



09/02/2023

RAP/RCha/SVK/13(2023)

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

13th National Report on the implementation of the
European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27, and 31
for the period 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021

Report registered by the Secretariat on

09 February 2023

CYCLE 2023

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

The European Social Charter (revised)

The Report of the Slovak Republic

on the implementation of the European Social Charter (revised)

(Conclusions 2019: ratified provisions of Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27, and 31
of the Revised Charter)

Table of Contents

Article 7 Paragraph 1	3
Article 7 Paragraph 2	3
Article 7 Paragraph 3	3
Article 7 Paragraph 4	3
Article 7 Paragraph 5	4
Article 7 Paragraph 6	4
Article 7 Paragraph 7	4
Article 7 Paragraph 8	4
Article 7 Paragraph 9	4
Article 7 Paragraph 10	5
Article 8 Paragraph 1	8
Article 8 Paragraph 2	9
Article 8 Paragraph 3	9
Article 8 Paragraph 4	9
Article 8 Paragraph 5	9
Article 16	9
Article 17 Paragraph 1	14
Article 17 Paragraph 2	19
Article 19 Paragraph 1	25
Article 19 Paragraph 4	26
Article 19 Paragraph 5	28
Article 19 Paragraph 6	28
Article 19 Paragraph 7	28
Article 19 Paragraph 8	28
Article 19 Paragraph 9	29
Article 19 Paragraph 11	29
Article 27 Paragraph 1	30
Article 27 Paragraph 2	30
Article 27 Paragraph 3	30

Article 7 Paragraph 1

Regarding the question of the Committee on whether the maximum working time of juvenile employees refers to working time during school holidays, the Slovak Republic would like inform the Committee that the working time limits apply throughout each working week, they are not set separately for school year and school holidays. Due to the nature of the work performed by these persons, its length does not usually span over a couple of days the given cultural performance or sport activity takes. If a young person is undertaking vocational education, the part of which is work performed directly within the premises of their employer, this work is not performed during school holidays (spring holidays – 1 week in February, Easter holidays – 1 week, summer holidays - 2 months, autumn holidays – 4 days and Christmas holidays – 2 weeks) and public holidays.

Regarding the question on activities performed to discover cases of children under 15 years of age working on their own account outside the scope of employment contracts in direct relation to cultural and sport performances and advertising activities, the National Labour Inspectorate (NLI) regularly performs inspections focused on finding violations of currently effective labour law relations and annually publishes a report of such findings on its website.

Article 7 Paragraph 2

Regarding the question of the Committee on activities and findings of the National Labour Inspectorate (NLI) in relation to the prohibition of employment of young persons under the age of 18 for dangerous or unhealthy activities, including the number of violations detected and sanctions applied, the Slovak Republic would like state that in 2021, 16 382 inspections focused on labour-law relations were performed by the NLI, in 2020 a total of 15 543 and in 2019 a total of 24 423. In 2020, one violation of the prohibition of work of persons under the age of 18 was discovered and the NLI immediately ordered the given employer to stop the related work activity and also removed its consent with employing juvenile employees from the employer in question. In other years, no case of prohibition of employment of persons under the age of 18 in dangerous working conditions was identified.

Article 7 Paragraph 3

Please refer also to the information under par. 1 and 2 of this particle for the question on work during school holidays and findings of the NLI as regards the prohibition of work of children subject to compulsory education.

Article 7 Paragraph 4

No changes to the situation that was to be in conformity with the Charter. In the period of 2018 – 2021, the NLI carried out 482 inspections focused on adherence to the provisions related to reduced working time of juvenile employees no longer subject to the compulsory school education and found 10 cases of breach of the relevant legislation. The employers concerned have been sanctioned with the withdrawal of agreement to employ juvenile employees, or financial penalties with subsequent inspections after a certain period of time passed.

Article 7 Paragraph 5

Regarding the question on the benefits of the system of social assistance available to juvenile workers, these are activation allowance, housing allowance and a separate individual allowance. Anyone earning the minimum wage can apply for these benefits.

Regarding the question on the amounts of net minimum and net average wage:

Year	Net minimum wage	Net average wage
2018	403.18 EUR	710.59 EUR
2019	427.11 EUR	766.01 EUR
2020	476.74 EUR	794.76 EUR
2021	508.44 EUR	849.48 EUR

The above mentioned levels of net minimum and net average wage apply for all workers, including juvenile workers.

Regarding the question on violations and sanctions imposed concerning the inspections carried out which guarantee allowances are paid to apprentices, according to the NLI, in 2021 a total of 16 382 inspections related to these aspects of labour law relations were performed and 284 violations were discovered. In 2020, a total of 15 543 inspections were performed with 305 violations. In 2019, a total of 24 423 inspections were performed with 374 violations. In 2018, a total of 17 269 inspections were performed with 392 violations identified. As far as sanctions are concerned, these were financial penalties.

Article 7 Paragraph 6

No questions asked.

Article 7 Paragraph 7

No questions asked. As a side note, the Slovak Republic would like to inform the committee, that according to the latest information from the NLI, no violation related to not respecting the right to paid annual leave for juvenile employees under the age of 18 has been found in the reference period.

Article 7 Paragraph 8

According to the information the NLI, during the reference period, no violation of the prohibition of night work of juvenile workers was discovered.

Article 7 Paragraph 9

In 2018, the NLI performed 21 inspections focused on adherence to the rules related to medical examination of juvenile workers, in 2019 it was 26 inspections, in 2020 it was 23 inspections and in 2021 it was 73 inspections. These inspections were performed on the basis of notifications from the relevant general medical practitioners, which notified the NLI about the requirement of the selected juvenile employees to undertake medical examinations in relation to the work they perform. The inspections did not find any violation, as the employer concerned ensured their juvenile workers attended the required medical examination.

Article 7 Paragraph 10

Regarding the question on the protection of children against violence, the Slovak Republic would like to state the following:

The National Coordination Centre for Solving the Problem of Violence Against Children (hereinafter referred to as "NKS") coordinates the implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence (hereinafter referred to as the "National Strategy"), by organizing working meetings of entities jointly responsible for the implementation of the National Strategy for the fulfilment of individual tasks, preparing documents and implementing outputs for individual tasks based on the documents and comments of co-responsible and cooperating subjects, methodical management of child protection coordinators from violence and evaluation of the coordination of participating subjects at the local level (work meetings and continuous communication with child protection coordinators, preparation of training for participants of multidisciplinary work meetings, analysis of output materials and proposals for system measures, etc.).

On the basis of the above, the NKS also initiated several legislative and systemic changes, such as:

Attorney-guardian:

- As a part of the amendment to the Criminal Code – regulation of rights and obligations, separate maintenance of lists within the bar association and also notification obligation of the lawyer-guardian in relation to measures of social and legal protection of children;

- It is the result of discussions between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Slovak Bar Association and police investigators.

Forced marriages:

- In addition to several preventive activities in the region and multidisciplinary meetings in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities, a leaflet with basic information on identification signs and possibilities for help has been prepared, as well as continuous educational activities on this topic with teachers, psychologists, social workers and the police;

- Also, several negotiations took place with the Ministry of the Interior, as the analysis of the Office of the Prosecutor General showed that punishments for forced marriages were mostly a suspended sentence. Based on these discussions in the amendment of the criminal law, the penalty was adjusted so that it is not possible to "get away" with the conditional punishment/suspended sentence.

Sexual abuse - increasing the statute of limitations:

- On the basis of experience and many analysed cases of sexual abuse and also on the basis of the recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee, in which the Slovak Republic is also represented, a discussion was initiated with the Ministry of Justice and the statute of limitations (prescriptive period) for that criminal offense was increased from 15 years (from reaching the age of majority) to 20 by a new amendment to the Criminal Act.

The NKS, as the substantive manager, participates in the implementation of the National Project on the Support of the Protection of Children from Violence and continued to support the independent position of coordinator of the protection of children from violence, which operates at the local level, supported the creation of a coordination framework at the local level, especially by methodologically guiding the coordinators operating at the regional level in the implementation meetings of the multidisciplinary team, during the preparation and implementation of educational activities and multidisciplinary education. In 2022, the NKS, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, prepared and published a leaflet about dangerous communities that can pose a significant risk to children, can encourage children to engage in risky behaviour, require loyalty and often personal data from children. It is not only about unregistered churches, but also about paramilitary groups, groups focusing on dangerous games and challenges, but also about groups for example "effective weight loss" and so on. The most important function of this educational material is early identification.

