

Groups at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion Spending Review

Final Report

March 2020

This project has been supported by the European Social Fund



Operačný program
**Efektívna
verejná správa**



Európska únia
Európsky sociálny fond



The review of public government spending is one of the tasks within the *Value for Money* project. This material of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic assesses the efficiency of policies that impact on social integration of groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion as provided in the Task B.1 of the Slovak Government Resolution No. 478/2017. The document has been developed as a cooperation between the *Value for Money* unit under the management of Štefan Kišš, the Educational Policy Institute under the management of Michal Rehúš, and the Social Policy Institute under the management of Lucia Fašungová. Tomáš Hellebrandt (VfM) is the main author (tomas.hellebrandt@mfsr.sk). Chapters 4 and 6 were written by Michaela Bednárík (Educational Policy Institute). She is also the co-author of Chapter 5. Laura Salomonsová (Social Policy Institute) is the co-author of Chapters 4, 7 and 8. Filip Markovič (VfM) is the co-author of Chapter 9. Valuable contributions to this document were also made by Alexandra Ostertágová and Samo Varsik (Educational Policy Institute), Zuzana Čarnogurská, Katarína Vaľková, Martina Erdelyiová and Marek Bojko (VfM), Zuzana Baranovičová and Michal Jerga (Implementation unit).

Acknowledgements:

Our gratitude for valuable suggestions and comments during compilation of the Final Report goes to Matej Kurian, Juraj Mach and Adam Marek from the Value for Money unit, colleagues from the Ministry of Finance's Financial Policy Institute and Budget Policy section, colleagues from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, colleagues from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, colleagues from the Ministry of Transport and Construction, colleagues from the Ministry of Health, Ábel Ravasz who was the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, Peter Drál (Learning Makes Sense/*To dá rozum* project), Lucia Kišš (SlovakAid), Zuzana Kusá and Jarmila Lajčáková (President's Office), Mária Machajdíková (SOCIA), Vladislav Matej (Association Early Intervention Providers and Supporters/*Asociácia poskytovateľov a podporovateľov včasnej intervencie*), Darina Ondrušová (Institute for Labour and Family Research/*Institute for Labour and Family Research*) and Katarína Smatanová (Slovak University of Technology/*Slovenská technická univerzita*). Special thanks go to the reviewers of the Final Report: Veronika Antalová (Environmental Policy Institute), Lucia Mýtina Kureková (Slovak Academy of Sciences) and Zuzana Polačková (Slovak Academy of Sciences) as well as all those who took part in the discussion within the peer-review procedure.

Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction and Summary	8
1. Proposed policy measures of the spending review	12
1.1. Value	12
1.2. Savings	23
1.3. Management and non-financial measures.....	24
1.4. Data and methodology	30
1.5. Analytical measures	32
2. Social integration and diagnostics of the groups at risk	35
3. Expenditures on social inclusion	41
3.1. Expenditures on social inclusion in education	41
3.2. Expenditures on social inclusion in labour market and social policies	43
3.3. Expenditures on social inclusion in the housing and infrastructure area	45
3.4. Expenditures on social inclusion in healthcare	46
3.5. Expenditures on social inclusion from ESI Funds and co-financing schemes	46
4. Early childhood care for disadvantaged children.....	50
5. Education of socially disadvantaged children.....	57
5.1. Education in kindergartens	59
5.2. Education in basic schools (primary and lower secondary level).....	66
5.3. Early school leavers	76
5.4. Upper secondary education.....	80
5.5. University education	82
6. Education of children with disability.....	83
6.1. Education in kindergartens	84
6.2. Education in basic schools (primary and lower secondary level).....	92
6.3. Early school leavers	108
6.4. Upper secondary education.....	108
6.5. University education	112
7. Integration of groups at risk into the labour market	114
7.1. Situation of the groups at risk on the labour market	115
7.2. Employment services and social economy	122
7.3. Labour market policies focusing on persons with disabilities.....	130
7.4. Policies targeting at work-life balance	135
7.5. Solution of debt problems.....	140
8. Social security and family policy.....	141
8.1. Assistance in material need.....	142
8.2. Support for families with children.....	151

8.3.	Tax expenditures	155
8.4.	Support of persons with disability	156
9.	Availability of housing and essential infrastructure	164
9.1.	Housing quality and affordability in Slovakia	165
9.2.	Rental housing with regulated rent	169
9.3.	Assistance for people in housing need	175
9.4.	Self-help housing construction and development of infrastructure in the MRC	180
9.5.	Housing allowance	183
10.	Healthcare availability	188
10.1.	Health condition of socially disadvantaged people	188
10.2.	Use of health care in MRC	190
10.3.	Barriers to healthcare accessibility and discrimination	191
10.4.	Measures to support demand for preventive health care.....	193
11.	Support programmes for municipalities with MRC	194
11.1.	Scope and impact of support programmes	194
11.2.	Management of support programmes and sustainability	198
12.	Bibliography	202
13.	Annexes:.....	217

List of Tables and Graphs

List of Tables

Table 1: Key indicators of social exclusion, 2018 (% of population)	37
Table 2: Expenditures on social inclusion in education (eur million)	42
Table 3: Expenditures on social inclusion in the area of labour market and social policies (eur million).....	44
Table 4: Expenditures on social inclusion in the housing and infrastructure area (eur million)	45
Table 5: Expenditures on social inclusion of groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion from ESI Funds and co-financing schemes (eur million, 2018).....	46
Table 6: Basic data about early intervention service providers, 2018	52
Table 7: Basic data about centres of special pedagogical counselling, 2018	54
Table 8: Overview of support provided to children at kindergartens (2019)	61
Table 9: Percentage of pupils by affiliation with SDB and MRC who repeated grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)	67
Table 10: Percentage of pupils by AMN and MRC enrolled in special education schools in the school year 2018/19 (%)	68
Table 11: Percentage of 6 years old pupils from SDB and MRC enrolled in the zero grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)	69
Table 12: Development of SDB allowance.....	71
Table 13: Percentage of pupils who completed compulsory education period in 2017/18 and did not continue in education (%).....	76
Table 14: Percentage of 16 years old children in the education system in the school year 2018/19 (%).....	81
Table 15: Percentage of 19 to 23 years old people within AMN system and from MRC who are or were enrolled at a university in Slovakia (%)	82
Table 16: Number of pupils with disabilities at basic schools by the type of disability (2018)	92
Table 17: Distribution of groups of pupils by the type of disability and education method (%).....	94
Table 18: T9 testing results (2018) – average success rate (%).....	95
Table 19: Dropout rate of pupils with disabilities by education stream (2018/19)	108
Table 20: Number of pupils with disabilities at upper secondary schools by the type of disability, 2018	108
Table 21: Percentage of pupils without and with disabilities at individual types of mainstream upper secondary schools (%)	109
Table 22: Percentage of students with individual types of disabilities (2018).....	112
Table 23: Overview of focus of individual labour market integration instruments on the review's target groups..	121
Table 24: Participation of job seekers in the selected ALMP instruments other than activation works in 2017 (%)	124
Table 25: Options of compliance with the statutory obligation to hire persons with disabilities.....	133
Table 26: System of quotas for persons with disabilities in the selected EU countries	134
Table 27: Percentage of children born in 2017 whose parents did not receive child birth allowance (%)	154
Table 28: One-off allowance as a percentage of the total price of aid or service.....	161
Table 29: Life expectancy at birth, 2015	188
Table 30: Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births), average for the period 2006 – 2015	189
Table 31: Number of workers within the supported SSCIs.....	198

List of Graphs

Graph 1: At-risk-of-poverty or at-risk-of-social-inclusion rate (%)	35
Graph 2: Severe material deprivation rate (%).....	35
Graph 3: Key indicators of social exclusion, 2018 (% of population)	37
Graph 4: Key indicators of social exclusion, 2017 (% of the members of the selected groups at risk)	38
Graph 5: At-risk-of-poverty or at-risk-of-social-inclusion rate of selected groups, 2018 (%)	38

Graph 6: Selection of social exclusion indicators in MRC, 2016 (%)	38
Graph 7: Net expenditures on social protection less the sick and old-age benefits, 2016 (% of GDP).....	43
Graph 8: Allocation, award of contracts and absorption within PA 5 (million euros, for period ended 31/12/2018)	49
Graph 9: Allocation, award of contracts and absorption within PA 6 (million euros, for period ended 31/12/2018)	49
Graph 10: Enrolment rate of children by age, school year 2018/19 (%).....	60
Graph 11: Percentage of children beginning the compulsory education in zero grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)	60
Graph 12: Percentage of first graders at basic schools in the school year 2017/18 who repeated grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)	60
Graph 13: Structure of population in municipalities by the number of KGs/special KGs (%)	63
Graph 14: Percentage of children from MRC and KG capacity in a municipality	64
Graph 15: KG capacity and enrolment rate in the municipality	64
Graph 16: Percentage of disadvantaged groups in all pupils by basic school grade in the year 2018/19 (%)	67
Graph 17: Employment prospects of early school leavers on the labour market in 2016	77
Graph 18: Percentage of F-type programme graduates in the school year 2017/18 who found employment until the end of 2018 (%)	78
Graph 19: Share of disadvantaged groups to all upper secondary school students by grades in the school year 2018/19 (%)	81
Graph 20: Distribution of upper secondary school students between types of schools in the school year 2018/19 (%)	81
Graph 21: Kindergarten enrolment rate of children with and without disability.....	85
Graph 22: Enrolment rate of pre-school children with disability by the type of disability, 2017/18	85
Graph 23: Percentage of pre-schoolers with disabilities educated within mainstream and special education stream	87
Graph 24: Percentage of pupils with individual types of disability in mainstream and special education stream (2018)	93
Graph 25: Proportion of disabled pupils at special schools in Prešov and Košice regions in the school year 2017/18	93
Graph 26: Percentage of pupils with disabilities in individual education streams.....	95
Graph 27: Number of pupils with disabilities in individual education streams	95
Graph 28: Number of teaching assistants requested and allocated.....	100
Graph 29: Percentage of pupils with individual types of disability at mainstream and special upper secondary schools, 2018.....	109
Graph 30: Employment rate by belonging to MRC and by gender (% , population aged 15 to 64 years)	115
Graph 31: Employment rate development (year-over-year growth in % , population aged 15 to 64 years)	115
Graph 32: Unemployment rate by the completed education level, 20 to 64 years, 2018 (%)	116
Graph 33: Employment rate of people aged 20 to 64 years (%)	119
Graph 34: Development of the employment rate of invalidity pensioners (%).....	119
Graph 35: Employment rate of lone mothers and mothers in complete families (% , 2014).	120
Graph 36: Employment rate by the type of family and age of the youngest child (% , 2011).....	120
Graph 37: Expenditures on ALMP and long-term unemployment rate (2017)	123
Graph 38: Expenditures on ALMP by instruments (2017, % of GDP).....	123
Graph 39: Structure of ALMP instruments by participation (in % of the total number of participants), 2017	126
Graph 40: Development and structure of expenditures on the ALMP for persons with disabilities (eur million) ..	131
Graph 41: Support of job positions in sheltered environment and in the open labour market.....	131
Graph 42: Compliance with the statutory percentage by method (thousands).....	134
Graph 43: Percentage of entities employing more than the statutory percentage of persons with disabilities (%)	134
Graph 44: Percentage of children aged less than 3 years in formal and informal childcare (% , 2017).....	136
Graph 45: Number of children supported with allowance for childcare by region and the fee amount (December 2019).....	136

Graph 46: Development of the assistance in material need.....	143
Graph 47: Minimum subsistence income and assistance in material need as a percentage of median income in the economy (%).....	143
Graph 48: Minimum guaranteed income as a percentage of the median income in the economy, 2018.....	144
Graph 49: Percentage of job seekers in the AMN system who became eligible to the activation benefit (%).....	147
Graph 50: Percentage of the municipality's population consisting of job seekers in the AMN system and coverage with the activation benefit, 2018.....	147
Graph 51: Development of the special allowance.....	149
Graph 52: Cumulative percentage of the special allowance recipients who end up back in the job seeker register by duration of special allowance receipt.....	149
Graph 53: Inactivity trap: effective tax in case of a job for a minimum wage, 2018 (%).....	150
Graph 54: Development of income coming from benefits and job for minimum wage for a long-term unemployed citizen (EUR).....	150
Graph 55: At-risk-of-poverty rate of children aged less than 16 years before and after social transfers, 2018....	151
Graph 56: Relative child poverty gap, 2018.....	151
Graph 57: Impact of parental benefit on the income of households of 2 adults and 2 children (2020).....	153
Graph 58: Income of a family of two adults without work earned income before and after the birth of the first child (EUR, 2020).....	153
Graph 59: At-risk-of-poverty rate of persons with disabilities before and after social transfers (% , 2018).....	157
Graph 60: Structure of expenditures on the compensation of social consequences of severe disability, eur million.....	158
Graph 61: Carer's allowance for working-age person looking after one person with severe disability.....	158
Graph 62: Participation tax with the personal assistance allowance (% , 2018).....	160
Graph 63: Average invalidity pensions as a % of the median equivalent disposable income.....	162
Graph 64: Change of earned income from work after medical approval of invalidity.....	162
Graph 65: Severe housing deprivation rate, 2018 (%).....	165
Graph 66: Severe housing deprivation rate in the population below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (%).....	165
Graph 67: Population distribution across the apartment quality categories (%).....	165
Graph 68: Housing quality indicators, 2016 (% of population).....	166
Graph 69: Distribution of the population of Roma communities by the type of settlement (%).....	167
Graph 70: Distribution of the population of Roma communities across types of housing by the type of settlement (%).....	168
Graph 71: Percentage of the population of Roma communities living in settlements with worse than 50% coverage by underground services (%).....	168
Graph 72: Water source in Roma settlements (% of the settlement's population).....	169
Graph 73: Percentage of population in rental housing (% , 2018).....	171
Graph 74: Development of the offer of rental housing with regulated rent.....	171
Graph 75: Support from the Ministry of Transport by the purpose of use (eur million).....	172
Graph 76: Support from the Housing Development Fund by the purpose of use (eur million).....	172
Graph 77: Coverage of housing benefit against proportion of MRC among the people in the AMN system in the municipality (2018).....	184
Graph 78: Proportion of households in the bottom income quintile which receive housing benefit (2017).....	184
Graph 79: Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) by age of the mother, 2006 – 2015.....	189
Graph 80: Percentage of people provided compensation of social consequences of severe disability, 2018 (%).....	190
Graph 81: Average expenditures of PHI per capita by age – MRC as % of the Slovak average, 2016.....	191
Graph 82: Reasons for not seeking medical care for 6 or more years old persons experiencing health issues (%).....	192
Graph 83: Percentage of population living in a municipality 10 or more km from the nearest outpatient office (%).....	192

Introduction and Summary

The spending review is a part of the Government's Value for Money project aiming to reform rules, set processes and strengthen institutions which will support good decision-making in the public interest and significantly increase value for money in the Slovak public sector.

In 2019, the spending review assessed expenditures impacting on social integration of groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, employment and remuneration policy in public administration, agriculture, and public the healthcare system. The interim reports identify areas with greatest room for efficiency gains. The final reports list measures and define action plans for their implementation. They are approved by the Government along with the Stability Programme of the Slovak Republic. The spending reviews to be published in 2020 include the final reports of the spending reviews on behalf of the Ministries of Culture, Interior and Defence.

The goal of spending review is to evaluate the majority of public expenditures during the electoral period. This goal has been met after the first electoral period. The measures proposed should bring financial savings, better public services and/or transfer of funds to government priorities. The spending review brings measures which are intended to be sustainable on a long-term basis.

Developed countries use spending review as a standard instrument which helps governments both to find room in public policies for more efficient use of public funds and to reach savings necessary to meet the national and European fiscal commitments.

The Final Report of the Groups at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion Spending Review quantifies the expenditures on the existing social protection and integration policies, assesses their efficiency and accessibility, and examines the existing systems of data collection. Gaps in the existing system of public policies are also identified based on findings and conclusions from the academic literature, discussions with field experts and examples of good practice at home and abroad. On the basis of those findings, it proposes measures to improve social integration of groups at risk and thereby unleash unused potential for economic growth.

Poverty and social exclusion affect the whole society and result in significant economic costs. They constitute not only a human-rights challenge, but also dampen the performance of the economy by wasting opportunities for the development of human potential. According to the OECD, an increase in the employment rate and labour productivity of people from marginalised Roma communities to the population average by 2060 would increase GDP by more than 12 % and government revenue by 5 % of GDP (Geva et al., 2018).

In 2018, 16.3 % of the Slovak population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Although this figure is below the average of EU-15 (21.5 %) or V3 (other Vysegrad 4 members, 19.1 %), certain groups face a much higher risk. These include in particular children from socially disadvantaged background and people from marginalised Roma communities (MRC). Lone parents and individuals with disabilities are exposed to a greater risk as well. Even though there are no statistical data measuring the risk for homeless people, there is little doubt that they are among the most vulnerable groups.

The review estimates that public spending on social inclusion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2018 amounts to EUR 2,611 million, which is approximately 2.9 % of GDP and 7.1 % of total public expenditure. Around 10 % of that was covered by the EU funds and co-funding. Comparable data for other countries is not available, but based on a wider definition of expenditures on social protection Slovakia belongs to the bottom third of EU countries.

Early childhood care for disadvantaged children

Early childhood care services aiming to reduce the risk of social exclusion are only accessible to a fraction of disadvantaged children. Only children with disability are eligible to receive early childhood care; however,

various obstacles mean even their access to these services is limited. There are no such services available for children and their families living in a difficult social situation or children with developmental delays. This is despite the fact that investments in human capital in early childhood have higher returns than investments made in later stages of life. Responsibility for early childhood care is divided between three ministries and local governments. Insufficient cooperation of these stakeholders negatively affects the accessibility and quality of services.

Education

The Slovak education system is not capable of sufficiently integrating children from socially disadvantaged environment and instruments targeting this group only cover half of all children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The impact of socioeconomic background on test results is significantly higher than in other developed countries. Compared to others, children from socially disadvantaged environment are only half as likely to be enrolled in pre-primary education. On the other hand, they are four times more likely to attend special schools/classes for children with disabilities and eight times more likely to repeat the grade. The share who do not continue their studies after completing the period of compulsory education is twice as high. Pupils from MRC have even worse results and they are often segregated within mainstream education into separate schools or classrooms.

Children with disabilities have lower pre-primary education enrolment rates than those without disabilities and a higher share is placed in the special education stream compared with other European countries. In 2014 nearly 6 % of pupils aged 6 to 15 attended special education stream compared with fewer than 2 % in selected EU countries. Mainstream schools are often unprepared for educating children with disabilities, both technically (barrier-free buildings) or in terms of human resources (education of teachers and shortage of teaching assistants and specialised employees). Pupils with intellectual disability are not allowed to complete lower secondary education which prevents them from continuing their education at the upper secondary level.

Expenditures on support for disadvantaged children in education are insufficient. A significant portion of those expenditures is concentrated at the primary and lower secondary level and mostly used for intervention and compensatory measures. Preventive measures and measures aiming to increase the enrolment rate at pre-basic schools are neglected, despite having the highest returns and potential for positive future impact on children.

Labour Market

Insufficient inclusion in education eventually translates into significant differences in labour market prospects. Among the EU countries, Slovakia has by far the highest unemployment rate of people with low qualifications, as high as 29 %. In comparison, the EU-15 countries report 14 % and the V3 countries 10 % unemployment in this group. The impact of education on the unemployment rate is one of the highest in the EU.

Labour offices do not have adequate resources to efficiently and quickly help disadvantaged and difficult-to-place job seekers. Job seeker profiling, which aims to identify those facing greatest obstacles, does not make use of sophisticated statistical methods which have proved to work well in other countries. Insufficient human resources do not enable work with difficult-to-place clients on an individual basis. The poorest job seekers are disproportionately found among participants in activation works, which is the least efficient policy tool.

Employment of individuals with disability is supported primarily through sheltered workshops or workplaces. Although employment in sheltered workshops is an irreplaceable instrument of inclusion for certain groups of disabled individuals, these workshop also employ people who, with appropriate support, would be employable in the open labour market.

The employment rate of lone parents is restricted by insufficient accessibility of nurseries and kindergartens. This is particularly true for mothers with small children. Only 5 % of children under 3 years of age attend formal daycare. This is the lowest figure in the EU (the average number for EU-15 is 42 % and for V3 it is 11 %). Employment of lone parent job seekers is currently supported by way of allowances for employers; complex support for lone parents themselves is non-existent.

Social policies

Although the share of children, who are at risk of poverty in Slovakia is close to the EU-15 average, the average income of these families is lower relative to the poverty threshold than the income of similar families in other countries. One of the reasons is the relatively low level of assistance in material need – the income of families dependent on this assistance expressed as a proportion of median income in the national economy is roughly half the EU-15 average. The level of assistance has not changed since 2009, which resulted in more than 20 % decline relative to the poverty threshold. **The available data shows that Slovakia spends a higher share of GDP on protecting individuals with disability against poverty than the EU-15 average and achieves better results. However, data comparability between countries is limited.**

Housing and infrastructure

14.3 % of people below the poverty threshold live in overcrowded housing of poor quality. This figure is twice as high as the EU-15 average (7.1 %) and higher also than the average in the V3 countries (11.9 %). Among the most deprived locations from the perspective of housing and infrastructure quality are several concentrated Roma settlements. Financial affordability and location of housing affect access to public services and labour market. Bad housing conditions also have a direct impact on health and on children's school performance. The supply of affordable rental housing with regulated rent is one of the lowest in the EU. Only 1.5 % of the Slovak population live in such accommodation, which is significantly less than the average for the EU-15 (8.5 %) and the V3 (8.8 %). Housing allowance as part of the assistance in material need is too narrowly defined, low and insensitive to the living conditions of the recipients when compared with similar benefits in other countries.

Slovakia does not yet have a complex strategy for addressing homelessness at the national level. Joining up of social services that focus on helping people in housing need into a single system has not been anchored in legislation. This negatively influences the quality of life of homeless people and increases public expenditure associated with homelessness. Data about homeless people and people at risk of losing their homes, which could be used to improve public policymaking, is not collected systematically.

Health care

The lifespan of people who live in socially disadvantaged environment is five years shorter than the Slovak average, and the infant mortality rate is more than twice the average. Still, healthcare is significantly underused, particularly among younger age groups. This suggests worse accessibility and use of preventive healthcare. Unlike in the majority of other developed countries, measures to protect low income people against high cost-sharing requirements in healthcare are non-existent in Slovakia. Physical accessibility of healthcare facilities (particularly gynaecology outpatient clinics) in municipalities with large MRC population is problematic.

Support programmes in the marginalised Roma communities

Municipalities with MRC have access to several support programmes financed by EU structural funds, but not all of them use those opportunities to the fullest extent. Programmes aim to improve access to the social and legal aid, counselling, public services, health care, and also preventive activities in the area of health and crime. Not all municipalities use the opportunities made available to the fullest extent in spite of positive assessment of these programs by clients, workers, representatives of local governments and experts.

Measures proposed

The review proposes measures to improve social inclusion amounting to EUR 263 million, with EUR 107 million implementable in the first year. The implementation of value measures will also depend on the state budget and on government priorities. Of the total envelope, one-off expenditures (investments and projects) amount to EUR 42 million and EUR 221 million is allocated for the potential additional expenditures spent annually on systematic measures. Two thirds of the total package (66 %) are intended for early childhood care and education.

Around 20 % should be used on housing support, 12 % on labour market policies and social policies. The remaining areas should receive 2 % of the total package. Not all measures can be fully implemented immediately, some of them will take as many as 10 years to come fully on stream.

Removing barriers to access to education and strengthening elements of inclusive education are essential for ensuring equal opportunities and improve the chances for disadvantaged children to realise their potential. The most important in this respect are high-quality teachers able to adjust teaching to the specific needs of individual children. A large portion of the proposed increase in education expenditure (EUR 125 million) is therefore intended for the development of human resources in kindergartens and schools. These expenditures are intended for improving preparation and life-long learning of teachers and other stakeholders operating in education for work with disadvantaged children and for additional specialised employees and teaching assistants.

The review also proposes to continue to improve the accessibility and availability of pre-primary education by building new capacities and to extend the definition of social disadvantage in order to cover a larger population of children at risk. Essential for improving the situation of children from MRC are steps to reduce their overrepresentation in special education and their segregation in mainstream schools, and to address the language issues of Roma children whose mother tongue is not Slovak. Further, it is important to provide methodological and financial support to schools for reducing barriers at all levels of education for pupils with disabilities. The review proposes to strengthen overall preparedness of disadvantaged children for education by expanding early childhood care and securing more efficient cooperation between individual ministries operating in this area.

Labour market assistance for difficult-to-place job seekers needs to be based on sophisticated profiling and subsequent timely, professional and individualised help. Both job seekers and labour offices should be motivated to utilize more efficient activation measures in place of activation works. Demand for employees with disability on the part of employers should be supported by stricter quotas.

Support for children living in extreme poverty requires not only better opportunities in education and more effective assistance for their parents in finding work but also stronger social protection. Life in extreme poverty has proven negative impact on their cognitive and emotional development and limits their ability to fully use the opportunities offered by the education system. To that end, the reduction in assistance in material need relative to the poverty threshold needs to be reversed for families with children and eligibility for the dependent child allowance needs to be expanded to include children below compulsory schooling age. Implementing the proposed measures would maintain significantly stronger work incentives for parents compared to the majority of EU countries.

The review proposes to strengthen housing affordability for groups at risk by amending the housing allowance and creating conditions for more efficient help to homeless people. Housing allowance should be provided independently of the assistance in material need system to a greater share of citizens, in line with international good practice, and should also reflect the structure of the household and the actual housing costs. More efficient prevention and solution to homelessness requires the adoption of a national strategy and regular collection of data about this group. A pilot project should evaluate within the Slovak context the so called "housing first" strategy that has shown positive results in other countries.

Important measures in other areas include a more efficient protection of low-income patients against excessive co-payments for medications and extending the coverage of support programmes in municipalities with MRC along with more efficient coordination of those programmes at regional level.

Savings as a result of eliminating or limiting less efficient instruments of public policies focusing on inclusion are estimated at EUR 13.7 million, with EUR 1.4 million implementable in the first year. The largest share of savings (96 %) is identified in education where better inclusion should allow the elimination of the zero grade and a gradual decrease in the number of pupils educated in special education. Further savings could be obtained from limiting the support of activation works within active labour market policies. The funds saved should be re-allocated to supporting expenditure measures in the relevant area.

1. Proposed policy measures of the spending review

The goal of the review is to identify and review expenditures and instruments of public policies having impact on social integration of the groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The proposed policy measures focus on the improvement of efficiency, adequacy and availability of existing assistance tools to a wider group of people at risk and the testing of new tools which proved to work well abroad or in the Slovak non-governmental sector. The review also identifies data collection gaps which restrict planning of investments in assistance tools and the assessment of their efficiency, and indicates how to remove them. The review could not resolve in sufficient detail some important questions connected with social inclusion of the groups at risk. In such cases, the review proposes additional analyses. The value and saving measures contain estimated impact on public spending. As for the other measures, any eventual expenditures required for them are low enough to be covered from the existing funds of the responsible Ministry.

A large portion of the proposed measures focus on disadvantaged children and their families. This is because interventions in childhood have greater effect and faster return on investment than interventions at later stages of life. This is because the human brain develops fastest in childhood. Measures focused on complex care in early childhood and accessible and high-quality education have the potential to reduce the negative effects of disability or social disadvantage on the quality of life and on social and labour market integration more effectively than the compensatory measures taken in adulthood.

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional problem. The measures proposed in various areas of public policies are related to each other and their efficiency as regards reduction of social exclusion of the target groups will depend on the cooperation and coordination of multiple ministries. One factor threatening the implementation of the proposed measures is the application of an individual-ministry-focused approach without interconnecting individual policies. This may lessen the effect of positive synergies across the policy areas.

1.1. Value

The review proposes measures to improve social inclusion with the aggregate allocation of EUR 262.8 million, with EUR 107.1 million implementable in the first year. The review identifies the so-called potential of value measures, which indicates the necessary target expenditure increase in the relevant area.¹ In case of capital and project expenditures (e.g. investments in kindergartens or pilot projects), with the aggregate total value of EUR 42.2 million, the potential indicates the total value of investment or project. In the case of current expenditure measures, totalling EUR 220.6, the potential indicates the final value of additional annual expenditures once the measure is implemented in full. The review defines the implementation horizon, which is the number of years required to realize the potential. The expenditures in the first year (2021) are calculated based on the assumption of even (linear) increase in the funds throughout the implementation horizon.

The implementation of value measures will depend on the state budget and on the Government priorities. In addition to the funds coming from the savings in this review (section 1.2), the proposed measures may also be partially funded from the savings identified in the previous spending reviews approved by the Government. The overall potential of those savings amounts to EUR 880 million, of which EUR 375 million could be earned in the first year (Hagara, Kišš and Ódor, 2019). The financial space for the implementation of the proposed measures can also be increased by utilisation of the European structural and investment funds to the greatest possible extent.

¹ The potential calculation method for individual measures is described in more detail in Annex 40.

Task	2021 (eur million).	Potential (eur million)	Hrzn. (years)	Responsibility
Early childhood care for disadvantaged children	0.6	4.9		
1 Support early childhood care for children aged 0 to 3 years from MRC	0.6	4.9	8	MinEdu, MinLbr
Pre-primary education	11.8	78.2		
2 Invest in expansion of kindergartens and making them barrier free	4.9	35.0	8	MinEdu, MinIntr
3 Establishing bus connection between segregated settlements and kindergartens/basic schools	0.4	0.4	1	MinEdu, MinIntr, MinTrans, municipalities
4 Support development of human resources in inclusion in kindergartens	4.4	40.7	10	MinEdu, MinIntr
5 Improve offer of education for teaching and professional staff at kindergartens for work with children from disadvantaged background and with disabilities	2.1	2.1	1	MinEdu
Education at basic and secondary schools	16.6	90.5		
6 Support development of human resources in inclusion at basic and secondary schools	8.6	74.7	10	MinEdu
7 Strengthen support of pupils from disadvantaged background in the educational process	4.2	4.2	1	MinEdu
8 Improve offer of education courses for teachers at basic schools and other stakeholders in work with disadvantaged pupils	2.5	7.6	3	MinEdu
9 Implement a flexible normative for second-chance education	0.8	0.8	1	MinEdu
10 Increase the volume of funds to make basic and secondary schools barrier-free	0.2	0.6	3	MinEdu
11 Do a pilot test of school district re-organisation on a de-segregation principle	0.1	0.8	8	MinEdu, MinIntr
12 Support transfer of pupils from the special to the mainstream education	0.2	1.8	8	MinEdu, MinIntr
Labour market and social policies	26.0	28.7		
13 Implement individualised work with disadvantaged groups in the labour market	1.1	3.3	3	MinLbr
14 Make the labour offices barrier-free	0.6	0.6	1	MinLbr
15 Increase and extend the assistance in material need	22.8	22.8	1	MinLbr
16 Improve the accessibility of the birth allowance	0.8	0.8	1	MinLbr
17 Increase the public contribution to financing aids for people with severe disabilities as part of one-off financial allowances to compensate the social consequences of severe disability	0.2	0.2	1	MinLbr
18 Launch pilot projects helping individuals who underwent personal bankruptcy and lone parents	0.5	1.0	2	Labour office, MinJus
Healthcare system	1.4	1.4		
19 Increase protection against cofinancing of medications based on income	1.3	1.3	1	MinHlth
20 Test transfers conditional on preventive health checkups	0.1	0.1	2	MinHlth
Housing and infrastructure	49.7	51.6		
21 Amend conditions for the granting of housing benefit	48.7	48.7	1	MinLbr
22 Test the "housing first" approach as a solution of homelessness	1.0	2.9	8	MinIntr, MinLbr, MinTrans

Support programmes for municipalities with MRC		0.9	7.5		
23	Support field workers in continued studies	0.0	0.3	7	MinLbr, MinIntr
24	Extend the Field Social Work programme to municipalities which do not have it	0.3	2.0	8	MinLbr, MinIntr
25	Extend the Healthy Communities programme to municipalities which do not have it	0.1	0.7	8	MinHlth
26	Extend the neighbourhood watch programme (MOPS) to municipalities which do not have it	0.6	4.5	8	MinIntr
TOTAL		107.1	262.8		

Early childhood care for disadvantaged children

1st measure: Support provision of early childhood care for children aged 0 to 3 years who live in marginalised Roma communities (potential of EUR 4.9 million). Availability and quality of early childhood care are decisive for the future life of disadvantaged children. The foundations for the development of various skills are laid in human brain in the first years of life (Chapter 4). Territorial concentration of poverty, its intergenerational transmission, and the consequent poor results of children from MRC at school should be addressed by an *ad hoc* programme of early childhood care focusing specifically on this group. The programme should cover visits of families with children under 3 years by trained workers from the community who would play games with children and their parents and do activities concentrating on psychosocial stimulation (fine and gross motor skills, cognitive, language, communication skills, social and emotional area). Cooperation with the workers should also be established by the Ministry of Health in connection with the administration of newly introduced screening of psychomotor development of children under 3 years of age. The programme should also provide counselling services to mothers and pregnant women and group education for families.

Pre-primary education

2nd measure: Invest in expansion of kindergartens and remove structural barriers from their premises (potential of EUR 35.0 million). Compared with the EU countries, the pre-primary education enrolment rate is low in Slovakia. This indicator is even lower in the groups of children at risk. These are the groups which benefit most from the pre-primary education. Insufficient capacity of kindergartens is one of the causes. Locations with most limited capacities overlap with several municipalities with marginalised Roma communities (Chapter 5.1). What is more, many kindergartens are not barrier-free. This is another obstacle to the acceptance of children with disabilities. Unlike in basic schools, the state does not support efforts of kindergartens to make their premises barrier free at all (Chapter 6.1).

The measure includes:

- Expansion of the capacities necessary to launch compulsory pre-primary education for children aged 5 years or more and a statutory right pertaining to 3 and 4 years old children to be admitted to a kindergarten. The total capital expenditures on this measure in excess of the funds allocated to that purpose in the current programming period amount to EUR 92.7 million. Approximately EUR 34.4 million of that allocation represent new places in kindergartens to be occupied by children from socially disadvantaged background or children with a disability.
- Financial support in the form of a development project to make kindergartens barrier-free with an allocation of EUR 600 thousand along with preparation of a manual on how to make schools barrier-free which will help schools identify drawbacks and the optimum condition. This measure is also necessary due to establishment of compulsory pre-primary education within which children with disability will be obligated to attend kindergartens.

3rd measure: Establish a bus line between segregated settlements and kindergartens and basic schools (potential of EUR 0.4 million). The kindergarten enrolment rate is significantly worse in the MRC environment and

the average number of absences at basic schools is much worse in these communities than it is in mainstream population. One of the causes is poor accessibility of schools from many segregated settlements which are located outside municipalities. There are 191 such settlements and 49 of them (i.e. 26%) are more than 2 km away from the nearest municipality with school (average distance is 3.5 km). System support to improve the accessibility of schools by introducing school buses is non-existent (Chapter 5.1).

4th measure: Support development of human resources in inclusion at kindergartens (potential of EUR 40.7 million). Nearly one half of children who will join kindergartens as a result of establishment of compulsory pre-primary education will be from socially disadvantaged background or will have a disability. However, the funding of mainstream kindergartens does not reflect the need for specialised staff who would support teachers in work with these children (just like it is in case of basic schools) (Chapters 5.1 and 6.1). Neither do kindergartens employ systematic language support of Roma children whose mother tongue is not Slovak. Employment of support staff who can speak Roma language is not supported and the offer on the labour market is limited by low education level in MRCs. Nevertheless, research projects of foreign countries demonstrate that engagement of a worker from the minority at school has a positive impact both on school attendance and results of children (Chapter 5.1).

The measure includes:

- Provision of funds to administrators for teaching assistants, ancillary tutors² and professional employees³ at kindergartens covering 50% of their tariff wage in amount of EUR 32.3 million. Allowances provided by the state for teaching assistants and ancillary tutors should reflect the number of children from socially disadvantaged background and the children with disability at a kindergarten. Since all children benefit from the presence of professional employees, their numbers should be determined based on the number of classrooms. At kindergartens with greater number of disadvantaged children, the number of supported job positions should depend on the distribution of the disadvantaged children across classrooms in order to support the principle of desegregation at schools.
- Full funding of Roma and Hungarian language speaking teaching assistants/ancillary tutors hired by kindergartens in selected municipalities with Roma/Hungarian speaking Roma minority in accordance with Article 8(1) of the anti-discrimination law valued at EUR 7.6 million.
- Initial preparation for work with children at kindergartens for individuals beginning in the position of ancillary tutor without completed secondary education valued at EUR 128 thousand. With the transitional period for completion of secondary education (non-financial measure 7), this measure aims to increase the number of assistant teachers coming from MRCs.
- Implementation of a pilot scholarship scheme for young people who can speak Roma language to help them complete the necessary education to become qualified teaching assistants, ancillary tutors or teachers at a kindergarten valued at EUR 710 thousand. The participants would be reimbursed for the cost of completion of basic/secondary education in the relevant field of study. Graduates would be bound to work for some specific pre-set time in the school system after graduation.

5th measure: Improve the offer of education of teaching and professional staff at kindergartens in work with children from socially disadvantaged background or disabilities (potential of EUR 2.1 million). The offer of accredited continuous education courses in 2018 containing 117 courses offered to kindergarten teachers only contains three courses focusing on education of children with disabilities and three courses generally covering inclusion in class (Chapters 5.1 and 6.1). The measure presupposes preparation of one new course on inter-generational transmission of poverty and six new courses on the education of children with specific types of disabilities (mild intellectual disability, vision impairment, autism, behavioural disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, learning disorders) which are not available now.

² To put it simply, ancillary tutors are lower qualified teaching assistants. They do not have to have pedagogical education and their role is to do auxiliary works during child-rearing and education process, provide physical care and help children to serve themselves.

³ Specialised employees include, for example, a psychologist, special education teachers, social pedagogues, speech therapists, etc.

Education at basic and upper secondary schools

6th measure: Support development of human resources in the area of inclusion at basic and upper secondary schools (potential of EUR 74.7 million). Although funding of basic schools takes into consideration the needs of socially disadvantaged and disabled pupils, the support is insufficient. Although the normative contributions that schools receive for disabled pupils are higher than the standard ones, they are insufficient to cover the annual staff costs of a professional employee. Schools receive contributions for pupils from socially disadvantaged background, but this contribution only covers 39% of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion, its amount is not stable and not sufficient to cover all expenditures contemplated by the school law. Although 92% of mainstream basic schools have at least one disadvantaged pupil, fewer than one half of schools (39%) have at least one professional employee. The needs of children with disabilities are not reflected in the funding of after school clubs founded by municipalities at mainstream basic schools (Chapters 5.2 and 6.2).

Funds to cover the costs of teaching assistants are currently allocated for pupils with disabilities within one package including both the basic and the upper secondary schools. Whereas the demand for funds to cover for the costs of teaching assistants is every year higher than the allocation, it seems that pupils at basic schools who need to complete the compulsory years are preferred to the pupils at upper secondary schools when the requests for funds are being assessed (Chapter 6.2).

The measure includes:

- Funding of professional employees at mainstream basic schools valued at EUR 32.9 million. Each school should receive purpose-specific funds to cover for the cost of two professional employees depending on the size of the school irrespective of the number of pupils with disabilities or those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The measure would constitute some sort of inclusive foundations which would be followed up with higher normative contributions for pupils with disabilities and pupils from socially disadvantaged background. Such higher contributions would allow to increase the number of professional employees based on the number and needs of the disadvantaged and disabled pupils at the relevant school.
- Higher normative contribution for education of pupils from socially disadvantaged background (SDB) based on the amended definition valued at EUR 21.7 million. If the number of pupils from SDB is higher than 50, the school will be obligated to have and fund the work of a teaching assistant or a professional employee (at school's choice). The cost estimate reflects the changed definition of pupils with SDB based on which the number of such pupils and, consequently, the coverage of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion with support instruments, would grow (non-financial measure 4).
- Allowing mainstream schools with after school club (ASC) attended by children with disabilities to apply for extra teaching assistants/ancillary tutors for such clubs within applications for funds to cover the costs of teaching assistants – value of the measure: EUR 9.7 million.
- Separate collection of requests for teaching assistants at upper secondary schools and allocation of a separate volume of non-normative sources to cover the staff costs of such assistants – value of the measure: EUR 5.7 million.
- Development project with regular financial allocation to support mentoring and tutoring⁴ of low performing pupils at the lower secondary level (grades 5 to 9) and upper secondary schools –value of the measure: EUR 4.7 million.

⁴ Mentoring is a structured relationship between a senior colleague, teacher, neighbour or other adult and a younger individual serving the purposes of counselling, support and encouragement. Tutoring means assistance provided to the pupils of basic and secondary schools who are the target group of mentoring and whose tutelage in the relevant subjects by way of a tutor is, if needed, recommended by mentor (based on monitoring school results in cooperation both with the school and teachers). The purpose of tutoring is to improve school results of pupils attending basic and secondary schools and their preparation for admissions to secondary schools and completion of secondary school with school-leaving exam.

7th measure: Strengthen the support of pupils from socially disadvantaged background in the education process (potential of EUR 4.2 million). Pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are currently supported by way of an allowance the schools may use to fund material support, teaching assistants or professional employees. As has already been mentioned, the allowance is insufficient in the current form. Attendance rate of after school clubs by pupils from socially disadvantaged background is low, although this is an important component of the day-long child-rearing and education system with a good potential to help improve their results (Chapter 5.2). Socially disadvantaged students of upper secondary schools are supported by way of scholarships. But this scholarship is low (EUR 36 on average), it does not cover the expenditures associated with studies at upper secondary schools (e.g. travel expenses, accommodation, textbooks and school supplies). This may lead some poverty-stricken pupils to prefer work (including informal economy) and, in the event of adult individuals, to prefer activation work to receive the activation benefit (Chapter 5.4).

The measure includes:

- Reformed allowance for pupils from socially disadvantaged background. In connection with the new normative contribution for pupils from socially disadvantaged background (value measure 6), the allowance would only cover for the material requirements of disadvantaged pupils, namely for their didactic technology and school supplies, then for their participation in activities and prevention of infectious disease transmission. The allowance can therefore be decreased compared with the existing status. The expected amount is EUR 50 per one pupil per year, and the allowance is expected to be adjusted on an annual basis. Total spend amounts to EUR 3.6 million which is EUR 2.6 million less than the expenditures spent on the allowance in 2018.
- Compulsory waiver of the fees for the after school club for pupils from socially disadvantaged background. To compensate the gap in revenues of administrators, the measure proposes to introduce (just like in kindergartens) a contribution to partially cover for the cost of child-rearing and education in after school clubs of their administrators – aggregate value: EUR 2.7 million.
- Increase the upper secondary school scholarship, with the lowest value reaching the amount of the activation benefit paid within the assistance in material need system (currently EUR 67.90). The proportion between the three levels of the allowance should remain unchanged. The increased expenditures on scholarship account for EUR 4.1 million.

8th measure: Improve offer of education of teachers at basic schools and other stakeholders in the area of work with disadvantaged pupils (potential of EUR 7.6 million). The available research studies imply that preparation of future teachers or education of existing teachers insufficiently covers the theme of education of pupils with diverse needs and efficient individualisation in education. The current offer of accredited continued education programmes containing 679 programmes offered to the target group of basic school teachers includes only five programmes focusing specifically on education of children with disabilities and 12 programmes which cover inclusion in class in general terms. Teaching Slovak as the second language is a challenge as well. More than one half of Roma population in Slovakia consider the Roma language to be their mother tongue. But there are no schools which would have Roma as the language of instruction or would teach Slovak as the second language, whether their language of instruction is Slovak or Hungarian. Spatial segregation of disadvantaged pupils within the mainstream education, whether within schools or between them, remains a specific problem (Chapter 5.2).

The measure includes:

- A grant programme for universities preparing future teachers to transform the study programmes towards greater inclusion – value: EUR 1.5 million. Transformation projects should also mandatorily include a curriculum concentrated on the acquisition of skills in the area of diagnostics of children's language skills. This programme would finance three best transformation projects chosen from among the departments offering study programmes preparing future teachers.
- Development and implementation of a new course for teachers focusing on inter-generational transmission of poverty and its impact on education and development of six new educational courses dealing in the

education of children with specific disabilities which currently are not available (mild intellectual disability, vision impairment and communication disorder) – value: EUR 4 million.

- Development and implementation of the educational programme focusing on segregation in education for head teachers of kindergartens and basic schools, mayors as administrators of schools, and officers of county authorities – value: EUR 1.5 million.
- Amendment of the offer of programmes and implementation of education for teachers to include programmes focusing on the acquisition of competencies in teaching Slovak as the second language – value: EUR 618 thousand. This measure follows up on the non-financial measure 10 which presupposes to formalise Slovak as the second language lessons.

9th measure: Introduce a flexible normative contribution for second-chance education (potential of EUR 0.8 million). Education to complete lower secondary education level (second-chance education) allows people who dropped out of school early to complete lower secondary education and even continue at higher levels. However, the normative contribution for a pupil participating in second-chance education is static (10% of the standard normative contribution). It does not necessarily reflect the scope of education which is determined by the school head teacher in line with the needs of pupils and this may be the cause for the scarcity of this type of courses (Chapter 5.3).

10th measure: Increase the volume of funds to make basic and upper secondary schools barrier-free (potential of EUR 0.6 million). Since 2015, the amount of EUR 300 thousand has been regularly allocated for the efforts to make basic and upper secondary schools barrier-free. Only schools which already educate pupils with disability may apply for these funds (Chapter 6.2). To improve the accessibility of all schools, all of them should be allowed to apply for this support (non-financial measure 15). The volume of this support therefore needs to be increased for the basic schools (from EUR 300 thousand to EUR 600 thousand) and a separate development project should be created for upper secondary schools (EUR 300 thousand).

11th measure: Do a pilot test of school district re-organisation on a de-segregation principle (potential EUR 0.8 million). School districts are sometimes organised in such manner that pupils from MRC are concentrated at one school irrespective of the distance from other accessible schools and their free capacities. Such a condition is undesirable because the social and economic as well as ethnic composition of classrooms and schools is one of the most important variables explaining systematically achieved poor results (Chapter 5.2). The aim of the pilot test is to try out a voluntary change of school districts in one larger municipality or in a smaller town to gradually, over time, distribute pupils from socially disadvantaged background from schools at which they were concentrated to schools with low numbers of such pupils. The measure pre-supposes, among other things, development of a methodological material treating school district organisation on a de-segregation principle (data and methodology measure 8).

12th measure: Support transfer of pupils from the special to the mainstream education stream (potential EUR 1.8 million). Pupils from socially disadvantaged background are overrepresented at special education schools particularly because they are diagnosed mild intellectual disorder. This implies drawbacks in the use of diagnostic tools and process (Chapter 5.2). Development of an inclusive model of education presupposes, among other things, the decrease in the total number of pupils with disabilities in special education stream. Pupils with intellectual disability who follow a different curriculum with restricted content and lower performance expectations are currently most difficult to be transferred to a mainstream school. This makes the individualisation of their education impossible, their education does not necessarily correspond to their potential and this is why they *a priori* lag behind when they are transferred to a mainstream school (Chapter 6.2).

The measure includes:

- Mandatory repeated diagnostics on an annual basis for pupils with mild intellectual disability at the primary level of mainstream and special education schools – value: EUR 100 thousand a year.

- Pilot project of a special education school transformation to a mainstream school or a resource centre – value: EUR 500 thousand. The role of the resource centre is to support mainstream schools during inclusion of pupils with disabilities in mainstream classes (development and distribution of materials and methodologies, support for teachers, parents and individualised help to pupils).
- Pilot project of dissolution of special education classrooms at 16 basic schools – value: EUR 1.2 million.

The reduction of the number of pupils educated within the special education stream will also be supported by the development of a methodological material treating transition of pupils from special education to mainstream schools (data and methodology measure 7) and laying greater emphasis on the utilisation of a general curriculum in the event of pupils with a disability (non-financial measure 11).

Labour market and social policies

13th measure: Implement individualised work with disadvantaged groups in the labour market (potential of EUR 3.3 million). Labour offices do not have enough resources to provide individualised support to hard-to-place job seekers when they look for and try to maintain employment suitable to their specific needs (e.g. specialised counselling, testing professional skills of job seekers, preparation for employment, arrangement of suitable employment, provision of specialised counselling to the employer to adjust the job position and working conditions to the needs of the disadvantaged individual, and "mentoring" or assistance after the job seeker is hired). This type of individualised public services of employment is provided by non-state providers in some countries. If the conditions are set right, this option may prove to be a cost-effective alternative (Chapter 7.2).

The measure presupposes a more intensive cooperation with non-state services of employment or other selected entities focusing on this type of work, or the resources in this area would have to be strengthened. A combination of the two is an option as well. In both cases a part of funding needs to be tied with the results achieved in placements of job seekers on the labour market. Should the services be outsourced, it would be necessary to set clear cooperation rules with labour offices, systematic and sustainable funding, and collection of data about the work of providers. The aim should be to have more than just one of such providers in the jurisdiction of each labour office to make the environment competitive and reach the requested quality of services. If the job seeker profiling system is applied right at the time of registration (analytical measure 7), the estimated risk of long-term unemployment may be used as a criterion to refer risk clients to this type of individualised help as well as for setting financial compensation.

14th measure: Making labour offices barrier-free (potential of EUR 0.6 million). Structural barriers present in some labour offices may restrict access to job seeker registration to people with reduced mobility (Chapter 7.2).

15th measure: Increase and extend the assistance in material need (potential of EUR 22.8 million). The assistance in material need (AMN) in Slovakia is substantially lower compared to the median income in economy than the equivalent benefit in majority of other EU countries (Chapter 8.1). This is also one of the reasons why poor children in Slovakia live way below the poverty threshold than poor children in EU or other V4 countries (Chapter 8.2). The activation benefit within the assistance in material need system paid for participation in activation works is the same as the allowance paid for engagement in more efficient tools of active labour market measures, education being one of them (Chapter 7.2). The concurrence of social assistance with the income from employment in the form of a special allowance motivates the recipients of AMN to find job. But some parents lose this motivation as they cease to be eligible to AMN when they become eligible to receive parental benefit (Chapter 8.2).

The measure includes:

- Making the maximum amount of claims in the AMN system for families with children (less the housing benefit – value measure 22) along with the child allowance based on the equivalent of the minimum subsistence income of an individual having no children taking into consideration the size and structure of

the household making use of the OECD equivalence scale (Box 20, Chapter 8.1).⁵ The amendment of the allowance for dependent children to include all children in the AMN system from birth until completion of the compulsory education years is a part of this measure. This allowance is conditional upon child's participation in the education system from the third year of life. These changes would increase expenditures by EUR 22.0 million.

- Introduction of the third level of the activation benefit in amount of EUR 101.80 which would be payable to job seekers in the AMN system engaging in education or improving qualification (including the second-chance education). The purpose is to support demand for these instruments to the detriment of activation works. Additional expenditures amount to EUR 500 thousand.
- Keeping the claim to special allowance for long-term unemployed or inactive parents who ceased to be eligible to the assistance in material need because they became eligible to receive parental benefit and who find job after that. The option to gain special allowance should remain valid for two years after losing the right to AMN. Additional expenditures amount to EUR 298 thousand.

16th measure: Improve the eligibility to the birth allowance (potential of EUR 0.8 million). Now, mothers who fail to regularly attend preventive exams or stay in a healthcare facility after delivery until she is released lose their claim to the allowance (Chapter 8.2). But the truth is that women from marginalised Roma communities have much worse access to gynaecology outpatient clinics than women of the majority population and they are more often exposed to bad treatment at hospitals which objectively makes their ability to meet the conditions for being eligible to the allowance more difficult (Chapter 10.3). The measure assumes that such mothers would be paid half of such allowance by establishing the institute of a special recipient (Chapter 8.2). In such event, mother's freedom to dispose of the allowance at her choice would be limited, but the purpose of the allowance, which is to take care of the necessary needs of the newborn baby, would be at least partially observed and the child would not be punished by full withdrawal of the allowance.

17th measure: Increase the public contribution to financing aids for people with severe disabilities as part of one-off financial allowances to compensate the social consequences of severe disability (potential of EUR 0.2 million). These allowances count on the recipient to financially participate in the price of a medical device or service which amounts to 5% to 15% of the total price for people with income amounting to double the minimum subsistence income. This may be a barrier for the poorest individuals with disability.

If the financial allowance is provided for purchase of a device, training to use the device, device modification, passenger car modification, apartment modification, family house modification or garage modification, the contribution is expected to be reduced for individuals with income below the subsistence level from 5% to 2% where the price is over EUR 1,659.70. As regards the financial allowance for repair of the device, the contribution is expected to be reduced for individuals with income below the minimum subsistence income from 5% to 2% if the price is higher than EUR 829.85. As regards the allowance for purchase of a passenger car, the contribution is expected to be reduced from 15% to 10% if the income is below the minimum subsistence income. In case of buying a lifting device, the contribution is expected to be reduced from 20% to 15% for individuals with income below the minimum subsistence income from 5% to 2% if the individual earns less than the quadruple of the minimum subsistence income and from 30% to 20% for individuals earning quintuple of the minimum subsistence income (Chapter 8.4).

18th measure: Launch pilot projects helping individuals who underwent personal bankruptcy and lone parents (potential of EUR 1.0 million). Although simple and fast personal bankruptcy process implemented by an amendment act and in effect from March 2017 helps solve old debts, there is no system measure which would help prevent the individuals whose debts are cleared from becoming indebted again in future. The institute of personal

⁵ Adjustment of this allowance to reach the level equivalent to the minimum subsistence income of an individual with no children would not apply to families in the AMN system without children, and also to families with a child who completed compulsory education whereas the allowance for dependent children is not paid for such a child anymore. However, these children have the option to gain secondary school scholarship if they continue in their studies. The amount of scholarship is higher than the allowance for dependent children and, also, the review proposes to increase the scholarship (value measure 7).

bankruptcy is often used by those groups of population which have greatest troubles with financial literacy (Chapter 7.5).

Lone parents need a specific and individualised form of help on the labour market which is non-existent in Slovakia. Good practice of foreign countries shows how important is the holistic approach to the solution of issues with employment of lone parents. Successful labour integration requires coordination of specialised workers. Such workers include, for example, specialists in the area of financial counselling, psychological support, personality development and skills development, and particularly important is the assistance during dealings with potential employers over conditions of employment (Chapter 7.4).

Both pilot projects can be implemented in cooperation with non-state entities (e.g. agencies of supported employment) or other selected entities focusing on the provision of individualised public services of employment to hard-to-place job seekers (value measure 13). The projects should also map and evaluate the underlying situation (financial literacy and the risk of repeated running into debts in case of the first project and the barriers to employment or, in the event of the second project, the ability to retain job for the lone parents) and compare the outcomes of the interventions implemented against the control group. Both projects should result in preparation of recommendations and methodology for systematic work with the target group.

Healthcare system

19th measure: Increase protection against cofinancing of medications based on income (potential of EUR 1.3 million). Slovakia is one of the few countries which do not have any measures to mitigate the financial burden due to low income. Slovak legislation protects the retired, children under 6 years and the disabled against high fees for drugs. These groups are compensated for the part of the fee which exceeds the limit laid down by the law (Chapter 10.3). The measure proposes to include the people with income below the minimum subsistence income among the protected groups.

20th measure: Test transfers conditional on preventive health checkups (potential of EUR 0.1 million). The expenditures of the public health care insurance scheme on the insured from the MRC environment aged 5 to 19 years are as much as 38% lower than the expenditures on the entire population, which implies insufficient use of preventive health care. This may have a negative impact on the state of health (and the expenditures) at later stages of life as well as on the life expectancy. A large percentage of the members of Roma communities lives more than 10 kilometres away from the nearest outpatient office, and the worst accessible are the gynaecologists and paediatricians. The conditional financial transfers compensating financial and non-financial costs associated with a visit of a physician proved to be an efficient tool in other countries to support demand for preventive health care (Chapter 10.4). The support should particularly focus on pregnant women and children.

Housing and infrastructure

21st measure: Amend conditions for the granting of housing benefit (potential of EUR 48.7 million). Whereas the housing benefit is currently tied with assistance in material need and also is subject to restrictive conditions, the accessibility of this assistance to low-income households is very low compared to other countries. The conditions of eligibility and the amount of the allowance abroad usually depend on the income of the household, its structure, and the cost of housing (Chapter 9.5). Exact expenditures on this measure will depend on the specific form of the housing benefit. Based on a simplified scenario, the total expenditures on the housing benefit alone are estimated to reach EUR 74.2 million; EUR 48.7 million of that amount constitute the additional expenditures compared with the current estimate of the expenditures on the housing benefit within the assistance in material need system (Annex 40).

22nd measure: Do a pilot test to try the "housing first" approach as a solution of homelessness (potential of EUR 2.9 million). Within the "housing first" strategy, the selected individuals in housing need are offered immediate access to stable and affordable housing in a natural and socially integrated environment. The evaluation of foreign pilot projects implies that this approach could be more efficient compared to alternative solutions (Chapter

9.3). The pilot project should primarily check the interest, application and potential success of the project in Slovak conditions.

An experiment needs to be done to survey the actual effects of provision of housing. This experiment will allow to compare the group of households in the provided housing (intervention group) against households which did not have this option (control group). The expenditures include the accompanying social services, financial assistance with payment of a part of the housing costs of the project participants, and the project evaluation. Since Slovakia has had a problem with the capacity of vacant rental apartments on a long-term basis, the costs also include the increased subsidies from the Ministry of Transport and Construction to procure (construction, purchase or long-term rental) and furnish suitable housing premises for 50 households in the intervention group (Annex 40). Increased state support is legitimate, whereas the offer of rental apartments with regulated rent is the responsibility of municipalities while the savings associated with the housing first strategy will arise primarily out of the saved state's expenditures (e.g. for health care and interventions by the Police).

Support programmes for municipalities with marginalised Roma communities

23rd measure: Support field workers in continued education (potential of EUR 0.3 million). The field social work is carried out in Slovakia by field social workers and field workers. A field social worker needs to complete the graduate level of university education to be qualified for this kind of work. Field workers need to have incomplete secondary education or lower secondary vocational education. To help develop career of field workers, they should be supported in their efforts to improve their qualification also by way of continued education at upper secondary schools and universities and enable them to be promoted to the position of a field social worker. Whereas low education level is often a barrier for the people from MRC to finding a job requiring higher qualification, this measure could help gradually increase the number of field social workers coming from MRC (Chapter 11.1).

24th measure: Extend the field social work programme to municipalities which do not have it (potential of EUR 2.0 million). Field social work is a unique instrument to improve the access of vulnerable groups of population to the instruments of social help and to public services. Its significance is also confirmed by quality assessment which proved the individual groups of interventions to have a positive on the situation of clients and the community. But this service is not available in all municipalities with MRCs which would need it (Chapter 11.1). In order to establish these services in those municipalities, around 102 additional work positions of field social workers would have to be created and 47 additional positions of field workers (Annex 40). The expansion will also depend on the interest of the municipalities themselves. The programme is conditional upon their consent and cooperation.

25th measure: Extend the Healthy Communities programme to municipalities which do not have it (potential of EUR 0.7 million). The Healthy Communities project conducts awareness-raising campaigns, health mediation (e.g. communication between the people from MRC and healthcare facilities) and further support of health in the MRC environment. The programme has received positive feedback from the first-contact physicians (Chapter 11.1). The measure presupposes amendment of the Healthy Communities programme to cover all the existing MRCs. To that end, 50 assistants and 10 coordinators for awareness-raising in the area of healthy lifestyle need to be hired (Annex 40). The expansion will also depend on the interest of the municipalities themselves. The programme is conditional upon their consent and cooperation.

26th measure: Extend the neighbourhood watch programme to municipalities which do not have it (potential of EUR 4.5 million). The work of the neighbourhood watch members focuses on the protection of public order, private and public property, children and youth against negative phenomena, the environment, and smooth and safe traffic. The research study from the USA implies that neighbourhood watch programmes have moderate but consistent impact on reduction of criminal activity. High interest of municipalities with MRC in the neighbourhood watch programme acknowledges positive perception of the programme (Chapter 11.1). The measure presupposes amendment of the neighbourhood watch programme to include all municipalities with at least 80 individuals living in MRC (Annex 40). The expansion will also depend on the willingness and ability of local governments to join the programme.

1.2. Savings

Saving measures proposed in the review bring savings of EUR 13.7 million, with EUR 1.4 million of that amount achievable in the first year. The review identifies the so-called potential of saving measures, that is the volume of funds which should be re-allocated to the support of value measures in the relevant area.⁶ The review defines the implementation horizon or, in other words, the number of years required to realize the potential. The savings in the first year (2021) are calculated based on the assumption of even (linear) decrease in the expenditures throughout the implementation horizon.

Task	2021 (eur million)	Potential (eur million)	Horizon (years)	Responsibility
Education	0.8	13.1		
1 Cancellation of the zero grade at basic schools	0.0	5.0	2	MinEdu
2 Reducing the number of pupils from MRC in the population of pupils with mild intellectual disability	0.8	8.1	10	MinEdu, MinIntr
Labour market and social policies	0.6	0.6		
3 Make support of activation works conditional upon development of participants' skills	0.6	0.6	1	MinLbr
TOTAL	1.4	13.7		

Education

1st measure: Cancel the zero grades at basic schools (potential of EUR 5.0 million). The zero grade is taken as the first year of the compulsory years of education which negatively affects children's chances that they would complete the basic school level if they repeat grade. It also concentrates pupils from MRC and, consequently, they continue to be concentrated in the same classrooms in higher grades (Chapter 5.2). Implementation of a compulsory pre-primary education from 5 years of age should attain the goal of school readiness development more effectively, provided that the existing barriers to the access to the pre-primary education and in the pre-primary education process are eliminated. This means that it could replace the zero grade.

2nd measure: Reduce the number of pupils from MRC in the population of pupils with mild intellectual disability (potential of EUR 8.1 million). Excessive representation of pupils from MRC among pupils with mild intellectual disability resulted in higher expenditures on education in the school year 2017/18 by EUR 8.1 million due to higher normative contribution (Chapter 6.2). If the inclusive elements in the education system are strengthened thanks to the value measures, schools will be better prepared to educate pupils from MRC together with the other pupils and, consequently, the number of pupils from MRCs diagnosed mild intellectual disability would fall down.

Labour market and social policies

3rd measure: Make support of activation works conditional upon development of participants' skills (potential of EUR 0.6 million). Although the law on employment services lists a relatively wide range of activities that may be included in activation works, the truth is that activation works contain mainly low-qualified activities without any extra superstructure such as street sweeping, litter collection, snow shovelling, etc. (Chapter 7.2). The measure presupposes making the allowance for activation works in the form of minor municipality services or the form of minor services for the local government conditional upon hiring participants for work of higher added value and developing their skills. The aim is to motivate municipalities and local governments to create opportunities for the participants to develop their skills and prompt them to choose more sophisticated activation instruments which

⁶ The calculation method of the potential of individual measures is described in more detail in Annex 40.

would eventually help them integrate into the labour market. The savings calculation presupposes a 25% reduction of expenditures (Annex 40). Actual savings will depend on the number of municipalities and local governments which would meet the proposed conditions for eligibility to the allowance.

1.3. Management and non-financial measures

Task	Responsibility
Early childhood care for disadvantaged children	
1 Create a supra-ministerial strategy of early childhood care for disadvantaged children	MinEdu, MinLbr, MinHlth
2 Take into consideration the specific features of early childhood care when developing standards for school centres of counselling and prevention	MinEdu
Pre-primary education	
3 Define the concept of segregation (applicable to all education levels)	MinEdu
4 Amend the definition of socially disadvantaged background (also applicable to basic schools)	MinEdu
5 Revoke the provision on the creation of smaller classes intended exclusively for children from disadvantaged background	MinEdu
6 Revoke the provision on including no more than two children with special needs in one kindergarten classroom	MinEdu
7 Define a transitional period for ancillary tutors to allow them to complete secondary education and gain qualification	MinEdu
8 Cancel the option to decide not to admit a child with disability to a kindergarten	MinEdu
Education at basic and upper secondary schools	
9 Increase the minimum scope of Roma language lessons in the first grades of basic schools and gradually make it vested	MinEdu
10 Formalise the lessons of Slovak as the second language	MinEdu
11 Lay more emphasis on the use of general curriculum for pupils with any form of disability	MinEdu
12 Cancel the option to create special education classrooms	MinEdu
13 Amend the work of teaching assistant and ancillary tutors at schools	MinEdu
14 Allow pupils with intellectual disability who completed basic school to complete lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	MinEdu
15 Allow all kindergartens, basic and upper secondary schools to participate in the development project to make their premises barrier-free	MinEdu
16 Allow pupils of special education upper secondary schools, vocational and practical schools to join the dual education programme	MinEdu
17 Regulate the number of first grade pupils at upper secondary schools enrolled in F-type study programmes	MinEdu
Labour market and social policies	
18 Restrict the option to place individuals who completed secondary education with “maturita” certificate for activation works	MinLbr
19 Introduce formal assessment of participants in activation works within ALMP	MinLbr
20 Increase the employment quota for individuals with disabilities from 3.2% to 5%	MinLbr
21 Prepare a draft proposal of a functioning system of work rehabilitation and retraining	MinLbr
22 Remove the levy for failure to hire the mandatory percentage of individuals with disability from employer's tax expenses	MinFin
Housing and infrastructure	
23 Develop and adopt a national homelessness prevention and solution strategy	MinIntr, MinLbr, MinHlth,

		MinTrans, local governments
Healthcare system		
24	Create a study programme of continuing education for selected healthcare professions focusing on work with MRC	MinHlth
Support programmes for municipalities with MRC		
25	Introduce a central management model for support programmes and make them sustainable	MinLbr, MinIntr
26	Create and secure the functioning of coordination teams for the support programmes at the micro-regional level	MinLbr, MinIntr, MinEdu, MinHlth

Early childhood care for disadvantaged children

1th measure: Create a supra-ministerial strategy of early childhood care for disadvantaged children. Inter-ministerial cooperation in the area of early childhood care for disadvantaged children is insufficient and it also has a negative impact on the accessibility and quality of services (Chapter 4). The review proposes to develop a supra-ministerial of early childhood care for children at risk which would fall under the responsibility of the Government Office. In future, individual ministries would prepare legislation in compliance with that strategy so that each child at risk would have access to the services. The strategy should also deal in the issue of development of supra-ministerial standards and the option to consolidate financial sources within the sectoral jurisdiction of the involved ministries in favour of individuals.

2th measure: Take into consideration the specific features of early childhood care when developing standards for school centres of counselling and prevention. The standards treating care provided in school centres of counselling and prevention are currently being developed within the National Project of Standards. Development of standards is one of the essential requirements to set the future funding of counselling facilities. The review therefore proposes that the standards take into consideration the specific aspects of early childhood care, and particularly the fact that it is a time-consuming field service. These aspects need to be reflected in the funding system.

Pre-primary education

3rd measure: Define the concept of segregation (applicable to all education levels). Segregation in education is forbidden, but neither the school legislation nor methodological guidelines specifically define actions or omissions which meet the definition of segregation. To effectively eliminate this phenomenon, all stakeholders in education must understand this concept.

4th measure: Amend the definition of socially disadvantaged background (also applicable to kindergartens and basic schools). The conditions for eligibility to receive support for children from socially disadvantaged background (SDB) only relate to the income situation of the child's family, while the remaining factors included in the definition of SDB (social, family and cultural) are disregarded. What is more, the definition of the income situation of a family is too narrow – it only covers the poorest families and therefore most children at risk of poverty or social exclusion are without support (introduction to Chapter 5). The new, wider definition of SDB should, in addition to the income, also reflect other aspects which are normally used abroad such as the highest completed education of parents, unemployment of parents and different mother tongue. The definition would also apply to kindergartens and basic schools. Additional expenditures due to wider SDB definition are reflected in the calculation of the new increased normative contribution for pupils from SDB (value measure 6).

5th measure: Revoke the provision on the creation of smaller classes intended exclusively for children from disadvantaged background. This provision is a part of the regulation governing organisation of education at kindergartens. Although schools do not use this option now, it may serve as a pretext for segregation of disadvantaged children at kindergartens when the compulsory education from 5 years of age takes effect and the number of pre-school children from socially disadvantaged background grows. International research studies

demonstrate that concentration of disadvantaged children in classrooms and schools has a negative impact on the quality of education (Chapter 5.1).

6th Revoke the provision on including no more than two children with special needs in one kindergarten classroom When the compulsory pre-primary education takes effect, the number of children with special needs at kindergartens will grow and this measure may not be feasible in some locations with higher prevalence of social disadvantage (or disability) (Chapter 5.1). The review therefore proposes to revoke the provision and give kindergartens methodological guidance how to distribute children with special needs.

7th measure: Define a transitional period for ancillary tutors to allow them to complete secondary education and gain qualification. The qualification criterion may be one of the barriers to the employment of teaching assistants/ancillary tutors from MRC as this position requires completion of secondary education with school leaving certificate. Based on the UNDP data (2012), this requirement only meet 17.3% of people from MRC (Chapter 5.1). Whereas the work performed by ancillary tutors is not of a pedagogical nature, this qualification criterion could be reduced for them for a transitional period and they could also be hired even if they only completed the lower secondary education level (ISCED 2). The ancillary tutors without secondary education with school leaving certificate would be imposed a duty to undergo a basic preparation course for work with children at kindergartens (value measure 4) and complete secondary education with school-leaving certificate during the transitional period.

8th measure: Cancel the option not to admit a child with disability to a kindergarten. Head teachers of mainstream kindergartens currently have an option not to admit a child with disability. However, the capacity of special education kindergartens or their accessibility when it comes to children with various types of disability remain to be limited. This is contrary to our undertakings to support inclusive education and *de facto* prevents some children with disabilities from taking part in pre-primary education, although it has been proved that children with disabilities benefit most from high quality pre-primary education (Chapter 6.1). This measure should follow after implementation of several measures to support children with disability at mainstream kindergartens listed in the review.

Education at basic and upper secondary schools

9th measure: Increase the minimum scope of Roma language lessons in the first grades of basic schools and gradually make it vested. The access to the mother tongue lessons provably increases school success, has a positive impact on the acquisition of the official language and is essential for the development in other cognitive areas. If children's mother tongue is different than the language of instruction, their success at school is substantially affected. Roma language lessons in the first grades of the compulsory years of education are rather scarce even though the development of the mother tongue is most important at younger age. Only two basic schools in Kremnica and in Košice taught Roma language to 203 pupils in 2018 (Chapter 5.2). The Roma language lessons could be established based on defining a percentage of pupils having Roma language as the mother tongue and if the percentage is reached, schools would be obligated to arrange for Roma language lessons.

10th measure: Formalise the lessons of Slovak as the second language. Schools teaching in Slovak or Hungarian do not offer lessons of Slovak as the second language to pupils with a different mother tongue. Whereas majority of Roma do not take Slovak as their mother tongue, it is quite probable that many pupils from MRC are not able to properly understand the instruction at the basic school (Chapter 5.2). Of course, preparation of teachers is an essential condition for teaching Slovak as the second language (value measure 8).

11th measure: Lay more emphasis on the use of general curriculum for pupils with any form of disability. Having different curriculum for pupils with disability is contrary to the established good practice in education. Establishment of a specific curriculum for all pupils with certain diagnosis does not allow to take into consideration their individual needs and skills. Therefore, instead of having specific curricula it is recommended to educate pupils irrespective of the disability based on a uniform standard and only adjust the method of acquisition to their specific needs, e.g. adjustment of the teaching method, method of instruction, adjustment of the time required to handle the task, etc. (Chapter 6.2). The measure presupposes to amend the legislation in such a manner that all pupils including the pupils with intellectual disability may be educated primarily based on the general curriculum.

12th measure: Cancel the option to create special education classrooms. Special education classrooms are intended for pupils from socially disadvantaged background who are not able to handle the content of education of the relevant grade (Chapter 5.2). This setting is viewed as troublesome as it concentrates disadvantaged pupils in one classroom.

13th measure: Amend the work of teaching assistant and ancillary tutors at schools. The role of teaching assistant or the ancillary tutor is not clearly defined. This opacity may restrict the access to the support, negatively affect the quality of the educational process and the efficiency of allocation of funds to cover for the staff costs of these support resources. The demand of schools for funds has been greater than the volume of funds allocated for funding the costs of teaching assistants for several years. This basically means that a part of requests submitted by schools is not satisfied and some disadvantaged pupils are left without support. Although the role of teaching assistants could also be carried out ancillary tutors at schools, their presence in classrooms is not supported as it is in case of the teaching assistants (Chapter 6.2).

The measure includes:

- Clear definition of the role of teaching assistants and of ancillary tutors, or diversification of the requested qualification and development of a methodological material treating their work.
- A more transparent process of the allocation of funds for teaching assistants/ancillary tutors by setting and publishing clear criteria for allocation of assistants and by publishing the funds requested and allocated for teaching assistants/ancillary tutors. The criteria should, first of all, reflect the needs of pupils (not the type of disability) and, in accordance with the good practice of foreign countries, the needs should be revised over time in relevant cases and the presence of assistance should gradually diminish as the pupils grow older.
- Introduction of a legal claim to a teaching assistant/ancillary tutor conditioned by the implementation of the two previous sub-measures and allocation of sufficient funds to that purpose. The calculation of the impacts of value measures on public finance (Chapter 1.1) does not reflect these sources, as it is actually not possible to make an objective estimate of the needs of pupils with disability for teaching assistants/ancillary tutors based on the available data.

