

Report

# SLOVAKIA

## Migration and demographic patterns in Central-Eastern Europe



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### **Migration and demographic patterns in Central-Eastern Europe** Report

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## Abstract

This report has been prepared as a part of the Horizon 2020 FUME project – Future Migration Scenarios for Europe (870649) and its deliverable “D.6.2. Report on migration and demographic patterns in the EU CEE countries and potential source countries”. Its aim is to analyse the migration profile of the Slovak Republic and to assess the country’s migration potential in order to provide material for fine-tuning of the FUME migration projection model. Some of the variables considered in this analysis are: migrants’ gender, education attainment, employment, formal status and country of origin. Moreover, the report is a first step in the analytical exercise which aims to determine migration movement potential both from and to the Slovak Republic.

Slovakia, similarly to other Visegrad countries, is a relatively new immigration country. Some of the key moments in its recent migration history are: the accession to the European Union in 2004, joining the Schengen Area in 2007 and joining the Eurozone in 2009, as the only country of the region. The report briefly presents the historical context of migrations to and from the Slovak Republic in order to facilitate understanding of the country’s current migration profile. It both sketches the demographic structure of the population of migrants residing in Slovakia and refers to the issues around the Slovak diaspora globally. Moreover, the presented analysis provides background information concerning particular institutions and laws that are crucial for migration policy of the country.

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# 1. Introduction

## The structure of the report

In the introductory part this report provides the historical background for the migration movement in the Slovak context. Then, in the following part it delves into the characteristics of the Slovak diaspora globally. In the third part it analyses the migration stock and migration flows both to and from the Slovak Republic. Finally, in the fourth part, it critically assesses the Slovak migration flow data presented by Abel and Cohen (2019) with the data gathered from the local sources.

## The historical background

The recent history of the independent Slovak Republic commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1993, when Czechoslovakia, in result of the so-called Velvet Revolution, dissolved into two, newly established states. Since then, both the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic maintain their firm places on the political map of the old continent. Accordingly, the following analysis focuses mainly on the data from the last 28 years. Nevertheless, in order to better ground this study in the context of the longer history of migration processes in the region, the authors decided it is necessary to also briefly sketch migration movements to and from the Slovak Republic since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Broadly speaking, the longer history of migrations from Slovakia is grounded in the context of migration movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between 1800 and 1925, more than 48 million people left the industrializing countries of Europe searching for a new life in America and Oceania. The United States of America was a key migration destination, however also Argentina, Brazil, Australia and Canada attracted a significant number of Europeans. Initially the key sending countries had been Britain, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden (Massey, 1988). However, soon after this initial period also nationals of other European states started to contribute to the global migration landscape in greater numbers. Among them were also Slovaks who, until the first World War, have been residing on the administrative territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The larger groups of migrants, including the Slovak nationals, started to migrate to the United States of America since 1880s. The flow of emigrants leaving the Austro-Hungarian Empire and other parts of the region for the USA (the so-called "new immigration") was so significant that already in a period of 1890 – 1900 it outweighed migration from the old countries of emigration (Bahna 2011: 53-54). According to Bielík and Rákoš, before the end of the WWI, 97 to 99% of all emigrants from Slovakia moved to America (<Bielík and Rákoš 1969> quoted in Bahna 2011: 54). The migration flow from the Austria-Hungary peaked in 1907, when 209 169 people left the country, 42 041 of whom were Slovaks. Since 1899, after the nationality had started to be identified in the the US immigration statistics, a steady inflow of Slovaks to the country has been observed. Over the period between 1900 and 1914 from 5 to over 40 thousand Slovaks have been emigrating to the USA every year (Bahna 2011: 56).



The First World War temporarily stopped Slovak migration movement, as the post-war restrictions on immigration from Czechoslovakia significantly curbed the number of Slovaks migrating to the United States. Migration movement of Slovaks has been therefore redirected to the other parts of the world, mostly other European countries. Europe, however, was not the only destination for Slovak emigrants. For example, in the period 1926 – 1930, a great number of them emigrated to Canada. In 1929, however, the global economic crisis (known commonly as the Great Depression) had commenced, and then did not end until the beginning of the WWII. In consequence, the new restrictions on migration have been introduced by the Canadian government and the short period when the direction of the Slovak migration movement diverted from the USA to Canada came to an end (Jakešová 1982 quoted in Bahna 2011: 58). Concluding the part of the analysis concerning the pre-war period, the authors wanted also to note that during the interbellum the number of Czechs who migrated to Slovakia (e.g. in 1930 over 121 thousand - primarily a reflection of the filling of jobs in the new state and public service by Czech workers) topped the number of Slovaks who moved to Czechia (in 1930 over 44 thousand). This internal migratory movements changed after 1945. Since then Slovaks have been migrating to Czechia more frequently than Czechs to Slovakia (Bahna 2011: 29).

After the Second World War Czechoslovakia had gotten into the Soviet sphere of influence and the external migration was curbed. The two political events which caused significant outflow of citizens from Czechoslovakia (Slovaks among them) were the communist coup of 1948 and the occupation of the country by the Soviet bloc troops in 1968. Speaking of the first event, according to some sources, during the most intensive emigration period of 1948 - 1950 over 23 thousand citizens fled the country. Speaking of the latter, on the other hand, in the result of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968, until the end of 1969 over 100 thousand Czechoslovak citizens fled the country (Rátka 2006 quoted in Bahna 2011: 58). The most frequent emigration destination for the fugitives were Switzerland, Canada, Austria and Germany. According to the experts, however, it were Czechs, not Slovaks, who contributed to this migration outflow more numerously. Presumably, this disparity was linked to the relatively lesser involvement of Slovaks in the events of the Prague Spring, their relatively limited access to information and personal contacts, as well as less expanded social networks, all of which were crucial for emigres leaving the country during this period.

Last but not least, it is important to note that after the WWII internal migration of Slovaks within the territory of Czechoslovakia significantly increased. The largest migration movement from Slovakia to Czechia has been noted in the 1950s. One of its key causes was the expulsion of the German population from the Sudetenland that then had to be replaced by Czechs and Slovaks. In the 1960s, relocation from Slovakia remained at the level of 20,000 people a year, whereas from the mid-1970s onwards at the level of around 10,000 a year (Bahna 2011: 70).

As already has been pointed out, migration movement from the Slovak to Czech regions prevailed over movement in the reverse direction during the post WW2 period. That data from 1991 and from 2001 show that over 100 thousand Slovaks decided to return to Slovakia during the 1990s. That, supposedly, is linked with the change of the political and economic system that had occurred with disintegration of the socialist block (Bahna 2011: 69). Needless to say, migration profiles of the central European countries have been visibly shaped by the post-war, collective history of the region. According to Sándor Gallai:

The Visegrad countries share some marked similarities which differentiate them from most West European states. In the Communist era these countries were closed to large-scale immigration and the possibility of emigrating to the West was also limited and mostly illegal. The freedom of movement was neither codified, nor respected. Therefore, compared to most West European societies, the countries in this region had a rather limited experience with immigration and each of them demonstrated a relatively high level of both ethnic and cultural homogeneity (Gallai 2017: 228).

The recent two decades brought a major change in migration profile of the Slovak Republic, as the Republic 'has been transforming gradually from a country of emigration to a country of transit, and [now] is slowly becoming a country of destination (Bolečekova & Olejarova 2017: 192)'. This, substantial shift is illustrated by the fact that while Slovakia still 'has one of the lowest proportions of migrants in the population among the EU Member States, [...] since its EU accession in May 2004, [the country] has experienced the second largest increase of migrant population among the European countries, especially in the Bratislava region (Drbohlav & Jaroszewicz 2016: 130)'.





Picture: Yuriy Chemerys/Unsplash.com

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## 2. Methodology, Definitions and Sources

### 2.1 Methodology and sources

The following report is based on the desk research and critical analysis of the secondary data. The materials analysed for its purposes had been gathered between April and September 2020. The main sources of information for this assessment were public, statistical databases, both local and international. The authors have been extensively utilising both the data provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic as well as the Eurostat's figures. The Slovak Statistical Office's 'source publications' on the population change in the Slovak Republic provide disaggregated data on migration flows in the Slovak context year to year. Another important source of data for this analysis are the annual reports: 'Annual Statistical Overviews of Legal and Illegal Migration in the Slovak Republic' published by the 'Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Presidium of the Police Force' under Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereafter: Mol). Those publications include the data on different forms of residence legalisation available to the foreigners in the Slovak Republic. Moreover, in order to present a complex picture of immigrant residents' population in Slovakia the authors have been gathering the information from the reports of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Finally, for the part of the analysis concerning the Slovak diaspora we incorporated into the analysis the estimations provided by the Office for the Slovaks Living Abroad. Last but not least, the final part of the report refers to the estimations on the immigrant flows shared by Abel & Cohen (2019).

Before proceeding to the analysis of the collected data it is necessary to shed light on the definitions of the key terms introduced further. The authors are going to explain how those, particular expressions are understood by the public Slovak institutions operating in the area of migration and local migration policy.

Firstly, the authors of this report are going to introduce the definitions concerning the Slovaks living in the foreign countries, in other words, the Slovak diaspora. Secondly, the light will be shed on those terms that concern the migration flows to the Slovak Republic and the stock of immigrants living in the territory of the country. Finally, the types of residence permits available to foreigners, details of the registration for the EU nationals and visas for foreigners are going to be listed and characterised.

### 2.2 The Slovak diaspora – terms and definitions

Talking about the Slovak diaspora, it is necessary to specify who Slovaks actually acknowledge as their fellow nationals abroad, thus what they understand through the term 'diaspora'. According to Svetluša Surova, the contemporary Slovak law, differently than in the past, equates the terms: 'Slovak Abroad', 'Foreign Slovak', 'Expatriate Slovak' and 'Slovak living abroad'. Moreover, the law of the Slovak Republic equates Slovak nationals living abroad and persons of Slovak origins who do not hold the country's citizenship (Surova 2016: 21). That applies to the, broadly speaking, cultural and symbolic dimension of nationhood:

By 1999, the Slovak parliament had already recognized Slovak co-ethnics living abroad as an integral part of the Slovak nation and as spiritual holders of Slovak statehood (Declaration of NCSR on foreign Slovaks, 1999). Notions of the Slovak nation are predominantly based in ethnicity in other Slovak documents such as the constitution and the language law. The constitution clearly separates the Slovak nation from others nations which form national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia. Secondly, the overall spirit of the preamble indicates that the Slovak nation is defined in ethnic terms and covers ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and historical links between the members of this nation. Thirdly, the conception of the Slovak language in the preamble of the language law also supports an ethnic understanding of the Slovak nation (Ibidem: 22).

The author also puts forward the conceptualisation of the Slovak citizenship utilised by the state institutions of the Slovak Republic:

Citizens are individuals who hold citizenship and they may belong to the Slovak nation or to other nationalities and ethnic groups. Slovak citizenship can be obtained in 3 ways; through birth, by adoption, or it may be granted. Acquisition of Slovak citizenship takes place usually by birth; it refers mainly to *jus sanguini* and not to unconditional *jus soli*. This is another argument — Slovak citizenship is not purely civic but a mixture of both civic and ethnic principles (Ibidem).

For better understanding of the Slovak policy concerning the country's diaspora it is also important to introduce the concept of a 'national awareness' as understood by the Slovak public institutions. What is important in this regard are the implications of this understanding for the Slovak co-ethnic non-citizens:

While Slovak citizens living abroad do not have to maintain Slovak awareness, Slovak co-ethnic non-citizens have to both have Slovak ethnicity and preserve Slovak awareness. They must have direct ancestors, such as parents, grandparents or great grandparents, with Slovak ethnicity. For the purpose of the law, 'national awareness' is understood as an active declaration that the person belongs to the Slovak nation and adheres to the values represented by the Slovak language, Slovak cultural heritage, and traditions. Slovak co-ethnic non-citizens living abroad should be able to speak the Slovak language and moreover should publicly perform their national awareness. If an individual does not have any evidence of public activities exemplifying their national awareness, then the formal Slovak organisation or institution in their country of residence must write a testimony as evidence of the person's national awareness (Ibidem: 23).

The status of 'the Slovak Living Abroad' (hereafter: SLA) grants its holder some benefits and rights, although, of course, those entitlements do not exactly match those held by Slovak citizens. For example, the SLA holders enjoy a free access to the Slovak labour market (they do not need employment permits to work and can start businesses residing in Slovakia on the basis of temporary residence permits), they benefit from some social protections from the Slovak state, and they are granted the set of entitlements in the field of education, similar to the ones granted to the citizens (for example with regard to the accommodation and meals in schools). Moreover, the SLA can apply for a Slovak citizenship after three years of uninterrupted residency in the country, which is a shorter period than this that applies to the foreigners not holding the SLA certificate (Ibidem: 26).

The Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí ('Office for Slovaks Living Abroad', hereafter: USZZ) defines the 'Slovak living abroad' accordingly to the art. 1, section 2 of the Act number 474. of 23 September 2005 on the Slovaks Living Abroad and Amendments and Additions to Certain Laws' as a: 'person, who is not permanently resident in the territory of the Slovak Republic and either is a citizen of the Slovak Republic or is not, but if not, then he/she can be considered the Slovak living abroad only provided he/she maintains his/her national awareness, and he/she or his/her direct ancestor is of Slovak ethnic origin (The National Council of the Slovak Republic 2005)'. The 'national awareness', on the other hand, is understood in the following way: 'the active demonstrations of being part of the Slovak nation and recognition of values representing the Slovak language, Slovak cultural heritage and traditions (The National Council of the Slovak Republic 2005)'. According to this broad definition, the Slovak emigrants who moved abroad over the period of the last 200 years and their descendants are still recognised as Slovaks (The National Council of the Slovak Republic 2005). This is, of course, not in line with the definition of a nationality utilised in censuses.

Speaking of the data on the SLA, according to the USZZ, 2092 SLA certificates have been granted in 2019. In a longitudinal perspective, the yearly numbers of the grantings of the SLA certificates had remained at a relatively stable level for the last 3 years (2025 certificates granted in 2017, 2371 in 2018), after it had almost doubled year to year; from 1116 in 2015 to 2207 in 2016 (USZZ 2020 a). The SLA Certificates replaced the former 'Expatriate Cards' on 1 January 2006 (Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in New York, a). In total, 12 011 SLA certificates have been issued between 2012 and 2019 (Ibidem).





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## 2.3 The Immigrant and emigrant stocks, migration flows – terms and definitions

Firstly, it is important to remember that the Slovak Statistical Office differentiates between 'foreigners', 'immigrants' and 'emigrants'. The persons considered as foreigners are recognised as such on the basis of the following legislation:

The conditions for foreigners' entry to, stay on and departure from the territory of the SR are laid down in Act No. 48/2002 Coll. on Stay of Aliens as amended. Under the Act "foreigner" means any person who is not a citizen of the Slovak Republic, including stateless persons. Thus, foreigners are citizens of another EU Member State, nationals of any other State party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), nationals of the Swiss Confederation and members of their families, third-country nationals and stateless persons. The entry and stay of EU/EEA citizens in the Slovak Republic are subjects to a special legal regime approximating to the rights of the citizens of the Slovak Republic.

On the other hand, the foreign immigration and emigration are understood as follows: 'The foreign migration means a change of the country of permanent residence, irrespective of citizenship.' Then, the immigration: 'means the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2019 a)'. Such approach clearly leaves out a significant group of temporary and circular migrants, who work abroad only for a short period of time, not having their abroad stay formally registered and often working without expected legal permits.

Speaking of the forced migrants, on the one hand, in the Slovak statistics the international protection recipients are included in the scope of immigrant group. On the other, however, Slovak statisticians exclude from this group those persons who remain in Slovakia on a basis of a tolerated stay and those asylum seekers who do not yet have their asylum applications processed:

The number of immigrants and the total population usually resident in the territory of the SR include also foreigners who were granted the asylum, based on which their residence is considered the permanent residence in the territory of the SR, and persons who were provided with subsidiary protection, based on which their residence is considered the temporary stay in the territory of the SR. The number of immigrants and the total population usually resident in the territory of the SR do not include applicants for international protection, nor persons having their tolerated stay in the territory of the SR, which results from the nature of stay (the maximum length of a tolerated stay is granted for 180 days, but may be extended repeatedly). (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2017 a)

Then, the emigration is understood as: 'the action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a Member State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least twelve months (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2019 a)'.

Finally, the 'usual residence', the term which both of the previously introduced definitions refer to, is understood as: 'the place in which a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absences for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment, or religious pilgrimage; or, if data are not available, the place of legal or registered residence (Ibidem).



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### 3. Registering Residence in the Slovak Republic

Unsurprisingly, the foreigners are entitled to legalize their stay in the Slovak Republic utilising varying legal pathways, depending on their status:

There are two residence permit regimes in the SR: the registration and granting of residence permits. The registration applies to EU/EEA citizens, while other foreigners have to request for a residence permit and then they may be granted. Legal migration is based on the granting of a temporary stay permit to third-country nationals, granting of a permanent residence permit to third-country nationals and advantaged foreigners, the registration of a permanent residence permit of EU/EEA citizens and the granting of a tolerated stay permit to third-country nationals. Thus, the legal system of the SR distinguishes the temporary stay permit, which is bound to a particular purpose, the permanent residence permit and the tolerated stay permit. (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2017 a)

The first of those legal paths is residence legalisation based on obtaining of a residence permit. According to the Act no. 404/2011 On Residence of Foreigners there are three types of available residence permits issued by the Slovak officials (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, 2020). The first of those is a temporary residence permit, issued to the third-country nationals for the following purposes: business, employment, study, research and development, family reunification and fulfilling the duties of the civilian components of the armed forces. This status might also be granted to persons who already hold the SLA status and to persons who have been granted long-term resident status in another EU member state. How long the temporary residence permit enables the foreigner to stay in Slovakia depends on the purpose of stay that constitutes a legal basis for granting of the document (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 2020 a).

Another type of residence permit available to the foreigners in the Slovak Republic is the permanent residence permit. This document might be issued in three types. The first one is the permit issued for five years, the second for unlimited duration (dependent on the individual migrant's circumstances and the length of the foregoing stay in the Slovak Republic), and the third one is granted to the third country nationals who were granted long-term resident status in the European Union.

Finally, the foreigners in Slovakia might be granted the tolerated stay. This kind of document may be issued in some specific circumstances, for example to the minors found on the territory of the Slovak Republic, to the foreigners who are recognised as the victims of human trafficking, or to the individuals on whom quarantining is enforced (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, 2020a).

As Slovakia is a Schengen State, the rules of obtaining a visa to enter Slovakia (and Schengen Area at the same time) are subject to the international regulations concerning that matter. Finally, the registrations for the EU nationals apply to those foreigners who hold EU/EEA passport and are staying in Slovakia for a period longer than three months.







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## 4. The Slovak Diaspora

### 4.1 The 'Office for Slovaks Living Abroad' and the diaspora engagement policy

As for the last 30 years the newly established Republic has been developing and reforming its policies concerning the Slovaks living abroad, since 1993 different acts have been institutionalized and the legal context for diaspora-related issues have been gradually established. The first and crucial document in this regard is the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. This legislation has been enacted with the establishment of the new state, and then altered in 1997, 1999, 2005 and 2016 (Surova, 2016, p. 20).

The key step in the development of the country's diaspora-related policy has been the establishment of the formal body responsible for shaping Slovak policy towards Slovaks residing outside of the country. 'The Office for Slovaks Living Abroad' located in the capital of Slovakia, Bratislava, has been instituted on the 1 January 2006. The legal ground for establishment of the office has been the 'ACT No. 474/2005 on the Slovaks Living Abroad and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Laws'<sup>1</sup> (The National Council of the Slovak Republic 2005) the law which is still in force shaping Slovak Republic's bilateral relationship with its foreign-living nationals<sup>2</sup>.

Accordingly to the Office's charter<sup>3</sup> (USZZ, 2005), the USZZ has been granted the following responsibilities: supporting Slovaks living abroad, providing them with information, collaborating with the diasporic communities, bestowing the Certificate of Slovak Living Abroad and hatching the data on the life of Slovaks living abroad documenting it. Amongst the aforementioned prerogatives the latest one is of particular relevance for this analysis, inasmuch as the USZZ performs that duty collecting and sharing its diaspora-related statistics and estimations in its webpage (<https://www.uszz.sk/sk>). Some of the interesting data can be found there in the section 'the Numbers and the Estimates' (počty a odhady) in the website of the very Office, however most of the interesting, relevant information around the Slovak diaspora has been uploaded through the educational portal 'Slovenské zahraničie' (Slovak Abroad) administrated by the USZZ.

According to the Slovak authors publishing in the Slovak Abroad portal, the very idea to establish such archive: 'encapsulates building a stable, professional, journalist-spirit, up to date database which will enable us to get to know where we come from' (Slovenské zahraničie, 2020 a). Indeed, in both of the aforementioned websites the Slovak officials share the data on the size of the Slovak diasporic groups globally, disaggregated by countries and regions. The weak points of both databases are that, unfortunately, they are quite outdated, as the most recent data published there dates back to 2008. The authors of the estimates also do not provide an opportunity to analyse the data on Slovak diaspora crossing the country of emigrants' residence with any other variables.

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<sup>1</sup> In Slovak: *Zákon č. 474/2005 Z. z. o Slovákoch žijúcich v zahraničí*.

<sup>2</sup> The comprehensive analysis of Slovak diaspora policy is presented by Michal Vašečka and Viera Žúborová in their chapter: *Diaspora Policies, Consular Services and Social Protection for Slovak Citizens Abroad in: Migration and Social Protection in Europe and Beyond (Volume 2)* by J-M. Lafleur and D. Vintila, pages: 427-440.

<sup>3</sup> In Slovak: *Štatút Úradu pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí*.

## 4.2 The Slovak diaspora in numbers and estimates

The estimates published in Slovak Abroad indicate that the overall number of Slovak nationals living outside of Slovakia decreased significantly from 2 660 000 in 1991 to 2 016 000 in 2001. Since then however, the number of diaspora members remained relatively stable, shrinking to 2 015 125 over the next four years (2005) and then reaching 2 236 730 in 2008 (Slovenské zahraničie, 2020 b). Clearly it is important to highlight that the data for the year 1991, as has been already pointed in this report, refers to the period before the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. As we pointed out above the significant number of Slovaks had lived in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia before 1993 and then decided to move to Slovakia after the separate republic had been established.

Speaking of the data - Slovaks compare the official calculations collected from the general censuses with their own estimations (*odhady krajanov* – fellow nationals' estimations) (USZZ, 2020 c). According to what the authors of this report were told by the USZZ representative in the direct correspondence, the local sources for the data on Slovak diaspora were: 'estimates made by Slovak associations abroad, staff of the Slovak consulates and Slovak experts<sup>4</sup>'. The Slovak sources frequently point out that the official statistics underestimate the size of the Slovak communities in different countries. While from methodological perspective the emergence of such disparity is something expected<sup>5</sup>, the very fact still needs to be acknowledged, as its roots might be in the very scope of the definitions used in the process of developing of the estimates.

According to the IOM-administrated Global Migration Data Portal, the 'hard' data on the global diasporas is drastically limited:

Data on diaspora populations are difficult to collect, as emigrants are not automatically members of diasporas, and second- and third-generation descendants of migrants may also be considered or consider themselves to be part of a diasporas group. Generally, there is far more information available on diasporas than there are data. Information is qualitatively different from data, with information suggesting a nonsystematic approach. Currently there are no attempts to measure global diaspora populations per se, but the data sources below can act as a proxy for diasporas that maintain links to a certain country of origin (Migration Data Portal 2020).

There are, however, sources that can help to fill the gaps in the general knowledge on the subject of diasporas, however they should be treated as a 'rough proxy' (Migration Data Portal 2020). Those are, for example, the data on emigrant stocks from particular countries, or the data on various diaspora-related issues, such as transnational remittances (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2017: 74-87). Aware of the limitations in the data availability, the authors of this report decided to include the rough estimations of the sizes of the Slovak diaspora communities shared by the USZZ. Accordingly, the numbers regarding the ten largest Slovak diaspora groups (for 2008), listed together with some of the more recent estimations, are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Slovaks living abroad - estimations and the official data.

Sources<sup>6</sup>: Slovenské zahraničie (2020 b), Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí (2020 b), pp. 3-4, Personal e-mail correspondence with Pavel Meleg writing on behalf of the Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí - e-mail message from 06.10.2020.

Country of residence	The Slovak estimation for 1991	The Slovak estimation for 2001	The Slovak estimation for 2008	The most recent foreign official data	The Slovak estimations for 2020
The USA <sup>7</sup>	1 900 000	1 200 000	1 200 000	560 000 (2010)	750 000
Czechia <sup>8</sup>	315 000	350 000	375 000	148 000 (2011-2012)	350 – 400 000
Hungary	110 000	110 000	110 000	29 647 (2011-2012)	100 000
Canada <sup>9</sup>	100 000	100 000	100 000	72 000 (2016)	100 – 150 000
The United Kingdom <sup>10</sup>	1 000	35 000	90 000	84 000 (06.2018)	110 000
Serbia	64 000	60 000	60 000	52 750 (2011-2012)	35 – 42 000
Germany	20 000	20 000	60 000	58 235 (31.12.2018)	80 000
Austria	15 000	10 000	30 000	no data	no data
Ireland	-	1 000	30 000	9 717 (2016)	22 000
Argentina <sup>11</sup>	30 000	30 000	30 000	no data	20 – 25 000

<sup>6</sup> The estimations for 1991, 2001 and 2008 are collected from 'Slovenské zahraničie' portal. Both the remaining data and the remarks in the footnotes 2., 3. and 4. shared by USZZ thanks to their courtesy and collected from Správa za rok 2019 o štátnej politike vo vzťahu k Slovákom žijúcim v zahraničí [...] published by Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí (2020 b).