In accordance with the Slovak Government's work plan, the NKS is preparing a new Strategy for Childhood without Violence for all Children. This strategy directly follows the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence and also reflects on the development of the situation in Slovakia. It also reflects international strategies (e.g. the Council of Europe's Strategy for Children's Rights) and includes multidisciplinary cooperation between departments - continuation of the coordination system built so far, involving children in all things that concern them, the judicial system and legislation understandable to children, the child's path to safety, education and professional growth of employees and the professional public, prevention against violence and several educational activities, etc. As part of this year's NKS campaign aimed at raising awareness of violence against children, the strategy of adding information through posts and stories on social media has fundamentally changed, which consisted of focusing on one topic and deepening information related to it for a certain period (e.g. cyberbullying, neglect, sexual abuse).

Towards the end of 2022, the NKS recorded video-podcasts with interesting guests who had different professions (e.g. actress, presenter, clinical psychologist, psychiatrist and researcher, manager of the national helpline for children at risk, expert in the field of video games, peer education lecturer and volunteer etc.). Video-podcasts focus on the topic of violence as a whole, the purpose is to open social discussion and de-taboo the topic of violence against children. The podcast is called "It concerns me" (#tykasamato).

Raising awareness of peer violence for children in an acceptable form is realized by the theatrical performance PUNK ROCK (www.punkrock.sk) in cooperation with the NKS, and this, through a subsequent discussion with the audience (students), points to the issue of peer violence with fatal impact. The discussion is focused on the basic explanation of processes and concepts, but above all, on mediation of help.

As regards preventing violence in institutions, abuse, exploitation, but also mistreatment of children is a serious socio-pathological phenomenon with the potential for far-reaching negative consequences for primary and secondary victims. The need to take comprehensive measures to protect children from any form of abuse becomes particularly urgent for institutions and organizations working with children. There is a lot of interaction between their staff and child clients. To eliminate risks in the context of institutions/organizations working with children, the NKS participated in the creation of a methodological guide: SAFEGUARDING - Strategy for the Protection of Children from

Abuse, Exploitation and Ill-treatment. The manual is primarily intended for persons holding management positions in institutions and organizations working with children, but also for all employees and volunteers working in institutions and organizations working with children.

As regards preventing of social exclusion of children, the Slovak Republic would like to state that in 2022, the NKS developed the conceptual material National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee ("ECG"), the vision of which is to improve living conditions in Slovakia for all children who face difficult life situations through no fault of their own. Children in these life situations need to be supported, both at the national and regional level. The presented material is designed on the basis of recommendations and divided into basic areas - improving access to education, health care, adequate housing and healthy nutrition. One of the pillars of measures to break the cycle of poverty is inevitably education, its support, availability and elimination of the causes of early termination of education. One of the main causes of early termination of education is the early parenthood of girls, therefore the material also focuses on education and prevention in the field of early parenthood.

Regarding the question on protection of children in cyberspace/digital space, the Slovak Republic would like to state that in the area of measures aimed at protecting children in cyberspace, the NKS developed an Action Plan for the National Concept for the Protection of Children in Digital Space for the years 2022-2023, which was approved by the Government by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 382/2022. It contains up-to-date tasks important for increasing the safety of children in the online space, agreed upon by the members of the working group of experts - representatives of ministries, other state administration bodies, non-profit organizations and scientific research institutions.

The NKS (in accordance with the Action Plan) is developing an initiative towards the involvement of the Slovak Republic in the INHOPE networks (an international network for reporting and better identification of content depicting sexual abuse of children) and the creation of a Safe Internet Centre in the Slovak Republic, which will be connected to the international INSAFE network.

From the point of view of INSAFE, an informal consortium of four actors was created, which aims to establish a Safe Internet Centre in the Slovak Republic. In accordance with the requirements of the Better Internet for Kids initiative, to which INSAFE belongs, a helpline (National helpline for children in danger) aimed at raising awareness about the Centre was also established.

Once a month, the NKS organizes an online event for the lay public, the so-called Evening Schools, focused on the digital space, its positive and negative aspects in the context of children in the online space. The topics are focused on the "home digital agreement" (how to set the rules for using devices with Internet access); "Is it (cyber)bullying?" (what is and what is not cyberbullying, how to recognize it and how to deal with it); "Video games, bogeyman or useful tool?" (about the positive and negative factors of online gaming, when it is an addiction, when and what games can be useful and develop a child's creativity and critical thinking), "Hoaxes and misinformation" and many others aimed at protecting children in the online space.

As regards the question of participation of children, children were directly participating on the preparation of the new strategy mentioned above. Children's participation took place on 12-17 October 2022 in three places in Slovakia: Stará Ľubovňa, Žiar nad

Hronom and Bratislava. A total of 66 children and 27 adults from the three regions participated.

The views and abilities of children and young people and their contributions are a unique resource for strengthening human rights and democracy, yet their views often remain unheard and ignored. The Slovak Republic decided that if we want to do something for children, we have to do it with them, and that's why we involved children in the creation of the new National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence.

Their participation took place in the form of a moderated discussion with the participation of children from primary and secondary schools and adults who represented entities working in the field of protecting children from violence. In the beginning, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was presented to the participants, where they had the opportunity to express their opinion on the observance of children's rights. After the introduction, children discussed questions such as: What topic do you think we should cover? What topics would you like to learn about? What topics that concern you receive little attention from adults? The participation helped us identify and formulate topics and areas that should not be left out in the new strategy. Their experience and perception of the current world and the measures that adults prepare for them is the best feedback for the country. They do not allow us to slip into routine and ideas that directives and regulations are enough for us and thus motivate us to always do things better. This is a unique opportunity to involve children in the process of creating such material, which we hope will become a natural part in the future.

Article 8 Paragraph 1

Regarding the question on what kind of benefits is provided to employed women besides the maternity benefit, the Slovak Republic would like to inform the Committee about new development in this area.

As of April 1, 2021, the sickness benefit system was expanded to include a new benefit - pregnancy benefit.

The purpose of the new benefit is to provide a pregnant woman with an income that will serve to compensate for increased expenses during pregnancy. All pregnant women with sickness insurance and pregnant women whose compulsory insurance has been interrupted due to taking parental leave or receiving parental allowance are entitled to this benefit. Entitlement to the benefit arises from the beginning of the 27th week before the expected day of delivery, i.e. from the 13th week of pregnancy. The conditions for entitlement to this benefit are: the existence of sickness insurance, at least 270 days of sickness insurance in the last two years before the reason for providing this benefit arose, and payment of the insurance premium for the health insurance on time and in the correct amount by a self-employed woman. The specificity of this benefit is that the Social Insurance Agency will provide it even during the period when the insured person is earning income or receiving other benefits – therefore it is cumulative with the income or other benefits. The entitlement to the pregnancy benefit expires on the day the pregnancy ends.

Article 8 Paragraph 2

Regarding the statement of non-conformity related to the possibility of dismissal of a woman worker during pregnancy or maternity leave, the Slovak Republic would like to state that this is a very specific situation and the only case when a person concerned could be dismissed. It is not clear for the Slovak Republic why it is being repeatedly found to be in non-conformity on this ground, because the employer in this situation de facto has no other option than to dismiss such an employee. For example, if a woman worker, who is pregnant or on a maternity leave, works for an employer which decides to relocate to a city 200 km away from its “original” seat, this woman worker would be given the opportunity to continue working on her position in the new seat of the employer. If the woman concerned does not agree to such a change to her conditions of work (meaning she does not agree to perform her work in a new location or within different branch of the employer), the employer does not have a chance to keep her employed when the employer relocates to an entirely new location.

Article 8 Paragraph 3

No questions asked.

Article 8 Paragraph 4

No questions asked.

Article 8 Paragraph 5

The Slovak Republic confirms, that in accordance with the Labour Code (Article 157 par. 1), the woman concerned does retain the right to return to her previous post. If assignment to the original job and workplace is not possible, the employer is obliged to assign them to another job corresponding to the employment contract. The employer is obliged to place the employee under conditions that will not be less favourable for them than the conditions they had at the time when an important personal obstacle to work arose according to the first sentence, and the employee has the right to benefit from any improvement in working conditions, to which they would be entitled to if this important personal obstacle at work had not occurred. This applies both to the private and the public sector.