14th measure: Allow pupils with intellectual disability who completed basic school to complete lower secondary education. Unlike pupils with other types of disabilities, pupils with intellectual disability do not gain lower secondary education level (ISCED 2) upon successful completion of the basic school, but only the primary education level and may not continue in education at mainstream upper secondary schools. Multiple research studies prove that pupils with intellectual disability have better school results and complete higher education level if they are educated together with intact children. This is not true if they are educated at segregated schools (Chapter 6.2).

15th measure: Allow all kindergartens, basic and upper secondary schools to join the development project to make their premises barrier-free. The situation now is that only mainstream basic or upper secondary schools which already educate at least one pupil with disability may apply for funds from the development project to make their premises barrier-free. This approach expects to first admit a pupil with disability and educate such pupil in an environment with structural barriers and only then apply for funds to make it barrier-free. This criterion *de facto* prevents schools to automatically prepare for education of these pupils in advance (Chapter 6).

16th measure: Allow pupils of special education upper secondary schools, vocational and practical schools to join the dual education programme. The legislation in force only allows the pupils of vocational schools to join dual education. This approach goes against international good practice. Experts point out that pupils of all schools irrespective of their special needs should have access to dual education (Chapter 6.4). The measure presupposes

amendment of the vocational education law. To support implementation of dual education in relation to pupils with disability, the funds of the National Project Dual Education which have not been used yet could be used.⁷

17th measure: Regulate the number of first grade pupils enrolled in F-type study programmes. Only pupils who did not complete basic school may be educated within the F-type study programmes. However, by completing an F-type programme, they will not gain lower secondary education (which is equivalent to the completion of a basic school), but only the lower secondary vocational education which does not allow them to continue in education at upper secondary schools. Education within the F-type programmes is approximately twice as expensive as education at mainstream basic schools. The F-type programmes educate poor pupils and pupils from MRC to a greater extent. The graduates of F-type programmes have a bit better chance to find employment than the graduates of basic schools, but this is not true for all F-type programmes (Chapter 5.3). The number of first grade pupils enrolled in F-type programmes is not regulated by the results achieved as it is in case of other study programmes within vocational education.

Labour market and social policies

18th measure: Restrict inclusion of individuals who completed secondary education with “maturita” certificate in activation works. Even though activation works usually include simple manual works, as many as 10% of participants in 2017 were the job seekers with secondary education with school leaving certificate or university education. The procedural instructions at labour offices should be amended in such a manner as to ensure that job seekers who completed secondary education with school leaving certificate and not experiencing other barriers preventing them from taking part in other instruments be included after complex profiling primarily in other programmes under the active labour market policies than the activation works (Chapter 7.2).

19th measure: Introduce formal assessment of participants in activation works within active labour market policies (ALMP). The current practice implies that activation works are not followed up by more sophisticated ALMP which would move graduates closer to a placement on the labour market (Chapter 7.2). The assessment of the participants by the coordinator or organiser of activation works (worker of the municipality) should be followed up by other instruments of help. More successful graduates should be guaranteed access to more sophisticated instruments within the ALMP and the less successful ones should be referred to a more intensive individualised counselling (value measure 13).

20th measure: Increase the employment quota for individuals with disabilities from 3.2% to 5%. Compared with the neighbouring EU countries, Slovakia has a smaller mandatory percentage of employment of individuals with disabilities. However, the total number of individuals with disabilities hired by all affected employers substantially exceeds the number of such individuals required to meet the statutory obligation. This implies that this restriction is not binding upon majority of companies (Chapter 7.3). The increased mandatory percentage will both support integration of individuals with disabilities in the open labour market and the emerging sector of social entrepreneurship (Chapter 7.2), whereas the defined quota may also be met by buying goods or services from the social economy entities.

21st measure: Prepare a draft proposal of a functioning system of work rehabilitation and retraining. Work rehabilitation and retraining is an option preferred by several European countries to sheltered employment as a more efficient instrument of integration of individuals with disability in the open labour market. However, Slovakia predominantly uses the sheltered employment to help these people on the labour market. Clear and precisely defined concept of work rehabilitation and retraining in Slovakia is non-existent for the time being (Chapter 7.3).

22nd measure: Remove the levy for failure to employ the mandatory percentage of individuals with disability from employer's tax expenses. The levy for failure to employ the mandatory percentage of individuals with disability may be used by employers as a tax expense. This diminishes its effect as a sanction (Chapter 7.3).

⁷ Available at: <https://siov.sk/projekty/aktualne-projekty/narodny-projekt-dualne-vzdelavanie/>

Housing and infrastructure

23rd measure: Develop and adopt a national homelessness prevention and solution strategy. For the time being, Slovakia does not have a complex concept of how to address homelessness at a national level. One third of OECD countries have such a strategy, and the experiences of Finland show that the integration of policies at the national level may lead to a more efficient use of public finance (Chapter 9.3). The purpose of this strategy is to define the causes of homelessness, formulate clear goals of public policies in this area, identify key indicators to be monitored, propose specific measures based on expert knowledge and good practice, assign responsibilities for their implementation and set their funding. The strategy should come from a supra-national work group.

Healthcare system

24th measure: Create a study programme of continuing education for selected healthcare professions focusing on work with MRC. Slovakia faces several lawsuits for direct and indirect discrimination against Roma in healthcare which results in lower quality of provided care. Bad experiences of Roma in healthcare facilities may also be caused by the medical staff's lack of knowledge of the Roma language and the specific features of the Roma community (Chapter 10.3).

Support programmes for municipalities with marginalised Roma communities

25th measure: Introduce a central management model for support programmes and make them sustainable. Support programmes such as field social work, selected social services of crisis intervention, Healthy Communities programme and the neighbourhood watch programmes prove to be essential for social inclusion and improvement of living conditions of people living in the MRC environment. Their work depends on the external funding from European funds; this is a threat to long-lasting sustainability and may also lead to temporary interruption of services during preparation of projects in the new programming period. The efficiency of management of some programmes is negatively influenced by their division in two national projects, employment of workers directly by municipalities, and the resulting possible conflict between professional standards and the need to attend to the municipal agenda (Chapter 11).

The role of management of individual programmes should be entrusted to a single organisation falling under the responsibility of the relevant department.⁸ In addition to the administrative and accounting management of programmes, the managing organisation should also provide methodological support, supervision and monitoring. Workers would become employees of that organisation, and not of the municipalities, in order to strengthen their independence of the local politics and focus on the needs of clients. Sustainability of programmes after the end of the current programming period needs to be solved at least by providing the bridging funding from the state budget until the funding from European funds is restored in the new programming period. From the long-term perspective, the funding should be transferred under the state budget.

26th measure: Create and secure the functioning of coordination teams for the support programmes at the micro-regional level. The non-existent coordination constitutes a significant drawback of support programme management in the MRC environment. Hence, the potential of positive synergies is not realised (Chapter 11). In addition to the representatives of individual programmes, the teams should also include the representatives of other involved institutions such as Police specialists in work with Roma communities, teaching assistants, workers of labour offices, local governments or non-governmental organisations operating in the micro-region. Regular meetings could help transform the mostly personal ties between the stakeholders to professional ties, define more precisely the boundaries, powers and responsibilities between individual programmes, and improve the position of Roma workers under the programmes in interactions with mostly non-Roma workers of state institutions. The size

⁸ The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in the event of field social work and the selected social services of crisis intervention, and the Ministry of Interior in the event of neighbourhood watch programme. The Healthy Regions organisation which implements the Healthy Communities programme has become a state-subsidised organisation of the Ministry of Health.

of a territorial unit (micro-region) should be defined based on the number of citizens who are the clients of support programmes.

1.4. Data and methodology

Task	Responsibility
Early childhood care for disadvantaged children	
1 Regularly publish average running expenditures on the early intervention service at the level of higher territorial unit (HTU)	local governments
Education	
2 Collect annually the data concerning the mother tongue of children, pupils and students	MinEdu
3 Collect annually the data concerning the highest completed education of parents	MinEdu
4 Regularly interconnect data about unemployment of parents with the data about pupils	MinEdu, Central Labour Office
5 Regularly publish the list of Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling (CSPC) which have early childhood care sections	MinEdu
6 Set uniform and separate reporting of expenditures of state and non-state Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling	MinEdu
7 Prepare a methodological material about transfer of pupils from special to mainstream schools	MinEdu
8 Prepare a methodological material about school district organisation on a de-segregation principle	MinEdu
Labour market and social policies	
9 Amend the representative data collection surveys to include the option to report multiple ethnicities	Statistical Office
10 Prepare a methodological guideline regulating the process undertaken by the offices of labour, social affairs and family when arranging employment for individuals with disability	MinLbr
11 Do a survey in the form of questionnaire with individuals undergoing personal bankruptcy and publish its results	MinJus
12 Set a systematic and regular collection of data about care for children under three years of age	MinLbr
Housing and infrastructure	
13 Set a systematic and regular collection of data about homeless people and individuals at risk of housing loss	MinLbr

Early childhood care for disadvantaged children

1st measure: Regularly publish average running expenditures on the early intervention service at the level of higher territorial unit (HTU). The contributions for an hour of the early intervention service are set by the higher territorial units. These contributions currently range from EUR 7.60 in the Žilina region up to EUR 15 in the Košice region (Chapter 4). The measure expects the higher territorial units to set and publish average running expenditures on the early intervention service on an annual basis. These expenditures would also reflect the actual costs of wages of professional employees, their supervision and education, operational costs of premises including the costs of field services and aids.

Education

2nd measure: Collect annually the data concerning the mother tongue of children, pupils and students. International research studies show that a different mother tongue than the language of instruction has a significant impact on the school results. Slovakia is one of the countries where this impact is most noticeable. In spite of that, administrative data about the mother tongue of pupils are not systematically collected in Slovakia and the impact of the mother tongue on school results is not monitored (Chapter 5). The data on the level of individual pupils and

schools could help identify the examples of good practice as well as the lagging schools which would need additional interventions. The measure presupposes amendment of the school law, modification of the information system of the Ministry of Education (ministerial IS) and the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the mother tongue attribute both in Testing 5 and Testing 9.

3rd measure: Collect annually the data concerning the highest completed education of parents. Although the current school law allows to collect data about the highest completed education of parents, no such data is collected within the ministerial IS. But it should be noted that this is an important aspect which needs to be monitored when the efficiency of education system is being assessed as regards its ability to successfully prepare all pupils irrespective of the educational background of parents (Chapter 5). The basic data within the ministerial IS could be used in the wider definition of socially disadvantaged background in future (non-financial measure 4).

4th measure: Regularly interconnect data about unemployment of parents with the data about pupils. The Ministry of Education currently does not have an access to the Central Labour Office's data from the job seeker register. Considering the proposal to amend the definition of the socially disadvantaged background to include unemployment of parents (non-financial measure 4), a data channel needs to be created to allow the Central Labour Office to share the data from the job seeker register with the Ministry of Education.

5th measure: Regularly publish the list of Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling (CSPC) which have early childhood care sections. The information about which Special Pedagogical Counselling Centres have early childhood care sections is not publicly available. Restricted access to the information about these services may raise a barrier to access (Chapter 4).

6th measure: Set uniform and separate reporting of expenditures of state and non-state Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling The data about expenditures for nearly all state Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling is reported on an annual basis together with the expenditures of special education schools, while the data about the expenditures of the non-state centres is only collected partially within the quarterly report of work within the school system (Chapter 4). The measure presupposes uniform and separate reporting of the expenditures of both the state and non-state Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling within the Financial Management Report.

7th measure: Prepare a methodological material about transfer of pupils from special to mainstream schools. Slovakia is one of the countries with the greatest percentage of pupils educated in special education schools. Only 0.8% of all pupils enrolled in special education school changed the special for the mainstream school in 2018. The transfer of pupils is not methodologically processed or specifically supported (Chapter 6.2). The measure presupposes preparation of case studies treating transfer of pupils from special to mainstream schools (value measure 12) based on which methodological guideline would be developed for all schools.

8th measure: Prepare a methodological material about school district organisation on a de-segregation principle. This measure is a part of the pilot project to change school districts with emphasis on higher diversity at basic schools (value measure 12).

Labour market and social policies

9th measure: Amend the representative data collection surveys to include the option of multiple ethnicities. Poor quality of ethnic identifiers in public data affects the survey researching the experiences of people from MRC on the labour market. Self-identification with an ethnic or national minority results in substantial underestimation of the size of Roma minority compared to the overall population in surveys. The experience of foreign countries shows that the option of self-identification with more than just one ethnicity/nationality significantly improves the accuracy of ethnic data collected (e.g. the last census in Hungary) (Chapter 7.1).

10th measure: Prepare a methodological guideline regulating the process undertaken by the offices of labour, social affairs and family when arranging employment for individuals with disability. The work of

employees of the offices of labour, social affairs and family relating to the mediation of employment is not governed by a uniform methodology or instructions treating work with job seekers with health issues. Methodological guideline should regulate the processes from the office of labour's first contact with individuals with disability until their placement and support to help them retain employment whether directly, or by way of agencies of supported employment, or other entities. The methodological guideline should also lay emphasis on the placement of job seekers with disability primarily in the open labour market, and only offer employment in sheltered workshops to a selected group of job seekers whose barriers to the labour market are most significant. The methodological guideline should also explicitly prohibit to discourage individuals with disability from registering in the job seeker register.

11th measure: Do a survey in the form of questionnaire with individuals undergoing personal bankruptcy and publish its results. To efficiently help people undergoing personal bankruptcy in order to prevent them from becoming indebted again (value measure 19), it is necessary to know their situation to a more detail. The survey should map and evaluate the situation of the selected group of persons undergoing personal bankruptcy in the form of a questionnaire to be filled out by such individuals when they file the application for personal bankruptcy with the Legal Aid Centre.

12th measure: Set a systematic and regular collection of data about care for children under three years of age. The administrative data about the forms of care for children under 3 years of age are currently not reported in the requested structure and extent. The data about the offer of formal care for children under 3 years of age is necessary in order to adopt efficient policies and plan support projects to expand the capacities of existing facilities or to build new ones (Chapter 7.4).

Housing and infrastructure

13th measure: Set a systematic and regular collection of data about homeless people and individuals at risk of housing loss. Data about homeless people and the people at risk of losing their homes is not collected systematically; if it was, it would lead to better public policy planning. This goal could be achieved if a client registration software solution was procured and administered for all organisations which provide social services to homeless people, including the field services, in accordance with all requirements for personal data protection and the low-threshold nature of certain social services. Compared with occasional censuses of homeless people, this approach allows to monitor the inflow and outflow of homeless people and the duration of homelessness. This would allow to investigate into its causes and evaluate the efficiency of public policies. Many European countries including Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands or Belgium have experience with a shared register of clients. As regards people at risk of housing loss, methods of their identification should be researched in cooperation with public and private owners of rental apartments and lodging houses, foster care institutions, public health insurance companies, or labour offices (Chapter 9.3).

1.5. Analytical measures

Task	Responsibility
Education	
1 Regularly monitor the impact of compulsory pre-primary education on the attendance of children from SDB/MRC and with disability and publish the outcomes	MinEdu
2 Conduct and publish the survey surveying the content of preparation of future kindergarten teachers at upper secondary schools	MinEdu
3 Conduct and publish the audit of available and necessary aids for children and pupils with disabilities	MinEdu
4 Conduct and publish surveys focusing on education of pupils with disabilities	MinEdu
5 Evaluate the impacts of nation-wide lunch subsidies on the school results and outcomes, and publish the results	MinEdu
6 Conduct and publish a survey on the causes and risk factors of early school drop-out	MinEdu

Labour market and social policies		
7	Introduce job seeker profiling based on quantitative methods	MinLbr
8	Prepare and publish impact assessment of the social economy law after 3 years from its introduction	MinLbr
9	Prepare and publish an analysis of the use of the option to make the payment of full assistance in material need conditional upon engagement in community activities	MinLbr
10	Prepare and publish an analysis of the invalidity insurance scheme	MinFin, MinLbr
General		
11	Continuously evaluate the efficiency of the existing and proposed inclusion instruments and publish the results	MinFin

Education

1st measure: Regularly monitor the impact of compulsory pre-primary education on the attendance of children from socially disadvantaged background, MRC and with disability. In addition to quantification of the impact by quantifying the enrolment rate and participation of disadvantaged children in the compulsory pre-primary education, it is necessary to monitor on-site whether and what kind of barriers to access or in the process of education will be experienced by the legal guardians of disadvantaged children, kindergartens and their administrators. As regards the children with disabilities, it will also be necessary to monitor whether they are not being prompted to select individual (home) education and, further to the finding, revise the planned cancellation of the zero grade for pupils with disability. If a portion of children with disability does not undergo any pre-primary education, the preparatory grade should be kept. This monitoring could be conducted by the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, non-governmental organisations or universities.

2nd measure: Conduct and publish the survey surveying the content of preparation of future kindergarten teachers at upper secondary schools. The aim is to assess whether and to what extent are teachers prepared for education of disadvantaged children or for education of children with various needs. The preparedness of teachers for education of disadvantaged children may be considered to be essential to the efficient application of individualised approach in education (Chapters 5.1 and 6.1).

3rd measure: Conduct and publish the audit of available and necessary aids for children and pupils with disabilities Children with disability may use special multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids. The available data does not allow us to tell the extent to which those aids are available at schools or Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling, or whether and how much schools invest in their purchase (Chapter 6.1).

4th measure: Conduct and publish surveys focusing on education of pupils with disabilities. Although pupils with intellectual disability and pupils with learning disorders are the most numerous group of pupils with disabilities at basic schools, no research studies are conducted to survey the methods and forms of their education and their academic and social results. The number of research projects which focus on the education of pupils with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, communication disorder or autism are nearly non-existent even though the number of such pupils have been on the rise in recent years. To improve the school results of those pupils, it is essential to survey in more detail and depth the situation concerning their needs and (in)effective method and forms of their education (Chapter 6.2).

5th measure: Evaluate the impacts of nation-wide subsidies for school lunch on the school results and outcomes, and publish the results. Relying on the examples of good practice of foreign countries, the access to nation-wide lunch subsidies for all pre-school children in kindergartens and all pupils of basic school is expected to have a positive impact on the educational outcomes and results of pupils (Chapters 5.1 and 5.2). The evaluation of the impact counts on collection and assessment of quantitative and qualitative data about pupils and should be preceded by monitoring of implementation of the measure at the level of administrators and schools.

6th measure: Conduct and publish a survey on the causes and risk factors of early school drop-out. To efficiently solve the problem of the growing numbers of pupils who drop out of school, individual, system and wider contextual factors causing early drop out need to be preventively identified. The identification of these factors will allow to better aim individualised "tailored" interventions and then evaluate their efficiency (Chapters 5.3 and 6.3).

Labour market and social policies

7th measure: Introduce job seeker profiling based on quantitative methods. Job seeker profiling in Slovakia does not make use of the sophisticated statistical instruments. The experience of foreign countries show that this approach can better predict how long a job seeker will remain in the register than the criteria of disadvantage defined by law and, consequently, they are more efficient in targeting at the most disadvantaged job seekers (Chapter 7.2).

8th measure: Prepare and publish impact assessment of the social economy law after three years from its introduction. It is too early to assess the social economy law now in this review as it only came into force on 1 May 2018. However, when talking about integration of disadvantaged job seekers on the labour market, very important is to determine whether the intent to create an efficient labour inter-market using the integrational social enterprises which increase their chances to find employment in an open market proved to work well (Chapter 7.2). As regards the assessment of housing policy in Slovakia, research should be made to determine whether the law helped develop the non-profit sector with rented apartments through the social housing enterprise (Chapter 9.2).

9th measure: Prepare and publish an analysis of the use of the option to make the payment of full assistance in material need conditional upon engagement in community activities. There has been no systematic research yet focusing on the utilisation of this option by municipalities and whether it is also used when the potential of the activation benefit which allows households to earn more through activation has not been fully used (Chapter 8.1).

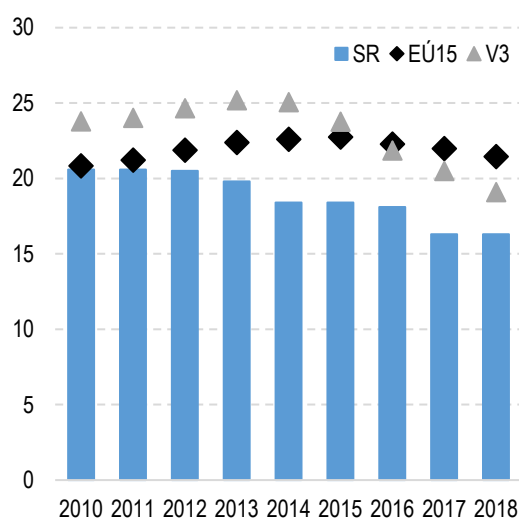
10th measure: Prepare and publish an analysis of the invalidity insurance scheme. The employment rate of invalidity pension recipients is substantially worse than the average figures for the population. The wages earned by employees after they are recognised as being invalid implies that a part of them is able to do their jobs in spite of the Social Insurance Agency's decision over their reduced ability to conduct gainful activity. This information indicates that it would be possible to contemplate measures with positive impact on the public government budget. It could create room to improve access to the support for that group of individuals who do not meet the eligibility requirements for the invalidity pension although their state of health does not allow them to work (Chapter 8.3). Analysis and proposal of measures should be developed by the Financial Policy Institute within the tax and contributions policy reform.

2. Social integration and diagnostics of the groups at risk

The review examines and assesses the policies of multiple departments, since social exclusion should be understood as a multi-dimensional issue. "Social exclusion means limited access to resources and opportunities and goes hand in hand with deterioration of bonds between individuals and the entire social groups and the majority society, and results in reduced opportunities to use the rights associated with the affiliation with the relevant community and actively participate in its life" (Gerbery and Džambazovič, 2011). The resources and opportunities essential for social integration apply to multiple areas of public policies including the policies of early childhood care, education system, labour market, social policies, health and housing. The need for cross-section, inter-ministerial revision has already been noticed by the already completed spending reviews in the area of the labour market and social policies, and education (VfM unit, 2017, VfM unit and Educational Policy Institute, 2017).

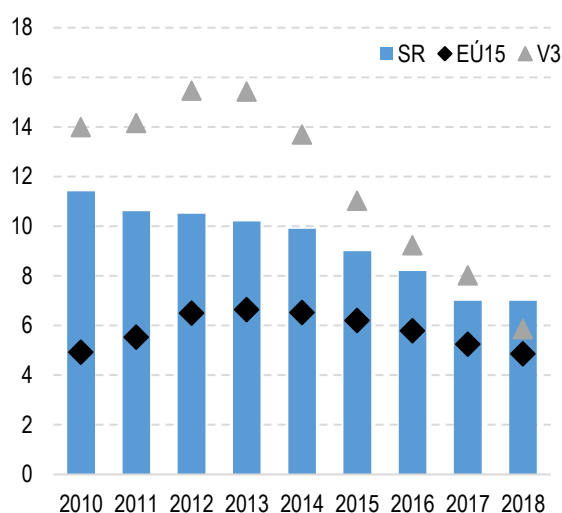
The percentage of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Slovakia remained unchanged in 2018 at the level of 16.3% (Graph 1). 239 thousand individuals have managed to flee the risk of poverty or social exclusion since 2008 and Slovakia thus met the goal within the Europe 2020 strategy to reduce the number of people at risk by at least 170 thousand until 2020. Referring to its multi-dimensional nature, the definition of this risk within the Europe 2020 strategy includes the indicators of income poverty, severe material deprivation and very low work intensity of households (Box 1). Slovakia reports better results than the average results of the EU-15 and V3 countries for this indicator.

Graph 1: At-risk-of-poverty or at-risk-of-social-inclusion rate (%)



Source: Eurostat

Graph 2: Severe material deprivation rate (%)



Source: Eurostat

While the at-risk-of-poverty rate and the very low work intensity of households in Slovakia is lower than the average figures of the EU-15 countries, the percentage of population living in the conditions of severe material deprivation is above average and this also applies when compared against the V3 countries (Graph 2). Severe material deprivation is the inability to afford to buy certain articles which are generally perceived as necessary for living a full life. Unlike in the case of income poverty, it describes the absolute and not the relative poverty in society.

Box 1: Key indicators of social exclusion within the Europe 2020 strategy

The social exclusion indicators in this chapter have been selected from among the basic indicators within the strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of Europe 2020.⁹ Due to the multi-dimensional nature of

⁹ <http://www.eu2020.gov.sk/strategia-europa-2020/>

social exclusion, the indicators have been selected in such a manner as to ensure that each of the main areas of the review (education, labour market, social system, healthcare, and housing) contain at least one indicator.

The main indicator – the risk of poverty or social exclusion, embraces three sub-indicators. Households which are characterised by at least one of these problems are considered to be households at risk of poverty or social exclusion:

- The **at-risk-of-poverty rate** means the number of individuals (in percentage) of the total population who live in households with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold. The internationally used risk-of-poverty threshold is defined as 60% of the median equivalised disposable income of households after social transfers. The calculation of the equivalised size of a household uses the equivalence scale (Box 19, Chapter 8.1).
- The **severe material deprivation rate** gauges the proportion of population (in percentage) who lives in households facing forced shortage of at least four out of nine deprivation items from the dimension of financial load and ownership of articles of long-term consumption.¹⁰
- The **very low work intensity rate** expresses the proportion of individuals who live in households with work intensity lower than 20% to the population aged 0 – 59 years. Work intensity of households refers to the number of months that all working age members of a household have been working during the income reference year as a proportion of the total number of months that could theoretically be worked within the household. The definition of working age covers the individuals aged 18 – 59 years less the individuals aged 18 – 24 who are students.

Of the remaining indicators, selected was one indicator of each of the access to education, to healthcare and to housing (the three key areas of social integration):

- The **school drop-out rate** expresses the number of individuals aged 18 to 24 years who completed the lower secondary education level (ISCED 0 to 2) at the most and did not take part in education or trainings four weeks before the survey.
- The **unmet need for medical examination or treatment** means the number of individuals in the population aged 16 or more who reported in the survey to have had at least one unmet health care need in the previous year.
- The **severe housing deprivation rate** is defined as the percentage of population living in the dwelling which is considered as overcrowded (number of rooms does not correspond to the size and structure of the household), while also exposed to at least one of the three housing issues: dwelling considered too dark, leaking roof, no shower, bath or indoor toilet.

The data is based on the sample survey on income and living conditions of households (EU SILC) conducted every year in Slovakia by the Statistical Office. Considering the data collection methodology, a part of socially weakest groups of population, such as homeless people or some citizens of segregated Roma settlements, might not be represented to a sufficient extent.¹¹

¹⁰ The items include: 1) arrears connected with mortgage or rent or utility bills, or instalment buying or other loans; 2) ability to go on a one-week holiday outside one's home once a year; 3) ability to afford a meal containing meat, chicken, fish (or a vegetarian equivalent) every other day; 4) ability to face unexpected expenses in the amount set as a monthly national risk-of-poverty threshold for the previous year; 5) ability to afford to buy a telephone (including mobile phone); 6) ability to afford to buy a colour television; 7) ability to afford to buy a washing machine; 8) ability to afford to buy a car; 9) ability to afford to keep one's home adequately warm.

¹¹ According to the international method of Eurostat, the SILC surveys only randomly selected private households based on the Population and Housing Census (SOB 2011) and not the so-called collective households (elders homes, dormitories, municipal authorities, offices, etc.). If certain citizens (e.g. homeless people or a part of people living in segregated settlements) were counted at a municipal authority, they cannot be a part of the sample survey. Neither does the SILC survey include households living in undocumented or legally unsettled dwellings.

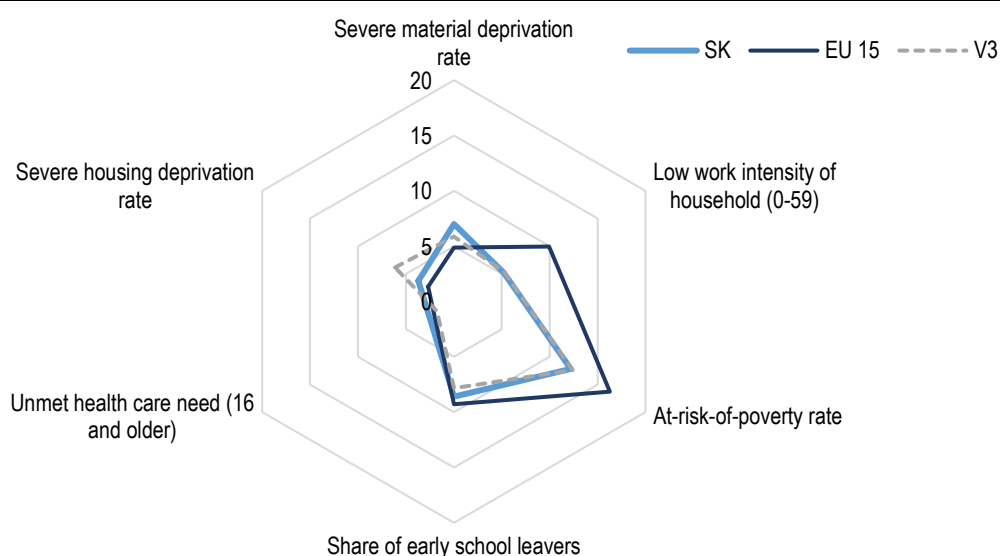
Table 1: Key indicators of social exclusion, 2018 (% of population)

	Slovakia	V3	EU-15
At-risk-of-poverty or at-risk-of-social-inclusion rate	16.3	19.1	21.5
At-risk-of-poverty rate	12.2	12.4	16.3
Severe material deprivation rate	7.0	5.9	4.9
Low work intensity of a household	5.2	5.3	9.9
Other indicators			
School drop-out rate	8.6	7.8	9.3
Unmet health care need	2.6	1.8	2.1
Severe housing deprivation rate	3.7	6.1	2.7

Source: Eurostat

Slovakia reports worse results within the Europe 2020 strategy than the average results of the EU-15 in the area of healthcare accessibility and the severe housing deprivation rate (Table 1, Graph 3). The accessibility of health care is measured by the unmet need for medical examination or treatment rate. Although Slovakia reports better results in the early school drop-out rate than the EU-15 countries, this figure has nearly doubled during the past eight years and jumped from 4.7% to 8.6%. Slovakia thus fails to meet the national goal of 6%.

Graph 3: Key indicators of social exclusion, 2018 (% of population)



Note: For definitions of individual indicators in the graph refer to Box 1

Source: Eurostat

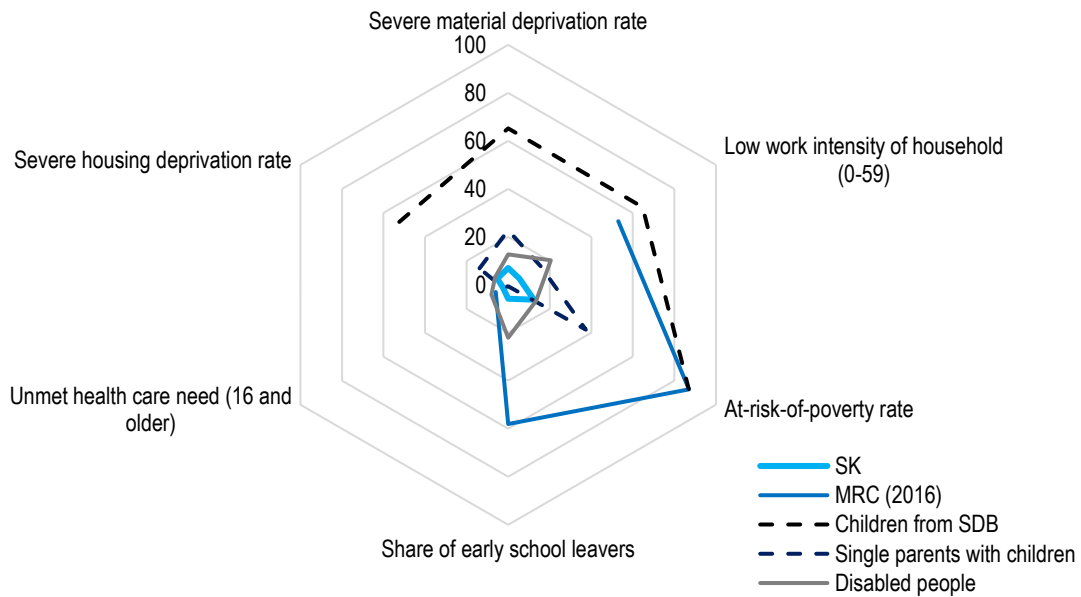
Even though Slovakia's overall results meet the standards of the developed European countries, certain groups of population are at a much greater risk of social exclusion. Particularly vulnerable groups whose results can be traced in statistical findings include the people from marginalised Roma communities (MRC), children from socially disadvantaged background (SDB), lone parents with children¹² and persons with disability.¹³ All those groups report substantially worse results in the social exclusion indicators than the overall total population of Slovakia (Graph 4). Considering the size of those groups, their risk-of-social-exclusion rate, and their traceability in surveys or administrative data, they have been selected as the target group for the review. Besides the above groups, the review also covers the homeless people whose risk-of-social-exclusion rate cannot be traced within standardised statistical surveys of households.¹⁴

¹² As regards families of lone parents with children, those with at least one child under 6 years of age stand out. As many as 67% of people living in such families are exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion.

¹³ Disabled people are identified in the EU SILC survey based on self-identification of respondents who reported in the survey to feel very limited in their everyday activities due to health issues. Since the question in the survey is not formulated unambiguously, the number of disabled persons in the population may be overestimated (Bahna, 2018).

¹⁴ The target groups have been identified in the mandate for the review <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=11158>.

Graph 4: Key indicators of social exclusion, 2017 (% of the members of the selected groups at risk)

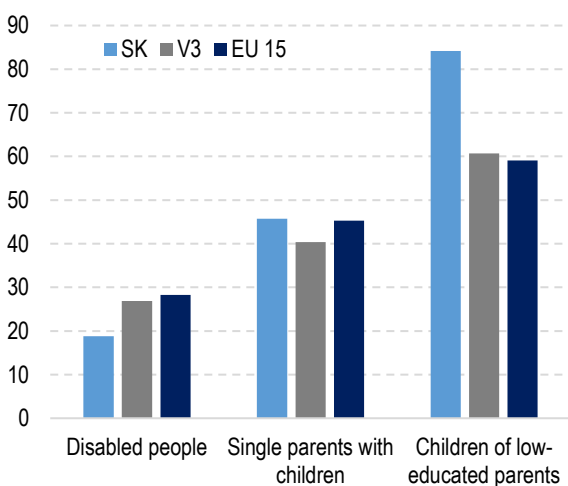


Source: VIM unit based on data of EU SILC and FRA (MRC)

Note: The data for the people from MRC and children from SDB date back to 2016. The data covering severe material deprivation rate and the severe housing deprivation rate in MRC is not included in the FRA's public data. The data concerning the unmet need for medical examination or treatment and the early school drop-out rate cannot be quantified for children from SDB due to their age.

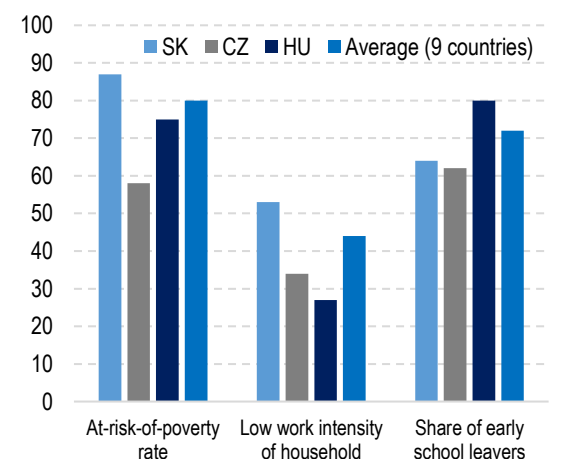
The review does not cover people in retirement age whereas social inclusion of this group raises different challenges than the inclusion of people below and in the working age. Moreover, statistical surveys imply that people in retirement age do not belong among groups at particular risk of social exclusion. The percentage of people aged 65 or more who live under the risk-of-poverty threshold is 6.4%, the severe material deprivation rate in this age group is at the level of 7.0%, and the severe housing deprivation rate at 2.1%. These rates are similar to or lower than the rates in the total Slovak population (Table 1). The only indicator in which elderly people report worse results than the total results for the population is the unmet need for medical examination or treatment (4.2%).¹⁵

Graph 5: At-risk-of-poverty or at-risk-of-social-inclusion rate of selected groups, 2018 (%)



Source: Eurostat

Graph 6: Selection of social exclusion indicators in MRC, 2016 (%)



Source: FRA

Note: The surveyed countries include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia

¹⁵ Eurostat (2018).

Some of the above groups at risk report worse results both against the average figures for Slovakia and against the same groups in other EU-15 countries. While the at-risk-of-poverty or at-risk-of-social-inclusion rate among people with disability is lower in Slovakia than in the V3 or EU-15 countries, and at a comparable level with the EU average results among lone parents with children, the children of parents with low education are doing much worse than in other countries (Graph 5). Slovakia, Bulgaria and Lithuania are at the bottom of the EU countries in this group. Slovakia also reports worse results than most of the other EU countries with a numerous Roma minority in two out of three indicators of social inclusion of people from MRC. Slovakia only scores better in the early school drop-out rate of young people (Graph 6). Women from MRC are a particularly vulnerable group. They often experience several times worse discrimination due to their ethnicity as well as gender (Box 2).

Box 2: Gender-specific disadvantage of women in MRC

Gender stereotypes in MRC substantially shape the life goals, parenting style and expectations from individuals based on their gender. Although the attitudes and preferences have changed to some extent towards greater gender equality, gender stereotypes are still present in these communities. Men are expected to fulfil their role of family provider, while women are expected to take care of the household. Although women may have greater say within the family life when it comes to the issues of finance or child raising, the engagement in the public and work sphere is mainly reserved to men. This model leads to substantial dependence of women on their partners and greatly limits their independence and the self-realization outside their families (Filadelfiová, 2012).

The experience of foreign countries demonstrate that access to education, economic inclusion and growth of employment rates of women not only emancipates women, but also helps develop the community as a whole (UN, 2018; IMF, 2018). While gender differences in the economic status in the Slovak labour market are general (Ministry of Labour, 2019), they become stronger in the MRC environment (Chapter 7.1). Annex 2 shows that this is so despite better education results of women than men, a fact which applies both in and outside the MRC.

There is a practical reason why social exclusion is approached through specific groups – it is not possible to identify from the administrative data the entire population of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.¹⁶ The approach based on groups which can be identified in administrative data brings wider analytical options and better assessment of public policies with the aim to improve their setting for all people who happen to occur in a difficult social situation. Although certain instruments of public policies, such as the assistance in material need or allowance for pupils from socially disadvantaged background (a SDB allowance), aim at socially disadvantaged people, the definition of disadvantage is much narrower here than the definition of the risk of poverty or social exclusion. The income threshold below which individual becomes eligible to the assistance in material need and the SDB allowance is well below the risk-of-poverty threshold (Chapter 8.1). The approach through the above target groups allows a wider coverage of the people at risk.

Another reason for this approach is that social exclusion is substantially associated with certain features of individuals and groups. The selected target groups cover the dimension of ethnicity, age, gender¹⁷ and the state of health. Contrary to the definition of the target group based on an outcome indicator, such as material deprivation, this approach encourages to ponder how the operation of the existing norms and institutions in the society contribute to the vulnerability of specific groups and make certain characteristics of people risk features. This line of thought creates better background to also address causes and not just the consequences of social exclusion. Nevertheless, the analysis is made both based on the above groups as well as on assistance in material

¹⁶ The administrative data is sometimes collected at the level of individual and sometimes at the level of a family or household depending on how the target group of a specific policy is defined. The definition of the risk of poverty or social exclusion is based on the social situation of households which may be monitored in the statistical surveys on income and living conditions of households (EU SILC).

¹⁷ Based on the 2017 EU SILC data, women are householders in as many as 89% of incomplete families.

need (Box 3). As regards children from socially disadvantaged background, the assistance in material need serves as a proxy for that group wherever children from SDB are not identifiable from unit data.¹⁸

The assessment of public policies having impact on social inclusion must take into consideration the diversity of instrument across individual areas. Some of the relevant instruments are targeted (e.g. allowance for pupils from socially disadvantaged background), others are universal (e.g. pre-primary education). Some of the instruments are targeted based on income (e.g. assistance in material need), others based on affiliation with a specific group (e.g. programmes focusing on people from MRC). What is more, the definition of the target group of a particular instrument is not uniform across various instruments and budget categories, and it does not always correspond to the target groups of the review. Nevertheless, the review aims to assess all policies and instruments which affect social inclusion, point out if certain target groups experience barriers to accessing support and, where possible, assess the effect of interventions on target groups of the review.

A more successful integration of the members of the groups at risk into society would support the growth of economy and improve the standard of living of the entire population in the long-term horizon. For example, according to the OECD estimates, if the employment rate and labour productivity of people from marginalised Roma communities reached the average level in Slovakia, the GDP would grow by more than 12 % and the public finance by 5% of GDP until 2060 (Geva et al., 2018). Better purchase power of people who lived at the margins of the society would significantly support the local demand, creation of new job positions, and growth of wages of all groups of population.

Box 3: Identification of people from MRC and comparison against the people in the assistance in material need system

The matching of Atlas of Roma Communities with administrative data allows to identify the Roma population in municipalities with concentrated settlements. This data helps to improve the assessment of integration policy impacts on the Roma minority. The review works with microdata which includes people living in concentrated settlements as well as some Roma who live integrated among the majority population. The review uses the acronym MRC (marginalised Roma communities) for this group which serves as a "proxy" for the less integrated part of Roma population, although some Roma in this group are spacially integrated. While according to the Atlas 2013 people from MRC account for around one half of the population of Roma communities (Central Labour Office, 2018), the group addressed in this review includes around 71% (339,354 individuals).

In several places in this review it is appropriate to compare the results and access to support for people from MRC against the rest of the population. To get a more complex picture, the comparison takes place in two dimensions: based on belonging to MRC and based on the assistance in material need (AMN). For the purposes of this comparison, a person in the AMN system includes every person who lives in a household which received assistance in material need at least one month in the relevant year based on the data from the Central Labour Office.¹⁹ The number of so defined households is higher than the number of households which received the AMN in a specific month. It covers greater share of people with income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (estimated at 41%).²⁰ This division allows to partially reflect the huge differences in poverty between people from MRC and the rest of the population, and for example compare poor people from MRC with similarly poor people outside MRC or people with lower or higher income within MRC.

¹⁸ Unit data are the data at the level of an individual, in this case it is the data about individual pupils of schools from the Ministry of Education's information system. The definition of SDB and the identification of pupils from SDB in unit data is described in *Box 7*.

¹⁹ The assistance in material need system is described in more detail in Chapter 8.

²⁰ Based on the data of the Central Labour Office, 265 thousand of Slovaks lived in 2017 in a household which received AMN at least one month in the year. The number of people below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in 2017 totalled 650 thousand according to Eurostat's figures. The percentage of households which received assistance in material need at least one month is thus estimated to cover around 41% of poor people. To compare, households which received assistance in material need in a specific month covered on average around 30 % of poor people for one month.

3. Expenditures on social inclusion

The expenditures on social inclusion mean, for the purposes of this review, the expenditures on financial transfers, services or instruments of public policies which focus on the improvement of the income and social situation of the groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and their better integration into the society. Where the help consists in increased expenditures due to disadvantage within services and policies which are also available to other groups of population (e.g. normative funding of basic schools), the expenditures on integration only mean the additional expenditures used on top of the expenditures which would be used if all recipients of support or users of the service were not affected by the disadvantage. As regards universal expenditures which are not tied with the social situation of an individual, family or group, but still constitute a significant support and inclusion instrument (e.g. family support and pre-primary education at kindergartens), the social inclusion expenditures mean that part of the total spend which goes to people living in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion.²¹

The public spending on social inclusion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2018 reached EUR 2,610.7 million, which is approximately 2.9% of GDP and 7.1% of total public expenditure. The greatest percentage (82.0%) of was provided from the state budget, local governments contributed 7.9% from their budgets, and EU grants and co-financing schemes provided for 10.2%. The largest portion of inclusion expenditure went on the labour market and social policies (85.4%), education consumed 11.2%, housing and infrastructure 3.1%, health care 0.1% and other areas 0.2%. The review includes the expenditures of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Transport and Construction, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture (IROP), and the funds of local governments.

3.1. Expenditures on social inclusion in education

Public expenditure on social inclusion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the area of education in 2018 reached EUR 291.4 million, which is approximately 0.32 % of GDP, 0.80% of total public expenditure and 8.46% of public expenditure on education (Table 2). The expenditures include budget funds of the Ministries of Education; Interior; Labour, Social Affairs and Family as well as funds of the local governments. ESI Funds and co-financing schemes cover for 13.7% (EUR 32.5 million) of total expenditure. Within the current programming period, projects addressing social inclusion contracted in the area of education by the end of 2018 totalled EUR 196.4 million (Table 5).

Expenditures in the area of education constitute additional funds which flow to the education system on the grounds of disadvantage of certain children and pupils.²² In 2018, schools were provided lunch subsidies in kindergartens and basic schools²³ for socially disadvantaged pupils, increased normative contribution for pupils of the zero grade at basic schools, and allowances for pupils at basic schools. The only item which goes directly to pupils and not to schools or their administrators are the scholarships for upper secondary school and university students. Special education kindergartens, mainstream and special basic and upper secondary schools receive higher normative contributions for pupils with disability, and universities receive subsidies for the specific needs of students. In addition, the state allocates purpose-specific funds for teaching assistants for the basic and upper

²¹ The proportion of expenditures on inclusion out of the total package of expenditures on the relevant instrument is estimated based on the proportion of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the demographic group corresponding to the recipients of benefits or users of service in the EU SILC survey (e.g. children aged 3 to 5 years in case of kindergartens).

²² The expenditures on social inclusion are calculated based on the budgeted funds and do not necessarily correspond to the amounts actually spent by schools for that purpose. As regards normative funding, the expenditures on disadvantaged pupils may change whereas administrators are permitted by law to distribute a part of the funds to schools in their jurisdiction. Additional funds may be obtained within the concertation procedure. In the event of mainstream schools, the expenditures on education of integrated disabled pupils and on special education classes for disabled pupils are not purpose-specific, and therefore it is not possible to check whether they were actually used for social inclusion. Similarly, the expenditures in case of proportional taxes are calculated based on theoretically calculated funds for some specific purpose, and not based on verifiable expenditures whereas the funds from proportional taxes are not purpose-specific.

²³ Basic schools in the Sloveak system cover primary and lower secondary education (typically ages 6 to 15).

secondary schools. Both mainstream and special education schools may also apply for funds from development projects to solve education of socially disadvantaged and disabled pupils.

Table 2: Expenditures on social inclusion in education (eur million)

	Budget Category	2018 R	2019 ES	2020 B	2021 B	2022 B
Socially disadvantaged children at kindergartens		45.2	50.8	52.1	60.2	69.5
Portion of proportional taxes used for pre-primary education including the state's allowance for the compulsory last grade of which children at risk of poverty or social exclusion	SS/MinE du	396.7	438.3	448.8	492.5	521.5
Allowance to partially cover for the cost of child-rearing and education of children enrolled in kindergartens and included in the SSB system	MinEdu	44.2	48.8	50.0	58.0	67.3
Lunch subsidy	MinLbr	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Allowance for school supplies	MinLbr	0.7	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7
	MinLbr	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Pupils/students from socially disadvantaged background (SDB) and poor pupils/students		21.5	27.9	32.1	32.4	30.4
Increased normative contribution for the zero grade SDB allowance	MinEdu	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.3	4.3
Lunch subsidy (SDB and poor children/pupils)	MinLbr	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
Allowance for school supplies	MinLbr	6.3	10.1	15.0	15.0	15.0
School supplies for first graders (SDB and poor pupils)	MinLbr	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.5
Upper secondary school scholarships	MinEdu		0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
	MinEdu	2.4	3.3	2.5	2.5	2.4
Disabled pupils – integration		84.3	92.0	100.4	105.5	109.5
Increased normative contributions for integrated pupils with disability at basic schools	MinEdu	47.8	52.1	56.8	59.6	61.9
Staff cost of teaching assistants for pupils with disability in mainstream basic and upper secondary schools	MinEdu	17.2	18.9	20.8	22.0	22.8
Development Project Removal of Structural Barriers in mainstream schools attended by pupils with disability	MinEdu	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Increased normative contributions for integrated pupils with disability at gymnasiums	MinEdu	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.7
Increased normative contributions for integrated pupils with disability at conservatoriums	MinEdu	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Increased normative contributions for integrated pupils with disability at upper secondary technical schools	MinEdu	16.7	18.2	19.9	20.9	21.6
Subsidy for specific needs of students with disability at universities	MinEdu	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
Disabled pupils – special education schools		80.9	83.3	90.9	95.4	99.1
Increased normative contributions for pupils with disability at special education kindergartens	MinEdu	4.5	4.9	5.4	5.6	5.9
Increased normative contributions for pupils with disability attending special education classroom at a basic school	MinEdu	13.7	15.0	16.3	17.2	17.8
Increased normative contributions for pupils with disability at special education basic schools	MinEdu	42.3	46.1	50.2	52.7	54.8
Increased funds for pupils with disability for after school club at special education basic schools	MinEdu	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.1
Increased normative contributions for pupils with disability at gymnasiums and conservatoriums – special education upper secondary schools	MinEdu	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
Increased normative contributions for pupils with disability at upper secondary technical schools – special education secondary schools	MinEdu	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9
Increased normative contributions for pupils with disability at vocational schools and practical schools	MinEdu	10.2	11.1	12.1	12.7	13.2
Staff cost of teaching assistants for pupils with disability in special education basic and upper secondary schools	MinEdu	6.3	6.9	7.6	8.0	8.3

Development Project Removal of Structural Barriers in special education schools attended by pupils with disability	MinEdu	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
School centres of child-rearing counselling and prevention (centres for pedagogical and psychological counselling and prevention, and centres of special pedagogical counselling)²⁴	MinEdu	28.0	30.8	33.9	35.7	37.1
Total for the state and local government budgets		259.9	284.9	309.3	329.2	345.5
ESI Funds (Table 5)		32.5				
Total public expenditure		292.4				

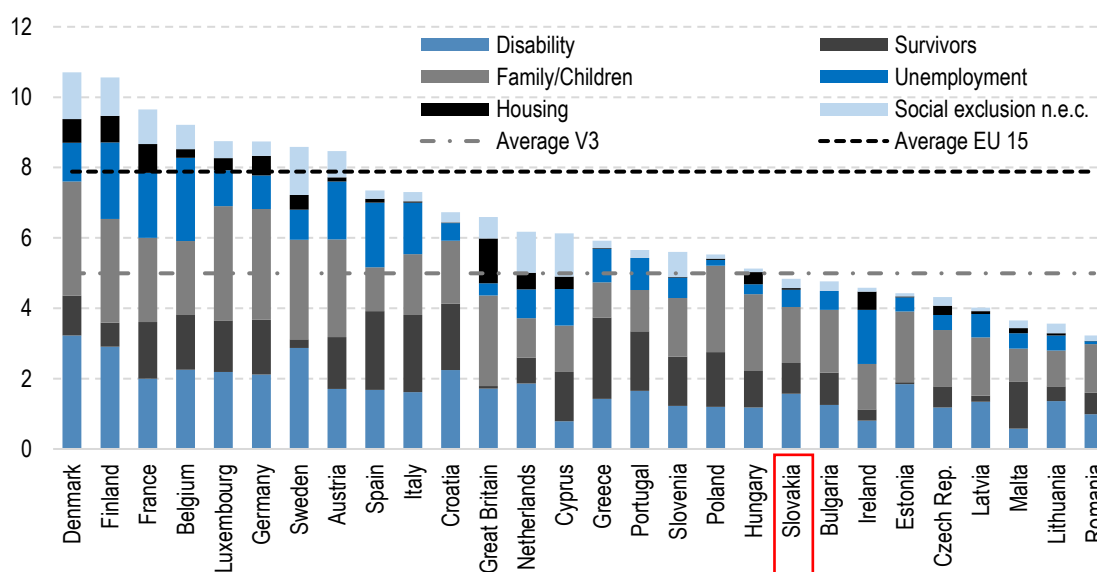
Source: VřM unit and Educational Policy Institute based on the data of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour, Central Labour Office and our own calculations

Note: Development projects with expenditures below EUR 50 thousand a year are not listed separately in the table, but are included in the total expenditure calculation. R: reality; ES: expected status, B: budget. Items which are not stated in the budget are forecast based on the best estimate of authors.

3.2. Expenditures on social inclusion in labour market and social policies

Public expenditure on social inclusion of groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the area of labour market and social policies reached EUR 2,229.5 million in 2018, which is approximately 2.47% of GDP, 6.08% of total public expenditure and 36.3% of the public expenditure on labour market and social policies (Table 3). The expenditures include budget resources of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Finance and resources of local governments. Of the total expenditure, ESI Funds and co-financing cover 9.8% (EUR 219.6 million). Most of that amount (81%) went on various projects in the area of active labour market policies. Within the current programming period, projects addressing labour market and social policies contracted by the end of 2018 totalled EUR 1,283.3 million (Table 5).

Graph 7: Net expenditures²⁵ on social protection less the sick and old-age benefits, 2016 (% of GDP)



Note: Data for Estonia are for 2015.

Source: Eurostat, ESSPROS statistics

The review does not include expenditures on benefits from the social insurance scheme (e.g. unemployment benefits, sick benefits) with the exception of invalidity pensions or expenditures on pensions. Because the social insurance system is, to a substantial extent, a merit-based system based on previous contributions of the insured persons, this instrument cannot be said to target groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The expenditures on

²⁴ The school centres of child-rearing counselling and prevention are partially treated in the review in Chapter 4 on early childhood care.

²⁵ Some of the benefits are subject to taxation in some countries which returns part of the gross expenditures on those instruments back to the state budget. Net expenditures may be finally much lower than the gross expenditures.

invalidity pensions have been included as they focus on one of the review's target groups – people with disability. Invalidity pensions consume a substantial part (42%) of total expenditure on inclusion in the area of labour market and social policies. They are funded from the basic invalidity insurance fund, its revenues reached EUR 1,449.6 million in 2018.²⁶

Looking at a wider definition of social protection used for international comparison, and after deducting expenditures on social benefits associated with illness (particularly the medical insurance scheme) and old age (particularly the old-age pensions scheme), expenditures amounted to around 4.8% of GDP in Slovakia which is within the bottom third of EU countries (Graph 7). The relative level of expenditures compared with the EU-15 average figures is lowest in the area of help with housing costs (7% of the EU-15 average figures), help to the unemployed (40% of the EU-15 average figures) and the other help to socially excluded (44% of the EU-15 average figures). Slovakia's expenditures come closest to the EU-15 average figures in the area of help provided to the disabled (81% of the EU-15 average figures).

Table 3: Expenditures on social inclusion in the area of labour market and social policies (eur million)

	Budget Category	2018 R	2019 ES	2020 B	2021 B	2022 B
Labour Market Policies		39.9	34.1	41.7	40.6	39.8
ALMP and employment support ²⁷	MinLbr	39.9	34.1	41.7	40.6	39.8
Social assistance		132.3	117.5	129.3	129.8	131.2
Benefit in material need and allowances	MinLbr	126.3	112.2	123.4	123.4	124.9
Substitute alimony benefit	MinLbr	6.0	5.2	5.9	6.4	6.4
Support for families with children		245.9	252.8	324.7	331.6	339.1
Child benefit	MinLbr	313.1	327.9	334.5	341.1	348.6
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		84.9	88.9	90.7	92.5	94.5
Parental benefit	MinLbr	368.7	377.3	551.3	564.1	577.1
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		147.4	150.8	220.4	225.5	230.7
Birth allowance	MinLbr	44.0	43.4	44.8	45.0	45.8
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		12.4	12.2	12.6	12.6	12.9
Childcare allowance ²⁸	MinLbr	7.6	2.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		0.6	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Other family support allowances	MinLbr	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Tax Expenditures		178.2	95.9	93.2	90.3	89.4
Contribution relief for long-term unemployed	MinFin	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Contribution deductible item for low-income people	MinFin	119.9	27.7	20.7	16.2	14.5
Dependent spouse income tax allowance	MinFin	63.0	64.8	66.3	67.7	69.1
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		17.0	17.5	17.9	18.3	18.7
Child tax bonus	MinFin	269.1	332.6	359.1	367.6	370.5
of which at risk of poverty or social exclusion		39.8	49.2	53.1	54.3	54.8
Support of persons with disability		1,224.1	1,340.6	1,361.6	1,405.4	1,412.1
Financial allowances to compensate for severe disability	MinLbr	293.2	395.9	423.5	432.6	442.2
Disability pension	MinLbr	930.9	944.7	938.1	972.8	969.9
Social services		189.5	209.4	213.5	223.3	237.4

²⁶ The basic invalidity insurance fund is used to pay out invalidity pensions as well as widow's pensions, widower's pensions and the orphan's pensions after the death of invalidity pension recipient, death of the insured person whose number of pension insurance years made him or her eligible to disability pension, and the death of the insured person who died as a consequence of a job-related injury or an occupational disease. The total expenditures of the basic invalidity insurance fund amounted to EUR 931.1 million in 2018.

²⁷ Includes all expenditures on ALMP funded from the state budget. The expenditures financed from ESI Funds are detailed in Table 5.

²⁸ The childcare allowance is partially funded from the European Social Fund (Table 5). The total expenditures on the allowance amounted to EUR 11.7 million in 2018 – EUR 7.6 million from the state budget and EUR 4.1 million from the funds of ESI Funds. The refund (drawing) of the funds from the ESF takes place after some time from labour office's payment of the allowance to the eligible person. Once all the eligible payments are refunded as expected in 2018, the proportion of the funds from the state budget to the funds from ESI Funds should be EUR 0.8 million to EUR 10.9 million.

Crisis intervention ²⁹		1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9
financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	Local governments	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5
Support for families with children ³⁰		1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3
financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	Local governments	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Solution of difficult social situation due to severe disability ³¹		187.0	206.6	210.6	220.3	234.2
financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	Local governments	153.6	169.8	173.1	181.0	192.4
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	33.4	36.9	37.6	39.3	41.8
Total state and local government budgets		2,009.9	2,050.3	2,163.9	2,221.0	2,249.1
ESI Funds (Table 5)		219.6				
Total public expenditure		2,229.5				

Source: VIM unit based on the data of the Ministry of Finance's IS, Ministry of Labour, Central Labour Office and its own calculations

3.3. Expenditures on social inclusion in the housing and infrastructure area

Public expenditure on social inclusion of groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the area of housing and infrastructure reached EUR 80.2 million in 2018, which is approximately 0.09% of GDP, 0.22% of the total public expenditure and 19.0% of public expenditure on housing and infrastructure (Table 4). The expenditures include budget resources of the Ministries of Transport and Construction, and of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as well as resources of local governments. ESI Funds and co-financing schemes cover for 5.4% (EUR 4.3 million) of the expenditure. Within the current programming period, projects addressing social inclusion contracted in the area of housing and infrastructure by the end of 2018 totalled EUR 34.3 million (Table 5).

Table 4: Expenditures on social inclusion in the housing and infrastructure area (eur million)

	Budget Category	2018 R	2019 ES	2020 B	2021 B	2022 B
Support of construction of rental apartments with regulated rent		66.1	89.1	104.6	105.1	105.7
State Housing Development Fund	MinTrans	38.2	69.8	84.9	85.0	85.1
Housing development subsidies	MinTrans	27.9	19.3	19.7	20.1	20.6
Social services of crisis intervention		9.8	10.8	11.0	11.5	12.3
Dormitory		2.1	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.7
financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	local governments	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9
Shelter		5.2	5.7	5.8	6.1	6.5
financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	local governments	4.0	4.4	4.5	4.7	5.0
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5
Emergency housing facility		1.9	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4
financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	local governments	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5

²⁹ The social services of crisis intervention include services focusing on housing (Table 4), low-threshold day centre, low-threshold social services for children and family, integration centre, community centre and the field social service of crisis intervention.

³⁰ The social services focusing on the support of families with children include the help with home-based child care, temporary childcare facilities, early intervention service, work-life balance support service, and childcare facilities for children under three years of age.

³¹ The social services addressing difficult social situation due to severe disability, bad state of health or attainment of the retirement age include the residential long-term care facility for adults, adult day care, residential long-term care facility for children, supportive housing facility, rehabilitation centre, elder care facility and specialised facility. The expenditures detailed in the table do not include the expenditures on the elder care facilities. Some of the other services listed may also be used by clients in retirement age.

Halfway home financed by municipalities and higher territorial units	local governments	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
co-financed from the state budget	MinLbr	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total state and local government budgets		75.9	99.9	115.6	116.6	118.0
ESI Funds (Table 5)		4.3				
Total public expenditure		80.2				

Source: VřM unit based on the data of the Ministry of Transport, State Housing Development Fund, Ministry of Labour and its own calculations

3.4. Expenditures on social inclusion in healthcare

The only instrument expressly focused on social inclusion in the area of healthcare is the **Healthy Communities project**. Total expenditure in 2018 amounted to EUR 3.3 million. This expenditure was financed from the ESI Funds. The project focuses on the improvement of the health situation of excluded groups, particularly the MRC. Within the current programming period, the amount of EUR 11.6 million was contracted for the Healthy Communities project by the end of 2018. The project is being implemented by the state-subsidized organisation called Healthy Regions founded by the Slovak Ministry of Health.

3.5. Expenditures on social inclusion from ESI Funds and co-financing schemes

The use of ESI Funds and co-financing schemes³² for social inclusion of groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion reached EUR 265.0 million in 2018, which is approximately 0.29% of GDP and 0.72% of the total public expenditure (Table 5). The area of education consumed 12.3%, the labour market and social policies 82.9%, the housing and infrastructure 1.6%, the area of health 1.2% and the public order area 2.0%. The funds contracted until the end of 2018 amounted to EUR 1,545.6 million.

Table 5: Expenditures on social inclusion of groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion from ESI Funds and co-financing schemes (eur million, 2018)

	OP and PA	Contracted for the period ended 31/12/2018	Drawdown for 2018
Education		196.4	32.5
School Open to Everyone	OP HR 1	29.9	8.7
More Successful at Basic school	OP HR 1	47.9	6.5
Support of pre-primary education of children from MRC	OP HR 5	20.0	0.1
Mentoring and tutoring support for pupils from MRC	OP HR 5	1.0	0.0
Construction and reconstruction of kindergartens (150 municipalities within the Atlas of Roma Communities)	OP HR 6	19.3	4.1
Construction and reconstruction of kindergartens (other than the above 150 municipalities)	OP HR 6	8.6	1.9
Construction and reconstruction of pre-school facilities	OP HR 6	0.0	0.0
Expansion of the capacity of the kindergarten infrastructure	IROP 2	69.7	11.2
Labour market and social policies		1,283.3	219.6
Initiative supporting employment of young people	OP HR 2	253.0	61.4
Support of the employment of job seekers using the selected ALMP	OP HR 3	200.0	33.8
Support of the employment of persons with disabilities	OP HR 3	150.0	30.1
Financial instruments (support of social economy)	OP HR 3	58.5	0.0
Operational Programme of Food and Basic Material Assistance	OP FEAD	64.8	9.9
Counselling			
Support of individualised counselling for the long-term unemployed job seekers	OP HR 3	32.9	1.2

³² The co-financing scheme includes national funds from the state budget, but no co-financing by recipients. The expenditures do not include the funds drawn for projects and calls aimed at people in retirement age.

Support of the non-state employment services	OP HR 3	1.0	0.1
Looking for a Job Together	OP HR 3	7.0	0.9
Education			
RESTART – The opportunity for the long-term unemployed to get back into the labour market	OP HR 3	15.6	3.6
Education of job seekers	OP HR 3	28.9	5.3
Development of sector skills	OP HR 3	2.1	0.0
Employment stimuli			
A Chance to Get a Job	OP HR 3	50.0	1.7
A Way out of the Unemployment Circle	OP HR 3	50.0	8.7
Engaging job seekers in the cultural heritage restoration	OP HR 3	17.1	2.8
A Road to the Labour Market	OP HR 3	99.5	26.2
We Wish to be Active in the Labour Market (50+)	OP HR 3	15.0	2.1
Support of the work-life balance			
Childcare allowance in a more developed region	OP HR 3	30.0	3.1
Childcare allowance in a less developed region	OP HR 3	50.0	2.2
Demand-driven calls to support the balance	OP HR 3	2.7	0.0
Support and development of childcare services for children under 3 years at a community level	IROP	0.0	0.0
Social services			
Support of the selected social services of crisis intervention at a community level	OP HR 4	20.9	3.9
Field social work in municipalities	OP HR 4	29.3	6.3
Support of the development of the home-based social work	OP HR 4	29.2	5.7
Field social work and field work in municipalities with MRC	OP HR 5	26.5	6.1
Community centres in towns and villages with MRC	OP HR 5	18.7	1.8
Reconstruction and construction of community centres	OP HR 6	13.9	2.6
Construction, renovation, reconstruction, rebuilding of community centres	OP HR 6	9.0	0.0
Demand-driven calls			
Development of instruments to increase the activity of the people at risk	OP HR 4	0.9	0.0
Development of new devices supporting social integration of persons with disabilities	OP HR 4	1.1	0.0
Counselling and awareness-raising in the area of prevention and elimination of discrimination	OP HR 4	5.7	0.0
Housing and infrastructure		34.3	4.3
Support of land settlement in MRC	OP HR 5	2.4	0.1
Building the waste sorting system and transport of municipal waste	OP HR 6	15.8	3.9
Support of access to drinking water in the MRC environment	OP HR 6	2.5	0.3
Improved forms of housing with elements of transitional housing in municipalities with MRC	OP HR 6	0.0	0.0
Financial instruments (support of self-help construction)	OP HR 6	13.6	0.0
Healthcare system		11.6	3.3
Healthy Communities 2A	OP HR 5	11.3	3.2
Healthy Communities 3A	OP HR 4	0.3	0.0
Other		20.1	5.3
Support of neighbourhood watch programme (MOPS) in municipalities with MRC	OP HR 5	20.1	5.3
Total ESI Funds and co-financing schemes		1,545.6	265.0

Source: VIM unit based on data of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Interior

Note: OP means the operational programme and PA means the priority axis, the Atlas stands for the Atlas of Roma Communities, ALMP for the active labour market policies MRC means the marginalised Roma communities. MOPS means the neighbourhood watch programme. Job seekers are those who look for employment.

Expenditures on social inclusion of MRC funded from the ESI Funds

Two priority axes (5 and 6) of the Human Resources Operational Programme (OP HR) expressly focus on the social inclusion of the MRC. The main objective is to systematically integrate the policies and instruments in the area of health, housing, education, employment and financial literacy in accordance with the principles of desegregation, de-ghettoisation and destigmatization. The priority axis 5 (Integration of the Marginalised Roma Communities) primarily focuses on the improvement of the quality of the life of people coming from the MRC environment by way of counselling and help in the area of health and health care, entrance to the labour market, solution of personal finance, housing and education. The priority axis 6 (Technical Facilities in Municipalities with MRC) helps to improve the quality of the environment in which people from the MRC live primarily by investing in the infrastructure.

The amount allocated to the priority axis 5 amounts to EUR 139.0 million (6% of the OP HR funds), and to the priority axis 6 it is EUR 243.7 million (11% of the OP HR funds).³³ While the funds contracted within the PA 5 exceed the OP HR financial plan until the end of 2018 by 2%, the PA 6 is nearly 53% behind the schedule. Two thirds (65.8%) of the allocated funds were contracted during the first five years of the programming period. But within the PA 6, it was approximately 36% of funds.

Neither of the priority axes attained the medium-term objectives at the end of 2018 when it comes to the use of funds. Medium-term objectives are set in order to motivate the member states to draw and efficiently use the resources available from the European funds.³⁴ The amount drawn by the end of 2018 within the PA 5 totalled EUR 18.0 million, which ranges at the level of 89% of the medium-term objective. As regards the PA 6, the amount drawn totalled EUR 16.7 million, which is only 41 % of the medium-term objective. The reasons for this include issues with public procurement process (frequent irregularities leading to repeated procurement process) and an incorrect estimate of interest in certain demand-driven calls.³⁵

Most funds within the PA 5 are allocated to the support of field social work and community centres³⁶, while the support of land settlement received smallest allocation³⁷ (Graph 8). Contract-awarding process and absorption is most successful in case of the demand-driven call for the support of neighbourhood watch (MOPS)³⁸ as well as for the National Project of Field Social Work in MRC. The contract-awarding and absorption situation is worst in the support of mentoring and tutoring of pupils from MRC at basic schools. Absorption is negligible in the area of the support of land settlement and the support of pre-primary education of children from MRC.

³³ The funds for PA 5 are provided from the European Social Fund, while the PA 6 is funded from the European Regional Development Fund.

³⁴ Medium-term objectives are evaluated after the lapse of 5 years from the beginning of the programming period. In the current programming period, it will take place at the end of 2018. If the medium-term objectives are not sufficiently attained, the so-called performance reserve of 6% of the total ESI Funds may not be released.

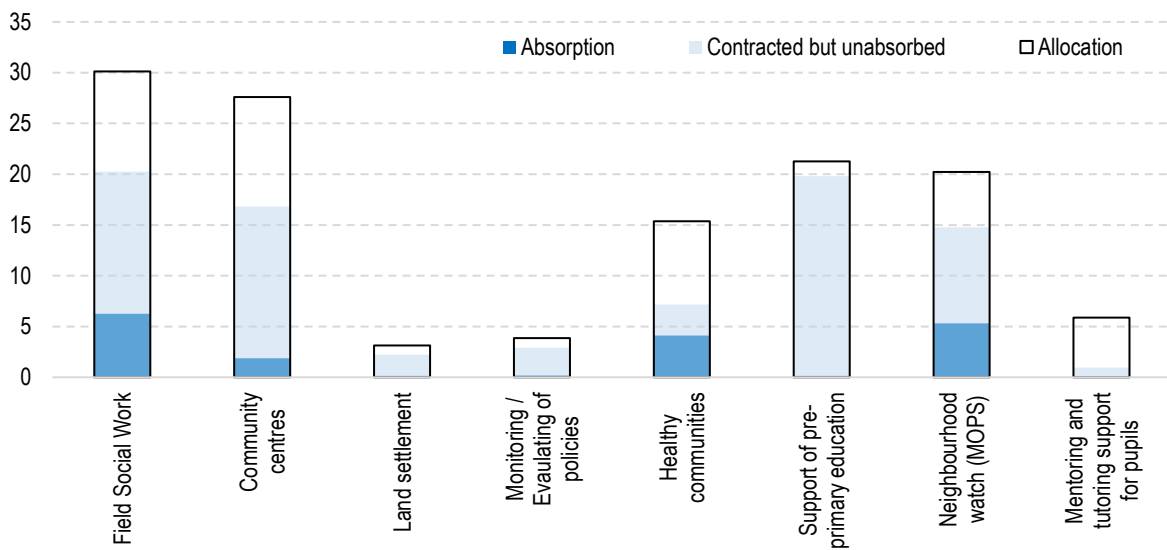
³⁵ Based on the annual report of the OP HR for 2018: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/esf/programove-obdobie-2014-2020/spravy-implementationii/op-ludske-zdroje/>

³⁶ Support programmes funded from the ESI Funds are described and evaluated in Chapter 11.

³⁷ The support of land settlements in MRC is described in Chapter 9.

³⁸ As the interest in and success of the MOPS project was great, a second call for MOPS was announced in 2018 with a larger allocation compared to the first call.

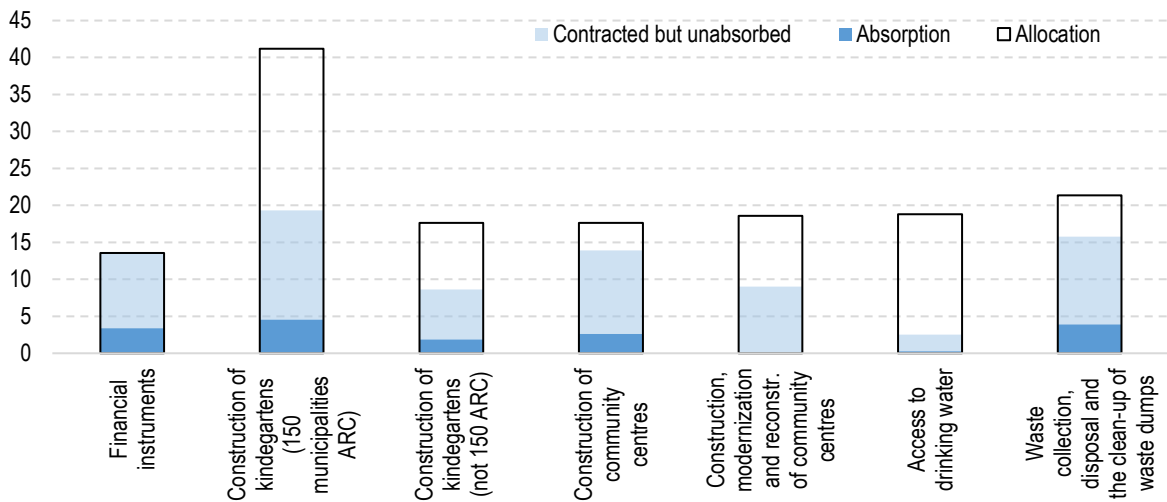
Graph 8: Allocation, award of contracts and absorption within PA 5 (million euros, for period ended 31/12/2018)



Source: Ministry of Interior

Most funds within the PA 6 are allocated to the construction of kindergartens, smallest allocation goes to the financial instruments primarily aimed to support self-help construction³⁹ (Graph 9). The contract awarding and absorption process is most successful in the area of financial instruments and investments in waste collection and disposal and the clean-up of waste dump sites. The worst contract awarding and absorption situation is in the area of investments in improvement of access to drinking water.

