unemployment rate did not change between March and November 2019 and is 6.1%. A slight increase of unemployment which was recorded meanwhile was a result of subsequent entry of foreigners to the labour market. The National Bank of Slovakia considers influx and outflow of people registered as unemployed as relatively stable. Source: https://www.nbs.sk/_img/Documents/_komentare/2019/1075_rk_nez_20191220.pdf (consulted on 21/01/2020).

55 Source: Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

56 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

57 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

58 Available at: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/-/SK/LP/2019/661> (consulted on 27/01/2020).

59 Source: <https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/22280532/strategiu-hospodarskej-politiky-ma-naplnt-39-uloh.html> (consulted on 27/01/2020).

60 Available at: <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/23019/1> (consulted on 21/01/2020).

force, maintaining competitiveness and using qualified labour force in compliance with economic interests of the SR.⁶¹

MoLSAF SR (projects' results receiver) in cooperation with the IOM (realising the project) worked on *Technical support for the preparation of the labour mobility scheme for the SR project draft*. The project will be implemented in the upcoming 2020–2021 period. The labour mobility scheme for the SR should contribute to a comprehensive, sustainable and effective work migration policy. It will make it possible to faster receive foreign workforce into selected sectors of the Slovak economy (i.e. Fast-track programme) aiming to support competitiveness, make labour mobility tools focused on TCNs more effective and reflect on labour market needs, raise attractiveness of the SR for foreign workforce, ensure better protection of foreign and domestic workers and create measures aimed at supporting the return of foreign workforce into their country of origin.⁶²

In 2019 the labour migration was a topic of number of public events. The state secretary of the MoLSAF SR participated in the panel discussion entitled *Gastarbeiters in Slovakia* in November 2019, organised by Progressive forum (Progresívne fórum) with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.⁶³

General Legislative Changes

As of 1 January 2019, the following changes were among others introduced by the Act on Employment Services:

- the frequency of updating the *list of professions with a shortage of labour* was increased from once a year to four times a year in districts with an average unemployment rate under 5%. The list serves for an expedited administrative procedure while employing TCNs. It is published by the COLSAF for the previous calendar quarter^{64, 65}
- a general obligation of employers to report a vacancy to a respective Office of Labour and Family Affairs was introduced in order to simplify the identification of professions with a shortage of labour in the SR. A fine of €300 was set for not complying with this obligation. The obligation does not apply to vacancies which are reported to the Central Government Portal.
- the deadline of employers for reporting a vacancy to the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family was shortened from 15 to 10 working days preceding the submission of the application for work permit.
- temporary employment agencies residing in the SR were enabled to temporarily assign TCNs to work in professions with the shortage of labour. TCNs can enter Slovak labour market in this way only if they have been performing their work for at least three years prior to submitting the application for temporary residence for the purpose of employment. Moreover, their activity must be included in the list of professions with a shortage of labour in districts with an average registered unemployment rate under 5%. The ratio of employed and temporarily assigned TCNs cannot exceed 30% of the overall number of employees of the given employer.⁶⁶

61 Source: Hanzlíková, M., Slama, V. (2018): Integration of third country nationals into the labour market in the Slovak Republic – a questionnaire. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

62 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR and IOM Office in the SR.

63 Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM9dXfOJpwl> (consulted on 28/04/2020).

64 Available at: https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/sluzby-zamestnanosti/zamestnavanie-cudzincov/zoznam-zamestnani-s-nedostatkom-pracovnej-sily.html?page_id=806803 (consulted on 21/01/2020).

65 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

66 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

As of 1 January 2020, the following changes were introduced by Act on Residence of Foreigners:

- inclusion of the consent of the municipality in a temporary residence application, which had been introduced into the legislation in 2019, is not needed.
- in order to use *training*, application for temporary residence for the purposes of employment must be submitted including all required parts. The option of training was introduced into the legislation in 2018 and is applied only in case of professions with a shortage of labour.⁶⁷

In 2019, the SR did not adopt any legislative changes or measures related to family reunification or creation of migrant workers family.⁶⁸

3.3.1 Admission and Residence of Specific Categories of Migrants from Third Countries Coming to the SR for Work

(Highly-)Qualified Workers

As of 1 January 2019, the submission of documents attesting to level of education when seeking temporary residence was facilitated. According to the Act on Employment Services⁶⁹, recognition of an education certificate under a special regulation or a certified copy of a required education document is requested only in case of regulated professions (currently there are about 220 of them including healthcare, legal or teaching professions). The aim of the legislation is to lower the administrative burden on the seekers of temporary residence for the purpose of employment based on a confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy or for the purpose of obtaining a work permit.⁷⁰

Intra-corporate Transferees

In 2019, the SR did not adopt any changes related to intra-corporate transferees.⁷¹

Seasonal and Other Low/Mid-Qualified Workers

As of 1 January 2019, the following changes were introduced by the Act on Employment Services:

- the Office of Labour and Social Affairs is obliged to inform cities and municipalities about the place of accommodation of a TCN who is performing seasonal employment based on a work permit (in order to better control local taxes flows).
- the deadline for reporting a vacancy in seasonal jobs was shortened from 90 to 10 days preceding the submission of work permit application,
- the deadline for employers to report a vacancy to OLSAF was shortened from 15 to 5 work-days in case of prolonging work permit for the purposes of seasonal employment,
- one of the reasons – fine for breaching working conditions – for rejecting the application for temporary residence for the purposes of seasonal employment or the application for permit for the purposes of seasonal employment was cancelled.⁷²

67 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

68 Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the MoLSAF SR.

69 Section 21b of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to some acts

70 Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the MoLSAF SR.

71 Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the MoLSAF SR.

72 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

Regarding circular migration, the SR did not adopt any legislative changes or other measures in 2019.⁷³

Entrepreneurs and Investors

As of 1 December 2019, Act on Residence of Foreigners omits the obligation of TCNs (both individuals and legal entities) to enclose to the application for renewal of temporary residence for the purpose of entrepreneurship documents attesting to the fact that they do not have debts towards the Tax Office, Customs Office, Health Insurance Authority, and Social Insurance Authority. This means that they do not have to attest to the facts which the public administration authorities can verify in public administration informational systems. If the TCN is not a tax subject or obliged to pay social insurance payments, they enclose documents attesting to this fact.⁷⁴

Au pair, Volunteers and Interns

In 2019, the SR did not adopt any changes related to au pair, volunteers and interns.⁷⁵

Other Paid Workers

As of 1 January 2019, the following changes were introduced by the Act on Employment Services:

- A new possibility was created for TCNs to enter the Slovak labour market based on a national visa, if it is in the interest of the Government of the SR and approved by a special document.
- It was determined that TCNs can perform assembly, warranty and repair works and the works concerning setting of manufacturing equipment systems, which are unconditionally related to the delivery of goods or services performed on the basis of a business agreement, only in case of deployment. In such cases they are not required to submit the confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy corresponding to highly qualified employment, the confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy, or a work permit.
- The Office of Labour and Social Affairs is newly obliged to inform cities and municipalities about the place of accommodation of a TCN who was deployed by an employer residing in an EU MS within the provision of services provided by this employer (the same obligation applies to TCNs performing seasonal employment on the basis of granted work permit). The aim of the measure is to better control local tax flows.⁷⁶

As of 1 January 2020, the following changes were introduced by the Act on Employment Services:

- In case of temporary residence for the purpose of special sports activity it is now possible to prove the purpose with a contract for the professional performance of sport. The police department grants the temporary residence for the expected duration of the contract, but for a maximum of five years.⁷⁷

⁷³ Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the MoLSAF SR.

⁷⁴ Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

⁷⁵ Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the MoLSAF SR.

⁷⁶ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

⁷⁷ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

3.4 Students and Researchers

In 2019, the SR signed two *agreements at the government level on mutual recognition of education certificates – with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China (PRC)*. The agreements respond to the current process of mutual recognition of education certificates and are the basis for its simplification in the case of academic recognition, i. e. to pursue further study in both States of the Agreement. In the case of recognition of Chinese documents in the territory of the SR, the period for processing will be shortened to 15 days and a lower administrative fee will be paid. A similar process of simplifying the recognition of education certificates is also expected in the PRC.⁷⁸

Within the *National programme for the development of education* and its implementing plans, the MoESRaS defined the following as the tasks they will be working on: preparing measures to ensure a more prominent academic student and university employees mobility, decreasing the obstacles preventing the access to study in the SR (such as language in which study programmes are taught, possibilities to obtain visa and residence permits, scholarship programmes), improving the conditions to fill university teacher/researcher vacancies, considering the role of tuition fees in foreign language study programmes, supporting integration activities, supporting marketing activities focused on foreign applicants.⁷⁹

On 12 December 2018, the “SDG regulation”⁸⁰(single digital gateway) came into effect and is binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all EU MS. A single digital gateway is established by it. One of the areas which should be covered by the gateway is the “Applying for tertiary education study financing, such as study grants and loans from a public body or institution” agenda (Application for funding tertiary education such as student scholarships and loans from a public entity or institution). At the end of November 2019, the MoESRS started gathering basic statistical data for this purpose.⁸¹

Within the Official Development Assistance the SR continued in 2019 with the provision of governmental scholarships for the university education in the SR to students from developing countries, including countries which are effected by war conflict and refugee crisis (see part 12.1).⁸²

Regarding researchers from third countries, Slovakia did not adopt any legislative changes or new measures in 2019.⁸³

3.5 Preventing Social Dumping and Lowering of Work Standards

As of 1 January 2019, the following changes were introduced by the Act on Employment Services:

- The period of non breaching the ban on illegal employment which is reviewed upon granting various types of work permits was unified to five years. Before, a two-year period was retroactively reviewed for temporary residence for the purposes of employment and a five year period was reviewed in the case of seasonal employment.

⁷⁸ Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

⁷⁹ Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

⁸⁰ Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012

⁸¹ Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

⁸² Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

⁸³ Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the MoLSAF SR.

- the condition of non breaching the ban on illegal employment now applies also to “using employers” if they are temporarily assigned employees from third countries.⁸⁴

At the same time in 2019 the effect of the amended *Act on Illegal Work and Illegal Employment*⁸⁵ effective from 1 January 2018 was apparent. The change in the legislation mitigated the merits of illegal employment.⁸⁶

In 2019, the National Labour Inspectorate adopted a *methodical guideline* to improve awareness and communication during checks to detect illegal employment of TCNs. The guideline sets the processes used by the labour inspectors when communicating, interpreting and providing information related to legality of work performed by TCNs in the territory of the SR.

In 2019, a *working group composed of COLSAF, National Labour Inspectorate and BBFP PFP representatives* was created under the auspices of MoLSAF SR. It prepared *joint procedure and coordination of participants involved in checks of illegal employment, unification of procedure and single way of securing the evidence on performing dependant work for the purposes of TCN expulsion procedure*. The document is used by all checking authorities.⁸⁷

In 2019, the cooperation of BBFP PFP, National Labour Inspectorate and the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family continued; they performed *regular checks of business entities* to detect illegal work and illegal employment. The checks also aim to identify cases of potential work exploitation. As compared to previous year, the SR recorded a radical decrease in the number of breaches of the ban on illegal employment of TCNs. In 2019, the number of illegally employed TCNs was 412 which amounts to a decrease of 67% as compared with 2018 when 958 breaches to the ban on illegal employment of TCNs were detected.⁸⁸ In 2019, 101 business entities and a total of 1,522 persons (out of which 703 were Slovak nationals and 819 foreign nationals) were checked.

These checks discovered 25 businesses which broke the provisions of the Act on Illegal Work and Illegal Employment. They were illegally employing 5 controlled Slovak nationals and 165 controlled foreigners. Nationals from following countries of origin were employed illegally: Ukraine (116), Serbia (25), Moldova (18) and Georgia (6). Out of those 165 foreigners, 55 of them were in the SR without residence permit. Within the checks performed up to now, no victim of human trafficking was identified in the SR.⁸⁹

The decrease in the illegally employed TCNs was positively effected by simplification of their employment in professions where there is a so called shortage in counties where the unemployment rate was under 5%. The simplification was caused by adopted legislative changes in Acts on Residence of Foreigners and Act on Employment Services effective from 1 January 2019.⁹⁰

Agreement on Cooperation between the National Labour Inspectorate of the SR and the National Labour Inspectorate of the Polish Republic from 9 September 2019 regulates cooperation and exchange of information concerning work performed in the territory of both countries (based on contracts concluded directly with Slovak or Polish employers) as well as deployment of workers

⁸⁴ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

⁸⁵ Act No. 82/2005 Coll. on Illegal Work and Illegal Employment and on changes and amendments to some acts

⁸⁶ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

⁸⁷ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

⁸⁸ Information provided by the National Labour Inspectorate.

⁸⁹ Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

⁹⁰ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

to the territory of both countries through temporary employment agencies (seeking and offering jobs in foreign employers' companies). The agreement therefore concerns TCNs, too. It also covers cooperation aimed at improving the staff of the labour inspectorates of both countries (based on the experience of the partner institution and external initiatives, including projects funded from external sources).⁹¹

3.6 Further Measures Concerning Regular Migration

3.6.1 Brexit

In 2019, the SR continued to approve preventive measures in case of the unregulated withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) from the EU, the so-called 'No-deal Brexit', in order to minimize its negative impact on the citizens who are taking advantage of the freedom of movement within the EU. Since 2018, this area is coordinated by the *Inter-departmental Steering Committee for Brexit Preparations*, which regularly brings together representatives of various departments (on the level of state secretaries), social partners and representatives of expert and professional organizations. Based on the reciprocity principle with the UK, Slovak citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the SR will have the right of residence and access to healthcare and social security scheme. Intensive preparations also concerned businesses which have to get ready for the new way of trading. Changes to administrative logistic, regulatory, customs and tax procedures are expected in 2020.⁹²

The most significant **legislative measures** of the SR in 2019 included the *Resolution of the Government of the SR*⁹³ of January 2019 on the Development of National Measures of the SR for the Case of Brexit and the subsequent *amending of several acts*⁹⁴ which took place in March 2019. Transitional provisions of said acts will enter into force on the day when the UK ceases to be a party to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, unless the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union pursuant to Art. 50, par. 2 of the Treaty on EU. The law stipulates as follows:

- Pursuant to Art. 50, par. 2 of the Treaty on European Union and to said act coordination of social security systems, the so-called Coordination Regulation⁹⁵, shall be maintained in relation to UK citizens and their family members and survivors and to citizens of a Member state (including the SR), stateless persons, refugees as well as family members and survivors of all the previous categories. Maintaining of said legal regime shall be contingent upon the reciprocal approach on the side of the UK.
- MoFEA SR shall publish in the Collection of Laws of the SR a notification of the date the UK ceased to be a party to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and of the date of entering into force of the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the EU pursuant to Art. 50, par. 2 of the Treaty on EU.

⁹¹ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

⁹² Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

⁹³ Resolution of the Government of the SR no. 42 of 30 January 2019 on the Development of National Measures of the SR for the Potential Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union Without a Deal – Current Priorities

⁹⁴ Act No. 83/2019 Coll. of 27 March 2019 amending and supplementing certain acts in relation to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union without a deal

⁹⁵ Regulation (EC) No. 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) No. 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No. 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems

- The Act on Employment Services⁹⁶ stipulates that an employer may be employing a UK citizen and his/her family member without a confirmation of the possibility of filling a vacancy that corresponds to a highly qualified employment, confirmation of the possibility of filling a vacancy or a work permit if on the day preceding the day of withdrawal of the UK from the EU they had been staying in the territory of the SR and held an employment and that for the maximum period of 90 days following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. After the 90 days period following the UK's withdrawal from the EU employment of UK citizens and their family members shall be governed by the provisions of the Act on Employment Services laying down the conditions of employing TCNs in the SR. This means that an employer may only employ them if they have been granted temporary residence for employment purposes (EU Blue Card or a single permit) or if they have been granted a work permit.
- A UK citizen and his/her family member pursuant to Sec. 2 Par. 5 whose residence in the territory of the SR is considered long-term residence or permanent residence for the period of five years pursuant to a specific regulation of the Act on Residence of Foreigners⁹⁷ shall have the same legal status as a Slovak citizen in terms of legal relations arising in accordance with the Act on Employment Services.
- Equal legal status as that of a Slovak citizen shall be maintained in case of a UK citizen and his/her family members who have been legally residing in the SR after the UK's withdrawal from the EU for the purpose of job-seekers registration and that for the period of time during which such social security regime applies to him/her.
- The local jurisdiction of the Labour Office for the purpose of job-seekers registration shall be determined for a UK citizen and his/her family members.⁹⁸

Other preventive measures arising from the abovementioned Resolution of the Government of the SR include:

- Monitoring of potential widespread decrease in the number of jobs, especially in the automotive industry. If needed, the MoLSAF SR should adopt adequate measures to mitigate the impact and improve the labour market situation in compliance with the Act on Employment Services. Continuous monitoring of the number of applicants for unemployment benefits by the Social Insurance Agency in case a need arises to allocate funds in the area of social benefits. So far, the Social Insurance Agency has not registered any increase in the number of applicants for unemployment benefits who have returned from the UK.⁹⁹
- Creation of information sections on legal impacts of Brexit within the MoI SR and MoLSAF SR websites in order to improve the awareness of affected persons. At the MoLSAF SR website (www.employment.gov.sk), in the „Neprehliadnite“ (Important) section a link was created to the information for Slovak citizens and businesses published by the MoFEA SR¹⁰⁰ since 2018 in case of Brexit.¹⁰¹ For UK citizens, the MoFEA SR prepared a separate English section on its website on the impacts of Brexit¹⁰². In addition, the Ministry published a press release¹⁰³ in October 2019 and posted a video in English on Facebook¹⁰⁴.

96 Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to some acts as subsequently amended

97 Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to some acts as subsequently amended

98 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

99 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

100 Available at: <https://www.mzv.sk/europske-zalezitosti/brexit> (consulted on 21/01/2020).

101 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

102 Available at: <http://www.minv.sk/?brexit-2> (consulted on 21/01/2020).

103 Available at: <http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy&sprava=brexit-co-z-neho-vyplyva> (consulted on 21/01/2020).

104 Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=external&v=334098590569856> (consulted on 21/01/2020).

3.6.2 Working Holiday Programmes

In 2019, the SR continued to develop the working holiday programmes¹⁰⁵ with third countries which enable young people to study for a maximum of one year with short-term gainful employment.¹⁰⁶ In June 2019, the SR signed a *working holiday programme with the Republic of Korea*¹⁰⁷, finalized a *draft programme with Argentina*¹⁰⁸ and negotiated a *draft programme with Chile*. The SR plans to continue to facilitate the mobility of young people in the future.

In 2019, the SR did not conclude any bilateral agreements with third countries in the area of economic migration apart from the working holiday programmes.¹⁰⁹

3.6.3 European Labour Authority (ELA)

In June 2019 the EU ministers of labour decided that the first ever EU institution aim of which is to improve the implementation of the EU law in the area of cross-border labour mobility and coordination of social security will have its seat in Slovakia. The aim of this institution should be also to facilitate the exchange of information among the social security authorities, labour inspections and other services in EU Member States, so the states could flexibly react in cases of individuals' rights breach.¹¹⁰ In October 2019, the *European Labour Authority (ELA)* was created. It officially resides in Bratislava. Its activity focuses on labour force mobility and it will be able to connect resources for joint activities such as organising joint inspections or vocational training of national workers etc. ELA does not create any new EU level competences.¹¹¹

3.6.4 Census of Population and Housing

In June 2019, the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted the *Act on Census of Population and Housing 2021*¹¹². Based on this Act the information on residents in the SR will be collected according to their country of birth, citizenship, age and sex, previous residence abroad and their year of arrival in the SR as well as some social and economic indicators defined. The census will not only include Slovak citizens but also foreigners – EU nationals, TCNs and stateless persons.¹¹³

105 The aim of working holiday programmes is reciprocal simplification of entry and residence conditions for Slovak and third-country citizens who want to spend a year-long holiday in the other state. Participants of the programme can study or perform occasional jobs. The programmes are intended for young people between 18 and 35 years and one programme can be used once.