Article 16

Regarding the question on measures aimed at preventing violence against women and protection of victims of such violence, including forms of legal and psychological advisory services and crisis centres for victims, the Slovak Republic would like to inform the Committee that an amendment to the Act on Social Services, amended the range of natural persons to whom it is possible to provide social services in an emergency housing facility. The listed classification is exclusively dedicated to providing assistance to a natural person who is subjected to domestic violence or gender-based violence, or who is a victim of a crime, or a victim of human trafficking, or to a natural person who is threatened by the aforementioned situations. The emergency housing facility provides: accommodation for a certain period of time, social counselling, assistance in exercising rights and interests protected by law, conditions are created for: food preparation, food distribution, performing necessary basic personal hygiene, washing, ironing and maintenance of linen and clothing, a

hobby. The secrecy of the place of provision of the social service and the anonymity of the clients are maintained, but not only because of the threat to their life and health, but also due to the protection of their privacy and family life. In view of the problems that are solved within the mentioned social service, the provision of social counselling to the perpetrator of violence is also regulated at the same time. In order to provide security to victims of violence, social services that provide assistance can only be provided outside the object of the facility in which social services are provided to the victims.

As of January 23, 2023, there are 34 emergency housing facilities registered in the Slovak Republic, which are established by public and non-public social service providers. According to the Act on Social Services, the provision of emergency housing is the responsibility of higher territorial units. The emergency housing facility will provide social services to any natural person in an unfavourable social situation, if it is necessary to protect their life and health, regardless of whether it is an adult natural person or an adult natural person with a minor child or children. Social services are provided on the basis of a concluded contract on the provision of social services in accordance with Article 74 of the Act on Social Services.

The Slovak Republic has adopted several binding documents that significantly affect the equality of women and men in Slovakia. On April 28, 2021, the Government Resolution 223/2021 approved the "National strategy for equality between women and men and equal opportunities in the Slovak Republic for the years 2021 - 2027, together with the relevant Action Plan for equality between women and men and equal opportunities for the years 2021 - 2027". Measures and activities are focused on areas such as: violence against women, bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination against women in education, science and research, discrimination against employed women and job seekers, wage differentials, invisible work, women and their representation in leading positions and ensuring equality between women and men at the institutional level.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and state and public administration bodies developed the "National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women for 2022-2027", which was approved by the Government Resolution 12/2022 on January 12, 2022. The action plan complements the National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities in the Slovak Republic for 2021-2027. It establishes the basis for providing institutional support to women who are victims of violence and their children and includes strengthening the legal and strategic framework, supporting existing ones and creating new available support services, education for professions dealing with violence against women, primary prevention, as well as monitoring and research.

The goal of priority area no. 1: "Protection of women experiencing violence and their children" is:

- Ensuring the comprehensive protection of women from violence, access to help and support, including long-term assistance aimed at mitigating or eliminating the various impacts of violence and the sustainability of specialized services for women experiencing violence and especially for pregnant women experiencing violence in a sufficient number, geographical distribution and quality with regard to the needs of women experiencing violence and their children.

- Increasing the availability of services for women experiencing violence and their children.

- Increasing the protection of the safety of children of women experiencing violence and their specialized support.
- Increasing the availability and use of means of legal protection, including information about them.
- Secure financial resources for the implementation and sustainability of the measures.
- Support of non-governmental organizations and involvement of civil society.
- Improving the awareness of women experiencing violence about available support services for women experiencing violence and their children, and legal measures in a language they understand.

The goal of priority area no. 2 "Prevention of violence against women" is:

- To implement comprehensive and coordinated prevention of violence against women at all three levels of prevention with the involvement of all concerned actors in order to achieve a reduction of violence against women, its consequences for women and their children, and to eliminate the risk of secondary victimization as a result of the actions or inaction of a public authority, an entity providing assistance to victims, a health care provider, an expert, an interpreter, an advocate or means of notification.
- Implement continuous primary prevention of violence in education and society.
- Introduce measures to prevent secondary and repeated victimization of those experiencing violence.
- Tertiary violence prevention available.

The objective of the 3rd priority area "Integrated policies and data collection" is:

- Increasing knowledge about violence against women and about the support and protection of women experiencing violence and their children (ensuring the systematic collection of nationwide and administrative data and its evaluation)
- Increasing the level and regularity of knowledge about the punishment of violence
- Ensure a comprehensive and coordinated solution to violence against women at the systemic level, including multi-institutional and interdepartmental cooperation, which will be based on knowledge
- Set and implement comprehensive and coordinated policies
- Coordinating body.

The goal of priority area 4 "Effective prosecution of violence against women" is:

- Ensure the protection of women from all forms of violence, consistently and effectively prosecute violence and hold perpetrators of violence accountable, including the effective application of protective measures.
- Increasing prosecution of violence and protection of women experiencing violence from crimes related to violence against women.
- Provision and implementation of comprehensive legislation in the field of violence against women, which will ensure women's access to justice and appropriate compensation in the civil-law field.

The Slovak Republic is implementing the project "Improving the protection of victims' rights - strengthening capacities and procedures to combat violence against women and domestic violence", the aim of which is to:

- Bring up-to-date knowledge about the protection of women and their children from violence
- Create coordinated protection against violence through the work of regional coordinators

- Strengthen activities aimed at the primary prevention of domestic and gender-based violence
- Improve procedures for the prevention of secondary victimization, in particular by increasing the availability of special police interrogation rooms
- Through specialized education, create prerequisites for the creation of police teams of specialists focused on investigating cases of domestic and gender-based violence
- Implement programs for perpetrators of violence and lectures for young people aimed at preventing violence against women.

At the same time, the national project "Prevention and Elimination of Gender Discrimination" is being implemented, which is being implemented thanks to support from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund within the Operational Program Human Resources, within which systemic institutional advisory and research activities in the field of discrimination were ensured, including violence against women. A free and round-the-clock National Line for Women is available for women who are at risk of or experiencing violence, which is a confidential and safe space as well as the point of first contact, where women are provided with all important information about violence against women, especially about violence in close relationships.

As part of the project, the Coordinating Methodical Centre for the Prevention of Violence against Women (hereinafter referred to as "KMC") was established, which initiated the creation of regional working groups to create action plans based on the real needs of the regions. The content of the regional action plans and their main areas, which focus on the provision of assistance and support to victims of violence against women through the area of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, is the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls so that their basic human rights are not violated and that women could live in safety, dignity, freedom and without any threat. KMC implements workshops for workers in the field of providing specific services for women experiencing violence, workshops for other helping professions in the field of protection and support of women experiencing violence, online education - police, social workers, health workers, prosecutor's office and courts or specialized training programs at the regional level. KMC created several methodologies, carried out monitoring and carried out several researches or carried out information and awareness activities.

In Slovakia, the area of support and protection of women and their children from violence is created and provided primarily by non-public social service providers registered or accredited pursuant to Act no. 448/2008 Coll. on social services. Counselling centres and emergency housing facilities providing safe accommodation for women experiencing violence and their children ("women's safe houses") represent a specialized type of support and protection for women and their children experiencing violence.

As of January 1, 2018, Act No. 274/2017 Coll. on Victims of Crimes and on amendments to certain laws (hereinafter referred to as the Act on Victims). With this law, European standards in relation to the rights and protection of victims of crimes were transferred to the Slovak legal system. The Act on Victims defines terms such as victim of a crime, particularly vulnerable victim or domestic violence. It also regulates the rights of victims regardless of the initiation of criminal proceedings, i.e. in particular, the right to professional assistance, including legal assistance. The Act on Victims also focuses on the regulation of compensation for victims of violent crimes as well as the creation of a system for the provision of professional assistance by entities providing assistance to victims and

their support. Every victim has the right to receive professional help. This professional assistance is mainly provided by entities accredited under the Act on Victims as well as other entities providing assistance to victims (so-called registered entities). Individual entities usually specialize in providing professional assistance to a certain group of victims, so that they can focus more specifically on the needs of victims and provide better quality professional help. Accredited entities can provide you with general professional assistance or specialized professional assistance that is intended for particularly vulnerable victims.