Graph 9: Allocation, award of contracts and absorption within PA 6 (million euros, for period ended 31/12/2018)



Source: Ministry of Interior

³⁹ The self-help construction in MRC is described and evaluated in Chapter 9.

4. Early childhood care for disadvantaged children

- **Investments in human capital in early childhood have higher returns than the investments made at later stages of life.** Provable effects of programmes focused on disadvantaged children include the improvement of school results and placement on the labour market.
- **Early childhood care for disadvantaged children is the responsibility of the Ministries of Health, Labour and of Education.** Part of services fall under the powers and responsibilities of local governments. The inter-ministerial cooperation is insufficient, which has a negative impact on the accessibility and quality of early childhood care services.
- **While current situation is that only the children with disability are eligible to receive early childhood care, their access to those services is rather restricted because of various obstacles.** But interventions in early childhood are also beneficial for children in a difficult social situation and children having developmental delays.
- **The review proposes to create a supra-ministerial strategy of early childhood care which would define a legal eligibility to the services for all disadvantaged children, standards of services and their funding.** In the current setting, the review proposes to remove the language barrier at preventive screening of children, remedy drawbacks in funding, and support provision of early childhood care in MRC.

Investments in human capital in early childhood⁴⁰ have higher returns than the investments made at later stages of life. Provable effects of childcare programmes aimed at disadvantaged children include better results achieved in testing, elimination of child placement in the special education stream, reduced grade repetition rate, higher employment rate and income, but also lower crime rates (Lynn A. Karolly et al., 2005). Participation in programmes intended for children from birth until beginning of compulsory education may have a significant positive influence on the success of the children at later stages of their lives and this is particularly true in case of the disadvantaged children (OECD, 2017).

The cost-and-benefit meta-analysis of various programmes focusing on socially disadvantaged children and their parents in the USA showed that the return of each invested US dollar ranged from USD 1.26 up to USD 17.07. Slovak cost-and-benefit analyses of early interventions focusing on children with disability (children with autism spectrum disorder and children with hearing impairment) demonstrate that the benefits of early intervention exceed the cost of such intervention and that they increase the quality of life as well as the results on the labour market and save public finance in the area of education and social services (Annex 3 and Box 4).

The aim of early childhood care is to reduce the risk of possible social exclusion of the disadvantaged children and their families. The care needs to be available to all children at risk and it should be trans-disciplinary. These are the important aspects. Specialised literature defines children at risk as: (1) children with disability; (2) children with developmental delays; and (3) children who are at risk due to the biological conditions or the conditions of their environment (particularly a difficult social situation). The approach is based on the cooperation of a family and experts providing health, social, psychological and educational services (paediatricians, social workers, therapeutic and special education teachers, psychologists, etc.) (Cangár et al., 2016 and APPVI Association, 2019).

In 2018, the top level of the number of children at risk could have ranged around 5,822 children (9.2% of children of the relevant generation).⁴¹ Exact data about the size of the entire population of children at risk are either non-existent or their definition and collection across individual ministries is heterogeneous. Based on the data of the Ministry of Education, 3,044 pupils of the zero, preparatory and the first grade (4.8% of all pupils of the zero, preparatory and first grade) were diagnosed a disability in 2018.⁴² The number of children having developmental

⁴⁰ Early childhood definition may vary from country to country. They usually work with the ranges from 0 to 3 or, as the case may be, 7 years.

⁴¹ Some intersections may exist between individual groups of children, and therefore some children may have been counted twice.

⁴² The calculation of the Educational Policy Institute based on the number of pupils with disability (intellectual disability, autism, communication disorder, hearing, vision, physical and multiple impairment) in the zero, preparatory and the first grade (CSTI, 2018). Also the data of the previous years confirm that the size of the population is around 5%. Cangár et al. (2016) estimate the size of the generation of children with

delays without a confirmed disability is unknown. Children whose risk results from the conditions of the environment of concentrated intergenerational transmission of poverty include particularly the children from marginalised Roma communities. The population of children from MRC was 2,778 children in 2018 (4.4% of all zero, preparatory and first grade).⁴³

Services focusing on children at risk are the responsibility of the Ministries of Health, Labour and of Education. Within the Ministry of Health, the first possible developmental risks are identified by the gynaecology and obstetrics departments. Within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the providers of early intervention service (PEIS) work with families with children with disabilities up to the seventh year of child's age. Within the Ministry of Education, the centres for special pedagogical counselling (CSPC) primarily focus on the work with children with disabilities and stimulate their development applying special education care.

A large part of children at risk is not eligible to receive formalised interventional care in early childhood. Based on the rules actually in force within the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education, only the children with medically certified disability are eligible to the early childhood care. The system does not warrant access to the services to children with developmental delays (without medically confirmed disability) and the children from socially disadvantaged background.

The inter-ministerial cooperation to establish high-quality sustainable and accessible integrated and formalised form of interventional care in early childhood is insufficient.⁴⁴ This has a negative impact on the accessibility and quality of early care services for the target group of children. A supra-ministerial strategy, which is currently non-existent, would ensure integrated and systematic development of the early childhood care for children at risk. Each Ministry defines its own group of recipients, services and the related activities, the standards associated with them⁴⁵, as well as the structure of services and the funding system. Insufficient also is the support of life-long education of specialists in this area with emphasis on their specialisation in internationally recognised methods.

The review proposes to develop a supra-ministerial strategy of formalised form of early interventional care for children at risk which would fall under the responsibility of the Government Office. In future, the legislation in individual ministries would be prepared in compliance with that strategy so that each child at risk and the child's family would have access to the services of this care so that the child may develop in a complex manner. The strategy should also deal in the issue of preparation of supra-ministerial standards and the option to consolidate financial sources under the responsibility of the involved ministries in favour of individuals.⁴⁶

Care under the Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has a key role in early diagnostics of children at risk. Besides the nation-wide newborn screening for developmental risk, also the examination of the psycho-motor development in the first three years of children's life (second up to the eleventh preventive exam) is one of the main instrument to identify the need for care for children at risk. This examination was implemented on 1 February 2019. It consists of a questionnaire for

disability to reach 2,000 children. They rely on the number of children born with a birth defect or prematurely and those who may be assumed to suffer from persistent effects.

⁴³ Calculations of the Roma Plenipotentiary's Office based on specialised survey of EU SILC – MRC. Available at: <http://www.minv.sk/?zber-dat-od-ministerstiev-a-ostatnych-organov-statnej-a-verejnej-spravy>

⁴⁴ Positive is that an inter-ministerial work group focusing on the early intervention issue was set up at the Ministry of Labour at the end of 2018. However, the real impact of the work group on system changes has been limited for now.

⁴⁵ Standards are currently being developed at the Ministry of Health (<https://www.health.gov.sk/Clanok?standardne-diagnosticke-postupy>). The Ministry of Labour already has universal standards in place for all types of social services (Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services, Annex 2). The Ministry of Education is currently working on the standards within the NP Standards for school centres of counselling and prevention (<https://vudpap.sk/x/projekty/standardy/>).

⁴⁶ The Portuguese model of early intervention and recommendations that can be found in many specialised publications (Pinto, A. I. et al. (2012), Dobrova-Krol et al. (2019), Early Intervention National Association (2016)) are the examples of good practice.

parents who will most probably complete the questionnaire at home as the number of paediatricians is low and they are quite busy. The questionnaire is only available in the Slovak language.⁴⁷

In order to remove the possible language barrier and other barriers present in the environment of intergenerational transmission of poverty, the review proposes that the Ministry of Health provide for health education assistants (Chapter 11) or early childhood care workers in MRC to help with the questionnaires (part Care under the Ministry of Education).

Care under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

The Ministry of Labour provides the service of early intervention to a family with a child under seven years of age if the child's development is at risk due to disability. The provision of services of early intervention is taken care of by the higher territorial units by way of a public provider of this service either founded or established by the higher territorial unit or by way of a non-public provider which receives financial contribution for operations from the higher territorial unit's budget. Measures made within the service of early intervention include the stimulation of the complex development of a child with disability, social rehabilitation, specialised social counselling, preventive activities, and community rehabilitation.⁴⁸

13 public and 17 non-public providers of the early intervention service were registered in Slovakia in 2018. All in all, they provided social service to 1,219 clients, a figure which covered 5.7% of the total number of children with a disability.⁴⁹ Most clients (81%) used the services of non-public providers.⁵⁰ The number of providers and recipients of the early intervention service has been growing since 2015 when the service started to be provided (Annex 4). The services are free of charge, so the recipients do not pay anything for the professional actions within this social service. However, the social service provider may request payment for auxiliary activities.⁵¹ The data about the employees of early intervention service providers will be available from June 2021 within the social services information system that is currently being developed. This will allow to monitor the structure of specialist workers performing activities within this social service more effectively.⁵²

Total expenditures of the early intervention service providers amounted to approximately EUR 1.4 million in 2018. The average expenditures on one client totalled EUR 1,158; public providers reported on average EUR 673 higher expenditures than the non-public ones (Table 6). The revenues coming from payments by recipients covered only 0.3% of all revenues of public providers and 0.9% of all revenues of non-public providers. The remainder came from the budget of the higher territorial units and non-public providers received nearly one third of all revenues (28%) from donations, fund-raising campaigns and project funds of foundations (Annex 5).

Table 6: Basic data about early intervention service providers, 2018

	Public	Non-public	Total
Number of providers	13	17	30
Number of recipients	230	989	1,219
Total revenues (EUR)	386,339	996,389	1,382,728
Total expenditures (EUR)	359,404	1,050,386	1,409,790
Revenues per one client (EUR)	1,680	1,007	1,135
Expenditures per one client (EUR)	1,563	1,062	1,158

Note: Includes the expenditures on wages, contributions, goods and services, current transfers and capital expenditures

Source: Statements V(Ministry of Labour) 7-01 and V(MinLbr SR) 10-01 ??????????????????

⁴⁷ For more information click [here](#).

⁴⁸ Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services.

⁴⁹ Calculated as a proportion of clients to the overall population of children with disability aged 0 – 7 years. The size of the relevant generation that is taken into consideration covers 3,044 children with disability.

⁵⁰ All non-public providers were non-profit organisations.

⁵¹ Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services; Article 17. The auxiliary services include accommodation, boarding, housekeeping, washing, ironing, maintenance of bed linen and clothing, and provision of benefits in kind associated with provision of outpatient service in common areas.

⁵² Act No. 280/2019 Coll. amending the Act No. 480/2008 Coll. on social services

The average contribution provided by the higher territorial unit for one hour of early intervention service totalled EUR 10, which the experts consider to be insufficient. Also, these contributions varied from region to region from EUR 7.6 in the Žilina region to EUR 15 in the Košice region (Fričová et al., 2018). Based on the calculations of the Association of Early Intervention Providers and Supporters (APPVI Association), the optimum contribution should be somewhere around EUR 17 per hour (APPVI Association, 2018).⁵³ **The review's proposal is that all higher territorial units set and publish the average current expenditures on the early intervention service. These expenditures would also reflect the actual costs of wages of professional employees, their supervision and education, operational costs of premises including the costs of field services and aids.**

The current version of standards⁵⁴ does not reflect the fact that the early intervention is a field service, and therefore does not warrant the necessary quality of the service. Today, the providers of early intervention service must meet the universal standards laid down for all types and forms of social services.⁵⁵ However, they do not reflect the situation of residential social services and the fact that early intervention is primarily a field service. **Aiming to improve the quality of the services provided, the review proposes to appoint a person/entity to warrant professional quality of the early intervention service. For example, such a role could be given to the Association of Early Intervention Providers and Supporters (APPVI Association) which already provides accredited education to the early intervention workers and also sets the methodological standards of the service on the so-called self-regulatory principle for the time being.**

Care under the Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health currently provides the so-called early childhood care only to children with disability.⁵⁶ This care is provided by the centres of special pedagogical counselling (CSPC). Neither the legislation nor the conceptual materials in the Ministry of Education define the concept of early childhood care or set any age limits for this kind of care.⁵⁷ The age limits for provision of early childhood care from 0 to 3 years of child's life are only informal.

It is not possible to quantify the total expenditures on early childhood care for children with disability aged 0-3 years. The data about expenditures for nearly all state counselling centres are reported together with the expenditures of special education schools⁵⁸, while the data about the expenditures of the non-state centres are collected only partially.⁵⁹ **The review proposes to amend the structure of the Financial Management Report and provide appropriate support to counselling centres (whether in terms of resources and/or technology) to make the data available in the requested structure.**

In 2018, Slovakia had 151 counselling centres – 83 state-owned and 68 non-state centres. They provided care to around 1,267 clients aged 0 – 3 years, which covered around 14% of all children with disability in this age group. Nearly two thirds of clients (60%) used the services of state-owned counselling centres, as the one-off collection of data by the Ministry of Education implies.⁶⁰ The survey also indicates that 22% of counselling

⁵³ APPVI Association (2017). Cost of the early intervention provider per year.

⁵⁴ Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services; Annex 2

⁵⁵ Act No. 448/2008 Coll.; Annex 2. The standards currently undergo revision. The revision of the standards is conducted as one of the activities under the Quality of Social Services National Project. The revised version of the standards should be released in 2022.

⁵⁶ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law), Article 130 and the Decree No. 325/2008 Coll. on school centres of child-rearing counselling and prevention, Article 4(5)

⁵⁷ The Concept of Special Pedagogical Counselling was last prepared in 2008, and one of the measures included improvement of early childhood care. Available at: https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/198_koncepcia_spp.pdf

⁵⁸ Only three out of 83 existing state counselling centres were not part of special education basic schools in 2018. They had their own legal personality and reported their revenues and expenditures separately. The remaining 80 counselling centres reported their expenditures together with the expenditures of special education basic schools.

⁵⁹ At the central level, the Summary Report of Work in Education System (Ministry of Education) 1-04 only collects the data about wages and other wage costs. Individual municipalities which allocate funds to non-state counselling centres from proportional taxes collect the data about expenditures on their own in structure of their choice.

⁶⁰ The regular data collection does not contain data about the number of unique clients aged 0 – 3 years because it only collects data about the total number of clients who received care. In 2018/19, the counselling centres provided care to 2,817 children aged 0 – 3 years with disability. Available at: https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/9126_skol_5-01_2019.pdf

centres had Early Childhood Care sections.⁶¹ The same percentage of counselling centres said they had already established some form of cooperation with the providers of early intervention service under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Education does not indicate in the register of counselling centres which of them have Early Childhood Care sections. **The review proposes that the Ministry of Education publish and regularly update the list of counselling centres which have Early Childhood Care sections.**

Table 7: Basic data about centres of special pedagogical counselling, 2018

	State	Non-state	Total
Number of providers	83	68	151
Number of recipients irrespective of age	45,038	40,128	85,166
Total revenues (EUR)	3,028,582	6,755,148	9,783,730
Revenues per one client (EUR)	67	168	116

Source: Calculations of the Educational Policy Institute based on the Eduzber data (2018), Financial Management Report (2018) and CSTI (2018)

The amount of EUR 67 was allocated for one child (irrespective of the age) in the care of a state-owned counselling centres in 2018. Non-state centres were allocated EUR 168 (Table 7). However, these data do not have to necessarily correspond to the actual revenues of these centres and do not reflect the difference in the expenditures of state-owned and non-state counselling centres. State-owned counselling centres founded by county authorities are funded from the state budget of the Ministry of Interior based on the number of clients and individual services. 97% of state-owned counselling centres are part of special education basic schools⁶², so they do not incur any rental or building maintenance costs. The state supplies them with tests and aids, they may take part in state grant calls and receive the rest of the necessary finance in the concentration procedure. Non-state counselling centres founded by private or religious providers are funded from the so-called proportional taxes and only based on the number of clients. Non-state centres must pay all overhead costs from their own sources. There also is a rule that if a municipality has a state-owned facility, it must allocate to the non-state centre at least 88% of the amount set aside for the wages and operations in the state-owned centre. But the law does not address the rules of funding the non-state counselling centres if a municipality does not have any state-owned facility.

The current counselling centre funding system does not reflect the fact that provision of early childhood care to children aged 0 – 3 years is financially more demanding than the special pedagogical care provided to children at a higher age. The average revenues of counselling centres for one client amounted to EUR 116 in 2018 (Table 7). Projects and analyses focusing on the provision of care to children with disability in early childhood demonstrate that the actual costs are several times higher and that they need to be diversified depending on the varying needs of children with various forms of disabilities (Box 4 a Annex 3). The existing system of counselling centre funding of early childhood care does not reflect the necessity of engagement of a larger number of specialised workers, the longer duration of intervention and the necessity to provide home-based care in the natural environment of the child.⁶³ This is also because the standards for work of counselling centres do not exist. They are currently being developed within the Standards National Project.⁶⁴ **The review proposes that the new standards reflect the specific features of early childhood care, and particularly the fact that the care is a field service and is financially demanding, and that the funding system of the state-owned and non-state counselling centres be unified when the standards are ready.**

⁶¹ 125 of 151 existing counselling centres participated in the survey. Early Childhood Care sections provided services to 632 clients aged 0 – 3 years. Furthermore, additional 635 children aged 0 – 3 years received early childhood care from counselling centres which do not have an Early Childhood Care sections.

⁶² Eduzber (2018).

⁶³ Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities.

⁶⁴ Available at: <https://vudpap.sk/x/projekty/standardy/>

Box 4: Mobile Teacher project

Pontis Foundation supported the Mobile Teacher project in 2012 – 2017. The project aimed to help families trigger communication, accept and understand the disadvantage of a child with hearing impairment and trigger child's active progress by way of game and child-rearing. The services of a mobile teacher were provided to nearly 200 children with hearing impairment aged two to four years and to their families.

The main tasks of a mobile teacher and activities during the intervention included: emotional support of the family in the child's hearing impairment acceptance process, support of the development of parental competencies, development of communication between the family and the child, identification of the child's developmental stage, proposal of games for a complex development of the child, provision of information about child's development and hearing impairment, and accompanying the family in search for additional information (e.g. contacts to other experts or other families with a child with hearing impairment).

According to the calculations modelled based on the project, the costs of the service were supposed to reach EUR 2,000 per one child in the first year and were expected to gradually fall down with the decreasing frequency of the service. The costs include the compensation paid to the mobile teacher, the travelling expenses, aids, supervision and education of teachers, and the cost of management. Based on the outcomes of the cost-and-benefit analysis, each Euro invested in this care is expected to bring the benefits of EUR 1.40 up to EUR 5.50 (Bednárík et al., 2018).

Non-existence of care for children from socially disadvantaged background

Although the newly established paediatric examination of the psycho-motor development in the first three years of child's life has the potential to identify children at risk coming from socially disadvantaged background, neither the Ministry of Labour nor the Ministry of Education actually provide formalised form of interventional care in early childhood care for these children.⁶⁵ The aim of the programmes tailored to this group of children is to mitigate the impact of poverty on the physical, social and emotional, and cognitive development of children in the first years of their life (0 – 3 years). Programmes mostly focus on the provision of educational and awareness-raising activities in the area of early development of children and health. They aim to enable the parents to support development of their children in their home environment to be able to use their potential as much as possible and reduce the risk of social exclusion (Lynn A. Karolly et al., 2005).

When looking at territorial concentration of poverty, its intergenerational transmission and poor results of children in the area of education (this Chapter) and health (Chapter 10), this type of care is most needed in the environment of marginalised Roma communities. Around 7,535 children aged 0 – 3 years live in this environment. This type of care has been provided in the environment of MRC by the non-governmental organisation *Cesta von (A Way Out)* since 2018 on a small sample of households (Box 5).

The review proposes to support early childhood care for children aged 0 to 3 years living in the environment of marginalised Roma communities. Economic estimates indicate that the future return of these investments should be 1.2 up to 17 times higher after deduction of the initial investment (Lynn A. Karolly et al., 2005). We should also include the added value coming from the increased economic independence of women, as programmes count on their active participation, and the gradual reduction of the early childhood care services as a result of improvement of parental skills in the community. If the project proves to work well, it could be expanded to include all children born in socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

⁶⁵ Although the Early Childhood Care sections may be set up within centres of special pedagogical counselling in Slovakia, they only provide care to children with disabilities and not to children from socially disadvantaged background.

Box 5: *Omama* project

The civic association *Cesta von* implements a unique *Omama* project in Slovakia. The aim of this project is to support early stimulation and healthy development of children in marginalised Roma communities during the crucial stage from birth to 3 years. Trained assistants, the so-called "omamas" who come directly from the community, visit families and play various games with children and their parents (usually mothers) and do activities concentrating on psychosocial stimulation (fine and gross motor skills, cognitive, language, communication skills, social and emotional area). Each *omama* is accompanied by a middle-class mentor who provides the *omama* with the necessary support, helps her with administrative issues or solve on-site issues.

One *omama* gives regular weekly lessons in 15 to 20 families. Moreover, she provides counselling to mothers and pregnant women and attends educational group meetings with parents which take place once a month. The project was launched in 2018 in three communities at risk and expanded in 2019 to include three more communities.

Direct cost of the project per one child amount to approximately one thousand Euro a year and totals three thousand Euro for the crucial stage of the first three years of the life of the child. The cost include the wage for the *omama*, the cost of the companion, travelling expenses, education for *omamas* and mentors, games and other aids, cost of communication and overhead costs.

5. Education of socially disadvantaged children

- The main vision of inclusive educational systems is to ensure that all children, including those coming from socially disadvantaged background, have access to high-quality educational opportunities in their community within a mainstream education system.
- The participation of children from socially disadvantaged background (SDB) in pre-primary education (41%) is a little over half of that of other children (75%). They have worse school results, while it is also true that the impact of the social and economic background on the results of pupils is much greater in Slovakia than in other developed countries (18% against 12%). Compared with other pupils, the pupils from SDB repeat grade four times as often (13% against 3%) and nearly twice as many of them do not continue in education once they complete compulsory education (11% against 6%). Socially disadvantaged pupils from marginalised Roma communities (MRC) obtain even worse results.
- The fact that they visit segregated schools reduces their chances of social inclusion. Still, Slovakia continues to have a problem with excessive representation of pupils from MRC in special education schools and their spatial segregation in mainstream schools.
- The disadvantaged children's eligibility to support instruments is conditional upon the income situation of children's families. Since the eligibility criteria are too restrictive, the instruments only cover less than half of children and pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- Measures to support children from SDB in pre-primary education include waiver of fees for kindergartens and lunch subsidies for 3 and 4 years old children. Basic schools have the zero grade and SDB allowance and upper secondary schools have scholarships.
- Waiver of the kindergarten fees and lunch subsidies are not enough to increase the enrolment rate of children from SDB. Children from SDB experience several other barriers to access to pre-primary education and in the pre-primary education process. Their needs are not reflected in the pre-primary education funding system. The zero grade aiming to prepare pupils from SDB for school is inefficient. It leads to segregation and early drop out from school. Children who attend the zero grade quite often repeat already the first grade. The SDB allowance and upper secondary school scholarships are insufficient and, consequently, schools are not able to appropriately fund the needs of pupils from SDB.
- The total additional expenditures on the support of education of children and pupils from SDB reached nearly EUR 14 million in 2018. The expenditures were concentrated at basic schools and mostly used for intervention and compensatory measures. The expenditures on preventive measures and the measures aiming to increase kindergarten enrolment rate of children from SDB which have the highest returns and potential to have a positive impact on future success of children were minimal. International good practice shows that the support should be much more intensive as early as in the pre-primary education stage and much more funds should be used on prevention.
- For a more efficient coverage of children and pupils from SDB, the review proposes to amend the definition of socially disadvantaged background, increase the support for pupils from SDB at the primary and secondary education level, and introduce preventive and interventional measures to eliminate early school drop out.
- To increase inclusiveness of the Slovak education system, the review proposes to make substantial investments in removal of barriers to access to pre-primary education, analyse and improve the readiness of future and current teachers for education of children and pupils from SDB, and develop human resources for inclusive education in kindergartens and basic schools (teaching assistants, special education teachers, psychologists, mentors, tutors, etc.).
- Measures focusing on the improvement of the starting point of the children from MRC include language support, introduction of pilot measures that would transform into systematic measures to eliminate spatial segregation of pupils from MRC within the mainstream schools.
- Improvement of inclusion in education will lead to savings in future owing to cancellation of zero grades and less extensive diagnostics of mild intellectual disability in children from MRC.

The approach to high-quality inclusive education is an important element of social inclusion. The main vision of inclusive education systems is to ensure that all children, including the children from the disadvantaged background (this Chapter) and the children with disability (Chapter 6) who belong in the target groups of the review, have access to high-quality educational opportunities in their communities (EASNIE, 2020). Attendance of segregated school facilities are proved to reduce the chances of social inclusion both from the short-term (while the disadvantaged children attend school) and the long-term perspective (after completion of the secondary education) (EASNIE, 2018).⁶⁶

Inclusive education is also beneficial in economic terms. The main benefits of inclusive education are: (1) reduction of administrative and other duplicate overhead expenditures associated with the existence of multiple educational streams; (2) reduction of the costs in the social security system together with reduction of dependence on the system; and (3) higher productivity of graduates and the related increase in the revenues from taxes. The costs of inclusive education of a child with special needs are higher at the beginning than the costs used for a child with no special needs. Nevertheless, if we spread these costs in time, we will find out that it is a good investment both for the child with special education needs and the state itself (Rieser, 2008).

Slovak Republic committed to implement inclusive education in international human rights treaties⁶⁷, several of its strategies⁶⁸ and in some national education programmes⁶⁹. Multiple projects supporting inclusive education have been implemented thanks to the European funds within the Ministry of Education.⁷⁰ However, the legislation governing education continues to only use the concept of integration.⁷¹

The spending review analyses the expenditures on the education of children from socially disadvantaged background and with disabilities (Chapter 6) and assesses how much the policies and instruments targeting these children are set so as to support their social inclusion. This analysis is done in accordance with the framework for mapping inclusive policies and, applying the perspective of equality of opportunity, surveys whether the disadvantaged children reach the same school results as the children not experiencing disadvantage, whether they have sufficient access to education, and whether they have sufficient access to support during educational process (EASNIE 2011a) The review also analyses the overall expenditures on pre-primary education and the expenditures associated with the preparation and continued education of teachers in the area of education of children with diverse needs which are considered to be crucial for efficient implementation of inclusive education (EASNIE, 2011b).

Socially disadvantaged background

Children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (SDB) are children living in an environment which, considering the social, family, economic and cultural conditions, insufficiently develops the mental, volitive, and emotional qualities, does not support their socialisation, and does not offer them enough appropriate stimuli for the development of their personalities.⁷² Educational needs resulting from a child's growing up in a socially disadvantaged background are included in the special education needs which are diagnosed by centres of child-rearing counselling and prevention (counselling centres).⁷³

⁶⁶ Attendance of a special education facility is associated with poor academic and professional qualifications, employment in sheltered shops (Chapter 7.3), financial dependency, lower frequency of opportunities to have independent life, and poor social contacts after completion of education.

⁶⁷ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

⁶⁸ Learning Slovakia (*Učiace sa Slovensko*); Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020; National Program for the Development of Living Conditions of Persons with Disabilities (2014 – 2020)

⁶⁹ National Education Programme for Pre-primary Education in Kindergartens

⁷⁰ MRK, MRK 2, PRINED, ŠOV

⁷¹ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education; Article 2(s). Inclusion and integration are two concepts of different quality. While integration means physical integration of persons with disabilities into the existing mainstream educational institutions and adjustment of those persons to the existing standards and rules, inclusion means the process of system changes aiming to remove barriers and adjust the school to the needs of children to allow them to fully benefit from education (UNCRPD, 2007).

⁷² Act No. 245/2008 on child-rearing and education (School Law) and on amendments and supplements to certain laws; Article 2(p)

⁷³ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 2(j).

Children from SDB are educated in line with the mainstream education programme⁷⁴ and have right to the adjustment of the child-rearing and education process, environment and application of specific child-rearing and education methods and forms.⁷⁵ The School Law does not lay down individual adjustments in detail. The National Institute for Education (*Štátny pedagogický ústav*) recommends various modifications from lower number of pupils in a class through development of an individualised child-rearing and education plan and considering the specific cultural and language features up to establishment of a day-long child-rearing and education system (NIE, 2020). Children from SDB are educated in standard classrooms at mainstream schools and may not be educated in special education schools or classrooms just because they come from SDB.⁷⁶

The conditions for eligibility to receive support for children from SDB are defined only based on the income situation of the child's family, while the remaining factors included in the definition of SDB are disregarded. Only the children included in the assistance in material need system (AMN) or those who live in households earning income below the minimum subsistence income threshold are eligible to receive support.⁷⁷ However, this income threshold is substantially lower than the risk-of-poverty threshold (Graph 47, Chapter 8.1).

The review therefore proposes to also include among the variables based on which pupils from SDB would receive other characteristics which are usually used in foreign countries, e.g. highest completed education of parents, unemployment of parents, institutional care⁷⁸ and different mother tongue of children (EASNIE, 2016; Cederberg, M. et al.). To that end, data need to be collected about the highest completed education of parents and the mother tongue, and data of the Central Labour Office about unemployment of parents and about the children in institutional care need to be interconnected with the Ministry of Education's information system.

5.1. Education in kindergartens

School results of socially disadvantaged children at kindergartens

While the total enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 5 years reached 75% in the school year 2018/19,⁷⁹ the enrolment rate in households which receive assistance in material need (AMN) only reached 41% and the rates for children from MRC got even lower to 32%.⁸⁰ The age-specific comparison implies that the enrolment rate of children from SDB and MRC grows rapidly with the age of children, which means that these children start attending kindergartens at an older age and their pre-primary education at kindergartens takes shorter time (Graph 10 and Box 6). The children included in the AMN system covered for 3.2% of the children at kindergartens in 2018.

Box 6: Calculation of the enrolment rate in kindergartens

To get as accurate enrolment rate in kindergartens, unit data about children enrolled in kindergartens from the Ministry of Education's information system and the persons registered in the Register of Natural Persons have been used. This data defines the relevant age category based on the 31 August status which is the best indication of the child's age in the relevant school year which begins in September. The enrolment rate in pre-

⁷⁴ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 5(4).

⁷⁵ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 107(1).

⁷⁶ Act No. 245/2008 on child-rearing and education (School Law) and on amendments and supplements to certain laws; Article 107(2)

⁷⁷ The support in the form of SDB allowance may also be provided based on diagnosed educational needs resulting from the development in the SDB.

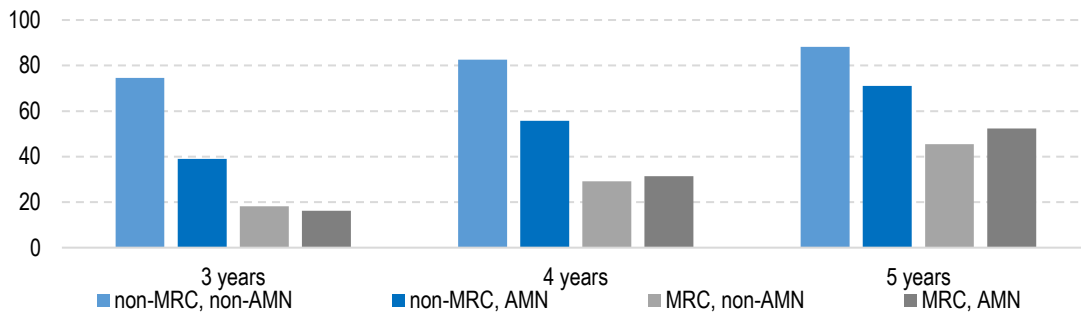
⁷⁸ 2,769 school-age children were growing up in foster homes in Slovakia in 2018 (Central Labour Office, 2018). The School Law now in force does not categorise children from foster homes as children with special needs and no specific instruments focusing on their support exist in the education system (EASNIE, 2011).

⁷⁹ In 2017, Slovakia's enrolment rate of children aged 4 or more years until the beginning of compulsory school years was the worst from among all EU countries – 78% compared to the EU's 95%. Slovakia thus substantially lags behind the objective to reach 95% enrolment rate of all children in this age category, which has been set for the EU member states within the Strategy 2020. Refer to https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2019-slovakia_en.pdf

⁸⁰ Administrative data only confirm the existing findings of the FRA's international survey which revealed that the proportion of children from the MRC environment in pre-primary education from 4 years until the beginning of the compulsory education ranged at a similar level (34 %). Nevertheless, the average of nine surveyed European countries with a numerous Roma minority was at the level of 54% (FRA, 2016).

primary education is calculated as the number of children of the relevant age at kindergartens/special education kindergartens compared to the total number of citizens of the same age. The data used in the review may partially differ from the data provided in other sources which use different calculation methods. Eurostat and OECD define the relevant age category based on the 31 December status and also include the pupils of the zero and preparatory grade among the children enrolled in kindergartens. Also the Ministry of Education works with the age group defined based on the 31 December status in the Analysis of Enrolment Rate in Kindergartens (2017), and uses the so-called gross enrolment rate which is calculated as the total number of children enrolled in kindergartens irrespective of age (also includes children younger and older than 3 to 5 years) to the number of 3 to 5 years old children in the population.

Graph 10: Enrolment rate of children by age, school year 2018/19 (%)

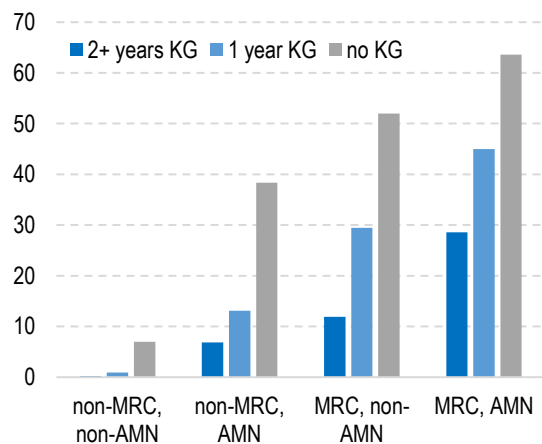


Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas

It follows both from the international findings and the Slovak data that participation in pre-primary education has a positive impact on the future school results of socially disadvantaged children. If the children in the AMN system and the children from MRC attend kindergarten, their number in zero grade (Graph 11) and first grade repetition rate (Graph 12) is lower. Compulsory pre-primary education for all pre-school children (from the school year 2021/22) has a potential to increase the enrolment rate of children from SDB/MRC. However, to successfully implement this measure it is necessary to continue to remove the barriers experienced by socially disadvantaged children they still face in the current education system (Chapter 6.1).

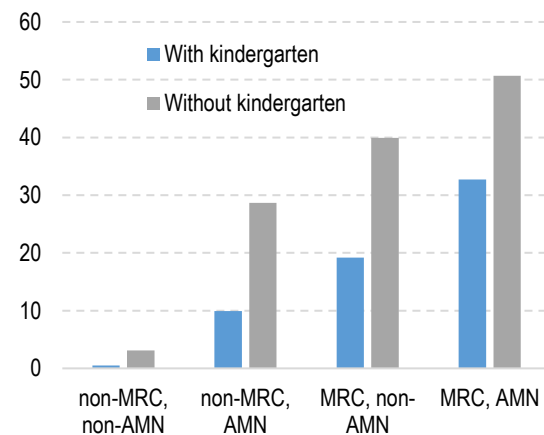
Graph 11: Percentage of children beginning the compulsory education in zero grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Graph 12: Percentage of first graders at basic schools in the school year 2017/18 who repeated grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

The instruments supporting pre-primary education of socially disadvantaged children are particularly aiming at children living in households which receive assistance in material need and the children in households earning income below the minimum subsistence income. Support instruments include waiver of the kindergarten fees, meal subsidy and, for the pre-schoolers, also the school supplies allowance (Table 8).⁸¹ Children from families receiving assistance in material need are eligible to the waiver of fees irrespective of their age. The conditions of eligibility to subsidies are met by children from families below the minimum subsistence income and the children who attend kindergartens educating more than 50% of children in the AMN system (blanket subsidies). In accordance with the amendment law on subsidies passed on 4 December 2018, effective as of 1 January 2019 the meal subsidies are provided for all children one year before the compulsory education.⁸²

Table 8: Overview of support provided to children at kindergartens (2019)

	Assistance in material need	Income below the minimum subsistence income	Other children*
3 and 4 years old children	KG free of charge	KG for a charge	KG for a charge
	subsidised lunch	subsidised lunch	not subsidised lunch
5 years old children/pre-schoolers	KG free of charge	KG free of charge	KG free of charge
	subsidised lunch	subsidised lunch	subsidised lunch
	subsidised school supplies	subsidised school supplies	not subsidised school supplies

* Children living in families earning income above the minimum subsistence income receive subsidised lunch and, in the event of pre-schoolers, also the school supplies allowance if they attend kindergarten with more than a half of children in the assistance in material need system.

Waiver of the kindergarten fees

The expenditures on the allowance for child-rearing and education for kindergartens amounted to EUR 305 thousand in 2018 and covered 1,842 children, which is 1.1% of all children enrolled in kindergartens and, by estimate, 11% of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.⁸³ By paying the allowance, the state compensates the "gap" in revenues of administrators due to waiver of the fees for children in the AMN system in amount of 15% of the minimum subsistence income. The allowance totalled EUR 165 a year in 2018.

The families at risk whose children are not eligible to receive the support may experience kindergarten fees as a financial barrier. The average monthly fee for attendance of kindergarten in the regions of Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov amounts to EUR 13.10. This figure results from the analysis of generally binding regulations (GBR) actually in force.⁸⁴ These regions report most children at risk of poverty and social exclusion (71%). While the maximum fee used to be set by the state at the level of 7.5% of the minimum subsistence income for one dependent child (EUR 7 in 2018), this regulation is not valid anymore and municipalities may set the fees at their own discretion.⁸⁵ 61% of municipalities have set the fee either at the level of 7.5% of the minimum subsistence income or below it, and 39% of municipalities have set the fee at a level higher than 7.5% of the minimum subsistence income (EUR 25.50 on average).⁸⁶ Amendment of the SDB definition to include additional factors (introduction to this chapter) would make a larger part of children at risk eligible to the waiver of fees.

⁸¹ The meal subsidies and the school supplies allowance are paid from the budget category of the Ministry of Labour, and the recipients are the administrators of schools.

⁸² 375/2018 Coll. changing and amending the Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on subsidies under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour

⁸³ Allowance for child-rearing and education for kindergartens (2018): <https://www.minedu.sk/prispevok-na-vychovu-a-vzdelavanie-pre-ms/>

⁸⁴ The calculations made by the EPI based on the publicly available regulations in the Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov regions.

⁸⁵ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 28(4). But the regulation still applies to the special education kindergartens.

⁸⁶ The fees higher than 7.5% of the minimum subsistence income were set by municipalities which set different fees for different groups of children depending on various criteria. Most often, it is the age of the child, permanent residence, start date of kindergarten attendance or a combination of those criteria.

Meal subsidy and allowance for school supplies

The meal subsidies were provided on average for 5,036 KG children per month, which represented 3.1% of all children at kindergartens and 30% of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion who attended kindergartens.^{87,88} The value of the subsidy was one Euro for each day spent at a KG and total expenditures on this measure totalled EUR 652 thousand. However, the subsidy has not been revised since its implementation in 2011 which, considering the food price inflation, led to the decrease in its real value by 14.2% until January 2019.

The access to meal subsidies has a positive impact on the enrolment rate of pre-schoolers from MRC, as is clear from the analysis of the impact of the selected factors on the probability that a 5 years old child from MRC would attend a kindergarten (Annex 6). The results of the analysis also imply a significant impact of the accessibility, capacities, employment rate and income of parents on the enrolment rate. The simulation of the model indicates that establishment of subsidies for all pre-schoolers could increase their enrolment rate in the MRC environment from the current 48% to 57% and, in the long-term horizon, up to 72%. The actual effect will depend on how successfully would the other barriers be removed. Such barriers include, for example, physical inaccessibility of kindergartens for children from segregated settlements and insufficient capacities. Similar positive impact on the enrolment rate can also be expected in the event of poor pre-schoolers from the majority population. **The review proposes to assess the impacts of blanket subsidies on the results and outcomes of disadvantaged children at kindergartens.**

The allowance for school supplies was provided on average to 2,162 KG children per month, which covered 4.5% of all pre-schoolers and 39% of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion who attended KGs. The allowance amounted to EUR 33.20 for one school year and is paid to schools in two payments in September and February. All in all, the expenditures totalled approximately EUR 71 thousand.

Amendment of the organisational regulations treating education

The organisational regulation includes a provision limiting the number of children with special needs included in one KG classroom to two such children at the most⁸⁹ and the provision reducing the maximum number of children in classrooms to 16 children if the class is only attended by children from SDB.⁹⁰ When the compulsory pre-primary education takes effect, the number of children with special needs at kindergartens will grow and the provision allowing maximum two children with special needs in one classroom may not be feasible in some locations with higher prevalence of social disadvantage and disability. **The review therefore proposes to revoke the provision and give kindergartens methodological guidance for distribution of children with special needs.**

A smaller classroom for children from SDB is also troublesome because it induces KGs to concentrate disadvantaged children in one classroom. Data from international research studies show that concentration of disadvantaged children in classrooms and schools has a negative impact on the quality of education (Bonal, 2019). This provision is not reflected in the pre-primary education funding and the result is that not a single KG uses it at present.⁹¹ Still, it may serve as a pretext for segregation of disadvantaged children at kindergartens when the compulsory education from 5 years of age takes effect and the number of pre-school children from SDB grows. **Therefore, the review proposes to cancel this provision.**

⁸⁷ The percentage of children at risk enrolled in kindergartens was estimated based on the at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate in the age group of 3 to 5 years in the 2017 EU SILC survey (19.3%) and on the assumption of enrolment rate of the children at risk in this age group at the same level as the level in the group of children in need in the school year 2018/19 (41%).

⁸⁸ Such a low coverage is particularly due to a huge gap between the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and the minimum subsistence income threshold (Chapter 8.1).

⁸⁹ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 28(12).

⁹⁰ Decree No. 306/2008 Coll. on kindergartens; Article 4(4). KG classrooms had 20 children on average in 2018.

⁹¹ CSTI SR (2018).

Preparation and education of teachers

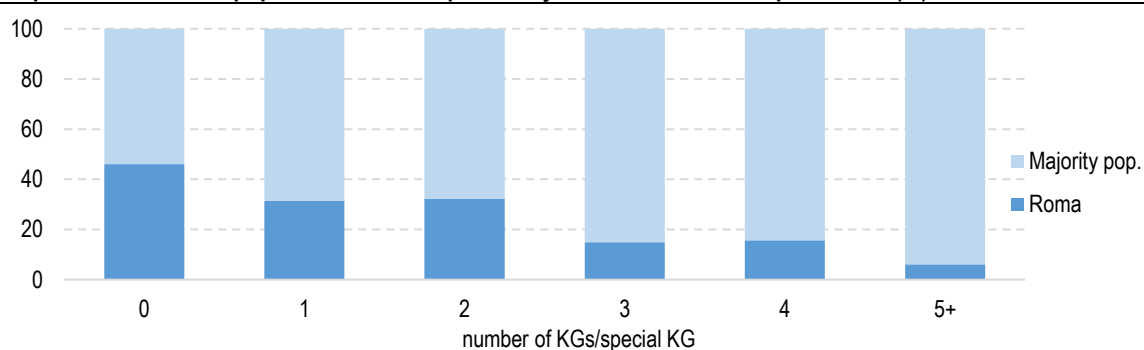
Although preparedness of teachers for education of children with diverse needs is one of the key precondition for improvement of pre-school education of children from SDB, representative survey indicates that part of teachers is not prepared for education of children from SDB. Although 83% of KG teachers consider their own kindergarten to be ready to educate children from SDB, nearly 11% of them believes a special classroom or special kindergarten to be the appropriate form for education of those children and nearly 6% are not able to assess which form would be appropriate (Learning Makes Sense/*To dá rozum*, 2019). However, placement of children in special education stream due to socially disadvantaged background is unlawful and expressly forbidden by Slovak legislation.⁹² The review proposes to survey the learning content of future teachers with the aim to establish to what extent teachers are being prepared for education of children from SDB or for education of children with diverse needs, and allow the Ministry of Education in cooperation with experts within the accreditation process to take part in the preparation of the learning content of the teaching profession study programme.

398 (2.4%) of KG teachers attended the accredited continuous education programmes focused on education of children from SDB in 2018. Of the total number of 116 accredited programmes of continuous education intended for KG teachers, only one dealt in education of children from SDB or MRC and four programmes focused on inclusive education and education of children with special education needs in general (Annex 7). Neither of the study programmes went deeper into the intergenerational transmission of poverty. **Therefore, the review proposes to create a programme focusing on the intergenerational transmission of poverty and its impact on education.**

Accessibility and capacity of kindergartens

Kindergartens in municipalities with high concentration of Roma population are less accessible (Graph 13). 18% of municipalities (i.e. 146) included in the Atlas of Roma Communities (806 municipalities) do not have a kindergarten. 6% (23 thousand) out of the total Roma population estimated in the Atlas (405 thousand) live in such municipalities. The establishment of compulsory pre-primary education should create pressure on the construction of KGs in all locations. **To make this pressure even greater and increase the enrolment rate of even younger children from SDB, the review proposes to vest the right to a place at KGs for 3 and 4 years old children.**

Graph 13: Structure of population in municipalities by the number of KGs/special KGs (%)



Source: EPI based on the data of the Atlas of Roma Communities (2019)

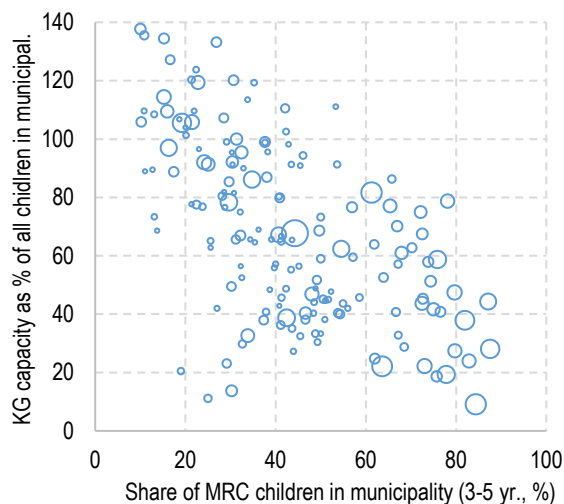
Municipalities with high percentage of children from MRC belong among the municipalities with greatest shortage of capacities. There is a very strong negative relationship between the percentage of 3 to 5 years old children from MRC in a municipality and the capacity expressed as a percentage of all 3 to 5 years old children in that municipality. This means that the higher the percentage of people from MRC in a municipality, the less accessible the capacities of a kindergarten (Graph 14).⁹³ The number of capacities at a KG then strongly correlates

⁹² Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 107(2).

⁹³ This comparison only included the municipalities with at least 20 of 3 to 5 years old children both from and outside the MRC and where neither of the two groups covers more than 90% of the population of this age group. There are 164 municipalities meeting the above condition.

with the enrolment rate of this age group both within and outside the MRC (Graph 15). Kindergartens received 12,502 applications in the school year 2018/19 which had to be rejected due to shortage of spaces.⁹⁴ Compulsory pre-primary education for all pre-school children (from the school year 2021/22) will increase the pressure on the existing capacities even more.

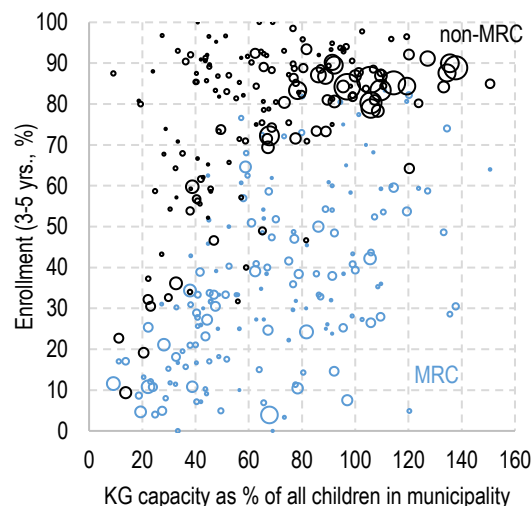
Graph 14: Percentage of children from MRC and KG capacity in a municipality



Source: VfM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas

Note: The bubble size is proportionate to the number of 3 to 5 years old children in the municipality

Graph 15: KG capacity and enrolment rate in the municipality



Source: VfM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas

Note: The bubble size is proportionate to the number of 3 to 5 years old children in the relevant groups in the municipality

An EUR 130 million allocation was provided from the ESI Funds in the current programming period for expansion of kindergarten capacities. However the allocation may not necessarily be sufficient to cover the expected demand. Around EUR 89 million of that amount was contracted in December 2018; this amount should transform into 11,147 new places. Nevertheless, the capacity will still be short of approximately 3.5 to 4.8 thousand places to attain 100% enrolment rate of 5 years old children. If all allocated funds are used, the number of missing places could drop to 1.8 to 3.2 thousand (Annex 8). **Therefore, the review proposes to continue in, and even increase the intensity of, the development of kindergarten capacities in the next programming period.**

Missing measures to support education of socially disadvantaged children at kindergartens

Improvement of accessibility of kindergartens

Kindergarten may be difficult to access for the inhabitants of segregated settlements located at the outskirts of a municipality even though the municipality has one. A quarter (48) out of 191 settlements at the outskirts of the municipality is more than 2 km away from the nearest municipality with a kindergarten. The average distance is 5.4 km.⁹⁵ Support to improve accessibility of KGs other than through the construction of new infrastructure does not exist. **This is why the review proposes to establish a bus line between Roma settlements outside the municipality and the kindergartens.**

Considering the needs of children from socially disadvantaged background in KG funding schemes

The needs of children from socially disadvantaged background are not taken into consideration in the pre-primary education funding scheme. Proportional taxes the municipalities use to fund kindergartens are not

⁹⁴ The data about the rejected applications may also contain duplicate application if parents filed applications with multiple kindergartens (Varsik, 2019).

⁹⁵ Atlas of Roma Communities (2019): <https://www.minv.sk/?atlas-romskych-komunit-2019>

purpose-specific. The formula for the allocation of the funds from the proportional taxes only reflects the number of children in the kindergarten irrespective of their special education needs. The municipality decides how much funds would go to kindergartens or whether or not the special education needs would be taken into consideration. The amounts calculated based on the formula for individual municipalities are not published anywhere, making it impossible to monitor the financial management of administrators.

As many as 82% of municipalities use fewer funds for kindergartens than they receive from proportional taxes based on the number of children in KGs. Regression analysis implies that children with social disadvantage or disability do not substantially influence the amount of expenditures. The expenditures on pre-primary education of individual municipalities depend on the factors which cannot be traced from the available data (Annex 9).

Establishment of compulsory pre-primary education will increase the number of children at kindergartens by approximately 10 thousand children, and this may influence the average revenues and expenditures on a child at a kindergarten. If the volume of proportional taxes remains the same, the increase in the number of children enrolled in kindergartens may translate in some municipalities (some administrators of KGs) into lower average funds allocated one one child.⁹⁶ It will therefore be necessary to open a discussion about kindergarten funding system in connection with implementation of the compulsory pre-primary education and with the planned establishment of a vested right to such education.

Improvement of availability of teaching assistants and professional employees

The current legislation and the national education programme do not address the need to have teaching assistants (TA) and professional employees (PE) in the process of pre-primary education of children from socially disadvantaged background and the right to such resources. National projects aiming to improve inclusiveness of education at kindergartens within which new job positions for TAs and PEs are being set up do not cover the need of continuous work of the support staff at kindergartens and, consequently, do not allow to maintain the accessibility and quality of pre-school education on a long-term basis (Annex 10). **The review proposes to allocate to administrators 50% of the annual tariff wage of a teaching assistant/ancillary tutor and a professional employee, if they show interest in them.**

Language support for Roma children

Systematic language support for Roma children whose mother tongue is not Slovak is non-existent at the level of KGs. Employment of assistants who can speak the language of the Roma minority is not supported. Nevertheless, research studies of foreign countries demonstrate that having a worker from the minority in a work team at school has a positive impact both on school attendance and results of children (EC, 2016a; Gatti et al. 2016). An example of good practice is the national project that is currently being implemented within which teaching assistants who can speak Roma language are being employed on a preferential basis.⁹⁷ The national education programme for KGs does not consider the option of incorporating Roma language (or other minority languages) into child-rearing and education process and the lessons of minority languages are not reflected in the KG funding schemes.⁹⁸ **The review therefore proposes to incorporate the lessons of minority languages into the national education programme for pre-primary education. Considering the language needs of children from MRC, the review proposes to fully fund a Roma/Hungarian language speaking teaching assistant/ancillary tutor**

⁹⁶ Increase in the state's contribution to partially cover for the costs of child-rearing and education of children at KGs from 15% to 43.75% of the minimum subsistence income forms a part of the contemplated establishment of the compulsory pre-primary education. However, the increase is only calculated based on the calculations of the funding of the increased number of teachers and teaching assistants at KGs, and the original impact analysis counted on as much as 80% of the minimum subsistence income. It is therefore questionable whether the funds will suffice.

⁹⁷ National Project of Inclusion at Kindergartens. Available at: <https://www.minv.sk/?pre-materske-skoly>

⁹⁸ In 2017, the Ministry of Education implemented the IKATIKA pilot project and developed within this project methods for KG teachers who educate children speaking Hungarian, Ruthenian and Roma language. 112 teachers (together for all language versions) were trained and all of them assessed the method positively. However, the trained teachers did not work at KGs but in zero grades at 12 selected basic schools. The methods are available on-line on the portal *Planéta vedomostí* (Planet of Knowledge).

in the selected locations in compliance with the temporary compensatory measures defined in the anti-discrimination law.⁹⁹

The employment of Roma speaking teaching assistants may also be hindered by the qualification requirements requiring at least secondary education with school-leaving certificate. Based on the UNDP data (2012), this requirement only meet 17.3% of people from MRC. But KGs may also employ ancillary tutors. Whereas the work performed by them is not of a pedagogical nature, this qualification criterion could be reduced for them for a transitional period to the lower secondary education level (ISCED 2).

The review therefore proposes to define a transitional period for ancillary tutors to allow them to meet the qualification criterion of secondary education. During the transitional period, the ancillary tutors who only attained primary education level hired by the KG would be obligated to pass a basic preparatory course for work with children at KG at the beginning of their employment and would complete secondary education during such transitional period.

5.2. Education in basic schools (primary and lower secondary level)

School results of socially disadvantaged children at basic schools

The percentage of pupils from SDB amounted to 9,3% of the total basic school population in 2018 (41,149 pupils).¹⁰⁰ According to the best estimates based on the available data, 58% of pupils from SDB are children from MRC and 55% of children from MRC are included in the SDB category (Box 7).

Pupils from socially disadvantaged background score substantially worse than the intact population both in the national (Testing 5 and Testing 9) and international testing (PIS, PRILS, TIMSS). The impact of the social and economic background on the results of pupils is higher in Slovakia compared with other developed countries (e.g. 18% against the 12% of the OECD average in the reading literacy results in the PISA 2018 testing) and the difference between the results of pupils with high and those with low socio-economic status roughly corresponds to three-year schooling (OECD, 2018b). The results of international testing of reading (PIRLS) and mathematical (TIMSS) literacy of the 4th grade pupils also imply that the performance of pupils from weaker social and economic background gets worse over time.¹⁰¹

Box 7: Identification of pupils from SDB in the review

For the purposes of the review, a pupil from SDB is the pupil who has been diagnosed to have needs resulting from his or her development in the SDB and a pupil proved to come from a family which receives a assistance in material need. Pupils with diagnosed needs covered for 7.8% and pupils from families which received assistance in material need for 1.5% of all basic school pupils in the school year 2018/19. In the individualised data from the ministerial IS, a pupil from SDB means the pupil who is either identified as SDB or who lives in a household which received assistance in material need at least one month in the relevant year. Pupils who met this definition of SDB covered for 12% of all basic school pupils in the school year 2018/19.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and on the protection against discrimination, Article 8a

¹⁰⁰ Calculations made by the EPI. Calculated as a percentage of pupils from SDB based on the data of Eduzber (2018) in the total population of basic school pupils (exclusive of special education classrooms) based on the CSTI's data (2018).

¹⁰¹ <https://www.nucem.sk/sk/merania/narodne-merania/testovanie-5/roky/2018-2019>, <https://www.nucem.sk/sk/merania/narodne-merania/testovanie-9/roky/2018-2019?componentId=730>, https://www.oecd.org/pisa/Combined_Executive_Summaries_PISA_2018.pdf, http://www.nucem.sk/documents/27/medzinarodne_merania/timss/publikacie/Prve_vysledky_Slovenska_v_studii_IEA_TIMSS_2015.pdf, http://www.nucem.sk/documents/27/medzinarodne_merania/pirls/publikacie/Prv%C3%A9_v%C3%BDsledky_Slovenska_v_%C5%A1t%C3%BAadii_IEA_PIRLS_2016.pdf

¹⁰² It is not possible to sufficiently apply the official definition of SDB in the ministerial IS because many schools do not fill in the data about SDB about the status of pupils or do not fill in complete data. The result is that the total number of pupils from SDB at basic schools is 26% lower in the ministerial IS than the total number of pupils for which schools receive SDB allowance based on the Eduzber data (data collection for normative funding).

Table 9: Percentage of pupils by affiliation with SDB and MRC who repeated grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
SDB	14.1	10.9	12.7
non-SDB	12.2	1.1	1.6
Total	13.4	1.6	2.9

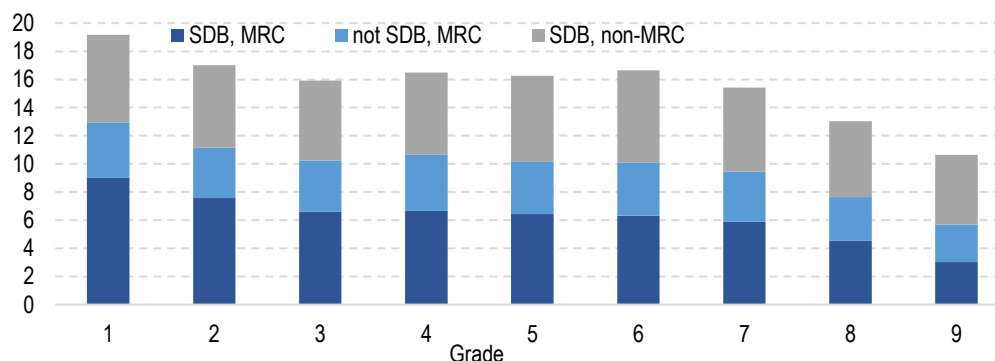
Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Only covers pupils within the mainstream education. Moderate deviation in the total grade repetition rate compared with the CSTI's data is caused by using different data from the Ministry of Education's information system. Box 3 for definition of MRC. Box 7 for explanation of identification of pupils from SDB in individualised administrative data.

Pupils from SDB repeat grade more often than the remainder of the basic school population. Even higher grade repetition rate is reported for pupils from MRC (Table 9). Falling number of pupils from the disadvantaged groups at higher grades of the lower secondary level (grades 5 to 9) proves that a substantial number of those pupils repeat grade several times, although according to the legislation currently in force multiple grade repetition is only allowed in exceptional cases (Graph 16).¹⁰³ Even if we take into consideration that the zero grade is included in the compulsory education years, these results imply that several pupils had to repeat grade twice or three times. Both the representative questionnaire-based survey and partial qualitative data indicate that the support of the grade repetition as an instrument addressing insufficient school results among teachers is quite high (Vančíková, 2019).

The impact of the social background on the grade repetition in Slovakia is one of the highest among the developed countries. The international PISA testing implies that Slovakia is the second country after Spain in which social background most influences the grade repetition rates and this applies also after the results in testing are taken into consideration (OECD, 2016). Experience of foreign countries show that grade repetition does not seem to be an efficient tool to improve school results of pupils; rather, it has a stigmatising effect on pupils and undermines their self-confidence (OECD, 2007).

Graph 16: Percentage of disadvantaged groups in all pupils by basic school grade in the year 2018/19 (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC. Box 7 for explanation of identification of pupils from SDB in individualised administrative data.

Pupils from SDB are concentrated in a smaller part of mainstream schools. The percentage of pupils from SDB exceeds 30% at nearly every seventh school, and these pupils cover for 9.3% of all pupils in the total population of basic schools. 27% of schools do not have a single pupil from SDB.¹⁰⁴

Even though segregation in education is forbidden,¹⁰⁵ pupils from MRC are spatially concentrated/segregated both within the school premises and between schools within a municipality.

¹⁰³ Decrease between the first and the third grade may partially be ascribed to the segregation of some pupils from these groups into the special education schools. Change for special education schools in higher grades is minimum.

¹⁰⁴ Based on the data about the SDB allowance from Eduzber (2018).

¹⁰⁵ 245/2008 Coll., School Law; Article 3(d) Discrimination in education on the grounds of race, skin colour, language, national or ethnic origin, disability or other grounds is forbidden both by the Slovak laws and several international human rights treaties ratified by the Slovak Republic.

Spatial segregation can be traced by applying the so-called index of dissimilarity (Annex 11). The results based on the administrative data show that to achieve even distribution of pupils from MRC within the first grade of mixed basic schools, as many as one third of them would have to be moved to a different classroom.¹⁰⁶ The analysis made at the level of municipalities with mixed population in the mainstream education implies that to achieve even distribution of pupils from MRC between schools in the municipality, nearly one half of them would have to be moved to a different school.¹⁰⁷ **Such a condition is undesirable because the social and economic as well as ethnic composition of classrooms and schools is one of the most important variables explaining systematically achieved poor results (OECD, 2010, Habodászová, 2019).**

Table 10: Percentage of pupils by AMN and MRC enrolled in special education schools in the school year 2018/19 (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	22.3	11.8	17.9
non-AMN	16.2	3.4	4.3
Total	19.2	3.8	5.7

Source: Vfm unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Too high a proportion of pupils from MRC and pupils from families in the AMN system in the special education schools remains a serious problem. Of all pupils in the AMN system, 17.9% are educated in the special education stream and as many as 19.2% come from MRC. However, the total population of pupils educated in special education schools in Slovakia amounts to 5.7% (Table 10). **The review expects the improved inclusion in the education system thanks to the proposed measures which should lead to better preparedness of schools to educate pupils from MRC together with the other pupils to result in savings on the special education cost.**

Existing measures supporting education of socially disadvantaged children at basic schools

Around EUR 11.2 million was allocated for the support of education of pupils from SDB at basic schools in 2018. These funds include the expenditures on the zero grade (EUR 5 million), a contribution to improve the conditions of child-rearing and education of pupils from SDB (EUR 6.2 million) and development projects for pupils from SDB (EUR 45 thousand).¹⁰⁸

Zero grade

The main objective of the zero grade is to enable pupils from SDB who are not ready to master the first grade at a basic school to develop school readiness to be able to start the first grade. 3,552 pupils went to the zero grade in 2018 and the expenditures on their education amounted to EUR 5 million. The expenditures come from the increased normative contribution compared with a pupil without disability of the relevant basic school.¹⁰⁹ The annual expenditures on a pupil in the zero grade are approximately 35% (EUR 1,200) higher than the expenditures on a child at a kindergarten (nearly EUR 4.3 million in the school year 2018/19). The educational content in the zero grade is determined by the school based on the needs of individual pupils.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Approximately one half of the first-graders from MRC enrolled in the mainstream education were educated at schools which meet the conditions for being included in the researched sample (Annex 11).

¹⁰⁷ Approximately 29% of the pupils from MRC enrolled in the mainstream education were educated at schools which meet the conditions for being included in the researched sample (Annex 11).

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Education. Regional education. Funding. <https://www.minedu.sk/financovanie/>

¹⁰⁹ The wage normative contribution for a pupil enrolled in a zero grade at a basic school is twice as high as the normative contribution for a pupil of the relevant basic school, resulting in an average increase by EUR 1,344 per year in 2018. The expenditures are higher particularly because the classrooms have fewer pupils (from 6 to 16) than the other classrooms at the primary level (from 11 to 25 pupils).

¹¹⁰ The educational content in zero grades should be based on the national education programmes (NEP) for pre-primary education and the NEP for primary education https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/6342_isvp_platne_od-1_9_2015.pdf

Table 11: Percentage of 6 years old pupils from SDB and MRC enrolled in the zero grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
SDB	60.1	34.0	50.4
non-SDB	7.9	0.2	0.5
Total	44.8	1.9	6.7

Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC. Box 7 for explanation of identification of pupils from SDB in individualised administrative data.

The percentage of pupils attending the zero grade is higher for the MRC than the majority population, and this remains true even after the figures are adjusted for pupils from SDB. The percentage of 6 years old children from MRC enrolled in the zero grade is nearly twice as high as the percentage of socially disadvantaged pupils from a non-MRC environment in the same age category (Table 11). Based on the administrative data, pupils from MRC accounted for as many as 74% of all zero grade pupils in the school year 2018/19.¹¹¹

Pupils included in the zero grade basically continue in their education in a classroom with a similar structure in higher grades. Pupils who passed the zero grade in the school year 2017/18 and entered the first grade in the school year 2018/19 were placed in classrooms where, on average, 64% of their classmates went to the zero grade in the previous school year.¹¹² To compare, pupils enrolled right in the first grade at a school which also has a zero grade had only 16% of classmates who completed the zero grade. Even pupils from SDB who went right to the first grade had only 30% of classmates who passed the zero grade. This phenomenon may be associated with the distribution of pupils in classrooms as soon as they start school either by their skills or social disadvantage or ethnicity. **What is more, the zero grade is taken as the first year of the compulsory education period which negatively affects the chances to complete the basic school level if they repeat grade.**

Although the main purpose of the zero grade is to develop school readiness and master the educational content of the first grade at a basic school, nearly each fifth graduate of the zero grade repeats the first grade. As many as 749 pupils (19.3%) out of 3,692¹¹³ graduates of the zero grade in the school year 2017/2018 repeat the first grade in the school year 2019/2020. To compare, the first grade repetition rate among all pupils going to mainstream classrooms ranges at the level of 5 to 6%. This means that the purpose of the zero grade has not been fulfilled for a large part of pupils.

Furthermore, pupils who went to the zero grade demonstrate a much lower level of reading literacy in the fourth grade than pupils who went right in the first grade. This finding follows from the data of PIRLS 2016 which measure reading literacy on a representative sample of 4th grade pupils. The average score of pupils who went to the zero grade is 29 points worse on the reading literacy, the social and economic background of pupils being considered, compared with the pupils who did not go to the zero grade.¹¹⁴

It follows that the cancellation of zero grade in connection with the establishment of the compulsory pre-primary education for pre-school children from 2022/23¹¹⁵ may be assessed positively. Savings should be used to support development of an inclusive environment at kindergartens (Chapter 5.1).

¹¹¹ The findings of the State School Inspection authority report even 91% share of pupils from MRC. The SSI's data come from the electronic questionnaire sent to head teachers of schools which had a zero grade in the school year 2016/17 (State School Inspection, 2017a).

¹¹² This calculation only covered pupils who continued at the same school after the zero grade and only those schools which had at least two classrooms in the first grade (essentially, to make the separation of those who went to the zero grade from the other first-graders possible). From among the graduates of the zero grade who started the first grade in the school year 2018/19, only 12% went to the school which only had one classroom in the first grade.

¹¹³ The data differs from the official statistics of the CSTI due to different data source (ministerial IS). The data is adjusted for the zero grade pupils who repeated the zero grade in the next year and also for the pupils who were transferred to special education classrooms or schools.

¹¹⁴ EPI's calculations based on NUCEM data (2018) Point scale ranges from 300 to 700. To put the findings in a broader context, the average scores of Slovak students were 535 and the scores of Czech students 543.

¹¹⁵ Act No. 209/2019 Coll. changing and amending the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law)

Allowance to improve the conditions of child-rearing and education of pupils from SDB

The allowance for improvement of child-rearing and education conditions of pupils from SDB (SDB allowance) may be used by the basic schools¹¹⁶ for six goals. They could simply be categorised as material (purchase of didactic technology and teaching aids; purchase of agents to prevent transmission of a infectious disease)¹¹⁷ and immaterial (cost of teaching assistant or social pedagogue¹¹⁸; bonus for work with pupils from SDB; education of pupils in specialised classrooms; funding participation of pupils in educational activities). Use of the allowance is conditional upon two goals: at least 50% of the allowance must be used for a teaching assistant or social pedagogue if the school educates more than 50 pupils from SDB¹¹⁹ and pay a bonus to the teacher who teaches a class with at least 30% of pupils from SDB or with a disability.

The expenditures on SDB allowance amounted to nearly EUR 6.2 million in 2018. The allowance for one pupil totalled EUR 150 and it was paid for 41,149 pupils. The SDB allowance was used to fund 257 support workers, three quarters of them teaching assistants and one quarter social pedagogues.¹²⁰ On average, 160 pupils from SDB fell on one support worker. The use of the SDB allowance and the impact of the work of support workers on the education of pupils from SDB has not been evaluated yet.

The allowance eligibility criteria have changed several times in the past years (Box 8). In 2018, it only covered around 39% of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The criteria are currently conditional upon the income of the pupil's family (recipient of AMN) or the diagnosis of educational needs as a result of growing up in a SDB.¹²¹ However, both the criteria seem to be insufficient, first because the assistance in material need is very low and the number of recipients has been falling down over time (Chapter 8.1) and, second, because the counselling centres do not have enough resources to assess the educational needs of all pupils (CVEK, 2018a).

The SDB allowance is insufficient to cover the prescribed staff and material expenditures. If the schools used half of the funds allocated for 100 pupils from SDB for a teaching assistant as is provided in the legislation, they could have only funded a half of such assistant's wage. If they wanted to employ a full-time teaching assistant, they would have to use all the entire allowance allocated for 100 pupils from SDB leaving no funds for any other expenditures (Table 12). The threshold for using one half of the allowance was decreased to 85 pupils from 2018. However, the fact is that only 7% of all schools educating at least one pupil from SDB have more than 85 pupils from SDB.

Also, the SDB allowance is unstable as the volume of total funds fluctuates and the definition of SDB keeps changing. The funds allocated for the support of pupils from SDB in 2012 – 2018 did not follow the changing number of pupils from SDB (Table 12). The ability of schools to fund the wages of teaching assistants changes greatly over time. While in 2012 schools were able to cover more than one half of the costs of one support worker using one half of the allowance for 100 pupils from SDB in line with the law, in 2016 they only could cover a bit more than one third of the costs of one support worker. The number of support workers paid from the SDB allowance has fallen down by 78 since 2012 (Table 12).

¹¹⁶ The 8-year secondary general schools educating during the first four years pupils who would otherwise attend the 6th to 9th grades of basic schools are not eligible to the SDB allowance or, in other words, to the support for education of pupils from socially disadvantaged background.

¹¹⁷ Effective as of 1 January 2020, the SDB allowance may also be used to procure the necessary supplies for pupils on top of the school supplies allowance provided in accordance with Act 554/2010 Coll.: <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/zakon&MasterID=7467>

¹¹⁸ The role of the teaching assistant is to help pupils overcome the barriers resulting from their disadvantage. Social pedagogue provides pupils with social assistance within the child-rearing and education process.

¹¹⁹ Until the end of 2019, the threshold for hiring a teaching assistant or social pedagogue was set at 85 pupils.

¹²⁰ EPI's calculations based on the data from CSTI and the ministerial IS (2018).

¹²¹ Counselling centres should consider many factors listed in the methodological guideline of the Ministry of Education (2016) when identifying educational needs resulting from SDB: https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/5853_usmernenie_cpypap_diagnostika.pdf

Table 12: Development of SDB allowance

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Total funds for allowance (eur million)	6.5	6.5	6.7	6.5	4.9	7.3	6.1
Number of pupils from SDB	65,224	65,580	65,835	61,195	45,183	28,263	41,149
Amount of allowance	100	100	103	106	109	260	150
Number of assistants	335	328	338	349	299	260	257
Number of pupils from SDB per one support worker	195	200	195	175	151	109	160
Work schedule covered by 100% value of SDB allowance for 100 pupils (1 = full-time)	1.17	1.05	1.01	1.01	0.71	2.04	0.98
Work schedule covered by 50 % value of SDB allowance for 100 pupils (1 = full-time)	0.59	0.53	0.51	0.50	0.35	1.02	0.49

Source: EPI's calculations based on the Financial Management Report and the Statistical Survey on Employees and Wages in Education System

Note: In 2018, the threshold for using a half of the allowance for assistants was reduced to 85 pupils and the use was amended to also include social pedagogues.

In order to stabilise and increase support for pupils from SDB, the review proposes to: (1) establish a new normative contribution for pupils from SDB which, just like in the case of education of pupils with disability, would bind a school educating 50 or more pupils from SDB to employ a teaching assistant or a professional employee of their choice for each 50 pupils; (2) establish a separate compensatory contribution which would be used to pay the material needs of pupils from SDB and which would be regularly revised.

The SDB allowance would also be used for bonuses for teachers teaching classrooms with at least 30% of pupils from SDB or with disability. In 2018, the bonus amounted to EUR 26 a month at the most,¹²² it is not possible to quantify the total volume of funds used for the bonuses.