<sup>7</sup> The data in the two columns on the right of the table concerning number the Slovaks living in the USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Ireland and Argentina has been collected from the table 'Tab.č.9 Počty Slovákov žijúcich v západnej Európe a v Zámorí' (Personal e-mail correspondence with USZZ) described by Pavel Meleg in the following way: 'On the one hand, emigrants and their descendants from the end of the 19th until the end of the 20th century. (before WWII USA, Argentina, Canada, partially France, after WWII also Germany, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland). All those are „Slovaks“ according to the Act on Slovaks Living Abroad. On the other, the Slovak immigrants to the EU countries and oversea countries who have emigrated in 21century (after accession to the EU) have been included in the table. However they are not subject of the Act but the world has changed since it has been adopted.' (Ibidem).

<sup>8</sup> The data in the two columns on the right on the number of Slovaks living in Czechia, Hungary and Serbia is collected from the table 'Počty príslušníkov slovenských národnostných autochtónnych menšín' (Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí <2020 b: 3>) described by Pavel Meleg (in personal e-mail correspondence with the USZZ) in the following way: 'Slovaks living in post Austro Hungarian countries, indigenous national minorities' (Ibidem).

<sup>9</sup> Also, 40 000 people of Czechoslovak origin registered in Canada (Ibidem).

<sup>10</sup> There are 50 273 people working officially in the United Kingdom (May 2019), while the numbers on the residents show 84 000 people (June 2018) (Ibidem).

<sup>11</sup> There are estimations that say that there were 30 000 – 50 000 Slovaks who emigrated to Argentina in the 1920s and 1930s (there are also other estimations that say there were even 70 000 Slovak emigrants at that time). (Ibidem).



*Picture: Kotryna Juskaite*

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## 5. Migration flows and migrant stocks – the analysis of gathered data

### 5.1 Population of the Slovak Republic

The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic reports that as of January 2020 the population of the country reached 5 457 873 having grown 0,4% over the last decade (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2020). The gender ratio of the overall Slovak population, on the other hand, remained stable over the last five years, as the share of women in the overall population of Slovakia have been remaining at the level of slightly above 51% (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Total population of Slovakia.

Source: Eurostat a.

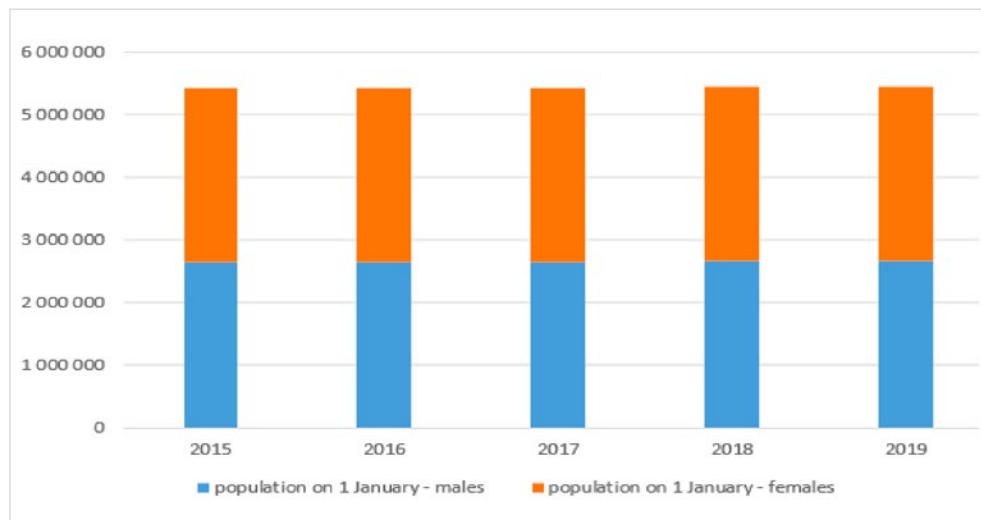


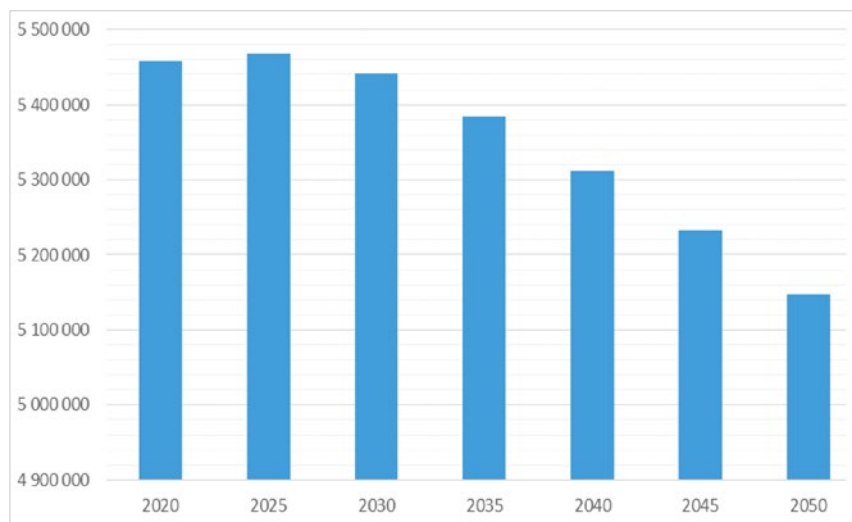
Table 2. Sex ratio of the overall population of Slovakia.

Source: Eurostat a.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
population on January 1st - males	2 642 328	2 646 082	2 651 684	2 656 514	2 661 077	no data
population on January 1st - females	2 779 021	2 780 170	2 783 659	2 786 606	2 789 344	no data
population on January 1st - total	5 421 349	5 426 252	5 435 343	5 443 120	5 450 421	5 457 873

The Eurostat's projections indicate that the size of the Slovak population is going to decrease over the next 30 years. By 2050 the total population of the country is expected to shrink to slightly above 5,1 million inhabitants (see Figure 2). One of the major factors taken into account in this projection is the Slovak total fertility rate which currently reaches approximately 1.5 child per woman. Just as for the other countries of the region (e.g. Poland), the total fertility rate value for Slovakia is much lower than the replacement rate - 2.1 child per woman.

Figure 2. Population of the Slovak Republic on the 1st January – projection for 2020-2050.  
Source: Eurostat b.



## 5.2 Visas for the third country nationals and registrations for the EU nationals

One of the important sources of information concerning the inflow of foreigners to the Slovak Republic is the data on the number of visas granted to the third country nationals. Those statistics can be used to conduct the rough assessment of the size of the inflow of foreigners from outside of the European Union to Slovakia and the nationality structure of the immigrants group. The Ukrainians are by far the largest group of the third country nationals granted this kind of document in Slovakia, as over 100 thousand of them have been issued visas during the period of five years from the beginning of 2015 till the end of 2019 (see Table 3).

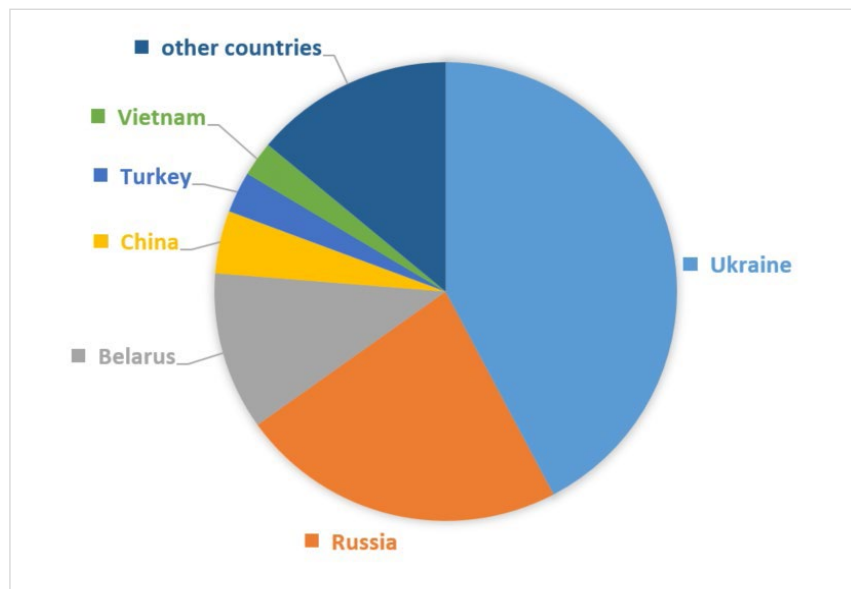
Table 3. Slovak visas granted to the nationals of particular states' nationals between 2015 and 2019.

Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.

Ukraine	101 572
Russia	54 924
Belarus	26 797
China	10 625
Turkey	6 975
Vietnam	5 896
Other countries	33 523
All visas	240 312

Figure 3. Visas granted by Slovak embassies to nationals of particular countries.

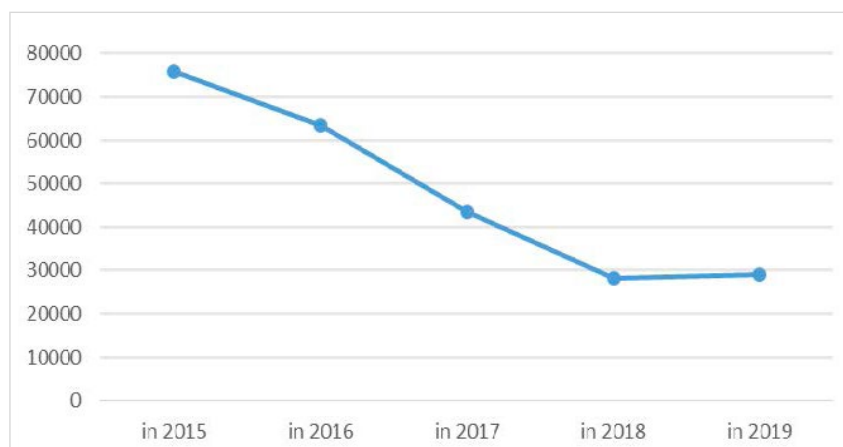
Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



The analysis of the aforementioned data indicates the steady, yearly decrease in the number of visas issued by the Slovak embassies during the analysed period. This, overall drop is clearly related to the fact that the number of visas granted to the very Ukrainian citizens significantly shrunk over the analysed period of time. One of the major factors that caused this fall had been introducing the regime entitling Ukrainians with biometric passports to travel to the Schengen Area countries visa-free for up to 90 days within any 180-day period from June 11, 2017.

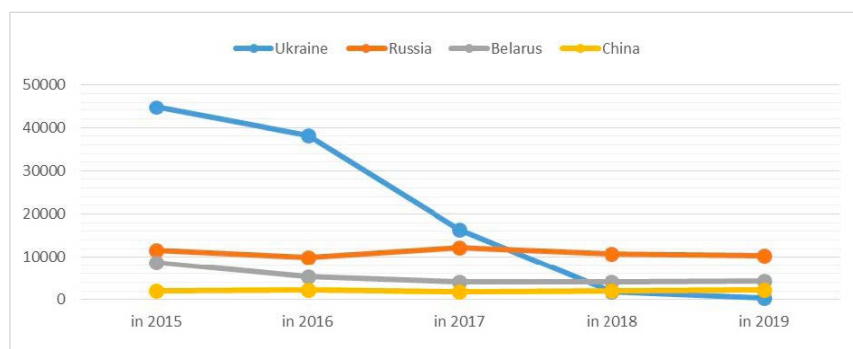
Figure 4. Visas granted by Slovak embassies, 2015-2019, year to year.

Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



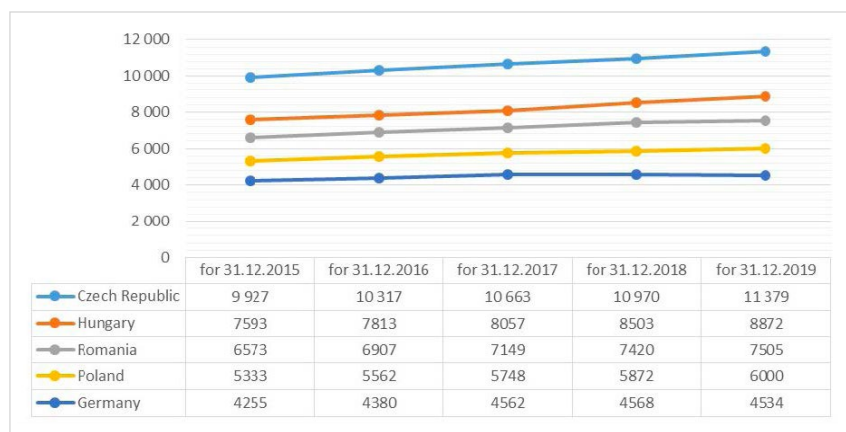
While, particularly after 2016, the number of visas issued to the Ukrainian citizens dropped, the number of visa applications filed by other countries' nationals remained relatively stable (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Number of visas granted by Slovak embassies - top 4 countries for 2015-2019.  
Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



Over the same period, the number of the EU nationals registering in Slovakia increased. The most numerous national groups among the EU citizens registered in the country are Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles and Germans. The sizes of those groups have been on the rise, slowly but steadily growing over the last few years. The total size of the most numerous group – the citizens of Czechia - rose from below 10 thousand in December 2015 to over 11 thousand in December 2019 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Number of valid EU nationals' registrations in the Slovak Republic for 31.12, top 5 countries for 2015-2019.  
Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



Finally, the total number of the EU citizens' registrations in Slovakia has soared from below 50 thousand in December 2015 to over 57 thousand in December 2019 (see Table 4). That substantial increase clearly indicates that the Slovak Republic is an attractive immigration destination not only for the third country nationals but also for the EU citizens – particularly those moving from the neighbouring countries, such as Czechia, Hungary and Poland.

Table 4. Number of valid EU nationals' registrations in the Slovak Republic as of 31.12 of a given year.  
Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.

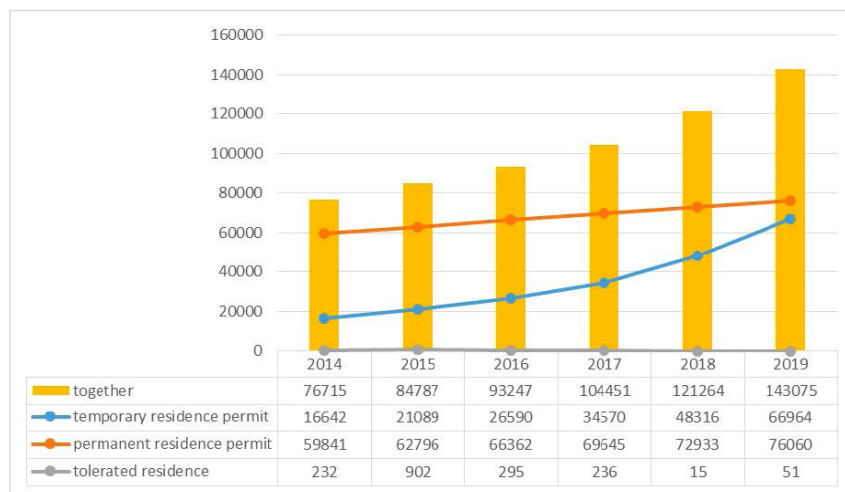
2015	49 526
2016	52 015
2017	54 056
2018	55 883
2019	57 248



### 5.3 Residence permits

Figure 7. Number of valid residence permits by type of permit.

Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



Key sources of the information concerning the stock of immigrants in Slovakia is the aforementioned data regarding the EU citizens' registrations, as well as the data on the number of the residence permits issued in the country. Whereas in 2014 there were slightly above 76 thousand holders of such permits in Slovakia, by the end of 2019 this number almost doubled (see figure 7). Interestingly, among all of the types of permits issued by the Slovak authorities the most numerous were the permanent residence permits. In 2015 they constituted two thirds of all granted permits while those validating temporary residence constituted merely one third of all the documents. However, this ratio has changed over the last few years and the gap between the numbers of permanent and temporary residence permits narrowed. In 2019 the number of issued permanent residence permits outblanced the number of temporary permits by merely 10 thousand.

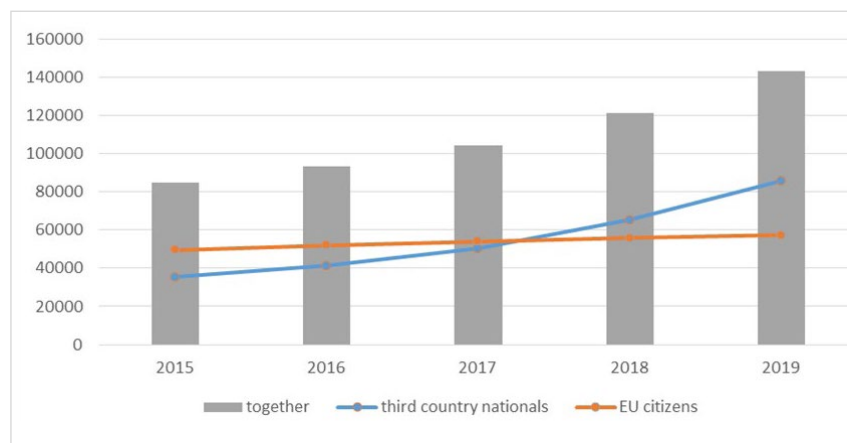
Last but not least, speaking of the tolerated residence permits, the peak number of such documents issued over a single year has been noted in 2015 during the so-called migration crisis<sup>12</sup>. Since then the number of grantings of such documents significantly dropped to only 15 permits issued in 2018 and 51 in 2019.

As far as the migrants stock is concerned, another interesting development in the last years has been a growing importance of the immigration from the third countries in the total number of foreign residents in Slovakia. Up until 2017 the number of EU citizens living in the country was higher than the number of registered nationals of the third countries. From 2017 the third country nationals took the lead and currently they are the largest

<sup>12</sup> Presumably, it might be more adequate to refer to those events as the European solidarity crisis instead.

Figure 8. Number of valid residence permits on 31.12 by citizenship of the grantee<sup>13</sup>.

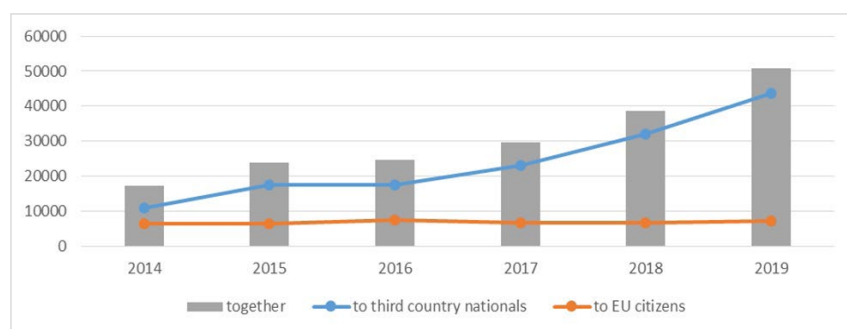
Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



From 2014 onwards the number of residence permits granted yearly to the citizens of the third countries has been steadily growing. Over the same period the number of registrations of the EU citizens rose (see Table 4), however, relatively to the rise in the number of permits for the third country nationals, still, this increase has not been that significant. In other words it is the immigration from outside of the European Union that has been above all responsible for the growth of population of immigrants in Slovakia (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Number of residence permits granted in a given year by citizenship of the grantee<sup>14</sup>.

Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



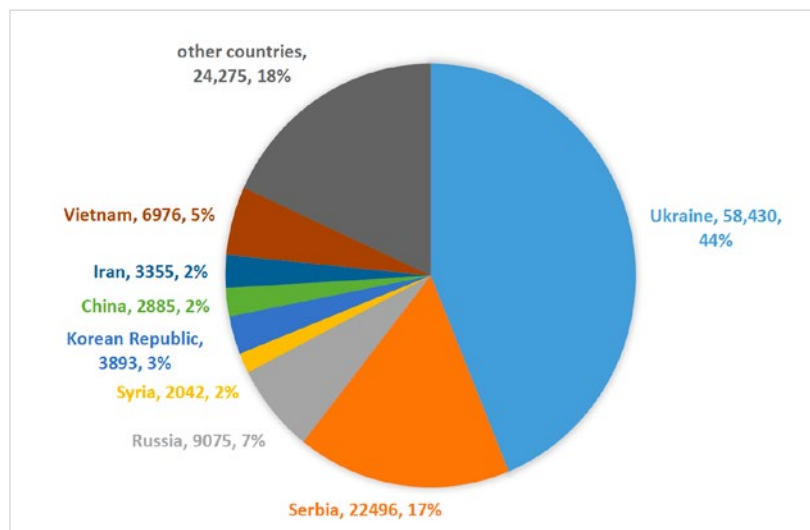
As for the national structure of the residence permits' holders from the third countries, the largest group by far is constituted by the nationals of Ukraine. Over 58 thousand Ukrainians had valid residence permits in Slovakia by the end of 2019, followed by Serbs and Russians. Then, there were also almost 7 thousand citizens of Vietnam holding residence permits in Slovakia. Finally, among other statistically important groups of immigrants in Slovakia there are also communities of South Koreans (in the source data referred to as citizens of Korean Republic), Iranians, Chinese and Syrians (see Figure 10).

<sup>13</sup> The terminology used in the source reports of the Presidium of the Police Force is slightly unclear, as the EU nationals are not granted residence permits ('počet pobytov udelených cudzincom v roku 2018 a v roku 2019' <2019: 18>), but registered as the citizens of the European Union residing in another member state. Therefore, the number of 'residence permits' for the EU citizens depicted in the figure 8 is in fact the number of EU citizens' registrations in the Slovak Republic valid in a given year.

<sup>14</sup> Vide: footnote number 13 on a previous page.

Figure 10. The national structure of immigrants with valid residence permits as of the end of 2019.

Source: Presidium of the Police Force, Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police a, b, c.



The citizens of Syria holding residence permits are one of the largest groups of persons who have successfully applied and received international protection in Slovakia. It should be mentioned at this point that since 1993 almost 60 thousand people applied for asylum in Slovakia. Out of them less than 1 thousand obtained the protection. In case of almost 50 thousand persons the procedure was suspended. That have been occurring most commonly in cases where the asylum seekers treated Slovakia as a transition destination deciding to leave the country (mostly) for one of the Western European countries before the administrative procedure ended. In the last decade the number of asylum applications varied between 732 (in 2012) and 146 (in 2016) per year. The highest number of persons were granted asylum in 2016 (167 persons) (see Table 5).

Table 5. International protection statistics.

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (a).

Year	The number of asylum applications	Asylum granted	Asylum refused	Complementary protection provided/ not provided	The procedure suspended	The citizenship granted
2010	541	15	180	57/101	361	3
2011	491	12	186	91/47	270	7
2012	732	32	334	104/153	383	0
2013	441	15	124	34/49	352	7
2014	331	14	197	99/41	163	12
2015	330	8	124	41/24	148	5
2016	146	167	82	12/13	35	3
2017	166	29	77	25/16	73	6
2018	178	5	128	37/23	69	18
2019	232	9	93	19/33	179	9
2020	249	10	69	21/19	154	14

## 5.4 Key characteristics of the immigrant residents' group in Slovakia

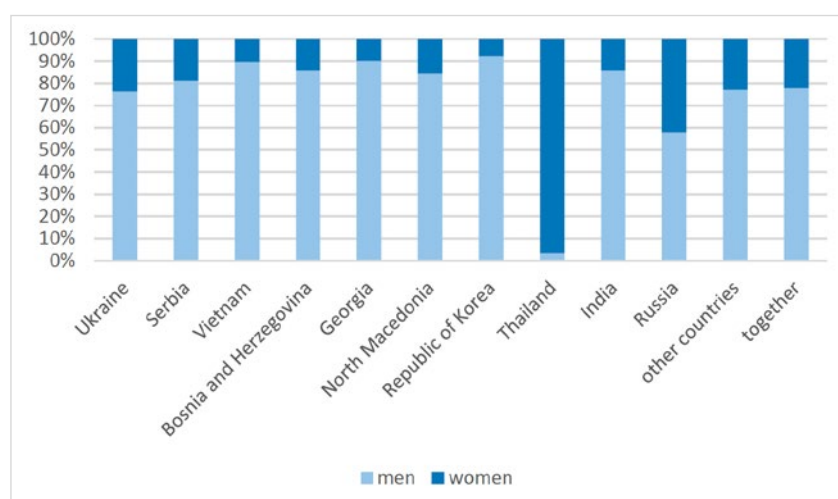
The Border Police reports on residence permits do not include information, for example, concerning the sex ratio of the immigrant population in Slovakia as well as other important features of the immigrant groups. Hence, we decided to support this analysis with information on work permits of different kind issued to foreigners in Slovakia. The data has been gathered from the monthly reports published by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereafter COLSAF)<sup>15</sup>. The reports distinguish three categories of immigrants in the Slovak labour market: third-country nationals with work permits, EU/EEA citizens with information cards and third country nationals with information cards. Whereas the EU/EEA citizens have free access to the Slovak market, the citizens of third countries in order to be employed need to obtain work permits. An exception is made for some particular categories of foreigners, among them, e.g., scholars, educators, priests, diplomats, soldiers, humanitarian missionary officers, persons seeking asylum, or members of the Slovak diaspora. Those foreigners are entitled to obtain the "information cards" and find legally registered employment with this type of document (Trend 3/2018).