Specialized professional assistance for a particularly vulnerable victim includes:

- providing general professional assistance,
- provision of crisis psychological intervention,
- evaluation of the threat of danger to life or health,
- mediating the provision of social services in an emergency housing facility and specialized social counselling, if the life or health of a particularly vulnerable victim is in immediate danger.

Especially vulnerable victims are always entitled to the provision of specialized professional assistance free of charge. This assistance is provided for a period of 90 days, and if necessary and the victim requests it (also informally, e.g. by arranging another meeting), even longer.

Regarding the question on facilities providing care to children aged 0 to 6 years, the Slovak Republic would like to state that in order to reconcile family and work life, parents of children (from 0-3 years old) can use the care provided to children in childcare facilities until the child is three years old. Currently, 214 such facilities with a total capacity of 3752 places are registered in the social services system. For the purpose of paying for the care provided, parents can use the child care allowance or parental allowance. Parents of children from 0-5 years old (until the beginning of the obligation of pre-primary education in kindergarten) can also use a new, more flexible form of care provided in children's groups. This form of care is provided by a physical person in her household, while one person can care for a maximum of 4 children. There are currently 9 children's groups registered. A contribution of 160 EUR/month was introduced for the purpose of paying for child care in the children's group.

Regarding the question on measures at supporting the housing for families with children and families and social housing, the Slovak Republic would like to state that the fundamental principle in all relevant policies is that housing is one of the basic human needs, which should be satisfied at a level corresponding to the overall level of socio-economic development of society. Under the conditions of a market economy, the responsibility for providing one's own housing is transferred to the citizen. The availability of housing is thus directly proportional to the economic possibilities of the individual. Under the conditions of Slovakia, the primary responsibility for housing rests with the citizen himself, on whose shoulders lies the obligation to secure sufficient finances, procure a suitable plot of land, and the like, and therefore to secure housing by his own efforts. In Slovakia, we currently have 3 types of housing: 1. ownership - in personal ownership, 2. social (public rent) - housing for disadvantaged groups of citizens and 3. private rent - renting out apartments for profit.

Social housing is defined in the Slovak legislation in Article 21 of Act no. 443/2010 Coll. on subsidies for housing development and on social housing, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic. It defines

social housing as housing procured with the use of public funds intended for adequate and humanly dignified housing of natural persons who cannot procure housing by their own efforts and meet the conditions according to this law. Social housing is also housing or accommodation financed with the use of public funds and provided as part of care according to special regulations.

Regarding the question on advisory services for families, the Slovak Republic would like to inform the Committee that in addition to the already existing systems, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic is also working on the introduction of a family counselling system. In the period September 2021 - December 2023, thanks to support from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, a national project entitled "Family counselling - counselling and psychological services for individuals, couples and families" (hereinafter referred to as the "national project"), the recipient of which is the Institute for Work and Family Research and the partner is the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

The goal of the national project is to create conditions for the development of psychological and other professional counselling for people (individuals, couples, families) in solving problems in the family, marriage and interpersonal relationships, including the creation of quantitative and qualitative standards of the family counselling system and their pilot verification in practice, i.e. the design and pilot implementation of changes of a complex and systemic nature in the mentioned area.

The main goal of the national project is to contribute to a systemic solution in the field of mental illness prevention, strengthening family relationships and intergenerational communication by creating conditions for providing professional, especially psychological counselling for individuals, couples and families in solving problems in the family, marriage and interpersonal relationships. The stated goal will be achieved through the mapping of existing counselling services, the creation of the standards of the counselling system - family counselling centres, the creation of 5 pilot family counselling centres (in Trnava, Nové Zámky, Žilina, Košice and Humenné) and the pilot verification of standards. After the implementation of the pilot national project, the Slovak Republic plans to continue (using the outputs/results of the national project) the introduction of the family counselling system in the Slovak Republic. More information can be found at the following links (only in the Slovak language at the moment due to the pilot nature of the project):

<https://www.rodinnaporadna.gov.sk/>

<https://ivpr.gov.sk/narodny-projekt-rodinne-poradne-poradensko-psychologicke-sluzby-pre-jednotlivcov-pary-a-rodiny/>

Article 17 Paragraph 1

Regarding the question on measures aimed at the prevention of abuse of children, including sexual abuse, please see the information provided to Article 7 par. 10 of this report.

Regarding the question on measures aimed at prevention of child poverty, the Slovak Republic would like to state that all measures aimed at helping families with children have an impact on reducing child poverty, both by providing direct financial transfers to increase the family's disposable income (e.g. aid in material need, state social benefits) through reducing expenses (school subsidies for children, provision of social services) to direct measures of

active inclusion supporting access to employment and education and active participation in social life. In particular, support for the active participation of parents in the labour market leads to an increase in household income, a reduction in its economic burden and helps to reduce child poverty. A number of measures aimed at eliminating child poverty are also implemented within the purview of, for example, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, or Ministry of Justice.

A household that finds itself without income or has a very low income can request the state to provide assistance in material need in accordance with Act no. 417/2013 Coll. on aid in material need and on the amendment of certain laws in the framework of aid in material need. The purpose of the aid is to provide protection to households that cannot or does not know how to secure or increase their income through their own work, legal claims or property, based on the constitutional guarantee of basic living conditions. The amount of aid in material need is determined as the difference between the sum of claims and income of individual household members and is provided in one sum. The conditions of provision are exhaustively defined in the Act on Assistance in Material Needs. Aid in material need is a benefit in material need (set at six levels), protection allowance, activation allowance, dependent child allowance and housing allowance. If there is a child in the circle of jointly assessed persons who is properly attending compulsory school, the household that is provided with assistance in material need is entitled to allowance for a dependent child. It is intended to support the upbringing, education and all-round development of a child fulfilling compulsory school attendance.

Within the framework of the Act on Assistance in Material Needs, a protective principle is applied in relation to single parents taking care of a small child. The provision of benefit in material need is for an adult, able-bodied member of the household to whom help in material need is provided, conditional on the performance of activities (smaller general activities, voluntary activity, dependent activity). In the case of a member of the household to whom assistance is provided in material need, who is a single parent who takes care of a child under six years of age, the performance of these activities is not required. In the case of a parent of a child who is not a single parent, the performance of these activities is not required until the child is three years old.

Also, in the case of a single parent who takes care of a child up to the age of 31 weeks personally, all day long, the person is entitled to a protective allowance in the amount of 41.60 euros per month. A protective allowance in the amount of 16.20 euros per month also belongs to the child's parent, who takes care of the child personally, all day long, and properly until the child is one-year-old.

Furthermore, we state that in order to support the motivation for a responsible approach to protecting the health of the pregnant woman, the healthy prenatal development of the child, as well as the motivation for a responsible approach to parenthood, a protective allowance belongs to a pregnant woman who is a member of the household to whom assistance in material need is provided, and that in sum

- 16.20 euros per month, if it is a pregnant woman from the beginning of the fourth month of pregnancy, who participates regularly once a month in preventive examinations with a doctor specializing in the specialized field of gynaecology and obstetrics,
- 41.60 euros per month, for a pregnant woman from the beginning of the eighth week before the expected day of delivery determined by a doctor.

Within the framework of the act on assistance in material need, a valorisation mechanism is introduced, which regularly adjusts the amounts of aid in material need as of January 1 of the calendar year based on the adjustment of the living wage amounts as of July 1 of the previous calendar year. With this measure, in accordance with the development of the socio-economic situation in the country, the real value of the amounts of assistance in material need is preserved. In connection with the adjustment of the amounts of the living minimum, a measure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family was adopted, which, starting from January 1, 2023, resulted in an adjustment - an increase in the amounts of assistance in material need.

During the pandemic, during the month of August 2021, a one-time increase in aid in material need was provided for each dependent child from households that were in the system of aid in material need at the time of the pandemic (March 2020 to April 2021), in the amount of 333 euros. For the month of May 2022, the first inflation aid in the amount of 100 euros was paid out in June 2022 to families receiving aid in material need. For the month of October 2022, inflation aid in the amount of EUR 100 was paid in November 2022 to families who are provided with financial aid and who did not qualify for an increase in financial aid as part of the first inflationary aid for May 2022.