Setting of the eligibility conditions for the bonus is problematic. The right to the bonus is conditional upon a higher concentration of disadvantaged pupils in one classroom. Such an approach has been proved to have a negative impact on the school performance of all pupils in the classroom (OECD, 2010). The right to the bonus is automatically incompatible with a teaching assistant in the classroom which forces the teacher or the head teacher to choose between having an assistant or rewarding the teacher. Last but not least, the SDB allowance is also used to fund the remuneration for the teachers educating exclusively or predominantly pupils with disability; however, schools receive separate higher normative contribution for the support of this group of pupils.¹²³

It is equally problematic to use the SDB allowance for creation of a specialised classroom as such a measure concentrates disadvantaged pupils in one classroom. Specialised classroom is intended for pupils from SDB who are not expected to be able to master educational content of the relevant grade to close the educational gaps.¹²⁴ Pupils may be educated there one year at the most.¹²⁵ Only 18 schools (in aggregate 22 classrooms with 164 pupils) had a specialised classroom funded from the SDB allowance in 2018¹²⁶, this is less than 2% of all schools which educate at least four pupils from SDB and could open a specialised classroom.¹²⁷ **The review therefore proposes to revoke the option of setting up specialised classrooms.**

¹²² Effective as of 1 January 2020, the bonus grew from 2.5% to 5% of the 9th salary bracket of the first labour grade a month: <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/zakon&MasterID=7467>

¹²³ 553/2003 Coll. on the remuneration of certain employees for work in the public interest; Article 14d

¹²⁴ Specialised classroom should be distinguished from special education classrooms (and special schools) which are intended for pupils with disabilities and children diagnosed intellectual disability (Chapter 6.2).

¹²⁵ 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 29(11) Pupil is transferred to a specialised classroom by the head teacher based on class teacher's recommendation, opinion of the school counsellor, and informed consent of the pupil's legal guardian.

¹²⁶ CSTI (2018)

¹²⁷ Considering the low number of pupils (from 4 to 8), the instrument is relatively expensive and the SDB allowance (EUR 150) might be insufficient to cover the expenditures associated with a specialised classroom. This may be one of the reasons why schools show very little interest in this instrument.

Box 8: Changes in the SDB allowance eligibility conditions

A quantitative definition of SDB based on the family's income status was used for the provision of SDB allowance from 2009 to 2016. The SDB allowance was paid to all schools (mainstream and special) for all pupils from families who received assistance in material need or with income below the minimum subsistence income.

This changed in September 2016 when the SDB allowance was decided to be only provided to pupils who have been diagnosed to have SDB-related educational needs. The aim of this regulation was to prevent confusion of special education needs based on a disability which is a decisive factor for including a pupil in a special school or classroom, and special education needs resulting from socially disadvantaged background. The allowance also ceased to be provided to special schools and mainstream schools for integrated pupils and for pupils in special education classrooms.

However, this change led to a significant decrease in the number of pupils from SDB by 35,626 (from 57,207 pupils in September 2016 to 21,581 pupils in September 2017), a slump much greater than the number of recipients of the allowance in special education schools and classrooms.¹²⁸ In response to the issues associated with the diagnostics of needs, a transitional provision took effect in September 2017 which is still in force and permits the concurrence of the eligibility to the allowance on the grounds of diagnostics as well as on the grounds of receipt of the assistance in material need.¹²⁹ This transitional provision led to the repeated increase in the number of pupils from SDB to 40,318 in September 2018.

Meal subsidy and allowance for school supplies

On average, meal subsidies were paid to 48,518 pupils of basic schools a month in 2018, a figure covering 11% of all pupils and fewer than a half (49%) of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion.¹³⁰ On average, the allowance for school supplies was paid to 46,260 pupils of basic schools a month in 2018, a figure covering 10 % of all pupils and 47% of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Subsidies for basic schools are provided under the same conditions as the subsidies for kindergartens (Chapter 5.1). Pursuant to the amendment act on subsidies, the meal subsidies are provided for all pupils of basic schools effective as of 1 September 2019.¹³¹

Better accessibility of blanket subsidies in special schools could have contributed to the segregation of poor children outside the mainstream education. The percentage of pupils in the AMN system enrolled in the special education stream is too high (Table 10). Consequently, as many as 16% of special schools received the blanket meal subsidy compared with roughly 6% of mainstream schools. Poor parents of pupils who would not be eligible to subsidised lunch based on their income situation may be motivated in some municipalities to rather enrol their children in a special school receiving blanket subsidy.

The absenteeism at schools which had access to blanket subsidies averaged 31 absences better per pupil per year than in similar schools which did not have access to blanket subsidies. This remains true even when we take into account other factors which have an impact on absenteeism, particularly the share of pupils in the AMN system, the share of pupils from MRC and the share of pupils with disability (Annex 12). If blanket subsidies applied to all schools, the average number of absences could drop from the today's 98 absences per year to 74 per year and would most probably have a positive impact on the school performance.

¹²⁸ In terms of calendar years, the figure decreased from 45,183 pupils in 2016 to 28,236 pupils in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2016, 2017).

¹²⁹ 597/2003 Coll. on the funding of basic schools, secondary schools and school facilities, Article 9f(3).

¹³⁰ Such a low coverage is particularly due to a huge gap between the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and the minimum subsistence income threshold making the recipient eligible to the subsidies (Chapter 8.1).

¹³¹ Act No. 375/2018 Coll. changing and amending the Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on subsidies in the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Inefficient implementation of the subsidy scheme may restrict the positive impact of subsidies. Some local governments have presented various types of fees in response to the establishment of blanket meal subsidies which should cover their increased expenditures associated with the implementation of this measure (e.g. funding the price of foodstuff, funding the higher overhead costs and the advance payments to cover for the expenditures arisen if the lunch is not taken). New fees may finally make the lunch at schools even less affordable than it was in past, especially for the pupils from the SDB. **The review therefore proposes to evaluate the implementation of the subsidy scheme together with its impact on school results and performance of pupils and modify the scheme based on the results of analyses.**

Roma language lessons

Pupils with a mother tongue other than the Slovak have the right to have a minority language and literature classes at schools with Slovak as the instruction language. The access to the mother tongue lessons provably increases school success, has a positive impact on the acquisition of the official language and is essential for the development in other cognitive areas (Ball, 2011; Mizza, 2014). If children's mother tongue differs from the language of instruction, it has a substantial impact on their success at school. Pupils who speak other language than the language of instruction are more probable to perform poorly at school. Slovakia is one of the countries where this probability is highest (OECD, 2016b; TIMMS, 2015; PIRLS, 2016).

Only two basic schools in Kremnica and in Košice taught Roma language to 203 pupils in 2018. The overall expenditures totalled EUR 12,789, averaging EUR 63 per one pupil.¹³² The exact data about the number of pupils with Roma as their mother tongue is not available.¹³³ Generally speaking, more than one half of Roma (53%) report Roma language as their mother tongue (UNDP, 2012, Kiššová, 2017) and 62% consider Roma language to be their preferred language (Central Labour Office, 2019).

Whether or not Roma language lessons are included in the study programme currently only depends on the demand of parents. Basic schools are obligated to inform parents of Roma pupils about the opportunity to teach Roma language and must arrange such lessons if they show interest.¹³⁴ Considering the cultural and language barriers of parents from MRC and the non-existent guidelines concerning the awareness-raising about the option (and importance) of taking mother tongue lessons, this regulation can be considered insufficient, which is also confirmed by the low number of schools offering Roma lessons.

Neither the setting of the minimum scope of lessons for Roma language at schools with Slovak as the language of instruction is good.¹³⁵ The number of minority language and literature lessons is low in the first years of compulsory education (only 1 to 2 lessons a week in the first grade, 2 or 3 lessons in the second grade, 2 lessons up to the sixth grade and 3 lessons in the seventh to ninth grades¹³⁶). This proportion should be reversed whereas of the mother tongue development is most important at a younger age (Ball, 2011; Berglund, 2017; Mizza, 2014).

Future teachers are not being systematically prepared for education of pupils who cannot speak the language of instruction. The offer of continuing education for teachers does not include programmes focusing on the Roma language lessons. From 2019/2020, students have an opportunity to apply for a double major in Roma

¹³² 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities. Basic schools teaching minority language lessons receive higher normative contribution for pupils learning the minority language, corresponding to 104% of the standard normative contribution. There are no schools with Roma as the language of instruction. Normative funding scheme available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/normativne-financovanie/>

¹³³ The School Law currently does not permit to collect data about the mother tongue of pupils.

¹³⁴ <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/14770.pdf>

¹³⁵ Schools may increase the number of lessons within the optional lessons.

¹³⁶ Framework study plan for basic schools with minority language lessons: http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/rupts_pre-z-s-vyu_ovan_m-jazyka-n_rodnostnej-men_iny.pdf a https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/7461_dodatok-c-1_vjnm.pdf

language teacher combined with another subject of their choice at Prešov University. The programmes for teaching and professional staff to support education of pupils from MRC do not mention language needs in their syllabi.¹³⁷

Also the survey of the *Learning Makes Sense* initiative proved the teachers to be unprepared and lack knowledge in this area. The survey revealed that as many as 38% of teachers at mainstream basic schools believe that it is best to educate pupils with a different mother tongue in special education classrooms of mainstream schools or in special education schools, and 22% of teachers were not able to choose the appropriate form of education (*Learning Makes Sense*, 2019). However, the laws in force do not permit to educate pupils in special classrooms or school just because they have different mother tongue, and such a decision would also be contrary to the good international practice in education of pupils speaking minority language.

The review therefore proposes: (1) to amend the School Law to permit to collect data about the mother tongue of children, pupils and students; collect such data in the ministerial IS and then monitor and evaluate this attribute also in Testing 5 and Testing 9; (2) gradually warrant the right to Roma language lessons by setting a percentage of pupils speaking Roma language obligating schools to arrange for Roma language lessons; (3) increase the minimum scope of Roma lessons in the first grades of basic school; and (4) add to the educational content of future teachers the acquisition of skills in the area of diagnostics of language needs of children and in the area of teaching in a mixed language environment.

Reduction and waiver of fees for the after school clubs

The data about the number of pupils from SDB attending after school clubs (ASC) is not available. However, it follows from the reports of the State School Inspection authority that the attendance rate of pupils from SDB and MRC in this club is low (SSI, 2015, 2016, 2017). The causes have not been researched in more detail. Attendance by pupils from the disadvantaged background of after school clubs is considered to be an important part of the day-long child-rearing and education system and has been proved to have a positive impact on the development of cognitive, social and emotional skills (Posner, J. K., & Vandell, D. L., 1994; and Durlak, J. A et al 2010).

Their attendance rate in these clubs may be low also due to financial reasons.¹³⁸ Nearly one half (49%) of administrators in the Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice regions do not accept assistance in material need as the reason for waiving the fees for this club. This finding follows from the analysis of generally binding regulations (GBR) of municipalities.¹³⁹ Unlike in the case of kindergarten fees which municipalities are obligated to waive if the family receives AMN, the administrator may, but does not have to, waive the fees for the after school club.¹⁴⁰ Majority of pupils from SDB (88%) and 56% of all pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion are educated in the above three regions. The fees in the above regions are reduced by less than one half of administrators (43%), and around one third of them (32%) state the reduction specifically in their binding regulations. The reduced fee amounts to EUR 2.1 on average (from EUR 0.30 to 5.00). The average fee for the school club is EUR 4.50 a month (from EUR 0 to EUR 15) **The review proposes the mandatory waiver of school club fees for pupils from socially disadvantaged background. The administrators of school clubs should receive similar compensation for the gap in revenues as they receive for waiver of the kindergarten fees.**

¹³⁷ Innovative education of teachers in the area of inclusive education of children from marginalised Roma communities; development of competencies of professional employees in the area of prevention of socially pathological phenomena in pupils from marginalised Roma communities, and professional counselling in pre-primary education of children from marginalised Roma communities

¹³⁸ Such a case has also been documented by the State School Inspection authority when the attendance rate of pupils in the school club at a basic school in Bardejov was low because they did not reduce or waive the monthly fee for the cost of the club. http://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/ZS_UZP_Inkluzia_2017_2018.pdf

¹³⁹ Source: EPI's data collection.

¹⁴⁰ The maximum fees for school clubs founded by municipality used to be limited to 7.5% of the minimum subsistence income for a dependent child in past. Today, this regulation only applies to school clubs at special basic schools which are founded by county authorities.

Modification of the environment and application of specific methods and forms in the child-rearing and education process

The preparedness of teachers for education of children from SDB is essential for the application of specific methods and forms and, consequently, for efficient application of an individual approach in education. However, the results of both international and Slovak surveys uncover insufficient preparedness of teachers. The results suggest that teachers feel the greatest need in the area of education of pupils with special needs, but only a small portion of them admitted to have undergone such a type of education (Hapalová, 2019; TALIS, 2018). A serious problem resulting from insufficient education is the persisting belief that pupils from SDB should be educated in a special education stream, which is expressly forbidden by the School Law.¹⁴¹ In spite of that, 13% of teachers of mainstream schools believe special schools to be the best form of education of socially disadvantaged pupils (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). **The review proposes to examine the educational content of future teachers and assess how much they are being prepared for education of pupils from SDB or with various needs.**

1,077 (3%) of basic school teachers attended accredited continuous education programmes focused on education of pupils from SDB in 2018. Of the total number of 679 accredited programmes of continuous education intended for basic school teachers, only four dealt in education of children from SDB or MRC and twelve programmes focused on inclusive education and education of children with special education needs in general (Annex 7).

[Missing measures to support education of socially disadvantaged children at basic schools](#)

Slovak as the second language lessons

Schools teaching in Slovak (87% of state basic schools) do not offer lessons of Slovak as the second language to pupils with a different mother tongue. Whereas majority of Roma do not consider Slovak to be their mother tongue (UNDP, 2012; Kiššová, 2017), it is probable that many pupils from MRC who account for more than one half of pupils from SDB do not understand enough the instruction at the basic school.

Materials for teaching Slovak as the second language (e.g. Kamenárová et al., 2018; Kvapil et al., 2018) already exist in Slovakia. However, they have not been incorporated into the lessons for pupils with Roma as the mother tongue who attend schools teaching in Slovak. Acquisition of Slovak as the second language requires separate curriculum and adjustment of teaching strategy which would reflect the first language and the language level of pupils (Cook, 2008; Kamenárová et al., 2018; Saville-Troike, 2012). The existing accredited programmes of continuing education for teachers only focus on teaching Slovak as the second language to the children of foreigners (two programmes) or on teaching Slovak as the second language at schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction (three programmes).¹⁴²

The review proposes: (1) to formalise Slovak as the second language lessons and reflect this change in the framework study plans; and (2) to amend the offer of education programmes to include programmes focusing on the acquisition of skills in teaching Slovak as the second language.

Measures to reduce spatial segregation of pupils

The problem of spatial segregation of disadvantaged pupils is also connected with the overall setting of the education system, with the regulation of the free choice of school, school districts planning and education of individual stakeholders playing an important role in this respect. Although Slovakia has defined

¹⁴¹ Act No. 245/2008 on child-rearing and education (School Law) and on amendments and supplements to certain laws; Article 107(2)

¹⁴² Insufficient preparedness of teachers for education of children speaking minority language was also revealed by several research studies. A qualitative research study in the form of interviews with teachers educating children from MRC pointed out that some teachers forbid children to speak Roma between each other because the teachers do not understand it. Teachers who used Roma as a support language felt urged to justify this practice (Gažovičová, 2012) although many education system consider it an efficient method of education of children with a different mother tongue (overview e.g. Ó Duibhir et al., 2015).

catchment schools which must accept pupils who belong in the relevant catchment region, pupils may also select a school of their own choice.¹⁴³ Catchment schools are defined based on school districts created by municipalities. School districts are sometimes "designed" in such manner that they concentrate pupils from MRC at one school irrespective of the distance from other accessible schools and their free capacities.¹⁴⁴

Or, even if a school district setting is pro-inclusive, pupils without disadvantage are free to choose to leave such school which may result in the concentration of the disadvantaged ones. However, there is still no definition of segregation in education, methodological materials or support teams which would help individual stakeholders (schools, administrators and county authorities) eliminate or prevent such situations. Neither are there any relevant educational programmes for head teachers, mayors of municipalities and officers of county authorities which would familiarize them with this issue.

Some countries address such situations by establishing the so-called controlled choice which provides the school choice and, at the same time, sets for schools a percentage of pupils with various types of disadvantage based on the overall demographic structure of the relevant location (OECD, 2010) Some countries use local authorities to help coordinate the pupil admission process – they process applications and help with distribution of pupils in schools to achieve the desired representation of pupils at various schools. The attainment of the goals set is substantially affected by parents' demand.

The review proposes to (1) establish the definition of segregation in education; (2) develop an educational programme focusing on prevention and solution of segregation in education for head teachers, mayors of municipalities and officers of county authorities; and (3) implement a pilot project of school district re-organisation with emphasis on greater diversity at basic schools and also develop within this project a methodological material about organisation of school districts on a de-segregation principle.

5.3. Early school leavers

Early leavers from socially disadvantaged background.

The percentage of pupils who completed the compulsory education period and did not continue in education is much higher in the socially disadvantaged groups than it is in the rest of the population. In the school year 2017/18, every tenth pupil in the AMN system (10.6 %) and 13.4 % of pupils from MRC ended their education in this manner (Table 13). In the whole age group, the figure reached 6.4% of the total population.

Table 13: Percentage of pupils who completed compulsory education period in 2017/18 and did not continue in education (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	12.8	8.0	10.6
non-AMN	14.1	5.3	5.9
Total	13.4	5.5	6.4

Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN. The data shows the percentage of pupils who did not continue in education from among all pupils who turned 16 in the school year 2017/18. The calculation methodology in the table differs from the internationally reported data for early school leavers.

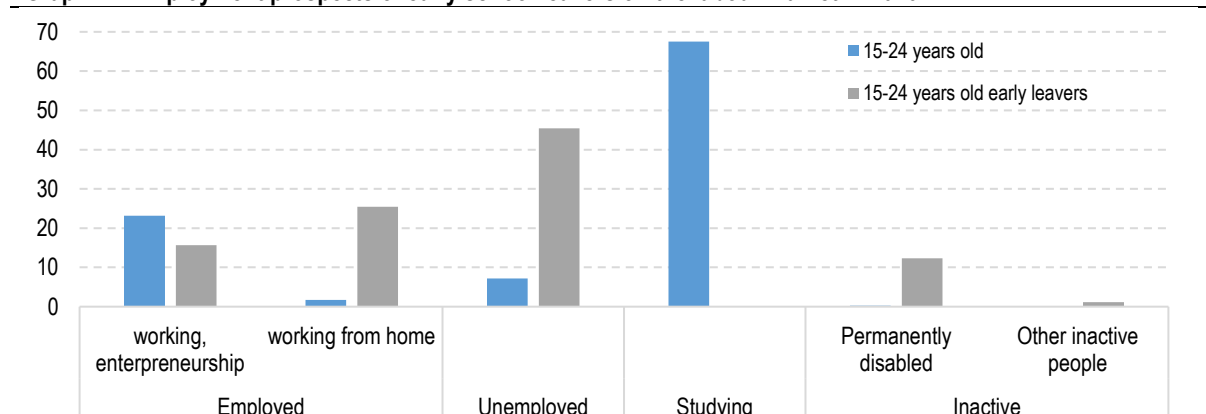
Early school leavers are 12 times more likely to be unemployed as the 15 to 24-year olds who did not drop out of school (Graph 17). Nearly one half (45%) of early school leavers is unemployed and a quarter (25%) works

¹⁴³ 596/2003 Coll. on state government in education and educational local government; Article 8

¹⁴⁴ <https://presov.korzar.sme.sk/c/7901842/lipany-rusia-spolocny-skolsky-obvod-s-torysou.html>
<http://www.podtatranske-noviny.sk/2017/02/kvoli-segregacii-vypovedali-janovciam-skolsky-obvod/>
<http://www.vop.gov.sk/files/Sprava%20VOP-Vzdelavanie%20Romov.pdf>
http://www.noveskolstvo.sk/upload/pdf/OSF_2012.pdf
<http://www.amnesty.sk/ai-slovensko-a-poradna-pre-obcianske-a-ludske-prava-vyzvali-mesto-presov-aby-odstranilo-segregaciu-romskych-deti-na-skolach/>

from home¹⁴⁵ (e.g. license or flexible work schedule). The early school leavers who find job on the labour market often do low-income jobs (e.g. rubbish collectors, auxiliary workers in the mining or construction business, or assemblers). Also, they often work in unstable and precarious¹⁴⁶ working conditions. As the workforce survey reveals, more than one half (52%) of the early school leavers who had work in 2016 had contracts for a definite period of time, and majority of them said they were not able to find other type of employment (only 24% of the remaining 15-24 year olds worked for a definite period of time). Only 61% of early school leavers worked full-time (compared with 91% of the other 15-24 year olds who ended their studies), while more than one fifth of them (23%), whether employed or unemployed, said they wished to work more hours.¹⁴⁷

Graph 17: Employment prospects of early school leavers on the labour market in 2016



Source: LFS (2016)

Note: Early school leavers are 15 to 24 years old persons who completed lower secondary education at the most and are not engaged in continuing education or professional preparation. The share of early school leavers is the share of the total number of the 15 to 24 years old persons.

Existing measures to support early school leavers from socially disadvantaged background

Compensatory measures

Individuals who did not complete basic school may continue in two-year or three-year study programmes of a lower secondary vocational education¹⁴⁸ (F-type study programmes) or may complete the basic school within the lower secondary education (the so-called second-chance education courses) organised by basic schools or upper secondary technical schools.¹⁴⁹

F-type study programmes

Education in the F-type study programmes is not equivalent to the completed basic school. In spite of that, one year of this type of education is twice as expensive. The expenditures on education of pupils in F-type study programmes reached more than EUR 16.3 million in 2018. While the average normative contribution for a pupil enrolled in the F-type study programme amounted to EUR 3,742, the average normative contribution for a

¹⁴⁵ The definition of this variable is explained on page 72 here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/EU-LFS-explanatory-notes-from-2017-onwards.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Precarious work is defined by the uncertain working conditions, collective representation, prospects on the labour market, etc. (EP's Report on Working Conditions and Precarious Employment 2016/2221 (INI))

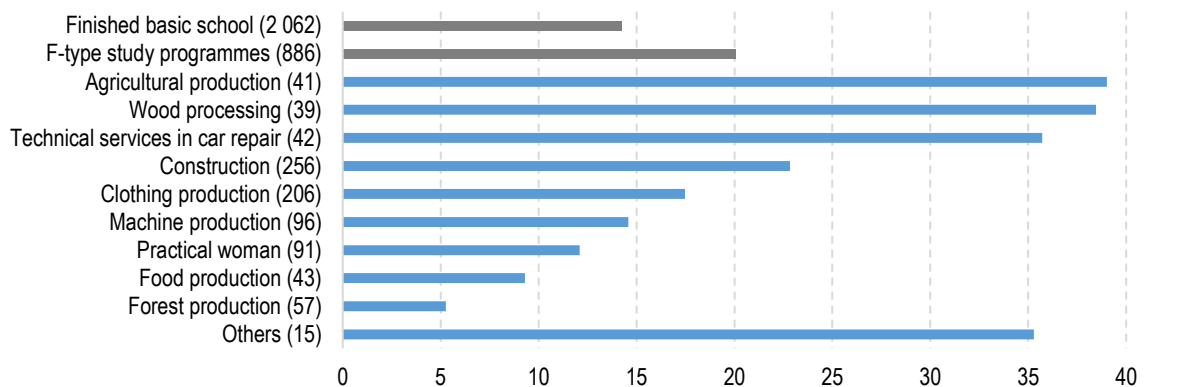
¹⁴⁷ LFS (2016). The definition of early school leavers differs from the definition provided in Table 12 as it is based on a different data source. Early school leavers are 15 to 24 years old persons who completed lower secondary education at the most and are not engaged in continuing education or professional preparation. The share of early school leavers is the share of the total number of the 15 to 24 years old persons.

¹⁴⁸ 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 62(4) – according to the interpretation provided by the Ministry of Education, pupils who may be transferred from the basic school to an upper secondary technical school providing lower secondary vocational education are the pupils who have not completed or have unsuccessfully completed the 9th grade of the basic school, and the pupils who after the nine years of compulsory education finished a lower than the ninth grade, irrespective of whether they finished it successfully or not.

¹⁴⁹ 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 30(5) and Article 42(4)

pupil of a basic school reached EUR 1,912.¹⁵⁰ When pupils pass this study programme, they do not acquire the lower secondary education (equivalent to the completed basic school), but only the lower secondary vocational education which does not allow them to seek admission to upper secondary schools where they could obtain a technical training certificate or school leaving certificate (maturita). Only 29% of F-type study programme pupils are estimated to have successfully completed school and gained a final exam certificate.¹⁵¹ Fewer than one half (42%) of schools offering F-type study programme also offered the second-chance education courses.¹⁵² **All in all, 4,364 pupils were educated in F-type study programmes in 2018,¹⁵³ approximately 59% of them are in the AMN system and 59% come from MRC.¹⁵⁴**

Graph 18: Percentage of F-type programme graduates in the school year 2017/18 who found employment until the end of 2018 (%)



Source: VřM unit based on data of the Social Insurance Agency, ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas
 Note: Number of graduates identified in the unit data given in brackets.

The chance of the graduates of an F-type study programme to find employment is only a bit better than it is in case of pupils who completed basic school only. But there also exist F-type study programmes, whose graduates have poor prospects on the labour market. The graduates of the study programmes of mechanical engineering, practical woman, food production and forest production reported employment rates similar to or lower than the graduates of basic schools (Graph 18). It remains true even after adjusting for other factors affecting employment rates (Annex 13).¹⁵⁵ Unlike in case of other study programmes within vocational and technical education, the number of pupils in the first grades of F-type programmes is not regulated according to the results achieved. This means that they continue to be funded even if they are not efficient. **The review therefore proposes to regulate the number of first grade pupils enrolled in F-type study programmes in accordance with Article 29 et seq. of Act No. 61/2015 on vocational education.**

F-type study programmes support segregation in the education system. 40% of upper secondary technical schools providing education in F-type study programmes are external workplaces (55 of 138) physically separated from the core school.¹⁵⁶ 96% of the external workplaces are located in municipalities with Roma minority, and 15 of

¹⁵⁰ Eduzber (2018). Average normative contributions calculated based on the number of pupils of the F-type study programmes (less the pupils enrolled in F-type study programmes at upper secondary technical schools for disabled and the upper secondary technical schools at re-education centres) and the number of pupils of basic schools in 2018.

¹⁵¹ CSTI (2017, 2019). Calculated as the quotient of F-type programme graduates in 2019 and the first-grade pupils of F-type programmes in 2017. The calculation does not include pupils of F-type programmes at upper secondary technical schools for disabled or at upper secondary technical schools at re-education centres. Cleared for 3-year study programmes.

¹⁵² CSTI (2018). Only 40 of 95 secondary schools which have pupils enrolled in two-year F-type programmes also had a second-chance education course in place.

¹⁵³ Eduzber and CSTI (2018). The number of pupils of F-type programmes at upper secondary technical schools for disabled less the pupils of upper secondary technical schools at re-education centres.

¹⁵⁴ Only 75% of the total number of pupils of F-type programmes can be identified in the ministerial IS, so the above estimates may be inaccurate.

¹⁵⁵ When other observable variables which may affect the chances on the labour market were taken into consideration, the probability that the graduates of the above four study programmes would find an employment does not significantly differ from the probability applicable to the graduates of basic schools (Annex 13).

¹⁵⁶ Although the external workplaces follow the educational programme of the core school, they are founded as physically separate workplaces (Act No. 596/2003 Coll.).

all 55 external workplaces are located in municipalities with Roma living at the outskirts of a municipality or in segregated settlements. These external workplaces thus do not motivate the pupils from MRC to attend schools together with pupils coming from the majority population. It follows from the qualitative research study that physical accessibility and financial affordability as well as the presence of peers from the same community prompt pupils who complete basic schools to enrol in F-type study programmes although they could also continue at mainstream upper secondary schools (CVEK, 2015). In accordance with the Government Resolution No. 476 of 26 August 2015, the Ministry of Education was expected to support establishment of external workplaces in the least developed counties until the end of 2019. Renewal of this support does not seem to be beneficial in future.

Second-chance education

Second-chance education allows graduates to complete lower secondary education with the option to continue in education at higher levels where they could gain technical training certificate or school-leaving certificate (maturita) and have better prospects of finding employment on the labour market in future. The scope of the course is not standardised, and is defined by the head teacher based on the education level of the relevant person. However, the course may not be longer than one school year. The education ends with a final exam.¹⁵⁷

The expenditures on the second-chance education courses amounted to EUR 193 thousand in 2018. The uniform normative contribution for a pupil in a second-chance education does not reflect the scope and duration of education. The amount allocated for one pupil is set to 10% of the normative contribution for a pupil of a basic school or of the relevant upper secondary school (based on Act No. 630/2008 Coll.) irrespective of the scope and duration of the course which should at all times be set individually depending on the needs and initial level of knowledge of individual pupils. The existing funding system does not permit to reflect the needs of pupils and, as the qualitative research study reveals, this may be one of the reasons why particularly the basic schools are not interested in these courses (Vančíková, 2019). **The review therefore proposes to establish a flexible normative contribution to be set depending on the scope of the study plan and duration of education.**

The State School Inspection authority (SSI) has pointed out problems relating to the quality of the second-chance education provided. 784 persons enrolled in the second-chance education courses in 2018. 93% of the courses were organised by upper secondary schools.¹⁵⁸ The Inspection authority points out that schools set the content and scope of the second-chance education without first checking the level of knowledge of pupils and without adjusting education to individual needs of pupils to allow them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Particularly the upper secondary technical schools had a problem with the quality of schooling, as they provided the second-chance education by way of teachers who did not have the requested qualifications (SSI, 2018). **High-quality courses of second-chance education are thus substantially cheaper than the F-type study programmes and if they were interconnected with other support measures (such as upper secondary school scholarships, and mentoring and tutoring), they could be more efficient in supporting people who have not completed basic school.**

[Missing measures to support education of socially disadvantaged children at risk of school dropout](#)

Preventive and intervention programmes

A systematic approach to a specific support of pupils at risk of dropout which would also include preventive and intervention measures does not exist. The Slovak education system focuses mainly and only on compensatory measures for persons who have already dropped out of the education system (F-type study programmes and second-chance education). Preventive measures consist particularly in the support of early childhood care, inclusive education and provision of high-quality career counselling. Equally important also is the continuous collection and evaluation of the data which enables identification of pupils at risk of dropout and

¹⁵⁷ Decree No. 320/2008 Coll.; Article 19

¹⁵⁸ CSTI (2018)

examination of the causes of this phenomenon. Slovakia is lacking this kind of research. **The review therefore proposes to research the reasons of early school leaving.**

High-quality career counselling taking into consideration specific circumstances of pupils growing up in a disadvantaged background may help interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The decision whether or not to continue in education is affected by the socio-economic background of pupils. The aim of efficient career counselling is to provide access to the information and opportunities of continuing education and career choice to all pupils based on their true skills. In spite of existence of career counselling, pupils from SDB having the same school results as their peers choose less difficult study programmes (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018). To improve the efficiency of the career counselling system,¹⁵⁹ career counsellors need to have access to high-quality training which would equip them with skills and strategies necessary for work with pupils from SDB (e.g. how to provide for access to information, how to work with the pressure of peers and parents, etc.).

Mentoring and tutoring programmes are considered to be the most efficient intervention strategies which have the potential to positively affect grade repetition elimination. The role of mentors is to provide counselling, support and encouragement to pupils at risk. Mentoring also works with the motivation of pupils and their emotional commitments towards school which may be one of the main factors in early school dropout (Nouwen et al., 2016). Tutors provide tutelage to pupils participating in mentoring aiming to improve their school performance or prepare them on entrance exams of upper secondary schools. Within support programmes, mentors (or tutors or coaches) should do activities at the level of the entire school and ideally also the entire community and engage teachers and parents in education and support activities (EP, 2011). Also the partial qualitative results point out insufficient communication between the school and the parents and consider it as one of the barriers to the prevention of dropout in Slovakia (Vančíková, 2019).

Mentoring and tutoring may be beneficial even if the pupil finally decides to drop out of school. In reality, it turns out that many pupils are not aware of certain obligations they have as a result of this decision, which may cause them problems. For example, they are not aware that when they drop out of the education system they have to register with the public health insurance company and pay health insurance premiums. Therefore, many of them incur debt which they are unable to pay and, consequently, face legal action and debt enforcement motion. Thanks to the European funds, 20 non-profit organisations currently provide mentoring and tutoring to 968 pupils at basic schools.¹⁶⁰ However, mentoring and tutoring is not supported systematically. **The review proposes to create a development project with a regular financial allocation to support mentoring and tutoring of disadvantaged pupils at the upper basic schools and upper secondary schools.**

5.4. Upper secondary education

Education results of socially disadvantaged children at upper secondary schools

Only 62% of the pupils in the AMN system and a half (51%) of pupils from MRC continue in education after they complete the compulsory education, compared with a national average of 75% (Table 14). Disadvantaged pupils also remain in upper secondary schools shorter. The percentage of pupils from MRC and households in the AMN system decreases sharply after the first grade at upper secondary schools when according to a standard education path compulsory education is completed. Less than 3% of pupils in the AMN system or from MRC make it to the fourth grade of upper secondary schools (Graph 19). This slump may also be due to the greater participation in the two-year F-type study programmes due to uncompleted basic school (Chapter 5.3).

¹⁵⁹ The career counselling system underwent several changes in 2019 <https://www.minedu.sk/zmeny-v-karierovom-poradenstve-v-systeme-regionalneho-skolstva-od-192019/>

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.minv.sk/?aktualne-vyzy-va-predkladanie-ziadosti-o-nenavratny-financny-prispevok&sprava=vyzva-zamerana-na-poskytovanie-mentorskej-a-tutorskej-podpory-pre-ziakov-z-mrk-s-dorazom-na-uspesne-ukoncenie-zs-a-plynuly-prechod-na-ss-oplz-po5-2017-2>

Table 14: Percentage of 16 years old children in the education system in the school year 2018/19 (%)

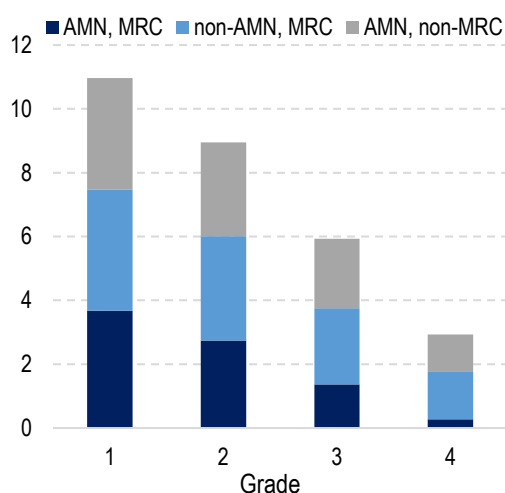
	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	56.3	70.2	62.2
non-AMN	47.0	78.8	76.6
Total	51.2	78.4	75.3

Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

The situation with pupils from SDB at the upper secondary level is similar to that in basic schools. Again, they represented to a greater extent in the special education stream at practical and vocational schools intended for pupils with intellectual disability. Nearly one third of upper secondary school students outside the AMN system and MRC study at gymnaziums and only 1% at vocational or practical schools (Graph 20). These proportions are reversed in the group of upper secondary school students from MRC and in the AMN system: less than 1% of them attend gymnaziums and 20% go to vocational and practical schools.

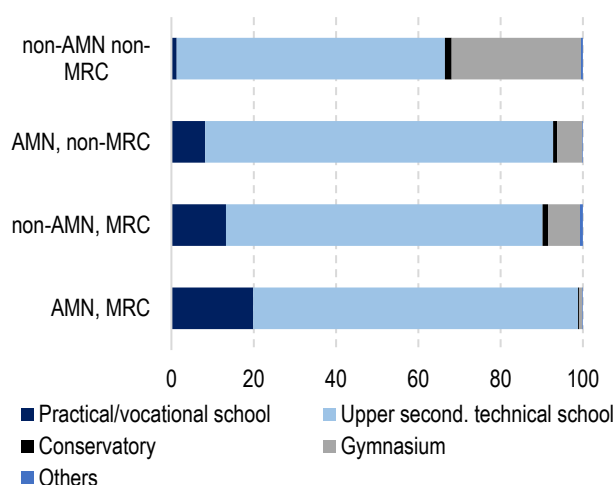
Graph 19: Share of disadvantaged groups to all upper secondary school students by grades in the school year 2018/19 (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: The grades of 8-year gymnaziums are adjusted so as to correspond to the other types of upper secondary schools. Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Graph 20: Distribution of upper secondary school students between types of schools in the school year 2018/19 (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Existing measures to support education of socially disadvantaged pupils at upper secondary schools

Upper secondary school social scholarships

The amount of EUR 3 million was used for upper secondary school scholarships in 2018. On average, the support was paid to 8,266 pupils a month, which is 4% of all upper secondary school pupils and, by estimate, 34% of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion.¹⁶¹ Eligible to the scholarship are pupils of upper secondary schools living in a household which receives AMN or which has income below the minimum subsistence income. The scholarship has three levels and depends on the pupil's school performance.

The current amount of the social scholarship (EUR 36) is insufficient to cover expenditures associated with studies (e.g. travel expenses, accommodation, textbooks and school supplies). Financial barriers to continuing education at a upper secondary school for poor pupils were also confirmed in the UNDP survey (2012)

¹⁶¹ The percentage of children at risk enrolled in secondary schools was estimated based on the at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate in the age group of 15 to 19 years in the 2016 EU SILC survey (23.6 %) and on the assumption that the number of persons at risk in this age group participating in education is the same as the number in the group of people in need.

in which 24% of the young people from MRC said that lack of money was the reason why they did not continue in education at a upper secondary school (the second most frequent response) (UNDP, 2012). Low support of secondary education may lead some poor pupils to prefer work (including informal economy) and, in the event of adult individuals, to prefer activation works which makes them eligible for the activation allowance. **The review therefore proposes to set the lowest amount of the upper secondary school scholarship at the level of the activation allowance paid as part of the assistance in material need system (currently EUR 67.90, Chapter 8.1). The proportion between the three levels of the scholarship may remain unchanged.**

5.5. University education

School results of socially disadvantaged children at universities

The participation in university education of socially disadvantaged groups is even lower than it is in the case of upper secondary schools. Only 10% of young people (19 to 23 years) from families which receive AMN are enrolled at a university in Slovakia, which is less than quarter the nationwide figure (Table 15). In the MRC environment, the participation in university education among young people is minimal – less than 7% in aggregate and 1.5% if MRC and AMN are combined.

Table 15: Percentage of 19 to 23 years old people within AMN system and from MRC who are or were enrolled at a university in Slovakia (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	1.5	19.4	10.3
non-AMN	8.0	48.8	46.1
Total	6.7	48.3	45.0

Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Existing measures to support socially disadvantaged students at universities

Social scholarships were paid to 9,488 students in 2018. They averaged EUR 102 a month, totalling nearly EUR 11.6 million. Students become eligible to a scholarship if they and, as the case may be, the persons assessed together with them have income below the total amount of individual minimum subsistence income amounts. The amount of a scholarship depends on the jointly assessed persons (e.g. spouse or parent), their total income and distance of the school from the student's permanent residence.¹⁶² The evaluation of this measure, i.e. how much scholarships compensate the disadvantage of university students from SDB and help them stay in tertiary education, is currently unavailable.

¹⁶² Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on universities and the Ministry of Education's Decree No. 102/2006 Coll. on social scholarship scheme for university students

6. Education of children with disability

- Access to high-quality inclusive education is an important element of social inclusion. The main vision of inclusive educational systems is to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities, have access to high-quality mainstream education within their community.
- Architectural, technological and informational barriers in schools negatively affect access to education for children and pupils with disabilities and preclude their full participation in the education process. The removal of barriers does not receive sufficient attention, whether at kindergartens, basic or upper secondary schools. Schools do not receive methodological guidance or sufficient financial support.
- Children with disabilities have restricted access to secondary education. The enrolment rate of pre-schoolers with disabilities (67%) is lower than the enrolment rate of pre-schoolers in the general population (85%). Mainstream kindergartens are not obliged to admit children with disabilities. Pupils with disabilities have worse results in basic schools than the general population and repeat grade more often (4% against 2.5%). 18% of pupils with disabilities, compared with 6% of the other pupils, do not continue in education after they complete the compulsory education.
- Special schools report excessive percentage of pupils from marginalised Roma communities (MRC) and pupils in the assistance in material need system (AMN), particularly due to the mild intellectual disability diagnosis. This disability is diagnosed three times as often as in the population of pupils in the AMN system and five times as often in the population of pupils from MRC than in the overall population of pupils enrolled at basic schools.
- Although more than one half of children with disabilities currently attend mainstream schools, internationally Slovakia reported the largest percentage of pupils educated in special schools in 2014 (6% of basic school population compared with less than 2% in the selected EU countries). At the same time, the belief prevailing at schools is that separate education in a special classroom or school is a more suitable option for majority of pupils with disabilities than education in mainstream schools. Contrary to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, pupils with intellectual disability may not be educated in mainstream upper secondary schools.
- Children with disabilities are primarily supported in primary and secondary education through higher normative contributions provided to meet the needs of these pupils. The data about use of such higher contributions is not available. However, the analysis of the available data reveals that these funds are usually insufficient for the school to fund teaching assistants and professional employees who play an important role in the development of inclusive environment at schools.
- Additional expenditures on the support of education of children and pupils with disabilities reached more than EUR 165 million in 2018. The largest portion of expenditures for the support of education of pupils with disabilities in the form of increased normative contributions was used in basic schools. The needs of children with disabilities educated in mainstream kindergartens and who attended after school clubs at mainstream basic schools were not taken into account in the funding system.
- To make the school premises more accessible, the review proposes to support, both methodologically and financially, the removal of structural barriers at all education levels. To increase inclusiveness of the Slovak education system, it is necessary to analyse and improve the preparedness of future and current teachers for education of children and pupils with disabilities, and develop human resources for inclusion in kindergartens and basic schools (teaching assistants, special education teachers, psychologists, mentors, tutors, etc.). For basic schools, the review proposes to define in more detail the role of teaching assistant, amend the assistant assignment criteria, and change it to a vested right.
- The review also proposes to allow pupils with intellectual disability to acquire lower secondary education to permit them to continue in education at mainstream upper secondary schools. In order to eliminate the excessive presence of pupils (including pupils from MRC) in the special education stream, it is necessary to change the curriculum for pupils with intellectual disability, support transfers between the special and mainstream schools and do a pilot test of the transformation of special education schools and classrooms.

Health disability

Children¹⁶³ with disabilities include children with various types of disability (intellectual, hearing, vision, physical, communication disorder, autism), children with a long-term illness and weakened health (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, asthma, etc.), children with developmental disorders (attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, learning disorders), and children with behavioural disorders.¹⁶⁴ Educational needs resulting from a child's disability are included in the special education needs which are diagnosed by centres of child-rearing counselling and prevention (counselling centres)¹⁶⁵ in cooperation with other specialists.¹⁶⁶

Children with disability are eligible to modified education conditions, content, forms, methods and approaches. They may be educated in mainstream classrooms of mainstream schools (integration), in special education classrooms of mainstream schools or in special schools (special education system).¹⁶⁷ Special classrooms and schools are normally set up for children with the same type of disability and, if included in special classrooms, part of education may also take place in mainstream classrooms together with other children.¹⁶⁸ Special classrooms and schools primarily employ teachers with special education degree.¹⁶⁹

Counselling centres recommend a specific method of education to the legal guardian. The recommendation is not binding. It is the head teacher who decides based on legal guardian's application whether or not to admit a child with disability.¹⁷⁰ Head teachers of kindergartens are not obligated to admit a child with disability. As regards basic schools, each child, including a child with a disability, has a mainstream school in his or her region which has to admit him or her.¹⁷¹

Children with disabilities are primarily educated in line with the national education programme for the relevant type of disability at all education levels, irrespective of whether they are enrolled in the mainstream or special education stream. If disability prevents children from being educated based on the educational programme for the relevant type of disability¹⁷², they may pursue individualised educational programme prepared by school in cooperation with the counselling centre. Children with disabilities are entitled to the education employing specific forms and methods appropriate to their needs and to the essential conditions which permit such an approach, including the use of special textbooks, multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids.¹⁷³

6.1. Education in kindergartens

Educational results of disabled children at kindergartens

The enrolment rate of pre-school children with disabilities totalled 67% compared with 85% of children without disability in the school year 2017/18, while the enrolment rate of 4 years old children with disability in 2016/17 was 57% compared with 72% of children without disability (Graph 21). It is not possible to quantify the enrolment rate of 3 years old children with disability from the available data (Box 9). Comparative data about

¹⁶³ The word children used in this chapter denominates children and pupils in the education system.

¹⁶⁴ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 2(k).

¹⁶⁵ Centres of Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling (CPPPpP) and Centres of Special Pedagogical Counselling (CSPC)

¹⁶⁶ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 130. This is initiated by a legal guardian or school always based on the prior informed consent of the legal guardian. Article 130

¹⁶⁷ Recommendation to educate child or pupil with special education needs in a kindergarten, basic or secondary school and in special school. Available at: <https://edicnyportal.iedu.sk/Forms/Show/476>

¹⁶⁸ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 94(1)(b)(1).

¹⁶⁹ Act No. 138/2019 Coll. on pedagogical and professional employees; Article 10(2). This does not apply to a teacher who performs child-rearing and education work in the extent of ten lessons a week at the most in a classroom for children and pupils with special education needs.

¹⁷⁰ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 28(12); Article (61)(1).

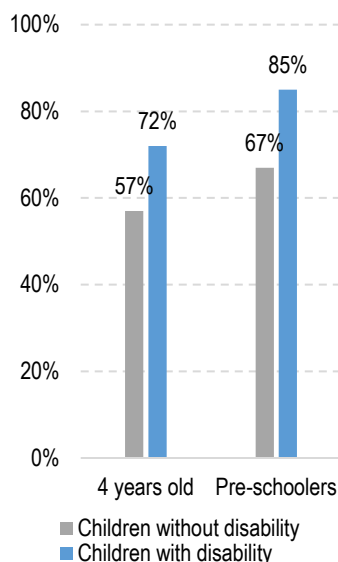
¹⁷¹ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 20(5).

¹⁷² Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 94(1)(b)(2) and Article 94(3).

¹⁷³ Act No. 245/2008 on child-rearing and education (School Law) and on amendments and supplements to certain laws; Article 144(2) and (3)

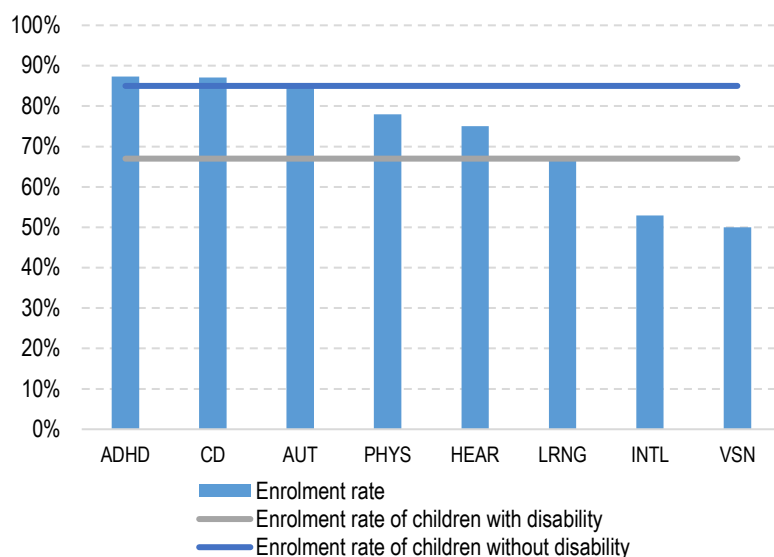
the enrolment rate of children with disabilities in other countries is not available. The causes of lower enrolment rate in Slovakia have not been research in detail yet.

Graph 21: Kindergarten enrolment rate of children with and without disability



Source: EPI's calculations based on the data from the ministerial IS (2016/17 and 2017/18)

Graph 22: Enrolment rate of pre-school children with disability by the type of disability, 2017/18



Source: EPI's calculations based on the data from the ministerial IS (2017, 2018) Children with behavioural disorders and ill and weakened children are not included in the enrolment rates due to insufficient number of surveys. ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, CD: communication disorder, AUT: autism syndrome¹⁷⁴, PHYS: physical disability, HEAR: hearing impairment, LRNG: learning disorders, INTL: intellectual disability¹⁷⁵, VSN: vision impairment.

Box 9: Calculation of the enrolment rate of children with disability and proportion of children with disability at kindergartens

The enrolment rates of children with disabilities are calculated based on the data from the ministerial IS. This data allows to trace back the enrolment rate of those children at kindergartens who were assigned the disability attribute in the first year of compulsory education at basic school. The review applies this approach because the number of children with disabilities in KGs in the data of the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (CSTI) is underestimated.¹⁷⁶

The first step identifies pupils with disabilities starting the compulsory education in the school year 2018/19; the second step identifies those children out of that group who attended kindergarten in previous school years (transfer of disability attribute from the basic school to the kindergarten). It is not possible to quantify the enrolment rate of 3 years old children with disabilities due to unavailability of the data for the school year 2015/16. Pupils who have already attended basic school (mainstream or special) in the "pre-school" years of interest are excluded from the sample. This is because some pupils repeat the first or, as the case may be, the zero or preparatory grade of basic school/special education basic school.

¹⁷⁴ The population of children with autism only includes children with autism without intellectual disability.
¹⁷⁵ The population of children with intellectual disability includes children with intellectual disability including intellectual disability combined with other disability.
¹⁷⁶ Kindergartens lack motivation to report disability attribute in the official statistics, whereas this attribute is not reflected in the funding system for mainstream kindergartens (although the administrators, usually municipalities, may reflect this fact in their funding schemes). Consequently, reporting disability may basically only result in greater administrative burden for kindergartens associated with the modification of educational programmes. As for parents, they may feel concerned about stigmatisation or rejection of their application for child's admission to the kindergarten if they openly communicate the existence of disability.

The final numbers of children with disabilities in mainstream kindergartens differ from the CSTI's official data. While the percentage of all children with disabilities in mainstream kindergartens in the school year 2017/18 was only 0.3% based on the CSTI's data, the percentage of pre-schoolers with disabilities resulting from the ministerial IS was 2.1% of the total number of pre-schoolers in the school year 2017/18 (Annex 14) and 4 years old children with disabilities accounted for 3.1% of all 4 years old children in the school year 2016/17. This comparison reveals that the data about children with disabilities at mainstream kindergartens is substantially underestimated.¹⁷⁷

However, all kinds of barriers can be found both in legislation and in reality. School Law gives head teachers of kindergartens the option not to admit children with disability if they do not have suitable conditions for their education. The maximum number of two children with special education needs set for one classroom restricts the number of children the head teachers may lawfully admit. Findings of the representative survey also suggest that insufficient preparedness of workers and insufficient equipment of mainstream and special kindergartens is a significant factor as well. Only 23% of teaching and professional staff of kindergartens compared with more than 70% of respondents from basic schools (Learning Makes Sense, 2019) feel to be prepared for education of children with disabilities. In certain cases, this situation leads to rejection of applications for admission of children with disabilities to kindergartens or to their placement only for a part of the day (Hapalová, 2019).

Compulsory pre-primary education for all pre-school children (effective from the school year 2021/22) will increase the enrolment rate of children with disabilities. However, successful implementation of this measure presupposes continuation in the removal of structural barriers to the access to education and in the education process the children with disabilities currently experience (this Chapter). **In addition to the below listed measures, the review therefore proposes to monitor the impact of compulsory pre-primary education on the enrolment rate of children with disabilities.**

The enrolment rates of children with disabilities differed in the school year 2017/18 depending on the disability. A substandard enrolment rate compared with children without disability as well as with all children with disability may be observed in pre-schoolers with vision impairment and intellectual disability (Graph 22).¹⁷⁸ On the contrary, children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, communication disorder and autism without intellectual disability reach comparable enrolment rates to the children without disabilities.

Nearly three quarters of preschoolers with disability at kindergartens (71%) were educated in the school year 2017/18 within mainstream education system and more than one quarter (29%) within special education stream. Majority of children in the special education stream were educated at special kindergartens, special education classrooms are rare at mainstream kindergartens.¹⁷⁹ The representation in special and mainstream education stream differs depending on the type of disability. Excessive presence in the special education stream in 2017/18 was particularly reported for pre-schoolers with intellectual disability (48%) and hearing impairment (49%) (Graph 23).¹⁸⁰

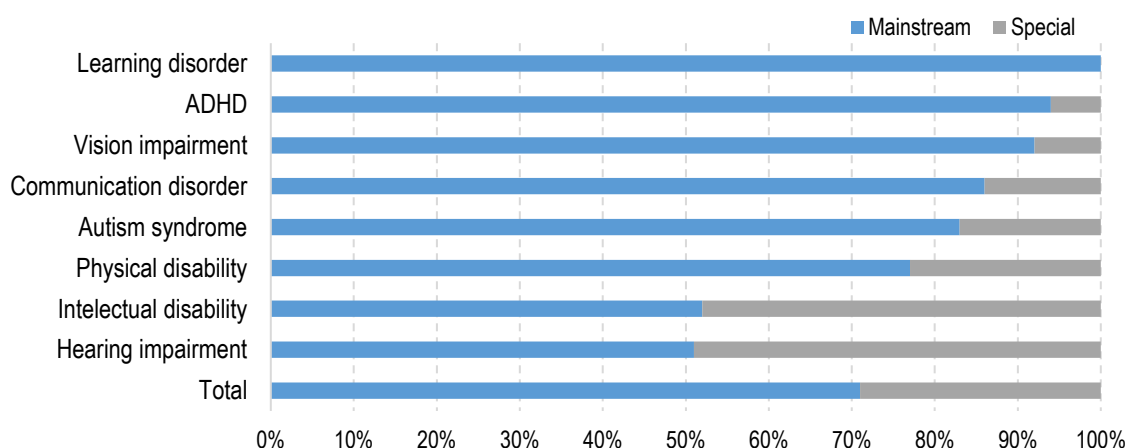
¹⁷⁷ The attribute of disability was actually reported in kindergartens only for 7% of children with disabilities who were diagnosed disability in the basic school (zero, preparatory and first grade) in 2018/19 and attended mainstream kindergarten in 2017/18. The underestimated reporting of disability is not the only reason of differing shares of children with disabilities at kindergartens and basic schools. This difference also results from other factors, such as naturally lower enrolment of children in non-compulsory pre-school education and accessibility and timing of diagnostics. The disability may be diagnosed at older school age for various reasons. Such reasons are diverse – parents themselves and teachers notice the disability at a later time, accessibility of diagnostics (counselling centres work primarily with school-age children), type of disability which may, by definition, be diagnosed at an older age (e.g. learning disorder, autism, etc.).

¹⁷⁸ EPI's calculations based on the data of the ministerial IS (2016 – 2018).

¹⁷⁹ Out of 1,310 children with disability, only 6 pre-school children with disability were educated in special education classrooms, the rest of the children attended either mainstream classrooms of mainstream kindergartens or special kindergartens.

¹⁸⁰ Among the 4-year olds, it was 44% for both the types of disability in the school year 2016/17 and excessive presence in the special education stream was also reported for children with physical disability (47%).

Graph 23: Percentage of pre-schoolers with disabilities educated within mainstream and special education stream



EPI's calculations based on data from the ministerial IS (2017, 2018)

Existing measures to support children with disabilities at kindergartens

Increased normative contributions for children with disabilities at special education kindergartens

Increased normative contributions at special kindergartens (SKG) reflect especially the substantially smaller classrooms at special kindergartens and higher qualification requirements for teachers. While the average number of children in classrooms of special kindergartens was 7, mainstream kindergartens may have 20 children in one classroom.¹⁸¹

In 2018, the state allocated on average EUR 5,325 for a child with disability at a special kindergarten, resulting in the cost which is EUR 2,999 higher compared with the average expenditures on a child at a mainstream kindergarten (EUR 2,326). The total additional expenditures on children with disability educated at 91 special kindergartens reached nearly EUR 5.4 million.¹⁸² 1,608 out of 1,812 children were educated at state SKGs and 204 children at private or religious SKGs. Only 175 children were educated in special education classrooms of mainstream kindergartens in 2018.¹⁸³ Increased normative contributions do not apply to such classrooms.

Organisation of education

The School Law limits the number of children with special education needs¹⁸⁴ in one classroom to two children¹⁸⁵ and allows to reduce the number of children in the kindergarten classroom by four as a result of their integration (two children for each integrated child). The efficiency of this measure is questionable. Reduction of the number of children in classrooms is not systematically reflected in the kindergarten funding scheme and the data we have does not allow us to say to what extent kindergartens use this option. Based on the information that is available it seems that only Slovakia, Turkey (SENnet, 2018) and Iceland (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019) reduce numbers of children in a classroom due to integration of a child with disability. Smaller number of children in a classroom may lead to the need to create a new classroom, resulting in

¹⁸¹ EPI's calculations based on CSTI's data (2017, 2018)

¹⁸² EPI's calculations based on Eduzber's data (2017, 2018) and based on average amount calculated for one child at a kindergarten according to the formula applied to the distribution of individual income taxes taking into consideration the equalized number of children at kindergarten in the calendar year 2018.

¹⁸³ EPI's calculations based on CSTI's data (2017, 2018)

¹⁸⁴ Children with special education needs include children with disability, gifted children and children from socially disadvantaged background.

¹⁸⁵ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 28(12).

higher expenditures due to the necessary increase in the number of teachers. It also exerts pressure on the already strained capacities of kindergartens.

On average, kindergarten classrooms had 20 children in 2018.¹⁸⁶ This is a limit for the optimum number of children in a classroom which should not be exceeded, or the quality of education may be affected by the size of the classroom (Browne et al., 2017). However, it follows from the available data that more than one third of kindergartens exceed this number, which teachers perceive as a barrier to efficient education of children with special education needs.¹⁸⁷ The School Law sets the maximum size of a classroom at the level of 20 to 22 children depending on the age structure of the relevant classroom and, if the demand for kindergarten places is high, it also permits head teachers to increase the number of children in a classroom by three at the most.¹⁸⁸ The questionnaire-based survey reveals that as many as 66.5% of teachers consider high number of children in a classroom to be the largest obstacle to the education of children with special needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). The review therefore proposes to continue in the development of kindergarten capacities, so the head teachers do not have to exceed the statutory limits.

The average number of children per one worker at a kindergarten (20 children) substantially exceeded the optimum figures. The current meta-analytical study suggested that the optimum number of children per one adult to maintain the quality of children's education and results is 10 to 15 children (Bowne et al., 2017). Also several EU countries set the maximum numbers of children per one worker (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).¹⁸⁹ Slovakia does not regulate the number of children per one worker and this number is identical with the average number of children in classrooms since the number of auxiliary workers is low. **The review therefore proposes to substantially increase the funds to support employment of support workers to gradually reduce the number of children per one worker.**

Special education multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids

Children with disability may use special multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids.¹⁹⁰ It is not possible to say based on the available data to what extent are the aids at kindergartens available or whether or how much kindergartens invest in their purchase. According to the School Law, centres of special pedagogic counselling participate in the procurement of aids as well (Article 133(4)). However, in spite of the audit of counselling centres, it is not clear what aids centres dispose of and whether or to what extent they borrow it to kindergartens.¹⁹¹ **The review therefore proposes to audit the available and necessary aids for children with disabilities in pre-primary education.**

Preparedness of teachers

The preparation of teachers is crucial in the application of specific methods and forms of education. Complex analysis of the efficiency of preparation of future pre-school teachers does not exist in Slovakia. However, the representative survey among kindergarten teachers shows that as many as 76.8% of teachers of mainstream kindergartens has not undergone any continuing education in the area of child-rearing and education of children with special needs, and 66.3% of them also mentioned they felt need for further education. The second

¹⁸⁶ EPI's calculations based on the CSTI's data (2018)

¹⁸⁷ The CSTI's data (2018) show that 1,144 out of 3,001 kindergartens had 22 or more children in one classroom (the calculation reflects the statutory limits and is adjusted to reflect the hygienic capacity). The maximum number of children in classrooms is set above the optimum 20 children per classroom in other EU countries as well, but around one of them regulate the maximum number of children per one worker (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

¹⁸⁸ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 28(9) and (10)

¹⁸⁹ 8 out of 20 education systems of EU countries in case of 5 years old children and 12 out of 20 education systems in case of 3 years old children. The maximum numbers of children per one adult are set at 8 to 13.

¹⁹⁰ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 144(2) and (3)

¹⁹¹ Unpublished audit of counselling centres prepared by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Patopsychology for the Ministry of Education.

most frequent reason why they did not take part in education given by nearly one quarter of respondents (24.1%) was the insufficient offer of suitable accredited programmes (Learning Makes Sense, 2019).

The offer of accredited continuous education courses in 2018 containing 117 courses offered to kindergarten teachers contained only four courses focusing on education of children with disabilities and four general courses covering inclusion in the classroom.¹⁹² 428 teachers, i.e. 3% of all kindergarten teachers, took part in these programmes in 2018 (Annex 7). **The review proposes to: (1) expand the offer of education programmes for kindergarten teachers with emphasis on the acquisition of skills required for education of children with disabilities; and (2) research the educational content for future teachers to assess whether teachers are being prepared for education of children with disabilities and to what extent.**

Specialised employees

The role of professional employees is to identify child's disadvantage, stimulate child's development employing specific interventions, and help teachers to adjust the educational content, methods and forms to the child's needs.¹⁹³ The national educational programme for children with disabilities provides that professional employees should be used in a classroom or provide children with professional care if the child-rearing and education process of the child requires it depending on the severity of disability and based on recommendation of the centre of special pedagogic counselling (National Institute for Education, 2017).

The 2018 expenditures on professional employees working directly at kindergartens amounted to EUR 587 thousand in mainstream kindergartens and EUR 75 thousand in special kindergartens. 57 professional employees provided services in mainstream kindergartens¹⁹⁴, at least one professional employee provided services in 1% of kindergartens.¹⁹⁵ 28 professional employees worked in special kindergartens, all of them psychologists.¹⁹⁶ The wages of professional employees were paid by administrators out of their own funds whereas their services are not reflected in the kindergarten funding schemes.

The analysis of how successful kindergartens are in hiring professional employees and the analysis of efficiency of professional employees at work has not been done. Neither is available comparative data about the average and optimum numbers of professional employees in other countries. However, international comparison reveals that support in the form of professional employees as early as at the pre-primary education level is a part of education systems in majority of EU countries (Eurydice, 2014), and that it might be crucial to early diagnostics of needs of children and to the improvement of inclusiveness of the education system (EASNIE, 2017).

The review therefore proposes to allocate funds to automatically cover for 50% of the average wage¹⁹⁷ of a selected professional employee depending on the size of the kindergarten or, as the case may be, the

¹⁹² To get a comprehensive overview of education offered in the area of special education needs of children with disabilities, it is necessary to analyse the content of other programmes which focus on other areas (e.g. use of ICT), but may also contain specific recommendations for work with children with special education needs within their curricula.

¹⁹³ Minister's Instruction No. 39/2017 laying down the professional standards for individual categories and sub-categories of pedagogical and professional employees of schools and educational facilities. Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/pokyn-ministra-c-392017-ktorym-sa-vydavaju-profesijne-standardy-pre-jednotlive-kategorie-a-podkategorie-pedagogickych-zamestnancov-a-odbornych-zamestnancov-skol-a-skolskych-zariadeni/>. The above professional standards describe specific competencies of individual support employees.

¹⁹⁴ 11 special education teachers, 10 psychologists and 36 other professional employees (speech therapists, social and therapeutic pedagogues).

¹⁹⁵ In 40 of 3,001.

¹⁹⁶ EPI's calculations based on CSTI's data (2017, 2018).

¹⁹⁷ The analysis of revenues and expenditures of kindergarten administrators shows that the expenditures of municipalities, i.e. the administrators of kindergartens, on pre-primary education are on average EUR 15,579 lower per one kindergarten than their revenues from the so-called proportional taxes calculated based on the number of children in kindergartens. This means that majority of municipalities currently have funds to cover for 50% of the tariff wage of a professional employee. 18% of municipalities have revenues lower than expenditures, and 15% of municipalities had revenues greater than expenditures by 0 to 10% (Annex 9).

number of classrooms at the kindergarten irrespective of the number of disabled children, if the administrators of kindergartens show interest in this kind of support.¹⁹⁸

Teaching assistants and ancillary tutors

The expenditures on teaching assistants at kindergartens amounted to nearly EUR 2.5 million in 2018. Almost EUR 1.5 million of that came from the budget of administrators (123 assistants) and nearly EUR 1 million came from the European funds (81 assistants).¹⁹⁹ Their role is to help overcome barriers resulting from disability.²⁰⁰ 166 teaching assistants provided services in mainstream kindergartens, at least one assistant provided services in 5 % of mainstream kindergartens. 38 teaching assistants provided services in special kindergartens, at least one assistant provided services in 30% of special kindergartens.²⁰¹ The work of teaching assistants is not taken into account in the kindergarten funding system and it is not specifically financially supported as it is in basic schools (Chapter 5.3).²⁰² The questionnaire-based survey of *To dá rozum* (Learning Makes Sense) project implies that shortage of teaching assistants at kindergartens is considered to be the greatest problem of education of children with special education needs by 45% of KG teachers and 51% of special kindergartens (in both cases, this was the most frequent response) (Learning Makes Sense, 2019)

The expenditures on ancillary tutors amounted to approximately EUR 437 thousand in 2018.²⁰³ **All in all, 60 ancillary tutors worked at kindergartens, three at mainstream kindergartens and 57 at special kindergartens.**²⁰⁴ Their role is to do auxiliary works during the child-rearing and education process, particularly physical care for children and helping them to serve themselves (Chapter 5.3).

To prepare kindergartens for the compulsory pre-primary education and to reduce the number of children per one adult in kindergarten classrooms, the review proposes to allocate to administrators funds to cover for 50% of the average wage²⁰⁵ of teaching assistants/ancillary tutors for children with disabilities who were recommended to have a teaching assistant/ancillary tutor (in accordance with clearly defined role of teaching assistant/ancillary tutor, Chapter 6.2).

Missing measures to support children with disabilities at kindergartens

Not all children with disabilities can select the education stream and, moreover, it is often impossible for them to attend kindergartens in the existing system.

Head teachers of mainstream kindergartens have an option not to admit a child with disability. However, the capacity of special kindergartens or their accessibility when it comes to children with various types of

¹⁹⁸ Presence of professional employees at kindergartens (psychologists, special teachers, speech therapists, etc.) is beneficial to all children, not just the children with disabilities.

¹⁹⁹ EPI's calculations based on the data from CSTI (2017, 2018) and the data from the National Programme of School Open to Everyone (2019).

²⁰⁰ Act No. 138/2019 Coll. on pedagogical and professional employees, Article 21. The national educational programme for children with disabilities provides that teaching assistants should be used in a classroom if it is necessary for the child-rearing and education process of the child depending on the severity of disability and based on recommendation of the centre of special pedagogic counselling (National Institute for Education, 2017).

²⁰¹ EPI's calculations based on the data from CSTI (2018). Teaching assistants were used to a greater extent in non-state mainstream kindergartens and non-state special kindergartens (teaching assistants were present in 14% of private KGs and 88% of private SKGs).

²⁰² Basic schools may apply for financial support to cover the cost of teaching assistants for pupils with disabilities every year. Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/asistenti-ucitela-pre-ziakov-so-zdravotnym-znevychodnenim/>

²⁰³ Calculated as the median value of wage costs in the 3rd salary bracket which applies to ancillary tutors according to the Annex 3 of Act No. 553/2003 Coll. on the remuneration of certain employees for work in the public interest.

²⁰⁴ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018)

²⁰⁵ The analysis of revenues and expenditures of kindergarten administrators shows that the expenditures of municipalities, i.e. the administrators of kindergartens, on pre-primary education are on average EUR 15,579 lower per one kindergarten than their revenues from the so-called proportional taxes calculated based on the number of children in kindergartens. This means that majority of municipalities currently have funds to cover for 50% of the tariff wage of a professional employee. 18% of municipalities have revenues lower than expenditures, and 15% of municipalities had revenues greater than expenditures by 0 to 10% (Annex 9).

disability continues to be limited. This is contrary to our undertaking to support inclusive education and *de facto* prevents some children with disabilities from taking part in pre-primary education.

A head teacher of a mainstream kindergarten may reject to admit a child with disabilities if the head teacher concludes that the staff, structural and material conditions at the kindergarten are not suitable for education of such a child. The currently valid regulation does not impose an obligation upon head teachers to arrange for such conditions and neither is there a system of support in place which the administrators of kindergartens could use in order to improve the conditions (Ministry of Education, 2018). The data about the number of children not admitted due to unsuitable conditions is not available, and neither do we monitor whether and how many children with disabilities have not been admitted to mainstream kindergartens due to shortage of places. In the representative survey with KG head teachers, nearly 6% of them noted that they had not admitted certain pupils with special education needs in the school year 2017/18 because their school was not able to satisfy their needs. However, qualitative data from interviews with parents of children with disabilities suggest that this practice may be more widespread (Hapalová, 2019).

Slovakia continues to build special kindergartens (SKG) in spite of commitments to develop inclusive education system. The number of SKGs has nearly doubled during the past ten years (from 43 to 74); nevertheless, their capacities continue to be insufficient²⁰⁶ and at least one SKG for a specific type of disability in each of the regions is only available for children with intellectual disability and those with autism.²⁰⁷ **The review proposes several measures to strengthen inclusiveness of mainstream kindergartens and, further to those measures, proposes to cancel the option not to admit children with disabilities to mainstream kindergartens.**

The needs of children with disabilities are not taken into consideration in the kindergarten funding scheme

As many as 28% of mainstream kindergartens educate at least one child with a disability;²⁰⁸ this figure should grow once the compulsory pre-primary education is established. Majority of municipalities (82%) spend less on kindergartens from the so-called proportional taxes than they received based on the number of children enrolled in kindergartens.²⁰⁹ The formula for the allocation of funds from the so-called proportional taxes which are used to fund substantial part of expenditures of kindergartens only reflects the number of children in the kindergarten, disregarding their special education needs. The revenues of municipalities from the so-called proportional taxes are not purpose-specific; this means that administrators of kindergartens may also use the funds allocated for pre-primary education on other purposes. That is to say, municipalities as the administrators of kindergartens may reflect special education needs of children in kindergarten funding only if they so decide. The analysis of the available data reveals that the presence of children with disabilities at kindergartens does not substantially affect the expenditures on pre-primary education. The amounts calculated based on the formula for distribution of the so-called proportional taxes based on the number of children enrolled in KGs for individual municipalities are not published anywhere, making control of financial management of administrators by experts or public impossible (Annex 9).²¹⁰ **The review therefore proposes to publish the volume of funds allocated for one child in a kindergarten at the level of municipalities.**

²⁰⁶ According to the CSTI's data (2018), SKGs reject applications on the grounds of shortage of spaces as well. Majority of applications come from the Bratislava region (30), other regions have reported such applications as well: Žilina reported 3, Košice 4 and Prešov region reported 2. The rejected applications included children with intellectual disability (25), children with autism (19) and children with hearing impairment (4).

²⁰⁷ EPI's calculations based on the data from CSTI (2018).

²⁰⁸ EPI's calculations based on data from the ministerial IS (2017).

²⁰⁹ Actual expenditures on pre-primary education in the calendar year 2017 taken into consideration. The resources of the expenditures were adjusted for the funds from the state budget, EU and co-funding schemes. Only the expenditures paid from the revenues of municipalities taken into account. Both current and capital expenditures considered.

²¹⁰ The Ministry of Education publishes the value of the unit coefficient which allows to calculate the amounts distributed to each municipality based on the number of children enrolled in kindergartens in the "Frequently asked questions" document here: <https://www.minedu.sk/financovanie-zus-ms-js-a-skolskych-zariadeni-prostrednictvom-podielovych-dani/>. However, the amount allocated based on the number of children at kindergartens can only be calculated if we know the data about the number of children attending

Removal of structural barriers from kindergartens is not supported.

No funds are allocated for removal of structural barriers in kindergartens. The Ministry of Education does not provide kindergartens with guidance in this respect²¹¹ and does not monitor the situation either. **Complex data about barrier-free design of kindergartens is not available.** Based on the findings of the State School Inspection authority only 3% of the checked mainstream schools underwent reconstruction in the school year 2018/19 to become barrier-free (State School Inspection, 2018a).²¹² Besides the lack of funds, the problem may also be caused by insufficient methodological support. As a result schools and their administrators have poor knowledge about the necessary parameters of a barrier-free environment and are unable to assess the drawbacks of the existing situation or define an optimum barrier-free condition.²¹³ Representative survey showed that more than one third of head teachers of mainstream kindergartens (35.1%) consider physical barriers in their buildings to be a barrier to the education of children with special education needs; much lower figure (4.3%) is reported by head teachers of special kindergartens (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). **The review therefore proposes: (1) to develop a manual on making the school premises barrier-free; and (2) to allocate funds to support efforts to make kindergartens barrier-free.**

6.2. Education in basic schools (primary and lower secondary level)

School performance of disabled children at basic schools

The percentage of pupils with disabilities amounted to 11 % of the total basic school population in 2018 (51,869 pupils).²¹⁴ The percentage of pupils with disabilities of the total population of basic school pupils has been stable since 2014 (Annex 15), but the figure is high when compared internationally. The average percentage of pupils who were diagnosed to have special education needs in the selected EU countries was more than one half lower (4.4%) in 2014.²¹⁵

Table 16: Number of pupils with disabilities at basic schools by the type of disability (2018)

Type of disability	Number of pupils	Percentage of pupils (%)
Intellectual disability	24,403	47.0
Learning disorders	15,014	28.9
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder	4,539	8.8
Communication disorder	3,649	7.0
Behavioural disorder	930	1.8
Autism	743	1.4
Physical disability	714	1.4
Hearing impairment	673	1.3
Multiple disability	450	0.9
Visual impairment	394	0.8
Illness and weakened health	361	0.7
TOTAL	51,869	100.0

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018)

kindergartens by individual administrators reported for funding purposes by each municipality. This information is not available to general public or experts.