106 Source: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/ministerstvo/medzinarodna-spolupraca/europska-unia/zmluvy-mobilite-mladych/> (consulted on 23/01/2020).

107 Source: <https://domov.sme.sk/c/22140240/slovaci-budu-moct-ist-na-pracovnu-dovolenku-do-korey-dohodli-sa-na-tom-ministri.html> (consulted on 23/01/2020).

108 Source: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/-/SK/dokumenty/LP-2019-644> (consulted on 23/01/2020).

109 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

110 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

111 Source: <https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/22237820/europsky-organ-prace-zacina-svoju-cinnost.html> (consulted on 16/04/2020).

112 Act No. 223/2019 Coll. on Census of Population and Housing 2021 of 18 July 2019 and on changes and amendments to some acts

113 Information provided by the SO SR.

3.7 Information on Possibilities and Conditions of Legal Migration

3.7.1 State Institutions

In 2019, the SR implemented a new online booking system¹¹⁴ which enables users to register an application and book a visit at a Foreigners Police office – max. 14 days prior to the visit (<http://www.minv.sk/?objednavaci-system-na-ocp>). As this is a new system within the work of the Police with foreigners, its effectiveness and functionality will be improved in the following year.¹¹⁵

Within the efforts of MoI SR to improve the Police Force services towards clients, a new department of Foreigners Police of the Police Force opened in Ružomberok on 1 December 2019 with 21 employees. The department has material and territorial scope in the districts of Dolný Kubín, Liptovský Mikuláš, Martin, Námestovo, Ružomberok, Turčianske Teplice, Tvrdošín.¹¹⁶

Out of total 74 diplomatic missions of the SR conducting consular activities, 51 representations carried out visa agenda and 57 representations carried out also the residence agenda in 2019. Out of them, 7 representations are located in Schengen agreement countries (so called regional visa centres) and their competences are divided in a way that they cover all Schengen countries. In October 2019, new diplomatic mission was opened in Baku, Azerbaijan, which covers both visa and residence agenda.¹¹⁷

In 2019, MoESRS approved the *Action plan for improving the quality according to the CAF model¹¹⁸ for 2019–2020*. Activity No 4 includes the development of website www.minedu.sk in English. The website serves as informational portal for foreign applicants for study in the SR including applicants from third countries.¹¹⁹

3.7.2 International Organizations and Civic Sector

IOM Migration Information Centre (MIC) funded by the AMIF continued to provide practical support for the integration of foreigners in the SR in 2019¹²⁰. It provided information on the options and conditions of legal migration for both third-country nationals and the Slovak institutions coming into contact with them. In 2019, the MIC offices in Bratislava and Košice provided 10,398 personal, phone or e-mail consultations within comprehensive integration counselling. The counselling services were used by a total of 6,191 clients mainly from Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Serbia, India, Iran and the USA. The MIC website was visited 325,706 times in 2019.¹²¹

114 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=412554952783911> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

115 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

116 Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?vizova-info-typy-viz-1> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

117 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

118 Common Assessment Framework

119 Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

120 Name of the project: IOM Migration Information Centre to Support Integration of Migrants in Slovakia (Phase IX). Project code: SK 2016 AMIF SC2.1/3. Project duration: 01/01/2017 – 31/12/2019.

MIC is a counselling centre of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Since 2006, it has been providing foreigners with services supporting them in social, economic and cultural integration in Slovakia. It offers a comprehensive integration, social and labour counselling, supports their inclusion into the labour market, organizes open Slovak language and social and cultural orientation courses, provides important information about life in Slovakia, and supports the community life of foreigners.

121 Information provided by the FAD EPS MoI SR and the IOM Office in the SR.

In 2019, MIC organized three *One-Stop Shop counselling days* on Foreign Police Department PF premises in Bratislava. More than 82 visitors from 30 countries used the possibility to obtain counselling from Foreigners' Police police officers, workers of Labour Offices, Trade Licensing Offices and MIC IOM consultants.

Visa Check web application services¹²² were used by 4,270 clients from 147 countries in 2019. MIC's application provides information to foreigners from any country who want to come to Slovakia to find out if visa is needed to enter Slovakia and what kind of residence is required to study, work or engage in business in Slovakia.

In 2019, the MIC updated the *Vitajte na Slovensku (Welcome to Slovakia)¹²³* brochure, which is available in Slovak, English and Russian and provides migrants with a basic overview about residence of foreigners, educational system, healthcare, social insurance and other important areas of life in Slovakia.

MIC also issued 16 *fact sheets on residence of foreigners¹²⁴* about how to proceed when submitting residence application and what the duties are stemming from individual types of temporary and permanent residence of TCNs in Slovakia.¹²⁵

In 2019, a supranational web portal *Danube Compass* was active as well which was established in 2018. It is a multilanguage website which gathers information on residence, education, entrepreneurship, job search or learning official language of a new country for all 8 countries included in the project: Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Serbia. The web portal is an output of the international project *Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants – DRIM* within the EU scheme Interreg Danube Transnational Programme 2014 – 2020. Project partner from the SR is the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.¹²⁶

3.8 Research

In 2019, the IOM as the coordinator of EMN in the SR approached the topic of legal migration from research perspective. EMN prepared a national report – *Migratory Pathways for Start-Ups and Innovative Entrepreneurship in the SR* which will be published in the form of a questionnaire at www.emn.sk together with a summary report for all EU MS.¹²⁷

122 Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

123 Available at: <https://www.mic.iom.sk/sk/na-stiahnutie/brozury-a-letaky/item/245-nove-vydanie-brozury-vitajte-na-slovensku.html> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

124 Available at: <https://www.mic.iom.sk/sk/na-stiahnutie/info-karty/itemlist/category/70-prechodny-pobyt.html> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

125 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

126 Source: <http://sk.danubecompass.org/?lang=sk> (consulted on 16/04/2019).

127 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.



International Protection Including Asylum

In 2019, the SR did not pass any changes in the legislation regarding international protection. The level of asylum seekers and the number of asylums granted in the SR remained low even in 2019. In 2019, the MO Mol SR, which is responsible for the international protection and refugee integration agenda, paid special attention to the topics of safety and protection of human rights of asylum seekers in the Mol SR asylum facilities. In this respect, the MO Mol SR prepared an internal methodology for social workers entitled *Social Workers' Competences to Avoid and Solve Critical Situations*. Efficiency of provision of interpretation services in terms of the time availability and of the increased number of interpreted languages also improved in 2019. A number of decisions of the Supreme Court of the SR and of the Constitutional Court of the SR concerning international protection provision were issued in the SR in 2019. The SR did not conduct any relocation, nor did it implement any resettlement programmes or humanitarian admission programmes for third-country refugees. In 2019, the MO Mol SR was also assessing the finalization of the project concerning the integration of 149 refugees (25 families) from Northern Iraq who were admitted in the SR on humanitarian grounds in 2015.

UNHCR has prepared *learning materials for the junior and senior sections of elementary schools in the SR* designed for the teachers working with various groups of migrant children as well as for students, helping them to increase their awareness of international protection and refugees. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of its existence, the MO Mol SR published an *information brochure describing its competences and tasks*.

4.1 Statistics and Trends

The number of asylum seekers and the number of asylums granted in the SR were low even in 2019. In comparison to previous years, the number of asylum seekers in the SR has been increasing slightly.¹²⁸ In 2019, a total of 323 asylum applications were submitted in the SR (of which 214 were first applications and 18 were repeated applications), compared to 178 asylum applications in 2018, 166 asylum applications in 2017 and 146 asylum applications in 2016. 30 asylum applications concerned unaccompanied minors, most of whom were from Afghanistan. In 2019, the SR granted asylum to 9 people from Iran, Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq, Yemen, Cameroon and Ukraine; and subsidiary protection was granted to 19 people, mostly from Afghanistan. The SR discontinued the asylum procedure in 178 cases, denied asylum in 60 cases and denied subsidiary protection in 33 cases. Even in 2019, the most numerous groups of asylum seekers were from Afghanistan (90); followed by Iran (46), Armenia (14), Bangladesh (13) and Ukraine (11).¹²⁹

4.2 National Legislation and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

In 2019, the SR did not pass any changes in the legislation regarding international protection. The Slovak asylum system did not face any extraordinary challenges in 2019. The situation in reception facilities and other capacities was stable.¹³⁰

4.2.1 Accessing Asylum Procedure and Receiving Asylum Seekers

In 2019, the MO Mol SR paid special attention to the topics of security and protection of human rights of asylum seekers in the Mol SR asylum facilities. In this respect, it continued to cooperate closely with non-governmental organizations, especially within the scope of the projects financed from the EU funds.¹³¹ Apart from the complex care provided to asylum seekers, the projects also address safety and in the asylum facilities, education and protection of fundamental rights of asylum seekers, especially the so-called vulnerable groups such as minors seeking asylum.¹³²

In this context, the MO Mol SR prepared an internal methodology for social workers entitled *Social Workers' Competences to Avoid and Solve Critical Situations*. The document identifies the most frequent types of extraordinary and critical situations that the social workers in Mol SR asylum facilities can encounter, as well as their possible causes. Moreover, the document points out the ways to avoid the emergence of such situations and, in case a critical situation does occur, it also offers possible approaches and solutions. The methodology focuses on the social aspects of the lives of asylum seekers in the asylum facilities, it does not address asylum procedure or

¹²⁸ Source: Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

¹²⁹ Source: Statistical Report of Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic – year 2019. Available at: <http://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20> (consulted on 16/04/2020)

¹³⁰ Information provided by the MO Mol SR

¹³¹ Within the scope of the Strategy of Prevention of Criminal and Other Antisocial Activities in the Slovak Republic for Years 2016 – 2020, the MO Mol SR addresses this issue in cooperation with the Crime Prevention Department of the Office of the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic and other relevant PFP departments. It particularly concerns Priority no. 3: "Pay increased attention to security and the protection of fundamental rights of asylum seekers in the MO Mol SR asylum facilities. Continue close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and private security services in this field."

¹³² Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

the operation of said facilities.¹³³ Launch of the abovementioned document and exchange of experience, information and best practices in this field were the aim of the EMN meeting held on 3 – 4 June 2019 in cooperation with IOM acting as the EMN coordinator in Slovakia. Apart from the MO Mol SR and IOM, the meeting was also attended by the representatives of UNHCR, MoFEA SR, Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, NGOs and academia.¹³⁴

The Slovak NGO Slovak Humanitarian Council, working in partnership with Rovné municipality, implemented the final year of the project entitled *Effective Services to Asylum Seekers in the SR II*¹³⁵, financed from the AMIF fund, in 2019. Within the scope of the project, asylum seekers including those residing in the MO Mol SR asylum facilities were provided with both basic and subsidiary services. Special attention was given to the needs of vulnerable persons. Subsidiary services included teaching the Slovak language, psychological counselling, social work, leisure time activities etc.¹³⁶

4.2.2 Asylum Procedure Including Dublin Procedure

MO Mol SR employees are continuously and comprehensively informed of the available EASO instruments designed to improve the quality of the asylum procedure.

Access to Information and Legal Representation

In 2019, the NGO Human Rights League implemented the final year of the *Legal Counselling Centre for Asylum* project¹³⁷ supported from AMIF fund in 2019. The project ensured access to legal services to all asylum seekers placed in the MO Mol SR asylum facilities, applicants with residence permit outside an asylum facility and imprisoned asylum seekers taking into consideration their individual needs. The project specifically targeted vulnerable persons within the target group.¹³⁸

Provision of Interpretation

In 2019, MO Mol SR allowed interpretation for the purpose of asylum procedure outside of the scope of the framework agreement concluded by the Mol SR, which helped to increase the efficiency of the provision of interpretation services in terms of the time availability and of the increased number of interpreted languages. The MO Mol SR issued a guideline of the Director of MO Mol SR *Procedure of the Provision of Interpretation and Translation Services in the Domain of the Migration Office*. If necessary and provided the interpreter is available, the services can be utilized also by the social workers in asylum facilities.¹³⁹

¹³³ Available at: http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=vymena-skusenosti-z-riesenia-konfliktov-v-azylovych-zariadeniach-a-v-procese-integracie&subor_spravy=336986 (consulted on 27/01/2020).

¹³⁴ Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=vymena-skusenosti-z-riesenia-konfliktov-v-azylovych-zariadeniach-a-v-procese-integracie> (consulted on 27/01/2020).

¹³⁵ Project code: SK 2016 AMIF SC1.2/1. Project duration: 1 January 2017 – 31 December 2019, Grant: €1,008,400. Funding: AMIF and State Budget of the SR.

¹³⁶ Information provided by the FAD EPS Mol SR

¹³⁷ Name of the project: Právna poradňa pre azyl. Project Code: SK 2016 AMIF SC1.1/2. Project Duration: 4 November 2016 – 31 December 2019

¹³⁸ Information provided by the FAD EPS Mol SR

¹³⁹ Information provided by the MO Mol SR

Dublin Proceedings and Transfers

Process of determining the responsible EU Member State in cases of asylum applicants in the SR and in cases of TCNs illegally staying in the SR within the handing over procedure in line with the Act on Asylum was also in 2019 conducted in set deadlines and procedures set by the relevant legislation. The Dublin Centre in the SR received and processed a total of 339 applications for determination of responsibility for the assessment of applications for international protection from the MS implementing the Dublin Regulation and sent 51 applications on taking over the responsibility from other Member States. There were 81 cases of receiving TCNs to the territory of the SR for further proceeding and the SR handed over 17 persons to responsible Member States.

In 2019, the SR did not stop any transfers from any of the states implementing the Dublin Regulation, provided the applications of the SR were accepted by the given EU MS and decisions on handover were executable in compliance with valid Slovak legislation.¹⁴⁰

Countries of Origin Information

The *new COI processing methodology*¹⁴¹ adopted in December 2018 was fully implemented in 2019. It proceeds from the currently valid EASO COI Report Methodology and Writing and Referencing Guide for EASO COI Reports. In Slovak conditions, this meant a switch from the citation system to paraphrasing and synthesis.¹⁴²

Due to the capacity available, even in 2019 the MO Mol SR analysts were focusing on the processing of the so called COI queries (Q&A). The total of 445 queries within 88 applications (Q&A) were processed. The countries on which the information were processed most frequently were: 1. Afghanistan, 2. Iran and 3. Ukraine.¹⁴³

The MO Mol SR participated in two EASO operations in 2019 (in the form of an Asylum Support Team) in Greece focusing on the COI processing and also in the preparation of the COI training module.¹⁴⁴

The first national online training during which the EASO COI module was used took place in December 2019. In total, 19 MO Mol SR employees were trained. Another meeting, held in person, for those who could not participate in said training, will be held at the beginning of 2020.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Information provided by the MO Mol SR

¹⁴¹ A Guideline of the Director of the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic governing the procedure of processing of country of origin information concerning asylum seekers or applicants for subsidiary protection in the SR and cooperation between departments

¹⁴² Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁴³ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁴⁴ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁴⁵ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

4.2.3 Court Decisions on National and European Level

Constitutional Court of the SR

Judgement no. 70/2019 Coll. of 12 December 2018¹⁴⁶

Effective from 6 March 2019, the Constitutional Court of the SR stated the inconsistency of some provisions of the Act on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to some acts with the Constitution of the SR and with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and said provisions lost their effect¹⁴⁷. Provisions of Section 52 par. 2 of the Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and Section 120 par. 2 of Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners concern the decision issued by the MO Mol SR on international protection¹⁴⁸ and the decision of the relevant Police department on residence¹⁴⁹ and on the administrative expulsion in which the only justification provided is the security interest of the SR.¹⁵⁰

“Provision of Section 52 par. 2 of the Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and on changes and amendments to some acts as subsequently amended is not consistent with Art. 46 par. 1 and 2, Art. 47 par. 3, Art. 48 par. 2 in conjunction with Art. 1 par. 1, Art. 12 par. 1 and 2 and with Art. 13 par. 4 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and with Art. 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.”

“If, due to security of the state, it is not possible to notify the affected person of exact and complete reasons forming the grounds for the decisions [pursuant to Section 120 par. 2 (a) to (i) of Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to some acts as subsequently amended and pursuant to Section 52 par. 2 of Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and on changes and amendments to some acts], judicial review of such decisions cannot be effective in terms of protection of the rights and interests protected by law of such person, it cannot represent a satisfactory safeguard against potential wantonness of competent state authorities and cannot thus realistically execute the fundamental right of the affected person to judicial protection pursuant to Art. 46 par. 1 and 2 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, as well as the right to fair judicial proceedings pursuant to Art. 6 par. 1 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as well as the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial pursuant to Art. 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Judgement of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic Case PL. ÚS 8/2016 of 12 December 2018, published on 06/03/2019.

¹⁴⁷ Available at: <https://www.ustavnysud.sk/vyhľadavanie-rozhodnuti/#!/DecisionsSearchResultView> (consulted on 31/1/2020).

¹⁴⁸ In particular denial/withdrawal of asylum, denial/revocation/refusal to renew subsidiary protection and cessation of temporary shelter granting.

¹⁴⁹ This particularly concerns:

- a) the refusal of the application for the granting of temporary residence pursuant to Art. 33 par. 6 (b) if there is a justified suspicion that a TCN would threaten the state security;
- b) the withdrawal of temporary residence pursuant Art. 36 par. 1 (b) if there is a justified suspicion that a TCN would threaten the state security;
- c) the refusal of an application for the issue of a Blue Card pursuant to Art. 39 par. 1 (c) if a TCN is a threat to state security;
- d) the refusal of an application for the Blue Card renewal or the withdrawal of the blue card pursuant to Art. 41 par. 1 (d) if the card holder is a threat to state security;
- e) the refusal of an application for the granting of permanent residence pursuant to Art. 48 par. 2 (b) if there is a justified suspicion that a TCN would threaten state security;
- f) the revocation of permanent residence pursuant to Art. 50 par. 1 (a) if there is a justified suspicion that a TCN would threaten state security;
- g) the refusal of an application for the granting of long-term residence pursuant to Art. 54 par. 2 (b) if there is a justified suspicion that a TCN would threaten state security;
- h) the cancellation of tolerated residence pursuant to Art. 61 par. 1 (b) if a TCN is a threat to state security;
- i) administrative expulsion pursuant to Art. 82 par. 2 (a) if a TCN represents a serious threat to national security, or pursuant to Art. 82 par. 2 (b) if a TCN is a threat to state security.