When it comes to the overall sex structure of the immigrant labour force in Slovakia, within every category of migrants women constitute the minority group. When one takes all the migrants in the labour market into account women make up 26 per cent of the total. Among the third-country nationals holding a work permit issued in Slovak Republic 78 per cent are men.

Among the ten most numerous groups of foreigners issued work permits in the country the highest percentage of males are in the groups of immigrants from South Korea, Vietnam and Georgia. The most gender-balanced group of immigrants from third countries is the group of Russians. Moreover, the COLSAF data indicate that almost all immigrants from Thailand in Slovakia are women. Similarly to other countries of the region, Thai women most frequently find employment in the spa sector (see Figure 11 and Table 6).

Figure 11. Sex ratio of the group of the third-country nationals holding work permits in Slovakia.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).



<sup>15</sup> The data presented below come from the COLSAF report from January 2020.



Table 6. Sex ratio of the group of the third-country nationals holding work permits in Slovakia.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

	Men	Women	Men and women together	Unspecified
Ukraine	12 994	4 019	17 013	16
Serbia	4 791	1 116	5 907	6
Vietnam	985	114	1 099	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	569	94	663	0
Georgia	579	64	643	0
North Macedonia	455	83	539	0
Republic of Korea	303	25	328	0
Thailand	11	299	310	1
India	265	44	309	0
Russia	126	92	218	0
Other countries	1 379	411	1 790	1
Together	22 457	6 362	28 819	26

Among migrants from the EU/EEA countries holding information cards 26 per cent are women. Similarly to the group of immigrants from the third countries, EU/EEA immigrants' group is therefore also predominantly made up of men. The lowest percentage of females is among the immigrants from Germany, United Kingdom and Italy, whereas the highest amongst the Czechs, Poles and Croats (see Figure 12 and Table 7).

Figure 12. Sex ratio of the group of the EU/EEA nationals granted information cards in Slovakia.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

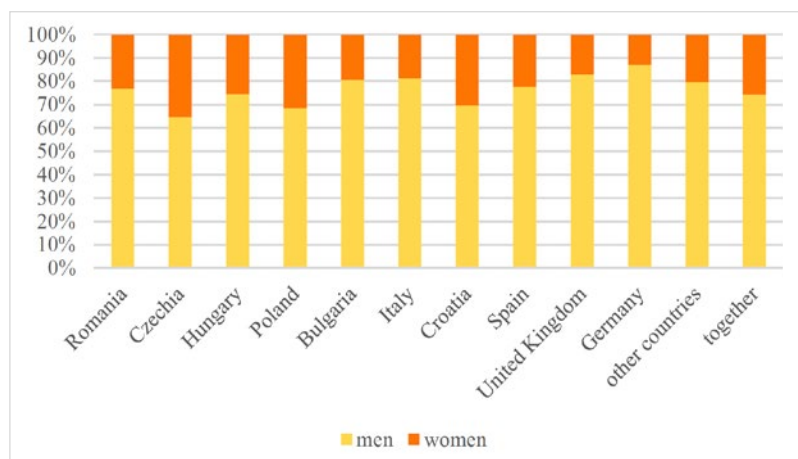


Table 7. Sex ratio of the group of the EU/EEA nationals holding information cards in Slovakia.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

	Men	Women	Men and women together	Unspecified
Romania	6 345	1 902	8 247	143
Czechia	3 781	2 074	5 855	85
Hungary	4 089	1 399	5 488	66
Poland	1 709	789	2 498	32
Bulgaria	1 806	437	2 243	18
Italy	1 002	230	1 232	40
Croatia	749	326	1 075	20
Spain	566	164	730	17
United Kingdom	554	115	669	7
Germany	515	77	592	21
Other countries	2 089	538	2 627	45
Together	23 205	8 051	31 256	494

The highest percentage of females has been registered among the third country nationals holding information cards. Almost one third of migrants in this category are women, whereas 68 per cent are men. Women make up the majority of immigrants from Russia and significant proportion of Serbian and Ukrainian nationals. The lowest percentage of females are among the immigrants from South Korea, Georgia and Moldova (see figure 13 and table 8).

Figure 13. Sex ratio of the group of the third-country nationals granted information cards in Slovakia.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

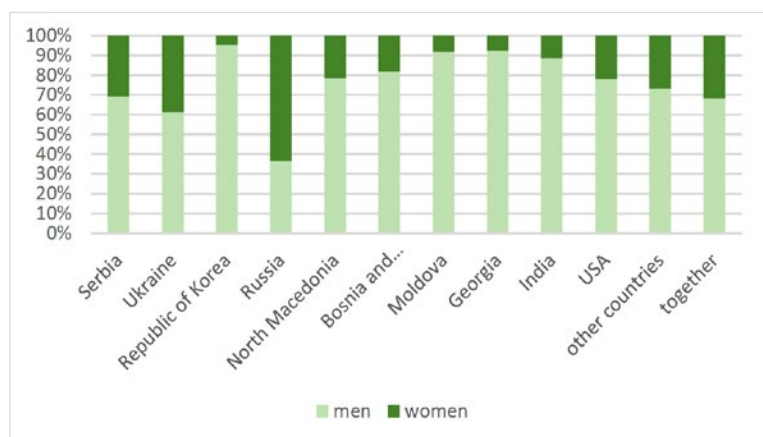


Table 8. Sex ratio of the group of the third-country nationals holding information cards in Slovakia.  
Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

	Men	Women	Men and women together	Unspecified
Serbia	5 117	2 285	7402	58
Ukraine	3 398	2 144	5 542	49
Republic of Korea	421	21	442	1
Russia	140	243	383	3
North Macedonia	254	70	324	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	261	58	319	5
Moldova	210	19	229	6
Georgia	196	16	212	1
India	186	24	210	1
USA	95	27	122	1
Other countries	1 335	493	1 828	21
Together	11 613	5 400	17 013	151

Majority of the third-country nationals with work permits receive their documents for up to 2 years, some up to 3 years and the smaller group for a period of one year. Similarly, in the EU/EEA citizens' group, the most popular length of stay is also up to 24 months, however almost equally frequent are stays for over 72 months, between 49 and 72 months, and up to 6 months. Among the third country nationals with information cards foreigners permitted to stay in the country for up to 24 months outbalance the others, although almost equally popular form of legalisation of stay is the document issued for a period of up to 6 months (COLSAF 2020).

Additionally, the quoted COLSAF reports provide information concerning employment structure of various groups of immigrants in Slovakia. The representatives of the largest occupational group of immigrants in the country are employed as operators and installers of various kinds of machinery and equipment. Almost an equal number of immigrants in Slovakia works as skilled workers and craftsmen. Other, less popular positions filled by immigrants include: auxiliary and unskilled workers, service and trade workers, specialists, administrative staff, legislators, executives, as well as technicians and professionals. The least popular positions among the immigrants include occupation in the army and employment in a role of as skilled worker in agricultural sector (see Figure 14 and table 9).

Figure 14. Immigrants in various sectors of the Slovak labour market.  
Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

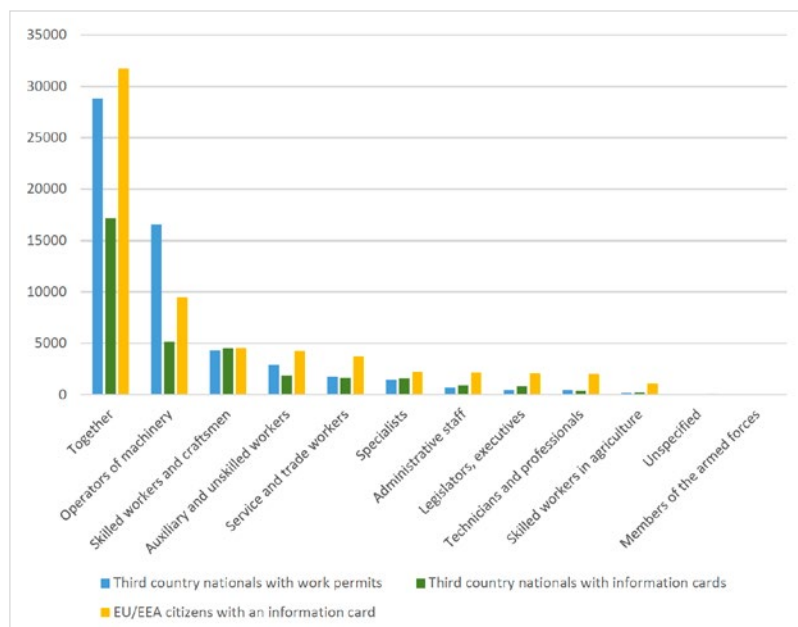


Table 9. Immigrants in various sectors of the Slovak labour market.  
Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

	Third country nationals with information cards	Third country nationals with work permits	EU/EEA citizens with information cards	Together
Together	17 164	28 845	31 750	77 759
Operators of machinery	5 153	16 577	9 496	31 226
Skilled workers and craftsmen	4 524	4 312	4 529	13 365
Auxiliary and unskilled workers	1 858	2 898	4 275	9 031
Service and trade workers	1 626	1 762	3 740	7 128
Specialists	1 569	1 461	2 229	5 259
Administrative staff	937	683	2 165	3 785
Legislators, executives	817	481	2 113	3 411
Technicians and professionals	371	480	2 026	2 877
Skilled workers in agriculture	220	188	1 068	1 476
Unspecified	89	3	109	201
Members of the armed forces	0	0	0	0



Lastly, the reports of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family provide information about the educational background of immigrants in the Slovak labour market. The largest group of migrants, almost one third of them, is educated to a secondary vocational level. This type of education is particularly frequent among the third country nationals holding work permits, as nearly half of them are granted such degrees. The largest number of immigrants holding academic second degree education can be found among the EU/EEA nationals, however also a significant number of third-country nationals with work permits hold such degrees (see figure 15 and table 10).

Figure 15. Immigrants in the Slovak labour market by the level of education.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

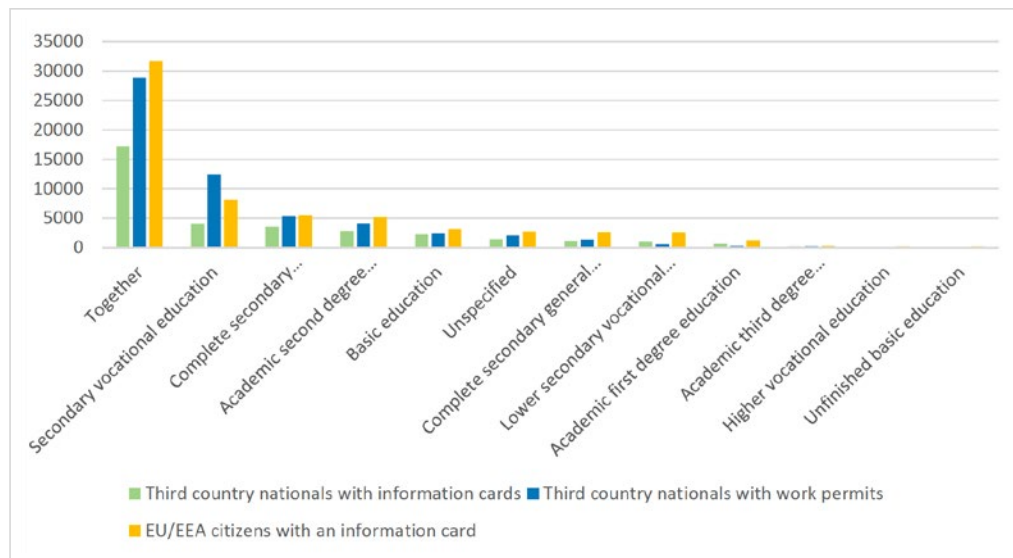


Table 10. Immigrants in the Slovak labour market by the level of education.

Source: Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2021).

