PRAGUE PROCESS
ПРАЖСКИЙ ПРОЦЕСС



Slovakia

General Information

Population

5 413 813 (World Bank 2025)

5 422 069 (STAT SK 2024)

Immigration

323 991 (UN Immigration Stock 2024)

6 824 (STAT SK 2024)

Emigration

389 909 (UN Emigration Stock 2024)

4 425 (STAT SK 2024)

Working-age population

3 540 288 (World Bank 2025)

1 828 200 (STAT SK 2021)

Unemployment rate

5.4 % (World Bank 2025)

5.3 % (STAT SK 2024)

GDP

154 530 066 506.9 current prices USD (World Bank 2025)

130 207 520 000 current prices USD (STAT SK 2024)

Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

Refugees

140 885 (UNHCR 2025)

63 (SK MoI 2024)

Asylum Seekers

16 (UNHCR 2025)

165 (SK MoI 2024)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2025)

Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2024)

By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Years of Residency

8 years of residence required (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Territory

49 035 km^2 (CIA World Factbook)

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Ministry of Interior

Line Ministries

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

Migration office

Ministry of Justice

Agencies

Foreign and Border Police

Informational centre for combating trafficking in human beings and for crime prevention

Statistical Office

Key Policy Documents

National Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Asylum and Migration Management 2025

Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025 - new version

National Programme for Combating Human Trafficking 2024-2028

2002 (2022) Act on Asylum

2011 Act on the Residence of Aliens

Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic from 2014

Strategy of Labour Mobility of Foreigners in the Slovak Republic 2018

Relevant Publications

Exploring the Potential of Digitalisation in Migration Management in the Prague Process Region

Digitalisation and labour migration: the use of modern technology, challenges and opportunities

How will migration to Europe look in the Future?

Intra-corporate Transferees (ICTs): The benefits for the EU and the opportunity cost

ICMPD, Re-thinking approaches to labour migration Potential and Gaps in EU Member States' Migration Infrastructures Case Study Summary — Slovakia

ICMPD, Re-thinking approaches to labour migration? Potentials and gaps in EU member states' migration infrastructures

Historically a country of emigration, Slovakia has become increasingly attractive to foreign nationals since joining the EU and the Schengen area. By June 2025, the population stood at 5,413,813, down by 0.15% compared with June 2024, marking the fifth consecutive year of population decline and the first sustained decrease since independence. This trend is driven mainly by natural population loss, as births continue to fall despite stabilising mortality. Although immigration still exceeds emigration, it remains insufficient to offset demographic decline.

According to UN DESA, an estimated 389,909 Slovaks lived abroad in 2024, with 95% residing elsewhere in Europe. The largest diaspora communities were in Czechia (59%), Austria (13%), Hungary (6%), and Switzerland (6%). Emigration flows have risen since the COVID-19 pandemic, averaging around 4,500 departures annually between 2022 and 2024. In 2024, 4,425 Slovak citizens emigrated, mainly to Czechia (44%), Austria (17%), Germany (7%), and the United Kingdom (7%). Most emigrants were of working age (15-44), with 35% holding secondary and 27% tertiary education. Family reasons accounted for nearly half of all departures.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the foreign population in Slovakia has continued to grow, supported by more than three decades of positive net migration. This increase reflects relatively strong economic performance, EU membership, low unemployment, population ageing, and the outward mobility of Slovak workers within the EU.

In 2024, immigration reached 6,824 persons, a 15% increase compared with 2023. Slovak citizens accounted for just over half of arrivals (53%), followed by nationals of Hungary (4%), Czechia (3%), and Russia (2%). Family reasons dominated migration motives (45%). While a large share of newcomers reported no formal education (42%), nearly one quarter (23%) held tertiary qualifications. According to UN DESA, the immigrant stock rose to 323,991 in 2024 – up 64% from 2020 – with Ukrainians (38%), Czechs (30%), and Hungarians (6%) forming the largest groups.

In 2024, Slovakia granted 18,959 first residence permits, down 34% from 2023, mainly to the nationals were Ukraine (27%), Serbia (11%), Vietnam (8%) and Georgia (6%). Employment remained the main purpose of stay (65%), ahead of family reunification (17%) and education (14%).By purpose, work-related permits were most frequently issued to nationals of Ukraine (18%), Serbia (14%), Georgia (9%), and Vietnam (9%). Family reunification permits were mainly granted to Ukrainians (26%), Vietnamese (14%), and Russians (8%), while education-related permits were overwhelmingly issued to Ukrainian nationals (73%). Despite fewer new permits, the overall stock of valid residence permits continued to rise, reaching 153,301 by the end of 2024. Two-thirds were employment-based, and just over one-fifth related to family reunification, confirming Slovakia's sustained reliance on foreign labour and family migration despite short-term fluctuations in inflows.