¹⁵⁰ Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

¹⁵¹ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

The Supreme Court of the SR

Decision 1Sžak/10/2019 of 13 September 2019 (T.V.U. c/a MV SR)¹⁵²

“It is beyond doubt that if a person cannot exercise his/her rights in front of an administrative court in the language he/she understands, such exercise of the right would be ineffective and the basic objective of the right to a fair trial would not be fulfilled. The right to carry out proceedings before administrative court in a language that a person understands includes mainly the right for the involvement of an interpreter in the course of the court hearings and potentially during other acts carried out by the affected person. On the grounds of the nature and circumstances of the case, the relevant administrative court shall review and make a final decision concerning whether an interpreter shall or shall not be engaged in the administrative court proceedings. Therefore, if the administrative court determines that it is possible to adjudicate on the administrative appeal on the grounds of documentary evidence submitted or based on the administrative file, and therefore does not deem it necessary to conduct an examination of the party to the proceedings, engagement of an interpreter could be uneconomical and pointless. Due to the fact that the plaintiff was represented by his representative during the entire proceedings and since the regional court in the reasoning of the contested judgement explained the reasons for which it did not deem the plaintiff’s examination necessary and on these grounds it finally decided on the pointlessness and ineconomy of the engagement of an interpreter, in doing so the court did not violate the equality of arms principle.”¹⁵³

Decision 10Sžak/9/2019 of 19 June 2019 (T.R. c/a MV SR)¹⁵⁴

“The line of reasoning of the defendant who claims that the plaintiff had a legal representative present during the hearing who, unlike the plaintiff, is well versed in the law, could not hold, since the examination of the asylum seeker in the court proceedings represents one of the most important means of evidence as well as one of the most important rights an asylum seeker has and, as such, cannot be abandoned solely on the grounds of the lack of interpreters on the list or due to time constraints. Moreover, exceeding the time limit for the decision in the matters of asylum due to the existence of objective causes, even more so if these are not caused by the party to the proceedings or the court, must not be to the detriment of the plaintiff’s right to fair trial.”¹⁵⁵

Decision 1Sžak/7/2019 of 30 July 2019 (T.D. c/a MV SR)¹⁵⁶

“The Decision of the Court of Cassation on the granting of suspensive effect of the cassation appeal shall be seen as an extraordinary decision. The extraordinary nature of this procedural act of an administrative court resides in the fact that such action by the judiciary paralyses effects of the valid ruling issued by the regional court. Provision of Art. 447 of the Administrative Procedure Code (if the legal consequences of the contested decision of the regional court represented a threat of serious harm and the granting of suspensive effect of the cassation appeal is not contrary to public interests) clearly and undoubtedly indicates that the suspensive effect of the

¹⁵² Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/620bc265-8d3b-4ea9-ae8-c7a9468da91f%3A32f07628-c9b4-4339-b9b5-c743f60afd65> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

¹⁵³ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁵⁴ Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/51e6e6e7-c39f-43f7-9d73-3621e4aecea6%3A14e62e15-52db-4bc3-a458-9348f34d5231> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

¹⁵⁵ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁵⁶ Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/5f450f12-4652-42f6-abf1-b624730e5862%3A0f44c007-a3fc-4382-833f-851cb4ed863f> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

cassation appeal only impacts the legal effects of the contested decision of the regional court. The legal provisions do not allow the Court of Cassation to autonomously suspend the effect of the administrative decision within the scope of the decision on the granting of suspensive effect of the cassation appeal. Such legal situation may only arise in case the decision of the Court of Cassation pursuant to Art. 447 of the Administrative Procedure Code maintains the suspensive effect directed against the decision, measure or any other intervention by a public authority, provided said authority appeared already in the proceedings held before the regional court. In case of its absence in the proceedings held before the regional court which rejected the administrative appeal, granting of suspensive effect of the cassation appeal would have no impact on the reviewed decision of the public authority¹⁵⁷

Decision 1Sžak/13/2019 of 22 October 2019 (D.S. c/a MV SR)¹⁵⁸

“A situation when legal consequences of a contested decision of the regional court represented a threat of serious harm and the granting of suspensive effect is not contrary to public interest is a fundamental and unavoidable condition that has to be met in order for the Court of Cassation to grant suspensive effect of a cassation appeal. The Court of Cassation did not agree with the plaintiff’s claim that the very commencement of the detention procedure or the failure to take into account her intention to stay in the accommodation centre constitutes serious harm. At the same time, the Court of Cassation quotes the provision of Art. 2 (h) (1) of Act No. 480/2002 Coll., within the meaning of which an asylum seeker shall mean, inter alia, a foreigner during the period for the filing of administrative appeal against the decision issued by the Ministry in the asylum granting procedure, with the exception of the decision to stay the asylum granting procedure and during the administrative appeal procedure¹⁵⁹”

Decision 1Sžak/12/2019 of 22 October 2019 (S.U. c/a MV SR)¹⁶⁰

The Court of Cassation “due to the low-profile status of the plaintiff as one of the many construction workers involved in the construction of flood protection structures without a sufficient level of individualizing elements concerning the plaintiff and with respect to the story provided by him did not find the conclusion concerning the possible attributed (imputed) political beliefs or the plaintiff’s holding of political opinions hostile towards the Taliban, or the plaintiff’s affiliation to the risk group of individuals considered to be supporters of the international armed forces reasonable.”

“Thus, even if the plaintiff held different political views, he did not present them.”

“Individual circumstances of an applicant constitute a significant substance when considering one’s entitlement to be granted a refugee status. A mere assumption that a person with imputed political views may need international protection is therefore insufficient for granting asylum.”¹⁶¹

Decision 10Sžak/13/2019 of 21 August 2019 (B. H. A. A. c/a MV SR)¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁵⁸ The source was not available online at the time of writing of this document.

¹⁵⁹ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

¹⁶⁰ The source was not available online at the time of writing of this document.

¹⁶¹ Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/b4c93b71-f5e5-4946-9e25-aad254bc37b0%3A4082399d-584a-4350-b3a0-cfbca5e562da> (consulted on 29/04/2020).

¹⁶² The source was not available online at the time of writing of this document.

“The Court of Cassation is of the opinion that in the plaintiff’s case defining conceptual elements of a social group were not accomplished as stipulated in the provision of Art. 19a par. 4 (c) of the Act on Asylum. Performance of a work activity by a plaintiff or his education and qualifications do not establish his affiliation to a particular social group, as they do not form an innate characteristic feature, invariable characteristic or a perceptible differentiating feature. Similarly, they do not represent origin or shared beliefs that would be important for an individual’s identity.”¹⁶³

Decision 1Sžak/10/2019 of 13 September 2019 (M. H. S. c/a MV SR)¹⁶⁴

“Inter alia, the plaintiff challenged the incorrect legal assessment of the genuineness of his conversion, while mainly reprehending the non-application of the ‘benefit of doubt’ principle, insufficient verification of his faith resulting from the fact that only one interview was carried out, during which the defendant failed to focus to a sufficient extent on the comprehensiveness of [the plaintiff’s] inner conviction to profess religion and the related identity and way of life. Contents of the Questionnaire for Applicants for Granting Asylum dated 30 April 2018 imply that in the course of the entry interview the defendant focused mainly on the assertion of the facts concerning the period of time when the plaintiff converted, as well as on the means of conversion and [plaintiff’s] further Christian behaviour both in the country of origin and in the Slovak Republic. The defendant then checked the plaintiff’s basic knowledge of his new faith. At the end of the interview, the defendant gave the plaintiff a time to state all reasons for his applying for asylum while asking additional questions to ascertain the plaintiff’s way of life in his country of origin after the conversion.”

“...even the Court of Cassation did not come to believe that the plaintiff has a satisfactory level of knowledge of the fundamental principles of the religion that could be reasonably expected from a university-educated adult coming from an urban culture, who claims to have converted to Christianity as early as in Spring 2016, after which he was allegedly attending various Christian communities in his country of origin, which reasonably supports the conclusion drawn by the administrative authority that the plaintiff’s claim of conversion could only be calculated.”

“As concerns the challenged unconvincing and unsatisfactory reasoning of the contested decision, the Court of Cassation states that even despite the considerable brevity of the court’s verdict it is clear beyond any doubt what were the grounds for the rejection of the administrative appeal. In this respect, the Court of Cassation deemed it necessary to recall the resolution of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic Case IV. ÚS 115/03, of 3 July 2003, within the meaning of which: ‘A general court shall not be obliged to provide answers to all questions formulated by a party to the proceedings, only those which are substantial for the matter or which satisfactorily explain factual and legal grounds for the decision without having to go into all the details of the case stated by the parties to the proceedings. Therefore, any reasoning of a decision issued by a general court (first instance as well as appellate court) which explains the factual and legal grounds for the decision briefly and clearly, is sufficient to conclude that in this respect the parties’ right to a fair trial have been fully exercised.’¹⁶⁵”

¹⁶³ Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/da7d93b5-5fa7-4ea4-bda7-99d323055b9b%3A3f6af12c-ee9e-4689-8b7b-e7f97ae6ad4b> (consulted on 29/04/2020).

¹⁶⁴ Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/620bc265-8d3b-4ea9-ae8-c7a9468da91f%3A32f07628-c9b4-4339-b9b5-c743f60afd65> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

¹⁶⁵ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

Decision 10Sžak/17/2019 of 15 November 2019 (F.H. c/a MV SR)¹⁶⁶

In the proceeding the legal representative of the plaintiff objected that she was not allowed within the interview in front of the administrative body pose questions to her client and that despite of her proposal to conduct an additional interview the administrative body did not do so.

“With respect to the plaintiff’s objections, the Court of Cassation states that these are unjustified. It is clear from the defendant’s administrative file that the plaintiff’s legal representative was allowed to be present during the interview and she was given an opportunity to comment as stipulated in Art. 23 of the Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast) and of the Art. 6 par. 7 of Act on Asylum. The Court of Cassation is of the opinion that the proposed additional interview would have been redundant, as the previously conducted interview and subsequent evidence included in the administrative file (e.g. country of origin information) did not result in any inconsistencies that it would be necessary to remove by the additional interview.”¹⁶⁷

Decisions at the EU Level

The SR has not recorded any new judgments of national courts or ECHR which would create an asylum-related precedent significantly impacting national policies. As for the decisions issued by the Court of Justice of the EU, the MoI SR takes into consideration the case law in application and practice; however, no specialized policies were adopted.¹⁶⁸

4.2.4 Enhancement of Professional Skills

The MO MoI SR has been implementing the national project *Capacity Building in the Field of Asylum*¹⁶⁹, since 2019. The AMIF¹⁷⁰ funded project, which will be implemented until the end of 2020, mainly aims to extend the knowledge of MO MoI SR staff members (those coming into direct contact with asylum seekers as well as with the persons granted international protection in the SR) concerning reception of asylum seekers including earlier and more precise identification of vulnerable groups. MO MoI SR employees take part in immersive social-psychological training, supervision and courses on cultural differences, which will ensure better expertise and preparedness of the MO MoI SR staff for identification of vulnerable asylum seekers but also in the case they encounter unexpected situations in their work. In course of the training, the MO MoI SR staff needs to use the Slovak version of EASO materials. Therefore, translation of selected EASO modules to be used during the abovementioned trainings into the Slovak language is also a part of the project.¹⁷¹

One national trainer for the EASO training module on Reception was trained in 2019. 5 national training courses using EASO training modules were also organised for the MO MoI SR employ-

¹⁶⁶ Available at: <https://obcan.justice.sk/infosud/-/infosud/i-detail/rozhodnutie/ea909383-a8f6-42e7-9b1d-8b155f5ee617%3A1b55ebf6-e56b-466e-bef1-5a8951353f93> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

¹⁶⁷ Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁶⁸ Information provided by the MO MoI SR and the the BBFP PFP.

¹⁶⁹ Available at: <https://www.minv.sk/?budovanie-kapacit-azyl-projekt-AMIF> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

¹⁷⁰ Project code: SK 2018 AMIF SC1.1. Project duration: 1 January 2019 – 31 December 2020. Grant: €41,553.08 . Funding: AMIF and State Budget of the SR.

¹⁷¹ Information provided by the FAD EPS MoI SR.

ees. The modules were Inclusion (13 participants), Exclusion (15 participants), Reception (12 participants), Country of Origin Information (19 participants) and Interviewing Vulnerable Persons (5 participants).¹⁷²

4.2.5 Educational Materials and Activities

UNHCR has prepared *learning materials for the junior and senior sections of elementary schools in the SR* designed for the teachers working with various groups of migrant children as well as for students, helping them to increase their awareness of international protection and refugees. Apart from the curricula for elementary schools, materials for teachers also include activity guides, overview of best practices for working with multilingual students, guidance on working with refugee children struggling with stress and trauma, as well as tips for inclusion of the topic of refugees in various subjects (e.g. History, Geography, Civics, etc.). Materials for students include animated videos and various activities. All of these materials have been prepared specifically for students aged 6 – 9 years and 9 - 12 years of age and are available in Slovak: <https://www.minedu.sk/ucebne-materialy-pre-ucitelov-a-ziakov-od-unhcr-learning-materials-for-teachers-and-learners-from-the-unhcr/>.¹⁷³

Based on the agreement between the MoESRS SR, the MoI SR and UNHCR concerning education of teachers working at the schools attended by children of refugees and asylum seekers, three teacher training sessions and one trainer training course were held in Bratislava and Poprad in June and November of 2019. The training focused on working with children granted asylum and on the presentation of the abovementioned UNHCR materials and were even attended by the state secretary of the MoESRS SR.¹⁷⁴ In the last 5 years, the number of foreign students in Slovak schools more than doubled. In the academic year 2013/2014 the number of foreign students in regional schools was 2,432, while in the academic year 2018/2019 there were 5,019 of them. Of this, 2,682 foreign students from 76 countries attended elementary schools.¹⁷⁵ The abovementioned total number of foreign students attending Slovak schools included also 39 children and young people granted international protection who were concurrently enrolled in the integration project STEP 3¹⁷⁶: 20 elementary school students, 10 secondary school students and 9 university students. 26 asylum seekers studied at all three levels of schools in 2019 – 22 at the elementary level, 3 at the secondary level and 1 at the university level.¹⁷⁷

The MO MoI SR, which is responsible for international protection and refugee integration agenda, published an information brochure in the Slovak¹⁷⁸ and English language¹⁷⁹ to commemorate the 25th anniversary of its existence. The brochure describes competences and tasks of the MO MoI SR which the public often confuses with the activities of the BBFP PFP or with the responsibilities of the MoFEA SR.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷² Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁷³ Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

¹⁷⁴ Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

¹⁷⁵ Source: <https://www.minedu.sk/skolenie-ucitelov-na-temu-vzdelavanie-o-utečenoch/> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

¹⁷⁶ This means that the provided number does not include pupils/students from the integration programme Pokoj a dobro – pomoc utečencom o.z. of the Iraqi community of persons with granted asylum.

¹⁷⁷ Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁷⁸ Available at: http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/images/mu-25-rokov-brozura-sk.pdf (consulted on 24/01/2020).

¹⁷⁹ Available at: http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=migracny-urad-mv-sr-posobi-uz-viac-ako-stvrtstorie&subor_spravy=340470 (consulted on 24/01/2020).

¹⁸⁰ Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=migracny-urad-mv-sr-posobi-uz-viac-ako-stvrtstorie> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

4.2.6 Cooperation on the Level of EU Member States and V4 Countries

In 2019, the SR provided the in-kind humanitarian assistance eleven times: Ukraine (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (4), Lebanon (1), Iran (1), Albania (2) and Greece (2). The SR provided in-kind humanitarian assistance abroad amounting to the value of €623,547 in total and weighting more than 69,400 kg (movable humanitarian material). From this the SR provided in-kind humanitarian assistance to refugees in Lebanon, Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the form of humanitarian material amounting to the value of €183,334 and weighting more than 22,200 kg (see part 12.1). MoI SR in cooperation with the Administration of State Material Reserves of the SR prepared in-kind humanitarian assistance for migrants in Greece. MoI SR assigned from its reserves tents, mats, sleeping bags, blankets, winter clothes for children and adults, generators, illuminating sets, heaters and chemical toilets amounting to the value of €25,000. The Administration of State Material Reserves of the SR assigned 224 pairs of shoes amounting to the value of €2,479.68. Part of the Slovak aid was delivered to Athens on 26 October 2019 by special government flight of the MoI SR Aerial Unit. Following the request of the Embassy of the SR in Athens and the MoFEA SR for second in-kind aid of the SR for migrants in Greece, the MoI SR in cooperation with the Administration of State Material Reserves of the SR prepared in months October – November 2019 second in-kind humanitarian assistance amounting to the value of €55,558.13.¹⁸¹

Similarly to 2018, even in 2019 MO MoI SR employees actively participated in EASO Asylum Support Teams operating in Greece, Italy and Cyprus. A total of 14 operations took place in 2019 (7 in Greece, 5 in Italy and 2 in Cyprus), each lasting for 6 weeks. The MO MoI SR employees worked for 570 man-days in the Asylum Support Teams in 2019 (289 in Greece, 200 in Italy and 81 in Cyprus). The posted employees carried out tasks as defined by EASO.¹⁸²

The SR also addressed the migration topics at the *regional level*. Ministers of the V4 countries and Austria met in November 2019 in Prague to deliberate on the current internal affairs including migration and asylum procedure and on the impact of Brexit on security and protection of the Schengen borders. Representatives of the V4 countries agreed that they would like to reform the European migration system but without the mandatory migrant relocation quota for the EU member states. Their priority is to secure the external EU border and address the causes of migration in the countries of origin.¹⁸³

Within the scope of the Slovak presidency of the Visegrad Group, a Meeting of the Directors of Migration and Asylum Offices of the V4 countries was held in Bratislava on 12 – 13 March 2019. Participants talked about current challenges that the V4 countries are facing and the partners also prepared for the 2019 Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva in December 2019 under the auspices of the UNHCR.

Although the asylum situation concerning the number of forced migrants has stabilized and the numbers are comparable to those from 2014, new challenges emerge in the field of migration, among them Brexit and the need to prepare for the situation after the UK's withdrawal from the EU, organizational and legislative changes, or the need to update V4 countries' migration strate-

¹⁸¹ Information provided by the Department of Crisis Management of the MoI SR.

¹⁸² Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁸³ Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=ministri-v4-v-prahe-rokovali-o-aktualnych-temach-v-oblasti-vnutornych-zalezitosti> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

gies to reflect the changing situation, with a view beyond 2020.¹⁸⁴

4.3 Cooperation With Third Countries and Institutions

In the period of years 2016 – 2019 the SR has participated in the *MOBILAZE project* implemented under the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Azerbaijan. The SR has shared information and experience with Azerbaijani representatives, focusing mainly on the governmental capacity building in order to develop and implement the national migration policy of Azerbaijan. The MOBILAZE project addressed several areas of migration and the MO MoI SR focused mainly on the areas which concerned national asylum system development and integration of persons granted international protection (their accommodation, education, work counselling and pre-integration measures).¹⁸⁵

In October 2019, within the scope of a study trip organized under the auspices of MoFEA SR, information on asylum and migration procedures were provided to a representative of Palestine.¹⁸⁶

As part of academic cooperation, a number of Slovak universities joined the international organisation *Scholars at Risk* in May 2019.¹⁸⁷ The organisation helps foreign academics who were forced to leave their countries because of wars or due to the threat of imprisonment to continue their work in a host country.¹⁸⁸

In a similar way, the city of Bratislava plans to help persecuted artists. The city is interested in becoming a part of the *International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN)*. In September 2019, representatives of the city of Bratislava met with Sudanese caricaturist Khalid Albaih, ICORN representatives, Milan Šimečka Foundation representatives and Bratislava Book Festival BRaK representatives. ICORN is a network of 70 cities which provide residency programmes for persecuted artists from all around the globe. The target group includes artists, writers and journalists whose lives are at risk or who face persecution in their countries of origin because of their work or because they expressed their opinions.¹⁸⁹

Other activities concerning international protection, humanitarian assistance or development cooperation, conducted by the SR, are listed in chapter Migration and Development (see part 12).

4.4 Relocation and Resettlement Programmes

In 2019, the SR did not join any European or bilateral relocation activities (see **table 7** in annexes).

The SR did not conduct any resettlement programmes or TCN refugee's humanitarian admission programmes (see **table 8** in annexes), nor any special humanitarian refugee transfer through the territory of the SR which the SR has been conducting in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM

¹⁸⁴ Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy-6&sprava=v-bratislave-sa-konalo-stretnutie-zastupcov-migracnych-uradov-krajin-v4> (consulted on 24/01/2020).

