

## 2018 Country Report for Slovakia

### Key points for EASPD members

#### I. Employment and Labour Market Policy

- The employment rate rose to 71.2 % and the unemployment rate fell to 8.1 % in 2017.
- Slovakia has started implementing the action plan for the integration of the long-term unemployed focusing on personalised services.
- However, the rate of participation in active labour market policies is still low and their upskilling component remains limited.
- **Low-skilled workers, the Roma community and young people continue to face high levels of unemployment, amplified by high regional disparities.**
- The share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) remains slightly above the EU average (12.3 % vs EU 11.5 % in 2016, age 15-24).
- Spending on active labour market policies (ALMPs) is still one of the lowest in the EU.

#### II. Education Policy

- Only limited progress has been made in improving the quality of education.
- Student performance in basic skills is weak and shows a high level of inequality, with low achievement strongly linked to socioeconomic background.
- Reforms are taking place in the education and training systems, but the quality and equity of educational outcomes remain of significant concern.
- The proportion of low achievers in the PISA 2015 survey is significantly higher than the EU average in all areas tested.
- To address declining educational outcomes, the national education strategy 'Learning Slovakia', developed through a comprehensive consultation process by experts and completed in September 2017, spells out a vision for regional and higher education reform. Progress on the reform has however been limited, as the document still needs to be translated into the official government National Education Strategy with concrete action plans announced only for 2018.
- The rate of early school leaving (ESL) is low at 7.4 %, well below the EU average of 10.7%, but shows sizeable regional disparities.
- Public expenditure on education has been low over the last decade.



- Slovakia has fast-increasing tertiary education attainment rates, but structural weaknesses in the higher education persist.
- Implementation of measures to address weaknesses in higher education has been delayed.
- Education continues to be relatively underfunded at all levels and adult participation in life-long learning activities is still very low.

### III. Social Policy

- The cost-effectiveness of the healthcare system is improving, but from a low level.
- Public e-health system has been introduced after long delays but limitations in terms of basic functionalities and user-friendliness may hinder its use.
- While action to rationalise hospital care continues, plans to create streamlined, integrated care centres have not advanced.

### IV. Anything else?

- Access to inclusive education and social housing is limited.
- Income inequality remains very low and poverty rates are decreasing.
- The gender employment gap remains high (persistently above the EU average), with women's employment opportunities conflicting with care responsibilities.
- Efforts are being made to improve access to childcare through investment from EU funds, but quality and affordable care, in particular for children under the age of 3, are still lacking.
- Labour market improvements contributed to the decrease in the risk of poverty or social exclusion but the intensity of poverty is relatively high and not addressed sufficiently by social inclusion measures.

### Additional Information

- European Commission: 2018 Country Report for [Slovakia](#)
- EASPD [Activities on the European Semester](#)

### For more information, please contact

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This position paper has been produced with the financial support of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation “EaSI” (2014-2020). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.



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