	Third country nationals with information cards	Third country nationals with work permits	EU/EEA citizens with information cards	Together
Together	17 164	28 845	31 750	77 759
Secondary vocational education	4 034	12 410	8 125	24 569
Complete secondary vocational education	3 501	5 349	5 502	14 352
Academic second degree education	2 821	4 109	5 162	12 092
Basic education	2 223	2 426	3 098	7 747
Unspecified	1 423	2 018	2 725	6 166
Complete secondary general education	1 156	1 360	2 631	5 147
Lower secondary vocational education	972	574	2 583	4 129
Academic first degree education	662	288	1 235	2 185
Academic third degree education	220	261	301	782
Higher vocational education	106	37	202	345
Unfinished basic education	46	13	186	245



## 6. Migration Flows

### 6.1 Net Migration

In the last part of the report we focus on migration flows as reported by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, comparing this data to the estimations of bilateral international migration flows provided by Abel and Cohen (2019). According to the Slovak statisticians, over the last five years the country have been remaining a net immigration state. The database of the Office shows that more people move into Slovakia, than emigrate from the country. In order to correctly understand these statistics one needs to remember that 'an immigrant' is understood by the Office as a person that has been staying in the country for over a year. Consequently, the Office does not take into account for instance those migrants who might stay in the country for a shorter period but regularly return to take up work. The same remark applies to emigrants leaving the country, as only deregistering from their local communes they become visible in the Statistical Office database.

*Table 11. Net migration for the Slovak Republic.*

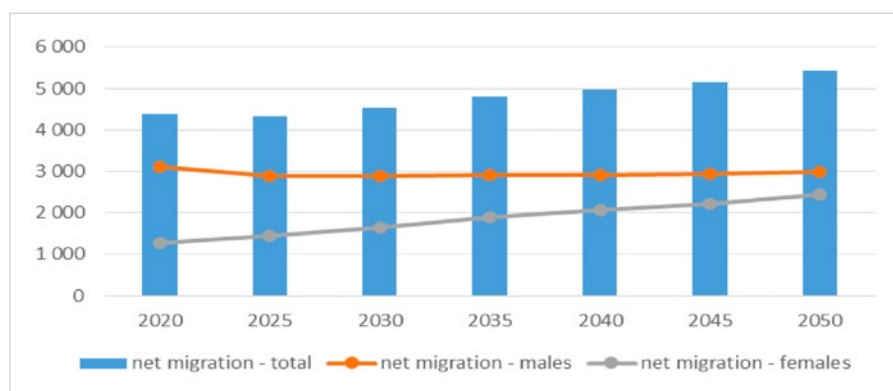
*Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2017 b, 2017 c, 2018, 2019 b, 2020 a).*

2015	3 127
2016	3 887
2017	3 722
2018	3 955
2019	3 632

The Eurostat assumes that over the next 30 years the net migration ratio for the Slovak Republic is going to be on the rise. Moreover, the agency predicts that the share of women in the overall population of migrants will grow significantly.

*Figure 16. Net migration in the Slovak Republic by migrants' sex - projection for 2020-2050.*

*Source: Eurostat b.*

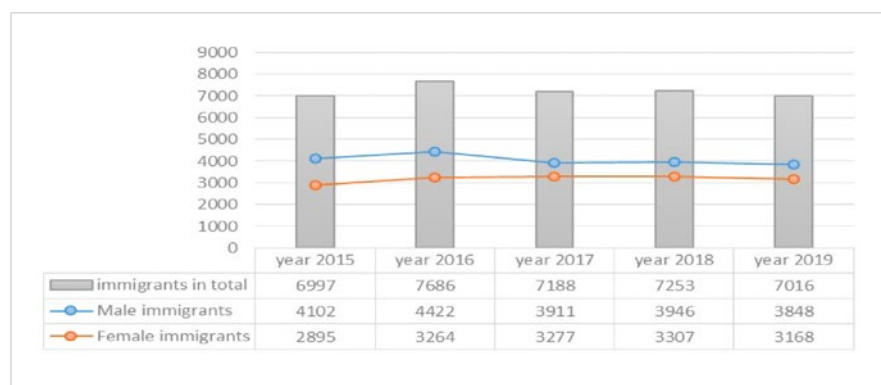




According to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic in 2017, 2018 and 2019 there were more than twice as many migrants that arrived in Slovakia, in comparison to the number of those who left the country. Interestingly, Slovakia is attracting a growing number of females, thus witnessing a change in the sex ratio of the immigrants' group.

Figure 17. Immigrants to the Slovak Republic by Sex, 2015-2019.

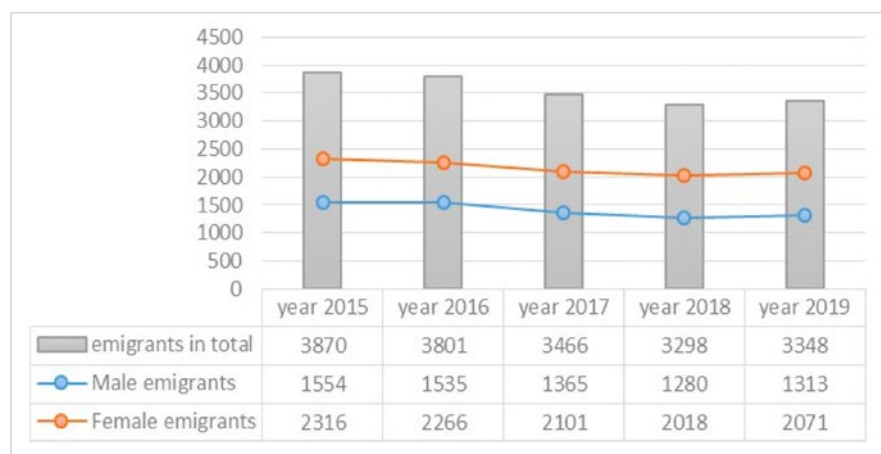
Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2017 b, 2017 c, 2018, 2019 b, 2020 a.



As far as the emigration from Slovakia is concerned, a higher propensity for migration among Slovak women than men is observed. Almost two thirds of the Slovak emigrants are females and this share has been fairly stable over the last five years.

Figure 18. Emigrants From the Slovak Republic by Sex, 2015-2019.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2017 b, 2017 c, 2018, 2019 b, 2020 a.



The data on emigration and immigration flows prove that most of the migratory movement to and from the Slovak Republic is currently constituted by the intra-European movement. The vast majority of immigrants in Slovakia come from the European countries while much less numerous groups have American and Asian heritages (see Table 12).

Table 12. Immigrants to the Slovak Republic by continents of previous residence; in 2019.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2020 a).

Africa	44
America	343
Antarctica	0
Australia and Oceania	62
Asia	224
Europe	6 343
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 016</b>

Moreover, the Slovak migrants usually choose one of the Western European countries as their emigration destinations (see Table 13), rather than North America (USA or Canada) - the most popular destination emigration in the past (see subchapter 1.2 of this report).

Table 13. Emigrants from the Slovak Republic by continents of destination; in 2019.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2020 a).

Africa	8
America	172
Antarctica	0
Australia and Oceania	29
Asia	67
Europe	3 108
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 384</b>

## 6.2 Abel & Cohen's dataset analysed in comparison with the local data

As one of the aims defined for this analysis is providing a comparison of the estimations concerning the bilateral migration flows according to Abel and Cohen (2019) with the external data, the authors decided to source information from the United Nations Population Division (UNCPD). The gathered data covers the 5-year period between 2011 and 2015. According Abel and Cohen's estimates, almost 42 thousand people immigrated to Slovakia within this period of time. The most numerous groups of migrants arrived from Czechia, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania and Poland. The nationals of the ten countries that sent the most migrants the Slovakia over this period constitute above 85% of immigrants who moved to the country over this period (see table 14).

*Table 14. Abel and Cohen's estimations of the number of immigrants to the Slovak Republic between 2011-2015.*  
Source: Abel & Cohen (2019).

Czech Republic	21 207
Hungary	4 187
Ukraine	2 375
Romania	1 936
Poland	1 600
UK	1 161
Germany	1 109
Austria	749
France	706
Russia	658
All immigrants	41 904

The comparison of Abel and Cohen's estimates with the data provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic indicates a few, important discrepancies. The first one concerns the total number of immigrants who arrived in the country during the analysed period. The estimations of the Slovak Statistical Office point to over fourteen thousand fewer persons that are known to have arrived in Slovakia than the data shared by Abel and Cohen. One of the key factors that might be of substantial importance here is the possible underestimation of the number of immigrants in the country created by the scope of the definitions adopted by the Slovak statisticians. As has already been pointed out, only those persons who stay in the country for a period of over 12 months are identified as immigrants, while those who reside in the country for shorter periods might be invisible in the national statistics.

Another important disparity between the analysed data becomes visible once one acknowledges that the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic distinguishes between the country of previous residence of immigrants (Table 15) and their citizenship (Table 16). Intersecting both datasets proves, that the substantial share of the immigrants from the Czech Republic (the most numerous group of immigrants according to this dataset) who came to Slovakia between 2011 and 2015 were Slovaks by citizenship. This kind of comparison is not available just on the basis of Abel and Cohen's dataset. In other words their analysis is not able to account for some forms of return migration.

Table 15. Immigrants to the Slovak Republic by country of previous residence, 2011-2015 period.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2018 a, 2018 b, 2018 c, 2019 c, 2020 b).

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011-2015
Czech Republic	989	1 172	1 137	1 232	1 441	5 971
United Kingdom	224	549	617	706	792	2 888
Hungary	691	744	385	408	450	2 678
Romania	465	286	275	298	491	1 815
Germany	288	276	278	271	377	1 490
Ukraine	116	114	148	234	374	986
Poland	191	128	170	135	220	844
France	107	86	85	92	115	485
Russia	40	37	49	41	63	230
Other	1 718	2 027	2 005	1 940	2 674	10 364
Together	4 829	5 419	5 149	5 357	6 997	27 751

Abel and Cohen's estimates are convergent with the Slovak statistics in pointing to Czechia as the country that sent the most numerous group of immigrants to the Slovak Republic over the analysed period. However, the sizes of groups of immigrants from the Czech Republic differ substantially between the two sources. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic points to 5971 persons that moved to Slovakia from the Czech Republic and only 2467 persons who moved to the Slovak Republic holding Czech citizenship. On the other hand, Abel and Cohen point out that there were 12 207, over 3,5 times more people who emigrated from the Czech Republic towards its Eastern neighbour. Interestingly, the second largest sending country according to the Slovak Statistical Office is the United Kingdom which appears also in Abel and Cohen's estimations but on the sixth place. Presumably a significant portion of immigrants from the UK are Slovaks returning to their homeland. Both, Abel and Cohen's dataset as well as the Slovak Statistical Office point out that Hungary, Romania as well as Poland are important sending countries. Finally, the Slovak estimates seem to particularly underestimate the significance of the Ukrainian migration which became visible particularly after 2015.



Table 16. Immigrants to the Slovak Republic by citizenship, 2011-2015 period.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2018 a, 2018 b, 2018 c, 2019 c, 2020 b).

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011-2015
Slovakia	1 078	2 479	2 674	2 939	3 223	12 393
Hungary	662	706	379	510	560	2 817
Czech Republic	600	462	402	414	589	2 467
Romania	458	275	274	290	498	1 795
Poland	190	115	158	122	205	790
Germany	191	129	90	76	147	633
Austria	105	63	29	44	91	332
Russia	40	34	43	39	53	209
Other	1 505	1 156	1 100	923	1 631	6 315
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 829</b>	<b>5419</b>	<b>5 149</b>	<b>5 357</b>	<b>6 997</b>	<b>27 751</b>

Juxtaposition of the estimates for 2011-2015 shared by Abel and Cohen, the data from the Slovak Statistical Office and the data from the Bureau of Border and Foreigners Police for a period of 2015-2019 indicates that both of the sources analysed in this part of the report significantly underestimate the size of immigration to Slovakia. The Slovak Police in its report from 2015 states that there were 17 178 residence permits granted in the Slovak Republic (to the EU nationals and the third country nationals together) in 2014 and over 23 thousand in 2015. Over 6 thousand of the residence permits were issued in 2015 solely to the Ukrainian citizens. These sources of data in the view of this report's authors provide more accurate information with regard to the immigration flow as well as the stock of immigrants in the country.







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## 7. Conclusions

Slovakia is an immigration country and a popular destination not only for migrants from the third countries but also those from the EU/EEA area. Significant number of migrants came to Slovakia during the last decades also from the neighbouring countries including Czechia, Hungary and Poland, while some of the largest groups of migrants over the last years came from Ukraine. Around 60 thousand Ukrainians held valid residence permits in Slovakia at the end of 2019, thus constituting the largest immigrant community in the country. It is yet unknown how the Slovak migration processes will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the current crisis caused huge disruption to various sectors of the economy, in particular those that strongly rely on immigrant labour, such as, for example, tourism. Most likely, however, in the future the Slovak economy is going to rely on foreign labour even more significantly than it does currently.