¹⁸⁵ Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁸⁶ Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁸⁷ Among them Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Pan-European University in Bratislava, BISLA, The Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava and Bratislava Policy Institute

¹⁸⁸ Source: <https://dennikn.sk/1475540/vysoke-skoly-otvoria-pre-zahranicnych-akademikov-ktori-utekaju-pred-vojnou-ci-vazenim/?ref=tit> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

¹⁸⁹ Source: <https://www.facebook.com/166688783394167/posts/2674059745990379/> (consulted on 20/04/2020).

since 2009.¹⁹⁰

With regard to the humanitarian admission of 149 refugees (25 families) from Northern Iraq to the SR in 2015, the MO MoI SR has supervised the quality of provision of integration services by the integration implementer (civic association o.z. Pokoj a dobro) and evaluated the completion of the three-year project. The integration project of a group of Iraqi refugees in Nitra finished on 1 February 2019. As of that date, a total of 53 people involved in the project remained living in the SR in 10 households and 8 out of 10 families owned their dwellings. All the minors and young adults are fluent in the Slovak language.¹⁹¹

4.5 Research

In 2019, international migration as a topic was researched by IOM in its capacity of the EMN coordinator in the SR. EMN prepared a national study *Overview of National protection Statuses in the SR* which, together with the EU MS Summary Report, will be published at www.emn.sk.¹⁹²

Unaccompanied Minors and Other Vulnerable Groups

Following the amendment to the legislation of 2018, the Foster Home for UAMs in Medzilaborce transformed to a Children and Family Centre DLAŇ in Medzilaborce (CFC Medzilaborce) as of 1 January 2019. Measures adopted in 2019 led to an increased quality and scope of care for UAMs. Partly as a result of the increase in the number of UAMs, both material and personnel conditions in the centre were improved and a position of a cultural mediator was created. Professional capacity of the CFC Medzilaborce staff was improved through various educational activities. A measure was introduced according to which in case of doubt concerning the age of migrants a bone examination shall be carried out to determine their age before their placement in the CFC in Medzilaborce. This measure helped to partially eliminate the long-term problem of migrant placement in cases when their minor status could not be clearly proven.

An Expert Commission for the Support of Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Education, Work and Society was established as an advisory body within the structure of the Parliamentary Committee of National Council of the SR on Human Rights and National Minorities.

In order to improve the quality of services provided to vulnerable persons the MO MoI SR prepared a methodological guideline *Social Workers' Competences to Avoid and Solve Critical Situations*.

¹⁹⁰ The last valid trilateral Agreement between the Government of The Slovak Republic, the UNHCR and the IOM concerning Humanitarian Transfer of Refugees in Need of International Protection through the Slovak Republic was concluded on 18 November 2015.

¹⁹¹ Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

¹⁹² Information provided by the Office of IOM in the SR.

5.1 Unaccompanied Minors¹⁹³

5.1.1 Statistics and Trends

The Slovak Republic registered an increase in the number of UAMs in 2019 compared to previous years (see **table 9** in annexes). While the number of UAMs in the SR was 25 in 2017¹⁹⁴ and 37 in 2018¹⁹⁵, the total number of UAMs identified in the area of the SR in 2019 was 82. Of this, 69 UAMs (mostly from Afghanistan and Bangladesh) were intercepted while crossing the state border illegally or residing illegally in the SR¹⁹⁶.

SPCSG

In 2019, the SPCSG bodies registered a total of 82 UAMs (5 of them girls). Based on court decisions on urgent measures, 76 new UAMs were placed in the CFC for UAMs in Medzilaborce in 2019. In 2019 the CFC Medzilaborce provided care to UAMs from these non-EU countries: Afghanistan (55), Bangladesh (5), Pakistan, Vietnam and Morocco (2 each), Canada, Myanmar (Burma), Syria and Algeria (1 each). In 2019 the CFC Medzilaborce provided care altogether to 85 UAMs (6 of them girls), out of them, 65 left the facility voluntarily to an unknown location.¹⁹⁷

30 UAMs applied to enter the asylum procedure in 2019, which represents an increase compared to 2018, when 10 UAMs applied for asylum¹⁹⁸, or compared to 2017, when the number of UAMs applying for asylum in the SR was 11¹⁹⁹.

The number of UAMs not seeking asylum increased to 52 out of total 82 UAMs, who were provided care in CFC Medzilaborce in 2019²⁰⁰, in comparison with 27 UAMs not applying for asylum in 2018²⁰¹, 14 in 2017²⁰², 31 in 2016, 23 in 2015 and 10 in 2014²⁰³. (see **table 9** in annexes).

193 According to Act no. 305/2005 on Socio-legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship and on amendments of some acts, an unaccompanied minor shall mean a child who "is not a Slovak citizen and is present in the territory of the SR without their parent or other major individual into whose custody the child might be placed" (this category therefore does not only apply to minor TCNs).

194 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2018): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2017. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

195 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

196 Source: Statistical Overview of Legal and Irregular Migration in the Slovak Republic in 2019, BBFP PFP, http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicka_a_cudzinecka_policia/rocnky/rok_2019/2019-rocnka-UHCP-SK.pdf (consulted on 10/04/ 2020).

197 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

198 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

199 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2018): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2017. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

200 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

201 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

202 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2018): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2017. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

203 Source: Mészárosová, Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

5.1.2 Policies, Legislation and Measures

The Amendment²⁰⁴ to the Act on SPCSG²⁰⁵ adopted in 2018 resulted in the establishment of Children and Family Centres (CFC) in 2019. CFCs were constituted following the agreement of state and non-state SPCSG facilities representatives, replacing former foster homes, crisis centres and resocialisation centres. In this way, Foster Home DLAŇ in Medzilaborce, which has been providing care of UAMs since 2014, transformed to a CFC DLAŇ Medzilaborce (CFC Medzilaborce). Apart from the abovementioned, the provisions effective as of 2019 also led to the major change in the operation of these facilities²⁰⁶.

Residential forms of stay in CFCs provide children with a safe environment of individually arranged groups which temporarily substitute for his or her natural environment. Care for a child is based on the principles of individual and integrating approach so that the rights and opinions of a child are respected. Children's strengths are promoted and activated and their needs are fulfilled depending on their current situation and physical and mental state.

The governing principle that the care is based on is compliance with the children's rights and equal opportunities for all children in the comparable individually arranged groups and in professional foster families. Care for children in the facilities respects European quality standards applicable to children living outside of their families.²⁰⁷

As concerns care for UAMs, Internal Regulation of the COLSAF no. IN 105/2015 "Performing of Socio-legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship Measures in Case of Unaccompanied Minors" was updated to reflect changes in legislation and in 2019 was in approval procedure. This regulation lays down the details of the procedure undertaken by labour offices when carrying out the SPCSG measures concerning UAMs in the SR.²⁰⁸

Acting on the basis of the court decision the SPCSG authority acts as carer or guardian of UAMs and represents them in legal and other procedures as well as before and after entering the asylum procedure. In 2019, a total of 82 UAMs were identified in the territory of the SR, of which the SPCSG authority was appointed to act as the carer for 53 of them and as a guardian for 15 UAMs. 30 of the abovementioned UAMs have applied to enter the asylum granting procedure.²⁰⁹

The SPCSG authority also implemented the measures related to searching for parents or other family members of these UAMs in order reunite them. In five cases UAMs were returned into their country of origin and in two cases UAMs were reunited with their families in a third safe country. SPCSG measures implemented for UAMs also include their protection against human trafficking^{210, 211}.

The persisting problem of placing migrants whose minority status is not sufficiently and clearly determined in a facility for the enforcement of court judgments was recently partly eliminat-

204 Act No. 61/2018 Coll. changing and amending Act No. 305/2005 on Social and Legal Protection of Children and on Social Guardianship and on changes and amendments to some acts.

205 Act No. 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection of Children and on Social Guardianship and on changes and amendments to some acts

206 See also: Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

207 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

208 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

209 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

210 Information on the numbers of identified victims of human trafficking cannot be provided.

211 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

ed. If necessary or in case of doubt concerning the age of captured migrants bone examination was carried out to determine their age before the placement of the migrants in the CFC in Medzilaborce. In 11 cases when the age of migrants was examined prior to their placement in the CFC Medzilaborce the age was determined to be younger than 18 years. In 2019, age had to be determined additionally in the facility in one case and it was confirmed that the person was older than 18 years of age.²¹²

In order to increase the quality and scope of care for UAMs the COLSAF improved the material and technical as well as personnel conditions in CFC Medzilaborce. One social worker was added to the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Stropkov, branch office Medzilaborce, to handle socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship agenda, which allowed for the change in securing complex care provided to UAMs by the appointed employee who has been acting as a carer or UAMs guardian while handling a different agenda at the same time until now.²¹³

COLSAF also earmarked funds for the CFC Medzilaborce for the acquisition of a 9-place vehicle to be used primarily for transporting UAMs from the place of their “interception” to Medzilaborce.

Due to the higher number of UAMs who have been placed in the CFC Medzilaborce in 2019, the specialised team’s expert and personnel capacity was supported and the number of staff was increased by 5 education teachers and 2 operations staff members. The total number of employees securing the operation of the CFC Medzilaborce is 68 (compared to 61 employees as of 1 January 2019). In cooperation with the IOM a cultural mediator position was created in the centre in 2019.²¹⁴

As part of the continuous learning programme, CFC Medzilaborce employees attended the following specialised training events and working meetings in 2019:

- January – “Specificities of Working with Child Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings” working meeting in Bratislava;
- March – “Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings” IOM training in Košice;
- May - “Best Practices – Sharing of Experience with Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior of the CR Staff Members” working meeting in CFC Medzilaborce;
- June – a multidisciplinary training in Stropkov on the topic of protection of children against violence “Communicating with Child Victims of Sexual Abuse”;
- September – a thematic EMN meeting in Malatiny for the purpose of sharing of information on irregular migration of TCNs and to discuss current issues concerning the application practice;
- October – a working meeting in Sečovce within the Schengen evaluation process of the Slovak Republic concerning returns and a working meeting “Transportation of UAMs” in Bratislava;
- December – “Infectious Diseases – Protection and Prevention” medical lecture organised for the CFC Medzilaborce staff members.

Throughout the year 2019 supervisions aimed at the handling of stress situations in the work done with UAMs were carried out.²¹⁵

212 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

213 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

214 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

215 Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

Within the scope of the *Migration Information Centre to Support Integration of Migrants in Slovakia (phase IX)* project individual integration consultancy was provided in 2019 to UAMs, which mainly included basic legal information, social and cultural orientation, individual social counselling and supplementary educational activities.²¹⁶

5.2 Other Vulnerable Groups

An Expert Commission for the Support of Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Education, Work and Society was established in 2019 as an advisory body of the Committee for Human Rights and National Minorities of the Slovak Republic of the National Council of the SR. The Commission includes experts on upbringing, education and inclusion of vulnerable groups.²¹⁷ The Commission aims to provide expert points of departure for the preparation of measures needed in this field and monitor this area in the territory of the SR in accordance with the commitments and recommendations resulting from international treaties, applicable Slovak legislation and strategic and conceptual materials at the national as well as international levels.²¹⁸

In the effort to improve the quality of services provided to vulnerable groups, the MO Mol SR prepared a methodological guideline entitled *Social Workers’ Competences to Avoid and Solve Critical Situations* in 2019. The guideline focuses on the social aspects of life of applicants for asylum in asylum facilities and discusses, e.g., procedures to be applied in case of child neglect or when working with applicants with special needs (both mental and physical), victims of violence, victims of trafficking in human beings, etc.

Testing of usability of the EASO IPSN Tool²¹⁹ for identification of persons with special procedural and/or reception needs, in combination with information acquired within the elaboration of social profiles²²⁰ of applicants for granting asylum preparation, took place in 2019.²²¹

Moreover, 5 MO Mol SR employees completed the national EASO module training on the topic of Interviewing Vulnerable Persons in 2019 (see part 4.2.4).²²²

216 Information provided by the FAD EPS Mol SR.

217 V parlamente zasadla komisia pre inklúziu (Apríl 2019), available at: <http://www.noveskolstvo.sk/article.php?1656>, (consulted on 03/02/2020).

218 SAS ocenila vznik komisie pre začleňovanie zraniteľných skupín, available at: <https://domov.sme.sk/c/22102403/komisia-pre-zaclenovanie-zranitelnych-skupin-je-dolezity-krok.html> (consulted on 10/04/2020).

219 EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs available also in Slovak at <https://ipsn.easo.europa.eu/sk/easo-tool-identification-persons-special-needs>.

220 MO Mol SR Instruction No. 4/2015 on administration of documentation Social profile of the personality of the applicant for asylum, the aim of which is its elaboration in cooperation among different services of MO Mol SR including the individual examination of applicant’s vulnerability and the follow up care after him/her.

221 Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

222 Information provided by the MO Mol SR.



Integration

Aiming to support integration of foreigners, MoLSAF SR started to update the Integration Policy of the SR in 2019, focusing on the foreigners' integration in the labour market. Some self-governmental authorities became more actively involved in foreigners' integration activities, partly thanks to the implementation of the *KapaCITY – support for migrant integration on the local level* project focused on improving the integration of third-country nationals at the municipal level. The IOM MIC continued to provide comprehensive legal and labour counselling services as well as language and professional education to foreigners in the SR. Language education was also provided by civic associations Mareena and Studia Academica Slovaca. A number of non-governmental organizations, in coordination with the MO Mol SR, implemented integration activities for persons granted international protection.

Regarding the prevention of discrimination, the SR started to prepare the *Concept of Combating Radicalisation and Extremism for Years 2020 – 2024*. The MO Mol SR and non-governmental organisations organized several events in order to inform the public, improve the general public awareness on migration and prevent discrimination. These included, e.g., preparation of the Facebook page named Hoaxy a podvody (Hoaxes and Deceptions) in cooperation with the Police Force of the SR website administrators, organization of lectures and debates in schools and during various festivals, continuation of the staging of Nová scéna Theatre play on the refugee topic together with a related discussion, or „*Migration Compass*“, an online podcast prepared in cooperation with the magazine „*týždeň*“.

6.1 Integration of Third-Country Nationals

6.1.1 Policies and Legislation

In order to support integration of foreigners into the labour market, the MoLSAF started to implement the long-term measure “Updating of the Integration Policy of the SR” resulting from the Strategy on Labour Mobility of Foreigners in the Slovak Republic in 2019²²³. The updated document will specifically focus on the labour-market integration.

In this context, within the scope of EMN activities, a thematic meeting was being prepared with the aim to obtain stakeholders' feedback and proposals of measures concerning the current situation of foreigners' integration in the Slovak labour market. Discussion on the vision of an optimal integration model for Slovakia and on the main challenges, persistent problems and proposals of particular measures will also be included in the agenda of the meeting. Proposed measures will serve as points of departure for the updating of the Integration Strategy of the Slovak Republic with special focus on the labour market.²²⁴

Although there were no significant legislation changes in 2019, through socio-economical participation integration was impacted by the Act No. 280/2019 Coll., amending the Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services. The aim of this act is to prepare, from 1 January 2021, a new social services information system (IS SOCS) which will collect up-to-date, verifiable and relevant data for the purpose of establishing of circumstances concerning social services, improvement of the quality of medium-term planning of social services development and their co-funding at the self-governmental as well as state level.²²⁵

6.1.2 Measures to Support Integration

In 2019, the implementation of the IOM's project *Migration Information Centre to Support Integration of Migrants in Slovakia (phase IX)*²²⁶ continued. Within the project, the following services are provided: comprehensive legal, labour, social and cultural counselling, support of language and vocational education of foreigners and protection of the rights of UAMs as well as the support for their integration (see parts 3.7.2 and 4.2.1).

Regarding the support of foreigners in their integration into the labour market in Slovakia, the MIC IOM provided counselling to 627 clients in various areas such as labour market orientation, preparation of CVs, preparation for interviews, communication with employers, searching for job offers and mediating employment. In order to increase the chances for success in the labour market, the MIC IOM provided financial support which helped 47 clients take part in re-skilling courses. The MIC IOM cooperates with 13 cultural mediators (representatives of foreigners' associations and communities in Slovakia), with whom 16 *Welcoming Slovakia* meetings were organ-

²²³ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of the SR No. 473 of 10 October 2018.

²²⁴ Information provided by the MoLSAF SR.

²²⁵ Information provided by the MoESRS SR.

²²⁶ Name of the Project: IOM Migration Information Centre (MIC) to Support Integration of Migrants in Slovakia (Phase IX). Project code: SK 2016 AMIF SC2.1/3. Project duration: 1 January 2017 – 31 2019.

MIC is a counselling centre of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Since 2006 it has been providing its services to foreigners to promote their social, economic and cultural integration in Slovakia. The Centre offers comprehensive integration, social and vocational counselling, promotes foreigners' inclusion in the labour market, organizes open courses of Slovak language as well as social and cultural orientation courses, provides important information about life in Slovakia and supports community life of foreigners.

ized for more than 447 participants in 2019. These meetings help foreigners obtain practical and useful information on life in Slovakia.²²⁷

Career guidance for foreigners living in Slovakia is provided, inter alia, by the civic association Mareena, whose programme ranked among the good practices awarded within the *2019 National Career Guidance Award* competition. The competition is organized by Euroguidance in cooperation with the Association of Career Guidance and Career Development and the awards were presented by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR.²²⁸

As the Slovak language teaching for TCNs is currently not systemic in Slovakia, foreigners can attend language courses provided by various private institutions or some non-profit organizations. Within the MIC IOM project, in 2019 Slovak language courses were provided free of charge in Bratislava, Košice, Sered' and Nové Zámky for third-country nationals including Slovak language courses for unaccompanied minors²²⁹. In 2019, 2,417 persons attended the courses. The interest to attend the courses has been increasing year-on-year and the plan is to organize the courses in other Slovak towns, too.²³⁰

In 2019, Slovak and English language and conversation courses and computer courses were provided by o.z. Mareena civic association primarily for third-country nationals, but also for other foreigners.²³¹

Studia Academica Slovaca operating under the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University in Bratislava published a methodological guideline for teachers of Slovak as a second language entitled *Criss-cross. Methodological Guideline – Slovak A1 (2018)* and a handbook *First Aid in Slovak in 10 language mutations to help foreigners acquire basic vocabulary and collocations for everyday usage*. The handbook also serves as an informal guide to Slovak realia.²³²

In 2019 also a publication *Slovak as a Foreign Language* was issued. Following the initiative of the MoESRS SR and based on the requirements from practice it was prepared by the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre. Its aim is to serve as a first contact material for all teachers, who get in touch with the Slovak as a foreign language and above all with children of foreigners.²³³

In the context of the analysis of the existing integration measures, in 2019, the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture (CVEK)'s project *“Research of Foreigners' Integration – Barriers, Instruments and Attitudes”*²³⁴ was supported. The project aims to comprehensively map integration of foreigners in Slovakia, integration services accessibility as well as the perception of integration among the foreigners and the majority population. Findings from different phases of the project implementation will serve as point of departure for the preparation of advocating activities aimed at various levels of public administration authorities.²³⁵

227 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

228 Kariérové poradenstvo treba neustále posilňovať, <https://www.minedu.sk/karierove-poradenstvo-treba-neustale-posilnovat/> (consulted on 19/04/2020)

229 The courses are held in CFC Dľaň Medzilaborce.

230 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

231 More information about the project available at: <https://mareena.sk/programy>.

232 Specialised publications and handbooks available at: <https://fphil.uniba.sk/katedry-a-odborne-pracoviska/sas/edicna-cinnost-publications/odborne-publikacie-a-prirucky/>, <https://fphil.uniba.sk/katedry-a-odborne-pracoviska/sas/edicna-cinnost-publications/prva-pomoc-po-slovensky/> (consulted on 31/01/2020)

233 Publication is available at: <https://mpc-edu.sk/slovencina-ako-cudzi-jazyk>, (consulted on 29/04/2020).

234 The project will be implemented between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021.

235 More information about the project available at: <http://cvek.sk/vyskum-integracie-cudzincov-bariery-nastroje-a-postoje/>.