First-time asylum applications in Slovakia fluctuated at relatively low levels between 2015 and 2020 (around 100-265 annually), rose sharply to a peak of about 500 in 2022, before declining again to 370 in 2023 and falling further to around 135 in 2024. The main countries of origin in 2024 were Ukraine (30 applicants), Belarus (15), and Afghanistan (15). Compared with 2023, the steepest decline concerned Turkish nationals, whose applications dropped from 130 to just five in 2024.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, over 2.5 million people had crossed into Slovakia by September 2024. As of October 2025, over 137,000 persons who fled Ukraine resided in Slovakia under temporary protection. To support a coordinated response, the Ministry of the Interior and UNHCR adopted a Refugee Response Plan in 2024, strengthening assistance in protection, education, healthcare, and psychosocial support. In June 2025, EU Member States agreed to extend temporary protection for persons displaced from Ukraine until 4 March 2027.

Until 2020, irregular migration in Slovakia remained stable at around 2,000-2,500 detections of illegal in-country presence annually. This changed sharply in 2022-2023, when secondary transit movements along the Western Balkan route surged following the reintroduction of internal border controls by Czechia and Austria. The number of non-EU nationals found to be illegally present rose to 11,791 in 2022 and quadrupled to 47,610 in 2023, with over 97% linked to secondary transit, mainly from Hungary towards Germany via neighbouring states. Syrians dominated detections (78% in 2022 and 95% in 2023). In 2024, the trend reversed, with detections falling more than tenfold to 2,585, largely due to reinforced border measures; Ukrainians accounted for 83% of cases. Enforcement indicators followed a similar downward trend. Refusals of entry to non-EU nationals fell by 35% in 2024 to 645, mainly affecting Ukrainians, Moldovans, and Azerbaijanis, while return orders declined by 67% to 450. By contrast, effective returns increased by 17% to 310, primarily involving nationals of Türkiye, Serbia, and Georgia.

Trafficking in persons in Slovakia affects both nationals and foreigners, with heightened risks among Roma communities, children, migrant workers, refugees, and people experiencing homelessness or mental health challenges. In 2024, police investigated 18 cases, broadly in line with 2023 (19) but below 2022 levels (25); 17 traffickers were indicted and 20 convicted. Victim identification declined for a second year, with 35 victims formally identified (-8% year-on-year), most of them children (57%). Of these, 22 were victims of sexual exploitation and 13 of labour trafficking, while NGOs identified a further eight victims. In October 2023, the Slovak Republic approved the National Programme for Combating Human Trafficking 2024-2028, which also relates to migration and foreigners. In the same year, the Slovakia published the Analysis of Human Trafficking for the purpose of Labour Exploitation, distinguishing between trafficking in human beings for the purpose of forced labour and severe labour exploitation.

Slovakia's migration and asylum policy continues to be shaped by EU legislation, with the country maintaining a restrictive stance toward irregular migration while gradually expanding regulated legal migration channels. Between 2024 and 2025, Slovakia introduced a series of reforms aimed at facilitating labour mobility and improving the management of residence procedures. Key amendments included reduced salary thresholds and simplified eligibility criteria for EU Blue Cards, shorter minimum contract requirements, extended validity periods, and the introduction of an A2 Slovak language requirement for long-term residence.

Seasonal work rules were also liberalised through a new short-term contract with reduced contributions and simplified administrative procedures. Further changes to the Act on the Residence of Foreigners introduced business-residence quotas, extended national visa validity, and updated rules for changing the purpose of stay, while Slovakia also aligned its legislation with the EU Seasonal Workers Directive. Amendments to the Asylum Act revised subsidy rules and streamlined temporary protection procedures, with additional restrictions introduced from March 2025 limiting accommodation contributions to beneficiaries meeting specific vulnerability criteria.

In June 2025, the government approved the National Strategy for Asylum and Migration Management, a five-year framework to strengthen Slovakia's migration and asylum governance. While Slovakia initially opposed the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Strategy is firmly anchored in EU legislation and reflects key European priorities, including integrated migration management, legal migration pathways, cross-sectoral coordination, contingency planning, and migrant integration. It also addresses national priorities related to managing legal and irregular migration. To operationalise the Strategy, a national Action Plan is under preparation and is expected to be finalised by mid-2026, explicitly aligning Slovakia's migration framework with the EU Pact.

Slovakia is a party to several migration dialogues, including the Prague Process. In 2018, it voted against the Global Compact for Migration.

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