*Picture: Martin Katler/Unsplash.com*

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## 8. Narrative Scenario for the Slovak Republic

This chapter focuses on the existing migration potential of Slovakia as a sending and a host country, considering important push and pull factors. Among the key factors analysed below the following ones are considered: the demographic structure of the Slovak Republic, as well as country's economy, technological development, the social attitudes towards migrants and members of minority groups, the governance indicators and environmental factors. As such, these migration narratives do not aim to foresee the migration future of Slovakia but rather outline the possible future development of demographic processes in the country, with particular focus on international migration movements.



## 8.1 Migration potential of Slovakia

In this section the authors are going to focus on migration potential of the Slovak Republic. Starting with some important demographic indicators, the fertility rate of Slovakia should be considered low as in 2019 it amounted to 1.57 child per woman. Then, it should be also highlighted that over the decade between 2010 and 2019 the fertility rate value for the Slovak Republic substantially increased from 1.43 in 2010 (Eurostat, 2021a). Despite the positive change it needs to be pointed out that the Slovak society is ageing. The life expectancy at birth for the country has not changed in a decade and it oscillates around 77 years. In 2021 for males the expected length of life totalled 73 years, and for females to 80 (Eurostat, 2021b). Thus, it might be concluded that in the upcoming decades a growing need for immigrant workforce in the care services sector is going to become apparent, particularly in the elderly persons care sector, considering the aforementioned demographic indicators. As there is already a high proportion of immigrants in the care sector in Slovakia, the authors of this analysis assume that the inflow of migrant carers to Slovakia will be substantially important, if not necessary, to support this branch of economy.

According to the official Slovak projections issued in 2002, it had been estimated that the number of immigrants to the Slovak Republic would increase due to the improving economic situation of the country and general population growth in the 1990s. Moreover, it has been assumed that between 2020 and 2050 more men than women would be migrating to the Slovak Republic. The number of male immigrants that would arrive in the country in 2050 was expected to reach even 9 thousand while the number of female immigrants arriving in the Slovak Republic has been estimated to amount to 6 thousand (Institute of Informatics and Statistics (hereafter: IIS) 2002: 10). However, it needs to be highlighted that those assumptions were based on the trend of masculinisation of migration present at the time the estimations had been conducted.

What is more, it might be expected that the inflow of migrants in the forthcoming years may prove much higher than it had been expected two decades ago (Ibidem). Clearly, this is an example that indicates that much of the past estimations regarding the number of migrants arriving in the central-European region have already been proved wrong some of more recent ones will also turn out to be imprecise, if not flawed. For example, the data presented in the IIS's 2002 report has been significantly underestimated as the number of immigrants registered in the Slovak Republic currently totals nearly 78 thousand (see Table 9). However, it may be assumed that the fact this number outbalances the estimates shared by the IIS is caused also by the specifics of the Slovak immigrant register system. Namely, as already have been pointed out in this report, the Slovak system of immigrant registration does not take into account those migrants who live in the country for less than a year and temporary migrants who work in the Slovak Republic periodically returning there to work. With a dose of circumspection the authors of this analysis assume that this very underestimation as well as the scarcity of the up-to-date projections reveal the authorities' unpreparedness for receiving potentially more numerous inflows of migrants.

The official data indicates that the volume of immigration flow to Slovakia in 2020 has been over twice as high as the volume of emigration. While 7 thousand foreigners came to Slovakia in 2019, in 2010 this number amounted to only 5 thousand (Eurostat, 2021c). The emigration flow from Slovakia is relatively low, but increasing. In 2010 the yearly rate of emigration equated to 2 thousand, to increase to 3,3 thousand nine years later (Eurostat, 2021d).

Importantly, in 2019 the number of male immigrants slightly exceeded the number of female immigrants. On the other hand, in a group of emigrants the share of females was nearly twice as high as the number of males. In 2019 the number of the male emigrants reached 1,3 thousand, while the number of female emigrants totalled 2 thousand. Similarly, in 2020 the number of emigrating men reached 1.2 thousand, while the number of women who left the country totalled 2 thousand (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2021). It should be pointed out, however, that also the statistics concerning the group of emigrants might be grossly underestimated, as the official calculations include only the persons who deregister from the national registration systems. As there is no such formal obligation for persons leaving the Slovak Republic, consequently, the Statistical Office does not identify and recognise many of emigrating individuals as emigrants in its databases.

Before the pandemic the country noted the lowest unemployment rate since 1993 – 5,8 per cent (World Bank, 2021a). The economic growth witnessed in Slovakia contributed to reduction of the public debt and improvement of the quality of life. However, there is still much room for improvement, for example in eradication of barriers to labour market participation for females, as gender employment gap and gender pay gap in the Slovak Republic are among the highest in the European Union (OECD, 2021a). It might also be noted that the employment rate for the country remains relatively low, as in 2019 it has been estimated as about 68 per cent (Ibidem).

As for the economic structure of the country, in 2019 the agriculture contributed to 2,5 per cent of the annual GDP and 2,8 per cent of the overall population have been employed in this sector. The industry and manufacturing, on the other hand, constituted 29 per cent of the annual GDP in 2019 providing employment to 36 per cent of the Slovak working age population (World Bank, 2021a). Hence, it might be assumed that as long as the economic prosperity continues, it might remain a pull factor for potential immigrants and a significant share of the foreign workforce is likely to find employment in the industrial sector.

As the global technological development manifests itself in a growing need for transition to a knowledge-based economy, it must be noted that Slovakia is likely to face some obstacles in this process. The student performance in Slovak secondary schools is lower than the EU average. Apart from that, also low participation in life-long learning noted in the country may impede such transition as, according to the OECD, participation rates in life-long learning for Slovakia are nearly three times lower than the EU average score (OECD, 2021b). It is estimated that in 2016 adult Slovaks spent on average 49 hours partaking in the learning process, whilst the average for the EU amounted to 119 hours (World Bank, 2021b). This situation is likely to significantly impact the development of technologies in the Slovak Republic. Potentially, the eventual technological backwardness might shape little demand for high-qualified immigrant labour workforce in the upcoming decades.

As pointed out by de Jong and Boissonneault, while analysing the potential of migration inflows into a given country the presence of ethnic, national, and religious minorities need to be considered. The status of minorities and attitudes toward immigrants are important factors that need to be taken into account while assessing international migration movements (de Jong & Boissonneault 2020: 11). Therefore, we explain the situation of the minority groups living in the territory of the Slovak Republic, following Bolečekova's and Olejarova's assumption, that the experiences of minority groups' representatives in contacts with the state might be reflected in future integration processes of foreigners in Slovakia (Bolečekova & Olejarova 2017: 204).

To assess whether the outflow of members of national minorities from Slovakia are likely, we analyse whether fair labour practices, decent living conditions, safety, social justice and education (Woodcraft, 2015: 140) are provided to them in the country.

According to the 2011 Population Census conducted in the Slovak Republic the Hungarians constitute 8.5 per cent of the country's population. Two per cent of people living in Slovakia are Romani, while Czechs, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Germans, Bulgarians, Poles and Moravians each constitute one percent of the population (Minority Rights Group).

Accordingly, in our analysis we focus on the two largest of the aforementioned groups.

Hungarians living in Slovakia are autochthonous and granted the official status of a national minority. The group is politically and culturally organized on regional and national level. While the coexistence of Hungarian minority and Slovak majority in the country is usually peaceful, the occasional tensions arise. For instance, in 2009 the Hungarian extremist, political forces<sup>16</sup> raised the issue of the Slovak language law aimed at limiting the use of minority languages in the country. The tension resulted in public demonstrations (Macháček & Heinrich & Alekseeva 2011: 11).

On the other hand, among all of the aforementioned minority groups, the Roma are known to be particularly affected by social exclusion. Romani population experiences inequality which manifests in commonly experienced poverty and a limited access to education (Machlica, 2019). It needs to be pointed out that the at-risk-of-poverty rate for a non-Roma person living in Slovakia is estimated as 13 per cent, whilst for the Roma it reaches as much as 68 per cent. In 2019 the employment rate for members of the Roma community reached merely 25 per cent. Moreover, in the same year, the share of Romani households living without a bathroom and a toilet inside the dwelling was calculated as 43 per cent, while for the overall Slovak population it reaches only 0.6 per cent. The share of Roma households living in the areas affected by crime and violence reaches 30 per cent, exceeding the rates for general population more than threefold (Machlica, 2019). Moreover, Roma children are thirty times more likely to drop from school than non-Romani minors (UNICEF 2011: 16), and the risk of leaving primary education among them reaches as many as 83 per cent. It is also estimated that 70 per cent of the Roma community in Slovakia has not engaged in the upper secondary education (OECD 2015: 7).

Consequently, one may expect that the outflow of Roma people from Slovakia will continue unless the Slovak authorities seriously address the issues of various forms of exclusion (in employment, education, health and housing) experienced by the members of the community in the country (Macsó 2018: 80-81). On the other hand, it might also be concluded that the Hungarian minority is not likely to emigrate on a large scale, as the community does not experience economic and social exclusion.

The attitudes towards receiving immigrants and refugees in the country are rather negative in the Slovak society. For example, the results of the 2017 Eurobarometer indicate that 54,5 per cent of the respondents in Slovakia perceive immigration "only as a problem" and 26,9 per cent as "equally a problem and an opportunity" (Bozogáňová 2020: 51). Moreover, the rate of antiimmigrant sentiments for Slovakia exceeds the average for the European Union (Bolečekova & Olejarova 2017: 204). Interestingly, the most hostile attitudes toward immigrants are reported in Bratislava region and the least hostile attitudes have been reported in Central and Eastern parts of Slovakia (Bozogáňová 2020: 50).

The anti-immigrant attitudes have been systematically reinforced by the rightwing party *Smer*, governing the country in the periods between 2006 and 2010 as well as from 2012 to 2020. The community trust enjoyed by the party has been dramatically inflamed after a murder of the Slovak investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée in 2018. The event resulted in an outbreak of massive protests under the banner of: 'For a fair Slovakia'. The demonstrators perceived the murder of a journalist as a proof that the country has been appropriated by the party that attempts to build an oligarchic system in Slovakia, therefore they cried out for transparency of the state and the government. Despite the change of the authorities, Dębiec & Groszkowski still predict that the anti-immigration sentiments, emphasised during the *Smer* rule, will remain strong, as the party that currently holds the power (*Ordinary People and Independent Personalities, OLaNO*)<sup>3</sup> entered the coalition with a populist, anti-immigration and pro-welfare party *We are the Family*<sup>2</sup> (Dębiec & Groszkowski 2019).

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<sup>16</sup> Among others, the 'Hungarian Guard' - far-right nationalist and military organisation, dissolved in 2009.

Although the Slovak Republic is generally perceived as a free country where the civil liberties are secured, it is reported that the freedom of Slovak media is threatened (Freedom House, 2019) and hostility against migrants has been reinforced by the populist media. It is important to underline that journalists working in Slovakia are exposed to verbal attacks and interference in their work from the authorities. Moreover, public media are concentrated in the hands of a few business groups and individuals<sup>3</sup> whilst the full media independence of public broadcaster Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS) is being put under question (Freedom House 2019). Presumably the populist, right wing political groups are likely to continue capitalising anti-immigrant sentiments reinforced during the period of Smer's governance, as long as they manage to keep the power in the country. The role of media and the rhetoric adopted by the authorities might become an obstacle that immigrants in the process of migrants' social integration. Bolečekova and Olejarova, speaking of the Migrant Integration Policy Index results for the Slovak Republic, pointed out that:

Slovakia has only been characterized as a "very small country of net immigration (mostly non-EU) since the 2000s, driven by pre-crisis economic conditions and future demographic trends." [and] scored 37 points, which means "slightly unfavourable" towards immigrants, and is placed 34th out of 38 countries (Bolečekova and Olejarova 2017: 211).

As governance and the degree of international cooperation are important factors in creating migration narrative scenarios (de Jong & Boissonneault 2020: 11) the role of the Slovak government in managing the international migration flows will now be considered. As it has been mentioned before in this analysis, the parliamentary elections conducted in February 2020 put an end to Smer's rule. As has already been pointed out, the winning party, *OLaNO* led by Igor Matovič, rules in coalition with right-wing *We are the family* party. During the electoral campaign, the parties that formed the new government promised to endeavour to eradicate corruption, improve the systems of education and health, and work to improve the situation of the Roma and Hungarian communities. What might also be important from this a perspective of this analysis is that *OLaNO* leans towards political cooperation with Visegrad Group countries, Germany and France rather than active participation in the EU (Dębiec & Gniazdowski, 2019). Moreover, an explicit migration policy has not been anticipated in the party's programme.