²¹¹ The national education programme for children with disabilities defines barrier-free design as a material and technical prerequisite for the education of children with certain types of disability. Available at: <http://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/deti-ziaci-so-svvp/deti-ziaci-so-zdravotnym-znevyhodnenim-vseobecnym-intelektovym-nadanim/vzdelavacie-programy/vp-deti-so-zz-schvalene-maj-2017.pdf>

²¹² 5 out of 159 of the inspected kindergartens.

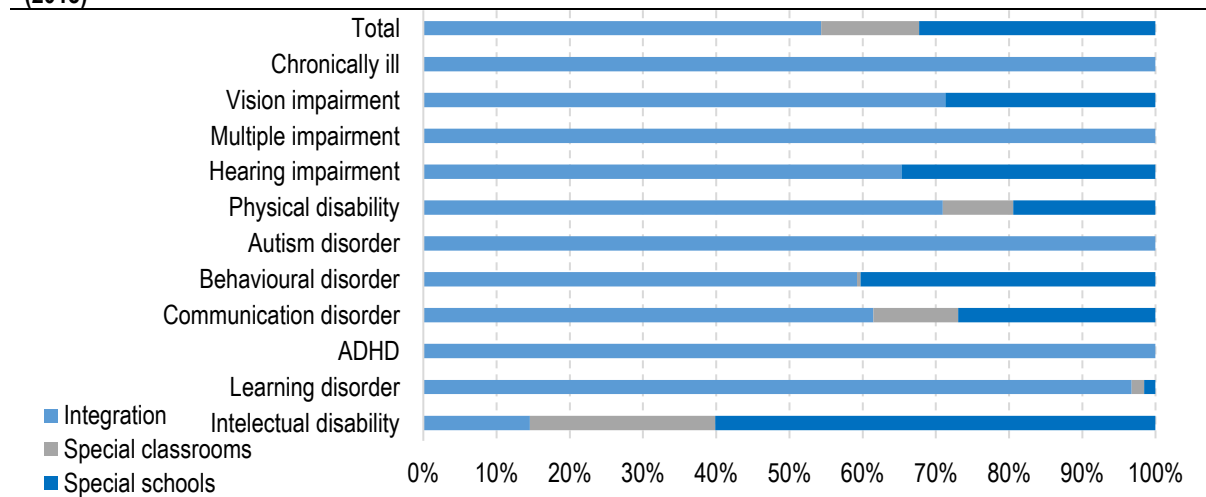
²¹³ For example, schools or, as the case may be, their administrators, may restrict their barrier-free efforts only to a barrier-free entrance to the building for people with physical disability. However, it is also necessary to make the sanitary, boarding and sports premises as well as information technologies barrier-free, and all of that also for people with sensory impairments.

²¹⁴ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018)

²¹⁵ International comparison includes pupils with diagnosed special education needs, although definitions of special education needs may vary across countries.

Pupils with intellectual disability account for nearly one half (47%) of pupils with disabilities and pupils with learning disorder more than one quarter (29%) (Table 16). The greatest increase since 2012²¹⁶ has been observed with the number of pupils with developmental attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, learning disorders and communication disorder. On the contrary, the greatest decrease was identified in the number of pupils with mild intellectual disability, behavioural disorders and physical disability (Annex 16).

Graph 24: Percentage of pupils with individual types of disability in mainstream and special education stream (2018)

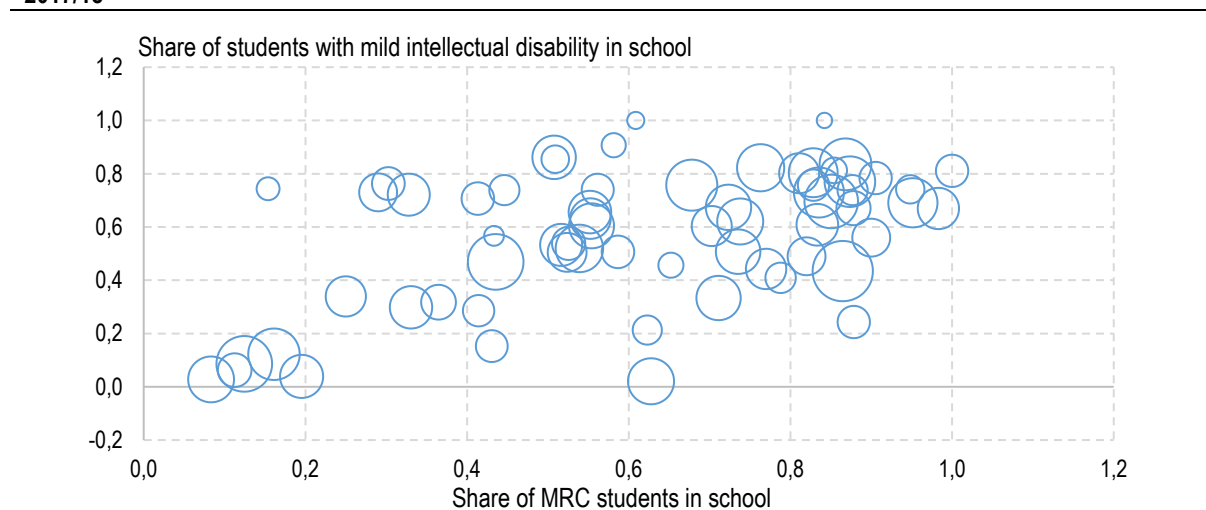


Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018)

The population of pupils with intellectual disability includes pupils with intellectual disability including intellectual disability combined with other disability. The population of pupils with autism only includes pupils with autism without intellectual disability. Multiple disability is not unambiguously defined, and therefore this category may be interpreted and reported differently by various entities. Multiple disability is only reported in mainstream classrooms of mainstream schools.

More than one half of pupils with disabilities (54.3%) was educated at mainstream schools in 2018. This is not true about pupils with intellectual disability, as more than four fifths (85%) of them were educated within the special education stream (special schools and classrooms). Around one third of pupils with disabilities (32.3%) was educated at special schools and the smallest portion in special classrooms (13.4%) (Graph 24).

Graph 25: Proportion of disabled pupils at special schools in Prešov and Košice regions in the school year 2017/18



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: bubble size is proportionate to the school size

²¹⁶ The data about pupils with disabilities in the existing structure has been collected since 2012. Data about pupils with developmental attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, about pupils who are ill and have weakened health, and about pupils with multiple disabilities was not collected before 2012.

Mild intellectual disability is significantly more common in pupils within the AMN system and those from MRC than in the general population of basic school pupils. While mild intellectual disability was diagnosed to only 4% of pupils of the general population of disabled pupils, in the population of pupils in the AMN system the figure was three times as high (12%) and in the population of pupils from MRC it was nearly five times as high (19.3%). At the same time, mild intellectual disability is the most common disability in the population of pupils in the AMN system and from MRC, while in the general population other disabilities prevail (Table 17). At the level of special schools in eastern Slovakia, where the majority of the MRC population lives, the proportion of pupils with mild intellectual disability positively correlates with the proportion of pupils from MRC (Graph 25).

Excessive representation of pupils from MRC among pupils with mild intellectual disability resulted in EUR 8.1 million higher expenditures on education in the school year 2017/18 due to higher normative contribution.²¹⁷ This estimate is based on a comparison of the existing status with a simulation in which prevalence of mild intellectual disability in the population of pupils from MRC and the distribution of pupils across various methods of education (integration, special classroom, special school) corresponds to the prevalence of the disability and education methods in the population of pupils in the AMN system outside MRCs (Table 17). If the prevalence of mild intellectual disability and the methods of education of pupils from MRC copied the general population of basic school pupils, the expenditures on education of pupils with mild intellectual disability would be EUR 14.6 million lower.²¹⁸

Table 17: Distribution of groups of pupils by the type of disability and education method (%)

	General population of basic school pupils	AMN, non-MRC	MRC
Percentage of the group with mild intellectual disability	4.0	12.0	19.3
whereof integrated pupils	0.8	3.1	3.2
whereof special classrooms	1.2	3.7	6.9
whereof special schools	2.0	5.2	9.2
Other disabilities	8.0	8.1	6.6
Pupils without disabilities	88.0	79.9	74.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Vfm unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN. Pupils with mild intellectual disability do not include pupils with combined disability. Such pupils are included in the "Other disabilities" group.

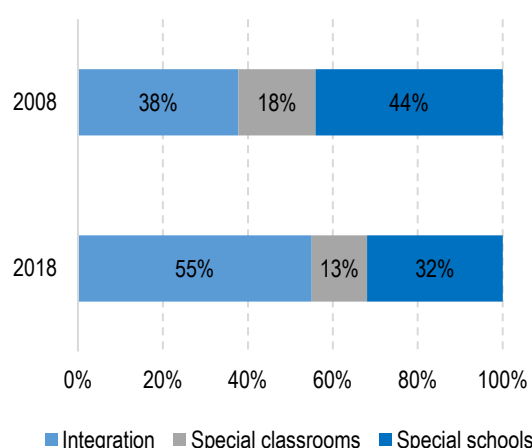
Although several national projects focusing on the support of inclusive education have been implemented in recent years (Annex 10), the opinion that separate education in a special education stream is a more suitable form of education for pupils with disabilities than their education at mainstream schools continues to prevail at schools. This opinion has also been affirmed by the representative survey made with the representatives of schools (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). Greatest support of separate education (64% to 86% of respondents) was reported in case of pupils with more severe types of disabilities. Nevertheless, a large percentage of respondents considered special education stream to be suitable also for pupils with behavioural disorders (54.1%), learning disorders (43.5%) or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (42.8%). Substantial support of separate education was even reported in case of pupils with physical disability (38.5%), although making the school premises barrier-free is often the only measure needs to be done for these pupils. Such attitudes may stem from insufficient awareness-raising among stakeholders about the possible approaches to the education of these pupils as well as insufficient conditions of schools for inclusive education.

²¹⁷ In the school year 2017/18, the average normative contribution for a pupil with mild intellectual disability integrated into mainstream school totalled EUR 2,952, in the special classroom it was EUR 3,311 and in the special school it was EUR 3,206. To compare, the average normative contribution for a pupil in a mainstream classroom without disability amounted to EUR 1,695.

²¹⁸ 44% of pupils of mainstream and special schools from MRC come from families who do not receive assistance in material need.

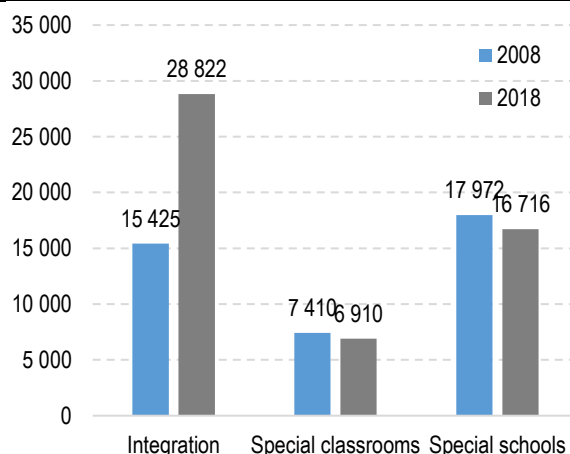
Although the percentage of pupils with disabilities educated in special education stream has been falling down (Graph 26), Slovakia still has the highest share of pupils in special education stream when compared internationally. 5.9% of basic school population attended the special education stream in Slovakia in the school year 2014/15 compared with 1.6% in the selected EU countries. While the number of integrated pupils with disabilities has nearly doubled during the past ten years (87% increase), the number of pupils in special schools and classrooms dropped only by 7% (Graph 27). The percentage of pupils transferred from mainstream to special schools has decreased, dropping by more than one third compared to 2008 (37%) (Annex 17).

Graph 26: Percentage of pupils with disabilities in individual education streams



Source: Own calculations based on data from CSTI

Graph 27: Number of pupils with disabilities in individual education streams



Source: Own calculations based on data from CSTI

At least one pupil with a disability was educated at 86% of mainstream basic schools. The average percentage of pupils with disabilities enrolled at a mainstream basic school was 8%. More than one third of basic schools (35%) reported more-than-average percentage of pupils with disabilities (16%). Only a small part of schools (2%) had more than 30% of pupils with disabilities. 14% of schools had special classrooms.²¹⁹ The index of dissimilarity also shows that some basic school pupils with disabilities are concentrated in separate classrooms which are not special education classrooms (Annex 18).

Pupils with disabilities scored worse in the T9 testing in 2018 than pupils without disabilities (Table 18).²²⁰ All pupils with disabilities, except the pupils with intellectual disability, take part in the testing. Pupils with severe types of disabilities or, as the case may be, pupils with multiple disability may choose to do the test.

Table 18: T9 testing results (2018) – average success rate (%)

	Slovak		Math	
	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group
Pupils without disability	64		57	
Pupils with disability	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group
whereof pupils with disabilities at basic schools	49	55	42	48
whereof pupils with disabilities in special basic schools	54	53	43	41

Head teacher includes pupils with disabilities in one of the groups of limitations based on recommendation of professional employees depending on the limitations applying to their capacity to work with a text. The test for pupils with disabilities included in the 1st group is adjusted formally and/or in terms of content, they have more time to complete the test and may use compensatory aids. Pupils included in the 2nd group also have an assistant, interpreter or special teacher at disposal (NUCEM, 2018). Gifted pupils are not included in the group of pupils without disabilities. The results of pupils with disabilities who attend special classrooms at mainstream schools have not been included due to their low number.

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from NUCEM and CSTI (2017, 2018).

²¹⁹ Eduzber (2018/19)

²²⁰ The T5 testing results are not reported due to low participation of pupils from special schools in testing. Comparison of the results of pupils by individual types of disabilities is not presented due to low number of pupils in individual disability groups.

The grade repetition rate was higher for pupils with disabilities than for the pupils from the general population in 2018. 4% of pupils with disabilities repeated grade in the school year 2018/19 compared with 2.5% of pupils from the general population of basic schools. Pupils with disabilities enrolled in mainstream classrooms and in special classrooms repeated grade to a greater extent (4%) than pupils with disabilities at special schools (2.5%). The highest grade repetition rate within individual types of disabilities was identified in pupils with intellectual disability and pupils with developmental learning disorders.²²¹

Existing measures to support education of disabled children at basic schools

Support of barrier-free design

11 mainstream basic schools (EUR 89 thousand) and 11 special basic schools (EUR 101 thousand received support in amount of EUR 190 thousand for barrier-free reconstructions in 2018. The demand of eligible applicants has not significantly exceeded the volume of allocated funds (except for one year) since 2015 when the funds for barrier-free reconstruction started to be allocated.²²² However, anecdotal evidence reveals that the number of applications is “regulated” in line with the allocation at the level of county authorities through which administrators file applications for the Ministry of Education.

Complex data about the barrier-free design of basic schools is not available. Out of schools which applied for funds to cover for the cost of teaching assistants in 2018, 33% of mainstream and 25% of special basic schools were made barrier-free to some extent.²²³ Findings of the State School Inspection authority reveal that a half of the inspected schools underwent partial barrier-free reconstruction in the school year 2018/19 (SSI, 2018).²²⁴

Although the Ministry of Education encourages schools in the Pedagogical and Organisational Instructions issued every year to create barrier-free environment (POI, 2018), it does not provide any methodological guidance. According to the questionnaire-based survey, 7.5% of head teachers of basic schools and 11.1% of head teachers of special basic schools consider physical barriers in the school building to be one of the greatest problems for education of pupils with special education needs by (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). Also the Ombudsman pointed out poor awareness about the importance of barrier-free design. She notes that administrators of mainstream schools or the mainstream schools themselves do not perceive barriers at schools as an issue and believe that pupils with disabilities should be educated in the special education system (Ombudsman, 2016).

A problematic aspect of the current setting of funding schemes is that only schools which already educate pupils with disabilities may apply for funds. This approach expects to first admit a pupil with disability and educate such pupil in an environment with structural barriers and only then initiate steps to make it barrier-free. This is unacceptable in case of catchment basic schools for a specific group of pupils²²⁵.

The review therefore proposes: (1) to allow all basic schools to apply for funds for removal of structural barriers; (2) to increase the volume of funds allocated for barrier removal; and (3) to develop a manual for a barrier-free design of school premises.

Preparatory grade

The main objective of the preparatory grade is to enable pupils with disabilities who are not ready to master the first grade in a special classroom at a basic school/special basic school to develop school readiness to be able to start the first grade. 994 pupils attended the preparatory grade in 2018. Majority of them (82%) attended preparatory grade in special basic schools. Pupils with intellectual disability (54%) and pupils with

²²¹ EPI's calculations based on the data from CSTI and the ministerial IS (2017, 2018).

²²² <https://www.minedu.sk/rozvojove-projekty-v-regionalnom-skolstve/> Funds applied for were nearly twice as high as the allocated funds in 2017 only.

²²³ Unpublished data of the Ministry of Education from the ASIST form (2018). 58% of all mainstream basic schools and 84% of all special basic schools applied for funds to cover the costs of teaching assistants.

²²⁴ 11 out of 22 basic schools. Two schools were made completely barrier-free.

²²⁵ Pupil has a right to be admitted to the catchment school.

communication disorder (35%) were most common in the preparatory grade. Whereas the preparatory grade is the first year of the compulsory education period, it reduces the chances that pupils would complete the basic school/special basic school if they repeat a grade, just like it is in the case of the zero grade opened for pupils from SDB.²²⁶

In connection with the establishment of compulsory pre-primary education of pre-school children, the preparatory grade is expected to be cancelled from the school year 2022/23²²⁷. Some legal guardians of children with disabilities may decide to educate their children on an individual basis also due to the limited preparedness of mainstream kindergartens and insufficient capacity of special kindergartens. Such children who would not have contact with formal education before enrolling in a basic school should be allowed to attend the preparatory grade which should not be included in the compulsory education period. **The review therefore proposes to revise the provision cancelling the preparatory grade in relation to the children with disabilities based on the outcomes of the first year of the compulsory pre-primary education.**

Educational content

Pupils with disabilities at basic schools are expected to be educated primarily based on the national education programmes (NEP) for the relevant type of disability.²²⁸ Only if their disability does not allow it may individualised education programmes be employed for such pupils. The data about how many pupils with disabilities are educated based on a specific NEP and how many based on an individualised one is not available.

Having different curriculum for pupils with disabilities is contrary to the current trends in education. Establishment of a specific curriculum for all pupils with certain diagnosis does not allow to take into consideration their individual needs and skills. Therefore, instead of having specific curricula it is recommended to educate pupils irrespective of the disability based on a uniform standard and only adjust to their specific needs the method of acquisition, e.g. adjustment of the teaching method, method of instruction, adjustment of the time required to handle the task, etc. (EASNIE, 2003; Winter, O'Raw, 2010). An individualised study plan may be prepared for pupils, if their situation requires it (however, the objectives and standards of education remain unchanged; NCSE, 2012).

The problem of differing curricula is most protuberant in the education of pupils with intellectual disability who have different content and performance standards set than the other pupils.²²⁹ Such a curriculum does not allow to reflect the true potential of individual pupils and hinders eventual transfer of pupils from special to mainstream education system.²³⁰ It causes the pupils who have potential to "lag behind" when they are transferred to a mainstream school.

The USA's 2001 *No Child Left Behind* law laid down a rule which does not allow to specifically adjust educational objectives for more than 1% of pupils. Schools assume the responsibility for all pupils acquiring knowledge and skills set in the national curriculum (Courtade, Browder, 2016). This approach requires more from schools and teachers (who must be able to adjust their teaching to the needs of all pupils), and therefore it is necessary to invest in the education of teachers and support of professional employees at schools (Taylor, 2017).

The review therefore proposes to amend the legislation to encourage schools to primarily educate pupils with disabilities according to an individualised education programme based on the general NEP and to

²²⁶ Due to poor data quality, it is not possible to calculate the first grade repetition rate for those who went to the preparatory grade in order to assess its efficiency.

²²⁷ Act No. 209/2019 Coll. changing and amending the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law)

²²⁸ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law), Article 94(3) and Article 94(1)(b)(2)

²²⁹ http://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/deti-ziaci-so-svvp/deti-ziaci-so-zdravotnym-znevyhodnenim-vseobecny-intelektovym-nadanim/vzdelavacie-programy/vzdelavacie-programy-ziakov-so-zdravotnym-znevyhodnenim-vseobecny-intelektovym-nadanim/zakladne-vzdelavanie-primarne-vzdelavanie-nizsie-stredne-vzdelavanie/vp_pre_ziakov_s_mentalnym_postihnutim.pdf

For example, pupils of special schools do not learn any foreign language.

²³⁰ Mild intellectual disability is not diagnosed objectively in Slovakia – an issue Slovakia has struggled with on a long term basis (State School Inspection, 2016a, 2016b, and 2017a).

gradually abandon the option of creating and using specific NEPs for pupils with individual types of disabilities.

Special education multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids

Pupils with disabilities may use special textbooks, and multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids.²³¹ As in the case of kindergartens, in the case of basic schools, the available data does not make it possible to say to what extent textbooks and aids are available in schools, nor whether or what amount of school resources they invest in purchasing aids. According to the School Law, centres of special pedagogic counselling participate in the procurement of aids as well (Article 133(4)). However, in spite of the audit of counselling centres, it is not clear what aids the centres dispose of and whether or to what extent they borrow it to basic schools.²³² **The review therefore proposes to audit the available and necessary textbooks and aids for pupils with disabilities in basic schools.**

Preparedness of teachers

More than two thirds of teachers at mainstream basic schools (66.9%) and nearly one third of teachers at special education basic schools (31.9%) have not undergone continuing education in the area of child-rearing and education of pupils with special education needs. This finding follows from the representative survey among teachers of basic schools and special education basic schools. Majority of respondents also admitted to feel the need to engage in continuing education. Teachers of mainstream basic schools listed heavy workload (27%) as the most frequent barrier to such education, while teachers from special basic schools complained about insufficient offer of suitable accredited programmes (25.5%) (Learning Makes Sense, 2019).

In 2018, 413 teachers, which is 2% of all teachers of mainstream and special basic schools, attended accredited continuing education programmes. The offer of accredited continuing education courses containing 679 courses for the target group of basic school teachers only contained five programmes focusing on education of pupils with disabilities and 12 programmes generally covering inclusion in the classroom Annex 10.²³³ Neither is there any platform to exchange know-how and experience between the mainstream and special schools, although teachers of mainstream schools would welcome this type of cooperation, as the findings of Learning Makes Sense suggest (Hapalová, 2019).

The review therefore proposes to amend the offer of education programmes for teachers of basic schools to include programmes focusing on the acquisition of skills required for education of pupils with disabilities and create room for cooperation between mainstream and special schools.

Higher normative contributions for pupils with disabilities

The additional costs in the form of higher normative contributions for education of more than 50 thousand pupils with disabilities at mainstream and special basic schools totalled EUR 102 million in 2018 (Annex 19). The additional costs include the higher basic normative contribution for pupils of special schools and subsequent increase in the basic normative contributions for pupils at mainstream (integration and special education classrooms) and at special education schools (SES) by the type of disability.²³⁴

The average additional costs of education of a pupil with disability on an integrated basis or in a special classroom was EUR 1,472 lower than the average additional costs of education of a pupil with disability at

²³¹ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 95(4) and 144(2) and (3)

²³² Unpublished audit of counselling centres prepared by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Patopsychology for the Ministry of Education

²³³ To get a comprehensive overview of education offered in the area of special education needs of children with disabilities, it is necessary to also analyse the content of other programmes which, although focusing on different areas (e.g. use of ICT), may also contain specific recommendations for work with children with special education needs within their curricula.

²³⁴ Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities. The coefficients range from 1.3 to 6.8 depending on the type of disability and on the type of school (mainstream or special).

a special school (EUR 1,735 compared with EUR 3,477) (Annex 20). Nearly one half of the difference is caused by the higher basic normative contribution for a pupil at a special basic school.²³⁵ This contribution particularly reflects much smaller classrooms and higher qualifications of teachers. While the average number of children in classrooms of special basic schools was 8, mainstream basic schools may have 19 children in one classroom. Another factor is the higher number of pupils with more severe types of disabilities in special schools which educate more than three quarters of pupils with severe intellectual disability or multiple disability (77%). Furthermore, normative contributions for pupils with the same type of disability are 5 to 19% higher at special schools than the normative contributions paid to mainstream schools (Annex 21).

The increased normative contributions are not purpose-specific. Complex surveys of how much schools use these funds to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities or to what extent the additional funds satisfy the needs of pupils are not available. Although it is not expressly regulated in any law, schools are believed to use for needs of pupils with disabilities the funds from the higher normative contributions²³⁶.²³⁷ The representative survey suggests that the allocated funds may be insufficient in some cases. Nearly one quarter of basic school head teachers (24.6%) and special school head teachers (23.6%) consider the lack of funds to be the greatest issue in the education of pupils with special needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019).

Specialised employees

The 2018 expenditures on professional employees working directly at basic schools amounted to EUR 8.3 million at mainstream basic schools and EUR 450 thousand at special basic schools. Around one half of expenditures on wages of professional employees was paid from the budgets of schools and the other half from the European funds.²³⁸ 990 professional employees worked at mainstream basic schools, together they accounted for 477 full-time jobs. At least one professional employee worked at less than one half of basic schools (44%). 46 professional employees worked at special basic schools, all of them psychologists. Together they accounted for 21 full-time jobs. At least one psychologists worked at 11% of special basic schools.²³⁹ For the past 10 years, the number of psychologists at mainstream basic schools has doubled and the number of special education teachers has tripled. The analysis of work efficiency of professional employees is not available. Neither are available comparative data about the work of professional employees at basic schools in other countries, or the information about their average and optimum numbers.

The analysis of the available data suggests that the standardized budget funds for wages are not sufficient for majority of mainstream basic schools (86%) to fund at least one full-time professional employee.²⁴⁰ At the same time, as many as 84% of mainstream basic schools met the condition of having a professional employee if they have more than 20 integrated pupils with disabilities.²⁴¹ Most schools (62%) employ a professional employee either on a half-time basis or for even less. Larger schools are more successful in meeting the above condition or hiring a professional employee for more hours (Annex 22). **Considering the insufficient resources of schools and relying on the examples of good practice of other countries (EASNIE, 1999), the review proposes to**

²³⁵ The basic normative contribution for a pupil at a special basic school was EUR 862 higher than the basic normative contribution for a pupil at a mainstream basic school (EUR 2,636 compared with EUR 1,774).

²³⁶ However, pupils with disabilities have right to the education using specific forms and methods, special textbooks, multimedia, didactic and compensatory aids and, where necessary for the pupil's child-rearing and education process, also a teaching assistant or professional employee should be present in the classroom.

²³⁷ Just like in case of basic normative contributions, the normative contribution for wages is intended for the expenditures connected with the wage and salary of school employees and the normative contribution for operations for expenditures connected with the child-rearing and education process and operation of the school.

²³⁸ Based on the available data from the National Project School Open to Everyone and the data from the call More Successful at Basic school (2018).

²³⁹ CSTI SR (2017, 2018) and Eduzber (2018).

²⁴⁰ After payment of the staff costs of teachers and non-pedagogical employees (without teaching assistants). Besides the expenditures on wages, the staff costs also include average bonuses for the calendar year 2018. The standardized expenditures were assessed based on the number of pupils in the school year 2018/2019. The staff costs of teachers, non-pedagogical and professional employees were assessed based on the actual expenditures for the last quarter of 2018.

²⁴¹ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 94(4).

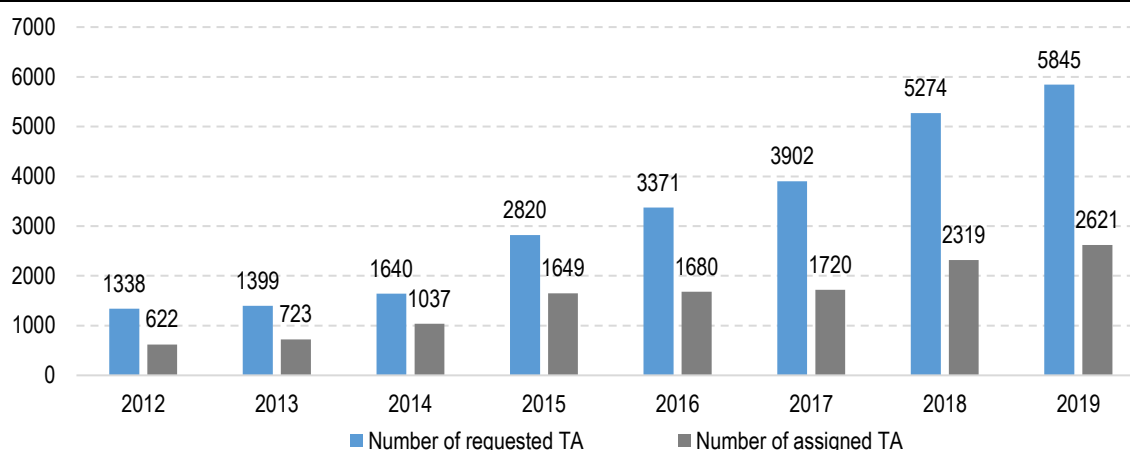
allocate to schools non-normative funds for two professional employees of their own choice; the work schedule of those employees would depend on the school size.

Teaching assistants

Basic and upper secondary schools reported 3,195 full-time teaching assistants in May 2018. 7% of them were funded by schools from their own budgets (e.g. increased normative contributions for pupils with disabilities); 71% was funded by the Ministry of Education based on applications filed; 16% was funded from the European funds; and 6% from other resources (e.g. from the funds of administrators, Ministry of Labour, etc.).²⁴²

In 2018, the standardized budget funds of mainstream and special basic schools were not sufficient to fund at least one full-time teaching assistant. Four out of five (79.4%) mainstream basic schools which educated pupils with disabilities, and three out of four special basic schools (73.2%) could not afford to fund at least one full-time teaching assistant from the standardized funds for wages in 2018.²⁴³

Graph 28: Number of teaching assistants requested and allocated



Source: EPI's calculations based on the data from the Ministry of Education

In 2018, the ministry allocated EUR 23.4 million to basic and upper secondary schools²⁴⁴ for the total number of 2,319 of teaching assistants. In that year, schools asked for 5,274 teaching assistants for 15,237 pupils with disabilities.²⁴⁵ This means that their requests were satisfied to the extent of 44% (Graph 28). The special basic schools were more successful with their applications. More than one half (58%) of mainstream basic schools applied for funds for a teaching assistant and approximately one third (34%) of applications were granted to some extent. The application for funds for an assistant was filed by majority of special basic schools (82%) and more than two thirds of them (67%) were granted to some extent (Annex 23). In 2018, most teaching assistants were requested for pupils with intellectual disability (41%), for pupils with learning disorders (20%) and for pupils with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (14%). As regards individual types of disability, schools asked for a

²⁴² EPI's calculations based on data from the ASIST application (may 2018).

²⁴³ After payment of the staff costs of teachers and non-pedagogical employees (without teaching assistants). Besides the expenditures on wages, the staff costs also include average bonuses for the calendar year 2018. The standardized expenditures were assessed based on the number of pupils in the school year 2018/2019. The staff costs of teachers and non-pedagogical employees were assessed based on the actual expenditures for the last quarter of 2018. Applications for teaching assistants are filed in May and the results of the application evaluation process are available in September.

²⁴⁴ The data structure in which applications for assistants are currently collected and the data structure in which the evaluation of applications is published does not allow us to accurately quantify the portion of funds which was allocated to secondary schools. Nearly 10% of all schools which were allocated funds for staff costs of teaching assistants in 2018 were combined schools consisting of several organisational components (primary and secondary). In these cases, it is not possible to identify the component for which the assistants worked or the extent of their work at such component. Secondary schools which are not combined schools were allocated 2% of all funds for teaching assistants.

²⁴⁵ EPI's calculations based on data from the Ministry of Education.

teaching assistant for each pupil with autism (100%), for two thirds of physically disabled pupils (67%), for two thirds of pupils who were ill and had weakened health (66%), and for a half of pupils with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (50%) (Annex 24).

The demand for teaching assistants has been growing faster than the number of pupils with disabilities. Total number of pupils with disabilities has grown by nearly one fifth since 2012,²⁴⁶ while the number of applications for funds for assistants has more than doubled, which means that schools apply for assistants for a constantly growing percentage of pupils with disabilities. The reasons why the demand for assistants has grown have not been researched yet (Annex 25).

The analysis of a sample of selected schools which applied for funds for assistants only for pupils with one type of disability in 2018 suggests confusion in the system of fund allocation for assistants. Although one of the criteria for allocation of funds for assistants includes the type, severity and extent of disability,²⁴⁷ there were cases in 2018 when funds for assistants were not allocated to five schools which applied for an assistant for pupils with hearing impairment. On the other side, 17 schools were allocated funds for assistants for pupils with learning disorders (Annex 26).

It follows from these results that current regulation treating teaching assistants is insufficient. Two areas are problematic. First, the role of assistant and the requirements for assistant's work are not clearly defined. Second, there are no definite and transparent criteria applicable to the allocation of funds for assistants.

According to academic literature and experience of other countries, the definition of the role of teaching assistants is an important precondition for efficient funding of teaching assistants' work. Otherwise, it may happen that assistants work with pupils for whom other types of interventions would be more suitable (Davis et al., 2004) or they might be insufficiently qualified for tasks they experience in the process of education of pupils with disabilities (Abbott et al., 2011). Last but not least, they can replace, in an undesirable way, teachers or professional employees in the educational process and thus contribute to the exclusion of pupils with disabilities (Webster, 2010; Blatchford et al., 2009).

Neither the Slovak legislation nor the methodological material define the role of teaching assistant clearly. The legislation does not clearly provide to what extent teaching assistants should only focus on the removal of barriers or, on the contrary, also assume responsibility for pupil's education, to what extent they should work individually or also as the assistant for the teacher, and cooperate during teaching planning and process. Although the law on teaching assistants²⁴⁸ speaks of help with overcoming barriers resulting from pupil's disability, the professional standard²⁴⁹ emphasises pedagogical aspect of the assistant's work and defines as the core competencies particularly the competencies relating to the child-rearing and education activities (planning, implementation and assessment of results). Furthermore, the list of barriers laid down in the law on teaching assistants is not exhaustive and leaves a lot of room to interpretation.

The issues due to ambiguous definition of the assistant's role are also pointed out in the representative survey in which assistants said that they are normally engaged in very diverse activities, e.g. individual support of a pupil in the core classroom under teacher's leadership (84.7%), individual education of pupils (66.2%), but also helping pupils with disability to serve themselves (53.4%), or even substituting for teachers (47.6%) (Learning Makes Sense, 2019).

The role of teaching assistant partially overlaps with the role of ancillary tutor. The role of ancillary tutors is to help children serve themselves, and particularly to physically care for children, develop good personal hygiene

²⁴⁶ At the same time, it has grown in mainstream schools and decreased in special schools (Annex 27).

²⁴⁷ Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on the funding of basic schools, secondary schools and school facilities and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, Article 4a

²⁴⁸ Act No. 138/2019 Coll. on pedagogical and professional employees, Article 21(1)

²⁴⁹ Minister's Instruction No. 39/2017, available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/pokyn-ministra-c-392017-ktorym-sa-vydavaju-profesijne-standardy-pre-jednotlive-kategorie-a-podkategorie-pedagogickych-zamestnancov-a-odbornych-zamestnancov-skol-a-skolskych-zariadeni/>

habits, and do auxiliary works in the child-rearing and education process.²⁵⁰ They are not required to have pedagogical education, but they may be employed by school and be helpful e.g. in removal of physical barriers resulting from disability.

Ancillary tutor may be considered to be a more suitable solution to satisfy the needs of pupils with physical disabilities than the personal assistant. Personal assistants provide assistance exclusively to persons with severe disabilities based on a contract. Such assistance includes various activities from self-service activities, through household chores, to assistance during transport or communication and under certain circumstances they may accompany the child to and from school. But the currently valid regulation does not expect them to accompany the child during education at school.²⁵¹ Moreover, the decisions allocating funds for personal assistants are made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Whereas the responsibility for the creation of conditions for compulsory education is borne by the Ministry of Education, the review considers the use of ancillary tutors to be a more efficient solution.

The review therefore proposes to clearly define the role of teaching assistants and of the ancillary tutors and to develop a methodological material about their use and work.

Due to ambiguously defined role of teaching assistant, assistants may be assigned to children who would benefit more from a different type of support. Such support does not have to necessarily take the form of an assistant, but imposes more requirements on the pedagogical work of the teacher. According to the available data, as many as 34% of pupils for whom schools wanted teaching assistants in 2018 were pupils with learning disorders or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (Annex 24), although teacher could have addressed the needs of these pupils by employing various education strategies, for example teacher could adjust the curriculum and instructions (Taylor, 2017; list of strategies for various types of special education needs Davis et al., 2004; strategies to teach mathematics Kroesbergen, Van Luit, 2003). Only one accredited programme of continuing education was available for teachers who wished to develop their competencies in the area of education of pupils with these disabilities in 2018; not a single teacher attended this course (Annex 10). **The review therefore proposes to extend the offer of education programmes, motivate teaching and professional staff to take part in this kind of education and revise the option to apply for funds for teaching assistants for pupils with learning disorders and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.**

In spite of all the various activities the assistants do, the qualification requirements for this position are uniform – they need a secondary or university education.²⁵² Assistants currently work with pupils with very diverse needs and do all kinds of activities from helping pupils with physical disability to serve themselves, through supporting pupils with learning disorders during the education process, to assisting pupils with intellectual disability or autism. Although deaf and blind pupils are entitled to being educated in the sign language and using Braille font²⁵³, the data available does not make it clear how many assistants are able to use these means of communication. The findings of Learning Makes Sense reveal that assistants perceive a deficit in continuing education. The unavailability of continuing education is considered as the second most frequent issue of their work at school (28.9%) and poor quality of available education as the fourth most frequent issue (14.9%) (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). **Further to the clarification of the role of the assistant/ancillary tutor, the qualification requirements for assistants/ancillary tutors should be revised or, as the case may be, the relevant education diversified and arrange for.**²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Government Regulation No. 341/2004 Coll. laying down the catalogues of activities during work in public interest

²⁵¹ Act No. 447/2008 Coll. on funds to compensate for severe disability and on amendments and supplements of certain acts, Annex 4. Personal assistance was used on average by 409 children aged 6 to 18 years in 2018. However, allowance for personal assistance is incompatible with the carer's allowance. 5,953 children who may also need assistance at school received carer's allowance. The third group comprises the children of parents who are not eligible to receive allowances due to their income, but whose children need assistance at school.

²⁵² 1/2020 Coll. Ministry of Education's Decree on the qualifications of pedagogical and professional employees

²⁵³ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 144(3).

²⁵⁴ For example, in Ireland assistants for pupils with sensory disabilities must be able to use sign language, Braille font, etc.

Other issues result from unclear definition of situations in which teaching assistant should work at school or, as the case may be, in the classroom. According to the School Law, assistants may, but do not have to, be present at basic schools.²⁵⁵ The work of assistant at special schools and classrooms is only regulated by a subordinate legislation.²⁵⁶ According to that legislation, assistants work at schools for pupils with disabilities in which it would not be possible to warrant safety and health of pupils without them and in classrooms educating pupils with the selected types of disabilities. The national education programmes for pupils with individual types of disabilities provide that assistants are expected to work in a classroom if their presence is necessary for the child-rearing and education of pupils depending on the severity of such pupil's disability (National Institute for Education, 2019).

Further to the clarification of the role of teaching assistant/ancillary tutor and further to the below proposed regulations relating to the evaluation of the need to have an assistant/ancillary tutor, we propose to vest the right to a teaching assistant/ancillary tutor according to clearly defined criteria for all pupils with disabilities who experience barriers in education.

Complex surveys assessing how much teaching assistants actually contribute to the equality of opportunities at Slovak schools are not available. Initial information comes from the data of the Learning Makes Sense initiative which reveals that two thirds of assistants educate pupils in the core classroom, but individually, and more than one fourth of assistants educate pupils with special needs outside their core classrooms, and that this is a common practice (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). These findings suggest that teachers are basically substituted by assistants and that pupils are *de facto* excluded from education in a community of their peers. **The review therefore proposes to do a complex survey of the work and impact of teaching assistant on the equality of opportunities in education.**

Box 10: Teaching assistants abroad

The definition of teaching assistant varies from country to country, and they even use different names for this position (e.g. *Learning Support Assistant* in England, *Special Needs Assistant* in Ireland, *Teacher Aide* in Australia or *Teaching Assistant* in Finland). Job description may even vary at the level of schools.

Assistants mostly focus on **individual support for pupils with special education needs**²⁵⁷ during satisfaction of their education, social or physical needs, and help them overcome barriers to enable them to fully participate in education irrespective of their disadvantage (e.g. disability, language²⁵⁸, family income, cultural background or ethnic origin) (OECD, 2015b). They may also focus on **targeted improvement of school performance of such pupils**. Presence of another pedagogical worker in the classroom reduces the number of pupils per one adult and creates better conditions for individualised support, and may positively affect school results.

Alternatively, the assistant's work may also aim to **support the teacher**. Taking care of some common obligations and duties relating to the teaching process (preparation of materials, monitoring the progress of students, administrative tasks) or helping to cope with disturbing behaviour of pupils allows the teacher to concentrate more on teaching and education (OECD, 2015b). The tasks of assistants usually overlap in real life irrespective of the target group of pupils they work with (Emanuelsson, 2001).

The main difference between individual countries lies in the **emphasis laid on their engagement in the education process**. England and Ireland represent two poles of this view.

²⁵⁵ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 28(14); Article (30)(6).

²⁵⁶ Decree No. 322/2008 Coll. on special schools; Article 6(3) and (6)

²⁵⁷ The definition of special education needs differs across countries and may include various categories: pupils with disability, pupils with health disadvantage, pupils from socially disadvantaged background, pupils from ethnic minorities, pupils from foreign countries, pupils who cannot speak the language of instruction used at the school, intellectually gifted pupils, etc.

²⁵⁸ Countries such as Australia, Finland and the United Kingdom use bilingual assistants to support specific language needs of bilingual students and students whose primary language is not the language used by the school in order to integrate the children of migrants and pupils from ethnic minorities.

The non-pedagogical role of the assistant **in England** substantially shifted to the pedagogical area and assistants meet a growing number of pedagogical duties. The primary role of assistants now is to cooperate teachers to make education more efficient and improve the school results of pupils (OECD, 2015b).

In Ireland, on the contrary, the growing engagement of assistants in pedagogical activities (which spontaneously started spreading at schools) was assessed to be inefficient within evaluation of the work of assistants at schools and the **role of assistants was limited to the support and care of non-pedagogical nature**, i.e. particularly on meeting the health needs of pupils or the needs resulting from substantial damage to their physical or sensory functions.²⁵⁹ Individual pedagogical assistance is provided at schools by the so-called support teachers (NCSE, 2014).

Another problematic area of the existing regulation is the unclear definition of the process and criteria for the allocation of non-normative funds for teaching assistants. Recommendation of a counselling centre is the basic precondition for filing an application for funds for a teaching assistant. But there currently does not exist any methodological material which would guide counselling centres in decisions about suitability of a teaching assistant with regard to the needs of a pupil. Applications of administrators for funds accompanied by a recommendation from the counselling centre are then processed by education departments of county authorities. The internal survey of the Ministry of Education reveals that the criteria for ranking applications based on urgency applied by individual county authorities already differ at this stage.²⁶⁰ This means that different county authorities may evaluate two similar applications differently. The final decision concerning allocation of funds is made by the Ministry of Education in accordance with the criteria defined in the law on school funding.²⁶¹ It is not clear to what extent is the order of priority set by county authorities followed by the Ministry of Education.

The decision-making process of the Ministry of Education concerning the allocation of funds is governed by the criteria laid down in the law on school funding.²⁶² The following criteria are taken into consideration: (1) number of pupils with disabilities; (2) type, severity and extent of disability; (3) barriers which pupils are not able to overcome; and (4) the fact whether the school administrator was allocated funds in the previous calendar year.²⁶³ However, allocation of funds based on the number of pupils with disabilities and based on the type of disability is not efficient, because two pupils with the same disability may have radically different needs. On the contrary, barriers which pupils are not able to overcome without assistants should play a crucial role in the decision-making process about allocations; this is in line with the good practice in other countries (NCSE, 2013). However, recommendations of counselling centres which define such barriers are not at disposal of the Ministry of Education.

Problematic also is the consideration of whether or not the administrator was allocated funds for assistant in the previous calendar year. Although applicants must update recommendations to have an assistant (in order to document the persisting need for an assistant), new diagnostic examination is not required for such update. Needs of pupils may change over time, but they may not be reflected in practice (while one pupil may not need an assistant anymore, such need may arise in another pupil).²⁶⁴

To make the decision-making process about eligibility more efficient, the review proposes to clearly define the competencies of individual stakeholders (counselling centres, county authorities and the Ministry). The

²⁵⁹ Contract of Employment. Special Needs Assistant. Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Popular-forms/SNA-15-05-Contract-Form.pdf>

²⁶⁰ Before 2013, the orders of priority used to be published on the Ministry's web site. Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/asistenti-ucitela-pre-ziakov-so-zdravotnym-znevychodnenim/>

²⁶² Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on the funding of basic schools, secondary schools and school facilities and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, Article 4a

²⁶³ Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on the funding of basic schools, secondary schools and school facilities, Article 4a

²⁶⁴ Diagnostic examination report – information with a recommendation for professional employees of school centres of educational counselling and prevention Available at: <https://vudpap.sk/odborny-portal/informacie/informacie-pre-odbornych-a-pedagogickych-zamestnancov/vudpap-informacie-pre-odbornych-sprava-z-diagnostickeho-vysetrenia-dietata/>

process should also be made more transparent by publishing the number of work schedules requested and allocated, and by publishing the evaluation of individual criteria. If a work schedule is not allocated, the review proposes to give the applicants an opportunity to file an appeal. The eligibility criteria should, first of all, reflect the needs of pupils (not the type of disability) and, in accordance with the good practice of other countries, the needs should be revised over time in relevant cases and the need for assistants/educators should gradually diminish as the pupils grow older (Annex 28).

Missing measures to support education of disabled children at basic schools

Limited access to education

The head teacher may permit the pupil to be educated individually based on legal guardian's application if the health of such pupil does not permit him or her to attend school.²⁶⁵ The expenditures of the state on individual education totalled EUR 177 per one pupil in 2018 (10% of the usual normative contribution), resulting in nearly EUR 55 thousand for 319 pupils.²⁶⁶ The percentage of pupils educated individually due to their health in the population of basic school pupils has grown moderately since 2008 from 0.05% (214 pupils) to 0.06% (319 pupils) of all pupils.²⁶⁷ The school is obligated to ensure education of at least 2 hours a week for the pupils educated individually.

But there are indications that in some cases this was not the choice of legal guardians but unlawful exclusion of pupils from compulsory education²⁶⁸ due to inability of schools to create the necessary conditions for their education. One of the cited reasons for not enrolling these pupils was the inability of mainstream and special schools to provide for a teaching assistant (Hapalová, 2019, Commissioner's Office, 2018). Nevertheless, legal guardians do not receive any financial compensation from the state for educating their children on their own.

Missing support for the ill and weakened pupils

Ill and weakened pupils²⁶⁹ do not receive necessary support in education. Although these pupils belong among pupils with disabilities, the state does not support their education (unlike it does in case of other pupils with disabilities) with higher normative contributions.²⁷⁰ Neither do mainstream basic schools have²⁷¹ a healthcare staff who would support their everyday needs or in case of acute conditions.

There is public discussion in this respect calling for health or nursing care at schools.²⁷² Many countries have nurses at schools (e.g. Austria, Poland, UK, France, Finland, Sweden and Norway) (Wolfe and McKee, 2013). In addition to supporting pupils with specific healthcare needs, nurses do activities within prevention and screening in order to identify health issues in due time. They also provide counselling. School nurses thus improve the health of all pupils (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008). Studies made abroad have proved their presence to positively correlate with the attendance rates of pupils, which specifically applies to pupils with chronic illness or from socially disadvantaged background (Telljohann et al., 2004), as well as with other school results (for overview refer to Maughan, 2003). **To promptly address the situation of these pupils and their parents, the review recommends**

²⁶⁵ Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities.

²⁶⁶ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 24(3).

²⁶⁷ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2008 – 2018).

²⁶⁸ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 94(24). All pupils, including pupils with disabilities, have a catchment school based on their place of residence which is obliged to admit them. No one may be relieved from compulsory education, pupils may only be permitted to be educated individually which relieves them from the obligation to regularly participate in education at school.

²⁶⁹ In 2018, ill and weakened pupils covered for 1% of all pupils for whom teaching assistant was requested.

²⁷⁰ Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities.

²⁷¹ 17 nurses worked at special education basic schools in 2018.

²⁷² Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities.

to allow teaching and professional staff of schools to undergo training, so they may acquire skills to provide the necessary interventions.²⁷³

No teaching assistants in the after school clubs

Neither the mainstream nor the special basic schools may currently apply for funds to cover the cost of teaching assistants/ancillary tutors for after school clubs. Anecdotal evidence reveals that failure to provide teaching for an assistant often means exclusion of a pupil with disability from the after school clubs.²⁷⁴ **The review therefore proposes to allow schools to apply for extra teaching assistants/ancillary tutors for pupils with disabilities attending after school clubs.**

Pupils with intellectual disability are not allowed to acquire lower secondary education

Pupils with mild intellectual disability are not allowed to complete the lower secondary education (ISCED 2, completed basic school) and continue in education at standard upper secondary schools.²⁷⁵ This applies irrespective of whether the pupils are integrated into a mainstream school or are educated within the special education stream.²⁷⁶ This is where they differ from pupils with other types of disabilities who acquire lower secondary education once they successfully complete the basic school. Such an approach is discriminatory and contrary to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by the Slovak Republic.²⁷⁷ Even the pupils with intellectual disability who complete mainstream or special basic school in the Czech Republic acquire lower secondary education.²⁷⁸ Several research studies also prove the pupils with intellectual disability educated together with the other children to have better school results and acquire higher education level than they do if they are segregated (Dessementet, R. S., & Bless, G., 2013; Freeman, S. F. N., & Alkin, M. C., 2000; Peetsma, T. et al., 2001). **The review therefore proposes to permit pupils with intellectual disability to acquire lower secondary education (ISCED 2).**

Measures to reduce excessive placement of pupils with mild intellectual disability from SDB in special education stream

Excessive diagnostics of mild intellectual disability and placement of pupils from socially disadvantaged background with this diagnosis in the special education stream suggest the existence of drawbacks in the use of diagnostic tools as well as in the diagnostic process. The State School Inspection authority has been pointing out this issue for some time already. Although the percentage of pupils diagnosed mild intellectual disability has slightly decreased, the inspection authority questioned multiple conclusions diagnosing mild intellectual disability and ordered repeated diagnostics of pupils. The mild intellectual disability diagnosis has not been confirmed in several pupils (SSI, 2016c, 2016b, 2017b). The Research Institute for Child Psychology and Patopsychology currently implements a national project supported with an allocation of EUR 18 million from the European funds in order to develop standards for counselling centres which could improve the quality of their work and, consequently, of their diagnostic process.²⁷⁹ **The review proposes to establish an annually repeated diagnostics of pupils with mild intellectual disability at the primary level.**

²⁷³ For example, such a model works in several US states where school nurse may train and permit another school employee to administer medications to a specific child. Of course, this only applies to the administration of prescription medications. Regulation for the US states available here: <http://healthinschools.org/issue-areas/other-school-health-issues/school-health-services/medication-management/state-policies-on-administration-of-medication-in-schools/#sthash.bs6boFmU.dpbs>

²⁷⁴ It is not possible to quantify based on the available data how many pupils attend ASCs or how many pupils with disabilities attend ASCs at mainstream or at special schools.

²⁷⁵ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law); Article 16 (3) and <http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/3772.pdf>

²⁷⁶ Article 94(1) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on child-rearing and education (School Law) and on amendments and supplements to certain acts

²⁷⁷ <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/uvod/legislativa/socialna-pomoc-podpora/dohovor-osn-pravach-osob-so-zdravotnym-postihnutim-opcny-protokol-sk-aj.pdf>, Article 24 "Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live."

²⁷⁸ <http://www.nuv.cz/vystupy/nova-klasifikace-vzdelani-v-europassu> a <https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/23169548/cz-isced+2011.pdf/fa446ca2-e212-4dd8-a61e-a80a3152f7cb?version=1.0>

²⁷⁹ National Project Standards. Available at: <https://vudpap.sk/x/projekty/standardy/>

Gradual transformation of the existing special schools to the so-called resource centres is a part of the efforts aiming to develop inclusive model of education. They should support mainstream schools during inclusion of pupils with special needs (creation and distribution of materials and methodologies, support of parents, individual assistance to pupils, and their support during the placement process). Slovakia has not decided to go for this type of transformation yet. Several European countries have been systematically modifying the education system towards greater inclusiveness and elimination of special education since 1980s and 1990s (EASNIE, 2019 and 2003). **The review proposes (1) to do a pilot project to verify the transformation of a special basic school which educates exclusively or almost exclusively pupils with mild intellectual disability to a resource centre; and (2) do a pilot project to verify cancellation of special classrooms at selected basic schools.**

Missing support for transfer from special to mainstream schools

142 pupils, i.e. 0.81% of all pupils of special schools changed the special school for a mainstream school between the school years 2017/18 and 2018/19.²⁸⁰ More than one half of the transferring pupils were the pupils with communication disorder (60%) and approximately one tenth had intellectual disability (9%). Most of the transfers took place within the primary level (80%), and majority of pupils went to mainstream classrooms (84%) and 16% of pupils were transferred to special classrooms at mainstream basic schools. Pupils in both mainstream and special classrooms usually continued in education at a higher grade (90%), a small portion (8%) in the same grade and a negligible percentage (2%) was transferred to a lower grade. Most transfers took place in the Bratislava (31%), Prešov (18%) and Nitra regions (18%).²⁸¹

The transfer of pupils from special to mainstream schools is not methodologically processed or specifically supported. Foreign publications emphasize the need for cooperation between both schools, with the parents of the pupil and the pupil himself or herself. Pupil should be provided support during preparations for this transfer and adaptation to the new environment. The target school should receive information about the needs of the pupil with disability to be able to create appropriate conditions (professional employees, etc.). (Gibb et al., 2007; NSCE, 2016). To make the transfer smoother, also the curriculum intended for pupils with intellectual disability needs to be modified. This is pointed out in the part treating existing measures – educational content. **The review therefore proposes to elaborate case studies about transfers of pupils from special to mainstream schools and then develop methodological material to guide schools in these situations.**

Lack of research studies about education of pupils with disabilities

Although pupils with intellectual disability and pupils with learning disorders are the most numerous group of pupils with disabilities at basic schools, no research studies are conducted to survey the methods and forms of their education and their academic and social results. Research studies focusing on this issue have not been supported in the past three years either by VEGA (Scientific Grant Agency) or KEGA (Cultural and Educational Grant Agency) of the Ministry of Education.²⁸² The Research Institute for Child Psychology and Patopsychology has not made any research study which would focus on pupils with intellectual disability and only one study focusing on pupils with learning disorders in the past 10 years.²⁸³ The number of research projects which focus on the education of pupils with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, communication disorder or autism are equally limited or nearly non-existent even though the number of such pupils has grown substantially in recent years (Annex 16). **The review proposes to conduct research studies focusing on education of pupils with disabilities**

²⁸⁰ CSTI (2018). Data for previous years is not available.

²⁸¹ EPI's calculations based on the data from the ministerial IS and CSTI (2017, 2018).

²⁸² Own processing of data from VEGA, KEGA and APVV.

²⁸³ Available at: <https://vudpap.sk/na-com-pracujeme/hlavne-ulohy/vyskumy/ukoncene-vyskumy/> The results of the research study titled *Optimisation of Psychological, Pedagogical and Social Methods Addressing Learning Disorders* are not available.

6.3. Early school leavers

While the early school leaving rate of children without disability was 3.4%, in the population of pupils with disabilities it was 18.4%. The greatest leaving rate was observed in pupils with disabilities attending special classrooms of mainstream basic schools (47.7 %) (Table 19). Majority of pupils with disabilities who dropped out of school had intellectual disability (Annex 29). Measures to prevent and eliminate dropout of pupils with disabilities are quite similar to with the measures recommended for pupils from socially disadvantaged background.

Table 19: Dropout rate of pupils with disabilities by education stream (2018/19)

	Percentage (%)
Pupils without disability	3.43
Pupils with disability	18.38
whereof integrated pupils with disabilities	7.59
whereof pupils with disabilities in special classrooms of mainstream basic schools	47.7
whereof pupils with disabilities in special basic schools	28.14
TOTAL	5.77

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the ministerial IS (2016 – 2019). Note: The calculation methodology in the table differs from the international data. Therefore, data in this part is not comparable with the international data. It covers the percentage of pupils with completed compulsory education and not continuing in education at basic or upper secondary schools.

6.4. Upper secondary education

Education results of disabled children at upper secondary schools

In 2018, pupils with disability accounted for 6.9% of the population of upper secondary schools (14,574 pupils). The percentage of pupils with disability in the population of upper secondary school pupils has more than doubled from 2.9% to 6.8% over the past ten years (Annex 30).

The most numerous groups of pupils with disabilities at upper secondary schools were those with learning disorders and with intellectual disability (Table 20). The number of pupils with learning disorders has grown most since 2012, while the greatest fall was recorded for the number of pupils with physical disability (Annex 31).

Table 20: Number of pupils with disabilities at upper secondary schools by the type of disability, 2018

Type of disability	Number of pupils	Percentage of pupils
Learning disorders	7,513	51.6%
Intellectual disability	4,552	31.2%
Other	862	5.9%
Physical disability	558	3.8%
Behavioural disorder	398	2.7%
Hearing impairment	301	2.1%
Visual impairment	216	1.5%
Autism	174	1.2%
TOTAL	14,574	100.0%

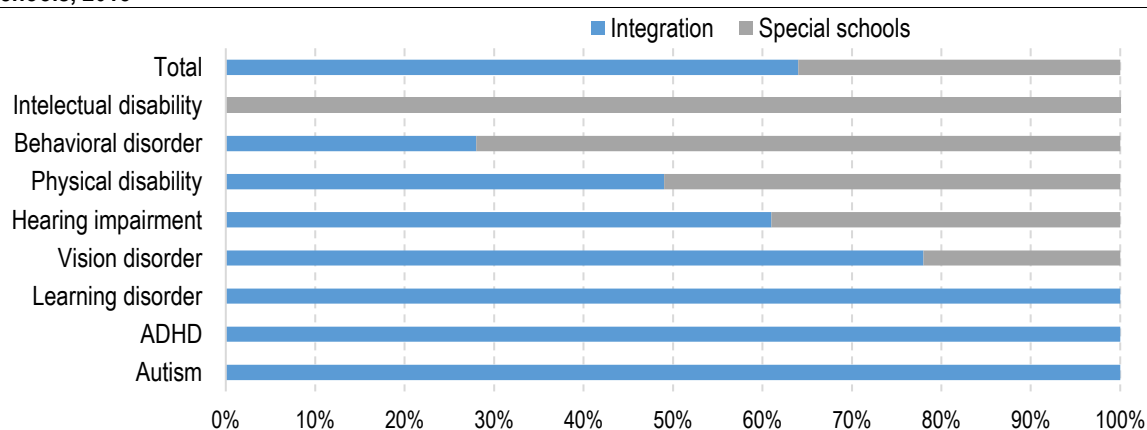
The Other category includes pupils with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder and the ill and weakened pupils. Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018).

Pupils with disabilities, with the exception of pupils with intellectual disability (ID), may be educated at mainstream upper secondary schools (gymnaziums, upper secondary technical schools and conservatoriums) and at special upper secondary schools (gymnaziums and upper secondary technical schools). Pupils with ID may attend vocational and practical schools. This means that pupils with ID are the only ones prevented from continuing in education with their peers within the mainstream education system. The

reason is that they only acquire the primary and not the lower secondary education when they complete the basic school (Chapter 5.2). Pupils who complete some of the study programmes at vocational schools may also gain a vocational training certificate, but graduates of practical schools only receive a schooling/instruction document.

The number of pupils with disabilities who did not continue in education at an upper secondary school between the school years 2017/18 and 2018/19 was nearly five times as high as the number of pupils without disabilities (16.3% compared with 3.3%). Nearly all pupils with disabilities (except the pupils with ID) educated within the mainstream system continued at upper secondary technical schools (95.6%). The number of pupils without disability who continued at gymnasiums was five times as high as the number of pupils with disability (except those with ID) (26.5% compared with 5.3%). 1.8% of all pupils with disabilities continuing at upper secondary schools enrolled in special upper secondary technical schools intended for pupils with disabilities (except those with ID). Majority of pupils with ID continued at vocational schools (78%) and fewer than one fifth at practical schools (22%). Detailed data structured by educational streams and individual types of disability is available in Annex 29.

Graph 29: Percentage of pupils with individual types of disability at mainstream and special upper secondary schools, 2018



The population of pupils with intellectual disability includes pupils with intellectual disability including intellectual disability combined with other disability. The population of pupils with autism only includes pupils with autism without intellectual disability. Special schools mentioned in the graph also include vocational and practical schools for pupils with ID.

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018)

Nearly two thirds of upper secondary school pupils with disabilities (61%) were educated in an integrated setting in 2018. But this does not apply to pupils with certain types of disability (Graph 29). Not a single mainstream upper secondary school had a special education classroom for pupils with disabilities in 2018. The percentage of integrated pupils with disabilities of all pupils of upper secondary schools has grown over time, the percentage of special upper secondary schools has been stable since 2014 (Annex 30).

Table 21: Percentage of pupils without and with disabilities at individual types of mainstream upper secondary schools (%)

	Pupils without disability	Pupils with disability
Gymnasiums	35.2	14.4
Conservatoriums	1.4	1.0
Upper secondary technical schools	63.4	84.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Source: EPI's calculations based on the data from CSTI (2017, 2018).

If compared with the other pupils, the share of pupils with disabilities is greater at upper secondary technical schools and lower at gymnasiums. Their numbers are 2.5 times lower at gymnasiums (Table 21).

At least one pupil with disability was educated at three quarters of gymnaziums (76%), at each conservatorium (100%) and at 86% of upper secondary technical schools.²⁸⁴

As regards special upper secondary schools, majority of pupils with disabilities studied at upper secondary technical schools (99.1%) and 0.9% at gymnaziums. Nearly all pupils with disability educated at upper secondary technical schools studied study programmes ending with a school-leaving exam (96.5%).²⁸⁵ Nearly all pupils studying at apprentice training schools (97%) studied study programmes allowing the option to gain an apprenticeship training certificate (G-type study programme). All pupils studying at practical schools studied study programmes which only allowed them to gain a schooling/instruction document (E-type programmes).²⁸⁶

Existing measures to support education of disabled children at upper secondary schools

Removal of structural barriers from upper secondary schools

Seven upper secondary schools received nearly EUR 66 thousand for removal of structural barriers in 2018.

Complex data about the barrier-free design of upper secondary schools is not available. According to the questionnaire-based survey, one fifth of head teachers of mainstream upper secondary schools (22%) and 7.4 % of head teachers of special education upper secondary schools consider physical barriers in the school building to be one of the greatest problems for education of pupils with special education needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). Even the ombudsman criticizes upper secondary schools for their poor awareness about the importance and the necessary extent of barrier-free design (Ombudsman, 2016). Upper secondary schools apply for funds for removal of barriers together with basic schools within one package of funds allocated to that purpose. On top of the measures listed with regard to removal of barriers in Chapter 6.3, **the review proposes to allocate a separate volume of funds to support removal of structural barriers at upper secondary schools.**

Higher normative contributions for pupils with disabilities

Additional cost of education of nearly 9 thousand pupils with disabilities at mainstream upper secondary schools totalled more than EUR 18 million in 2018, and averaged EUR 2,122 per one pupil. The additional costs include the higher basic normative contributions for pupils by the type of disability (Annex 32).²⁸⁷ However, unlike at basic schools, the additional funds are not allocated for pupils with all types of disabilities. Schools do not receive any additional funds for pupils with behavioural and communication disorders.²⁸⁸

Additional cost of education of 979 pupils with disabilities at special upper secondary schools totalled nearly EUR 1.4 million, and averaged EUR 1,390 per one pupil. EUR 641 thousand was allocated to special gymnaziums and EUR 720 went to upper secondary technical schools. The funds for education of pupils with disabilities at special upper secondary schools are not calculated by the type of disability, but are set flatly by the type of school.²⁸⁹

The average amount of additional costs of education of pupils with disabilities was EUR 732 lower per pupil at special upper secondary schools than it was at mainstream upper secondary schools. In case of special gymnaziums, the additional funds were 44% lower (EUR 894) and in case of special upper secondary technical schools they were 14% lower (EUR 279) (Annex 33). This finding is in line with the results of the representative survey in which as many as 39% of head teachers of special upper secondary schools compared with 13% of head

²⁸⁴ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2018)

²⁸⁵ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018).

²⁸⁶ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2018).

²⁸⁷ Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. laying down the details of financial breakdown of the funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities. The coefficients range from 1.7 to 2.7 depending on the type of disability.

²⁸⁸ While pupils with communication disorder accounted for 7% of the basic school population (3,649 pupils) in 2018, secondary schools did not report a single pupil with this diagnosis.

²⁸⁹ Therefore, additional costs of education of these pupils are calculated as a difference between the volume of funds allocated for one pupil of the selected type of special school and the average volume of funds allocated for one pupil in the same type of school in the mainstream system. Additional costs for apprentice training and practical schools were calculated based on the average volume of funds allocated for one pupil at mainstream upper secondary technical schools.

teachers of mainstream upper secondary schools said that lack of funds was one of the greatest problems in education of pupils with special educational needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019).

Additional costs of education of 4,704 pupils with ID at apprentice training and practical schools totalled more than EUR 10.1 million, averaging EUR 2,162 per one pupil.

Specialised employees

In 2018, the expenditures on professional employees working directly at upper secondary schools amounted to EUR 1.4 million at mainstream upper secondary schools and EUR 140 thousand at special upper secondary schools, apprentice training schools and practical schools. 193 professional employees²⁹⁰ worked at mainstream upper secondary schools, together they accounted for 86 full-time jobs. 13 professional employees worked at special upper secondary schools, apprentice training schools and practical schools, together accounting for 7 full-time jobs.²⁹¹ During the past 10 years, the number of psychologists at mainstream upper secondary schools has more than doubled and the number of special education teachers has tripled. The number of professional employees at special upper secondary schools, apprentice training schools and practical schools remained nearly unchanged.

Missing measures to support education of disabled pupils at upper secondary schools

Dual education

Pupils with disabilities educated at special upper secondary technical schools, apprentice training and practical schools are not allowed to join dual education. The legislation currently in force only permits pupils of mainstream upper secondary technical schools to join the dual education system.²⁹² This approach goes against international good practice. Experts point out that pupils of all schools irrespective of their special needs should have access to dual education. Important is that (1) all schools have an opportunity to develop partnerships with local employers; (2) qualified staff focusing on the preparation of pupils and provision of support activities to meet their needs (Scholl, L. et al., 2004) and the needs of employers be available before and during practical preparation (Box 11); and (3) the necessary funds be allocated for these activities. Engagement in dual education appears to be efficient in preventing and eliminating early school dropout and makes the transition to the open labour market easier (EASNIE, 2014; EASNIE, 2013).

The review therefore proposes to amend the law on vocational education and allow pupils from special vocational, apprentice training and practical schools to join the dual education system. To support implementation of dual education in relation to pupils with disability, the funds of the National Project Dual Education which have not been used yet could be used.²⁹³

Box 11: "Autistic People at Work" project

The "Autistic People at Work" project of the SPOSA civil association is an example of good practice in the area of training and employment of people with disabilities. Thanks to the project, 23 people with autism found employment. The project made use of job coaches who worked with job seekers for two years to prepare them for employment. They also helped prepare employers for training and hiring an employee with disability. At the time of project implementation, the state's annual expenditures on one person with autism in a residential long-term care facility amounted to approximately EUR 12,000, while the average costs of the job coach totalled EUR 12,800 for two years. In the long run, this type of intervention would save significant resources, because it

²⁹⁰ EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2017, 2018)

²⁹¹ EPI's calculations based on data from the Quarterly Report on Work in the Education System (2018).

²⁹² Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on vocational education and preparation and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, Article 3.

²⁹³ Available at: <https://siov.sk/projekty/aktualne-projekty/narodny-projekt-dualne-vzdelavanie/>

substantially reduces the dependency of a person with disability on social services (SPOSA, 2019). This type of job coaching could also be used during participation of pupils with disabilities in the dual education system.

6.5. University education

School performance of students with disabilities at universities

Students with disabilities accounted for only 1% of students of public universities (1,054 students) in 2018.²⁹⁴ The percentage of students with disabilities varied from university to university from 0.6% at the Technical University of Košice up to 3% at Catholic University in Ružomberok (Annex 34). The data about the number of students with disabilities at private universities is not available.

The most numerous groups at universities consisted of ill and weakened students (45.5%), students with learning disorders (20.2%) and students with physical disability (18.7%). Other students with disabilities accounted for 2.7% to 8% of school population (Table 22).

In 2018, each university educated at least one student with disability. According to the findings of the representative survey, more than one half of university teachers (53.6%) educated students with disabilities during their teaching career (Learning Makes Sense, 2019).

Table 22: Percentage of students with individual types of disabilities (2018)

	Percentage (%)
Illness and weakened health	45.5
Developmental learning disorders	20.2
Physical disability	18.7
Vision impairment	8.0
Hearing impairment	5.0
Autism	2.7
TOTAL	100.0

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the Ministry of Education's central registry of students (2018).

The ill and weakened students include students with chronic, and mental diseases and with weakened health.

Existing measures to support education of students with disabilities at universities

Support of barrier-free design

Support of accessible academic environment for students with disabilities was allocated EUR 900 thousand in 2018. Seven universities were supported with an amount from EUR 30 thousand to EUR 300 thousand. The funds were allocated within a thematic development project, but are not allocated on a regular basis.²⁹⁵ This is an issue, because the barrier-free design survey of universities (2016) revealed that nearly one half (46.5%) of the total number of buildings of university departments do not comply with the barrier-free requirements. The situation of dormitories was even worse; as many as 90% of buildings were unsatisfactory.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ The structure of the data about the students with disabilities at universities differs from the structure of the data about pupils with disabilities at basic and secondary schools. Universities do not collect data about students with communication disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder and behavioural disorders.

²⁹⁵ No funds were allocated for removal of structural barriers from university premises in 2017 and 2016. In 2015, Slovak University of Technology received EUR 729,429 for the *Elimination of Architectural, Information, and Orientation Barriers* project.

²⁹⁶ The survey was conducted from October 2015 to September 2016 within the UNIALl project at the selected 14 public universities; 43 buildings of university departments and 10 dormitories were included the survey. Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/vyrocné-spravy-o-stave-vysokeho-skolstva/>

Unlike the basic and upper secondary schools, universities perceive removal of structural barriers as their responsibility and pay more attention to that topic (VOP, 2016). This is a positive sign. Comenius University developed a manual to prevent and remove architectural barriers in the university environment (Holenová, 2015) and the Ministry of Education currently works on an Barrier-Free Action Plan.²⁹⁷

Subsidies for support services for students with specific needs

In 2018, EUR 700 thousand was allocated for specific needs of 1,054 students²⁹⁸, averaging EUR 664 per one student. The requests of universities were satisfied to the extent of 52%, the lowest percentage of satisfied requests since 2015 when the subsidies for specific needs started to be provided (Annex 35). The subsidies were only paid to public universities. The subsidies ranged from EUR 325 in case of students with chronic diseases up to EUR 5,400 in case of deaf and hearing-impaired students.²⁹⁹ Schools may also create their own funds to support education of students with specific needs.³⁰⁰

Such funds are purpose-specific and may only be used for support services provided to students with specific needs. However, there currently is no guideline in place which would regulate the use of subsidies in more detail. Some clue for the use of the resources is provided by the decree treating minimum requirements of a student with specific needs which lays down spatial and material requirements and study-related requirements.³⁰¹ Inspiration may also be found in the methodological material treating the creation of conditions to support students with specific needs. This material focuses on the creation of a generally accessible academic environment – on the removal of architectural as well as informational barriers with emphasis on the implementation of advanced information and communication technologies and services.³⁰²

Institutional support

The Ministry of Education has a Minister's Council in place to support students with specific needs. It is a special advisory body of the section of universities founded in 2013 in order to ensure systematic approach to the education of students with specific needs. It constitutes a platform for cooperation between the Ministry, universities and the non-profit organisations.³⁰³ For example, the Council currently participates in the preparation of the National Action Plan for Removal of Barriers from Universities.

Universities set up special pedagogical workplaces to support students with specific needs.³⁰⁴ Workplaces which support students are requested to be set up by law at Comenius University and at Technical University in Košice. They function as methodological, knowledge and coordination centres and employ coordinators for students with specific needs. Based on information from the Ministry of Education, such workplaces with coordinators are also set up by all other universities. Nevertheless, nearly one fifth of university teachers (17.5%) noted in the representative survey that they did not have any support from the university when they worked with students with specific needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). The survey on the conditions of the study and accessibility of the academic environment for students with specific needs revealed that neither some students with specific needs had been aware of the existence of such coordinator (Kešelová et al. 2017).³⁰⁵

²⁹⁷ Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/rada-ministra-na-podporu-studia-studentov-so-specifickymi-potrebami/>, [Záznam zo zasadnutia Rady 23.5.2017](#)

²⁹⁸ According to the number of students with the selected specific need as of 31/12/2017.

²⁹⁹ Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/677-sk/financovanie/>

³⁰⁰ Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on universities; Article 16a. 10 out of 20 Slovak public universities had their own funds in place in 2018 to be able to support students with specific needs. More than EUR 17 thousand was used to support students. The total volume of resources in such funds amounted to more than EUR 260 thousand in December 2018.