With regard to the migrants' health, the implementation of the national project *Creation of Recommended and Standard Processes for the Prevention and Timely Intervention Related to the Migration of Third-country Nationals in Slovakia*²³⁶ continued in 2019. The main goal of the project, which is funded by AMIF and the Ministry of Health of the SR, is to create recommended and standard procedures for the prevention (of disease outbreak and transmission) and (crisis and timely) intervention in order to early enough detect, diagnose and treat the diseases related to the migration of TCNs. In course of 2019, several working groups were formed to work in various areas of prevention and timely and crisis intervention. The project gives special attention to the health needs of vulnerable groups of people such as minors, pregnant women and victims of trafficking, torture and violence.^{237 238}

6.2 Integration of Persons Granted International Protection

In 2019, there were no new developments in the field of policies and legislation concerning integration of persons granted international protection.

Within the scope of activities aimed at supporting integration of persons granted international protection, with a specific focus on the protection of vulnerable groups the MO Mol SR organized a number of meetings with cultural mediators for persons granted international protection. Topics of the meetings mainly included information on socio-cultural realities and prevention of victimisation particularly of vulnerable groups (women). Second mentioned activity resulted from the need to react to the occurrence of cases of physical and verbal attacks.²³⁹

Several projects of non-profit organizations supporting integration of persons granted international protection in the SR received AMIF funding in 2019. 2019 was the third – and the final – year of implementation of the STEP 3 by the civic association Marginal in cooperation with the civic association Adra. The project ensured that the target group has access to education (including Slovak language courses²⁴⁰ and retraining courses) including the education of children. Within this project, guidance, legal and social assistance, help with accommodation search, etc. was provided on 324 occasions in 2019.²⁴¹

Similarly, the Slovak Humanitarian Council's project *Rifugio* was supported in 2019. The project, which will be implemented from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021, aims to use expert capacity to promote integration of persons granted asylum and persons granted subsidiary protection in a number of integration areas such as integration in the labour market, social and healthcare systems, etc. At the same time, the project complies with the individual approach principles and reflects different integration phases that the target group might be in.²⁴²

Also working on increasing the efficiency of integration of persons granted international protection was the Civic Association for Qualification and Education QUALED, which participates

236 SK 2018 AMIF SC2.1, (Project duration: 11/07/2018-30/04/2020)

237 Information provided by the FAD EPS Mol SR. more information about the project available at: <https://www.standardnepostupy.sk/zdravie-a-migracia/>, (consulted on 02/02/2020).

238 The project will continue until 30/04/2020.

239 Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

240 After entering the integration project had persons with granted international protection access to Slovak language course, provided by the state language school or they could use tutoring lessons provided by volunteers.

241 Information provided by the FAD EPS Mol SR.

242 Rifugio, Slovak Humanitarian Council, available at: <https://www.crz.gov.sk/index.php?ID=4370956&l=sk> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

in the *Post-traumatic Integration of Refugees*²⁴³ project. Together with other partner countries, QUALED has prepared Guidelines and a set of documents aiming to raise awareness about the PTSD symptoms and possibilities for early mental health interventions in persons (migrants/refugees) suffering from post-traumatic issues (including post-traumatic stress disorder - PTSD).²⁴⁴

6.3 Integration on Local Level and Civic Participation of Foreigners

In 2019, the implementation of the *KapaCITY project – support for migrant integration on the local level*²⁴⁵ continued. It is implemented by several civic organizations (Human Rights League, Milan Šimečka Foundation, Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture and civic association Marginal) working in cooperation with local and regional self-governing authorities (Bratislava, Trnava, Banská Bystrica, Košice Self-governing Region) and the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia representatives.²⁴⁶ The main goal of the project is to develop professional, networking, coordination, advocacy and communication capacities of local players in the integration of TCNs, to ensure the transfer of good practices at the local, regional, national and international level and to develop the communication skills of local self-governments. In 2019, the following activities were specifically conducted within the project: intercultural trainings for the representatives of self-governing authorities (Trnava, Bratislava and Banská Bystrica), preparation of training materials, legal training, social work training and service provision for TCNs.²⁴⁷

In October 2019, Human Rights League organized the sixth edition of the Integration Forum on the topic “Cities and Foreigners”. The event welcomed foreigners as well as experts on integration from Slovakia and abroad who talked about their personal experience and about the ways of designing a successful integration policy in a country that has little experience with foreigners.²⁴⁸

Some municipal offices participated in the projects or initiated activities aimed to support integration of foreigners.

As part of the effort to fulfil the aim to make Bratislava an open, tolerant and friendly city, Mayor of Bratislava Matúš Vallo met with foreigners living in the city. Moreover, Bratislava municipal office opened active communication with civil society organizations working in the field of integration of foreigners in Slovakia.²⁴⁹

A Community Centre for Work and Knowledge Mobility (COMIN) was established in Nitra in October 2019 as the point of first contact for foreigners who have been granted temporary or permanent residence in the SR. The project, initiated by Rotary Club Nitra, is coordinated by Nitra Community Foundation and the City of Nitra is the main partner of the project. COMIN offers legal counselling and provides basic information about the life of foreigners in Slovakia. OZ Pokoj

²⁴³ The project is funded from the EU Programme Erasmus+

²⁴⁴ Qualed, Posttraumatic Integration of Refugees, available at: <https://onlinematerial.posttraumatic-integration.eu/main/toolbox.php> (consulted on 03/02/2020)

²⁴⁵ Project duration: 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2020.

²⁴⁶ Spolupráca občianskej spoločnosti a samospráv na začleňovaní cudzincov, Mesto Trnava, available at: <https://www.trnava.sk/sk/aktualita/spolupraca-obcianskej-spolocnosti-a-samosprav-na-zaclenovani-cudzincov> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

²⁴⁷ KapaCITY, available at: <http://cvek.sk/kapacity-integracia-cudzincov-v-kosickom-samospravnom-kraji/> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

²⁴⁸ Ako dopadlo Forum o integrácii, available at: <https://www.hrl.sk/sk/o-nas/aktuality/ako-dopadlo-forum-o-integracii-2019> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

²⁴⁹ Stretnutie primátora s cudzincami žijúcimi v Bratislave, available at <https://bratislava.sk/sk/sprava/stretnutie-primatora-s-cudzincami-zijuci-mi-v-bratislave> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

a dobro (civic association Peace and Good) runs courses of Slovak language for foreigners in the Centre. In course of the first three months of its operation COMIN served 38 clients.²⁵⁰

6.4 Improving Awareness on Migration and Non-Discrimination

Regarding the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia, the SR started to prepare the Concept for Combating Radicalisation and Extremism for years 2020 – 2024 (hereinafter referred to as the “Concept”). In 2019, the Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) agreed that the responsibility for the Concept will be taken over by the Crime Prevention Department of the Office of the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic (CPD MIO SR). Invited to join the working group were experts from central state administration authorities and non-governmental organizations involved in the drafting of the new Concept, which combines successful aspects of the Concept for Combating Extremism for Years 2015-2019 and of the Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance for Years 2016 - 2018. The document was in 2019 commented on by the Committee members.²⁵¹

In November 2019, the SR received members of the monitoring mission of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The mission’s findings will be in 2020 described in the official progress report on the Slovak Republic regarding the agenda of the fight against racism and intolerance.²⁵²

Within the scope of its 2019 activities, the MO Mol SR focused on the improvement of public awareness about migration and prevention of discrimination.

Due to the persisting spread of disinformation concerning migration in the media, the MO Mol SR created a Facebook page named Hoaxy a podvody (Hoaxes and Deceptions) in cooperation with the Police Force of the SR website administrators, where, by means of a series of videos, they informed the public about the most common disinformation sources.

In 2019, the MO Mol SR also organized 6 lectures on the topic of migration, asylum and integration of foreigners in Slovakia at the secondary schools and 1 lecture at a university. The MO Mol SR also organizes lectures at the Secondary Police School in Bratislava and the Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava.

Following the successful preparation and premier of the play based on the story by Janne Teller “HOME (Where Is Yours?)”, intensive cooperation between the MO Mol SR and the Nová scéna Theatre in Bratislava continued also in 2019. The play was staged on several occasions for students as well as older audiences, followed by debates during which MO Mol SR experts discussed migration and asylum related topics with the members of the audience.

²⁵⁰ Služby COMIN využilo počas troch mesiacov 38 cudzincov <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/nitra-sluzby-comin-vyuzilo-pocas-tro/443643-clanok.html>, <http://nitrianskyhlasnik.sk/cudzinci-v-nitre/> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

²⁵¹ Information provided by the DEFA MIO.

²⁵² Štátny tajomník F. Ružička prijal delegáciu 6. monitorovacej misie Európskej komisie proti rasizmu a intolerancii Rady Európy ECRI na Slovensku, available at: https://www.mzv.sk/aktuality/vsetky_spravy/-/asset_publisher/Rp2fPY0svzsu/content/statny-tajomnik-f-ruzicka-prijal-delegaciu-6-monitorovacej-misie-europskej-komisie-proti-rasizmu-a-intolerancii-rady-europy-ecri-na-slovensku?p_auth=41622uxh (consulted on 05/02/2020).

The MO Mol SR attended a number of music and drama festivals in order to discuss and share factual information on asylum in the SR and challenges related to integration public with the public. The Office also took part in the discussions on integration of persons granted international protection in various cultural centres.

In order to stay in contact with persons granted international protection, the MO Mol SR also organizes Easter and Christmas meetings in Bratislava and Košice.²⁵³

Apart from the MO Mol SR, migration awareness raising activities were implemented by several other organisations, too. Within the scope of the “Migration Compass” project, the Human Rights League and the .týždeň weekly prepared together an online podcast with the same title Migračný Kompas aimed to raise awareness of the public and leaders involved in shaping the policies of the SR on migration and related topics.²⁵⁴

Campaign “Faces of Migration” (see part 12.1) also aims to inform the public about migration. In each of the partner countries the project will take a national form reflecting the local circumstances and the level of awareness of citizens of the respective country about the Sustainable Development Goals and migration.²⁵⁵

As a reaction to the spreading of disinformation concerning migrants in Slovakia, as a part of the “What is a Home?” campaign and the MIND²⁵⁶ project the Slovak Catholic Charity prepared a discussion entitled “Live Library: Slovakia Through the Eyes of a Foreigner” in December 2019. During the discussion, members of the public could communicate freely with foreigners living in Slovakia.

Milan Šimečka Foundation and the Slovak Humanitarian Council joined forces with a number of organizations, initiatives and foreigners communities to prepare an event called Sunday Parade on 16 June 2019 to commemorate the World Refugee Day. The event, organized under the auspices of the Mayor of Bratislava, featured also the Umbrella March along the streets of Bratislava Old Town. The MO Mol SR staff also participated in the event.²⁵⁷

Within the scope of the 2019 EMN Educational Seminar on Migration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) acting as the EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic coordinator organized an evening public event in August 2019, during which members of the public had a chance to see the play “HOME (Where is yours?)” by Nová scéna Theatre followed by a discussion with experts on how to talk about migration truthfully and in a balanced way.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Information provided by the MO Mol SR.

²⁵⁴ Migration Compass, Human Rights League, available at: <https://www.hrl.sk/sk/info-o-migracii/https://www.hrl.sk/sk/info-o-migracii/podcast/podcast-migracny-kompas-vysvetlujeme-detaily-o-migracii-integracii-a-azyle> (consulted on 31/01/2020).

²⁵⁵ Ambrela is a part of the “Global Goals and Migration” project and of the “Faces of Migration” campaign, more information at: https://ambrela.org/spravy/tvare-migracie/?fbclid=IwAR1gimXrk-7zrUuanY-0yOOWpWIXRQQ7J1u_KhboiUg9jDaiQNIhFiejZGI (consulted on 04/02/2020).

²⁵⁶ More information at: <https://charita.sk/cojedomov/>

²⁵⁷ More information at: <http://www.shr.sk/download/nedelna-parada-tlacova-sprava-2019.pdf>

²⁵⁸ Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.



Citizenship and the Situation of Stateless Persons

In 2019, the SR did not adopt any significant changes related to citizenship of third-country nationals or stateless persons. As of 1 December 2019, the *Act on State Citizenship* simplified the administrative process of citizenship application submission for third-country nationals.

7.1 Obtaining State Citizenship

Effective from 1 December 2019, the SR adopted the amendment to *Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on State Citizenship*. It removes the obligation of TCNs to include in the citizenship application documents attesting to the fact that they do not have debts towards the Tax Office, Customs Office, Health Insurance Authority, and Social Insurance Authority. This means that they do not have to attest to the facts which the public administration authorities can verify in public administration informational systems. If the TCN is not a tax subject or obliged to pay social insurance payments, they enclose documents attesting to this fact.²⁵⁹

In 2019, the IOM as the coordinator of EMN in the SR approached the topic of state citizenship from the research perspective. They prepared national report – *Pathways to Citizenship for third country nationals in the SR*, which will be published in the form of a questionnaire at www.emn.sk.

²⁵⁹ Source: <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/1993-40> (consulted on 05/02/2020).

sk together with summary report for all EU MS.²⁶⁰

7.2 Situation of Stateless Persons

In 2019, the SR did not adopt any legislative or other measures which would significantly influence the situation of stateless persons present in their territory.



Borders, Schengen and Visa

In 2019, the SR adopted the *National Strategy of Integrated Border Management for 2019 – 2022*. Several objectives stemmed from the strategy, which Slovakia will have to fulfil in the area of European integrated border management.

The SR continued the cooperation with operational and search border unit of Ukraine based on the *Plan of Development of Cooperation between the BBFP PFP and the State Border Service of Ukraine for 2019 – 2020*.

In 2019, the SR participated in the international COOPSEC 2019 exercise alongside the Central European Defence Cooperation partner countries. On the national level, an interdepartmental cooperation training *Nový Horizont 2019* (New Horizon 2019) was held. A third evaluation of the level of correct and full application of the Schengen acquis related to returns, to the area of personal data protection in the visa process and to the area of visa policy by the Slovak Republic by EC experts was performed.

8.1 Statistics and Trends

In 2019, the SR issued 29,148 visas (see **table 3** in annexes)²⁶¹ which is a slight increase compared with 2018 with 28,343 issued visas²⁶². However, from a long-term perspective the decrease

²⁶⁰ Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

²⁶¹ Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

²⁶² Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network,

continues; as compared with 2017 (43,641 issued visas)²⁶³, 2016 (63,553 issued visas)²⁶⁴ or 2015 (76,177 issued visas)²⁶⁵. The main reason is the introduction of a visa-free regime with Ukraine from 11 June 2017 for Ukrainian citizens who hold a biometric passport²⁶⁶.

Increase in the number of visa applications in 2019 is related to the introduction of outsourcing in the process of data and Schengen visa applications collection. These were introduced in December 2018 by means of so called visa centres of VF Worldwide Holdings Ltd. Company (also known under its commercial name VFS Global). By opening visa centres the possibility to receive visa for number of visitors to the SR was facilitated, namely in ten countries in Africa, Asia and Europe (Belarus, China, Egypt, India, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Palestinian territories – Gaza, Ramallah, Turkey, United Arab Emirates). 38 visa centres to submit applications for Schengen visa were opened in 2019 in the above listed countries.²⁶⁷

8.2 Border Control Policies and Measures

Regarding the European integrated border management, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the *National Strategy of Integrated Border Management for 2019 – 2022* by Resolution No 27 from 23 January 2019. The strategy means that within the building of the European Integrated Border Control system the SR will focus on, e.g.:

- a greater automation of border controls at border crossing points, in particular by deploying automatic border controls where effective;
- a gradual introduction of new European IS into the service, especially the Entry/Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), which should be launched in 2021 or 2022;
- renewal and completion of technical equipment and devices for verifying document authenticity in lines I. and II. including the completion of the camera system (especially at the Vyšné Nemecké - Uzghorod and Ubla - Malyj Berezhnyi crossing points) in the processing stalls at the border crossing points, mainly to eliminate possible corruption activities and to protect police officers;
- strengthening cooperation between police and customs units, which perform checks at border crossing points at external borders in compliance with EC recommendations.²⁶⁸

Further Activities

In October 2019, 33 professional soldiers of the Slovak Armed Forces and military equipment and three BBFP PFP employees participated in the international Cooperative Security Agreement (COOPSEC 2019) exercise in the Ujamajor training area in Hungary. The aim of the exercise was to strengthen police and military cooperation among the Central European Defence Co-

IOM, Bratislava.

263 Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2018): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2017. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

264 Bachtíková, I., Oboňová, S. (2017): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies. Slovak Republic 2016. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

265 Bachtíková, I., Oboňová, S. (2016): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies. Slovak Republic 2015. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

266 Regulation (EU) 2017/850 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement

267 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

268 National Strategy of Integrated Border Management for 2019 – 2022, available at: <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/23504/1> (consulted on 28/01/2020).

operation (CEDC) partner states in dealing with crisis situations which might arise as a result of stronger pressure on external borders. A total of 417 participants from the CEDC countries took part in the exercise.²⁶⁹

On the national level, on 9 – 13 September 2019, an interdepartmental cooperation training Nový Horizont 2019 (New Horizon 2019) was held in the Lešť training centre. It was preceded by an introductory planning conference. The main objective was to practice the cooperation of designated units of the Slovak Armed Forces with the management of Ministry of Defence of the SR, Ministry of Interior of the SR, Ministry of Economy of the SR, Ministry of Health of the SR, state administration and self-governing authorities in tasks related to the defence of the SR in a state of war as well as to check the ability of state crisis management authorities at the regional and district level to react to the requirements of the Slovak Armed Forces.²⁷⁰

In 2019, a call was launched within the ISF Borders – to present a national project by BBFP PFP focused on reaction capacity building by purchasing an automobile technique. The project was submitted within ISF Border and its overall allocation is €730,000.²⁷¹

In November 2019, a third evaluation of the level of correct and full application of the Schengen acquis related to returns by the Slovak Republic by EC experts was performed.²⁷²

The SR was evaluated also in the area of visa policy, namely Diplomatic Mission Minsk and Consulate General Istanbul. The evaluation took place between 2 and 6 December 2019. The evaluation committee consisted of representatives from European Commission, EU Agency LISA and EU MS experts. Profound control of the visa policy implementation set by the Schengen rules was realised at both representations. The evaluation report with possible recommendations will be delivered in 2020.²⁷³

EMN, in cooperation with the BBFP Police Force Presidium organized a thematic meeting with the aim of exchanging information on the irregular migration of TCNs and discussing current issues of application practice related in particular to the issue of administrative expulsion and detention. The meeting also included preparation for the Schengen evaluation in the area of returns.²⁷⁴

8.3 Cooperation With Third Countries in the Area of Border Management

Operational cooperation between the operational and search border unit of Ukraine and the NUCIM BBFP PF continued in 2019 based on the *Plan of Development of Cooperation between the BBFP PFP and the State Border Service of Ukraine for 2019 – 2020* (hereinafter Plan 2019 – 2020).²⁷⁵

269 COOPSEC 2019 international exercise confirmed that our soldiers are team players ready to cooperate in international environment, available at: <https://www.mosr.sk/45929-sk/p-gajdos-medzinarodne-cvicenie-coopsec-2019-potvrdivo-ze-nasi-vojaci-su-timovi-hraci-pripraveni-spolupracovat-aj-v-medzinarodnom-prostredii/> (consulted on 27/01/2020).

270 Interdepartmental training NOVÝ HORIZONT 2019, available at: <https://www.minv.sk/?medzirezortne-cvicenie-novy-horizont-2019> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

271 Information provided by FAD EPS Mol SR.

272 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

273 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

274 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

275 Information provided by BBFP PFP.

In October 2019, a meeting of the director of the BBFP PFP and head of the State Border Service of Ukraine was held in Kiev. The discussion about the situation on the Slovak-Ukrainian border assessed the development of cooperation as positive and further directions were also discussed within the fulfilment of tasks stemming from the Plan 2019 – 2020. Another educational activity (internship for Ukrainian experts focused on engineering – technical security of the Slovak – Ukrainian state border) was added to the plan at the meeting. In December 2019, the Secondary Vocational School of the PF Košice (based on BBFP PFP request) organized the internship for the Bohdan Khmelnytsky National Academy of the State Border Service of Ukraine students. It included a professional agenda prepared for the students and they were also briefed on the service activities in PF Departments.²⁷⁶



Irregular Migration and Smuggling

In 2019, a decrease in the number of irregular migration cases was recorded; as compared with 2018, there were fewer cases of state border crossings and of irregular residence. Regarding the irregular migration routes, the number of irregular entries through the external land border with Ukraine decreased and the number of secondary transit migration from the territory of Hungary increased.