Currently, an amendment to the Act on Assistance in Material Needs is in the legislative process, the aim of which is to ensure a more targeted, efficient and administratively less demanding provision of assistance to persons in material need.

In order to support the upbringing and education of children who attend kindergarten/primary school and in an effort to reduce the expenses of parents of children from low-income households, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic provides a subsidy to support the education of the child's eating habits and a subsidy to support the education of the child to fulfil his school duties. The subsidy to support the education of the child's eating habits can be provided both to children from low-income households, as well as to children whose parents did not or could not claim the child tax bonus.

During the pandemic, in an effort to help families with children, the provision of a food subsidy was made possible even when education at schools was interrupted due to anti-epidemiological measures, in the event that the school canteen was open. It was also possible to provide a subsidy directly to parents in the event that the cafeteria is closed due to quarantine measures, but the children are attending classes.

Regarding the question on the maximum length of pre-trial detention, the Slovak Republic confirms that the absolute maximum length is 7 months, and this only applies in case of a particularly serious crime committed by the juvenile (such as a premeditated homicide committed in a particularly serious or brutal way). There is no possibility of keep the juvenile in a solitary confinement.

According to the law, the body for the social and legal protection of children and social guardianship (hereinafter referred to as the "SPODaSK body") is obliged to receive and evaluate every initiative regarding the violation of the child's rights, while the initiative for evaluating the child's situation is not only a notification about a threat to the child's life, health or favourable development, or about the use of harsh or humiliating forms of child treatment and forms of child corporal punishment, but any information, submission, request, notification from various sources, including provision for the position of guardian in judicial or

administrative proceedings, or a request from law enforcement authorities for cooperation, if is a child suspected of committing a crime and others. After receiving the initiative, the SPODaSK employee will check and evaluate the child's situation. If an employee of the SPODaSK is not allowed to check the child's condition and has information indicating that the child is exposed to a threat to life and health, he can submit a request to the court for permission to enter the home. When implementing the measures, the SPODaSK cooperates with interested parties such as a doctor, school, police, municipality, etc. If necessary, the SPODaK authority will propose carrying out or ensuring the carrying out of a professional method - evaluation of the situation of the child and family, assessment of the possibilities of the parents, other relatives and other close persons of the child to solve the situation of the child and the family for the purpose of determining the degree of endangerment of the child.

The SPODaSK authority can ensure the implementation of measures to evaluate the situation of the child and the family, assessment of the possibilities of the parents, other relatives and other close persons of the child to solve the situation of the child and the family for the purpose of determining the degree of endangerment of the child, if the measures implemented it was not possible to unequivocally determine the degree of endangerment of the child within its own jurisdiction. If the stimulus is an information about a threat to the life, health or favourable development of a child or information about the use of rude or humiliating forms of treatment of a child and forms of corporal punishment of a child, it is necessary to immediately carry out the so-called preliminary evaluation, if the current situation of the child allows it, no later than 5 days from the date of receipt of the initiative. A comprehensive evaluation of the situation of the child and his family, even in situations where any information, request or notification is received by the SPODaSK authorities, can contribute to the timely identification of victims of violence even in cases where such suspicion does not directly arise from the content of the complaint. Such legal procedures ensure early identification of child victims of violence and sexual abuse.

Since 2018, the conditions for the implementation of measures in the form of residence to prevent the emergence, deepening and repetition of certain crisis situations for children have also been adjusted by law, i.e. a specialized program for children who have been the victims of the crime of human trafficking, abused and sexually abused children, or for the implementation of measures to verify the degree of danger to children from abuse, sexual abuse or other acts threatening their life, health or favourable psychological, physical or social development. Centres for children and families with a specialized program implement measures in a residential form, as an outpatient form, as well as in a field form, while the residential form of implementing measures does not have to be implemented only on the basis of a court decision, but also on the basis of an agreement with the child's parent, or with a person who personally takes care of the child.

The essence of such a specialization of the facility is to provide professional help to a child in a crisis situation or to verify whether the child is at risk, e.g. torture, sexual abuse (diagnosis is essential, in addition to focusing on professional help in existing situations, it is also important to confirm or refute the assumption whether or not the child is at risk of, for example, sexual abuse), the emphasis is placed on the timeliness of such measures. In addition to the possibility of placing the child in the centre based on an agreement with the parent/person who personally cares for the child (on the recommendation of the child welfare and social guardianship authority) and at the request of the child himself, the child can also be accepted based on a court decision ordering an emergency measure or about imposing an educational measure. A centre whose purpose is a specialized program is obliged to carry out

measures according to the elaborated specialized program of the centre. The entire SPODaSK system is designed in such a way that, in cooperation with other responsible entities, it is possible to provide children, including children who report cases of abuse in their family (regardless of whether the primary victim is a child or who is a possible perpetrator, including the occurrence of corporal punishment), in a timely manner the help he needs. Legal conditions allow different intensity and form of assistance to the child (depending on the level of danger, taking into account the circumstances in the family and the family's possibilities) - from outpatient assistance, through residential forms of assistance based on an agreement with the parents, to court intervention in the form of urgent measures and residential assistance based on a decision the court.

Regarding the question on the number of children in alternate care, a center for Children and Families implements the stay order of the court in

a) a professional surrogate family that provides care for a specified number of children and young adults in a family home or in an apartment provided by the centre or in a family home or apartment of which the professional surrogate parent is the owner, co-owner, tenant or joint tenant with the professional surrogate parent the right to use on the basis of a loan agreement or to which the professional surrogate parent has the right of personal use;

b) independently arranged groups established in a family house, apartment or in another building of the centre with separate catering, management and allocated budget, in the established number of independently organized groups and with the established number of children and young adults in the independently organized group.

In total, 5,196 children were placed in all types of facilities for the enforcement of court decisions based on the court's decision on institutional care, educational measures (time-limited measures by law) and urgent measures (the court's decision deals with the child's current situation with a subsequent decision on the merits, or cancellation of emergency intervention or the expiry of the period of validity of an emergency measure) and 17 children based on a court decision on protective education.

As of December 31, 2021, based on the agreement, care was provided to 366 clients in a residential form (children, children with parents, young adults, natural persons of legal age) in the centres for children and families. In the centres for children and families, in the course of 2021, measures were taken for 10,934 clients in an outpatient and/or field form based on the agreement and recommendation of the body for the social protection of children and social guardianship (10,164 clients in 2020). Depending on the purpose, centres for children and families have a developed program or a specialized program or a resocialization program. As of December 31, 2020, there were 668 professional families in centres for children and families with the program, in which 1,401 children and young adults were placed.

In the system of social protection of children and social guardianship, there is no regulated, or limited total capacity of the facility - centre for children and families. However, the number of children placed in individual organizational units of centres for children and families is regulated, namely:

- a maximum of 3 children per professional surrogate parent,
- a maximum of 10 children in one independently organized group,
- a maximum of 8 children in a specialized, independently organized group.

Children placed on the basis of a court decision in institutions for the execution of a court decision/preliminary measure, educational measure, institutional care and protective education/ as of December 31.

Institutions for the execution of the court's decision		2021
Centres for children and families (program)		4 637
Centres for children and families (specialized program)		22
Centres for children and families (resocialization program)		24
Social services homes		3
Medical and educational sanatoriums		43
Diagnostic centres		63
Re-education homes	NO, VO, ÚS	404
	OV	17

Individual forms of care in centres for children and families with a program for the enforcement of court decisions

2020	2021
662	668
291	291
153	159

Numbers of children and young adults placed in individual forms of care in centres for children and families with a program as of 31.12.

Number of placed children in individual forms	2020	2021
in a professional surrogate family	1 426	1 401
in a separate group	2 719	2 673
in other groups	841	854

Total number of children in individual forms of substitute family care in 2020 and 2021

Foster care	Guardianship
1 183	151
1 118	159

Article 17 Paragraph 2

The Government of the Slovak Republic approved by its Resolution no. 181/2021 on April 7, 2021, the Strategy for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 (hereinafter only "Strategy 2030"). This framework strategic document is a commitment of the government of the Slovak Republic (SR), which defines the direction of public policies at the level of priorities in order to achieve a visible change in the area of equality and inclusion of Roma. Regular European and national assessments continue to state that the four priority areas - employment, education, health and housing - are still crucial for the fulfilment of the goals. Special emphasis is placed on non-discrimination and the intensification of interventions in the fight against anti-Roma racism.