³⁰¹ Decree No. 458/2012 Coll. on the minimum requirements of students with specific needs

³⁰² Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/13930.pdf>

³⁰³ Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/rada-ministra-na-podporu-studia-studentov-so-specifickymi-potrebami/>

³⁰⁴ Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on universities; Article 100(7) and (8)

³⁰⁵

7. Integration of groups at risk into the labour market

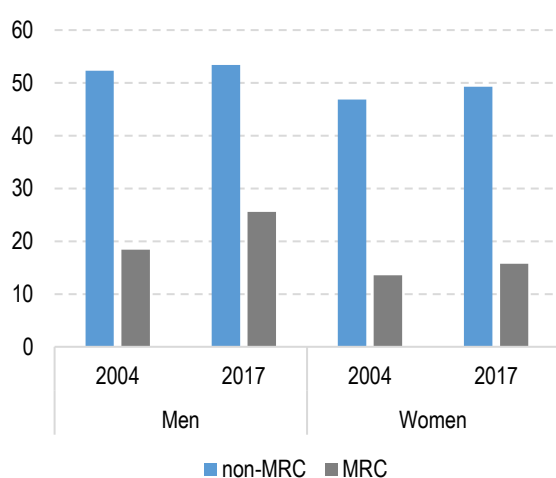
- People from MRC, those who are low educated, people with disabilities, or lone mothers with small children report substantially lower employment rates than the Slovak average.
- Most efficient public policies to increase employment rates of hard-to-place job seekers include early and individualised employment services including professional counselling, and instruments improving knowledge and work skills, such as education, retraining and support of work experience in a natural work environment. Crucial for lone mothers with small children is the availability of childcare facilities for children below 3 years of age.
- The expenditures to help job seekers by way of active labour market policies (ALMP) totalled EUR 184.1 million in 2018, which is substantially less compared to the GDP (0.20%) than the the EU-15 (0.59%) or V3 average (0.49%). The structure of the ALMP instruments focuses particularly on subsidizing job positions although both international and national studies prove the investments in education and retraining to have better returns.
- We also lag behind the international best practice in job seeker profiling aiming to provide more efficient and early help to people who experience greatest barriers on the labour market. Relevant information the labour offices have is not taken into consideration in the profiling process and more intensive counselling usually comes after as many as 6 months of registration which is contrary to the early intervention principle.
- Other countries sometimes use non-state employment services to successfully integrate hard-to-place job seekers in the open labour market using a combination of payment for service and payment by results. They only operate to a limited extent in Slovakia and their support and cooperation with labour offices has not been established at the system level.
- The poorest job seekers, which include many people from MRC, are "activated" mainly by activation works. These aim to maintain work habits but do not increase chances to find a job in the open labour market or to progress to more sophisticated instruments of support. Even people with the "maturita" certificate or university education are sometimes referred to activation works.
- The ALMP instruments focusing on assistance for persons with disabilities primarily support employment in sheltered workshops or sheltered workplaces. Although employment in sheltered workshops is an important and irreplaceable means of integration for certain groups of disabled individuals, these workshops also employ people who would also be employable in the open labour market if they received appropriate support. The law on social economy and social enterprises may support the transition from sheltered workshops to the open labour market. The application of the supported employment model and work rehabilitation and retraining are other possible support instruments, however Slovakia has not developed a clear concept of these instruments yet.
- Employers in Slovakia are obligated to employ persons with disabilities, which they do in excess of the statutory requirement. Although this limit is lower than in majority of other EU countries which have quotas in place, it applies to a broader range of employers.
- The work-life balance of (not only lone) parents with children is hindered by shortage of formal childcare facilities for pre-school children. The support of lone parents on the labour market by subsidized job positions is only starting to be implemented. A targeted and complex counselling for this group which proved to work well abroad is non-existent.
- The barrier on the labour market consisting of debt enforcement proceedings was successfully reduced by a simplified personal bankruptcy proceeding. However, systematic measures to prevent such debtors from becoming indebted again in the future is missing.
- The review proposes measures to make the employment services more efficient for hard-to-place job seekers through individualised work with the client (also with the help of non-state entities), improve job seeker profiling during registration process, increase motivation to prefer instruments other than the activation works, increase employment quotas for persons with disabilities, and more complex support of work-life balance for (not only) lone parents with small children.

7.1. Situation of the groups at risk on the labour market

People from MRC and low-educated people

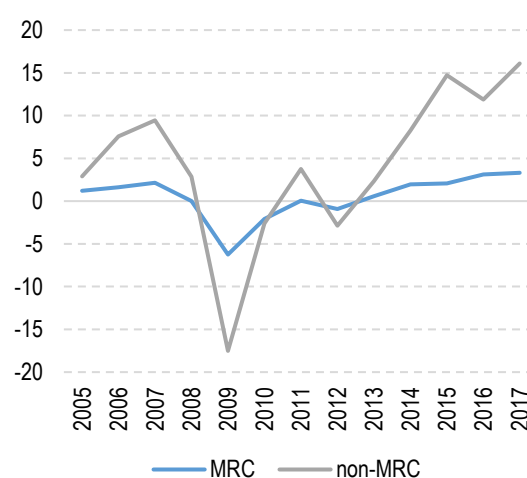
The employment rate of people from MRC has been substantially lower than the employment rate of the majority population on a long-term basis. Also gender-related differences are more protuberant within this group. The employment rate in MRC grew only moderately from 2004 to 2017. It only reached roughly one third of the employment rate reported for the majority population during the entire period monitored (Hidas et al., 2018). Traditional division of roles between men and women is more widespread in the MRC environment resulting in larger differences between men and women on the labour market (Graph 30), although women attain similar or better education results (Annex 2).

Graph 30: Employment rate by belonging to MRC and by gender (% , population aged 15 to 64 years)



Source: IFP according to data of the Social Insurance Agency
 Note: employment for at least 6 months of the year including agreements and the self-employment work;

Graph 31: Employment rate development (year-over-year growth in %, population aged 15 to 64 years)



Source: IFP according to data of the Social Insurance Agency
 Note: employment for at least 6 months of the year including agreements and the self-employment work;

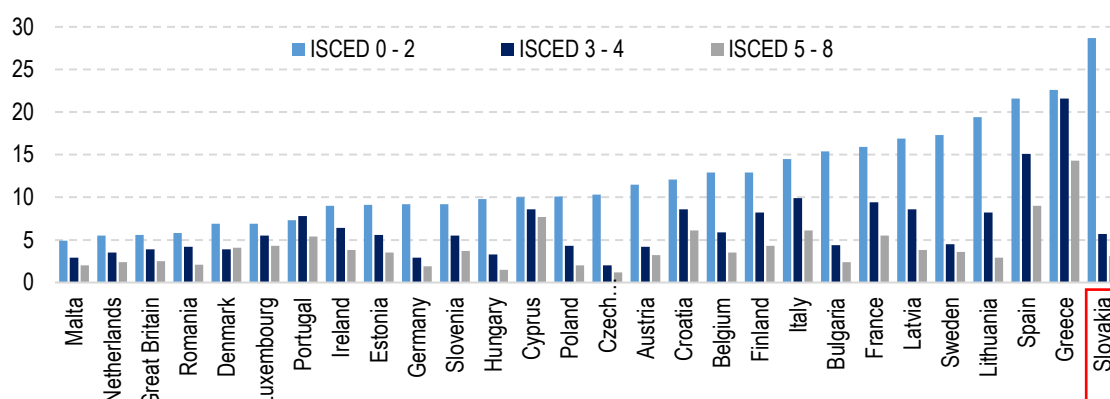
The employment rate of people from MRC is characterised by high volatility which implies greater prevalence of short-term and seasonal contracts. Although the employment rate in the MRC grew faster than outside the MRC during economic boom, crisis and the consequent layoffs affected people from the MRC more than the majority population (Graph 31).

Low education is a significant barrier to the people from MRC (Chapter 5). It is a matter of fact in Slovakia that the completed education level has an unusually significant impact on the the prospects on the labour market. Slovakia has by far the highest unemployment rate of law-qualified people in the EU (Graph 32). Slovakia also reports the greatest difference in percentage between the unemployment rate of low-educated people (ISCED 0 to 2) and the unemployment rate of people with higher education (ISCED 5 to 8). **Nevertheless, the employment rate of graduates from MRC remains lower than it is for other graduates even if we take into account the completed education level (Annex 13).**

Discrimination may be another reason of worse prospects of the people from MRC on the labour market. The experiment of the Institute for Financial Policy within which employers were distributed job applications of fictitious job seekers revealed that the odds of being invited to an interview for job seekers with Roma names was less than half the chance of the majority group although the personal and labour data, including education, was the same in each of the groups (IFP, 2014b). High (in international comparison) and growing discrimination rate of Roma in the job application process was also suggested in the survey made in the MRC environment (FRA, 2018). Other probable reasons of low employment rate include worse health condition (Chapter 10), distance from job

opportunities and issues with transport due to territorial segregation (Chapter 9), and worse financial literacy and the related exposure to debt enforcement burden (Chapter 7.5).

Graph 32: Unemployment rate by the completed education level, 20 to 64 years, 2018 (%)



Source: Eurostat

Note: ISCED 0 to 2 means lower secondary vocational education or lower; ISCED 3 to 4 means lower secondary vocational education with vocational training certificate up to post-secondary education; ISCED 5 to 8 means higher education and all types of university education. More information about ISCED classification at <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/5853.pdf>

Poor quality of ethnic identifiers in public data affects the survey researching the experiences of people from MRC on the labour market. Self-identification with an ethnic or national minority results in substantial underestimation of the proportion of Roma minority to the general population in surveys. Interconnection between the Atlas of Roma Communities and the administrative data (Box 3) could partially fill this gap, but this data is not available to external researchers which affects their usefulness. The experience of other countries shows that the option of self-identification with more than just one ethnicity/nationality significantly improves the accuracy of the collected ethnic data (e.g. the last census in Hungary) (Messing, 2014). **The review proposes to amend the representative data censuses in Slovakia (LFS, SILC, Census) to include the option to enter multiple ethnicities (multi-ethnicity question/self-identification).**

Persons with disabilities

International comparison of employment rate of persons with disabilities is hindered by incongruity between individual data sources. According to the special module of EU-LFS survey of 2011, the employment rate of persons with disabilities in Slovakia was roughly half the employment rate of persons without disability and substantially below the EU-15 average. On the contrary, the EU-SILC survey of 2017 implies that Slovakia's results are better than the average results of the EU-15 or V3 (Graph 33). This difference most probably results from different definition of disability in these two surveys rather than a dramatic improvement of the situation of disabled people on the labour market between 2011 and 2017.³⁰⁶

Administrative data cannot be used to consistently describe the situation of people with disabilities on the labour market whereas the definition of this group is not uniform (Box 12). This is why we will focus on various sub-groups of persons with disabilities within various parts of the spending review. When treating the measures

³⁰⁶ Majority of EU countries do not collect data about disability in regular Labour Force Surveys (LFS). Internationally comparable data about the situation of persons with disabilities on the labour market is only available from the special *ad hoc* 2011 LFS module which focused on this topic, and from the EU-SILC survey. The 2011 *ad hoc* EU-LFS module and the EU-SILC module define disability based on self-definition of the health condition by respondents themselves (the question asks about restrictions in every-day activities). This is why the number of persons with disabilities in the population is overestimated in them (Bahna, 2018). Slovakia is one of the few countries which collect data about disability in national LFS surveys. According to LFS, the 2018 employment rate of the population with disability reached only 18.7% in Slovakia. These regular surveys define disability objectively by asking whether the person was (based on medical expert opinion) diagnosed disability. The number of persons with disabilities in the population is rather underestimated in this survey and no internationally comparable data from other EU countries is available.

relating to the labour market, the review mainly focuses on the recipients of the invalidity pensions (IP) and job seekers with disabilities, within social policies (Chapter 8) it concentrates mainly on persons with severe disability.

Box 12: Who are persons with disabilities?

Slovak legal system does not use a uniform definition of disability. Various sub-groups of persons with disabilities (a non-exhaustive list) may be distinguished based on individual purposes, criteria and assessment methods:

Persons with severe disability (SD)

The support of social integration of people with disability into society (Chapter 8.4) makes use of the phrase "severe disability" which is defined in Act No. 447/2008 Coll.³⁰⁷ as an impairment of at least 50% of functional capacity. Impairment of functional capacity means lack of physical, sensory or mental capacity which is expected to last longer than 12 months. The assessment by covers the health condition which is reviewed by medical assessor, as well as social factors, such as individual capacity of a person with severe disability to solve adverse situation, family background or background which affects the integration of a person with severe disability into society (e.g. housing conditions or the conditions of transportation systems). These factors are reviewed by a social worker. On average, 418.5 thousand persons met the definition of severe disability in 2018 (343.5 in 2009).

Persons with unfavourable health condition

In addition to severe disability, the assessment of eligibility to certain social services uses also the concept of "unfavourable health condition". The unfavourable health condition is established by a certificate of healthcare provider. This includes such services as transport service, lending of aids, healthcare need monitoring and signalling, canteen, laundry or personal hygiene centre.

Persons dependent on social service

Some social services also incorporate a separate assessment which assesses dependency level of persons on the social service. The assessment process covers the assessment of the health condition to establish dependency level of a person on the assistance of another person as well as social factors. The dependency level is established based on the health and social assessment, and the appropriate type of social service is proposed taking into consideration the needs of the dependent person. Besides social services for elders, the services which require prior dependency assessment also include the centres of social services, rehabilitation centres, day care centres or supportive housing facilities.

Invalidity pension recipients

The social insurance system defines policyholders who are eligible to the invalidity pension. According to Act No. 461/2003 Coll.³⁰⁸, a policyholder is invalid if his or her ability to perform gainful activity decreases by more than 40% compared with a healthy person due to a long-lasting unfavourable health condition which is expected to last longer than 12 months. The assessment particularly reviews the health condition and the residual capacity to perform gainful activity or ability to prepare for occupation.

The amount of the invalidity pension is set depending on the decrease in the capacity to perform gainful activity below 70% (the so-called partial invalidity) and above 70% (the so-called full invalidity). Besides assessment of the scope of invalidity, the eligibility to invalidity pension also depends on whether or not the policyholder was insured for the pre-set number of years required for pension insurance.³⁰⁹ The so-called invalidity pension in

³⁰⁷ Article 2 of Act No. 447/2008 Coll.

³⁰⁸ Article 71 of Act No. 461/2003 Coll.

³⁰⁹ Number of years required for pension insurance scheme:

- fewer than one year, if the policyholder is less than 20 years old;

youth is an exception to the above rule. This pension is intended for the individuals who became invalid as dependent children or during post-graduate full-time study before they reached 26 years, and also if the invalidity is a consequence of a job-related injury or occupational disease.

In 2018, there were on average 251.6 thousand invalidity pensioners in Slovakia (of which 6% were the recipients of invalidity pension in youth). Invalidity pensioners aged 20 to 64 years accounted for 7.6% of population. The number of invalidity pensioners has grown by around 46 thousand since 2009.

Citizens with disabilities

The employment services use the concept of a "citizen with disability" which is defined by Act No. 5/2004 Coll.³¹⁰ as a citizen recognised as invalid according to a special regulation with reference to Article 71 of Act No. 461/2003 Coll. on social insurance as amended by Act No. 310/2006 Coll. and Act No. 328/2002 Coll. on social insurance of police corps and soldiers and amending and supplementing certain laws as amended. The citizen with disability proves invalidity and decrease (in percentage) in his or her capacity to perform gainful activity due to physical disability, mental disorder or behaviour disorder with a decision or notice of the Social Insurance Agency or an expert opinion of the social security unit in accordance with special regulation. In 2018, labour offices kept records of on average 6.4 thousand job seekers with disabilities. The number of job seekers with disabilities dropped from 12.9 thousand in 2015 particularly due to the economic cycle.

Persons disadvantaged due to their health condition

Act No. 112/2018 Coll. on social economy introduced a definition of disability which is broader than the definition in case of "citizens with disability". In addition to the persons recognised as being invalid, this wider definition also includes persons who are not recognised as being invalid, but have, compared with healthy persons, a long-lasting disability reducing their physical, mental and sensory capacity which prevent them from full and effective engagement in a working environment. For example, it is used in the context of support provided to social enterprises.

Although the employment rate of the invalidity pension recipients has grown, it remains relatively low when compared with the average figures for Slovakia. In 2018, 36.7% of invalidity pension recipients aged 20 to 64 years had a job.³¹¹ The employment rate grew by 9.3 pp compared with 2013 (Graph 34). The percentage of working invalidity pension recipients grew in the group of persons receiving partial as well as full invalidity pension. The employment rate of invalidity pension recipients aged 20 to 64 only reached around one half of the average figures for the entire Slovakia in 2018.

The gap in the employment rate of invalidity pension recipients compared with the average figures in Slovakia decreased only moderately since 2013 (by 1.9 percentage points) to 35.7 percentage points in 2018. This decrease is largely explained by the changing structure – decreasing percentage of the recipients of full and the growing percentage of the recipients of partial invalidity pensions. As regards the recipients of partial invalidity pensions, the gap compared with the average figures for Slovakia was only reduced by 0.5 percentage points during the same period; in case of the recipients of full invalidity pensions the growth of employment rate was slower than the Slovak

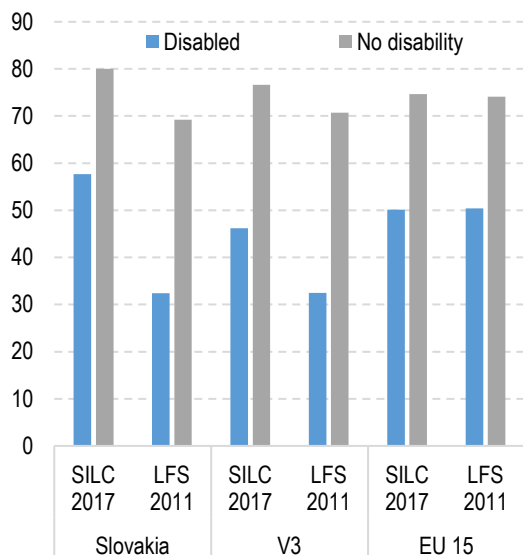
- at least one year, if the policy holder is aged more than 20 to 24 years;
- at least two years, if the policy holder is aged more than 24 to 28 years;
- at least five years, if the policy holder is aged more than 28 to 34 years;
- at least eight years, if the policy holder is aged more than 34 to 40 years;
- at least ten years, if the policy holder is aged more than 40 to 45 years;
- at least 15 years, if the policy holder is aged more than 40.

³¹⁰ Article 9 of Act No. 5/2004 Coll

³¹¹ The difference between the employment rate of invalidity pensioners according to the individual data of the Social Insurance Agency and the employment rate of persons with disability according to the data from the EU SILC survey is probably associated with the fact that the EU SILC data cover a larger group of people with varying extent of restrictions due to health problems including those who do not meet the invalidity criteria. According to the EU SILC survey, 29.4% of population reported disability in 2016, but there were only 7.2% of invalid pensioners in the general population (aged 20 to 64).

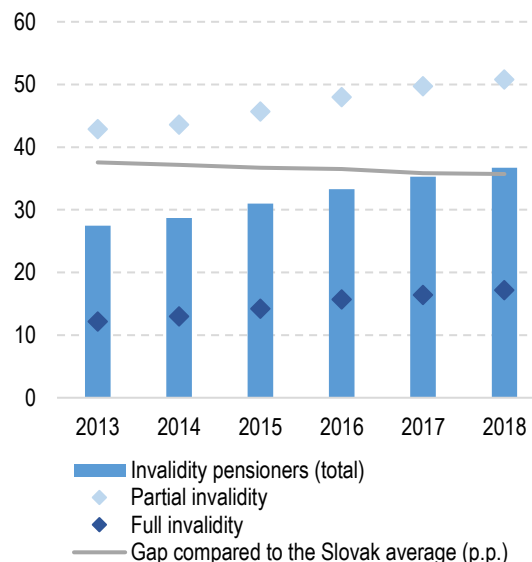
average and the gap in the employment rate thus increased by 2.4 percentage points. A relatively small percentage of jobless IP recipients is kept in the job seeker register. A huge part of them is economically inactive, particularly among the young ones.

Graph 33: Employment rate of people aged 20 to 64 years (%)



Source: ISP based on data of EU SILC and ad hoc EU LFS module 2011

Graph 34: Development of the employment rate of invalidity pensioners (%)



Source: ISP based on data of the Social Insurance Agency
Note: Box 12 for definition of partial and full invalidity

The structure of IP recipients typical for lower share of the employed, higher share of the inactive and lower share of job seekers is natural to some extent due to restrictions imposed by their health condition. But a part of the gap in the employment rate may also be associated with other factors, e.g. insufficient offer of job positions suitable for people with disabilities, reduced motivation to get employed (the so-called inactivity trap), insufficient support mechanisms (e.g. complex rehabilitation or supported employment) or barriers experienced during registration at labour offices.

Lone parents

Lone mothers have substantially worse status on the labour market than lone fathers and they account for the overwhelming majority of incomplete families (Box 13). On one hand, their motivation to work is strong because they cannot rely on the income of a partner.³¹² Their only alternative are the social benefits. On the other hand, missing partner with whom they would otherwise share childcare duties represents a significant barrier to their work-life balance.

The employment rate of lone mothers in Slovakia is relatively high, but this does not apply to lone mothers with small children. The labour force survey revealed that 78% of lone mothers were employed in Slovakia in 2018, while the EU-15 average was 71%. Although the employment rate of lone mothers in 2014 exceeded the average figure of the EU-15 by 4 percentage points, in case of mothers with the youngest child under 15 years of age it was more than 6 percentage points lower than the EU-15 average and 3 percentage points lower than the V3 average (Graph 35).³¹³

According to the labour force survey, Slovakia is specific for substantially higher employment rate of lone mothers than mothers in complete families, and particularly mothers with older children. However, the 2011 census did not

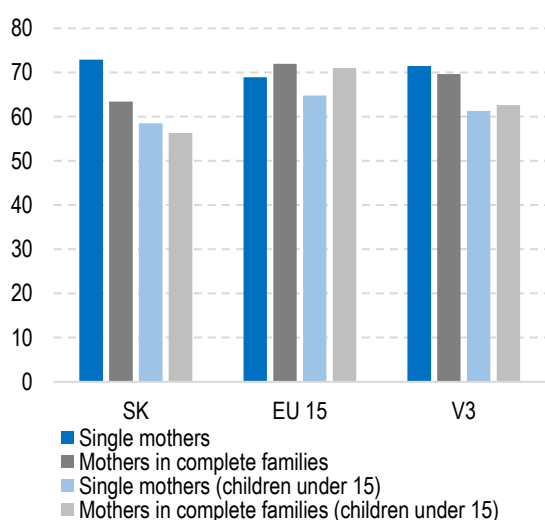
³¹² Exception to this are families which are considered to be incomplete due to long-lasting stay of one of the partners/spouses abroad (Box 13).

³¹³ More recent international data about the employment rate of mothers with small children is not publicly available.

confirm this conclusion. This source reveals that 60% of lone mothers were employed compared with 67% of mothers in complete families.³¹⁴

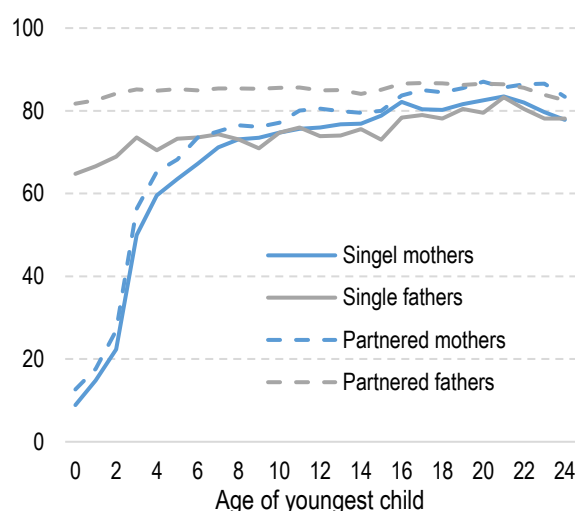
As regards employability on the labour market, lone mothers with small children under 3 years of age are a group facing particular risk in Slovakia. According to the census, the employment rate in this group only reached 15% in 2011. The employment rate gradually increases as the child grows older (Graph 36). Similar profile can also be observed in case of mothers in complete families. However, they may usually rely on the income of their husband or partner. Lone fathers have substantially better status on the labour market and it also applies to fathers of very small children.

Graph 35: Employment rate of lone mothers and mothers in complete families (% , 2014).



Source: EU LFS

Graph 36: Employment rate by the type of family and age of the youngest child (% , 2011)



Source: VřM unit based on data of the Statistical Office (SODB)

Box 13: Who are lone parents?

Incomplete family with children consists of a lone parent and his or her children living in one and the same household. A family may be incomplete due to death of one of the parents, divorce, separation of spouses or partners, woman's decision to be a lone mother or due to long-lasting stay of one of the partners/spouses abroad or in a different city, often with the aim to financially provide for the family. Incomplete family is defined based on long-lasting absence of a partner from the household, not based on the family status.³¹⁵

The 2011 census revealed that around 7% of Slovak population lived in incomplete families with children. Among dependant children, the figure was as high as 22% (Šprocha et al., 2014). Nearly one half (49%) of incomplete families consisted in 2011 of a lone parent and one child and only roughly each seventh incomplete family had three or more children. The average number of children in incomplete families with children was 1.7 (Podmanická et al., 2015).

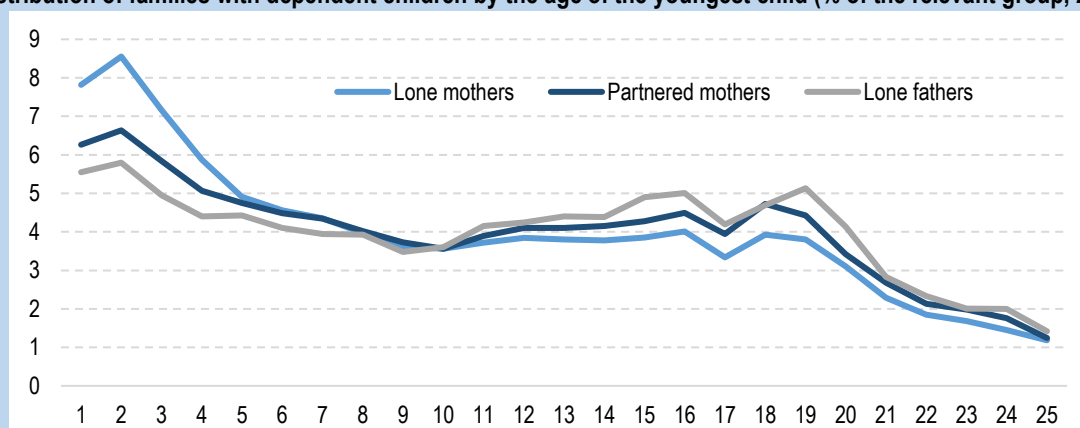
³¹⁴ The data from the LFS for the same year shows that employed were 78% of lone mothers and 64% of mothers in complete families. The difference between these sources cannot be attributed to a different definition of incomplete family whereas family or household is in both cases defined based on shared housing and costs. A probable reason of the difference may be insufficient representativeness of LFS as regards incomplete families. While the share of incomplete families with children identified in the 2011 LFS was roughly 1.6% of the population aged 15 to 64 years, the census showed that as many as 7% of the general population of Slovakia lived in incomplete families with children.

³¹⁵ Unmarried couple living in one household is considered as a complete family. On the contrary, a woman with children whose husband lives in a different household is considered to be an incomplete family.

Incomplete families with children are strongly gender-based; in 2011, as many as 84% of them were lone mothers with children. 22% of all mothers with dependant children were lone. This is also why the discussion in the review focuses mainly on lone mothers. However, the proposed measures should equally help lone fathers as well.

The situation of families with children from the perspective of the employment rate of parents as well as eligibility to certain types of social benefits is substantially affected by the age of the youngest child. This is particularly true about lone parents whereas they cannot rely on the income of their partner. It is therefore interesting that the structure of the families of lone mothers in relation to the age of the youngest child differs from the structure of complete families as well as from the structure of the families of lone fathers. According to the 2011 census, 39% of lone mothers had the youngest child under 6 years of age, in case of mothers in complete families this figure was 33% and of lone fathers it was 29%.

Distribution of families with dependent children by the age of the youngest child (% of the relevant group, 2011)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the Statistical Office (SODB)

Note: The sum of percentages across the age of the youngest child equals 100% for each type of family

Overview of integration instruments on the labour market

The review brings an overview of a wide spectrum of instruments relevant for the integration of the groups at risk into the labour market (Table 23). While some active labour market policies (ALMP) are not targeted at specific groups or disadvantaged job seekers, other instruments are more narrowly focused. For example, individualised work with the client and integrational social enterprises focus on hard-to-place job seekers, irrespective of whether the barrier to the employment stems from social or health disadvantage (Chapter 7.2). Certain instruments focus specifically on persons with disabilities, such as some types of ALMP or the statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities (Chapter 7.3). The policies aiming at the work-life balance are particularly relevant to lone mothers (Chapter 7.4). Personal bankruptcy to address the barrier on the labour market consisting of debt enforcement proceedings is available to all, but is mostly helpful to people with poor financial literacy and for the poor people (Chapter 7.5).

Table 23: Overview of focus of individual labour market integration instruments on the review's target groups

	MRC and low-educated people	Persons with disabilities	Lone mothers
Counselling services and active labour market policies	x	x	x
Individualised work with client	x	x	x
Integrational social enterprises	x	x	x
Statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities		x	
Work rehabilitation and retraining		x	
Work-life balance			x
Personal bankruptcy	x		

Source: VFM

7.2. Employment services and social economy

The employment services mean the system of institutions and instruments of support and assistance intended for those who participate on the labour market during job seeking process, job change, occupation of vacant positions and application of active labour market policies. Jobless people who wish to have access to employment services need to first register with the job seeker register. The information and counselling services are an exception, as they are available to all who wish to use them.

Labour offices do not have sufficient capacity to provide individualised support to more hard-to-place job seekers when they look for, and try to maintain, suitable employment with regard to their specific needs. Recent survey conducted by the Labour Force and Family Institute (LFFI) suggested poor specialisation of the labour office employees who provide professional counselling services (PCS) on individual groups of disadvantaged job seekers (Kešelová et al., 2018).

The employees of the offices of labour, social affairs and family providing recruitment services are not governed by a uniform methodology or instructions focusing on work with job seekers with health issues. According to the LFFI's survey, as many as 40% of the interviewed labour offices providing professional counselling services (PCS) consider sheltered shops to be the most suitable option of employment of people with disabilities (Kešelová et al., 2018).

Aiming to harmonise and improve the quality of services, the review therefore proposes to prepare a methodological instruction which should regulate procedures from the first contact of labour offices with a person with disabilities up to his or her placement and support to keep the job found, whether directly or by way of supported employment agencies or other selected entities focusing on individualised work with clients. The methodological guideline should also lay emphasis on the placement of job seekers with disability primarily in the open labour market, and only offer employment in sheltered workshops to a selected group of job seekers whose barriers to the labour market are most significant. The methodological guideline should also explicitly prohibit to discourage individuals with disability from registering in the job seeker register.

The access to employment services may be problematic for people with limited mobility if the labour offices are not barrier free. According to the 2016 monitoring of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, 9 labour offices did not have barrier free access to the registration office; the number of workplaces of individual offices which are not barrier free may be even higher.³¹⁶ **The review therefore proposes to ensure barrier-free access primarily to the registration, counselling and other support services at all labour offices.**

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP)

The expenditures on active labour market policies (ALMP) totalled EUR 184.1 million in 2018 (0.20% of GDP),³¹⁷ Slovakia spends less of the GDP than the EU-15 (0.59%) or V3 (0.49%) (Graph 37). The ALMP instruments focus primarily on hard-to-place job seekers who would only find a job on the labour market with difficulties if they were not provided more intensive help. Low expenditures on ALMP in Slovakia are particularly disturbing due to relatively high percentage of long-lasting unemployment compared with other European countries.

Slovakia is most lagging behind the EU-15 average in the expenditures on education (Graph 38), although foreign studies prove this instrument to be one of the most efficient especially in the medium up to long-term horizon and in case of the long-term unemployed (Card et al., 2015). The share of expenditures on education of the total expenditures on the ALMP significantly increased in recent years from 4.0% in 2016 to 10.6% in 2018. Majority of

³¹⁶ Activity Report of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities for 2016. Labour offices which reported to have barrier-free access in the monitoring were not surveyed for barrier-free access of all workplaces, and therefore the actual number of workplaces without barrier-free access could be even higher.

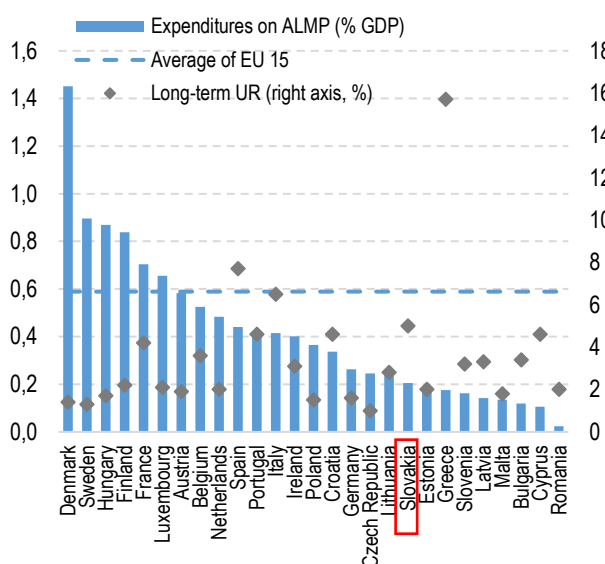
³¹⁷ 73% of this amount was funded from the ESI Funds and co-funding scheme. This amount also includes the expenditures on the ALMP focusing on job seekers with disabilities.

the expenditures on educational ALMP in Slovakia are spent by way of the REPAS (focusing on retraining) and KOMPAS (focusing on competence skills) projects.³¹⁸

Assessment of the net efficiency of the REPAS project made by the Institute of Social Policy showed that participation in education increased the employability of the participants on the labour market approximately by 3 to 5 percentage points compared with the control group, and the return on the expenditures on this instrument in the form of higher taxes and contributions was estimated to take 3 years (Petráš, 2018). Education had more than an average effect in case of men, long-term unemployed, and disadvantaged job seekers. Worse than an average effect was reached in case of women³¹⁹ and short-term unemployed. Nearly 45 thousand job seekers took part in the REPAS project from 2015 to 2017.³²⁰

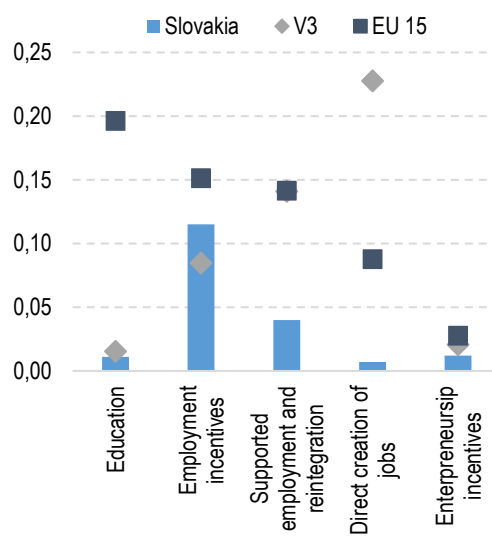
The allocation for ALMP continues to focus primarily on supporting the demand on the labour market by subsidised employment programmes (Graph 38). Such a setting is generally problematic, as employers report growing difficulties with occupation of the existing vacant job positions. But it may be meaningful in case of more hard-to-place job seekers, people who experience discrimination on the labour market and in regions with great shortage of jobs.

Graph 37: Expenditures on ALMP and long-term unemployment rate (2017)



Source: European Commission and Eurostat

Graph 38: Expenditures on ALMP by instruments (2017, % of GDP)



Source: European Commission

Support of employment by way of temporary employment in local governments increases the employment rate of participants by 15 percentage points and their income by EUR 40; in this case, the return on the expenditures on this ALMP instrument was estimated to 6.5 to 8 years (Petráš, 2019). This instrument³²¹ is one of the largest ones within the employment stimuli and only focuses on the disadvantaged job seekers. Nearly 22 thousand job seekers took part in this instrument during 2013 – 2018. The greatest effect was noticed with the long-term unemployed who reached 20 percentage points higher employment rate compared with the control group one year after the end of the programme. Those who participated in the temporary work at more qualified positions (e.g. office jobs or services) in cities, schools and social services, became substantially more employable on the

³¹⁸ 90% in 2017 and 93% in 2018. The KOMPAS project started to participate in the expenditures on education more (34%) only in 2018.

³¹⁹ Worse effect observed with women could have been particularly due to the nursing courses. In this case, the result could have been distorted because some of the participants in those courses decided to work abroad.

³²⁰ The decision to take part in an educational course within the REPAS and KOMPAS projects is upon the candidates who choose the course and provider on their own initiative. The state pays the course fee for the course participants and provide the participants an allowance for meal and transportation in amount of EUR 4.64 for each day of the course.

³²¹ Allowance to support development of local and regional employment according to Article 50j of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services.

labour market. However, they accounted for the smaller part compared with the lower qualified positions carried out in municipalities.

Support of employment of people who receive assistance in material need (including the people from MRC) using instruments other than the activation works is relatively low. Every fourth job seeker not included in the AMN system made use of one of the ALMP instruments other than the activation works in an average month of 2017, but with job seekers in the assistance in material need system it was only every fourteenth (Table 24). The use of the AMN receiving job seekers in the ALMP instruments other than the activation works is very low irrespective of whether or not they come from MRC; however, the truth is that it is one third lower in the MRC than outside the MRC. While the participation of women in ALMP instruments other than the activation works in the environment outside MRC is higher than it is for men, it is just the opposite in the MRC environment (Annex 2).

Table 24: Participation of job seekers in the selected ALMP instruments other than activation works in 2017 (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	5.3	8.1	7.0
non-AMN	18.4	24.8	24.3
Total	11.2	22.4	21.0

Source: VIM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office and the Atlas

Note: The figures in the table represent the average monthly percentages. Except the activation works, information and counselling services are not a part of the selected ALMP instruments (Article 42 of the Act on Employment Services). Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

If the profiling was done immediately at the registration, it would be possible to better use and plan assistance for job seekers most disadvantaged on the labour market. Profiling is a systematic approach assessing the long-term unemployment risk based on individual's characteristics and local labour market in order to ensure optimum setting of the time, structure and intensity of assistance. It is a diagnostic instrument which does not replace the work of labour office employees, but supplements it and makes it more efficient. Statistical quantitative profiling based on administrative data or supplemented with the data gained during interview with the job seeker provides a more objective and accurate picture about the level of disadvantage than the subjective judgement by a labour office employee or the rigid and binary definition of the disadvantage in the Act on Employment Services.

This instrument is used by several developed countries (Kureková, 2014). Czech study revealed that profiling based on administrative data was able to correctly predict 79% of job seekers who stayed in registration for more than 12 months compared to the 58% success based on the criteria of risky job seeker defined by law. Moreover, the costs of each of these methods are similar (Soukup, 2009). Of course, the social benefit of a more accurate estimate of job seeker's risk depends on how the labour offices would use the information and on the quality of the provided assistance.

The profiling of job seekers in Slovakia is very rough, without using sophisticated statistical instruments and all relevant information which labour offices have at disposal. Employees of labour offices use profiling to categorise job seekers in five groups of their employability on the labour market taking into consideration the duration of registration. Group A comprises young people under 29 years who are considered to be relatively easy to place. Group B comprises job seekers over 50 years with medium difficulty to place. Group C comprises long-term unemployed job seekers who are considered to be difficult to place. Group D comprises "non-placeable" job seekers whose barriers to the labour market consist in addiction (e.g. drugs, gambling), absence of basic hygiene habits, or social inadaptability (e.g. aggression, homelessness). The fifth group comprises all other job seekers³²².

The information which is highly relevant for placement on the labour market and is either available from the administrative data or easy to obtain during interview with the client, such as gender, material deprivation, education, work experience, disability, previous participation in the ALMP instruments, residence in a territorially

³²² Internal norm No. IN – 039/2019 "Methodological guideline for the offices of labour, social affairs and family employed by the department of services for citizens to use uniform recruitment process, assistance in material deprivation and state social benefits."

excluded community, motivation to find employment, care for dependent person, is not formally considered in the profiling process. More complex and intensive counselling provided by labour offices (e.g. professional counselling services, balance of competences, individual action plan) is usually initiated after as many as 6 months of registration, which is contrary to the principle of early intervention the purpose of which is to prevent long-term unemployment.

The review therefore proposes to elaborate job seeker profiling based on quantitative methods to enable early identification of those job seekers who are more probable to fall for long-term unemployed.

The project Efficient Services for Citizens 2 (ESKO 2) within the Human Resources Operational Programme may help achieve this goal. The goal of the project is to build a client-oriented state government in the area of employment to ensure provision of accessible, targeted and complex services aimed at solution of citizen's life situation in a single place. One of the main parts of the ESKO 2 project is the client profiling using the data from the existing ministerial internal systems, other public authorities (e.g. Social Insurance Agency) and the Big Data. The Employment and Social Policy Spending Review assessed the benefits of the ESKO 2 project resulting from more efficient placement of job seekers on the labour market at the level of EUR 8.6 million a year (VfM and ISP, 2017). Based on the data provided, the Value for Money unit expects the project to reach positive cost-and-benefit ratio at the level of 1.5.³²³ Approximately EUR 34 million were contracted within the project in July 2019.

Activation works as an ALMP

On average, 24,856 people engaged in activation works every month in 2018. The activation works are implemented within two rails in Slovakia. One rail comprises the activation works in the form of minor municipal services for a municipality or minor services for the self-governing region within the ALMP based on agreement between the job seeker and the labour office and the agreement between the labour office and the municipality or the self-governing region (14% of all participants). The ALMP expenditures on this activity consist of an allowance for the municipality or self-governing region which may be used to cover a part of the costs of personal protective equipment, accident insurance covering the participants, part of the costs of work tools and other costs. and to cover part of the total labour cost of coordinator's work. The second rail allows municipalities to also organise activation works based on agreement between the job seeker and the municipality, but they do not receive the allowance in such case (86% of all participants).³²⁴

Since 2014, coordination of activation works, selection of suitable candidates and provision of support and counselling to candidates during activation works are the responsibility of the activation centres. There are 46 such centres in Slovakia (each labour office has such a centre). The activation work is not carried out based on a standard labour relationship, the participants are not subject to the minimum wage law and organisers are not obligated to pay social insurance contribution for them.

Activation works serve within the ALMP as an instrument to activate job seekers who live in households which receive assistance in material need. More than one half of the ALMP participants in the AMN system were "activated" by this instrument (Graph 39, titled direct job creation³²⁵). Among the people from MRC in the AMN system, as many as three quarters of the participants in the ALMP were activated this way.

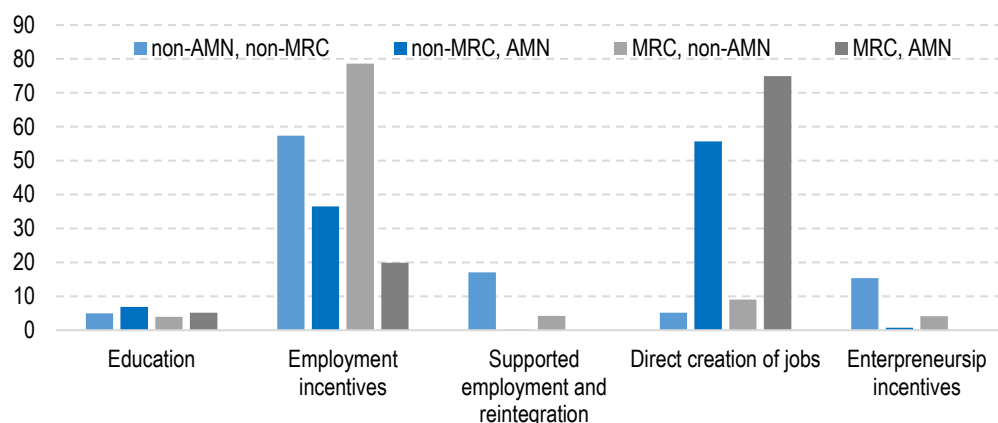
³²³ <http://www1.mfsr.sk/LoadDocument.aspx?categoryId=11154&documentId=16566>

³²⁴ There also are other differences in the eligibility conditions between activation works within the ALMP and the activation works organised by municipalities and they concern duration of registration and the maximum possible duration of participation (Kureková et al., 2013). The participants in activation works who are in the assistance in material need system are eligible to receive activation benefit (Chapter 8.1).

³²⁵ In the European Commission's classification of the ALMP instruments, the activation works are included under the Direct Job Creation instruments together with volunteering:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8126&furtherPubs=yes>

Graph 39: Structure of ALMP instruments by participation (in % of the total number of participants), 2017



Source: VřM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

The system of activation by way of activation works within ALMP is not efficient when it comes to the direct impact on unemployment rate reduction. Quantitative assessments of this instrument indicate that activation works do not improve the chances of finding employment in the open labour market (Hidas et al., 2016).³²⁶ The reason is that they mainly contain activities not requiring qualifications without any extra value, such as street sweeping, litter collection, snow shovelling, etc.

Although the objective to "support maintenance of work habits of a long-term unemployed citizen"³²⁷ can be perceived independently of the direct impact on the employment rate, this instrument should serve at least as a step to other, more advanced instruments with a more direct connection with the labour market. But this is not happening. Only 11% out of 13,953 participants in activation works within ALMP whose engagement ended between July 2016 and June 2017 found work during six months after their engagement or gained access to any other ALMP instruments.³²⁸

Also the educational structure of the participants in the activation works raises questions. Even though activation works usually include simple manual works, as many as 10% of participants in 2017 were job seekers with secondary education with school leaving certificate or university education. Other ALMP instruments would be more suitable for this group. Neither the participants themselves are motivated to prefer other forms of activation (such as education), as this would not affect the amount of the activation benefit within the assistance in material need system (more on activation benefit in Chapter 8.1).³²⁹

The information obtained suggests that many municipalities which organise activation works directly based on agreement with job seekers are limited by the lack of funds. They are not eligible to receive allowance from the state (unlike in the case of activation works within ALMP). Although activation works are financially a better option for them compared with employing people for a market wage, they have to cover all costs from their own funds. This practically leads to the shortage of coordinators and tools which limits their ability to give participants more diverse and sophisticated work with greater potential of personal growth and truer imitation of work in the open market (Kureková et al., 2013).

³²⁶ Although activation works within ALMP are used by the smaller part of participants in activation works, the efficiency of the second rail (based on agreement between the job seeker and municipality) can reasonably be expected to be even lower. In this case, municipalities do not receive any allowance from the state to cover part of their costs which, as the collected information reveals, limits their capability to offer more sophisticated work with higher added value which would enable the participants to acquire new skills (Kureková et al., 2013).

³²⁷ Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services; Article 52(1).

³²⁸ Only labour relationships or self-employment taking at least 6 months according to the data of the Social Insurance Agency were included in this calculation.

³²⁹ Paid employment with monthly income amounting to minimum wage or more is an exception to this rule, in which event the activation benefit is higher.

To ensure better addressability of activation works and make it a step to more sophisticated instruments and, eventually, to the integration into the labour market, the review proposes the following measures:

- The value of the activation benefit (Chapter 8.1) should be higher for people taking part in education or increasing qualifications than it is for the participants in activation works. This should support job seekers in seeking other, more efficient activation instruments.
- Procedural instructions at labour offices should be amended so that job seekers who completed secondary education with school-leaving certificate be referred primarily to the ALMP programmes other than the activation works.
- The participants in the activation works within ALMP should be formally assessed by the coordinator or organiser (worker of a municipality). More successful participants should be guaranteed access to more sophisticated instruments within the ALMP and the less successful ones should be referred to a more intensive individualised counselling or to non-state supported employment agencies (Chapter 7.3).
- The allowance for activation works in the form of minor municipality services or the form of minor services for the self-governing region should be made conditional upon hiring participants for work of higher added value and allowing development of their skills.³³⁰ If this measure is proved to work well, the allowance could be amended to also include the participants of the second rail (based on agreement between the job seeker and the municipality).

Individualised work with client and supported employment

Supported employment is a complex of individualised services intended for (socially/health) disadvantaged persons on the labour market focusing on finding and keeping job under the open labour market conditions. The packages of services are adjusted to the specific capacities and needs of an individual in and outside the workplace. For example, they may include professional counselling, surveying professional capacity and skills of job seekers, preparation for employment, intermediation of suitable employment, provision of professional counselling to the employer on how to modify the job position and create working conditions suitable to the needs of the disadvantaged person and "mentoring" or assistance after the person is hired.

In some countries, the supported employment services for the disadvantaged job seekers on the labour market are provided by non-state providers (Box 14). Their funding is typically a combination of a regular payment for the services provided and a payment by results, i.e. for placing clients and keeping them employed. The evaluation of the impacts of employment services outsourcing model has brought mixed results due to differences in outsourcing models in individual countries and use of different evaluation methods. If the conditions are set well, partial outsourcing of employment services may be cost efficient particularly in case of more hard-to-place clients (European Commission, 2013, OECD, 2015c, Eardley, 2003). For example, positive impact on the results on the labour market was documented with long-term unemployed clients (Hasluck et al., 2003), clients with disabilities (Stafford et al., 2007), clients with migration background or clients lacking qualification (Bernhard and Wolff, 2008).

However, funding and control of non-public providers must be set both to rewarding positive results and minimising the so-called "cream-skimming" (i.e. selection of the most easily-to-place clients). Nevertheless, we should remember that advantages of outsourcing may need some time to bring results, Australia being an example, where the model started to work well when a competitive environment was established in the market of providers, efficient management and monitoring of the service quality in place, and lower-quality providers excluded (Finn, 2011).

Box 14: Outsourcing of supported employment in other countries

In Spain, job seekers with disabilities are granted invalidity pension after labour offices assess their

³³⁰ Examples of activation works with higher added value are given in the Good Practice of Activation Work publication: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/publikacie/Dobra%20prax%20aktivacnej%20prace.pdf

documentation and then they may select the employment services they wish to use. Clients may initiate contact with non-state provider of supported employment on their own, but this must be preceded by registration and approval of the labour office. Labour counselling may be provided by the labour offices themselves, but this service is usually provided by non-public providers which may apply for funding. At the time of survey, around 200 – 300 (particularly private) providers of employment services employed 400 – 500 coaches who assisted around 5,000 persons with intensive needs in the area of integration on the labour market (European Commission, 2013).

Netherlands outsource the entire process of supported employment. Service packages, or "trajectories" include individualised case management, skills assessment, rehabilitation, professional education and/or search for employment, internships and services in the area of job placement and maintenance. These packages are purchased by labour offices or municipalities based on tenders. Service providers are funded based on results (e.g. 20% at the beginning of the agreed plan, another 30% after six months of participation, and the remaining 50% of the agreed fee if the client finds and keeps his or her job) (European Commission, 2013).

In Australia, the employment services are provided exclusively by non-public providers which are selected based on tenders. During preparations of the tender call, the Australian Ministry of Labour defines the minimum requirements and standards of services. In addition to the required compliance with these minimum requirements, the competing entities are also free to propose service models which lead to various innovations and diversity of services. The tender focuses on the proposed models and scopes of services, not the price. The Ministry of Labour then monitors the provision of the services purchased and publishes the "rating" of providers based on regression analysis which takes into account, for example, differences in individual local labour markets or in the characteristic features of local populations of job seekers. The results of the rating of individual providers (and their branches) are public and may thus serve as the background for the decisions of job seekers as well as employers. The Ministry of Labour may even order the least efficient providers in the relevant location to terminate their services or reduce their market share in favour of more efficient providers based on the rating results. The funding system is based on two types of allowances: administrative and result-based which are set in advance and are not subject to bid in the tender. Administrative allowances are provided every 6 months. Result-based allowances are paid for the job seeker placement and maintenance at work – in the 4th, 12th and 26th week from his or her placement. The amount of result-based allowances to the provider for the relevant job seeker depends on the residence and profiling result (Australian National Audit Office, 2017).

Non-state providers of employment services supporting citizens with disabilities and the long-term unemployed citizens in Slovakia are the agencies of supported employment (ASE). However, they do not receive systemic support. License for the supported employment agencies is granted by the Central Labour Office based on evaluation of the compliance with exact conditions³³¹. But the law does not define clear rules of operation and funding as a result of which the work of such agencies is not systematically funded from public finance or monitored³³². The only instrument for ASE funding defined in the law (employer's payment for ASE's services³³³) is only used to a limited extent and its amount does not cover all costs associated with the services of such agencies. The average number of ASE agencies with a valid license was 52 in the past 3 years, and dropped to 45 at the end of 2018.³³⁴ On 17 May 2019, the Central Labour Office only had 39 licensed ASE agencies and only one quarter of

³³¹ Article 58(5) of the Act on Employment Services.

³³² ASE agencies are expected to prepare annual reports, but only 11 out of 39 licensed agencies sent such report. It is not clear which agencies only deal in professional counselling or education and which work directly with clients (citizens with disabilities).

³³³ Article 58 of the Act on Employment Services. ASE agency may collect an agreed fee from the employer for such services as (i) provision of professional counselling to the employer during hiring process of employees falling in the category of citizens with disabilities or long-term unemployed citizens, and with solution of issues during their employment; (ii) selection of a suitable citizen with disability or a suitable long-term unemployed citizen for a job position based on employer's requirements; (iii) provision of professional counselling to the employer to help the employer to adjust the job position and working conditions to a specific citizen with disability.

³³⁴ Source: Annual Reports of Central Labour Office

them reported their services.³³⁵ In 2018, the Labour Force and Family Research Institute prepared an analytical study at request of the Ministry of Labour. This study recommends as a transitional solution to fund the services of the supported employment agencies by way of a national project (NP) (Ondrušová et al., 2018). However, this initiative has not entered the implementation phase yet.³³⁶

The review therefore proposes to reinforce individualised work with disadvantaged groups on the labour market. Possible solutions include more intensive cooperation with non-state services of employment or other selected entities focusing on this type of work, as well as strengthening the state's resources in this area, or a combination of the two approaches. In both cases, part of funds should be tied with the results achieved in placements of job seekers on the labour market. Should the services be outsourced, it is necessary to set clear cooperation rules with labour offices, systematic and sustainable funding, and collection of data about the work of providers. The aim should be to have more than just one such provider in the jurisdiction of each labour office to make the environment competitive and reach the requested quality of services. If the job seeker profiling system is applied right at the time of registration, the estimated risk of long-term unemployment may be used as a criterion to refer risk clients to this type of individualised help and for setting the financial compensation.

Integrational social enterprises

New opportunities for socially and health disadvantaged job seekers may be created by the act on social economy and social enterprises³³⁷ by establishing support for integrational social enterprises. Integrational enterprise is a type of registered social enterprise which achieves positive social benefit by employing disadvantaged or vulnerable persons. Unlike in the case of activation works, the work in an integrational enterprise offers normal labour relationship and larger room for the development of skills interesting for potential employers.

Funding of integrational social enterprises was set with the aim to motivate them to help their employees to find job in the open labour market (Box 15). The placement allowance paid to the integrational enterprise (53f) is conditional upon termination of the labour relationship of the disadvantaged employee in the integrational enterprise and his or her placement with an employer which is not an integrational enterprise or sheltered shop. The compensatory allowance paid to the integrational enterprise (53g) is limited to 12 to 24 months at the most in case of employees whose disadvantage does not stem from their health condition. This generates motivation for the labour inter-market in which hard-to-place people acquire work habits and practical experience and prepare for the open labour market. As regards employees whose disadvantage stems from their health condition, the allowance paid out in compliance with Article 53g is not limited in time, but the allowance paid out in compliance with Article 53f creates motivation for placing employees in the open labour market.

Box 15: Support of integrational social enterprises

Article 53g – compensatory allowance paid to the integrational enterprise

This allowance serves to fund the costs of integrational enterprise associated with the employment of disadvantaged, substantially disadvantaged and vulnerable persons (including the persons disadvantaged on the grounds of their health condition). It is provided by the Central Labour Office based on agreement and its amount depends on the actual eligible costs and type of disadvantage/vulnerability of the employed person.

Article 53f – placement allowance paid to the integrational enterprise

³³⁵ Source: https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/sluzby-zamestnanosti/nestatne-sluzby-zamestnanosti/agentury-podporovaneho-zamestnavania.html?page_id=13042, the information about the Activity Reports for 2018 was provided by the Central Labour Office at request.

³³⁶ The Ministry of Labour currently works on a "Step by Step" call covering individualised work with the disadvantaged groups on the labour market and besides the agencies of supported employment the circuit of eligible applicants will be extended to also include the selected entities (municipalities, non-profit organisations, civil associations, church organisations).

³³⁷ Act No. 112/2018 Coll.

The Central Labour Office provides, based on an agreement, allowance to the integrational enterprise for a disadvantaged person if the enterprise terminates labour relationship with such person and such person is employed by an employer other than the integrational enterprise, its related entity or sheltered shop. The support is often limited to 12 months and one-month allowance for 1 employee is differentiated by individual quarters.

In addition to the compensatory support, social enterprises are also supported by way of investment aid and by supporting demand in the form of service vouchers (vouchers exchangeable for various services in households and garden). Service vouchers are beneficial both for the registered social enterprises as well as the persons dependent on the assistance of another individual who may purchase service vouchers (and, consequently, the services of social enterprises) for a bargain price. The state may also support social enterprises by a lower value added tax of 10%, waiving the tax on a part of the profit which the enterprise invests back in the attainment of a social objective, and by preferring such enterprises in public tenders. Available also is a network of counselling centres of social economy workers of which provide information about social entrepreneurship and the necessary assistance and support when launching newly established social enterprises.³³⁸

It is too early to assess the act on social economy now. The act took effect on 1 May 2018. The registration process of integrational social enterprises was set off at the same time; drawdown of allowances was negligible in 2018. But the interest in acquiring the status of a registered social enterprise has been growing. On 25 February 2020, the status of a registered social enterprise was granted to 88 enterprises. On this date, the Department of Social Economy of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has additional 18 applications for the status of registered integrational social enterprise. **The review proposes to assess the implementation of the act on social economy in three years from its effective date.**

7.3. Labour market policies focusing on persons with disabilities

ALMP focusing on persons with disabilities

Public expenditures on the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market by way of targeted active labour market policies (ALMP) amounted to EUR 36.9 million in 2018, which is around 0.1% of the total public spend and 20.1% of the total expenditures on the ALMP. In 2018, 10,557 citizens with disabilities were supported by way of five targeted instruments³³⁹; one person with disability could have been supported with multiple instruments. The persons with disabilities supported by any of the targeted ALMP instruments accounted for 11.3% of the total number of working recipients of invalidity pension aged 20 to 64 years.

As much as 83% of expenditures on the ALMP for persons with disabilities went to the support of sheltered shops and workplaces in 2018 (Graph 40, Graph 41 and Box 16). 98% of that support maintenance of the existing job positions and 2% support creation of the new ones.³⁴⁰ At the end of 2018, 10,584 citizens with disabilities worked in a sheltered environment (6,135 in sheltered shops and 4,449 in sheltered workplaces)³⁴¹, which was 11.3% of working recipients of invalidity pensions aged 20 to 64 years.

Sheltered workshops are a form of special employment and the transition from them to the open labour market is rather rare (European Commission, 2013). Although sheltered employment is an important and irreplaceable integrational instrument for certain groups of persons with disabilities into the labour market (e.g. elderly people), in Slovakia these shops also employ people who could otherwise find job in an open labour market

³³⁸ <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/informacie-media/aktuality/otvaranie-poradenskych-centier-socialnej-ekonomiky.html>

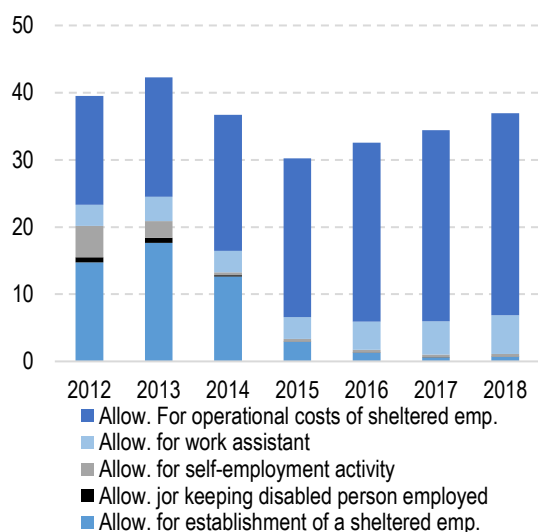
³³⁹ Based on the micro data of the Central Labour Office

³⁴⁰ The 20013 amendment act changed the conditions for provision of the allowance for establishment of a sheltered shop or workplace (Article 59). Before the amendment, the total labour costs of employees of sheltered shops/workplaces could have also been funded based on Article 56. From 1 May 2013, this allowance is only provided to cover the costs of creation of a job position without the total labour costs. The total labour costs can thus only be funded based on Article 60.

³⁴¹ Central Labour Office

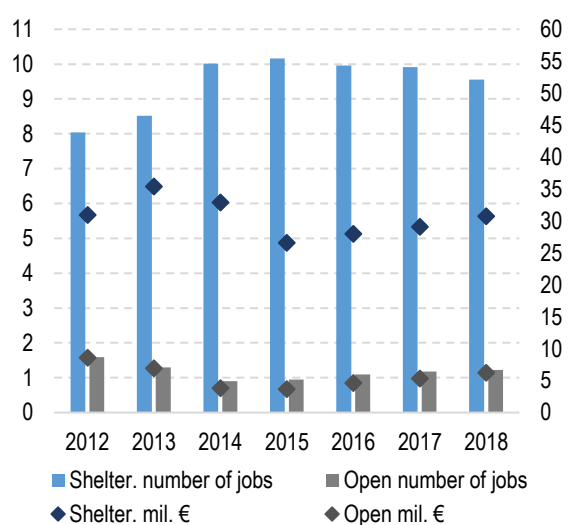
if they received appropriate support. This is why the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities criticised Slovakia in 2016.³⁴²

Graph 40: Development and structure of expenditures on the ALMP for persons with disabilities (eur million)



Source: ISP based on data from the Central Labour Office

Graph 41: Support of job positions in sheltered environment and in the open labour market



Source: ISP based on data from the Central Labour Office
 Note: CHD/CHP means sheltered shops and workplaces, OTP means the open labour market, PM stands for job positions.

Multiple European countries (e.g. Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden, or the Great Britain) adopted reforms laying more emphasis on the support of integration of persons into the open labour market e.g. by means of supported employment (Chapter 7.2) or work rehabilitation (European Commission, 2016b). The transition of citizens with disabilities from sheltered employment to the open labour market could be supported by the law on social economy and social enterprises (Chapter 7.2).

A US research study implies that supported employment (Chapter 7.2) is a better option for persons with disabilities than sheltered employment. The reason is that they create better conditions for integration into the labour market, including in terms of wage, and cost the state less. One of the reasons is that employees in sheltered employments are supported with all kinds of instruments substantially longer than the employees in supported employment, and a huge part of persons never changes the sheltered environment for the open labour market (Kregel and Dean, 2002; Cimera, 2011).

Box 16: ALMP focusing on the support of employment of persons with disabilities

The following active policies are indented for the support of employment of persons with disabilities according to the act on employment services:

Article 56 – Allowance for establishment of a sheltered shop or sheltered workplace

The allowance is provided to cover part of the costs of creation of a job position for a citizen with disability in a sheltered environment. The amount of the allowance is derived from the average wage in the economy and from the registered unemployment rate in the relevant county. The created position must exist for at least 2 years.

Sheltered shops and workplaces mean job positions where working conditions including the conditions for work performance are adjusted to the health condition of the citizens of disabilities who are not able to find job in an open labour market or who are preparing for work. Sheltered shops have at least 50% of employees with

³⁴² UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Concluding observations on the initial report of Slovakia CRPD/C/SVK/CO/1: available [here](#)

disabilities. Sheltered workplace is a specific form of employment of persons with disabilities. It is a sheltered job position for a citizen with disability which is not created in a sheltered shop.

Article 56a – Allowance to keep an employee who is a citizen with disability

The allowance is intended for the employers which employ more than 25% of citizens with disabilities and, at the same time, the employer is not a sheltered shop or sheltered workplace. It allows to pay the public health and social insurance contributions to the maximum of 60% of the average wage in national economy.

Article 57 – Allowance for a citizen with disability for operation or conduct of self-employment activity

The allowance serves for the settlement of the costs associated with a self-employment activity which must be operated for at least 2 years. The amount of the allowance is derived from the average wage in the economy and from the unemployment rate in the relevant county. Eligible applicant is the person who was kept in the job seeker registration for at least 3 months. The allowance is not provided for the payment of contributions or for rent.

Article 59 – Allowance for a work assistant

This allowance is provided to an employer or self-employed person with disability. The monthly allowance ranges from 41% to 70% of the total labour costs calculated based on average wage in economy.

Article 60 – Allowance for the settlement of operational costs of a sheltered shop or sheltered workplace and the cost of transportation of employees

This allowance is provided to employers or self-employed persons with disabilities. The amount of the allowance depends on the extent of limitation of the person with disability to conduct gainful activity based on an invalidity decision issued by the Social Insurance Agency.

Obligatory (claimable allowances) are the allowances provided under Articles 59 and 60. The remaining allowances are provided on an optional basis (non-claimable allowances) based on approval of the application for allowance by the Committee for Employment Issues set up by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. This is also reflected in the utilisability of allowances.

The second largest part of the expenditures on the instruments for citizens with disabilities after the support of sheltered employment was consumed by the allowance for work assistant (EUR 5.8 million). In 2018, 1,128 work assistants were supported who assisted 2,273 citizens with disabilities. The monthly allowance ranges from 41% to 70% of the total labour costs calculated based on average wage in economy. Work assistants constitute a significant support instrument for the integration of persons with disabilities in the open labour market and are used in majority of EU countries. It is often a part of wider programmes focusing on the integration of persons with disabilities on the labour market, rehabilitation or adjustment of working conditions (Heckl and Pecher, 2008).

In Slovakia, work assistance is primarily used in the context of sheltered employment. As many as 93.4% of citizens with disabilities who used the services of a work assistant in 2018 worked in the same year in the job position which was supported with an allowance for the operation of a sheltered shop or sheltered workplace. Work assistant usually assists several individuals and if the recipient of assistance is sick or absent from the workplace due to any other reason, the costs of assistance are not refunded. This poses risk for the employers, and particularly for those with a smaller share of employees with disabilities. Other reasons of low utilisation of the instrument by employers in the open labour market may, for example, include low awareness or insufficient amount of the allowance to make the instrument attractive for employers.

Other ALMP instruments for citizens with disabilities are only used to a minimum extent. Only 22 job positions were supported with the allowance for an employer to keep an employee with disabilities in 2018. Similarly, also the allowance for a citizen with disability for the operation or conduct of self-employment activity was only used in 76 cases.

Statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities

Employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market should be supported by a statutory obligation of employers to employ such persons. The act on employment services imposes an obligation upon employers to employ citizens with disabilities to the extent of 3.2% of the total number of employees if they have at least 20 employees, and provided that the labour office has disabled job seekers in the registration constituting 3.2% of the total number of their employees. To compare, the efficient share of recipients of invalidity pension to comply with the mandatory percentage of the total population aged 18 to 65 years was at the level of 13.6% in 2017.³⁴³ The employer which did not meet the statutory obligation may meet a substitute obligation instead (Table 25).

Employers meet the statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities in excess of the requested percentage. The total number of persons with disabilities hired by all concerned employers substantially exceeds the number of disabled persons required to be employed by employers to meet the statutory percentage of 3.2% (Graph 42). The levies paid if the employer fails to hire the statutory percentage (converted to the numbers of persons) are used only a little and their absolute value and share in the overall compliance are decreasing. This means that employers show increasing interest in employment of persons with disabilities and in the substitute form of contract awarding instead of paying the levy for failure to hire the statutory percentage. In 2017, employers paid contributions in amount of EUR 1.8 million within compliance with the obligation to hire 3.2% of employees with disabilities.

Table 25: Options of compliance with the statutory obligation to hire persons with disabilities

Method of compliance	Method of counting
Employment of a partially invalid citizen (invalidity below 70%)	Counted as 1 citizen with disability
Employment of a fully invalid citizen (invalidity above 70%)	Counted as 3 citizens with disability
Awarding a contract to an integrational enterprise, sheltered shop or sheltered workplace where person with disability conducts or operates self-employment activity	A contract amounting to 0.8 multiple of the total labour cost calculated based on the average wage of an employee in the Slovak economy is counted as 1 citizen with disability.
Awarding a designated contract in a public tender for registered integrational social enterprises, sheltered shops or sheltered workplaces (from 2018)	A contract amounting to EUR 2,000 (bid price) is counted as 1 citizen with disability
Payment of the non-compliance levy	0.9 multiple of the total labour cost calculated based on the average wage of an employee in the Slovak economy for each citizen needed to meet the statutory percentage

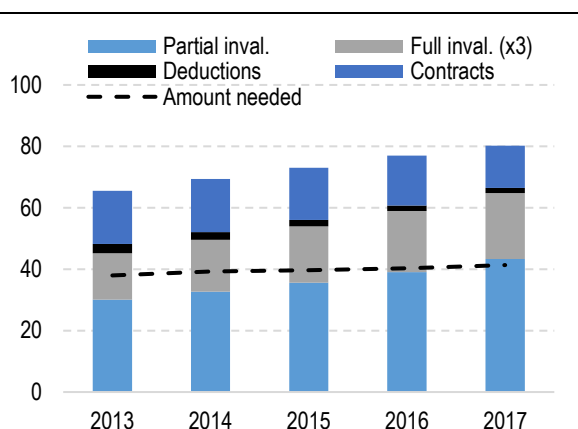
Source: Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services

Nearly all employers meet the obligation at least partially by hiring persons with disabilities or awarding contracts for goods or services to sheltered shops, sheltered workplaces or integrational enterprises. Only 6.2% of the concerned employers used the option of paying the levy. This percentage was higher with foreign and international employers and, on the contrary, lower with public employers and entities owned by cooperatives, associations, political parties and churches. Looking into statements, around one half of employers (50.5%) and

³⁴³ There were 114,667 recipients of full invalidity pension and 145,200 recipients of partial invalidity pension. To calculate the efficient share, each recipient of full invalidity pension was counted as 3 persons in accordance with the capability to meet the statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities (Table 25). Furthermore, the statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities does not only apply to the recipients of invalidity pension, but also to the persons who were recognised to be invalid but have not become eligible to receive the invalidity pension (Box 16).

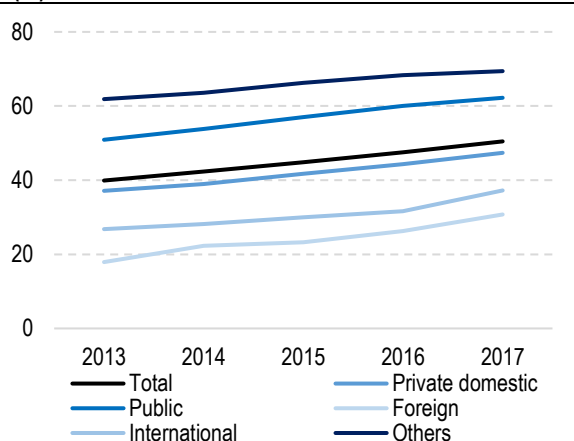
more than three out of five public employers (62.2%) employed more than the statutory percentage of persons with disabilities (Graph 43).

Graph 42: Compliance with the statutory percentage by method (thousands)



Source: ISP based on data from the Central Labour Office

Graph 43: Percentage of entities employing more than the statutory percentage of persons with disabilities (%)



Source: ISP based on data from the Central Labour Office, register of public government subjects and Finstat
 Note: "Others" includes cooperative entities and entities owned by associations, political parties and churches

The levy for non-compliance with the statutory obligation to employ persons with disabilities may be included in tax expenses by employers. This diminishes the sanction effect of the levy and the motivation to hire persons with disabilities. The review therefore proposes to exclude the levy for failure to employ the statutory percentage of persons with disabilities from employer's tax expenses.

Since 2018, employers have an option to meet the statutory percentage of employment of citizens with disabilities by awarding designated contracts within public tenders. Both the contracting authority and contracting entity may reserve the right to participate in a public tender only for the registered integrational social enterprises, sheltered shops or natural persons with disabilities who conduct or operate self-employment activity in the sheltered workplace. At present, it is not possible to assess the impact of this policy due to unavailability of data for 2018.

Table 26: System of quotas for persons with disabilities in the selected EU countries

Country	Quota	Size of concerned entities
Slovakia	3.20%	≥ 20 employees
Czech Republic	4%	≥ 25 employees
Hungary	5%	≥ 25 employees
Poland	6%	≥ 25 employees
Germany	5%	≥ 20 employees
Austria	4%	≥ 25 employees
Croatia	3%	≥ 20 employees
Slovenia	2 – 6%	> 20 employees (quotas depend on the area of economic activity)
Spain	2%	≥ 50 employees
France	6%	≥ 20 employees
Italy	7%	> 50 employees (different quotas apply to the employees with 15 – 49 employees)
Malta	2%	≥ 20 employees

Source: MISSOC database

Although Slovakia's statutory percentage for hiring persons with disabilities is lower than in the neighbouring EU countries, it applies to a wider range of employers (Table 26). Considering the above findings

concerning the scope and method of compliance with the obligation by employers in Slovakia, there is room for increasing the statutory percentage. **The review therefore proposes to support integration of disabled persons in the open labour market as well as the emerging sector of social entrepreneurship by increasing the statutory percentage from the current 3.2% to 5% (V3 average).**

Work rehabilitation and retraining

Work rehabilitation is an instrument focusing on the identification and development of the skills of persons with disabilities (not only due to accident or occupational disease) to integrate them into the labour market. For example, clients are given the opportunity to train work habits, adapt to working environment, choose retraining or develop motor skills.³⁴⁴ It may be provided together with other forms of rehabilitation, e.g. with social, therapeutic, pedagogical or psychological rehabilitation.