In 2019, several measures were adopted to increase the professional level and effectiveness of PF members in detecting forged and altered documents.

9.1 Statistics and Trends

In 2019, a relatively low level of irregular migration was detected in the SR. As compared with 2018, a slight decrease in the number of irregular migration²⁷⁷ cases was detected: a total of 2,190 cases as compared with 2,819 cases in 2018²⁷⁸ while most cases (1,413) concerned Ukrainian citizens, 140 cases concerned Afghani citizens and 136 cases Serbian citizens²⁷⁹. Regarding percentual representation of cases, the number of unauthorized state border crossings decreased (as compared with previous year) by almost 39%: 213 cases were recorded as compared

²⁷⁷ The number of irregular migration cases includes the number of unauthorized state border crossings and of unauthorized residences.

²⁷⁸ Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

²⁷⁹ Source: Statistical Overview of Legal and Irregular Migration in the Slovak Republic in 2019, BBFP PFP, http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicna_a_cudzinecka_policia/rocniky/rok_2019/2019-rocenka-UHCP-SK.pdf (consulted on 10/04/ 2020).

²⁷⁶ Slovak Police Facebook page.

with 348 cases in 2018 while this most often concerned the citizens of Vietnam (32), Sri Lanka (20) and Turkey (18). A significant increase in the number of irregular migrants from Sri Lanka was recorded for the first time. Unauthorized residence in the territory of the SR was detected in 1,977 cases out of which 1,378 were Ukrainian nationals. In 2018, there were 2,471 detected unauthorized residences out of which 1,873 were Ukrainian citizens. Out of 2,190 total irregular migration cases detected in 2019, 1,413 concerned Ukrainian citizens, 140 cases concerned Afghani citizens and 136 cases Serbian citizens.²⁸⁰ In 2019, law enforcement authorities detained 120 suspects on suspicion of the crime of smuggling (see **table 4** and **table 5** in annexes).²⁸¹

9.2 Measures Against Exploitation of Legal Migration Pathways

Forged and Altered Travel Documents

In 2019, measures were adopted to increase the level and effectiveness of detecting false and altered documents. Apart from renewal of technical equipment for fast document checks, the amount of professional training of PF members focused on the latest trends in forging and altering of documents was increased as well as the number of professional internships of those Police Force members who conduct the second-line control at a specialized workplace of the Border and Foreigners Police of the Police Force Presidium.²⁸²

9.3 Combating Smuggling and Prevention of Irregular Migration

9.3.1 Combating Smuggling

In 2019, Slovakia did not adopt any legislative changes or measures related to combatting smuggling. Statistical information can be found in part 8.1.

9.3.2 Monitoring and Identification of Irregular Migration Routes

The development of irregular migration in the territory of the SR is influenced also by the development on main migration routes into the EU. Given the geographical location, the Western Balkans migration route leading through Slovakia from Hungary continues westward (the Czech Republic, Austria) and to a small extent also northward (Poland). The second significant irregular migration route transferring the SR is the East-European route leading from the East (Ukraine) to the West of the country (Austria, the Czech Republic) and further to the Western European countries.²⁸³

In 2019, the BBFP PFP did not introduce new forms or ways of monitoring or identifying irregular migration routes. In 2019, regarding the monitoring of organized irregular migration and smuggling routes transferring the SR territory a year-to-year decrease was recorded with respect to the number of irregular entries through the external land border (East-European route) and an increase was recorded of detected cases of secondary transit migration from the territory of Hungary (continuation of the Western Balkans route).

²⁸⁰ Source: Statistical Overview of Legal and Irregular Migration in the Slovak Republic in 2019, BBFP PFP, http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicna_a_cudzinecka_policia/rocnky/rok_2019/2019-rocnka-UHCP-SK.pdf (consulted on 10/04/ 2020).

²⁸¹ Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

²⁸² Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

²⁸³ Information provided by the BBFP PFP.



Trafficking in Human Beings

The National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2019 – 2023 including its action plan entered into effect in 2019. Their main objective is to introduce a coordinated system with a view to reduce criminal activity in human trafficking. In 2019, the SR created a *network of information offices for human trafficking victims*, which provide comprehensive services and counselling to human trafficking victims. Construction of special interview rooms for child victims and for other particularly vulnerable victims of crime started. In 2019, the SR simplified access of human trafficking victims including TCNs enrolled in the Provision of support and protection to victims of human trafficking programme and located outside of their place of permanent residence to the services of Social Insurance Agency branch offices and Labour Offices. Several training and preventative activities including national and one European campaign took place in Slovakia in 2019. The SR did not implement any new measures or activities which would focus directly on human trafficking victims from third countries in 2019. The number of identified human trafficking victims coming from countries outside of the EU was very low in the SR, as in the previous years. The SR continued bilateral and multilateral cooperation in combating trafficking in human beings. In 2019, the third evaluation round of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings implementation in the SR was launched.

The Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention was included directly under the auspices of MoI SR state secretary. Statutes of the *Expert Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* were amended in 2019 while a regular working group comprised of MoI SR representatives, non-governmental sector and invited experts was established.

10.1 Statistics and Trends

The collected and available information for 2019 show that the SR is no longer only a country of origin or source of the victims of human trafficking. In 2019 the SR registered in total 53 victims of human trafficking, which is more than in 2018. Besides increase in the number of identified victims of human trafficking, the SR already second time in a row registered increase in the number of victims exploited in the SR as in the destination country.²⁸⁴

The number of identified human trafficking victims coming from countries outside of the EU was very low in the SR, as in the previous years²⁸⁵ (see **table 10** in annexes).²⁸⁶ In 2019, the NUCIM BBFP PF members in cooperation with National Labour Inspectorate and COLSAF continued to perform regular joint checks of business entities to detect illegal work, illegal employment and identify potential victims of human trafficking (see part 3.5).²⁸⁷

In 2019 was in total the criminal proceeding for the trafficking in human beings criminal act²⁸⁸ started in 20 cases, in 14 cases there were charges lodged in total against 36 persons. Proceeding was concluded in case of 51 known persons. 11 persons were convicted (see **table 11** in annexes).²⁸⁹

10.2 Legislation, Policies and International Monitoring

*The National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2019 – 2023*²⁹⁰ entered into effect in 2019. Its main objective is to introduce a coordinated system with a view to reduce criminal activity in human trafficking. The Programme also includes the *Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2019 – 2023* which defines 21 tasks to be fulfilled by individual stakeholders active in the field of prevention, protection, investigation and cooperation. Both of the above-mentioned documents address the fight against trafficking in human beings concerning all the victims, including TCNs.²⁹¹

The SR considered the fulfilment of the previous national plan for 2015 – 2018 with its action plan as very positive. During the three-year period, out of a total of 71 defined tasks, 70 were fulfilled completely and 1 partially.²⁹² In 2019, also the *third evaluation round of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings Implementation* in the SR was launched during the evaluation visit of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) to the Slovak Republic, which took place in Bratislava between 18 and 21 June 2019. The State Secretary of the MoI SR mentioned passing of the act on victims of crime as the most significant progress in the previous period. On the other hand, he also spoke about challenges, such as cooperation with private sector in combating work exploitation, victims' access to health-

care services at one place or the continuous improvement of the national referral mechanism.²⁹³ In the last *Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP)* issued annually by the US Department of State, Slovakia was downgraded to Tier 2 in 2019 after 8 years of meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The reason is mainly a lower number of identified victims and convicted traffickers as well as a low rate of utilization of tools for aiding and compensating victims.²⁹⁴

In 2019, the *Order of the Director General of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to Comply with the Act of the National Council of the SR No. 256/1998 Coll. on Witness Protection and on changes and amendments to certain acts as subsequently amended and with the Regulation of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic No. 144/2018 on the Provision of Support and Protection to Victims of Human Trafficking Programme* was issued, which simplifies access of victims²⁹⁵ including TCNs included in the Provision of Support and Protection to Victims of Human Trafficking Programme to services provided by labour offices. This applies to cases in which the victim is outside of their place of permanent residence and therefore of the local jurisdiction of labour offices. The processing of the agenda concerns job seeker or applicant for the state social benefit, the benefit in material need, special allowance, replacement alimony, the card of a natural person with a severe disability, the card of a natural person with a severe disability with a guide, the parking card for a natural person with disability or cash compensation allowance and is settled at the labour office according to the victim's current residence.²⁹⁶

Based on cooperation with the IC MoI SR, the Social Insurance Agency issued a *Guideline for Employees of Social Insurance Agency Branch Offices* which simplifies access of persons included in the Provision of Support and Protection to Victims of Human Trafficking Programme to services provided by Social Insurance Agency branch offices. This applies to cases in which the victim is outside of their place of permanent residence and therefore of local jurisdiction of labour offices. The processing of the agenda applies to all types of pensions, sickness benefits, accident benefits, unemployment benefits and guarantee insurance benefits and is processed at the branch of the Social Insurance Agency according to the victim's current residence.²⁹⁷

Until 2021 the MoI SR is implementing the national project *Improving access to services for victims of crime and establishing contact points for victims*. The main goal of the project is to increase the involvement of crime-prevention actors in the solution of current society-wide issues resulting from criminal activities in the SR. From the perspective of services provided, the project focused on 5 basic objective areas including human trafficking. The project focuses on the ways to reduce the incidence of socio-pathological behaviours, motives and opportunities for criminal activity. Moreover, it stresses the need for a complex and coordinated solution in the field of crime prevention on the side of state and self-governmental authorities in connection with NGOs as well as educational and scientific institutions. Within the project, publicly accessible and well-known places in the form of stable contact points were created for the provision of services. These contact points shall serve as information and consultation centres for potential and actual victims as well as the space for networking and coordination of assistance systems and institutions (self-governmental authorities, educational authorities, social services providers, employment ser-

284 Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF.

285 Source: Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

286 Information provided by the IC MoI SR.

287 Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF.

288 Pursuant to Section 179 of Act No. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, as amended.

289 Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF and the DFEA MIO.

290 Available at: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/mvstr/obchodovanie_ludmi/2018/dokumenty/NAP_19_23%20CELY%20DOKUMENT.pdf (consulted on 15/04/2020).

291 Information provided by the IC MoI SR and the NUCIM BBFP PF.

292 Source: Report on fulfillment of the tasks stemming from The National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2015 – 2018.

293 Source: <https://www.minv.sk/?aktuality-obchodovanie-s-ludmi&sprava=efektivny-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-nie-je-mozny-bez-spoluprace> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

294 Source: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/slovakia/> (consulted on 15/04/2020).

295 The internal guideline if needed applies to the TCNs as for the purposes of the document, human trafficking victim is a citizen of the SR, EU or a TCN in whom a justified suspicion exists that they became a victim of human trafficking in the territory of the SR or abroad.

296 Information provided by the IC MoI SR.

297 Information provided by the IC MoI SR.

vices providers, healthcare providers, etc.). Awareness raising and prevention activity is currently taking place in the form of various crime prevention activities. The activity of the contact points brought about the creation of a *network of information offices for crime victims* which provide their services to five target groups of victims - the elderly, victims of fraud, victims of hate crimes and extremism, victims of trafficking in human beings and young victims.²⁹⁸ Their main goal is to provide victims of crime with basic information as well as facilitation of services in three areas: social and psychological counselling, legal guidance and support. Experts for individual areas provide services within professional consultations and information provision to individual cases in every regional capital. In this way a potential or actual victim is provided a non-problematic, prompt and expert access to basic information. A regional coordinator and two assistant coordinators are available for the victims of crime in each of the offices. They actively participate in education to improve their professional skills needed to perform this work.²⁹⁹

To secure consistent procedure in the realisation of returns of the victims of human trafficking in cooperation with the diplomatic missions abroad the consular section of the MoFEA SR and Mol SR prepared in 2019 a methodology Procedures of diplomatic representations of the Slovak Republic in realisation of assistance to victims of human trafficking, which is targeted for consular services employees abroad.³⁰⁰

The following changes to the institutional structure of the (inter)departmental cooperation in the field of combating trafficking in human beings occurred in 2019:

- IC Mol SR was included within direct scope of authority of the State Secretary of the Mol SR. The aim was to increase effectiveness of processes related to ensuring assistance and support for victims of trafficking in human beings.
- Statutes of the *Expert Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* were amended in 2019 in cooperation with all members of the expert group³⁰¹. Apart from the Expert Group meetings, a *regular working group including Mol SR representatives, non-governmental sector representatives and other experts relevant invited experts depending on the issues discussed* was established. The new working group meets every three months.³⁰²

10.3 Identification of Victims from Third Countries, Provision of Information and Assistance

Non-governmental organisation Caritas Slovakia realised in 2019 preventive discussion events together with film screening in the reception centre Humenne.³⁰³

In 2019, IC Mol SR provided the MO Mol SR with updated leaflets on self-identification of victims of human trafficking³⁰⁴ in six languages (Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian, Romani, Chinese and English). Moreover, they also supplied posters promoting the fight against trafficking in human

298 Source: <https://prevenciakriminality.sk/p/pomoc-obetiam> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

299 Information provided by Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior.

300 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

301 The group, which is presided over by the State Secretary of the Mol SR, includes also specialised agencies – representatives of BBFP PF and MO Mol SR.

302 Source: <https://www.minv.sk/?aktuality-obchodovanie-s-ludmi&sprava=efektivny-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-nie-je-mozny-bez-spolu-prace> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

303 Source: <https://obchodsludmi.sk/http-charita-sk-osl-o-nas/> (consulted on 29/04/2020).

304 Available at: <http://www.minv.sk/?obchodovanie-s-ludmi-a-slovenska-republika&subor=322803> (consulted on 04/02/2020).

beings with a new visual design as well as the National Helpline 0800 800 818 for victims of trafficking in human beings to NUCIM BBFP PF, which subsequently distributed these posters through BFP directorates to the border crossing points located at the eastern Schengen border with Ukraine.³⁰⁵

Some of the following activities have a general nature or can be applicable/used with respect to all human trafficking victims irrespective of their citizenship:

In September 2019, BBFP PFP launched implementation of the project entitled *Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Application of Instruments for Prevention*³⁰⁶. The main goal of the project is to increase the efficiency of combating criminal activity related to human trafficking and promote as well as increase cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, with partner agencies operating in this field. The project aims to establish appropriate locations for interviewing identified victims of trafficking in human beings and introduce the Instruments and methods to increase effectiveness and promptness of the investigation processes and related activities.³⁰⁷ Further initiatives promoted by the project include language training for the members of the NUCIM BBFP PF and the working coordination meetings with partner agencies in Germany and Serbia for the purpose of information sharing and increasing of effectiveness of cooperation in detecting and investigating of trafficking in human beings criminal cases.³⁰⁸

The Office of Criminal Police of the PFP is implementing the project entitled *Special Interview Rooms for Child Victims and for Other Particularly Vulnerable Victims of Crime*³⁰⁹. The project shall help to reduce the risk of secondary victimisation of crime victims in the criminal proceedings by the provision of a space adjusted for the interviewing of children and/or of other particularly vulnerable victims of crime and by ensuring specialised expert preparation of police force members interviewing children and/or of other particularly vulnerable victims of crime. At the same time, this will encourage the initiative for combating trafficking in human beings and sexual abuse.³¹⁰

The SR alongside the majority of EU MS engaged in the *#YouHaveRights!* preventative campaign which was launched in October 2019 at the occasion of the European Anti-trafficking Day. The objective was to inform the (potential) victims that they are or could become human trafficking victims, where the victims can find assistance, protection and information and that within the EU they have rights (assistance and support, protection, compensation, human and labour rights, time for reflexion as well as the right to residence and reintegration). The campaign included distribution of leaflets, stickers and video at busy places such as airports, border crossing points, diplomatic missions and consulates, shopping centres, petrol stations or public areas as well as through social media. The campaign was organized by the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and funded by the Internal Security Fund (ISF).³¹¹ The SR distributed the campaign through their representative whose function is established at the Council of the SR for Crime Prevention.³¹²

305 Information provided by the IC Mol SR.

306 Project code: SK 2019 ISF SC5/NC4/A1/P2. Project duration: 02/09/2019 - 31/12/2021. Grant allocation: €287,580.00. Funding: Internal Security Fund and the SR State Budget.

307 Source: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/mvsr_a_eu/simons/projekty/police/boj-proti-obchodovaniu.pdf (consulted on 04/02/2020).

308 Information provided by the FAD EPS Mol SR.

309 Project code: SK 2017 ISF SC5/NC4/A1/P1. Project duration: 01/02/2018 - 31/12/2020. Grant allocation: €670,000.00. Funding: Internal Security Fund and the SR State Budget.

310 Source: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/mvsr_a_eu/simons/projekty/police/vysluchove_miestnosti.pdf (consulted on 04/02/2020).

311 Source: <https://eucpn.org/preventhumantrafficking> (consulted on 16/04/2020).

312 Source: <https://prevenciakriminality.sk/clanok/1-obchodovanie-s-ludmi/156-europske-krajiny-spolupracuju-na-preveniaobchodovaniasludmi> (consulted on 16/04/2020).

Strengthening Professional Capacities

In 2019, the *Particularly Vulnerable Victims of Crime – Investigating and Approaching the Victim* course was organized. The following topics were discussed: feelings of particularly vulnerable victim and communication with them, psychological aspects of interrogating particularly vulnerable victims and investigation of crimes against such persons. The course was organized by the Office of Criminal Police of the PFP and PF Academy Bratislava and 10 NUCIM BBFP PF investigators attended.³¹³

Representatives of the consular section of the MoFEA SR conducted a meeting with human trafficking victims care providers within the Provision of support and protection to victims of human trafficking programme, which was focused on identification and care for victims of human trafficking, interviews with the private service personnel of foreign diplomats within missions in the SR and prevention of potential human trafficking victims.³¹⁴

In 2019, IC Mol SR trained the following target groups in the field of human trafficking victim identification:

1. Primary and secondary schools teachers who attended 2-day trainings (especially history and civic education teachers and school coordinators for prevention and counselling);
2. Regional coordinators of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities of the Mol SR (incl. regional coordinators involved in projects aimed at field social workers, community centres and inclusion in pre-school facilities), who have been trained to be the trainers of human trafficking victims identification;
3. Members of consular staff of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the SR for whom regular training was organized as part of the external preparation for working in representation offices of the SR abroad;
4. Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the SR diplomats within the “certification education” programme;
5. Police force members and investigators deputed to identify human trafficking victims within the *Special Interview Rooms for Child Victims and for Other Particularly Vulnerable Victims of Crime project*;
6. Students of the final grades of the Joint School, Secondary School of Applied Arts and Business Academy in Ružomberok.³¹⁵

Secondary Police School in Bratislava in cooperation with the Mol SR implemented the three-year *educational project for Police Force members*³¹⁶. They obtained support for the project from the EU Internal Security Fund (ISF).³¹⁷ In 2019, 300 Police Force members were trained within the scope of the project and an international expert symposium *Training of Police Force Members in the field of Prevention and Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings* was held in Bratislava in October 2019.³¹⁸

313 Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF.

314 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

315 Information provided by the IC Mol SR.

316 Name of the project: Training of Police Force Members in the field of Prevention and Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. Project duration: 01/04/2017 – 31/12/2019. Grant allocation: €155,065.46.