Then, however the environmental factors are often not emphasised by many migration researchers, they are crucial in assessing migration movements particularly for the purposes of long-term prognoses, such as this one (Dłużewski & Sobczak-Szelc, 2013: 69). Hence, mean annual temperature, precipitation data and risk of air pollution, droughts, floods and sudden storms are considered in this analysis and presented in this part of the report. Slovak land is abundant in agricultural (49 per cent), and forest soils (41 per cent), while only roughly 5 per cent of the country is a built-up area. Apart from that, Slovakia is situated in a temperate zone. The mean annual temperature totalled around 8 Celsius degrees for a period of the recent thirty years, while the mean precipitation remained at about 780 mm annually (World Bank, 2021c). However, due to the industrial pollution, it is estimated that nowadays more than three-quarters of the Slovak land is exposed to the impact of air pollutants (OECD, 2021a).

It is assumed that from 2020 to 2039 the mean annual temperature for the Slovak Republic will climb by around 1,5 Celsius degrees, while between 2040 and 2059 it is going to increase by around 2,4 Celsius degrees. The mean annual precipitation is also expected to rise, increasing by 4,4 mm between 2014 and 2059. Slight temperature increase and intensified precipitation are an optimistic prediction for the Slovak agricultural sector (World Bank 2021d). Due to the mountainous character of its terrain, Slovakia is at low risk of sudden storms and droughts.



Besides, in the following years, only the northern parts of the country have been at a medium risk of floods (Ibidem). In conclusion, it can be assessed that in the upcoming decades Slovakia will not be a sending country of environmental migration. What is more, due to insignificant climate variability the Slovak Republic might be a destination for climate refugees.

## 8.2 The analysis with focus on particular sending countries

In this section the main migration networks present in Slovakia are characterised. The following definition of migration networks has been adopted for the purposes of this analysis: 'sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas' (Light et al. 1989). The aim of this part of the scrutiny is to assess whether a given network will expand or diminish in the future. We take into account the size of the group, its development since 2012, the most important features and the situation in the country of origin.

According to COLSAF reports quoted in this report (see page 24), migrants participating in the Slovak labour market might be divided into the following, three categories: the third-country nationals who obtained work permits, the EU/EEA citizens holding information cards, and the third-country nationals holding information cards. Currently, the third-country nationals are the largest group of migrants present in the Slovak labour market. All of the figures mentioned below concern both immigrants granted permanent residence permits as well as temporary stays. Among the EU citizens, the largest migrant groups residing in Slovakia are: Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Germans, Italians, UK citizens, Austrians, Bulgarians, French, Spaniards and Croats (Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic 2020: 12). When it comes to the third-country nationals, the most frequent nationalities are: Ukrainians, Serbians, Vietnamese, Russians, and Chinese (Ibidem: 9).

The size of the most numerous migrant community in Slovakia, Czechs, reached 12 thousand in 2020 (Mol 2020: 12). The size of this group has been increasing over the last couple of years, having risen from 9 thousand in 2012 (Mol 2012: 9). Due to the language proximity and historical connections between both nations, it is expected that the number of Czechs in Slovakia is going to increase in the following years.

The number of Hungarians residing in Slovakia had totalled 6 thousand in 2012 (Mol 2012: 9). Then it had risen by almost 60 per cent over the next decade and have reached 9.5 thousand in 2021 (Ibidem). The number of information cards granted to the representatives of Hungarian community totalled 4 thousand for males and roughly 1,5 thousand for females (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny 2021). Moreover, a continuing trend of masculinisation of Hungarian migrants' group over the years have been noted. Due to prospects of growth of the Slovak economy, and presence of Hungarian social network in the country, it is assumed that the number of Hungarian migrants might rise in the near future. Both Hungarians, as well as Czechs are well rooted in Slovakia due to the long bilateral history, and the long-standing presence of both minorities in the country. That, in turn, suggests both groups might rise in size over the next couple of years.

The third-largest immigrant group in Slovakia are Romanians. Romanian community is the one with the largest share of members holding information cards among all of the EU immigrant groups in Slovakia, as in 2021 there are 8 thousand Romanians who have been granted this kind of document. At the same time, 80 per cent of members of the group are males (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny 2021). Interestingly, in 2012 all of 6 thousand Romanians living in the Slovak Republic had held permanent residence permits (Mol 2012: 9). It can be presumed that the trend of immigration of Romanians to Slovakia will continue due to the presence of historical bonds between Romanian and Slovak nations. However, if the economic situation in Romania will further improve, the influx of Romanians to the Slovak Republic may slowly diminish in the following decades.

Nowadays, Polish migrants are the fourth largest group of foreigners with EU passports living in Slovakia. In 2020 there have been 6 thousand Poles residing in the country (Mol 2020: 12). Comparatively, the number of Polish people who had resided in the Slovak Republic in 2012 totalled 4,7 thousand (Mol 2012: 9). Poles are thus just another emigrant group in Slovakia that expanded in number over the previous decade. Nearly 2,5 thousand Polish immigrants in Slovakia have been granted information cards as for May 2021. Among them, male migrants outbalance females (Ibidem: 9). In 2021 the rate of feminization in a group of Polish migrants holding information cards reached 30 per cent (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny 2021). It is assumed that the inflow of Polish migrants to Slovakia will decrease as the Polish economy is developing. Apart from that, the future inflow of Poles to Slovakia may, to some extent, be maintained among members of particular professional groups (e.g. miners) within border areas. Those migration flows, however, are not likely to be significant.

In 2020 the number of Germans living in Slovakia reached 4,5 thousand (Mol 2020: 12) not having significantly changed since 2014. What is interesting is that relatively the group have not been grossly impacted by the pandemic outbreak. In April 2020, 606 persons have been employed, while 12 months later – 633 (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny 2020; 2021). The employment stability in the group indicates that German network in Slovakia consists mostly of high-qualified professionals. Hence, it might be presumed that migration inflow of Germans will not significantly diminish and, most likely, neither it is going to increase, as the demand for immigrant expert labour force in Slovakia is probably not going to prove considerable.

In 2012 the Italian community totalled nearly 2 thousand persons, while in 2020 it exceeded 3 thousand people (Mol 2020: 12). It might be concluded that the group has been increasing in size and it is likely to expand further. Importantly, more than one-third of the members of the network have been granted information cards (Mol, 2012: 9).

Another rapidly growing migrant communities in Slovakia are the British community and Austrians. In 2020, numbers of information cards issued to members of those national groups amounted to 2,8 thousand, and 2,7 thousand, respectively (Mol 2020: 12). Comparatively, in 2012 the number of British holders of information cards totalled 1,5 thousand, and Austrians – 1,9 thousand (Mol 2012: 9). The growing number of British migrants residing in the country stems from the economic attractiveness of the Slovak Republic, while the growth of the group of Austrian immigrants is partially caused by the geographical proximity of the countries. Closeness of Austria and Slovakia facilitates creation of economic and family bonds between nationals of those countries. Similarly to the aforementioned cases, it is expected that both Austrian and British communities in Slovakia will grow boosted by the development of the Slovak economics.

In 2015 the number of Bulgarians in Slovakia reached 1,7 thousand. Importantly, in 2021 among 2.2 thousand Bulgarian immigrants legally employed in Slovakia there were merely 20 per cent women (Mol, 2020: 12). It is assumed that the inflow of Bulgarian migrants to Slovakia might slightly decrease in the future if the country witnesses continuing economic growth.

The biggest group of third country nationals in Slovakia are Ukrainians, who constitute one-quarter of all the foreigners residing in the country (IOM 2021). According to the Mol data, in 2020 over 36 thousand of Ukrainians were granted the temporary stay, and over 6 thousand a permanent stay (Mol 2020: 9). The number of registered and employed Ukrainians (see: Table 6) is much smaller than the data presented by the Mol and we can assume the immigration of Ukrainians to Slovakia is mostly of economic nature. However a part of Ukrainians in Slovakia work without the required permission, this share is presumably not considerable. As pointed out by Drbohlav and Jaroszewicz: 'It is believed that the extent of irregular migrants' work [*in Slovakia*] is not great. Their contribution to national economy is difficult to estimate owing to the lack of any well-founded studies, interviews or estimates' (Drbohlav & Jaroszewicz 2016: 134). If the political instability and economic difficulties witnessed in Ukraine persist, new waves of emigration might leave from the country, with some of migrants deciding to seek safety and better living conditions in Slovakia.

Serbs are the next-biggest network of the third-country nationals in the Slovak Republic. In 2020 the number of Serbs granted permanent stay totalled nearly 1 thousand while the number of temporary stays issued to the Serbian national proved much higher, reaching as many as 15 thousand (Mol 2020: 10). The Serbian community grew substantially as in 2012 the number of Serbs granted permanent stay had equated to 420, and temporary stay to 4 thousand (Ibidem: 11). On the one hand, it might be assumed that in the nearest future the number of Serbs in Slovakia might increase. On the other, taking into consideration the discrepancy between the numbers of permanent and temporary stay permits, which might indicate that the Serbs in the Slovak Republic are employed as seasonal workers, in a longer perspective of the next decades the network might also decrease.

In 2020 the number of Vietnamese residing in Slovakia totalled 6.7 thousand (Mol 2020: 9). Therefore, Vietnamese are the largest community of Asian origin residing in the Slovak Republic. We assume that the Vietnamese network could have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the number of work permits for foreigners held by Vietnamese decreased from 1128 in 2019 to 940 in 2020 (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny 2019; 2020). What is more, most of Vietnamese in the Slovak Republic hold temporary stays. In 2020 the number of such documents issued to Vietnamese totalled 4.9 thousand. As Vietnamese communities in the CEE region show high entrepreneurship skills and quickly adapt to the new circumstances, it is expected that the number of Vietnamese in Slovakia will not decrease.

In 2020 there were 5.7 thousand Russian citizens living in Slovakia (Mol, 2020: 9), which indicates that the community had been growing, as in 2012 the group had totalled merely 2.3 thousand, with 1 thousand of temporary and 1.3 thousand of permanent residents (Mol 2012: 9). In 2020, 250 stays have been granted to Russians, among them 143 males and 106 females (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny 2020). Outbalance of permanent stay permits over the temporary ones and a relatively high female employment ratio suggest that the Russian community in Slovakia might grow in the following decades.

What is particularly noteworthy with regard to the group of Chinese is an imbalance between the number of permanent stays and temporary stays granted to Chinese immigrants. In 2020 the size of the Chinese community equated to 2.7 thousand, including 1.9 thousand immigrants granted permanent stays and around 800 granted the temporary documents (Mol 2020: 9). The growth tendency in the size of the Chinese diaspora has been observed, as in 2010 it totalled only 1.7 thousand (Mol 2010: 13). In 2020 164 work permits have been granted to the Chinese, while in 2019 – 176 (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny, 2020; Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny, 2019). In both cases, the share of women among permit holders equated to around 15 per cent. The community, due to a high share of permanent stays and, so far, the upward trend in the number of Chinese immigrants in the Slovak Republic, is likely to be growing.

### 8.3 Diaspora engagement policy

In the 1990s Slovakia has witnessed a massive return emigration linked to the change of economic and political system. For those who decided not to return to their country of origin, the diaspora engagement policy had been created. Consequently, the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad (USZZ) has been established. The institution not only substantively supports Slovaks living abroad and collects relevant data but also bestows Certificates of Slovak Living Abroad (SLA). The SLA grantees gain access to many rights guaranteed by the Slovak Republic, among them free access to the labour market in the country and social protection. The introduced policy aims at attracting Slovak emigrants to their country of origin.

## 8.4 Asylum seekers and refugees

The Slovak government has not agreed to introduce the quota system proposed by the EU and targeted at managing the immigration of the asylum seekers of, mostly, Africa and Middle Eastern origin. In 2019, 232 applications for asylum have been registered by the Slovak authorities, whilst as many as 93 have been rejected (see: Table 5). In general, the number of refugees granted asylum in the Slovak Republic is relatively low. Importantly, the number of asylum seekers registering their cases in the Slovak Republic has not decreased in time of the Covid-19 pandemic and even insignificantly increased to 249 in 2020. The biggest national group among them are Syrians (see Figure 10). Most likely the number of asylum seekers will continue to rise in the future.

## 8.5 Recruitment agencies

In case of the Slovak Republic, the activity of recruitment agencies reinforces the emigration trends, however it is also vital, for example, for the Ukrainian migrants, who move to the central-European region and Slovakia itself in big numbers. The most important directions for seasonal or permanent employment of Slovaks are the Czech Republic, Poland, Netherlands, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, and Armenia (Skills Provision International 2021).

## 8.6 COVID-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the situation of migrants' social and economics networks which manifests in the lower number of work permits and information cards issued in 2020, in comparison to 2019 and 2018 (Mol 2020: 9). Although Slovakia does not suffer from major shortages in the labour force yet, some sectors – heavily dependent on migrant work – have been weakened, among them, for instance, tourism industry and elderly care (OECD 2021 b). Nevertheless, the Slovak economy is projected to grow by 4.3 per cent in 2022. The unemployment rate, on the other hand, is expected to exceed pre-crisis levels by the end of that year (OECD 2021 b).



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