There is no clear and precisely defined concept of work rehabilitation and retraining in Slovakia. It is only defined in the context of social insurance as a benefit funded from the accident insurance as a consequence of a job-related injury or occupational disease, if re-integration of the injured into the work process is possible according to the medical assessor's opinion. But it is not used in real life. During the past 4 years, Social Insurance Agency only received 8 applications for rehabilitation and retraining benefits, and the benefits were not paid out at last³⁴⁵. Neither were the expenditures on these benefits included in the approved budget of the Social Insurance Agency.

Currently, there is no register of all providers of work rehabilitation or retraining in place, which may hinder access to these services. From among public institutions, work rehabilitation is provided by two specialised facilities of the Ministry of Labour: the Centre of Social and Work Rehabilitation (CSWR) at the Institute for Work Rehabilitation of Citizens with Disabilities (ILR) and the Rehabilitation Centre for the Visually Impaired in Levoča (RCVIP). Before 2003, work rehabilitation was also provided by Counselling and Information Centres (CIC)³⁴⁶ which were omitted from the new legislation (act on employment services) in force from 2004). Work rehabilitation may also be provided by the supported employment agencies, but their operation in Slovak conditions has not been set at a system level. **The review proposes to prepare a proposal of a functional work rehabilitation and retraining system.**

7.4. Policies targeting at work-life balance

Employment is one of the most efficient instruments in the fight against poverty. This is particularly true with lone parents.³⁴⁷ Crucial is the method used by the state to help families cope with the tension between the need to earn income for the family and the need to take care of children. Countries with a poor support of care for children or with support focusing predominantly on home care report substantially higher poverty rate in case of lone mothers and their children than the countries which actively help mothers combine home care with formal care outside their homes, so mothers may work (Misra et al., 2007). Very low employment rate of lone mothers with a child under 6 years of age in Slovakia helps explain the very high at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate in this type of families (Chapter 2).

Affordability of childcare for children aged less than three years

Affordable childcare is one of the most efficient instruments to support employment rate of mothers with small children. This conclusion is shared by the studies comparing family support systems of individual countries as well as the studies surveying the impacts of reforms on the employment rates of mothers in individual countries

³⁴⁴ Kozová, A. (2019): Work with a client in 2018. Centre of Social and Work Rehabilitation, Institute for Work Rehabilitation for Citizens with Disabilities.

³⁴⁵ Data provided by the Social Insurance Agency at request of the Ministry of Finance's VFM unit. The proceedings treating the above benefits were suspended e.g. due to revocation of the application by the injured person or rejection because the statutory requirements had not been met.

³⁴⁶ Article 35 of Act No. 387/1996 Coll. on employment

³⁴⁷ Employment rates of mothers in Slovakia were addressed by a recent economic analysis of the Institute for Financial Policy (Hidas and Horváthová, 2018) as well as the commentary of the Institute of Social Policy (Šedovič and Plavčan, 2019).

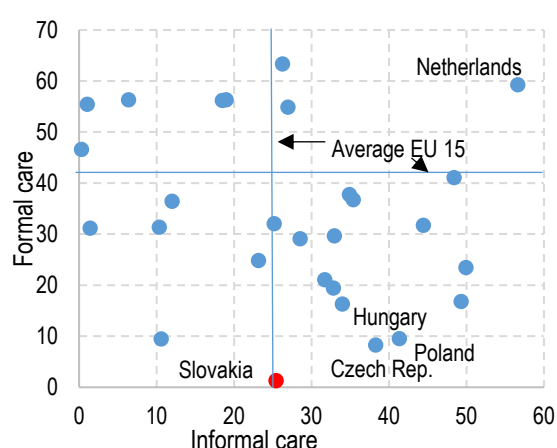
(Olivetti and Petrongolo, 2017). Affordable formal childcare has a more significant impact on the employment rate of mothers with lower education who are probably poorer (Del Boca et al., 2008). **Positive impact on the employment rate is even more noticeable in case of lone mothers.** This is evidenced by the studies from the USA (Gelbach, 2002; Bainbridge et al., 2003; Cascio, 2009) as well as Germany (Bauernschuster and Schlotter, 2015).

High-quality formal childcare for children aged less than 3 years has a consistently positive impact on their development, which is particularly true for socially disadvantaged children. This conclusion was reached by the recent meta-analysis surveying the outcomes of 30 studies focusing on long-term effects of a formal early childhood care for children. Publicly provided programmes were more successful than the private ones, and the benefit of formal childcare was most noticeable in case of socially disadvantaged children (Huizen and Plantenga, 2018). The conclusion of the authors is that the available findings support the universal access to formal childcare for small children with a sliding scale of fees depending on the income of the household, making sure that a combination of private and public funding resources establish sufficient quality.

Affordability of formal childcare is also recommended by international organisations. UNICEF recommends that the countries take measures to ensure affordability of subsidised and regulated childcare services which could cover at least 25% of children aged less than 3 years (UNICEF, 2008).³⁴⁸ The so-called Barcelona objectives that the European Union member countries committed to set the formal childcare coverage at the level of 33% of children aged less than 3 years.

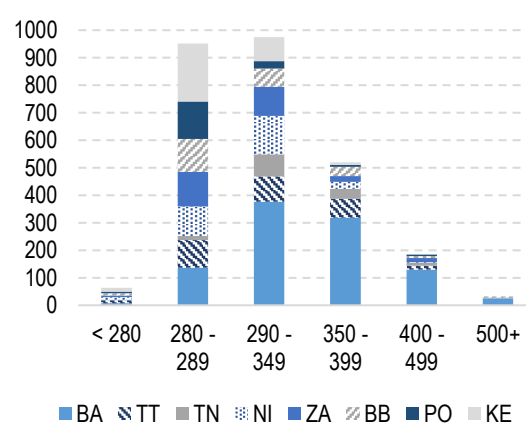
Considering the other measures supporting parenting, use of formal childcare for children aged less than three years is substantially lower in Slovakia than in other developed countries. According to the OECD, only 1.3% of children aged less than 3 years attended nursery or a similar facility in Slovakia in 2017, which is the lowest percentage in the EU. The average figure for the developed EU-15 countries was 42%. Shortage of formal childcare facilities for small children is filled with informal childcare in several countries provided usually by the child's grandparents or other relatives, neighbours, etc. (Graph 44) (Bordone et al., 2017). However, informal care only accounts for 25% in Slovakia, which means that a huge part of small children remain at home with a parent. Slovakia also lags behind most EU countries in the enrolment rate of children aged more than 4 years until the beginning of the compulsory education (Chapter 5.1).

Graph 44: Percentage of children aged less than 3 years in formal and informal childcare (% , 2017)



Source: OECD family database

Graph 45: Number of children supported with allowance for childcare by region and the fee amount (December 2019)



Source: VIM unit based on data of the Ministry of Labour

The Integrated Regional Operational Programme (IROP) sets the childcare for children aged less than three years as a specific goal within the second priority axis. A separate call with an EUR 13.5 million allocation was announced for that goal. The call produced huge interest, the amount of applications for grants exceeded

³⁴⁸ This benchmark does not include children placed in non-formal and non-licensed childcare or children in unsubsidised private facilities.

the allocated amount. Several regions stopped receiving applications as early as in October 2019 due to complete utilisation of funds. The call will close in April 2020 in the regions where interest in the grant has not been so enormous. The intent of the IROP and this call is to increase the number of children aged less than three years who receive childcare services. It supports activities related to the construction, reconstruction or modernisation of the facilities which should serve this purpose. A criterion is a facility with the minimum capacity of 20 places in one building.

The data about the forms of care for children aged less than 3 years is currently not reported in the requested structure and extent. The data about the registered childcare facilities for children aged less than 3 years forms a part of the central register of the providers of social services. In the 3rd quarter of 2019, the registered contained 213 facilities with the capacity of 3,666 children. Children aged less than 3 years who attend a pre-school childcare facility are covered by the Ministry of Education's statistical survey. Based on this survey, there were 8,616 children aged less than 3 years on 15 September 2018. The total number of children aged less than 3 years was more than 177 thousand in 2018.³⁴⁹ Considering the growing demand for childcare facilities for children aged less than three years, the capacities of all childcare forms should be mapped (e.g. whether the child is cared for by the parent, grandparent or other individual). The data about the offer of formal care for children under 3 years of age is necessary in order to adopt efficient policies and plan support projects to expand the capacities of existing facilities or to build new ones.

The review therefore proposes to arrange a complex collection of data about care for children aged less than three years. This is necessary for future capacity planning. Data may be collected annually by way of questionnaires or such collection could be incorporated into the Ministry of Education's statistical survey (e.g. by adding the information about pre-school care in the Ministry of Education's Statement of Basic school).

The state partially covers the expenditures of working parents on childcare by paying the allowance for childcare. The allowance is conditional by a parent either working or being a full-time student. The monthly allowance depends on the type of childcare provider and costs. If the childcare service is provided by a private facility, sole trader or other legal entity (covering 92% of cases³⁵⁰), the maximum possible allowance amounts to EUR 280. The allowance is provided until the child turns three or, in the event of a child with long-lasting bad health, until he or she turns six. The expenditures on the childcare allowance amounted to EUR 11.8 million in 2018. The allowance is funded from the European Social Fund.

The childcare allowance usually does not cover all expenditures on care. Around 63% of children covered by the allowance were placed in a childcare facility in December 2019 with a fee of EUR 290 or more, which means that their parents had to contribute as well (EUR 73 a month on average). The largest share of such children was in the Trenčín (88%) and Bratislava (85%) regions, the lowest in the Prešov (22%) and Košice (31%) regions (Graph 45).

When the parental benefit grows as a result of the September 2019 amendment act, the attractiveness of the allowance for childcare will substantially decrease. The childcare allowance is incompatible with the parental benefit. This means that it is only attractive if it is higher than the parental benefit.³⁵¹ When the parental benefit paid to parents who received maternity pay before they became eligible to the parental benefit grows to EUR 370 or, for those who did not receive maternity pay, to EUR 270 (Chapter 8.2), the childcare allowance will

³⁴⁹ Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

³⁵⁰ In other cases, the childcare is provided by a family member, e.g. grandparent. The allowance is lower in such event.

³⁵¹ The childcare allowance is more advantageous in case of families with more than just one child aged less than 3 years. The reason is that the childcare allowance is paid to a child receiving such care, while the parental benefit is allocated to the parent in the same amount irrespective of the number of children aged less than 3 years (unless the children were born at the same time).

only moderately exceed the parental benefit and only in the second case.^{352,353} The interest in this allowance may therefore be expected to substantially fall down.

The review therefore proposes to increase the maximum possible allowance for childcare to EUR 325 a month.³⁵⁴ The aim of this measure is to react to the growing average fees for childcare facilities for children aged less than 3 years and make the road to the labour market simpler for mothers who were unemployed or inactive before the child birth, were not eligible to receive the maternity pay (and, consequently, the higher parental benefit), and who stay on a maternity leave substantially longer than mothers with a better background on the labour market (Hidas and Horváthová, 2018). The review also proposes to extend the eligibility to the childcare allowance until the beginning of the school year in which the child celebrates the 3rd birthday (or 6th birthday in case of a child with long-term bad health). The purpose of this extension is to ensure coverage of the entire period before a child may normally be placed in the relevant pre-school or school facility (school year beginning).

Helping lone parents on the labour market

Parents (not only the lone ones) looking for a job in a labour market are currently supported by way of allowances for employers. A national project "Work-life balance" was announced in September 2019. It received an allocation from the ESF in amount of EUR 11 million.³⁵⁵ It aims to improve the conditions for work and life balancing, increase the employment rate of persons with parental duties, and particularly of women. Eligible are the job seekers kept in the registration for at least 3 months. It should cover women taking care of a child aged less than 6 years or lone adult persons who live with at least one person dependent on his/her care before they complete the compulsory education.

The project mainly focuses on the provision of a financial allowance to the employer which hires the eligible person for at least 3 months. The financial allowance is set at the level of 95% of the labour cost, but no more than 1.2 multiple of the minimum total labour costs. In 2019, this amount could reach EUR 844 a month at the most. The allowance is provided to the employer 12 months at the most depending on the duration of the labour relationship. It should support flexible forms of employment – part-time work, job-sharing or work from home or teleworking.

Lone parents need a specific and individualised form of help on the labour market which is non-existent in Slovakia. Employability of lone parents can be increased by way of a wider range of activities, e.g. mentoring, preparation for activities focusing on employment, soft and transferable skill training, education and professional preparation, career counselling and development, and arrangement of work experience in the labour inter-market. At all levels of this support, childcare is the greatest barrier to the labour market for lone parents. Ensuring childcare at least during the activities is an integral part of the support to lone parents on the labour market.

Good practice of other countries (Box 17) shows how important is the holistic approach to the solution of issues with employment of lone parents. Successful labour integration requires coordination of specialised workers. Such workers include, for example, specialists in the area of financial counselling, psychological support, personality development and skills development, and particularly important is the assistance in dealings with potential employers over employment conditions. **The review recommends to do a pilot project in the next programming period 2021-2027 focusing on a complex support for lone parents on the labour market.**

³⁵² The allowance may thus be beneficial for parents who have 2 or more children in childcare facilities. In such event, they are eligible to receive 2 or more childcare allowances, otherwise they would only receive one parental benefit.

³⁵³ This change also means that when the parents decide for the parental benefit, the expenditures on the allowance for childcare which are currently paid from the European funds will have to be fully funded from the national budget.

³⁵⁴ This is an estimate of the average nursery fee for a child supported with a childcare allowance based on the December 2019 data.

³⁵⁵ Full version of the call available at:

https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/KGR/narodne_projekty/Zosuladenie_rod_a_prac_zivota/Oznamenie_NP_ZRaPZ_Aktualizacia_2.pdf

Box 17: Support of lone parents on the labour market abroad

Germany

Lone parents are one of the priority target groups of activation policies in Germany. These policies lay emphasis on the work-life balance. Multiple projects have been implemented at a national level on the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The most renowned are the "Good work for lone parents" and the follow up "Network of effective assistance for lone parents" project which were implemented between 2009 and 2013 and were co-funded from the European Social Fund. The first one was intended for lone parents receiving unemployment benefits for the low-income disadvantaged groups with the aim to attain their successful integration on the labour market and employment maintenance. The second one focused on the solution of structural barriers to employment experienced by lone parents. The purpose was to achieve coordination of activities of individual stakeholders (authorities, community centres, employers, non-profit sector, lobbyist organisations, etc.) creating an integral system of support for lone parents. The chief implementers in both cases were the labour offices cooperating with the non-profit sector. They provided complex professional counselling to lone parents searching for job taking into consideration their specific situation, and mediated the contact with employers and even with the runners of pre-school facilities. The final assessment of interventions underscored the importance of a holistic approach during provision of these services. The success of labour integration largely depended on the resolution of issues in other areas of the lives of lone parents (psychological support, provision of childcare, personality development training), as well as wide cooperation particularly with the employers to ensure a win-win situation (Zagel, 2015).

Great Britain

The "New Deal for Lone Parents" programme focusing on the provision of specific, individualised assistance to lone parents when they look for employment helped increase the number of lone parents who ceased to be dependent on social benefits by 20% to 25% (Cebulla et al., 2008). In 2018, the pilot-tested "Wage Supplement for Lone Parents" programme was implemented on a nationwide scale. Lone parents who found work and received social benefits one year before could apply for GBP 40 a week. The wage supplement was not an income-tested benefit and was paid during 12 months at the most after the start date of employment. It was conditional upon at least 16-hour work schedule a week. The programme was assessed positively. After it had been launched, more than 11% of lone parents meeting the conditions for the supplement said that they would have not started working without this option. Majority of recipients were able to maintain their employment also after the 12-month time limit. The qualitative research study consisting of interviews with lone parents who received the benefit confirmed that they had perceived the programme positively. It was quite helpful for persons experiencing financial difficulties. As the number of hours required to be worked was quite low, the programme particularly led to the transition from social benefits to part-time employment, and its impact on full-time employment rate was minimum. Similar measures with higher number of worked hours brought better results (Brewer et al., 2017, Millar et al., 2016).

Other examples

Ensuring pre-school as well as after-school (if needed) childcare is often an essential precondition for a lone parent to return back to work. Before sufficient capacities were created for all children, children of lone parents were preferred in the kindergarten admission process in Iceland. Also, the kindergarten fees are lower for lone parents than for couples in several local governments (Eydal, 2018). The employment rate of lone mothers in Denmark reaches 74% (OECD, 2016). At the same time, 61% of children aged 0 to 2 years and 97% of children aged 3 to 5 years attend a pre-school facility (OECD, 2016). Their normal working hours (from 6:30 AM to 5:00 PM) and in some cases also the option of childcare outside the set hours allow parents to work full-time. There also is a separate allowance for a child of lone parents in place (EC, 2019, WID, 2019).

7.5. Solution of debt problems

Ongoing debt enforcement proceedings are a huge barrier to the employment of persons with weaker social status. Debt enforcement proceedings decrease the motivation to find employment in a legal labour market, whereas substantial part of the income is automatically taken off in favour of the debt enforcement officer for repayment of existing debts.

In spite of high number of debt enforcement proceedings in Slovakia (around 3.7 million³⁵⁶), the option to solve debt problems by way of personal bankruptcy was used only minimally before 2016. While more than 32 thousand applications for personal bankruptcy were filed in the Czech Republic in 2015, only 391 individuals made use of this option in Slovakia during the same period. The reason for that lied in quite complex conditions for this form of assistance. This made it an ineffective legal instrument.

The March 2017 amendment of the law made the personal bankruptcy substantially easier, and so its number grew to 14,756 in 2018. Debt clearance is nearly exclusively done by way of a bankruptcy when the entire property of the debtor is forfeited in favour of creditors. This instrument is a relatively painless and fast way to get rid of debts for poor groups of the population.³⁵⁷ Debt clearance employing schedule of payments which presupposes partial repayment of debts was only used in 157 cases in 2018.

Interventions within the field social work in MRC (Chapter 11) focus on debt enforcement proceedings, schedules of payments and financial counselling. These are most frequent types of interventions in this environment. This applied to 90% of the visited local governments within evaluation of the field social work in 2018 (Škobla et al., 2019). However, based on the data available it is not possible to tell how many of all people who underwent personal bankruptcy come from MRC. In addition to poverty, debt problems in MRC may also be caused by usury. However, there are no data about the extent of usury in the MRC environment.

Simple and fast personal bankruptcy process helps resolve debt problems from the past. For the time being, there is no system measure which would focus on the financial literacy of the groups at risk or on protection of debtors against becoming indebted again in future. The institute of personal bankruptcy is often used by those groups of population which have greatest troubles with financial literacy. Whereas personal bankruptcy may only be used once in ten years at the most, there is a risk that the escape from the debt enforcement trap will only be temporary for a part of the target population. **The review therefore proposes to do a pilot project in the next programming period 2021-2027 focusing on the individualised assistance for individuals who underwent personal bankruptcy.**

Also the act on termination of certain debt enforcement proceedings which entered into force on 1 January 2020 helps reduce the burden of debt enforcement proceedings.³⁵⁸ The act has terminated debt enforcement actions initiated before 1 April 2017 if five years lapsed from initiation of such action and no proceeds of at least EUR 15 were recovered during the past 18 months. The act also lays down exceptions not covered by the termination. For example, such exceptions include the alimony or payments in kind.

Although termination of certain debt enforcement proceedings does not mean automatic disappearance of the debt, only a few motions to initiate the debt enforcement proceeding are expected to be filed again. If the creditor believes that there is a chance to get the money back (e.g. because the debtor inherited some property), the creditor may file a new motion to initiate the debt enforcement proceeding again. But the creditor must then pay a fee, which will probably discourage those who conclude that their claims might be irrecoverable. There is around a million of debt enforcement proceedings which do not really recover anything.

³⁵⁶ One individual may be subject to several debt enforcement proceedings at a time.

³⁵⁷ The only cost for the debtor is the obligation to pay the Legal Aid Centre a fee of EUR 500 in EUR 14 instalments a month which the Centre paid the official receiver as a statutory lump-sum compensation.

³⁵⁸ Act No. 233/2019 Coll.

8. Social security and family policy

- Poverty and social exclusion is mitigated by the system of social assistance (assistance in material need, compensation of social consequences of severe disability, substitute alimony), some tax expenditures which increase the disposable income of working people and motivate them to work and, in case of families with children, partially also the system of social support which does not target at low-income families only. Invalidity pension within the system of social insurance is a significant instrument of inclusion of people who became invalid.
- The system of social transfers in Slovakia is less successful in reducing the risk of poverty of children than the average of EU-15 as well as the neighbouring countries, and the poverty of children is deeper.
- Compared to the median income in the national economy, the assistance in material need are substantially lower in Slovakia than an equivalent support in majority of other EU as well as V3 countries and is much deeper below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. Non-existent indexation since 2009 caused more than 20% fall against that threshold. Access to activation programmes which make people eligible to the merit-based part in the form of an activation benefit is not guaranteed to all candidates, but depends on the willingness and ability of local governments and the state to create enough opportunities. Some candidates are thus deprived of the opportunity to increase their income.
- The income of the poorest families with small children remains unchanged when they become eligible to the parental benefit. Sometimes, it can even worsen their financial situation. Mothers from MRC more often fail to meet the eligibility conditions for the child birth allowance.
- The financial motivation to work rather than live on social benefits is higher in Slovakia than it is in the EU-15 and V3 and has substantially grown in the past three years. A separate special allowance which permits, for a limited period of time, the concurrence of social benefits and work for the long-term unemployed or inactive recipients of assistance in material need forms an important part of the motivation. However, the allowance itself cannot keep them employed for a longer time and neither can it replace efficient active labour market policies.
- The available data shows that Slovakia spends more relative to the GDP on the protection of individuals with disability against poverty. Although the data comparability between countries is limited, these results are better than in majority of other EU-15 countries. The cost-sharing in the funding schemes for devices, lifting equipment and modifications of an apartment, house, motor vehicle or garage may constitute a barrier for the poorest persons with disabilities.
- The wage of employees after they were recognised to be invalid suggests that part of them receive invalidity pension in spite of unchanged or higher income. On the other hand, persons who met the medical condition for being recognised as invalid but lack a small part of the required years of the pension insurance scheme may lose eligibility to the entire invalidity pension.
- The review proposes measures to increase the assistance in material need, amend the allowance for a dependent child to also include pre-school children, improve the availability of activation works which generate the eligibility to the activation benefit, expand the coverage of the allowance at child birth, and improve the affordability of aids for the poorest persons with disabilities. The proposed measures could partially be funded from the cost-saving measures listed in the Labour Market and Social Policy Spending Review.

The Slovak social security system consists of three parts. **Social insurance** protects citizens in various situations (e.g. motherhood, incapacity to work, loss of employment) by way of contributions paid from the previous economic activity. **Social assistance** constitutes a system of assistance from the state in various social situations, such as material deprivation, severe disability, etc. The main objectives of this assistance is to prevent material deprivation and long-lasting marginalisation (particularly through integration on the labour market). Through the state **social support**, the state partially covers the expenditures in certain life situation recognised by the state (e.g. child birth, child care). The eligibility to the state social benefits is not conditioned by payment of contributions or by the income situation of the eligible persons.

Particularly important for social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are the components of social assistance and social support whereas considering their social situation and problems to find work on the labour market these people are often not able to earn appropriate work earned income and the social insurance system which is governed by a merit-based principle. The review does not intend to present a complex assessment of the social security system in Slovakia. It aims to point out where it fails to adequately support people either because it pays too low benefits or because of insufficient coverage or restricted access of certain groups of population at risk.

8.1. Assistance in material need

Social assistance to households which are not able to or cannot earn or increase income with their own effort is provided in the form of the assistance in material need.³⁵⁹ The assistance in material need is based on the constitutional guarantee of basic living conditions and consists of five components to ensure that the total amount of assistance partially reflect the specific circumstances of individual households and the activity of their members (Box 18).

Box 18: Assistance in material need and the minimum subsistence income

The assistance in material need system consists of a assistance in material need, activation benefit, protective allowance, dependent child allowance and housing benefit.

According to the law, the purpose of the assistance in material need is to guarantee the basic living conditions – one hot meal a day, the necessary clothing and shelter. From January 2014, the full assistance in material need for adult household members is conditional upon engagement in minor municipal services, voluntary activities or work in case of extraordinary events in the extent of at least 32 hours a month if such activities are offered to them.

The aim of the activation benefit is to support acquisition, maintenance, improvement or increase in the knowledge, skills, practical experience, work habits in order to improve employability on the labour market. In case of unemployed people, the eligibility to the activation benefit is conditional upon registration with the job seeker register and participation in certain types of education, certain programmes of the active labour market policies, activation works, minor municipal services or volunteering activities.

The aim of the protective allowance is to cover for the personal expenditures of a household member who does not have an option to earn or increase his or her income through work due to age, bad health condition or child care.

The child allowance is intended for the support of child-rearing, education and complex development of a child in a household. The allowance is conditional upon proper school attendance.

The purpose of the housing benefit is to partially cover the costs associated with accommodation. Eligible to the allowance are the owners or tenants of an apartment or house, individuals living in facilities providing social service on a year-long residential basis, and also the households living in an apartment or house based on a right of residence.

Material deprivation occurs when the income of a household is below the minimum subsistence income. However, the amount of benefits is not derived from the minimum subsistence income and the assistance system does not warrant income at the minimum subsistence income level. A household becomes eligible to the assistance in material need when it earns income totalling less than the sum of all benefits within the assistance

³⁵⁹ Act No. 417/2013 Coll. on assistance in material need.

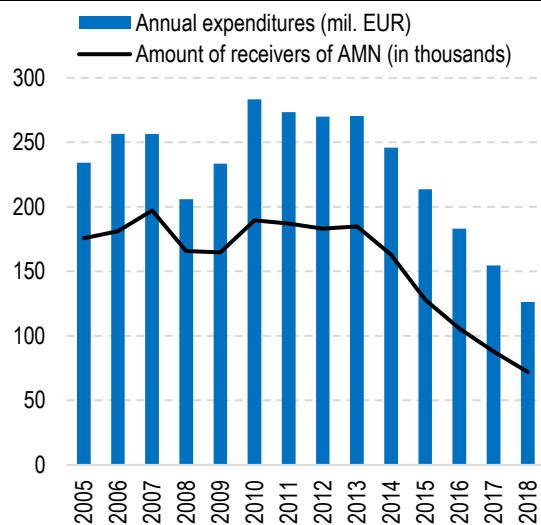
in material need system. The amount granted within the assistance in material need system need totals the difference between such total sum of all benefits and the income being assessed.

Children from households earning income below the minimum subsistence income level are provided meal subsidies at kindergartens.³⁶⁰ Pre-schoolers and school-age children are eligible to the subsidy irrespective of the household's income. Pre-schoolers and school-age children from households with income below the minimum subsistence income are also provided an allowance for school supplies (Chapter 5.1 and 5.2).

The expenditures on assistance in material need totalled EUR 126 million in 2018, accounting for around one third of one percent (0.34%) of public spending. They have fallen steeply during the past five years along with the decreasing number of recipients of the assistance (Graph 46). The reduction of the number of recipients partially reflects the growing demand on the labour market as the macroeconomic situation improves. Around one third of the recipients who ceased to be eligible to the assistance in material need in 2016 to 2018 found employment in that period.³⁶¹ However, more than one half of recipients were jobless before and after they ceased to be eligible.

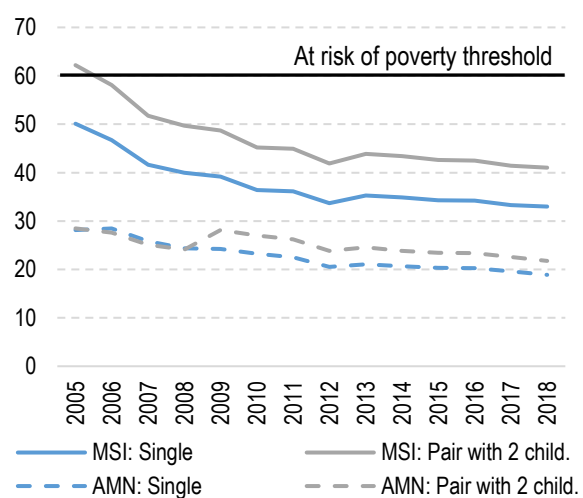
Legislative changes seem to have had a significant impact on the eligibility to the assistance in material need, too. Such changes include making the full basic assistance in material need conditional upon engagement in community activities (if offered to the recipient) (since January 2014), allowing concurrence of AMN and wage in the form of a modified special allowance (since January 2015), and change of assessment conditions for the income of the special allowance recipients (since may 2017).

Graph 46: Development of the assistance in material need



Source: Central Labour Office

Graph 47: Minimum subsistence income and assistance in material need as a percentage of median income in the economy (%)



Source: VfM unit based on data of the Statistical Office and the Central Labour Office

Note: The total amount of the assistance in material need need does not include the activation or protective allowance, whereas these allowances are paid to less than one half of AMN recipients.

³⁶⁰ Although the allowance is paid directly to the school, it helps reduce the costs of boarding incurred by households, so it can be considered as their non-financial income.

³⁶¹ This means that they started their employment in the last month eligibility to the assistance in material need, or a month before. This calculation was made based on data of the Central Labour Office and the Social Insurance Agency. It is not possible to infer from the data whether the income of the household actually exceeded the total sum of all benefits within the assistance in material need system as a result of the employment and, consequently, whether the departure from the assistance in material need system can be attributed to the beginning of employment or other circumstances.

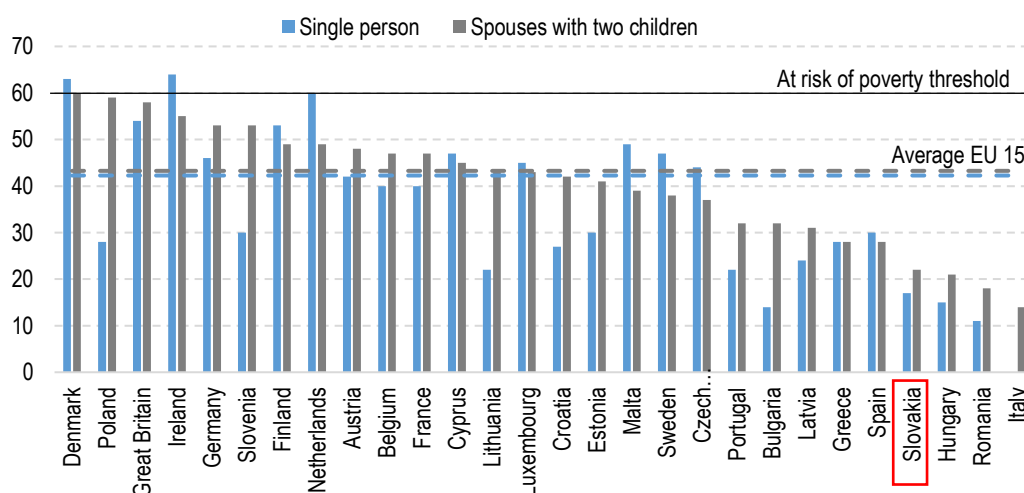
Although part of population perceives material deprivation as an ethnic-related issue, people from MRC accounted for less than one half (44%) of the population living in households receiving assistance in material need in 2018. Less than one quarter (23%) of people from MRC lived in such households. This does not mean that the other MRC members do not live in a very difficult social situation. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 2, surveys show that the risk-of-poverty rate in the MRC comes close to 90% (FRA, 2016). But material deprivation or poverty cannot be taken as a "Roma problem" only.

Adequacy of the assistance in material need

The assistance in material need for households without their own income did not change from 2009 to 2019³⁶², translating into decrease against the risk-of-poverty threshold³⁶³ by 22% for individuals and 23% for a couple with two children (Graph 47). The indexation of the assistance in material need was not treated by legislation before 2019 and depended on the decision of the government. The amendment act on the assistance in material need which took effect in April 2019 increased the basic benefit and allowances, except the housing benefit, roughly by 5% and laid down automatic indexation of the AMN in line with the rules applicable to the minimum subsistence income.³⁶⁴ The minimum subsistence income is adjusted on an annual basis based on a coefficient corresponding to the lower of the coefficient of the growth of the net monetary income per person and the coefficient of the growth of the living expenses of low-income households.

The minimum guaranteed income relative to the median income in the economy is substantially lower in Slovakia than in majority of other EU countries (Graph 48). The assistance in material need system in the form of a guaranteed minimum income protects citizens against complete loss of income. It corresponds to the social assistance in Slovakia. The Central and Eastern Europe countries and the countries in the Southern Europe usually report lower proportion of the minimum income to the median income than the countries in the western and northern parts of the Union. The number of all members of the households in the AMN system averaged 160,212 a month in 2018, which is approximately 24% of people living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.³⁶⁵

Graph 48: Minimum guaranteed income as a percentage of the median income in the economy, 2018



Source: OECD

Note: Italy does not have a assistance in material need system in the form of a minimum guaranteed income.

Families with small children are not eligible for the dependent child allowance within the assistance in material need system. They become eligible for this allowance only after the child starts compulsory education. The allowance is also conditional upon child's proper school attendance. This setting goes against the early

³⁶² In 2014, a part of the AMN was re-arranged without changing the AMN's total amount.

³⁶³ Box 1 for definition of the risk-of-poverty threshold.

³⁶⁴ The housing benefit remained unchanged. The activation benefit for working recipients of AMN was increased by 110% and amounts to EUR 132.40.

³⁶⁵ The number of people below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in 2018 totalled 655 thousand in Slovakia.

childhood intervention principle when the investments have the most positive impact on the development of children and can most mitigate the long-term negative consequences of growing up in poverty. At the same time families in the assistance in material need system face the greatest difficulties in creating a stimulating environment for their children at home as they cannot afford to buy toys, books and other aids.

To remedy the devaluation of the assistance in material need against the at-risk-of-poverty threshold during the past 10 years and partially mitigate our lagging behind the European standard as well as the standard of neighbouring countries, the review proposes to revise the assistance in material need and increase it to reach, without the housing benefit³⁶⁶ and together with the child allowance³⁶⁷, an equivalent disposable income for each household with children at the level of the minimum subsistence income of a childless individual, using the OECD equivalence scale (Box 19). This measure also includes amending the allowance for dependent children to cover all children in the AMN system from birth until completion of the compulsory education period. The allowance should be conditional on a child's participation in the education system from age three. This would ensure the same distance of the maximum eligible amount of benefit for all households with children together with the child allowance from the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.³⁶⁸ This objective can be attained through various combinations of parameters within the AMN system. One example is described in Box 20.

Box 19: Equivalence scale to compare income of various family types

A two-member household does not need twice as high income as a single-member household to have the same standard of living. For example, the costs of heating or rent do not grow proportionately to the number of members of the household. These economies of scale of a household are expressed in the so-called equivalence scale which illustrates how the needs of the household grow with the growing number of its members.

The equivalent disposable income of a household is calculated by dividing the total disposable income of the relevant household by the weighted number of its members. The equivalence scale determines the weight assigned to individual household members. The equivalence scale used by Eurostat and the OECD to compare the income and determine the at-risk-of-poverty threshold of individual household types assigns the weight of 1 to the first member of the household, 0.5 to each additional adult member and 0.3 to each child (OECD equivalence scale).

To compare, the current minimum subsistence income in Slovakia implicitly uses the scale which assigns the weight of 1 to the first household member, 0.6976 to each additional adult member and 0.4565 to each child. Large families are thus assigned higher weight compared with the OECD scale, which results in the minimum subsistence income of a family of two parents and two children being closer to the at-risk-of-poverty threshold than the minimum subsistence income of a childless individual (Graph 47).

There is no generally recognised method of choosing an appropriate equivalence scale. The choice does not depend only on the technical parameters of the economies of scale of households, but also on the value judgements concerning the priority assigned by the society to the needs of individual groups, such as children or pensioners. Sensitivity analyses imply that while the amount and structure of income poverty is influenced by the choice of the equivalence scale, the trends in time and comparisons across countries are much less affected (Burniaux et al., 1998).

³⁶⁶ The review recommends to exclude the housing benefit from the assistance in material need system and make it a special form of social assistance (Chapter 9.5).

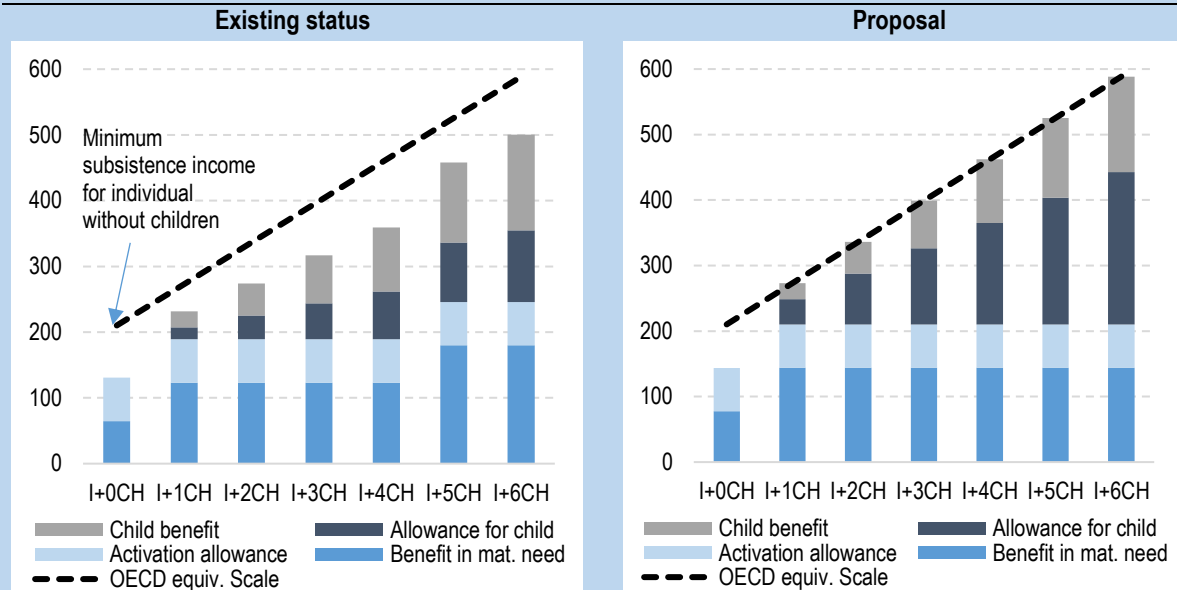
³⁶⁷ Child benefit is a social benefit paid by the state to partially cover the eligible persons' expenses on child-rearing and nutrition of a dependent child. The benefit is paid on a monthly basis until the child turns 25, provided that the child meets the condition of dependency. The allowance currently amounts to EUR 24.34 a month.

³⁶⁸ This does not apply to the families in the AMN system with a child who completed the compulsory education whereas the household does not receive a dependent child allowance for such a child. However, these children have the option to gain secondary school scholarship if they continue in their studies. The scholarship is higher than the dependent child allowance (Chapter 5.4).

Box 20: Possible alternative of the assistance in material need system

The proposed model works with an unchanged amount of the activation benefit, protective allowance and child allowance. The assistance in material need was amended to be simpler and independent on the number of children in the household with the exception of childless households. In case of an individual with children, the benefit is higher and totals EUR 142.30, for a couple with children it amounts to EUR 179.50.³⁶⁹ The purpose of the proposal is to reflect the number of children in the (increased) dependent child allowance and (unchanged) child allowance. The dependent child allowance is proposed to be increased from today's EUR 18.60 to EUR 38.11.

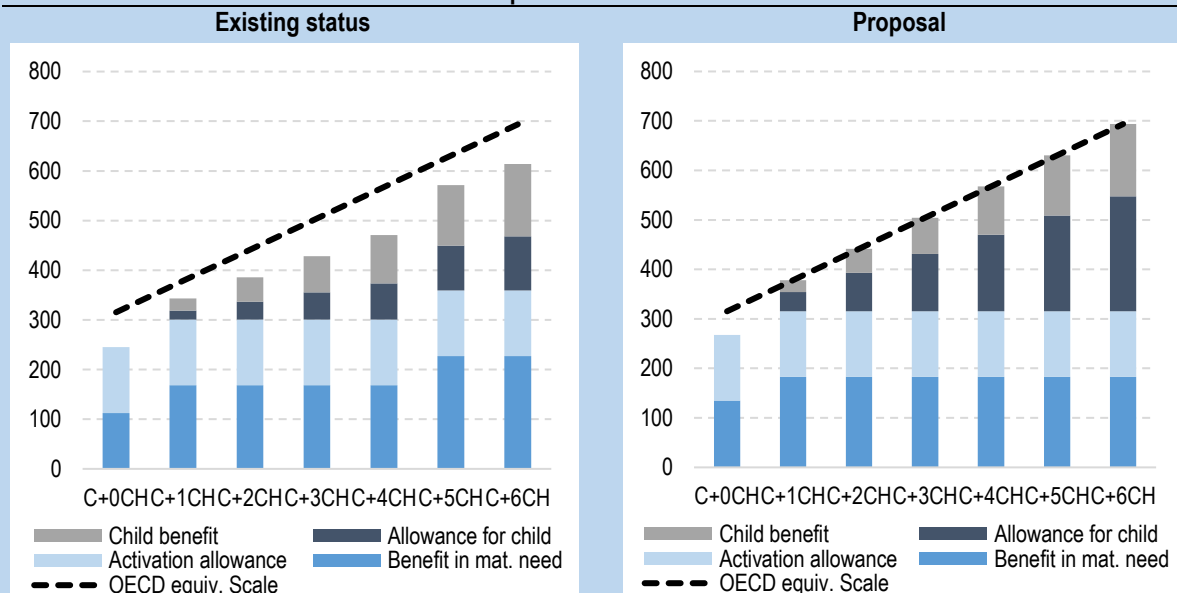
Household of an individual with various number of children



Source: VfM

Source: VfM

Household of a couple with various number of children



Source: VfM

Source: VfM

³⁶⁹ The increase in case of childless households is more modest, by 20% to EUR 79.56 for a childless individual and EUR 138.36 for a childless couple.

It follows from the proposal that the benefits within assistance in material need system need without housing benefit would grow by 9% to 26% depending on the household type. The greatest increase would occur in case of individuals with four children, the smallest in case of childless couples and childless individuals. The average increase in the benefits reflecting the structure of households in the assistance in material need system would be 11%, or 14% in case of families with children, in 2018.

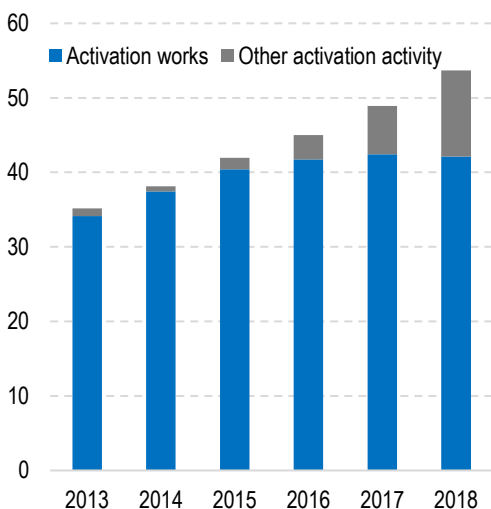
Although moderately, the measure would noticeably help reduce the depth of poverty of children in Slovakia which is significantly deeper than the EU or neighbouring countries average (Graph 56). According to the estimates based on unit data of EU SILC, the proposed increase in AMN would reduce the depth of child poverty by 4 – 6% (1.3 to 1.8 percentage points) depending on the age.

The motivation to work rather than live on social benefits measured by the so-called inactivity trap remains high even when the proposal is implemented. Households with children have substantially stronger motivation to work than to live on benefits than childless households. The inactivity trap is negative in case of parents. This means that they will gain more on social benefits if they work than when they are unemployed or inactive. The measures proposed in the review will substantially increase the motivation of lone parents to work. The motivation of couples with children will moderately decrease, but the inactivity trap remains negative also in their case (Annex 36).³⁷⁰

Availability of the merit-based component of the assistance in material need system

The activation benefit is conditional upon having employment or being registered with the job seeker register and engaging in any of the defined activation works (Box 18). It is the only way for many people in the AMN system to increase their income. While in the context of ALMP the activation works should be assessed based on how efficient this instrument is in improving employability on the labour market, in the context of social assistance the assessment should focus on the access of people at risk to the opportunities to improve their social situation.

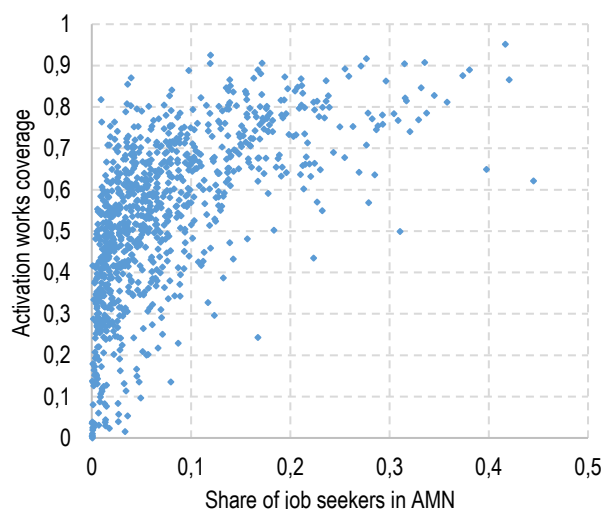
Graph 49: Percentage of job seekers in the AMN system who became eligible to the activation benefit (%)



Source: Central Labour Office

Note: Activations works mean minor municipal services or minor services for the self-governing region.

Graph 50: Percentage of the municipality's population consisting of job seekers in the AMN system and coverage with the activation benefit, 2018



Source: ViM based on data from the Central Labour Office

Note: The graph shows only municipalities with at least 10 job seekers in the AMN system.

³⁷⁰ The calculation of the inactivity trap reflects the proposal to increase the AMN as well as the proposal to keep the eligibility to special allowance for the long-term unemployed or inactive parents who ceased to be eligible to the assistance in material need when they became eligible to receive parental benefit, and who find job after that (Chapter 8.2).

The activation benefit is only provided to each second job seeker in the AMN system, mostly based on participation in activation works (Graph 49). The percentage of job seekers in the AMN system who meet the conditions for eligibility to the activation benefit has been growing over time. This may also be due to decrease in the absolute number of job seekers in the AMN system from more than 171 thousand in 2013 to 59 thousand in 2018 as well as the changed structure of job seekers in the AMN system.

Access to activation programmes making job seekers eligible to the allowance is not guaranteed to anyone who shows interest in it, but depends on capacities. Ironically, the goal of "supporting acquisition, maintenance, improvement or increase in the knowledge, skills, practical experience, work habits in order to improve employability on the labour market" does not only depend on the activity and motivation of people experiencing material deprivation to improve their social situation, but also on the ability and willingness of municipalities and local governments (in case of activation works) and the state (in case of other ALMP instruments) to create enough opportunities.

The coverage of job seekers in the AMN system with the activation benefit varies substantially across municipalities. The coverage generally increases with the percentage of population in a municipality which comprises job seekers in the assistance in material need system (Graph 50). But differences between municipalities are significant. Large diversity means that it would be good to investigate into the reasons of low performance of certain municipalities or labour offices in activating job seekers, and that there is room for sharing good practice of the municipalities which are successful in this area.

The problem of insufficient capacity of activation programmes may be deepened by the establishment of the option to make full amount of the basic assistance in material need conditional upon engagement in community activities. If such activity is offered to an adult person in the AMN system and he/she rejects it, the basic AMN benefit will be reduced to EUR 66.30.³⁷¹ However, the use of this option may produce additional administrative burden for labour offices and municipalities and this burden may affect the capacity for using other activation instruments including the instruments which result in the eligibility to the activation benefit (Lajčáková et al., 2017, Škobla et al., 2016a). The greatest burden lies on relatively small municipalities with high numbers of assistance in material need recipients. **The review proposes to elaborate and publish an analytical commentary based on administrative data about utilisation of the option to make the full amount of the assistance in material need conditional upon community activities.**

The opportunity to improve the social situation through activation works is also limited by low level of the activation benefit. Since 2009, this allowance was valorised for the first time in 2019 and only by 5%.³⁷² The minimum wage was valorised by 106% during the same time period. The hourly activation benefit calculated to the maximum number of activation hours (20 hours a week) currently reaches only 23% of the net minimum wage.

Motivation to work rather than be dependent on social benefits

There is an economic theory which says that loss of social assistance after finding employment reduces financial motivation to look for employment, and may thus contribute to the so-called unemployment and inactivity trap. This particularly applies to the low-qualified people whose chance to find a well-paid job is poor. Reduction of assistance in material need is one of the methods how to solve this problem, but this approach results in undesirable side effects in the form of deepening poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable people who are not able to find job. An alternative way to make a low-paid job more attractive is to amend the eligibility to social assistance to include a wider group of low-income employees.

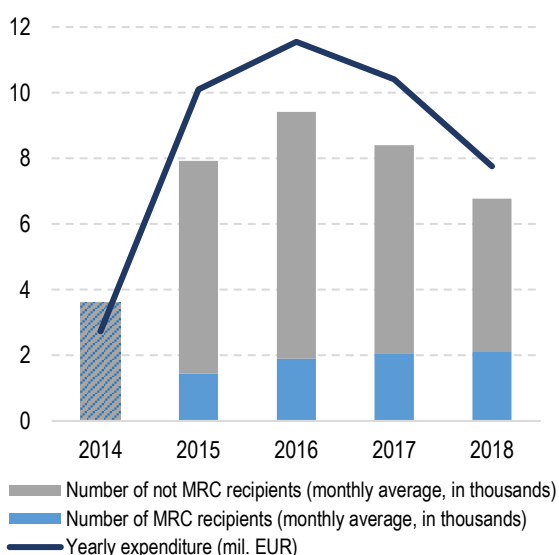
³⁷¹ Article 10(3) of Act No. 417/2013 Coll. on social assistance and amending and supplementing certain acts.

³⁷² People in the AMN system who work at least for a minimum wage have been eligible to a higher activation benefit (currently EUR 135.70) since 2019.

Special allowance is the main instrument in Slovakia permitting the concurrence of social assistance and a work earned income. The special allowance was introduced in 2014³⁷³ and is intended for people who find a low-paid job³⁷⁴ and who were previously long-term unemployed or long-term inactive and who are in the AMN system or exited from it because they started working. The concurrence of AMN and work was extended in May by changing the assessment conditions for the income of the special allowance recipients.³⁷⁵ Effective as of April 2019, the maximum duration of the allowance eligibility was extended to 18 months. The allowance is currently paid in the amount of EUR 126.14 for the first 12 months and EUR 63.07 in the next 6 months.³⁷⁶

The special allowance consumed EUR 7.8 million in 2018 supporting 6,777 persons a month. The expenditures on the special allowance and the number of recipients substantially grew one year after it had been established (Graph 51), but decreased in the last two years as a consequence of the decrease in the number of recipients of the assistance in material need (Graph 46). The percentage of the special allowance recipients from MRC totalled 31% in 2018, which is more than the percentage of people from MRK in the population of the long-term unemployed (17%).

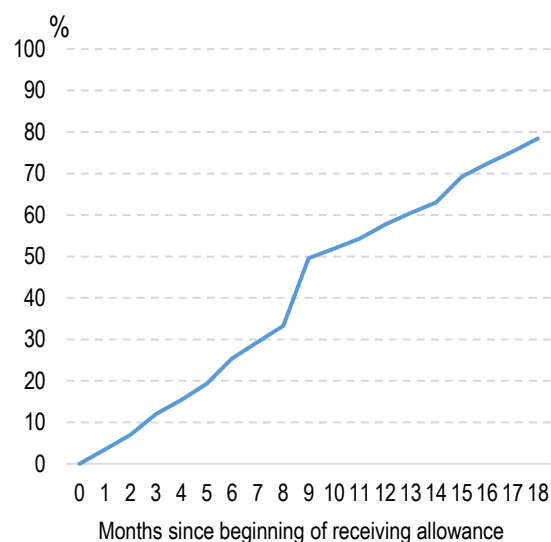
Graph 51: Development of the special allowance



Source: VFM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office and the Atlas

Note: It is not possible to isolate recipients from and outside MRC in 2014 and 2018 based on the available data. Box 3 for definition of MRC.

Graph 52: Cumulative percentage of the special allowance recipients who end up back in the job seeker register by duration of special allowance receipt



Source: VFM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office and the Atlas

Note: The graph includes people who started receiving the special allowance between July 2015 and June 2016.

The special allowance (SA) itself cannot keep the long-term unemployed people employed on a long-term basis. As many as 78% of them end up back in the job seeker register within 18 months from when they started receiving the allowance (Graph 52). Although the reasons for losing employment are not monitored on a systematic basis, a substantial portion of returns into the register is probably caused by full utilisation of the job position subsidy by the employer. More than one third (35%) of the SA recipients was supported by one of the

³⁷³ Before, the low-income employees were eligible to receive social assistance within the activation benefit, but the benefit was reduced relative to the work earned income which decreased the motivation to find work. Unlike in the case of the activation benefit, the special allowance is provided in the same amount to all employees who are eligible to it.

³⁷⁴ The income must range from a half of the minimum wage to double the minimum wage.

³⁷⁵ Effective as of 1 May 2017, the condition for reckoning the income of the household members who are provided special allowance changed from 75% to 50% of their work earned income or income earned from a similar labour relationship when assessing their eligibility to the assistance in material need. Basically, this means a milder reduction of the assistance in material need due to higher income of the recipients of the special allowance, which increases their motivation to find work. This advantage applies as long as they receive the special allowance.

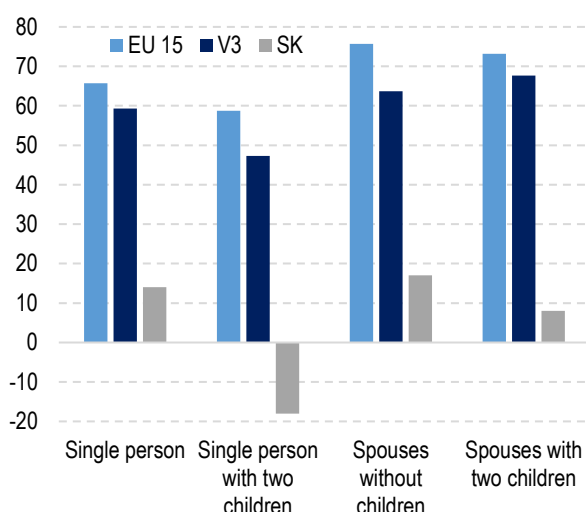
³⁷⁶ Before, the support was provided for 12 months – 6 months at a higher level and 6 months at a lower level of the allowance.

ALMP instruments before registering again, mainly within the national projects³⁷⁷ (29 %) and the allowance supporting local and regional employment development³⁷⁸ (4 %). Sudden increases in registrations concur with the duration of the eligibility to the support for the created job positions.³⁷⁹

This suggests that a significant part of the returns back to the job seeker register is not caused by insufficient motivation of the supported people to work, but by poor demand for their services without state subsidies shown by employers. The special allowance may therefore be taken as a supplement to, and not as a replacement of active labour market policies focusing on the increase in the employability of the disadvantaged job seekers (Chapter 7).

The advantage of work compared with dependence on social assistance is confirmed by international comparison of social systems. The inactivity trap in Slovakia, measured as the effective tax rate upon entering employment from the assistance in material need system³⁸⁰, was significantly below the average figures of the EU-15 as well as V3 countries in 2018 for most types of households when entering minimum wage employment (Graph 53).³⁸¹ For example, in case of childless individuals (56% of the AMN recipients) the inactivity trap was at the level of 14% in 2018 if the job seeker found work for minimum wage. This means that 86% of the gross income constituted a net financial gain compared with the AMN.

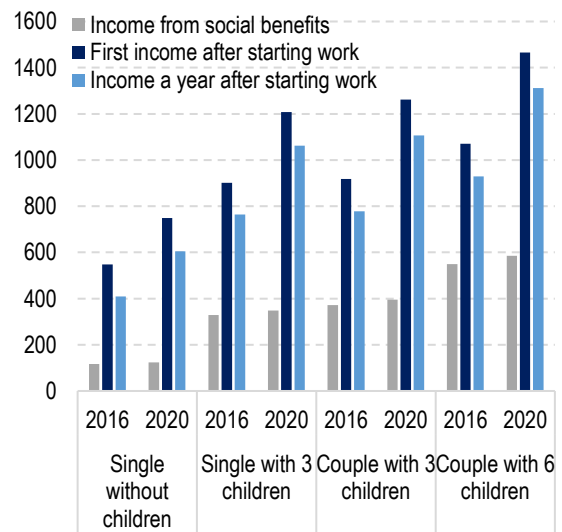
Graph 53: Inactivity trap: effective tax in case of a job for a minimum wage, 2018 (%)



Source: OECD

Note: The effective tax is calculated at the start date of employment from the system of minimum guaranteed income (in Slovakia, the AMN) after two months of unemployment. In case of married couples, the spouse of the person starting employment is considered to be jobless.

Graph 54: Development of income coming from benefits and job for minimum wage for a long-term unemployed citizen (EUR)



Source: <https://www.iz.sk/w/kalkulacka>

Note: The calculation presupposes residence in the most lagging county, jobless partner in case of couples, one third of children aged less than 3 years, one third enrolled in a kindergarten and one third at a basic school, and an eligibility to the housing benefit.

³⁷⁷ Article 54 of the act on employment services.

³⁷⁸ Article 50j of the act on employment services.

³⁷⁹ The allowance to support local and regional employment development is provided for 9 months at the most. The "A Chance of Employment" national project provided financial allowance to an employer for at least 3 and no more than 9 calendar month. The "A Way out of the Unemployment Circle" project provides financial allowance for no more than 12 months or, as the case may be, 15 months depending on how long the job seeker employed was kept in the register.

³⁸⁰ The tax measures the proportion of the gross income the individual loses due to taxes and the reduced social benefits when the individual finds employment. The higher the tax, the worse the financial motivation for changing unemployment for a job and, consequently, the larger the inactivity trap. If the tax is at the level of 100 percent, the net income of the employee is the same as if he or she remained living on social assistance. In addition to the tax and social system, the motivation to find employment is also affected by several non-financial factors, such as the quality of infrastructure and commuting to work in distant regions, discrimination rate on the labour market, and also cultural and language barriers in case of certain groups, such as Roma.

³⁸¹ In the event of a job with an average wage, the participation tax in Slovakia is below the EU and V3 average in all three types of households.

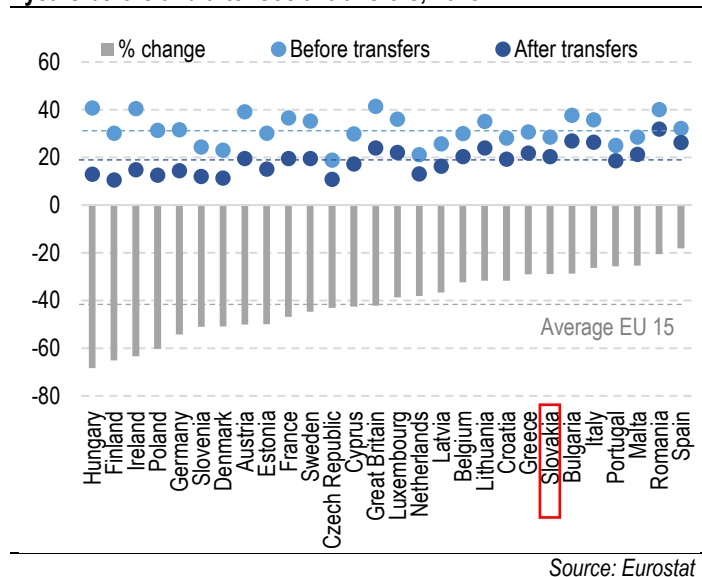
The financial motivation to work rather than living on social benefits has substantially grown during the past three years. While income of a long-term unemployed citizen coming from social benefits grew only minimally from 2016 to 2019, the minimum wage grew substantially (Graph 54). The growth of the minimum wage as well as wider concurrence of AMN and work earned income were significant factors in this respect. The income coming from benefits and the work earned income are affected by many factors, such as the household structure, the age of children, duration of unemployment before employment, and duration from the beginning of labour relationship (Páleník, 2018). It remains true for all types of households, including the multi-child families, that the income of working families is substantially higher compared to dependency on social benefits.

8.2. Support for families with children

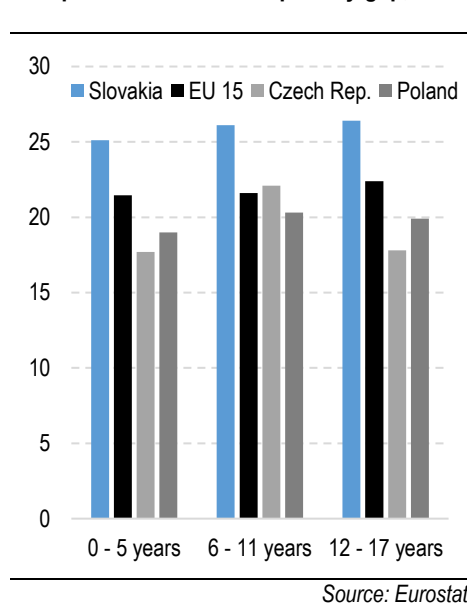
Families with children are, among others, supported by social support provided by the state to the parents in order to partially cover their expenditures associated with child birth or multiple birth and care for, raising and nutrition of dependent children. Compared with the assistance in material need system, the eligibility to the state social benefits within support of families with children do not depend the household's income and all families which meet conditions receive the same amount. It is an important income supplement particularly for poor families and helps compensate for the negative consequences of poverty on the development of children.

Slovakia is less successful in reducing the risk of poverty of children through social transfers than the EU-15 countries. Without social transfers, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of children aged less than 16 years is below the EU-15 average in Slovakia. With the social transfers, it is slightly above the average. The reduction in the risk of poverty of children attributable to the effect of social benefits (29%) is thus substantially lower than the EU-15 average (42%). Slovakia lags even more when compared with the V3 (57%) (Graph 55).

Graph 55: At-risk-of-poverty rate of children aged less than 16 years before and after social transfers, 2018



Graph 56: Relative child poverty gap, 2018



Poor children live in deeper poverty in Slovakia than the average for the EU-15 as well as neighbouring countries, as the relative poverty gap reveals. Relative poverty gap measures the gap between the median income of poor families³⁸² and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold expressed as % of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (Graph 56). Larger gap in Slovakia means that a typical family with children living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold has lower income compared with that threshold than a typical family in the EU-15 or the Czech Republic or Poland. Slovakia is closer to the Eastern and Southern European countries than to the developed countries of the Western

³⁸² Income is expressed as the equivalent disposable income reflecting the size and structure of a household based on the OECD equivalence scale (Box 19). The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is set separately for each country and reflects the differences in the average standard of living across countries (Box 1).

and Northern Europe when it comes to the child poverty gap. Poverty gap has negative impacts on the cognitive and emotional development of children (Box 21).

Box 21: Impact of poverty in early childhood on child development

Cognitive and emotional functions and skills of individuals are not only the outcome of the genes. They are also and greatly affected by the social environment in early childhood. The neuroscientific research proved that the parts of brain which are responsible for the development of basic cognitive functions are less developed in children from poor environment, and that this remains true even when the genetic influences are taken into account. They were observed to have smaller cortical volume which allows to acquire language, influences thinking, analytical skills, planning and processing of emotions (Noble et al., 2015). The function of the centre for memory and learning (Hanson et al., 2011, Duval et al., 2016) and for the emotion regulation (Kim et al., 2013) is weakened as well. The heritability of the intelligence quotient (IQ) depends on the social background and increases with its improvement (Nisbett et al., 2012). The IQ of children from socially disadvantaged background who were adopted by middle-class families was 12 to 18 percentage points higher than the IQ of their peers.

Reduced brain functions in poor children are the consequence of a higher stress and environmental burden and material deprivation (Johnson et al., 2016). These factors have a negative impact on the parenting skills and family relationships (Conger and Conger, 2002, Conger et al., 2010). The negative effect on the cognitive and emotional development of a child is reinforced in families which are not able to create a supportive environment (Luby et al., 2013). Poverty also provably affects the mental and physical health of children. Adverse conditions in childhood trigger physiological processes which open door to other diseases and influence brain activity (Nusslock and Miller, 2016). The prevalence of such diseases as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, asthma, cancer and mental disorders is higher in children from poor families (Wise, 2016).

Parental benefit

The expenditures on the parental benefit totalled EUR 368.7 million in 2018. Only EUR 7.4 million of that amount went to families in the assistance in material need system, families at risk of poverty or social exclusion received around EUR 147.4 million. Parental benefit is a benefit paid by the state to partially cover the costs of the eligible persons of raising a child until the child's third year of life. Predstavuje najväčšiu zložku sociálnej podpory rodín s deťmi (podkapitola 3.2). Effective as of 1 January 2020, the benefit was increased to EUR 270. The parental benefit of the eligible persons who received maternity benefit before they became eligible to the parental benefit grew to EUR 370.³⁸³

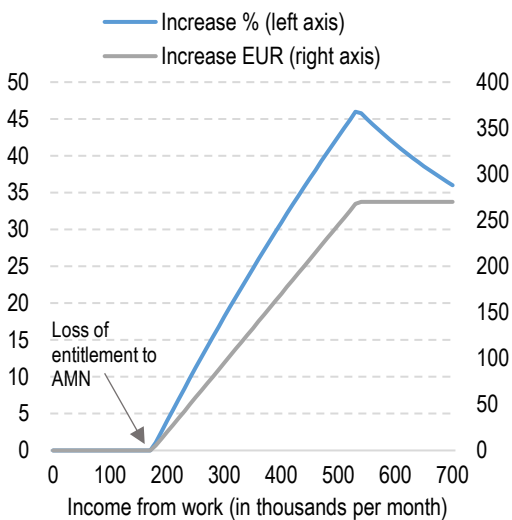
The income of the poorest families with small children remains unchanged when they become eligible to the parental benefit. Although all parents who meet conditions are eligible to the benefit, it is taken as income when the eligibility to the AMN is being assessed. For the groups with the lowest income this means that the AMN is reduced proportionately to the parental benefit; the income of the household thus remains unchanged (Graph 57).³⁸⁴

Although the combination of the social assistance and the family support moderately increases income of a household without the work earned income at child birth, the household falls deeper into poverty. This is because the gap between income and the minimum subsistence income opens wider upon child birth particularly if one of the parents does not engage in activation works and, consequently, does not receive the activation benefit due to day long care for the child (Graph 58).

³⁸³ The benefit is 25% higher for each additional child born at the same time.

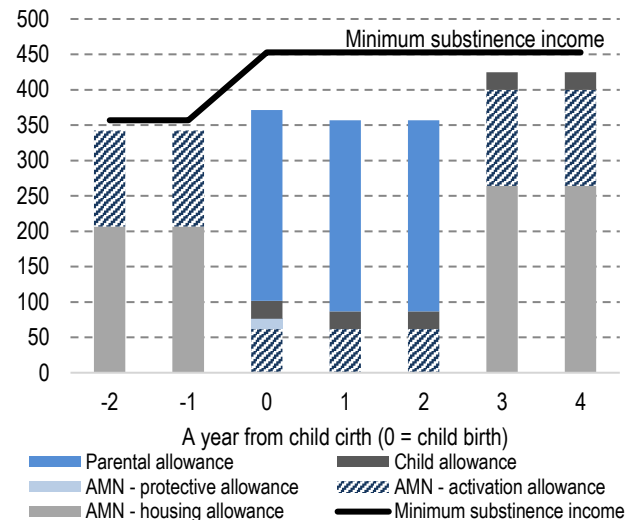
³⁸⁴ Advantage of this setting is that it creates stronger motivation for parents to find employment whereas, unlike the AMN, the eligibility to the parental benefit is not conditional upon the income of the household.

Graph 57: Impact of parental benefit on the income of households of 2 adults and 2 children (2020)



Source: VfM

Graph 58: Income of a family of two adults without work earned income before and after the birth of the first child (EUR, 2020)



Source: VfM

Note: The calculation presupposes that both parents received the activation benefit before the child birth. After the child birth, one of the parents becomes eligible to a protective allowance paid for one year. The calculation presupposes that one of the parents stays at home with the child until the child is three years old and therefore is not eligible to the activation benefit.

It can also happen that a poor family receives even less money with the parental benefit than it would if the parental benefit did not exist at all. If the parental benefit exceeds the aggregate amount of eligibility to the assistance in material need, the family ceases to be eligible to the AMN. Consequently, it also ceases to be eligible to the waiver of kindergarten fees (Table 8, Chapter 5.1). If the difference between the parental benefit and the total sum of all AMN components is lower than the kindergarten fee, after paying the fee the income of the family is lower with the parental benefit than it would be without it. This applies to a lone parent with a child with disability enrolled in a kindergarten who is not eligible to the activation benefit and to the housing benefit³⁸⁵ if the kindergarten fee is more than EUR 8.40 a month (Annex 37).³⁸⁶

Another problem leading to the loss of eligibility to the AMN is the loss of the option (when the conditions are met, e.g. finding employment after long-lasting unemployment) to increase the family income through the special allowance. This means that after child birth the family income parents may earn when they find employment may in some cases be lower with the parental benefit than without it. This particularly applies in case of a part-time job for a minimum wage. For example, a family of two long-term unemployed parents and one child aged 1 to 3 years which is not eligible to the activation benefit, but is eligible to the housing benefit, may lose as much as EUR 125 a month without this income potential (Annex 37).

The review proposes to keep the eligibility to the special allowance for long-term unemployed or inactive parents who ceased to be eligible to the assistance in material need because they became eligible to receive parental benefit and who find employment after that. This regulation should remain valid for two years after losing the right to AMN.

³⁸⁵ Less than a half of the recipients of the assistance in material need is eligible to the housing benefit (Chapter 9.5).

³⁸⁶ The calculation is based on the amount of the social assistance and the parental benefit in August 2019 before increase in the parental benefit which took effect on 1 January 2020. This problem will not disappear when the parental benefit increases, it will only affect different types of families in the AMN system.

Birth allowance

The expenditures on the child birth allowance totalled EUR 44.0 million in 2018. Only EUR 0.7 million of that amount went to families in the assistance in material need system, families at risk of poverty or social exclusion received around EUR 12.4 million. The child birth allowance is a social benefit paid by the state to partially cover the expenditures associated with the needs of a newborn baby. The allowance currently totals EUR 829.86 at the birth of one child from the first to third pregnancy.³⁸⁷

A much smaller percentage of parents of children in MRC meets the conditions for the eligibility to the child birth allowance than outside the MRC. While around 4% of parents of children born in 2017 outside MRC did not receive the allowance, in the MRC environment it was nearly one quarter (Table 27). A substantially more than an average prevalence of the loss of eligibility to the allowance is also observed among the families in the AMN system outside the MRC.

Table 27: Percentage of children born in 2017 whose parents did not receive child birth allowance (%)

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	24.4	16.6	19.7
non-AMN	24.1	3.0	4.2
Total	24.2	3.7	5.5

Source: Vfm unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Payment of the allowance is conditional upon regular preventive examinations before delivery and mother's stay in a healthcare facility after delivery until she is released. However, the accessibility of gynaecology offices is worse for women from MRC than for the women from mainstream population (Graph 83, Chapter 10). The flight of Roma mothers from hospitals after delivery is sometimes due to their bad experiences in healthcare facilities (Chapter 10.3) and a difficult social situation.

Aiming to provide for the newborn baby's basic needs even if the mother fails to meet the existing conditions for receiving the child birth allowance, the review recommends to pay out half the allowance by way of the already existing institute of special recipient. The institute of special recipient allows to pay the benefit by way of a person other than the parent of the child, e.g. by way of the municipality. The meaning of the special recipient is to ensure that the allowance is used for the intended purpose. In such event, mother's freedom to dispose of the allowance at her choice would be limited, but the purpose of the allowance, which is to take care of the necessary needs of the newborn baby, would be partially observed and the child would not be punished by full withdrawal of the allowance.

Majority of municipalities with MRC already have experience with the institute of special recipient, and so the proposed measure should not be a problem. 1,374 out of 2,928 municipalities in Slovakia had at least one recipient who received (whether the child allowance or child birth allowance) by way of a special recipient. Out of 134 municipalities with more than a half of population being Roma (according to the Atlas of Roma Communities), 133 had at least one such recipient.

Substitute alimony benefit

The substitute alimony benefit is a benefit paid by the state to partially cover for the maintenance of a dependent child in certain specific cases. Both parents are obligated to satisfy the minimum requirements for maintenance of a dependent child. The parent who does not live in the same household with the child pays alimony as determined by the court. If such parent fails to meet this obligation on a long-term basis or in case of an orphaned dependent child³⁸⁸, the parent entrusted the child may be supported by the state by paying substitute alimony

³⁸⁷ Any additional child births are supported in amount of EUR 151.37.

³⁸⁸ Also the orphaned dependent children who are not eligible to the orphan's pension or the benefit for surviving child, or if the benefit granted is lower than the minimum alimony under the family law are eligible to the substitute alimony benefit.

benefit. If the parent only pays a part of the alimony, the state provides the substitute alimony benefit in the amount of the difference between the amount determined by court and the paid portion. The substitute alimony benefit may be applied for by an eligible member of a household with the income below the amount 2.2 times the minimum subsistence income calculated for all its members.