317 Source: <http://www.minv.sk/?vzdelavanie-policajtov-prevencia-obchodovanie-s-ludmi-ISF> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

318 Source: <https://www.minv.sk/?aktuality-obchodovanie-s-ludmi&sprava=prvy-kontakt-s-obetou-obchodovania-s-ludmi-je-ten-najdolezitejsi> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

In 2019, IOM Slovakia published an updated version of the training manual *Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings*³¹⁹. It is aimed at professionals who in their work encounter potential human trafficking victims. With this manual, they are able to present human trafficking, the situation in Slovakia and internationally. It also provides preventative information and practical advice to minimize risks connected to job searches or traveling. It contains specific group activities to increase awareness about the threat of human trafficking and to learn how not to become a victim of human traffickers.³²⁰ Among other things, also this manual helped IOM Slovakia to train 87 experts working with vulnerable groups on the topic of human trafficking prevention in Košice and Piešťany in March 2019.³²¹

10.4 Increasing Public Awareness

The following activities have a general nature or can be applicable/used with respect to all human trafficking victims irrespective of their citizenship:

In October 2019, IC Mol SR launched a nation-wide billboard campaign introducing the new visual and motto *Nezatváraj pred tým oči! (Don't close your eyes to it!)* focused at the prevention of human trafficking and promotion of the National Helpline 0800 800 818 for victims of human trafficking. The campaign was organized to mark the EU Anti-trafficking Day (18 October).³²²

The Slovak Catholic Charity NGO (in cooperation with the Crime Prevention Department of the MIO and British Embassy) launched a field and online campaign in 2019 focused at combating human trafficking *Nenechaj sa zotročiť (Don't let yourself be enslaved!)*. The campaign aims to raise awareness of real threats of modern slavery which often concerns members of marginalized groups living in the poorest Slovak regions.³²³

In 2019, the public but especially pupils and students were able to learn more about human trafficking not only during lectures but also at experience workshops in Košice. In March 2019 a red double-decker which is a symbol of London transport was placed there and interactive presentations for secondary school students were organized in it. The event was organized by the British Embassy in Slovakia in cooperation with the Crime Prevention Department of the MIO SR, National Crime Agency, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, Slovak Catholic Charity and the City of Košice.³²⁴ In May 2019 pretend human trafficking victims were placed inside the shop windows. The project was organized by the Crime Prevention Department of the MIO SR.³²⁵

In 2019, IOM Slovakia *extended the SAFE Travel & Work Abroad mobile application* to include further language versions. The application is available in seven languages – Slovak, English, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, German and French – from Google Play³²⁶ and App Store³²⁷, as well as at the www.safe.iom.sk.³²⁸

319 Available at: <https://iom.sk/sk/publikacie/boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi.html?download=234:ct/iom-cthb-treningovy-manual-2019.pdf> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

320 Source: <https://iom.sk/sk/publikacie/boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi.html> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

321 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

322 Information provided by the IC Mol SR.

323 Source: <https://obchodsludmi.sk/nenechaj-sa-zotrocit/> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

324 Source: <https://prevenciakriminality.sk/clanok/1-obchodovanie-s-ludmi/88-nedajte-sa-lahko-odviest-aj-ked-je-vidina-zarobku-lakava> (consulted on 16/04/2020).

325 Source: <https://prevenciakriminality.sk/clanok/1-obchodovanie-s-ludmi/109-s-netypickym-tovaram-vo-vyklade-sme-zavitali-aj-na-vychodne-slovensko> (consulted on 16/04/2020).

326 Available at: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.beesafe.ios.safe> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

327 Available at: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/safe-travel-work-abroad/id1163826719?mt=8> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

328 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

10.5 International Cooperation

10.5.1 Cooperation With EU Member States

IC Mol SR as a national rapporteur regularly coordinated with national rapporteurs of other Member States using the formalized electronic platform established by the European Commission. The platform also deals with questions concerning trafficking in human beings victims – TCNs or stateless persons. The platform was established pursuant to Art. 19 of the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA.³²⁹

In terms of international police cooperation in 2019, NUCIM BBFP PFP attended multiple operational meetings with UK's police forces when operational information potentially leading to identification of trafficking in human beings was available. In June 2019, NUCIM concluded a *new Agreement on Establishing Joint Investigation Team (JIT) with the UK* which concerns investigation of suspicions of human trafficking and forced labour. Active police cooperation was also ongoing on the level of seconded Police staff members deployed to work abroad – and in particular with the seconded Police staff member posted in London.³³⁰

Intensive cooperation between the PFP with other Member States continued in 2019 through the Bureau for International Police Cooperation of the Police Force Presidium and its national units Europol and Interpol, as well as through direct communication between the NUCIM BBFP PFP and police units in other Member States via Europol's protected communication channel SIENA (Secure Information Exchange Network Application).³³¹

In 2019, NUCIM also participated in the EUROPOL Joint Action Days held in April 2019 on labour exploitation, in July 2019 on sexual exploitation of children and in September 2019 on sexual exploitation as such. During the checks that had been carried out no victims of trafficking in human beings from third countries were identified.³³²

10.5.2 Cooperation With Third Countries

IC Mol SR as a national rapporteur participated in the preparation of the *Meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs*, co-organized by the OSCE and the Council of Europe³³³, held in Bratislava on 22 – 23 October 2019. The event was opened, i.a., by the national coordinator for the SR, State Secretary of the Mol SR. Conference agenda included topics such as child victims of human trafficking, demand reduction and the national referral mechanism. Participation of OSCE countries brought an opportunity to establish better bilateral cooperation.³³⁴

In 2019, the SR did not participate in any joint investigation teams with third countries.³³⁵

³²⁹ Information provided by the IC Mol SR.

³³⁰ Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF.

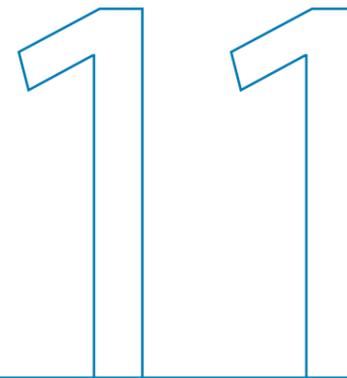
³³¹ Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF.

³³² Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF.

³³³ Source: https://www.mzv.sk/aktuality/detail/-/asset_publisher/lw1ppvnScIPx/content/lukas-parizek-otvori-stretnutie-narodnych-koordinatov-v-boji-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi?p_auth=DRU9FO4T&_101_INSTANCE_lw1ppvnScIPx_redirect=%2F (consulted on 04/02/2020).

³³⁴ Information provided by the IC Mol SR.

³³⁵ Information provided by Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior, BBFP PFP and MO Mol SR.



Returns and Readmissions

In 2019, a slight decrease in the overall number of returns from the territory of the SR was recorded. On the other hand, the number of assisted voluntary returns increased. Regarding forced returns, at the end of 2019, implementation of the *Forced Return - AMIF II* and *Kompas II* project was finished. They will be followed by the *Forced Return - AMIF III* and *Kompas III* projects in the upcoming period. Regarding monitoring of forced returns, the SR increased its participation in Frontex activities. Cooperation in readmission and returns to third countries was strengthened in the case of Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

Within the *Voluntary return and reintegration in the country of origin* project, the IOM launched a new website for interested persons and applicants for assisted voluntary returns. Towards the end of 2019, implementation of the project was finished, and a new project will start from 2020, also implemented by IOM.

11.1 Statistics and Trends

In 2019, a slight decrease of the overall number of forced returns from the territory of the SR was recorded. As compared with 2018, when 430 migrants were forcibly returned³³⁶, in 2019 the SR returned 283 persons: especially nationals of Ukraine, Vietnam and Afghanistan. The most returns were to Ukraine, Serbia and Austria. Voluntary return was issued to 1,313 persons as com-

³³⁶ Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

pared with 1,667 persons in 2018³³⁷ while Ukrainian nationals were the most numerous group. 108 migrants used the option of assisted voluntary return through the IOM. Out of them, 48 participated also in reintegration assistance (see **table 6** in annexes).³³⁸

11.2 Forced Returns

In 2019, the following projects were implemented within the National AMIF Programme and in compliance with specific objective 3 Return in order to provide fast, sustainable and effective return:

- The BBFP PFP project *Forced Return – AMIF II* which was aimed at improving effectiveness of return operations management and ensuring sustainable, safe and dignified return of third-country nationals. The project followed up BBFP PFP national projects implemented in previous periods. In the project, activities contributing to the successful management and carrying out of return operations were being implemented.
- The Slovak Humanitarian Council's project *KOMPAS II* which aimed, above all, to ensure an effective return process. The project ensured comprehensive provision of services to TCNs at the Police Detention Centres for Foreigners in Medvedov and Sečovce. Project activities specifically focused on vulnerable groups.

Both projects were finalized on 31 December 2019. In 2020, they will be followed by the KOMPAS III and Forced Return - AMIF III.³³⁹

Regarding monitoring of forced returns, on 11 – 15 November 2019, Slovak Humanitarian Council employees responsible for forced returns monitoring participated in *Forced Return Monitoring* training in Rome. They were awarded the certificate for monitoring Frontex operations and subsequently included in international database of monitors for Frontex for the SR.^{340 341}

In 2019, TCNs from PDCF Medvedov were temporarily transferred to PDCF Sečovce within the implementation of extraordinary measure. The measure was related to capacity needs connected to the foreigners agenda.³⁴²

Within the cooperation in return operations with third countries, on 11 – 12 July 2019, BBFP PFP representatives participated in the working meeting of representatives of several EU MS and officers working in Vietnam which was held in Poland. The meeting concerned common rules and tried and tested procedures related to the implementation of effective policy of returns to Vietnam.

Regarding cooperation with third countries, the Slovak Republic joined a more effective electronic platform RCMS Sri Lanka (Readmission case management system). From 1 February 2020, respective authorities in Sri Lanka will accept readmission applications from EU MS and Sri Lanka diplomatic missions active in the EU exclusively by means of the RCMS electronic platform.³⁴³

337 Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. (2019): Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2018. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

338 Information provided by the BBFP PFP and the IOM Office in the SR.

339 Information provided by the FAD EPS MoI SR. Both projects duration: 01/01/2020 - 31/12/2021

340 Within the Forced Return Monitoring III (FReM III) project.

341 Information provided by the MO MoI SR.

342 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

343 Information provided by the BBFP PFP.

11.3 Voluntary Returns and Reintegrations

2019 was the last year of implementing the IOM's *Voluntary return and reintegration in the country of origin* project by means of which the SR was performing the assisted voluntary returns. The main objective of the project was to contribute to the implementation of the migration policy of the SR by implementing the AVRR programme providing migrants with the opportunity for a humane and dignified return, including their integration in the labour market and society in their country of origin. At the same time, it provided the SR with a financially effective tool to increase sustainability of target group returns. Within the project, the migrants were provided with comprehensive services which included raising and maintaining awareness of assisted voluntary returns and reintegration in the target group itself and in collaborating institutions, preparing and implementing the returns themselves, and providing reintegration assistance in the countries of origin.³⁴⁴

IOM provided reintegration assistance for obtaining basic living needs and making a living after returning home to 41 individuals and families in 15 countries – Afghanistan, Armenia, Philippines, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia, Thailand, Ukraine and Vietnam. Migrants used the assistance in particular for the provision of temporary housing, reconstruction of houses, setting up small businesses or as a combination of several types of assistance. This project will be continuously followed by the *Voluntary return and reintegration in the country of origin* project from 2020³⁴⁵ which will be implemented by IOM.³⁴⁶

IOM prepared also a new website <https://avr.iom.sk/> aimed to better inform potential clients about the services provided by IOM within the assisted voluntary returns and reintegrations project.³⁴⁷

344 Information provided by the FAD EPS MoI SR.

345 Project duration: 01/01/2020-31/12/2022.

346 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

347 Information provided by the IOM Office in the SR.

12

Migration and Development

In 2019, the SR did not implement any significant systemic measures to promote development influence on migration.³⁴⁸ However, they continued to include migration into development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The Medium-Term Strategy of the Official Development Cooperation 2019 – 2023 which was approved by the Government of the SR in January 2019 includes a several fold increase of official development assistance by 2030. The strategy points to the need for dealing with the causes of migration in the countries of origin and transit countries through eliminating poverty, the creation of job opportunities, and enhancing food safety. In 2019, the development cooperation of the Slovak Republic was guided by the goals, principles and priorities defined in the *Focus of Bilateral Official Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic in 2019*, as well as by the amended *Act on Development Cooperation* and the *Act on Eximbank*. In 2019, the SR participated in helping countries of origin or transit through SlovakAid, EU and UN mechanisms.

12.1 Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance

In the area of migration and development, the SR has long focused mainly on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Due to the migration situation, the SR has since 2016 started to support measures aimed at addressing or mitigating the causes of irregular and/or forced migration to the EU.

³⁴⁸ E.g. activities/measures to integrate migration into development and sectoral policies, to reduce brain drain in countries of origin or cooperation activities with third countries in the field of economic migration (such as labor mobility partnerships and the establishment of Migration and Mobility Resource Centers, cooperation with diasporas and in relation to remittances).

Until 2018 (including), the SR allocated approximately 0.13% of GNI to its official development assistance (ODA). Slovakia's ODA in 2030 could be almost four times higher. This stems from the *Medium-Term Strategy of the Official Development Cooperation 2019 – 2023*³⁴⁹ which was approved by the Government of the SR in January 2019. According to the non-binding financial plan included in the strategy, the share of development assistance in GNI should gradually increase to 0.33 percent. The non-binding financial plan also quantifies the increase of the finances to ODA in order to reach the set level. In the *Report on the results and recommendations resulting from the partnership evaluation of the OECD Development Assistance Committee* adopted by the Slovak government on 3 July 2019 the MoFEA SR realistically proposes to increase ODA SR every year by 10%. Despite this in 2019 no increase in ODA SR spending for the upcoming period was enabled. In the strategy the Slovak Republic more prominently applies the regional approach, which enables the implementation of thematically related development interventions as well as the sharing of experience between partner countries. The strategy points to “the need for dealing with the causes of migration in the countries of origin and transit countries through eliminating poverty, the creation of job opportunities, and enhancing food safety. Therefore, it is scaling up SlovakAid work in the region of East Sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim of offering help to the least developed countries³⁵⁰, stimulating their own development potential, and improving living conditions of the inhabitants”. Kenya, Moldova and Georgia will be the SlovakAid programme countries until 2023. The strategy builds on the three main commitments made at the UN in 2015 (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement) and follows the New European Consensus on Development “Our World, our dignity, our future” from 2017, and at the same time reflects several of the recommendations of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) resulting from the historically first OECD/DAC Evaluation Report for the SR of October 2018. Responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the SR was divided between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Informatization, which is responsible for its national implementation, and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, which is responsible for its implementation in the international environment.³⁵¹

In 2019, the development cooperation of the Slovak Republic was guided by the goals, principles and priorities defined in the *Focus of Bilateral Official Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic in 2019*³⁵², as well as by the amended *Act on Development Cooperation* (namely Article VI)³⁵³ and the *Act on Eximbank*³⁵⁴. The amendments to both Acts³⁵⁵ effective from October 2019 expanded the activities of Eximbank - the export-import bank of the SR - to the area of development cooperation. The need to amend the Act on Development Cooperation resulted from the practice. One of the priorities of the amendment was to support the entrepreneurs to engage in development cooperation by means of providing advantageous export loans. An important aspect was also to include the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation as the authorised body together with the Eximbank SR to use the financial means and other forms of support from EU. To make the development cooperation processes more effective its tools to

³⁴⁹ Available at: https://www.slovakaid.sk/sites/default/files/strednodoba_strategia_rozvojovej_spoluprace_sr_2019-2023.pdf (consulted on 17/04/2020).

³⁵⁰ Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda

³⁵¹ Source: https://www.slovakaid.sk/sites/default/files/strednodoba_strategia_rozvojovej_spoluprace_sr_2019-2023.pdf (consulted on 17/04/2020).

³⁵² Source: https://www.slovakaid.sk/sites/default/files/strednodoba_strategia_rozvojovej_spoluprace_sr_2019-2023.pdf (consulted on 17/04/2020).

³⁵³ Source: <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2015-392> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

³⁵⁴ Source: <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2019-281> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

³⁵⁵ By means of Act No. 281/2019 Coll. which is changing and amending the Act No. 80/1997 Coll. On Export – import bank SR on changes and amendments to some acts.

provide knowledge and experiences from transformation and reform processes were extended. The method to provide financial grant as a mean of development cooperation was also simplified and rationalised. The aim is to gain more consistency and to more easily monitor the provision of financial grants.³⁵⁶

The Platform of Non-Governmental and Development Organizations (PMVRO) also underwent a structural change. In 2019 it changed its name to the *Platform of Development Organizations - Ambrela*. Since 2010, Ambrela has been an official partner of the MoFEA SR in commenting on and preparing key documents related to development policy and development cooperation.³⁵⁷ Their new project *Global Goals and Migration* (SDGs and Migration - Multipliers and Journalists Addressing Decision Makers and Citizens in the EU), as well as the *Faces of Migration* campaign plan to overcome and re-evaluate existing views on migration. The project, which is being implemented by a total of seven partners from across Europe, focuses on migration in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals, through awareness raising - both among decision-makers and the media and the general public. It is funded by the EC Development Education and Awareness Raising Program (DEAR).³⁵⁸

Bilateral Cooperation and Assistance in the SR

Every year the SR provides within the programme of governmental scholarships 48 scholarships to students from developing countries. The programme is under the auspice of the MoESRS SR and scholarships cover the whole period of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd level university education at the public universities in the SR in the Slovak language, including the preparatory year of Slovak language education. From 2018 in territorial division the emphasis is put on countries effected by war conflicts and refugee crisis following the commitment to help these countries as agreed on the so called Obama Summit (Leaders' Summit on Refugees), which took place on 20 September 2016 in New York. In the school year 2019/2020 24 scholarships were assigned to students from these countries (Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Ethiopia).³⁵⁹

Bilateral Cooperation and Assistance of the SR in Third Countries

In 2019, the SR, acting through the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (SAMRS), launched a *call for submission of applications for funding of humanitarian assistance projects*. Humanitarian activities are supported as a reaction to the armed conflicts consequences and to address the causes of irregular and/or forced migration by means of the improvement of the living conditions of citizens, as well as of the perspectives for their assertion in their respective home communities. Specific focus is also on the improvement of living conditions of refugees and internally displaced people, their adverse economic situation and on the forming of conditions allowing for their return provided the situation in their countries of origin or in their original place of residence allows it. Five projects in the overall amount of €999,962.40 were approved within the scope of the call. One project is implemented in South Sudan, three in Lebanon and one in Iraq.³⁶⁰

356 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

357 Source: <https://ambrela.org/co-je-ambrela/> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

358 Source: <https://ambrela.org/kampane/tvare-migracie/> (consulted on 17/04/2020).

359 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

360 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

Within the scope of the call for the region of Eastern Sub-Saharan Africa, ODA funds were used to support the project *Vocational Education for Young South Sudanese Refugees*³⁶¹, implemented since August 2019 by the Slovak Catholic Charity NGO together with the local diocesan charity organisation Caritas Gulu. The project target group includes young refugees who have dropped out of their studies prematurely or, for various reasons, cannot continue their education and who are staying in the Pagiririnya refugee camp in the North of Uganda inhabited by 36 thousand people. The project intends to provide vocational training in popular study programmes like joinery, construction, hairdressing, tailoring, mechanical engineering or hotel/restaurant work. The course is 4 months long, during which time the students reside in the school. Successful candidates receive attendance certificates as well as basic tools and initial capital.³⁶² 40 students took part in the first phase of the project, plans for the following phase envisage enrolment of 120 students. The project budget is €51,118.40.³⁶³

Humanitarian in-kind assistance for Bosnia and Herzegovina: following the request of the Red Cross in the town of Bihac the MoI SR provided on 17 June 2019 in-kind humanitarian assistance for migrants in the total amount of €51,717.46. Following the written request of the Red Cross Hadzici from Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed to the Slovak Embassy in Sarajevo the MoI SR prepared in December 2019 another assistance from its reserves in the amount of €20,998.56.³⁶⁴

Humanitarian in-kind assistance for Lebanon: International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Lebanon and UNHCR informed the Embassy of the SR in Beirut about the need to provide in-kind humanitarian assistance to refugees in Lebanon. The Slovak assistance was in particular directed to Akkar province in north Lebanon, where most of the informal tent refugee camps are located and where the poverty is the biggest. On 29 March 2019 the MoI SR prepared from its reserves in-kind humanitarian assistance in total amount of €50,020.75.³⁶⁵

Assistance Through EU and V4 Mechanisms

In 2019, the SR continued to *actively contribute into the EU trust funds* established in response to the refugee crisis in 2015. Pursuant to the payment schedule, the SR contributed €1.69 mil. to FRIT (EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey). At the same time, the SR was involved in active implementation of the projects financed from said funds.³⁶⁶

The SR was actively involved in the joint EU programming focusing on stabilization and empowerment of local communities and on irregular and/or forced migration prevention in 2019. In 2019, SAMRS signed a contract with the Self-Help Africa organization acting as grant manager for one of the AgriFI programme components. The programme aims to support productivity, adaptation and integration of small farmers in the Kenyan labour market. The contract concerns *cooperation during the period of years 2018 – 2022 in the sector of agriculture by means of participation in the AgriFi programme*, namely its KILIMO-VC component. This component aims to improve the integration of small farmers and shepherds' value chain by providing investment incentives in the agro-food sector. Contribution of the SR into this component in 2019 amounted to the sum of €625,000.³⁶⁷

361 Project code: SAMRS/2019/SSA/1/4. Project duration: 01/08/2019 – 15/11/2020.

362 Source: <https://charita.sk/rozvojova-spolupraca/doverujem-bohu-ze-ma-pre-nas-lepsiu-buducnost/> (consulted on 03/02/2020).