Strategy 2030 was created on the basis of a request for conceptual material that takes into account the development of the situation and experience from the previous eight years since the approval of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration until 2020 and the relevant action plans. It also arose from the initiative of the joint efforts of the member states of the European Union. Due to its cross-sectional nature, Strategy 2030 is an umbrella document for the creation and implementation of planned strategic documents of the responsible departments in the relevant areas, it also provides linkages with existing materials.

With its content, it contributes to the fulfilment of the government's intentions in relation to improving the status and situation of the Roma, listed in the Program Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the period 2020-2024, and also reflects the objectives of the Vision and Strategy for the Development of Slovakia until 2030. The national strategy represents a set of starting points and goals aimed at stopping the segregation of Roma communities, a significant positive turn in the social inclusion of Roma, non-discrimination, changing attitudes and improving coexistence. The global and sub-goals of the individual priorities will be elaborated to the level of measures and activities with a realistic calculation of the necessary financial claims and identified suitable resources for their coverage through thematic action plans, which will be updated in accordance with the monitoring cycle of Strategy 2030. The process of creating action plans is a follow-up step to the 2030 Strategy approved by the government. A necessary prerequisite for the effectiveness of the national strategy is its implementation, which requires a multi-departmental approach, active participation and cooperation between levels of public administration, coordinated by a single entity.

The National Contact Point for the implementation and evaluation of the Strategy is the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (hereinafter referred as “the Office of Plenipotentiary”). External expertise essential to ensure independence in the process of evaluation and monitoring can be secured through the so-called Panel of Experts, which is made up of respected experts in each thematic area of the Strategy. They play a key role in the process of verifying the data presented in the monitoring reports as well as in the formulation of the objectives and methodology of specific evaluations. Along with the engagement of the relevant central government departments and authorities, representatives of municipal and regional government, the non-governmental sector, academic sector, and Roma themselves are expected to be involved. The participation of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process is ensured through the so-called Thematic Working Group of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030.

The main objective of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030 and the Strategy itself is to promote real equality, effective socioeconomic inclusion and a full participation of Roma. Following the recommendations of the European Commission as well as the outputs of the FRA (FRA, 2020), the main focus of the monitoring and evaluation process is to prioritize the measurement of progress towards strengthening equality, inclusion and participation of Roma in relation to four sectoral areas: (i) education, (ii) employment, (iii) health and social services, and (iv) housing and basic services.

Progress in these areas is assessed and monitored through three horizontal and four sectoral objectives of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030, which are:

Horizontal objectives: 1. To prevent and combat the antigypsyism and discrimination 2. Reducing poverty and social exclusion 3. Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust;

Sectoral objectives: 1. Increase equal access to quality inclusive education in the mainstream education 2. Increase equal access to qualitative and long-term employment 3. Improve the health of Roma and increase an equal access to quality healthcare and social services 4. Increase a genuinely equal access to adequate and desegregated housing and basic infrastructure.

Strategy 2030 aims to improve the situation of Roma children and their education through the following measures:

Improve cognitive, emotional and prosocial skills of children from MRC aged from 0-3 through active participation of children and parents at the programs early care;

Improve school readiness of children from MRC through increasing their participation and holistic development of children from MRC to pre-primary education;

Secure a higher rate of success passing the lower secondary education ISCED 2 during compulsory school attendance of children from MRC;

To achieve readiness of people from MRC on the labour market through increasing the number graduates of professional and complete secondary education and support development of their lives skills;

Eliminate shortcomings related to employing and financing pedagogical, professional and other school employees and school facilities in educational system aimed at students from MRC;

Increase competencies of professional, pedagogical and other employees of schools and school facilities for working with pupils from MRC through qualification courses, education and methodological support;

Expand existing spatial capacity of maternity and elementary schools for provision of available education of all children from MRC;

Improve material conditions for education of children and pupils from MRC with a goal to improve the quality of their education process;

Prevent spatial and social methodical segregation by guiding and application of desegregation tools;

Systematically mitigate and eliminate manifestations of segregation in educational process on all levels of the education system;

Increase access of pupils from MRC to the mainstream education by supporting transformations of special education streams;

Ensure systemic and methodical support with a goal of introducing inclusive education of children and students from MRC;

Implement inclusive programs of education of children and pupils from MRC on all levels of the education system.

The vision of Strategy 2030 is to increase the real participation of children and pupils from MRC in quality education and education in the main education stream, with an emphasis on the application of desegregation and inclusive measures in the educational process at all levels of education, including lifelong learning programs. In preparation for education in the main education stream, it is necessary to focus on increasing the share of Roma children aged 0-3 years in early care programs at least to the level of 30% of all children from MRC. By increasing participation of 3-4-year-old children in pre-primary education to the level of 50% and to 100% by training of 5-6-year-old Roma children, in which case the enrolment rate would reach at least 75% at the pre-primary level of education. At the same time, the ambition of the strategy is to reduce the share of pupils from MRC in primary and special primary schools, who must retake the year, by half - to the level of 11% -, to reduce the share of dropouts of students from MRC to the level of 36% and increase the share of Roma with completed secondary higher education at least to the level of 45% for men and 40% for women, with an emphasis on application tools that will eliminate the current differences in the educational level of women and men.

An important element of the 2030 Strategy is to implement inclusive and desegregation policy in order to reduce the number of children who are educated primarily in ethnically homogeneous classes, or schools, at least by half to the level of 30%, and reduce the proportion of Roma who feel discriminated within the education process due to their ethnicity to 3%.

The participation of Roma children in pre-primary education has a long-term low representation, in. In 2015, only 34% of children from the age of 4 until the start of compulsory school attendance and in the 2018/2019 school year, it was only 32% of children from MRC aged 4 and over. As of January 1, 2021, the amendment to the School Act concerning the compulsory year of pre-primary education entered into force, which represents, from the point of view of increasing the pre-primary enrolment of children from MRC and implementation of desegregation measures, a significant step up.

The share of pupils with early school leavers, who do not continue in education, is significantly higher in socially disadvantaged groups than in the rest of the population. In the 2017/2018 school year, every tenth student in the system of material need ended their education in this way (10.6%) and 13.4% of pupils from the MRC environment. In the total population of this age group it was 6.4%.

One of the programs in the area of elimination of early school dropouts and increasing equal access to quality education of students from MRC is a program of the all-day educational system. It significantly contributes to increasing school attendance and, in particular, through funding teaching assistants and helping professions fluent in the Romani language, for education in the Romani language as a supporting tool of education. Expanding

the all-day educational system program, and mentoring and tutoring programs in lower secondary grades of education to all schools with a higher concentration of pupils from MRC, appears to be an effective tool for increasing the success rate of MRC pupils in the future.

It follows from the available data that after completing compulsory schooling, only 62% of pupils in material need and half (51%) of pupils from MRC continue their education, while the share in of the total population is 75%. Therefore, the priority remains to support intervention and preventive tools against school dropouts and interventions supporting the retention of students from MRC in the education system so that they gain vocational or complete secondary education for the purpose of their participation on the labour market.

The Slovak Republic aims to identify and eliminate the occurrence of segregation practices, e.g. through the implementation of desegregation projects, cancellation of special classes in primary schools, as well as preventing spatial and social problems caused by segregation by methodically guiding the creation of school districts based on the desegregation principle, e.g. the so-called controlled choice.

In 2022, for the first time in history, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport presented a manual and the first strategy for minimizing grade repetition. An amendment to the law follows up on this measure. It will be possible to repeat the year only once at the first level (1. – 4. class in primary school) and once at the second level (5. – 9. Class in primary school). What is important is that the repetition of the year is not counted in the duration of compulsory school attendance. This will reduce the probability that a pupil would drop out of school earlier than after completing the last year of elementary (primary) school. The draft law also defines the concept of school segregation for the first time.