363 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

364 Information provided by the Department of Crisis Management of the MoI SR.

365 Information provided by the Department of Crisis Management of the MoI SR.

366 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

367 Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

Implementation of the common V4 countries project in Kenya in the coastal areas of Kilifi, Kwale and Lamu continued in 2019. The value of the project is €1.9 million and the period of implementation is 4 years (2017 – 2021). The project is financed via EUTF – EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation is the main coordinator of the initiative. The main aim of the project is to support the development of coastal provinces by means of jobs creation and increase of food security. The specific goal is to improve the socio-economic situation of 15 thousand small farmers and create new jobs using Bio and Fair Trade production of cashew nuts and sesame.³⁶⁸

During the Slovak presidency of the V4 in 2019, a *joint contribution of the V4 countries and Germany to the project of assisting Morocco* in managing migration was announced. Its aim is to contribute to reducing migratory flows in the area and to combat the causes of irregular migration.³⁶⁹ The project initiative consists of two basic pillars - migration and development. A key activity under the migration pillar is to build the capacity of the Moroccan Coast Guard to control the coastal border. The development pillar is aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions for young people in the country, with an emphasis on increasing their employment, building economic infrastructure and supporting entrepreneurship. The project will be implemented in 2020-2021 with funding of € 30 million.³⁷⁰

12.2 Research

Migration and development in sending and transit countries is one of the topics in the *Náš spoločný domov: Migrácia a rozvoj na Slovensku (Our Common Home: Migration and Development in Slovakia)* publication published in May 2019 by the Slovak Catholic Charity NGO. The publication also identifies the main obstacles preventing migrants in developing both Slovakia and their countries of origin. It is a part of a three-year project entitled *MIND – Migration. Interconnectedness. Development (Migrácia. Prepojenosť. Rozvoj)* funded by the European Commission (DG DEVCO). The aim of the project is to increase the awareness of the public about the relationship between sustainable development, migration and the task of the EU in development cooperation.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ Information provided by the MoFEA SR.

³⁶⁹ Source: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2020/51> (consulted on 13/02/2020).

³⁷⁰ Information provided by the MO MoI SR and the MoFEA SR.

³⁷¹ Source: [https://www.charita.sk/cojedomov/N%C3%A1%20spol%C4%8Dn%C3%BD%20domov%20\(SK\).pdf](https://www.charita.sk/cojedomov/N%C3%A1%20spol%C4%8Dn%C3%BD%20domov%20(SK).pdf) (consulted on 17/04/2020).

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Annex: National Statistics

The Annex contains selected migration and international protection statistics for 2019 which are not collected at EU level through Eurostat³⁷² or Frontex agency³⁷³.

National statistics for Slovakia are available mainly in the annual statistical overviews of BBFP PFP³⁷⁴ (legal and irregular migration, returns), annual statistical reports of MO Mol SR³⁷⁵ (international protection including UAMs applying for asylum), statistics of COLSAF³⁷⁶ (employment of foreigners, UAMs not applying for asylum), MoFEA SR³⁷⁷ (visa) and SO SR³⁷⁸ (demographic data and international migration). Summary of the basic statistical data on migration in Slovakia for a calendar year from Eurostat provides the annual EMN Country Factsheet³⁷⁹ on developments in the area of migration and international protection or the website of the IOM Office in the SR³⁸⁰.

Table 1: First residence permits issued by the Slovak Republic to third-country nationals in 2019 by reason³⁸¹ and gender

Gender	Total	Reason of Residence			
		Family formation and reunification (family reasons)	Education and study	Remunerated activities	Other ³⁸²
Total	28 911	3 559	2 955	20 890	1 507
Male	:	:	:	:	:
Female	:	:	:	:	:

Source: BBFP PFP. Note: Data are processed in a way and in line with subdivision as provided to Eurostat according to Regulation (EC) No. 862/2007 as well as in line with current Eurostat instructions. This data can, however, slightly differ from official data for 2019 to be processed and validated in May 2020 and subsequently provided to Eurostat.

372 Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics (consulted on 06/04/2020).

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376 Available at: http://www.upsvar.sk/statistiky/zamestnavanie-cudzincov-statistiky.html?page_id=10803 (consulted on 06/04/2020).

377 Statistics on the numbers of visas issued are available upon request only.

378 Available at: https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/themes/demography/population/news/lut/p/b1/jdDRColwFABgZ-kF3HFbc7ucRnMl5jTLdh-MWEVJqUBS9fRbeZp27A9_wznlogLZprXx_JWtU15fu-WbY2nue-7Eri_wqC9OHXnxqi5Szuw6UCgZEi9CIBHagxahnkqDCEgyX95-DISfuVnyFa72nnsawc-cAEKx4JQzoCxsSBojexgRe71YJoIWAqgqkm6mJeBphnEcOg2A8Abg-GnvABA1fGYVsfUHY9oUudF89MV8lRj5AKltt/dl4/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/ (consulted on 06/04/2020).

379 Available at: <https://emn.sk/sk/na-stiahnutie-emn/publikacie-emn/itemlist/category/5-vyrocné-spravy-emn> (consulted on 06/04/2020).

380 Available at: <http://www.iom.sk/sk/migracia/migracia-na-slovensku> (consulted on 06/04/2020).

381 Reasons for issuing residence are in accordance with the respective EU legislation (Commission Regulation (EU) No. 216/2010 of 15 March 2010 implementing Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection, as regards the definitions of categories of the reasons for the residence permits) and are divided into four categories: 1. Family formation and reunification, 2. Education and study, 3. Remunerated activities, and 4. Other reasons. National types of and reasons for residence permits are divided into these four categories.

382 According to Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on the Residence of Foreigners, the category "Other reasons" includes the following types of residence which do not fall under any of the previous categories:

1. temporary residence – special activity – providing healthcare and accompanying a TCN who is provided healthcare; 2. temporary residence – execution of duties by civilian units of armed forces; 3. temporary residence – a Slovak citizen living abroad (in case the foreigner claims the category "Other reasons"); 4. permanent residence for an indefinite period of time according to Art. 46 par. 2 (if needed due to providing protection and assistance to a witness under a special regulation; or to a stateless person for reasons worth considering; or to an adult person with granted tolerated stay for a minimum period of three years during which studied at school within the territory of the SR); 5. tolerated stay – if there is an obstacle to administrative expulsion or in case the departure is not possible and detention is not reasonable [§ 58 par. 1 a) and b)], in case of a minor found on the territory of the Slovak Republic or victim of human trafficking who at least 18 years of age [§ 58 par. 2 a) and c)], in case of an illegally employed person under especially exploitative conditions or in case of an illegally employed minor whose presence in the territory of the Slovak Republic is inevitable for the purposes of criminal proceeding [§ 58 par. 3], in case of a period of state care provision, period of quarantine, period for assessing the application for tolerated stay, period of imprisonment or incarceration, or a maximum 90-day reflection period for a human trafficking victim (with possibility of extension by another 30 days) [§ 58 par. 4 a) till d)]; 6. subsidiary protection and 7. asylum.

Table 2: Administrative fees of applications for residence permits in the SR in 2019 by type, purpose and length of the residence

Type and purpose of residence	Maximum length of the residence (in months)	Cost of the permit (in EUR)*		
		Cost of the permit at the police department	Cost of the permit at the Slovak diplomatic mission	Fee for the issuance of the residence card**
Temporary residence for the purpose of family reunification (Directive 2003/86)	60	132.50 EUR	135 EUR	4.50 EUR
Temporary residence for the purpose of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (Directive 2004/114)	72	0 EUR (for the purpose of studies)	0 EUR (for the purpose of studies)	4.50 EUR (for the purpose of studies)
	24	99.50 EUR (for the purpose of special activity - unremunerated training or voluntary service)	100 EUR (for the purpose of special activity - unremunerated training or voluntary service)	4.50 EUR (for the purpose of special activity - unremunerated training or voluntary service)
Long-term residence (Directive 2003/119)	Indefinite period	165.50 EUR	-	4.50 EUR
Temporary residence for the purpose of scientific research (Directive 2005/71)	24	0 EUR	0 EUR	4.50 EUR
Temporary residence for the purpose of highly qualified employment (EU Blue Card) (Directive 2009/50)	36	165.50 EUR	170 EUR	4.50 EUR
Temporary residence for the purpose of seasonal employment (Directive 2014/36)	6 (180 days)	33 EUR	35 EUR	4.50 EUR

Type and purpose of residence	Maximum length of the residence (in months)	Cost of the permit (in EUR)*		
		Cost of the permit at the police department	Cost of the permit at the Slovak diplomatic mission	Fee for the issuance of the residence card ^{**}
Temporary residence for the purpose of intra-corporate transfer (Directive 2014/66)	36	-	170 EUR ^{***}	4.50 EUR ^{***}
Tolerated stay for victims of human trafficking (Directive 2004/81)	6 (180 days)	0 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR
Temporary residence for the purpose of employment – single permit to reside and work (Directive 2011/98)	60	165.50 EUR	170 EUR	4.50 EUR
Other national permits	-	-	-	-

Source: BBFP PFP.

* The fees listed in the table are based on the Act No. 145/1995 Coll. on Administrative Fees.

^{**} Residence card cost is paid in all above-mentioned applications for residence irrespective of place of their submission (FPD PF or diplomatic mission of the Slovak Republic). The cost is in both cases paid at the FPD PF.^{***} Correction: In the EMN Annual report for 2015 – 2018 it was incorrectly stated that it is not possible to file the application at the Slovak diplomatic mission abroad.**Table 3: Visas issued by the Slovak Republic to third-country nationals in 2019 by type and previous residence**

Visa	Total	(Schengen) short stay visas (A and C and LTV types of visa)		National visas (D type of visa)*	
		In third country	In other EU MS	In third country	In other EU MS
		previous residence			
Total	29 148*	21 843	1 665	5 605	35

Source: MoFEA SR (based on the Microcomp data from the NVIS system).

* Out of the total number, MoI SR issued 50 visas.

Note: Number of visas issued may differ from data contained in the BBFP PFP's publication Statistical Overview of Regular and Irregular Migration in the Slovak Republic in 2019. At the time of publishing of the overview, the number of processed visas in the system did not have to mirror the printed, i.e. issued visas.

Explanations: A type of visa – airport transit visa

C type of visa – tourist visa

D type of visa – national visa

LTV visa – visa with limited territorial validity

Table 4: Smuggled persons in the SR – selected indicators in 2019³⁸³

Indicator	Total	Male	Female
Third-country nationals identified as smuggled persons	764/113*	:	:
Reflection periods provided to smuggled persons (e.g. in accordance with Directive 2004/81/EC if implemented for smuggled persons)	-	-	-
Residence permits granted to smuggled persons (e.g. in accordance with Directive 2004/81/EC if implemented for smuggled persons)	-	-	-

Source: BBFP PFP.

* 764 irregular migrants were identified in investigation files in 2019, while the acts happened also in previous years. From the stated number, 113 irregular migrants were arrested with smugglers in 2019.

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

(-) Not implemented for smuggled persons in the Slovak Republic.

³⁸³ According to the Art. 355 and Art. 356 of the Act No. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, smuggling is defined as follows:

§ 355: Any person who organises illegal crossing of the state border of the SR, or a transfer through its territory, for a person who is neither a citizen of the SR nor a person with permanent residence in the territory of the SR, or who enables such activity or aids and abets it with the intention of obtaining financial or other material benefit.

§ 356: Any person who, with the intention of obtaining financial or other material benefit for himself or another either directly or indirectly, enables or helps a person, who is neither a citizen of the SR or of another EU MS or a citizen of a contracting state of the Agreement on the EEA nor a person with permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic, to stay or get an illegal job in the territory of the SR or of other EU MS or a contracting state of the Agreement on the EEA, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of two to eight years.

Table 5: Smugglers in the SR – selected indicators in 2019

Indicator	Smugglers	
	Arrested as suspects / criminally prosecuted	Convicted
Total	120*/90**	55
Convicted under Art. 355 of new Criminal Code No. 300/2005 Coll.	–	20
Convicted under Art. 356 of new Criminal Code No. 300/2005 Coll.	–	34
Convicted under Art. 171a of old Criminal Code No. 140/1961 Coll. (by nature of criminal offence)	–	1

Source: BBFP PFP, General Prosecutor's Office of the SR and Ministry of Justice of the SR (convicted)

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

**The number of persons indicted on charges of migrant smuggling (out of the total number). 34 persons were charged with assisting in illegal entry and 56 persons were charged with assisting with illegal stay

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned from the SR in 2019 by type, nationality and country of return

Indicator	Returned as part of forced return measures*				Returned voluntarily (incl. AVR)**				Returned voluntarily within the AVR Programme				Reintegrated within AVR			
	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 2	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 7	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 7***	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 4***
Total	283	249	34		1 313	1 010	303		108	75	33		48	32	16	
Top five groups – of persons by nationality	1. Ukraine (89) 2. Vietnam (31) 3. Afghanistan (20) 4. Sri Lanka (20) 5. Serbia (19)				1. Ukraine (1 199) 2. Serbia (31) 3. Iran (16) 4. Moldova (14) 5. Russia (11)				1. Serbia (30) 2. Ukraine (25) 3. Iran (15) 4. Iraq (9) 5. Turkey (5)				1. Serbia (13) 2. Ukraine (10) 3. Iraq (6) 4. Iran (4) 5. Vietnam (3)			
Top five countries of return	1. Ukraine (232) 2. Serbia (16) 3. Austria (12) 4. Hungary (4) 5. Georgia (3)				1. Ukraine (1 220) 2. Serbia (31) 3. Iran (13) 4. Iraq (9) 5. Turkey (7)				1. Serbia (30) 2. Ukraine (25) 3. Iran (15) 4. Iraq (9) 5. Turkey (5)				1. Serbia (13) 2. Ukraine (10) 3. Iraq (6) 4. Iran (4) 5. Vietnam (3)			

Source: BBFP PFP³⁸⁴ and IOM Office in the SR³⁸⁵.

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

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

*** There was 1 unaccompanied minor among minors

Explanations: AVR – assisted voluntary returns

F – female

M – male

Min – minor

384 BBFP PFP provided return statistics based on data provided to Eurostat for 2019. BBFP PFP collected statistical data in compliance with the Art. 7.1. of the Regulation No. 862/2007 on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection and with current Eurostat technical instructions (Technical Guidelines for the Data Collection – Enforcement of Immigration Legislation EIL Statistics).

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

Table 7: Third-country nationals relocated to the SR in 2019 by gender, country of origin and EU Member State

Indicator	Total	Male	Female	Minor	Country of origin of relocated TCNs	Relocations made from EU Member State(s)
Total	0	0	0	0	–	–

Source: MO Mol SR.

Table 8: Third-country nationals resettled to the Slovak Republic in 2019 by original hosting country and gender

Original hosting country/ gender	Total	Male	Female	Original hosting country
Total	0	0	0	–

Source: MO Mol SR.

Note: SR carries out through its territory resettlement activities to other third countries (see part 4.4). Programme Humanitarian transfer of refugees through the territory of the SR is based on trilateral agreement between the Slovak Government, UNHCR and IOM.

Table 9: Unaccompanied minors in the Slovak Republic in 2019 by legal status and gender

Indicator	Total	Male	Female
Unaccompanied minors not applying for asylum	52	48	4
Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum	30	29	1
Total	82	77	5

Source: MO Mol SR and COLSAF.

Table 10: Human trafficking victims from third countries in the SR – selected indicators in 2019

Indicator	Total	Male	Female
TCNs presumed to be victims of trafficking in human beings* (identified victims)³⁸⁶	Confidential data	Confidential data	Confidential data
Age	18 years of age or more	Confidential data	Confidential data
	Under 18 years of age	Confidential data	Confidential data
Form of exploitation ³⁸⁷	Sexual exploitation	Confidential data	Confidential data
	Labour exploitation	Confidential data	Confidential data
	Other	Confidential data	Confidential data
Most frequent citizenship of trafficked persons		Confidential data	Confidential data
TCNs identified as victims of trafficking in human beings (presumed victims)³⁸⁸	0	0	0
Age	18 years of age or more	0	0
	Under 18 years of age	0	0
Form of exploitation ³⁸⁹	Sexual exploitation	0	0
	Labour exploitation	0	0
	Other	0	0
Most frequent citizenship of trafficked persons		0	0

³⁸⁶ Identified victims are those who have been formally identified by the relevant authority (i.e. the national person/body authorised to formally identify victims). Slovak National Referral Mechanism states that only the law enforcement bodies are authorised to formally identify a victim of human trafficking in the Slovak Republic.

³⁸⁷ More than one form of exploitation may be associated with each victim, therefore the statistics presented in this section may not necessarily agree with the overall totals entered above.

³⁸⁸ Presumed victims are persons who fulfil the definition of victim of trafficking in human being, as outlined in Directive 2011/36/EU, but whom have not been formally identified by the relevant authorities (i.e. the national person/body authorised to formally identify victims).

³⁸⁹ More than one form of exploitation may be associated with each victim, therefore the statistics presented in this section may not necessarily agree with the overall totals entered above.

Reflection periods granted*	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Directive 2004/81/EC	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Other	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Residence permits requested*	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Directive 2004/81/EC	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Other (e.g. humanitarian grounds etc.)	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Residence permits granted*	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Directive 2004/81/EC	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
Other (e.g. humanitarian grounds etc.)	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data

Source: BBFP PFP and Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the Mol SR.

* Since the data on the identified victims of human trafficking is low we do not provide concrete numbers in order to protect the victims.

Table 11: Traffickers of human beings in the SR – selected indicators in 2019

Indicator	Traffickers of human beings	
	Arrested as suspects/prosecuted in custody	Convicted
Total	36/51*	11**

Sources: BBFP PFP, General Prosecutor's Office of the SR and Ministry of Justice of the SR.

* 36 persons are charged for the trafficking in human beings criminal act according to the § 179 of the Criminal Code; while in 2019 in case of 51 known persons the criminal proceeding was concluded

** According to the § 179 of the Criminal Code No. 300/2005 Coll.



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