One of the most prominent problems in solving the education of pupils from marginalized Roma communities is their incorrect placement in special schools. To prevent this from happening, the Slovak Republic has prepared the transformation of the counselling system so that it is more accessible to the needs of children, pupils and schools. From January 2023, content standards will be set to ensure that all children, including those from marginalized Roma communities, are provided with professional activities precisely tailored to their needs after diagnosis. These standards are the pillar to prevent erroneous or targeted inclusion of pupils without mental handicaps in special schools. The change brings the creation of two types of facilities, the definition of their activities, staffing and adjustment of their legal status. But above all, it will help children and parents to make counselling easier for them logistically. Parents and schools will have a better overview of which centre their child belongs to. The intention of the reform is to bring several experts under the heading of one counselling centre, such as speech therapists, special educators, psychologists, social educators, or medical educators.

The system consists of support levels that follow each other in five levels and will cooperate with each other. The most accessible services, such as prevention, will be provided by teachers within the support level of the first level directly at schools. The second level is the subject of activities of the school support team (assistants, speech therapists, special educators), which will be responsible for setting up and implementing strategies to support children's development and preventive programs at schools. The school support team is an important part of the whole counselling system reform network, as it will ensure a link to higher levels of support with counselling and prevention facilities at higher levels. Assistance at the level of the fourth level focuses on specialized professional activities also for children

with disabilities. It is the combination of the third and fourth level of support that creates the conditions for much more complex, multidisciplinary care for each child. The support level of the third and fourth level is implemented by Counselling and Prevention Centres, which will replace the current Centre for Pedagogical-psychological Counselling and Prevention. These provide professional activities without limitation to a specific diagnosis, developmental disorder or health handicap for all children from birth to completion of vocational training.

For children who need more demanding and specific professional help, a Specialized Counselling and Prevention Centre is available through the fifth level of the counselling system instead of the current Specialized Pedagogical Counselling Centre. It is a highly specialized professional activity focused on one type of disability (for example, for children with impaired communication skills, visual, hearing, mental and physical disabilities or autism) from birth to completion of vocational training.

In order to overcome the language barrier faced by pupils from marginalized Roma communities, who often speak only the Roma language and Slovak is not that familiar to them, teacher education is prepared. From October 2022, the National Institute of Education and Youth (NIVAM) provides extended study of the Romani language for primary school teachers. They will be implemented by regional workplaces, especially in Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica.

As regards the costs related to education, there are allowances provided to the parents of children by the state (such as one-time benefits at the beginning of the school year, the monthly provided subsidy to support the education of children's eating habits or a subsidy to support education to fulfil the child's school duties – aimed at covering the costs of buying school supplies), each municipality can provide individualised support on top of the already mentioned measures. However, the amount of such help and the conditions for its provision fall within the competences of municipalities.

Regarding the question on whether irregularly present children have access to education, it has to be said that even these persons have to right to free education, provided they (or their parents or representatives) apply at least for asylum or supplementary protection, despite arriving in the Slovak Republic as an irregular migrant. The statement that these children are allowed to enter into education process only after they have spent 3 months in detention, is not true. These children must be integrated into the education system before the period of 3 months after their application for asylum or supplementary protection expires. This means they can start attending classes as soon as they apply for asylum or supplementary protection, provided the relevant education facility has adequate conditions for their integration. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport encourages directors of these schools to accept the children without undue delay, but no later than 3 months after their application for asylum or supplementary protection.

Regarding the question on measures aimed at preventing bullying in schools, the Slovak Republic would like to inform the Committee that it has adopted the Action plan for solving bullying in schools and school facilities for 2022 – 2023 (hereinafter referred to as the "Action Plan") is a material developed on the basis of the Program Declaration of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the years 2020-2024. It was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic with the participation of co-managers and addressed partners, as prevention against negative phenomena in schools and school facilities is carried out through several platforms of state administration bodies,

including the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the National Coordination Centre for Solving the Issue of Violence against Children, as well the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights.

The ambition of the Action Plan is to formulate new measures which aim to eliminate risks and conditions affecting the occurrence of bullying in the school environment, as well as raising awareness of the risks of this behaviour both in physical and online environment. The Action Plan focuses on these main goals:

1. To increase the expertise of teaching and professional employees in education in the approach to bullying;
2. Strengthen cooperation with state administration bodies for the purpose of effective mutual cooperation and awareness raising;
3. Creation of measures to eliminate future risks;
4. Monitoring, strengthening the provision of relevant information and awareness of general public about bullying.

Regarding the question on children's participation, please see the information provided to Article 7 par. 10 of this report.

Regarding the request for the latest data on enrollment rates and dropouts, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport is migrating data to a new information system and the data shall be provided once the databases have been transferred. The Slovak Republic kindly asks the Committee to take this into consideration.

Article 19 Paragraph 1

Regarding the question on migration flows in the Slovak Republic, the Government states that in 2021, a total of 167 519 (111 427 third country nationals, 56 092 EU citizens) foreigners have legally remained within the state territory on the basis of residence permits (temporary – 85 286, permanent – 26 066, tolerated - 75). In 2020, a total of 150 012 (90 806 third country nationals, 59 206 EU citizens) foreigners have legally remained within the state territory on the basis of residence permits (temporary – 69 978, permanent – 20 775, tolerated - 53). In 2019, a total of 143 075 (85 827 third country nationals, 57 248 EU citizens) foreigners have legally remained within the state territory on the basis of residence permits (temporary – 66 964, permanent – 18 812, tolerated - 51). In 2018, a total of 121 264 (65 381 third country nationals, 55 883 citizens) foreigners have legally remained within the state territory on the basis of residence permits (temporary – 48 316, permanent – 17 050, tolerated - 15).

The Slovak Republic would like to inform the Committee that the Integration Policy strategy has been made obsolete by a new national policy document. In September 2021, the Government adopted a new Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic until the year 2025. This new strategic document defines as its main goal the creation of conditions for legal migration in the country in keeping with other government priorities and the capacity to both receive foreigners and support their integration. The issue of migrant integration forms a substantial component of the new policy, which aims at ensuring inter alia the availability of education for migrant children, as well as access to decent housing and social and cultural support. The new policy also defines productive communication approaches towards public in connection with the migration-related issues as an important element that must accompany other policy

measures in this area. The Slovak Republic is currently finalising the first report on the implementation of the related Action Plan.

Regarding the question of the Committee on which languages the information for migrants are available in, the Slovak Republic states this information is available in English and Ukrainian language.

Regarding the question on measures aimed at combatting misleading propaganda concerning migrants, the Slovak Republic would like to state, that it has established the Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and other Forms of Intolerance. The chair of this body is the Minister of the Interior of the Slovak Republic. The need to establish such a supra-departmental advisory body, in which the concerned ministries, independent institutions, experts, as well as civil society are represented, results from several factors. The issue of racism, xenophobia and extremism, their effective prevention and elimination, affects the competence of several ministries and requires a coordinated and conceptual approach synergistically linking the activities of various entities.

The main ambition of the committee is to serve as a platform for coordinating activities, defining priorities and directions in the creation of public policies aimed at preventing and eliminating racism, xenophobia and extremism. At the same time, this committee is a suitable tool for the exchange of information between representatives of public administration, self-government and civil society, which will help in solving issues within the committee's substantive scope.

In addition to this function, however, the committee or its working groups can also initiate some measures and activities in the form of preparing analyses, studies and initiative materials. The adopted statute also gives it the opportunity to participate in the preparation of educational programs in the area of its objective scope, preparation and implementation of training for workers of entities involved in the fight against racism, xenophobia and extremism, publications and aids focused on the issue of racism, xenophobia and extremism. Through its working groups, it can monitor and obtain information on serious cases related to its substantive scope.

Article 19 Paragraph 4

Regarding the question on the competences of labour inspection as regards discrimination of migrants, the Slovak Republic would like to state that the Act on Employment Services establishes within the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the Centre for Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family the obligation to carry out inspection activities in accordance with this Act and in accordance with special regulations, including control of violations of the prohibition of illegal employment. The aforementioned competence was transferred exclusively to labour inspectorates in relation to the control of violations of the prohibition of illegal employment, namely by Act no. 112/2022 Coll., amending Act no. 82/2005 Coll. on illegal work and illegal employment and on the amendment of certain laws as amended and amending Act no. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services and on the amendment of certain laws, as amended, with effect from 1 January 2023.

Control of compliance with the prohibition of illegal employment belongs to the scope of competences of the labour inspectorates, which implement it continuously throughout the entire calendar year. In 2022, a total of 17,304 inspections were carried out in 15,420 inspected entities. During these inspections, 33,212 natural persons were inspected who were at the workplaces of the inspected entities. In total, the illegal employment of 1,391 natural persons was detected, while this number consists of 997 illegally employed citizens of the Slovak Republic and 394 illegally employed foreigners.

In particular, the labour inspection authorities also focused on checks on the legal employment of foreigners. Regarding the latest data on findings, in 2022, two extraordinary tasks were carried out. The first was aimed at monitoring compliance with the ban on the illegal employment of third-country nationals and took place in the period from March 1, 2022 to May 31, 2022. Within it, attention was also paid to monitoring compliance with the ban on illegal employment of self-employed persons - third-country nationals (so-called fake businesses) and also checking the working conditions of employees. Results of this task: 274 labour inspection performances in 247 inspected entities, 714 natural persons performing work at the workplaces of the inspected entities were inspected. 93 deficiencies were detected, within which 35 employers who illegally employed 88 natural persons (including 75 foreigners) were discovered.

The second extraordinary task aimed at checking compliance with the prohibition of illegal employment and selected provisions of labour law regulations in the employment of third-country nationals took place in the period from October 3, 2022 to December 30, 2022. Its results have not yet been separately evaluated.

In 2022, inspectors of the labour, social affairs and family offices carried out a total of 23 inspections of employers who also employed third-country nationals (SPTK), while 4 employers were found to have illegally employed 4 SPTK (in violation of Article 2 par. 2 letter a) of Act No. 82/2005 Coll.), 3 cases and contrary to Article 2 par. 2 letters c) of the Act no. 82/2005 Coll. -1 case. They were two citizens of Ukraine who worked in the field of construction, one citizen of Vietnam who worked in the field of retail and one citizen of Ukraine who worked in industrial production.

In this period, inspectors of the labour, social affairs and family offices checked 89 SPTK, of which the most were citizens of Ukraine (48), Vietnam (21), China (13), Serbia, 2 citizens of Macedonia and Georgia, and one citizen of Turkey.

In 2022, the National Labour Inspectorate paid increased attention to informing the citizens of Ukraine. The National Labour Inspectorate publishes information available in foreign languages on its website, currently most of it is available in the Ukrainian language. This is how information is disseminated about working conditions in Slovakia ([Mimoriadna situácia na Ukrajine - Národný inšpektorát práce \(gov.sk\)](#)), about legal work (Handbook "Legal work, legal employment" - [Príručka "Legálna práca, legálne zamestnávanie" - Národný inšpektorát práce \(gov.sk\)](#)). At the same time, information leaflets in the Ukrainian language are published on the website, which draw attention to the issue of human trafficking - issued by the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (Don't become a victim of human traffickers - [Nestaňte sa obeťou obchodníkov s ľuďmi - Národný inšpektorát práce \(gov.sk\)](#)).

Representatives of the National Labour Inspectorate cooperate in disseminating information about working conditions at various professional events, seminars and conferences, where they inform about the competences of labour inspectorates in Slovakia. Representatives of state institutions of Ukraine also participate in several such activities. A certain part of the preventive action of the labour inspection takes place as the provision of advice on request and also within the performance of the labour inspection, when the labour inspectors teach inspected foreigners about their rights.

If a foreigner feels they are discriminated in employment or working conditions, they are able to submit a complaint to the relevant labour inspection body, or initiate proceedings in front of a district court. The procedure is the same for foreigners as it is for nationals of the Slovak Republic, meaning the employer must prove the foreigner was not discriminated (shift of burden of proof).

Regarding the question of the Committee on the availability of accommodation for foreigners, the Slovak Republic would like to state that there are no restrictions for non-nationals to own or buy home property. The same applies for loans provided by banks – the conditions under which loans are provided do not include the applicant's nationality as a criterion, which means anyone can apply for a loan aimed at purchasing immovable property. These are granted, or not granted, on the basis of the applicant's economic background, etc.

Foreigners can acquire real estate on the territory of the Slovak Republic, regardless of whether they have been granted residence in Slovakia or not. A foreigner can, with some exceptions, acquire almost any real estate. Real estate is apartments, houses, garages, gardens, plots of land and other buildings connected to the ground with a solid foundation. A foreigner cannot acquire real estate, the acquisition of which is restricted by special regulations (real estate on the list of cultural heritage).

Article 19 Paragraph 5

No questions asked.

Article 19 Paragraph 6

The Slovak Republic would like to state that it is convinced it is in compliance with the requirements of this article of the Charter. The Conclusions state that family members of a migrant worker are not granted independent right to stay after exercising the right to family reunion. However, the legislation allows for such family members to freely live even with temporary residence permit, they can perform gainful activities, such as performing business activities, working as an employee (after obtaining employment permit and even without the need for additional permits in the period after 12 months from the granting of temporary residence.), freely study (including university studies). Therefore, the Slovak Republic is of the opinion that a family member is autonomous even before obtaining permanent resident status.

Article 19 Paragraph 7

No questions asked.

Article 19 Paragraph 8

No questions asked.

Article 19 Paragraph 9

No questions asked.

Article 19 Paragraph 11

As regards the language courses in the Slovak language, these are generally provided by non-governmental organisations or international organisations with their seat in the Slovak Republic, together with individual education facilities. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport issues accreditation to these providers if they meet the required criteria. Because of decentralisation of these providers, it is currently not possible to provide precise numbers of migrants undertaking these courses, especially with the substantially increased number of migrants coming to the territory of the Slovak Republic from Ukraine due to the ongoing war. Each entity providing these courses focuses on different categories of persons these courses are aimed at. Some examples of language learning available for migrants follow.

E.g., the IOM Migration Information Center (MIC) organizes Open Slovak language courses for foreigners, which are available for:

- citizens of non-EU/EEA countries who have temporary, permanent or tolerated residence in Slovakia, including applicants for temporary asylum and persons granted temporary asylum in Slovakia ("expatriates");
- EU citizens with higher education, or workers in highly qualified positions
- foreign university students studying at a university in the Slovak Republic

Open Slovak language courses organized by MIC are not certified language courses. They serve as the first contact with the Slovak language and are recommended for complete beginners. They are free and without entrance tests and they are intended for pre-adult participants who have not yet participated in these courses in the past.

The courses are conducted using interactive teaching methods, during which the emphasis is mainly on conversation, and they focus on learning the basics of the Slovak language in real situations and everyday communication (e.g. in groceries, at the bank, at work, with friends, at the doctor, etc.)

A specialised website is available for everyone, the so-called slovake.eu. This project is supported by the European Commission as part of the KA2 – Languages – Lifelong Learning Programme. This portal contains language courses at different levels (A1, A2, B1, B2) with many exercises, tests and dictionaries - everything foreigners need to familiarise themselves with Slovak grammar, learn new words, or even interact with other users of this site. This website offers the study of the Slovak language in 13 different languages: Czech, English, German, Esperanto, Spanish, French, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Slovak.

The E-slovak project is another free Slovak language e-learning course. The portal offers tutored lessons that are available during the school year and untutored courses for self-

study. The courses correspond to the textbook Cross-Cross - Slovak A1. The content of the course is basic phrases, vocabulary, grammar, topics related to everyday life. A prerequisite for completing the course is a basic knowledge of the English language (A2). After successfully completing the course and passing the test, the student can apply for a certificate. The E-Slovak portal was prepared by the Centre for Slovak as a Foreign Language of Studia Academica Slovaca, which is a specialized workplace of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Comenius University in Bratislava.

The Učíme (sa) slovenčinu (We learn Slovak) project is a free e-learning platform that offers space not only for learning, but also for teaching Slovak as a foreign language. It is intended for language levels from A1.2 to C2. The portal is focused on working with authentic text in the form of audio-visual material (TV reports, vlogs, video podcasts, etc.) in the range of 2-4 min. There are two interactive tasks for each video: one focused on listening comprehension and the other on practicing grammar and vocabulary. There is also transcription of the video text to simplify work with the text. Two new task videos are posted every week. Worksheets in various thematic areas are freely available for lecturers.

Article 27 Paragraph 1

No questions asked.

Article 27 Paragraph 2

No questions asked.

Article 27 Paragraph 3

No questions asked.