The expenditures on the substitute alimony benefits amounted to EUR 7.0 million in 2018 and were paid to 8,186 children a month on average. The maximum possible substitute alimony benefit for one child totalled EUR 112.33 in 2018. Nearly 92% of recipients were women.

8.3. Tax expenditures

The aim of tax expenditures is to increase the disposable income of households and motivate people to find employment. The instruments focus on the reduction of the contribution system burden (contribution relief for long-term unemployed and contribution deductible item for low-income people), reduction of the tax wedge (dependent spouse allowance), and increase in the net income by way of financial allowances for dependent children (child tax bonus).

Contribution relief for long-term unemployed

Neither the long-term unemployed³⁸⁹ nor their employers are obligated to pay contributions to the Social Insurance Agency during the first year from the start date of their employment. The eligibility to the contribution relief for the long-term unemployed arises automatically on their recruitment. The employer only pays the accident and guarantee contributions during the first 12 months. One of the conditions is the gross monthly income not be higher than 67% of the average wage valid 2 years before the year of recruitment. The threshold remains the same during the entire duration of the contribution relief, and it is EUR 678.71 for 2020.

The measure had a positive impact on the employment of long-term unemployed. The share of the long-term unemployed of the number of the recruited population grew by 4 percentage points and the estimated probability of recruitment indicates changing preferences towards employment of persons eligible to the contribution relief. As many as 40% of the supported individuals had been kept in the job seeker register for more than two years. The relief did not have an impact on the employment of low-qualified people (IFP, 2014a).

However, the potential of the relief has not been used to the fullest.³⁹⁰ 15 thousand people were expected to make use of the support, but only 3,875 used it in 2014 and 2,090 in 2018, which translated into tax expenditures of EUR 1.5 million. On one side, low utilisation of the support is affected by various programmes subsidising labour costs which are more attractive for employers. They go hand in hand with higher public expenditures and the allocation of funds for subsidisation of labour costs is problematic particularly in the context of recruitment for already existing vacancies (Chapter 7.2). On the other side, the contribution relief results in the loss of eligibility to certain benefits covered by the insurance.³⁹¹ Whereas the relief is a matter of choice, this fact may be one of the reasons for low use of the contribution relief.

Contribution deductible item for low-income people

Low-income employees have an option to reduce the assessment base for the calculation of the contributions paid to the public health insurance company.³⁹² The maximum deductible item amounts to EUR

³⁸⁹ This relief is intended for a person kept in the job seeker register for at least 12 months or a person kept in the register 6 consecutive months and resident in the most lagging region. The list of regions is published by the Central Labour Office. Governed by the Act No. 461/2003 Coll. on social insurance.

³⁹⁰ The contribution relief was most used by the employees with the income at the level of minimum wage, in the wholesale and retail sectors, in industrial production and agriculture, and in the Prešov region.

³⁹¹ Employees who use this relief are not eligible to the sick benefits if they fall ill, and the duration of employment is not included in the time limit they need to reach to be eligible to the unemployment benefit. Neither is it considered in the pension assessment process.

³⁹² Unlike in the case of contribution relief, the eligibility to the deductible item does not arise automatically but is subject to the notification duty by an employee. Persons working based on agreement to perform work and state insurees are not eligible to the support. Governed by the Act No. 580/2004 Coll. on public health insurance.

380 a month and must not be higher than the employee's income. If the income grows, the item is reduced twice as much. The item is restricted to the work earned income of EUR 570 a month at the most.

The contribution deductible item for the low-income people amounted to EUR 119.9 million in 2018. The expenditures are expected to decrease substantially in the upcoming years. The reason is the increase in the minimum wage to EUR 580 in 2020 which will restrict the number of employees eligible to claim the deductible item.

Dependent spouse income tax allowance

Employees may compensate for the temporary gap of spouse's income in the annual tax return by means of the dependent spouse allowance. The eligibility applies to the aggregate amount of work earned income which includes the income of the person claimed within such allowance.³⁹³ If the taxpayer earns less than 176.8 times the minimum subsistence income a year (EUR 37,163.36 in 2020), the taxpayer may claim the dependent spouse allowance in the amount of the difference between the spouse's income and 19.2 times the minimum subsistence income (EUR 4,035.84 in 2020). Employees earning more are subject to different rules of dependent spouse allowance.

The expenditures on the dependent spouse allowance amounted to EUR 63 million in 2018. Around 27% of expenditures (EUR 17 million) went to the people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The expenditures are expected to grow by 2% a year in future.

Child tax bonus

Family with a dependent child may increase the monthly income by the child tax bonus.³⁹⁴ This bonus is conditional upon the work earned income of at least 6 times the minimum wage for a calendar year. The bonus is not subject to any upper cap limit for the income. The bonus may only be claimed by one of the parents. It amounts to EUR 22.72 per each child aged 6 or more years or EUR 45.44 per child aged less than 6 years.³⁹⁵ The taxpayer does not have to meet the condition of minimum wage (half the minimum wage) in all months of the calendar year; once the bonus is granted by the employer, it remains in force.

The expenditures on the child tax bonus totalled EUR 269.1 million in 2018. Around 15% (EUR 39.8 million) of that went to families at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The amendment act and increase in the bonus for pre-school children are one of the reasons why the expenditures on the child tax bonus are expected to grow in future.

8.4. Support of persons with disability

The state supports persons with disabilities by way of social assistance for persons with severe disability, social insurance used for payment of invalidity pensions, and also by way of selected social services.

According to the data of Eurostat, the expenditures of Slovakia on the social protection in case of disease, invalidity and disability relative to the GDP are higher than the EU average. While the EU countries spent on average 2.7% of their GDPs on this area in 2018, Slovakia's expenditures reached 3.1% of the GDP (EUR 2.8

³⁹³ The spouse must meet at least one condition laid down in Act No. 595/2003 Coll. on income tax during the tax period. The state social benefits are not included in the spouse's income. But the maternity benefit, sick benefits, all types of pension, winnings, etc. are a part of the income. Governed by the Act No. 595/2003 Coll. on income tax.

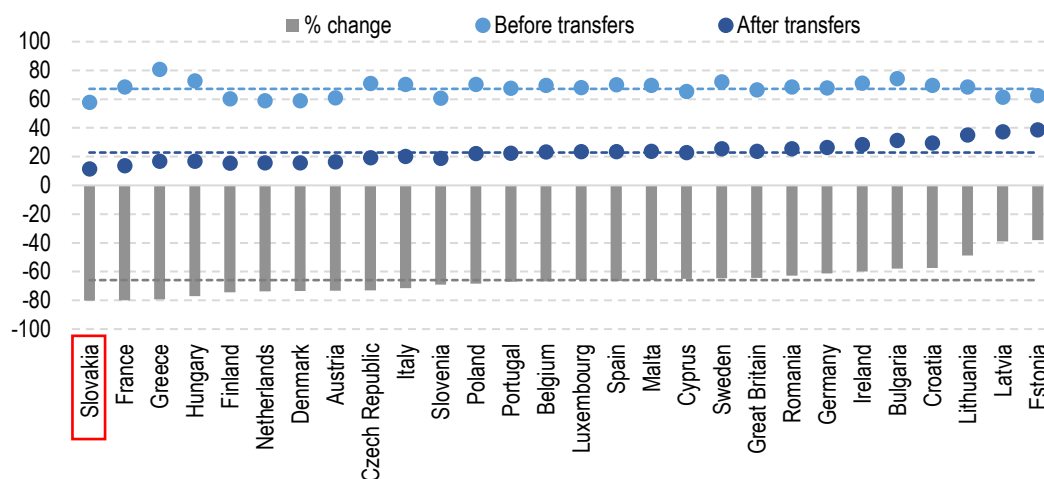
³⁹⁴ Taxpayers who became eligible to the invalidity pension are not eligible to the child tax bonus. Governed by the Act No. 595/2003 Coll. on income tax.

³⁹⁵ Governed by the amendment act in force from 1 April 2019.

billion).³⁹⁶ The expenditures should also be viewed in the context of diverse prevalence of disability in individual countries; however, final and objective internationally comparable data is not available.³⁹⁷

According to the 2018 EU-SILC survey data, the social system in Slovakia is the most successful in reducing the risk of poverty of disabled persons in the EU context. While without social transfers the at-risk-of-poverty rate of the disabled persons would reach 57.8% in Slovakia, with the social transfers it is only 11.4%, which is more than 80% decrease. The average decrease in the EU countries is 66% (Graph 59).

Graph 59: At-risk-of-poverty rate of persons with disabilities before and after social transfers (% , 2018)



Source: Eurostat (EU SILC)

However, Slovakia's results may also be good partially due to ambiguous question in the survey and the consequent poor comparability with the other countries. Since the question in the EU-SILC survey is not formulated unambiguously, the number of disabled persons in the population may be overestimated as it also includes less vulnerable persons in the category of the "disabled" (Bahna, 2018). While higher percentage of people report disability in Slovakia in the 2017 EU-SILC survey than the EU average (31.9% versus 24.5%), less than the EU average (18.6% versus 29.1%) admitted disability in Slovakia in the special module of EU-LFS of 2011.³⁹⁸

Compensation of social consequences of severe disability

The expenditures on the compensation of social consequences of severe disability (SD) amounted to EUR 293.2 million (0.8% of public expenditures) in 2018. The state helps compensate social consequences of severe disability by paying various one-off and recurring allowances to support integration of persons with SD into the society (Box 22). On average, these allowances were provided to 159.3 thousand persons with severe disability and 53.4 thousand caregivers every month. The expenditures grew by more than 20% (EUR 49.0 million) compared with 2017, representing the largest annual increase since 2010 (Graph 60). The expenditures grew particularly due to the legislative changes taking effect on 1 July 2018 which increased various allowances and liberated certain eligibility conditions.

The largest portion of the expenditures to compensate for the social consequences of severe disability goes to financing the carer's allowance (51%, Box 22). EUR 149.4 million was used for this purpose in 2018. It was paid to 53,356 caregivers on average, and the allowance averaged EUR 215 a month. The average monthly

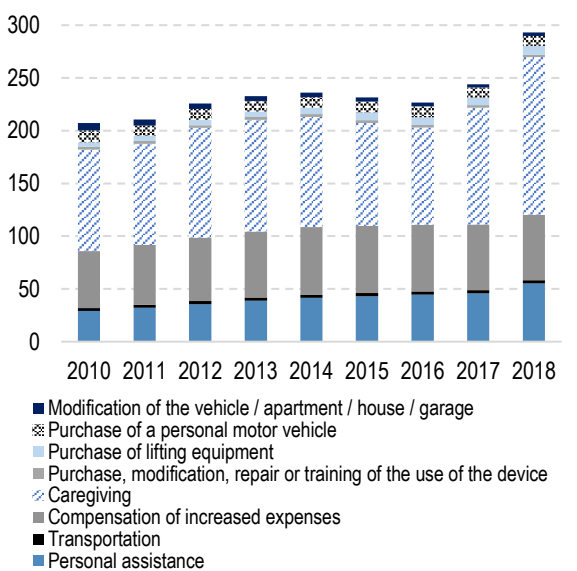
³⁹⁶ gov_10a_exp – this data also includes the expenditures which are not a part of this review, such as the medical insurance scheme. The data is designated as preliminary.

³⁹⁷ Higher expenditures in Slovakia may also result from the overall health condition of the population (Slovakia lagged behind the EU average in the healthy life years by around 7 years in 2016, and by around 5 years in case of the V3 countries).

³⁹⁸ Europe 2020 data & People with disabilities - tables (EU SILC 2017) (Stefanos Grammenos), December 2019.: <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/1045-europe-2020-data-people-with-disabilities-tables-eu-silc-2017>. Also, the EU SILC survey reports disability based on self-definition of the health conditions by the respondents themselves. Respondents are asked whether they have any health problem which limits them in their everyday activities.

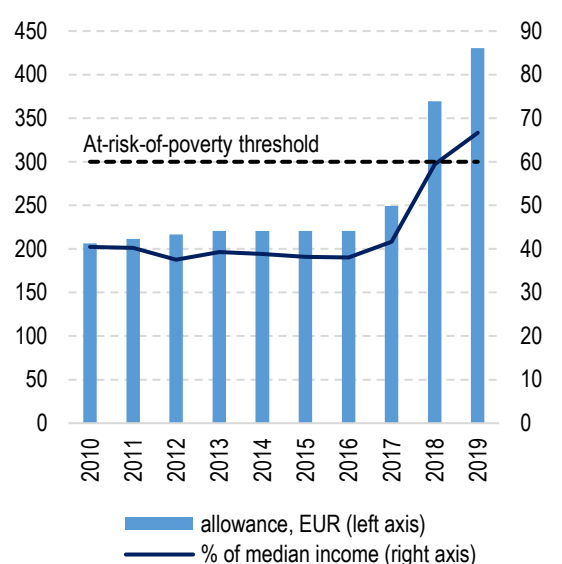
number of the recipients of carer's allowance dropped by nearly 6 thousand from 2014 to 2017. The decreasing trend was interrupted in 2018 most probably by legislative changes which increased the allowance to a more significant extent, increased the income threshold for care recipient above which the allowance is reduced from 1.7 times the minimum subsistence income to double the minimum subsistence income, and liberated other conditions.³⁹⁹

Graph 60: Structure of expenditures on the compensation of social consequences of severe disability, eur million



Source: ISP unit based on data of the Ministry of Labour

Graph 61: Carer's allowance for working-age person looking after one person with severe disability



Source: ISP unit based on data of the Ministry of Labour

Note: The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is provided for a childless individual. The 2019 threshold is estimated based on the same increase (in percentage) as in 2018.

The income from the basic carer's allowance without any other incomes for working-age persons looking after one person with severe disability used to be far below the at-risk-of poverty threshold until recently.

The allowance was more significantly increased on 1 January 2018 and then on 1 July 2018 when the basic allowance reached 99% of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. The allowance was increased again on 1 July 2019 to EUR 43.35 based on a decree-law of the government attaining the net minimum wage and can be expected to exceed the at-risk-of-poverty threshold for the first time (Graph 61). These increases have substantially reduced the percentage of carers dependent on the assistance in material need from 4.3% in 2016 to 1.4% in 2018 and 0.2% in the first six months of 2019.

Box 22: Financial allowances within compensation of the social consequences of severe disability

The Act No. 447/2008 Coll. on funds to compensate for severe disability and on amendments and supplements of certain acts as amended regulates the following social assistance instruments:

The **carer's allowance** is paid to compensate the dependence of a person with severe disability on the help of another person with self-service, household chores and social activities to be able to continue living in one's natural home environment. The carer's allowance is paid to the caregiver who looks after a person with severe disability aged 6 or more years. The allowance may also be paid to caregivers receiving pension. In such event, they are provided 50% of the allowance for so-called working-age carers.

³⁹⁹ For example, it revoked the reduction of the nursing allowance for children with severe disability attending school facility for more than 20 hours a week.

The purpose of personal assistance is the activation of the person with severe disability, support of his or her social integration, independence, decision-making power, fulfilling their family roles and engagement in working, educational or free time activities. **Personal assistance allowance** is paid to persons with severe disability aged 6 to 65 years⁴⁰⁰ who are not able to do certain activities due to their disability, such as to serve themselves, do activities related to mobility and relocation, household chores or communication. The persons with severe disability have a personal assistant to help them with these activities based on a personal assistance contract. The allowance is provided for personal assistance in a defined extent, which must not be more than 7,300 hours a year. The extent of personal assistance is determined depending on the individual activities the person with disability is unable to do on his or her own and the number of hours which are necessary to do them.

The **compensatory allowance for extra costs** is provided for:

- extra costs of a special diet;
- extra costs associated with hygiene or wear and tear of clothing, linen, shoes and apartment furnishing;
- extra costs associated with the operation of a private passenger car;
- extra costs associated with care for a dog with specialist training.

The individual allowances are determined as a percentage of the minimum subsistence income.

The **transport allowance** is provided to persons with severe disability who are dependent on individual transport by a passenger car to the place of their working, educational, family or civil activities. The transport may be provided by a person holding a transport license, by a municipality or a registered entity. The financial allowance ranges from 50% to 95% of the provable costs depending on the monthly income of the person with severe disability, but no more than 51.02% of the minimum subsistence income for one adult individual.⁴⁰¹

One-off financial allowances are provided for:

- purchase, training to use, modification and repair of an aid;
- purchase of a passenger car;
- purchase of a lifting aid;
- reconstruction of an apartment, family house, garage or passenger car.

The allowance is usually determined based on the costs (price) and the income of the person with severe disability.

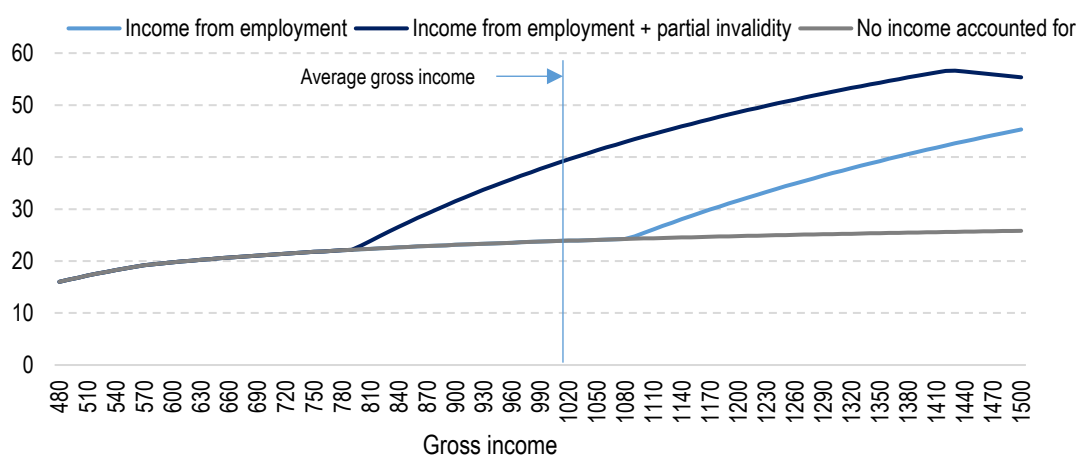
The expenditures on the personal assistance allowance amounted to EUR 55 million (18.8% of the total expenditures on the compensation of social consequences of severe disability) in 2018. On average, 10,100 persons with severe disability (2.4%) received the allowance every month. Since 2010, the average number of recipients has been growing by nearly 400 recipients a year. The legislative changes taking effect on 1 July 2018 increased the hourly rates of personal assistance and cancelled the recipient's income testing.⁴⁰² The increased hourly rate translated into the higher average monthly amount of the allowance from EUR 383.50 in 2017 to EUR 443.50 in 2018.

⁴⁰⁰ When the person with SD turns 65 years, the allowance is only provided if such person received it before turning 65 as well.

⁴⁰¹ 95% for income up to double the minimum subsistence income, 90% for income up to triple the minimum subsistence income, 70% for income up to quadruple the minimum subsistence income, 50% for income up to quintuple the minimum subsistence income.

⁴⁰² Before, the eligibility to the full allowance was limited by the income reaching no more than quadruple the minimum subsistence income.

Graph 62: Participation tax with the personal assistance allowance (% , 2018)



Source: ISP based on data of the Ministry of Labour and the Social Insurance Agency

Note: To put it simply, all scenarios use the average personal assistance allowance in 2018. The partial invalidity pension amounts to the average partial invalidity pensions paid before December 2018. The participation tax is defined as 1 minus the net financial profit from starting an employment as a percentage of gross wage.

Cancellation of the income test of personal assistance recipients increases their motivation to move to work. Originally, when recipients of personal assistance allowance or partial invalidity pension moved into work for an average wage (EUR 1,013 in 2018), they lost 39% of their gross wages (participation tax) (Graph 62). When the income test was cancelled, they continue to be eligible to the full personal assistance allowance after moving into work and, consequently, the participation tax is much lower (24%).

Persons with severe disability who become dependent on the assistance of a personal assistant after they turn 65 are not eligible to personal assistance. Other instruments, such as the carer's allowance or social services, are not always a good option considering the different conditions of provision (e.g. high dependency on the assistance of another individual). Neither can the personal assistant's assistance be used by pupils with severe disability during educational process. The barriers to the integration in education of children with severe disability are addressed in more detail in Chapter 6.2.

The compensatory allowances for extra costs swallowed nearly EUR 61.9 million in 2018. As regards the average number of recipients, this is the most used allowance (on average, 154,665 recipients), and the monthly allowance averaged EUR 32.80. Majority of recipients are working-age people (54.2% are 65 or more years old). The compensatory allowances for extra costs are subject to income testing, and are not provided to persons with severe disability with an income higher than triple the minimum subsistence income for one adult individual.

The transport allowances consumed EUR 3.2 million in 2018. On average, it was paid to 3,102 persons with severe disability a month in an average amount of nearly EUR 88. The transport allowance is predominantly granted to working-age persons with SD (68.3% of recipients are 65 or more years old⁴⁰³).

The state spent nearly EUR 23.4 million on one-off allowances for compensation of social consequences of severe disability. Majority of the allowances were provided for the purchase of an aid (2,540) and of a passenger car (1,404). The highest average allowances are for the purchase of a lifting aid (EUR 9,261) and of a passenger car (EUR 6,775).

Aids, lifting mechanisms or reconstructions of an apartment, house or garage may be unaffordable for persons with SD earning low income, since they are not refunded from public money in full extent. For example, even those who have income below the minimum subsistence income must partially cover the total price of the aid or reconstruction. Their cost-sharing requirements range from 5% to 15%. This is a huge financial burden in case of more expensive aids and reconstructions. **The review therefore proposes to set better conditions for**

⁴⁰³ Data for December 2018.

one-off allowances and increase, by way of a financial allowance, the refund percentage for e.g. the aid or lifting aid (depending on the type of allowance) in case of persons earning income below the minimum subsistence income. Such change would increase the financial allowances and reduce the cost-sharing requirements laid on low-income recipient.

Table 28: One-off allowance as a percentage of the total price of aid or service

	Income (multiple of the minimum subsistence income)				
	up to 1x	up to 2x	up to 3x	up to 4x	up to 5x
Purchase of an aid, training to use an aid, aid modification, car modification, modification of a house or garage					
up to EUR 331.94	90%	90%	90%	70%	50%
up to EUR 1,659.70	95%	95%	85%	75%	65%
above EUR 1,659.70	95% (98%)	95%	90%	80%	70%
Lifting aid	95% (98%)	95%	90%	80% (85%)	70% (80%)
Dog with specialist training	100%	100%	95%	90%	80%
Aid repair					
up to EUR 165.97	95%	95%	50%	0%	0%
up to EUR 331.94	95%	95%	70%	50%	25%
up to EUR 829.85	95%	95%	80%	60%	40%
above EUR 829.85	95% (98%)	95%	90%	70%	50%
Car purchase	85% (90%)	85%	80%	70%	55%

Source: Act No. 447/2008 Coll. on financial allowances for compensation of severe disability.

Note: The proposed changes are given in the table in brackets and are highlighted blue. Passenger car is a road motor vehicle.

Certain people with severe disability living in apartment houses could have experienced barriers in connection with barrier-free modifications although they had been granted an allowance for that purpose.

Any modifications of the common areas of apartment houses (e.g. installation of a stairlift) was subject to the consent of an absolute majority of the owners of apartments and non-residential premises⁴⁰⁴. Owners thus could vote against construction of the barrier-free access.⁴⁰⁵ The amendment act No. 182/1992 on the ownership of flats and non-residential premises taking effect in February 2020 revoked the condition of gaining consent of neighbours to the installation of a lifting aid in the common areas of an apartment house.

Invalidity pension

The purpose of the invalidity pension is to ensure income for the persons with reduced capacity to perform gainful activity as a consequence of long-lasting bad health. Invalidity pension is paid out from the basic invalidity insurance fund (Box 12, Chapter 7.1)

Total expenditures on invalidity pensions amounted to EUR 785.8 million in 2018 (0.94% of GDP). They grew by 26.3% since 2009. The expenditures on invalidity pensions paid by the state (the so-called youth invalidity pension) totalled EUR 56.2 million. They grew by 470 % since 2009. According to the European Commission's forecast until 2070, the expenditures on invalidity pensions should remain at around 1% of GDP. The percentage of invalidity pensioners in the Slovak population should remain at the present level of around 7% as well.⁴⁰⁶ But the fact is that the V3 average is 5.1%, although the data between the countries is only comparable to a limited extent due to differences in the invalidity insurance schemes.

While the average full invalidity pension provides income above the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and the invalidity pension granted in youth has come close to this threshold over time, the partial invalidity

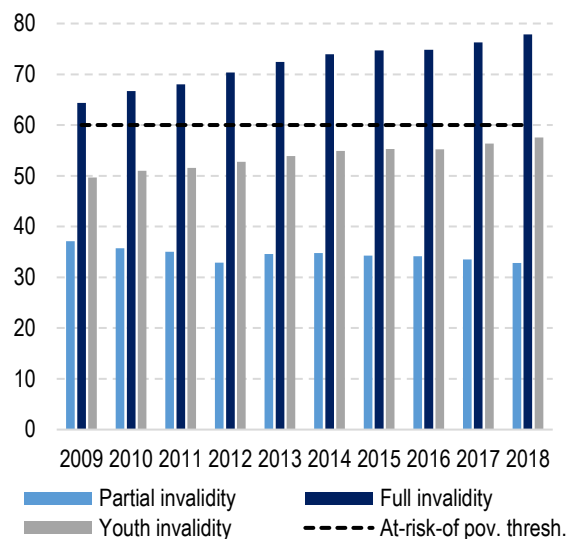
⁴⁰⁴ Act No. 182/1993 Coll. on the ownership of flats and non-residential premises (Article 14b)

⁴⁰⁵ This issue was solved e.g. by the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in 2017 (Activity Report of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities for 2017).

⁴⁰⁶ Ageing working group (2017): Country fiche on 2018 pension projections of the Slovak republic: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/final_country_fiche_sk.pdf

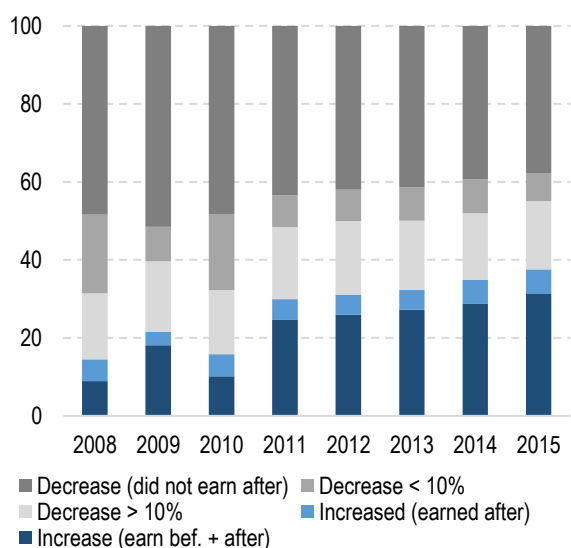
pensions have decreased relative to that threshold (Graph 63). The average full invalidity pension amounted to nearly EUR 368 a month in 2018. This means that persons with more than 70% reduction of the capacity to perform gainful activity received income of 91.2% of the net minimum wage. The partial invalidity pensioner received EUR 204 on average (55% of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold or 50.6% of the net minimum wage). Around 2.2% of invalidity pensioners are dependent on assistance in material need (2.8% in case of partial invalidity pensioners and 1.4% in case of full invalidity pensioners).

Graph 63: Average invalidity pensions as a % of the median equivalent disposable income



Source: ISP according to data of the Social Insurance Agency and EU SILC

Graph 64: Change of earned income from work after medical approval of invalidity



Source: IFP according to data of the Social Insurance Agency
 Note: The graph is arranged by the year of medical approval of invalidity.

The wages earned by employees after medical approval of their invalidity suggest that a part of such people is able to continue to do their jobs in spite of the Social Insurance Agency's decision over their reduced ability to perform gainful activity.⁴⁰⁷ More than one third of recipients earned higher wages one year after being granted the invalidity pension in 2015. Moreover, this percentage has been growing (Graph 64)⁴⁰⁸. All in all, nearly 20 thousand of IP recipients (8.1% of the total number) who worked in 2016 had higher net income, i.e. net wage together with the invalidity pension, than they had had before invalidity. The total net income of these persons thus grew on average by EUR 2,850 a year after they had been granted IP.

The growing percentage of invalidity pensioners whose income was not reduced after establishment of their invalidity and the cases of under-recognized diagnosis by the medical assessor may indicate, among other things, drawbacks in the medical assessment work. This has not changed since the 2004 reform. The table of diagnoses used by medical assessors to assess the extent of reduction of the capacity to perform gainful activity may not reflect the development in the area of medical science and the labour market (e.g. development of new technologies). Also the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommends that Slovakia replace the medicinal model of assessment work (based on diagnoses only) with a biopsychosocial model which also reflects the skills and qualifications of the relevant individual.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ The calculation only included employees and those who worked based on agreement. It was not possible to trace the income of self-employed from the data used.

⁴⁰⁸ The changed work earned income was calculated as the volume of wages one year before the year in which the invalidity pensioner was granted the IP compared with the year after invalidity granting. The volume of wages one year before invalidity granting may be distorted whereas it is quite common that applicants for IP are on a long-term incapacity benefit one year before they undergo medical assessment.

⁴⁰⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Concluding observations on the initial report of Slovakia CRPD/C/SVK/CO/1: available [here](#)

Furthermore, the assessment work is fragmented. Separate assessments are conducted for invalidity pension purposes, for severe disability establishment and granting the allowances for compensation of its social consequences and, again, to assess the dependency on social services. This means that the health condition of a single citizen may be assessed by the Social Insurance Agency, labour offices, but also by municipalities or self-governing regions. These facts suggest that there is room to improve the efficiency of the system, save public funds, and make the system working better for the citizens with disabilities themselves in the form of simpler processes and reduced administrative, time and financial burden.

The most vulnerable groups include persons with disabilities who meet the medical condition for invalidity granting, but do not meet the required duration of pension insurance. Although their health condition does not allow them to work or only allows them to work to a limited extent, they are not eligible to the invalidity pension to provide for their material needs.⁴¹⁰ The Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities repeatedly receives complaints of claimants who have not been granted invalidity pension only because they lack a part of the required pension insurance period.⁴¹¹

The review proposes to conduct deeper analysis of the invalidity insurance system in Slovakia together with proposal of measures to increase the efficiency of public spending and to improve availability of the support for people whose health condition does not allow them to work.

⁴¹⁰ In certain circumstances (e.g. registered unemployment, education at a secondary school or university), it is possible to pay the missing pension insurance contributions.

⁴¹¹ Activity Report of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities for 2018.

9. Availability of housing and essential infrastructure

- Physical availability of housing in Slovakia measured by the number of apartments per 1,000 citizens is one of the lowest in the EU. The severe housing deprivation rate in the population at risk of poverty is higher than the EU-15 or V3 average and gets worse over time.
- The offer of rental housing with regulated rent in Slovakia is one of the worst among the EU countries. In spite of that, the construction of new apartments is slowing down.
- Significant independence of local governments in defining the conditions and procedure of allocation of rental apartments with regulated rent creates room for discrimination and restricted access for certain groups at risk.
- Inclusive access and support of clients could be ensured by greater engagement of the non-governmental sector in the regulated rental housing management or even ownership, a practice common abroad. This objective could be supported by the new legislation on social economy.
- Social benefit in the form of housing benefit in Slovakia is tied with a relatively limited system of social assistance. But less than a half of recipients of the assistance within this system receive the allowance due to restrictive eligibility conditions which the most vulnerable households, such as people living in shacks in Roma settlements, are unable to meet. Moreover, the allowance is rather insensitive to the living conditions of the recipients, such as the family size and housing costs. This setting is non-standard compared with other developed countries.
- As many as 81% of Roma in Slovakia live in concentrated settlements segregated from the majority population. The quality and legal settlement of housing in MRC as well as the accessibility of the basic infrastructure is inversely related to the extent of spacial segregation. Many segregated settlements are located close to waste dumps, exposing them to health risks.
- One solution which has proved to work well in the MRC environment consists in the self-help construction of detached houses with the use of micro-loans. So far, this solution has been organized by the non-governmental sector on a small scale. Several projects funded from the European funds focus on the settlement of land and construction of housing and infrastructure in the MRC setting.
- Public support of social services of crisis intervention which provide housing to people in housing need has been decreasing over time. The joining up of crisis intervention services into a single integrated system is not legislatively resolved, although it could help reduce the public spending associated with homelessness and significantly improve the quality of life for homeless people.
- There is no systematic and regular collection of data about homeless people in Slovakia. This is why it is difficult to plan investments in the capacities of crisis accommodation facilities and assess public policies. Successful experience of other countries with the "housing first" strategy addressing homelessness of a part of that group could inspire Slovak cities to try this strategy to a greater extent.
- The review proposes measures to improve financial assistance to partially cover the housing costs by adjusting the housing benefit, improve efficiency of assistance for homeless individuals and the individuals at risk of housing loss using more complex data, and test the "housing first" strategy under the Slovak conditions.

Housing is one of the basic human needs and its affordability and quality serve as an indicator of the standard of living. Many international documents that Slovakia signed define the standards which appropriate housing should meet.⁴¹² For example, they include financial affordability, habitability, accessibility and appropriate location. The Slovak Constitution does not mention the right to housing as such⁴¹³ and the concepts of the state housing policy (regularly adopted since 1994) provide that in the conditions of market economy the responsibility for one's own housing is transferred to the citizen.

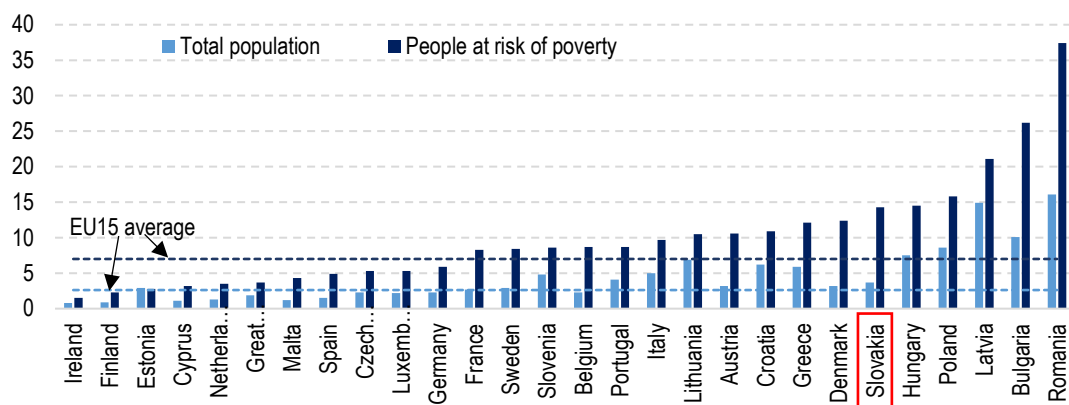
⁴¹² Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Vancouver Declaration (1976), Global Housing Strategy (1988), UN – Habitat from Istanbul (1996), etc.

⁴¹³ But the Slovak Constitution contains references to the protection of human dignity (Article 19(1)) and inviolability of housing (Article 21(1)). No exercise of the housing right is justified by the existing ownership structure of the housing fund and the capacity of the state.

9.1. Housing quality and affordability in Slovakia

Poor availability of housing in Slovakia is evidenced by the number of apartments per 1,000 citizens which is the lowest one in the EU. According to the population and housing census in Slovakia, there are 321 occupied apartments per 1,000 citizens in Slovakia, while the EU-15 average is 416 and the V3 average is 373 (NBS, 2015). This is also associated with the percentage of "overcrowded" households in Slovakia which was the fifth highest in the EU in 2018 (36%) and even the second highest among the households at risk of poverty (56%).⁴¹⁴

Graph 65: Severe housing deprivation rate, 2018 (%)

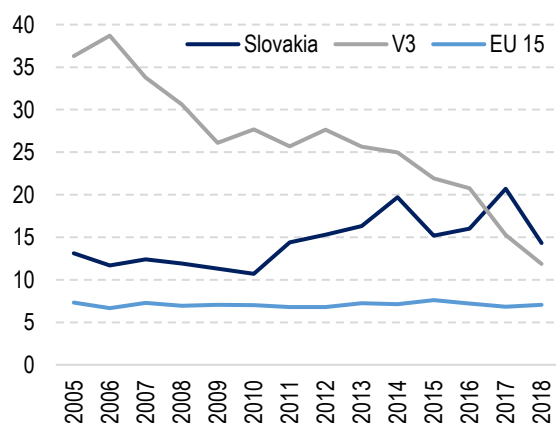


Note: Box 1 for definition of severe housing deprivation rate and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

Source: Eurostat

The income situation of households impacts on housing quality and availability much more in Slovakia than in other developed EU countries. While severe housing deprivation⁴¹⁵ is only slightly above the EU-15 average, this indicator of social exclusion is double the EU-15 average in the population below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold⁴¹⁶ (Graph 65). The actual housing deprivation rate among poor Slovaks is probably even higher because the statistical survey does not include households living in dwellings which are not documented or legalised.⁴¹⁷

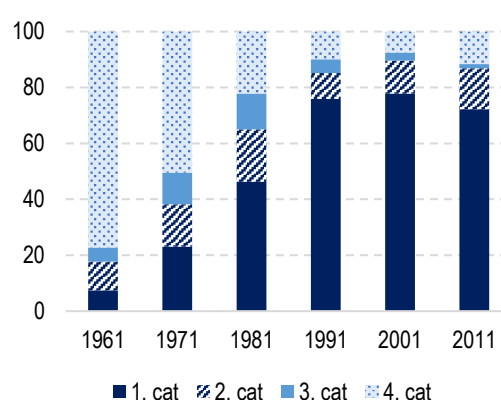
Graph 66: Severe housing deprivation rate in the population below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (%)



Source: Eurostat

Note: Box 1 for definition of severe housing deprivation rate and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

Graph 67: Population distribution across the apartment quality categories (%)



Source: Kusá (2013) based on data of the Statistical Office

⁴¹⁴ Overcrowded households are households with the number of rooms which does not match the size and structure of the household (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Overcrowding_rate). The data comes from Eurostat based on the EU-SILC survey.

⁴¹⁵ Severe housing deprivation is defined in Box 1.

⁴¹⁶ The risk of poverty is defined in Box 1.

⁴¹⁷ The selection of the sample for the statistical survey on income and living conditions of households is described in the footnote 11 in Chapter 2.

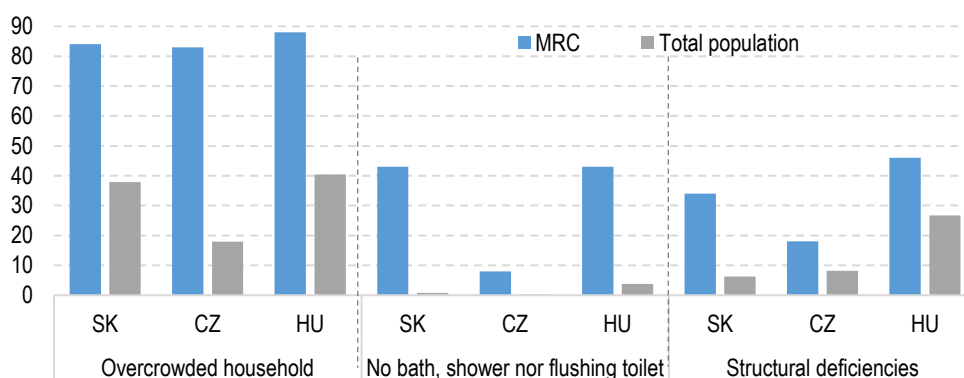
While the percentage of poor people experiencing severe housing deprivation has been stable in the EU-15 or substantially decreased in the V3 countries during the past twelve years, in Slovakia it has (Graph 66). While the average decrease in this indicator since 2005 reached 67% in the V3 countries, Slovakia reported a 9% growth.

Deteriorating housing quality in recent years is a turning point in the positive trend Slovakia enjoyed at least from the 1960s. The percentage of Slovak population living in an apartment of the 4th category (the lowest one) fell substantially from 1961 to 2001 from 77.3% to 7.5% (Graph 67). But the 2011 population and housing census in Slovakia recorded increase in this percentage to 11.6% for the first time.

Housing and infrastructure quality in marginalised Roma communities

Differences in the average housing quality between the MRC and the majority environment is substantial even if compared with the neighbouring countries. According to the FRA's survey, as many as 84% of people from the MRC environment in Slovakia live in an overcrowded dwelling, 43% do not have plumbing facilities in their dwelling and 34% live in a dwelling of a poor condition (leaking roof, wet walls, floor or foundations, or rot around window frames or floor). The differences between people from the MRC and the majority population are larger in two housing quality indicators compared with the Czech Republic⁴¹⁸ or Hungary (Graph 68). Poor quality of housing and the basic infrastructure has negative and permanent consequences for the health and school performance of children (Box 23).

Graph 68: Housing quality indicators, 2016 (% of population)



Source: FRA and Eurostat

Note: Overcrowded household means that the number of rooms is not appropriate to its size and structure. Lacking plumbing facility means a dwelling without access to a bathtub, shower and flush toilet. Poor condition means a dwelling with leaking roof, wet walls, floor or foundations, or with rot around the window frames or floor.

The data from the latest Atlas of Roma Communities (2019) indicate that more than three quarters (81%) of the Roma population in Slovakia live in concentrated settlements segregated from the majority population. Around 31% live in settlements inside municipalities, 36% at the outskirts, and 14% outside municipalities. Most concentrated settlements of Roma population are in the Banská Bystrica and Trnava regions, while most Roma live in the Košice and Prešov regions (Graph 69). From among the people from MRC living in settlements outside municipalities, 65% live in settlements up to one kilometre away from the nearest municipality and 10% live in settlements more than 3 kilometres from the nearest municipality. The data is only approximate, whereas the Atlas of Roma Communities is not a Roma population census.

As many as 70% of Roma settlements at the outskirts or outside municipalities do not have an access path. All in all, they comprise 477 settlements with the population of 120 thousand people. Around 10% of settlements outside municipalities which are homes for nearly 2 thousand people do not have an access road. The non-existent

⁴¹⁸ Relatively good results attained in the Czech Republic seem to result from a much better availability of municipal apartments as well as due to greater urbanisation of the Czech Roma population. While 59% of Roma live in a municipal apartment in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia it is only 5% (Perić, 2012).

or very damaged roads hinder access to education or healthcare for the people from segregated settlements, making their social exclusion even worse.

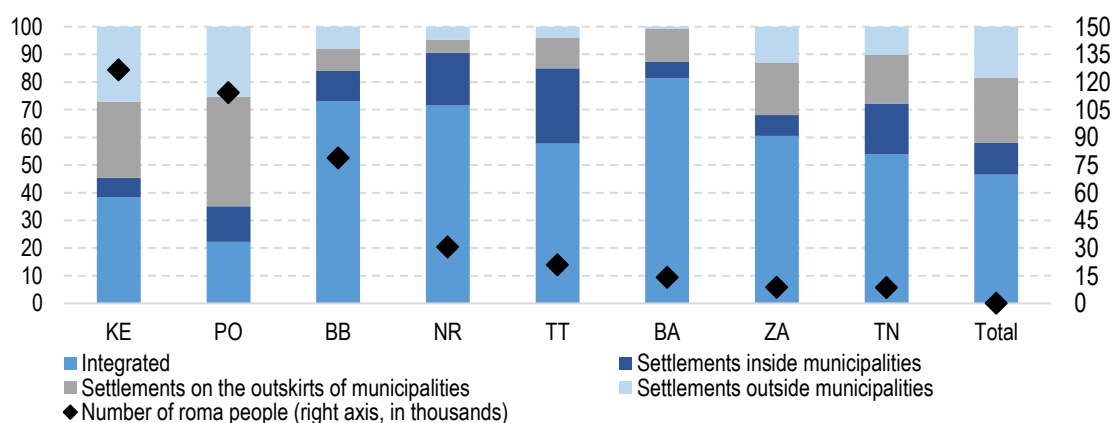
Box 23: Impact of housing quality on children

Poor housing quality has a substantial negative impact on the health of children and the related consequences are only difficult to avert at a later time. Children living in segregated settlements more often suffer diarrhoea, malnutrition and respiratory diseases (Unger, 2013). Bad conditions, such as dampness, rot, lack of light, noise or cold, increase the probability of health issues more than 4 times (Gehrt et al., 2019). Wet or rotten walls increase the prevalence of respiratory diseases, such as asthma, allergies and dyspnoea (Karvonen et al., 2015, Hurrass et al., 2017).

Inconvenient or overcrowded housing can also lead to mental health issues. Chronic stress and problems with satisfaction of the basic needs contribute to emotional issues and behavioural disorders in children (Coley et al., 2013, Wells et al., 2016). Bad housing conditions correlate with more prevalent anxiety and depression and the related sleep disorders and stress coping (Rollings et al., 2017). What is more, negative effects of bad housing are difficult to avert. Improvement of home conditions only helped stop the worsened health, but did not improve it (Thomson et al., 2013).

Housing also substantially affects the children's school performance. Due to health issues relating to unhealthy/damp home, children in Europe miss on average 1 to 4 days a year depending on the illness (Gehrt et al., 2019). In overcrowded households there is no room to learn and do homework with good lighting conditions and not disturbed with excessive noise which affects the children's ability to concentrate. Consequently, they often drop out from school too early, completing a lower education level (Solari and Mare, 2012), and also have worse results in reading and counting (Goux and Maurin, 2005).

Graph 69: Distribution of the population of Roma communities by the type of settlement (%)



Source: ARC 2019

The quality and accessibility of housing in marginalised Roma communities is getting worse with the degree of territorial exclusion. In marginalised Roma settlements inside the municipality, 90% of citizens live in legal dwellings (registered with the land registry or with building permit) and only 4% live in non-residential premises or illegal dwellings of non-compliant quality⁴¹⁹. On the contrary, only a bit more than half the citizens (54%) of settlements outside the municipality live in legal dwellings and as many as 26% live in dwellings in a bad condition or in non-residential premises (Graph 70).⁴²⁰

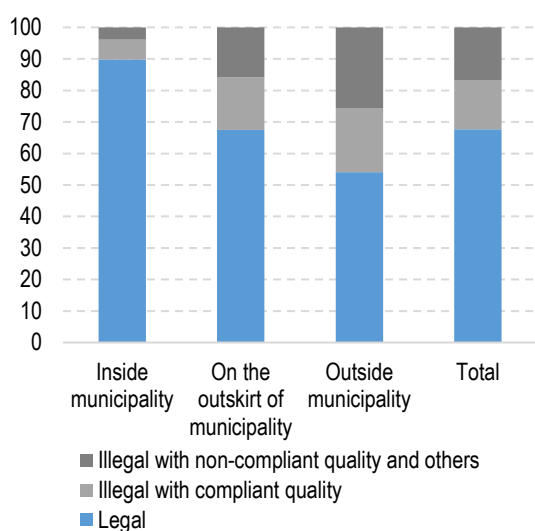
⁴¹⁹ Quality is not necessarily the only reasons why the structure is illegal. Theoretically, illegal dwellings in a technically sufficient condition could be legalised in future.

⁴²⁰ The data from the Atlas of Roma Communities dates back to 2013 since it was not collected in 2019.

The establishment and boom of many segregated settlements outside municipalities was influenced in past by forced relocation of Roma population during the Slovak State, forced assimilation during socialism, and loss of urban housing of many Roma families after the onset of capitalism and significant increase in the unemployment rate (Jurová, 2002). The legalisation of properties was complicated by the restitution which transferred the state land under the settlements to private ownership.

Unlegalised plots hinder investments in infrastructure. As the territorial segregation gets worse, also the accessibility of underground services aggravates (Graph 71). Roma settlements are best covered by electricity networks, the worst situation is with the gas network. Several settlements are at the municipalities where neither the majority population has underground services, but substantial part of the population lives in settlements with poor coverage although there are underground services in the municipality. The availability of the underground services in a settlement does not necessarily mean that all dwellings also use them. For example, natural gas is a relatively costly energy source and poor households often replace it with solid fuel. Heating and cooking with solid fuel pollutes outdoor as well as indoor air and increases the prevalence of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

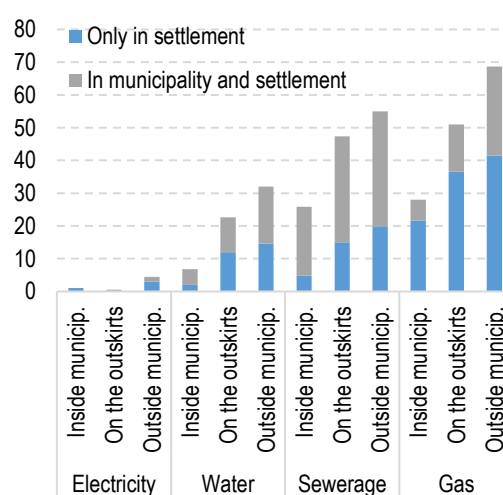
Graph 70: Distribution of the population of Roma communities across types of housing by the type of settlement (%)



Source: ARC 2013

Note: Dwellings not registered in the land register are divided by the extent of legalisable technical condition.

Graph 71: Percentage of the population of Roma communities living in settlements with worse than 50% coverage by underground services (%)



Source: VIM unit based on data of the ARC 2019

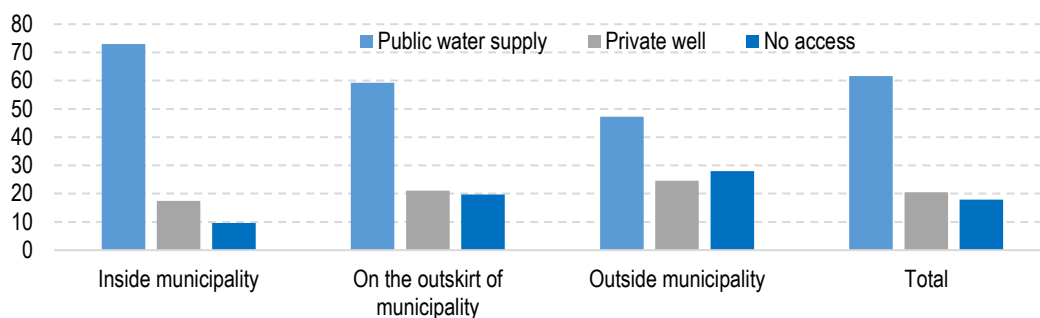
Note: The percentage depends on whether the access of a specific underground service is only unavailable in the settlement or also in the municipality to which the settlement belongs.

The access to drinking water is a particularly thorny issue in the MRC. According to the UN General Meeting, such access is considered to be the fundamental human right. It is a key factor for maintenance of public health and an essential condition of healthy living as well as working environment. According to the 2019 Atlas of Roma Communities, more than 17% of the population of Roma settlements (nearly 46 thousand people) did not have access to drinking water. The situation is worst in concentrations outside municipalities where as many as 28% of the population do not have access to drinking water (Graph 72). The situation in settlements has slightly improved since 2013.

Many Roma settlements are located too close to legal waste dumps, which exposes them to health risks. The Slovak standard valid from 2004 lays down at least 500-metre distance of an official waste dump from human dwellings. Problematic are the waste dumps set up before its effective date. According to the calculations of the Institute for Environmental Policy, at least 4,800 people from MRC live within the hazardous zone of the nearest

waste dump.⁴²¹ First of all, this applies to the waste dump in Košice-Myslava which neighbours with the Luník IX district. This is the largest community living close to this waste dump. Another example includes the waste dump in Martin which neighbours with a segregated settlement with more than 300 residents situated quite far away from the other city neighbourhoods. Other waste dumps which are located close to the segregated Roma settlements include the waste dumps in Spišská Nová Ves, Veľké Ozorovce in the Trebišov county and in Kozárovce in the Levice county (Annex 38). The number of illegal waste dumps close to Roma settlements may be much higher.

Graph 72: Water source in Roma settlements (% of the settlement's population)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the ARC 2019

Nearly 6% of Roma settlements (more than 7.5 thousand people) do not have access to the municipal waste collection system.⁴²² Illegal waste dumps are often created in the settlement particularly due to insufficient municipal waste collection. It also happens that all settlement residents were deprived of this public service as a consequence of fee evasion by a part of the settlement population (European Commission, 2019). More than 13% of the population in MRC had a limited access to the municipal waste collection in 2013. The environmental burdens are one of the reasons of worse health condition and shorter life expectancy in the MRC (Chapter 10).

9.2. Rental housing with regulated rent

Market cannot satisfy the housing needs of all population groups and it is not possible to address this need without interventions by the state and other entities in the market. One of the declared objectives of the State Housing Policy Concept until 2020⁴²³ is to ensure that each household have an access to appropriate and affordable housing. The key instruments to achieve this objective include rental housing with regulated rent.

The rental housing with regulated rent is characteristic in Slovakia for the connection with public finance and targeting at the population groups which are disadvantaged in the housing market⁴²⁴. The two chief support instruments in this area include advantage loans granted by the State Housing Development Fund and the subsidies of the Ministry of Transport (Box 24). This type of housing is the responsibility of the municipalities. The rent in such housing is regulated, does not depend on the market, but on the acquisition costs (the so-called cost rent)⁴²⁵. Eligible to use such housing are the persons living in households with monthly income not exceeding triple,

⁴²¹ The calculations are based on data from the Atlas of Roma Communities and the Roma population at risk only includes the residents of the segregated city parts. It was not possible to identify Roma scattered across the majority population, because they live integrated within the majority population, and therefore the total figure of 4,800 Roma people at risk is probably underestimated.

⁴²² Less than 50% of the settlement's population have waste bins and neither was there a large waste container placed in the settlement (source: Atlas of Roma Communities, 2019).

⁴²³ The concept is prepared in the form of a framework document setting priorities and instruments of the national housing policy: <https://www.mindop.sk/ministerstvo-1/vystavba-5/bytova-politika/dokumenty/koncepcie>

⁴²⁴ Act No. 443/2010 on housing development and social rental housing subsidies. This type of housing was "procured using the public funds and is intended for appropriate and respectable housing of individuals who cannot afford to procure housing alone, and who meet the conditions under this act".

⁴²⁵ In the Slovak conditions, rent is regulated by the Ministry of Finance's Measure No. 01/R/2011 of 1 December 2011 amending and supplementing the Ministry of Finance's Measure No. 01/R/2008 of 23 April 2008 on the regulation of the rent of apartments as amended by the Measure No. 02/R/2008 of 25 September 2008. The Article 2(1) restricts the maximum annual rent to 5% of the apartment acquisition price.

in some cases quadruple, the minimum subsistence income⁴²⁶. One of the important components also is the social work and provision of social services to tenants whose circumstances require it.

Box 24: Support instruments for the construction of rental apartments with regulated rent

State Housing Development Fund (SHDF)⁴²⁷ is the dominant housing support instrument ensuring complex support of housing fund renewal, rental and partially also the owned housing. Refundable support from this instrument may be drawn by individuals, municipalities, higher territorial units, non-profit organisations established by a municipality, owners of apartments and non-residential premises, and other legal entities. Municipalities and non-profit organisations in the most lagging regions are exempt from interest, other applicants pay a 1% interest during the entire term of the loan (no more than 2% a year for a period of 40 years). Rental apartments may be supported with a loan up to 100% of the acquisition price, but no more than EUR 90 thousand, and the income of tenants must not exceed quadruple the minimum subsistence income in such event (quintuple if the applicant is other legal entity).

The **housing development subsidies granted by the Ministry of Transport**⁴²⁸ are intended for the procurement of rental apartments and the pertaining technical equipment. The entities which may apply for them include municipalities, higher territorial units and non-profit organisations founded by a municipality. The subsidy for the procurement of a rental apartment ranges depending on the type of apartment from 30% to 75% of the acquisition cost. The maximum size and acquisition costs of the apartment are defined. The purpose of rental apartment must be retained by the applicant in the supported project for a statutory time period (from 1 January 2020, during the entire life of the building). At the same time, this housing may only be provided to households with income not exceeding triple or, as the case may be, quadruple the minimum subsistence income (if the rental agreement is executed repeatedly, assessed is the income on 31 December of the previous calendar year which should not exceed 3.5 or 4.5 times the minimum subsistence income).

Affordability of rental housing with regulated rent

The rental housing with regulated rent which would be also affordable for low-income families can also be developed if part of such apartments could be of smaller size⁴²⁹ with certain components defined in the **basic regime**. The acquisition price of so built apartments is substantially lower than the price of usual-size apartments (on average by 41% from 2017 to 2019). This also proportionately decreases the maximum monthly rent within regulation⁴³⁰. The average maximum monthly rent in the apartments built from 2017 to 2019 totalled EUR 117, which is 28% of the income of a four member family without its own earned income dependent on the assistance in material need system.⁴³¹ In case of an individual, it accounts for 61% of the monthly income. The smaller-size apartments represented less than 9% of apartments supported with the Ministry of Transport's subsidy (344 apartments out of the total 3,908). The proposed adjustments of the housing benefit (Chapter 9.5) would reinforce housing affordability for vulnerable groups.

Physical accessibility of rental housing with regulated rent and the housing with market rent is very low. According to the EU SILC survey, 9% of the Slovak population lived in rental housing in 2018. This is the second

⁴²⁶ Provided that (1) a member of such household is a person with severe disability; (2) the household consists of a lone parent with a dependent child; or (3) at least one of the members of this household provides healthcare, social and generally beneficial social services, education, culture or protection of the residents of a municipality.

⁴²⁷ Act No. 150/2013 Coll. on the State Housing Development Fund, as amended

⁴²⁸ Act No. 443/2010 on housing development and social rental housing subsidies as amended.

⁴²⁹ Slovakia applies the so-called dual model of social housing. This basically means that the legislation distinguishes 2 types of apartments: social apartments of a usual size (up to 80 m²) and a smaller size (up to 60 m²). The smaller-size level of the rental housing with regulated rent must meet the same criteria of the building act and the act on energy efficiency of buildings as the standard-size housing.

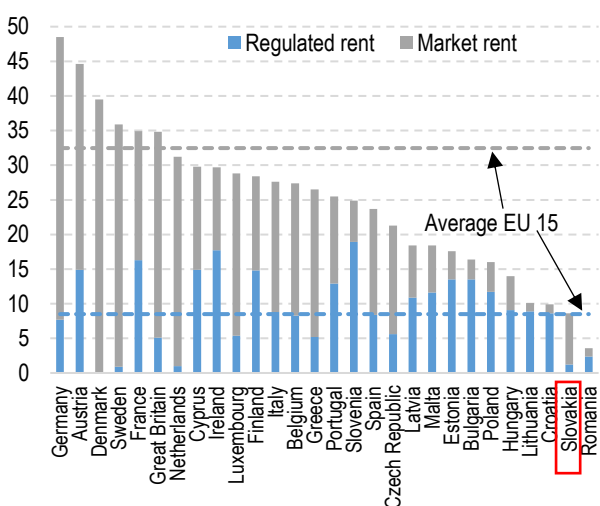
⁴³⁰ The maximum annual rent for apartments supported by the Ministry of Transport's subsidy is restricted to 5% of the acquisition price: Ministry of Finance's Measure No. 01/R/2008 of 23 April 2008 on the regulation of the rent of apartments.

⁴³¹ The calculation is based on a family consisting of two parents and two children eligible to one activation benefit, two dependent child allowances, housing benefit and two child allowances (totaling EUR 369.10).

lowest percentage in the EU (Graph 73). Only 1.2% of Slovak population lived in rental apartments with regulated rent. The EU-15 average is 8.5% and the V3 average reaches 8.8%. The survey of municipal rental housing in county cities of Slovakia revealed that its accessibility varies greatly from city to city. From among the larger cities (more than 40 thousand citizens), the lowest number of municipal apartments per 100 citizens is found in Bratislava (0.3), the highest in Zvolen (1.4) (Fico et al., 2019). The shortage of affordable rental housing for people who cannot afford to buy their own home increases the crowdedness and reduces the quality of housing (Chapter 7.1).

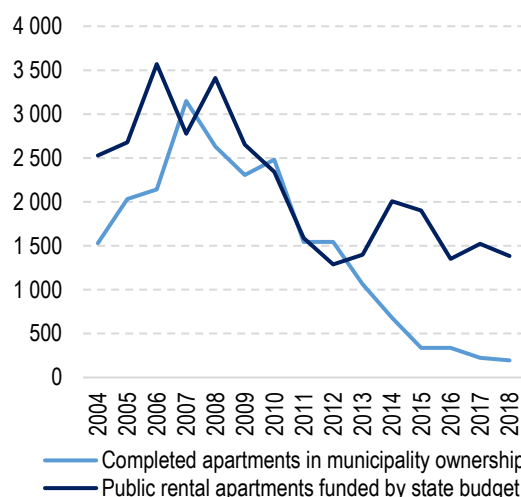
In the past decade, the construction of new rental apartments with regulated rent has greatly slowed down. While 3,149 apartments (19% of the total number of completed apartments) were completed in 2007, in 2018 it was only 195 (1%) (Graph 74). However, this slump may, to some extent, reflect the growing interest of local governments in buying already completed apartments and leave the construction on a builder. These apartments are not registered as owned by the local government at the moment of their completion. But also the number of apartments supported with state subsidy has been decreasing over time. In 2006, 3,569 apartments received support; in 2018, it was only 1,385 (Graph 74).

Graph 73: Percentage of population in rental housing (% , 2018)



Source: Eurostat (EU SILC)

Graph 74: Development of the offer of rental housing with regulated rent



Source: Ministry of Transport

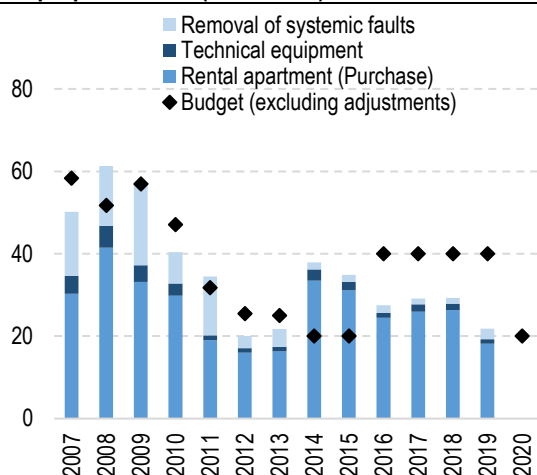
Local governments usually combine subsidies of the Ministry of Transport and the loans from the State Housing Development Fund when building rental apartments. In 2019, municipalities received subsidies from the Ministry of Transport of 41% of the eligible costs on average and covered the rest with loans from the State Housing Development Fund. But the total amount of the subsidies used for procurement of rental apartments decreased substantially from EUR 41.5 million in 2008 to EUR 18.1 million in 2019, and the expenditures have been substantially lower than the budget funds in recent years (Graph 75). This means that these instruments may be used insufficiently. As many as 75% of the total number of the State Housing Development Fund's loans were granted for the renewal of the existing housing fund (Graph 76). The reason is the bad technical condition of a large number of apartments as well as the option to draw European funds for their renewal.

Majority of mayors of cities and towns pronounce their support of the rental housing development. According to the survey conducted by the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS) in March 2019, as many as 83.9% of 413 mayors replied positively to the question whether support of rental housing is necessary, and 46.6% were convinced of it. At the same time, nearly 40% of them acknowledged that the residents of their towns or cities are interested in public rental housing and they keep waiting lists of them.⁴³²

⁴³² <https://reality.etrend.sk/byvanie/prieskum-ukazal-ze-starostovia-a-primatori-podporuju-najomne-byvanie.html>

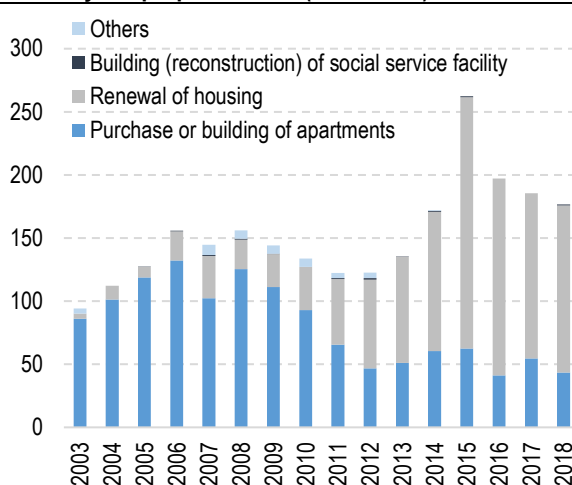
Local governments may experience barriers to the development of the fund with rental housing with regulated rent in spite of the support covering the full acquisition costs. The greatest barriers identified by local governments include the shortage of appropriate plots owned by towns and cities, often also due to the sale of plots in past in order to fund the operational costs (Szolgayová et al., 2019). Effective as of 1 January 2020, municipalities may use advantage loans from the Housing Development Fund to buy plots for rental housing. Municipalities may also be discouraged by the substantial bureaucracy connected with filing applications for support or unclear definition of the correct procedures during public procurement of rental apartments which, in case of misconduct, lead to financial penalties. Concerns about disagreement of residents, especially if the tenants would come from socially weaker environments or from MRC, may affect the willingness of the representatives of local governments to invest in rental housing as well (Smatanová, 2018).⁴³³

Graph 75: Support from the Ministry of Transport by the purpose of use (eur million)



Source: Ministry of Transport

Graph 76: Support from the Housing Development Fund by the purpose of use (eur million)



Source: IFP and VFM based on data from the Housing Development Fund

Segregation and discrimination

Municipalities often build rental apartments, particularly those of smaller size, in segregated locations. Moreover, they are only partially covered with underground services and are typical for cheap technical solution. One of the reasons may be unavailability of appropriate plots inside the municipality. However, this reduces the housing quality and increases the related costs. The concentration of poor households in one location is often accompanied by negative synergy effects, such as deepening poverty, bad accessibility of schools (Chapter 5), healthcare facilities (Chapter 10) and other services, decay of apartments or higher crime rates. In the end, this approach leads to higher expenditures of the state and local governments on the solution of the problems arisen. This situation applies particularly to the members of MRC in Slovakia⁴³⁴ (Brňak, 2017, Škobla, 2018). Set up of a caretaker position has proved to be an effective measure against decay of apartments (Box 25).

The conditions for assignment of rental apartments with regulated rent may in some cases appear to be discriminatory and create barriers to their accessibility for certain groups. Except the statutory rules, the conditions and process of the assignment of rental housing with regulated rent are set by local governments. However, they sometimes create barriers for certain applicants which are difficult to overcome, such as payment of a financial deposit, permanent residence in the municipality for some minimum duration, no debts owed to the municipality (even those not related to housing), or setting the rent at a level which the most vulnerable households cannot afford.

⁴³³ <https://katarinasmatanova.com/2018/05/06/socialne-byvanie-na-slovensku-prehľad/>

⁴³⁴ An illustrative example is the Lunik IX district which became one of the largest segregated districts with high deprivation rate in Central Europe as a consequence of short-sighted measures.

Box 25: Caretakers

The "Field Caretakers" project was launched in 2004 as part of long-term efforts of the Community Centre of Minorities (CCM) in Veľký Krtíš aiming to improve the situation of (not only) housing of local residents from the MRC. Particularly, it covered 800 people living in 132 apartments. The quality of the apartment fund, hygienic conditions, settlement of ownership relationships, change of the attitude of tenants and later owners of apartments has substantially improved during the 16 years thanks to intensive work. At the same time, they managed to reduce the total indebtedness due to arrears from around EUR 94 thousand to EUR 63 thousand stemming from the debts arisen before 2009, and new debts do not accrue anymore.

Caretakers in individual apartment house units were elected from among the tenants by the tenants themselves. They were motivated to participate by rent reduction and the option to work based on an agreement. Caretakers organise regular house meetings, assist in looking after and maintaining a functional condition of the apartment house, take care that the house and its neighbourhood is clean and orderly, and help prevent criminal activity and social and pathological phenomena. They communicate with tenants about such questions as payment of rent, utilities, rent evasion prevention, as well as with the facility management company/manager, police, city police, or the neighbourhood watch teams. These activities are carried out 3 times a week for 5 hours.

At the same time, a weekly reporting system has been developed. These reports serve to assess the condition of individual houses and determine the agenda and intensity of regular public meetings of the inhabitants. If an issue requires local government to take part, they attend such meeting together with tenants and owners of the houses.

Establishment of social work and set up of the position of a caretaker concurrently motivates the members of the community to participate in the solution of their housing. An option to repay debts on the rent has been created and the situation in and around the apartment houses has improved. Better look and hygiene of streets also helped to prevent infectious diseases. Abidance by the house rules and the protection of the municipal property resulted in the reduced crime rates in these neighbourhoods. These factors also helped to gradually improve the opinion of the majority on the minority population through their active care for their neighbourhood.⁴³⁵

The Ministry of Interior wants to attain the goal to establish the services of a caretaker in apartment houses with MRC by a demand-driven call with an EUR 3 million allocation being prepared.

Engagement of the non-profit sector

It is a common practice abroad to leave the management of rental housing with regulated rent (or even its ownership) upon non-governmental and non-profit organisations (Box 26). The main reasons include more efficient facility management associated with less bureaucracy, less corruption, not abusing housing for political fights, or willingness to establish social diversity and inclusion. At the same time, majority of these organisations provide both the housing as well as complex social services aiming to improve the living conditions of the tenants (Svidroňová, 2016; Brňak, 2017).

A relatively high fluctuation of non-profit organisations in Slovakia is a barrier to their engagement in the sector of the rental housing with regulated rent. This sector requires stable non-profit organisations, long-term plan and, in case of ownership, also finance for long-lasting investments in the housing fund. This is also why the engagement of the non-profit sector in rental housing is currently conditional upon partnership with local government. For example, only the non-profit organisations founded by a municipality or higher territorial units which

⁴³⁵ https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/publikacie/Velky%20Krtis%20final.pdf

made at least 51% contribution in its assets and have majority representation in the board of directors may apply for state support for housing development in Slovakia.⁴³⁶

The development of the non-profit sector with regulated rent could be encouraged by a social housing enterprise defined in the act on social economy and social enterprises. It is a public-benefit enterprise in which municipalities or higher territorial units do not have to have majority interest. Its purpose is to rent at least 70% of apartments in its ownership for advantage, cost rent to households whose aggregate monthly income does not exceed quadruple the minimum subsistence income. More than a half of any eventual profit must be invested back in the enterprise, so it may meet its function. Social housing enterprises should gain larger part of funds from their own commercial sources, but have also direct (loans, grants, subsidies) and indirect (tax allowances) support of the state at disposal (Ondrušová and Fico, 2018).

It is too early to assess the social housing enterprises now. The act on social economy entered into force on 1 May 2018. Out of 89 social enterprises which were granted the status as of 25 February 2020, only one was the registered social housing enterprise. On this date, the Department of Social Economy of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has received one more application for the status of registered social housing enterprise.

Box 26: Non-profit sector in Austria and the Netherlands

Austria

In recent years, major part of the new rental housing with regulated rent in Austria has been built by non-profit housing development companies which manage around 650,000 apartments and continue to build about 15,000 apartments a year. The conditions for the selection of tenants differ, particularly their income is assessed. All in all, around 15% of the population lives in apartments with regulated rent and additional 30% in apartments with market rent (Zúbková et al., 2008; Kubala and Peciar, 2019; Petránky, 2015; Adams, 2019; Svidroňová, 2016).

Non-profit housing development companies own around 136 thousand apartments with regulated cost rent in Vienna. Additional 220 thousand apartments with regulated rent are owned by Vienna. Consequently, more than 60% of the city's population lives in rental apartments. Vienna offers cooperation also to private developers to help with the plot and advantage loan. In consideration for this cooperation, Vienna gets 50% of apartments of so supported projects. The regulated rent in municipal apartments ranges from 20% to 25% of the income of the tenants.

Housing policy is quite decentralised in Austria and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Lands. But a part of funding is managed at the central level and consists of a fixed part of individual income tax and corporate income tax. These incomes are distributed among the Lands. The state support of rental apartment development in Austria consists in provision of security for the loan which is a less generous system than in Slovakia which offers regulated loan as well as subsidies (Box 24).

The Netherlands

The Netherlands report the highest percentage of rental housing with regulated rent in the EU (around 30% of the total housing fund) and high quality (low crowdedness, emphasis on technical solution). Non-profit housing cooperatives subject to public surveillance are the exclusive providers of rental housing. At the same time, they are financially independent of the state (no state subsidies are provided for the construction or operation in the Netherlands). Their independent operation is also supported by a system of public warranties when they draw commercial loans or various forms of support (grants and loans) as well as provision of plots by local governments.

⁴³⁶ Act No. 443/2010 Coll.

The rent depends on the financial situation of households.⁴³⁷ The organisations earn their own funds also by way of building and selling new apartments for market prices. The profits are then invested in the construction and management of rental housing with regulated rent. In addition to accommodation, the organisations are partially also responsible for ensuring conditions for high-quality life of tenants. This includes care for the housing fund, organisation and support of local events, construction of sports fields or operation of community centres.⁴³⁸

A well working structure of organisations is important as well. The important surveillance function is usually carried out by the advisory board consisting of all stakeholders – members of the organisation (provider), representatives of the local government (public, supporting entity) and representative of tenants (consumers). (Kuvíková et al., 2015).

9.3. Assistance for people in housing need

Social services of crisis intervention

In Slovakia, housing for people in housing need (Box 27) is provided within the social services of crisis intervention. They include facilities of crisis accommodation (homeless shelters, reception centres, half-way houses and emergency centre facilities⁴³⁹) and are combined with field social service of crisis intervention. The crisis accommodation facilities differ from each other in the length of stay, target group or scope of provided services (Annex 39). The field service of crisis intervention consists in the activities aiming to prevent risk behaviours and situations, risk behaviour management or solution. Field work in locations where homeless people dwell can also capture people who need care, but do not actively search for it.

Crisis accommodation facilities are funded from multiple resources – the percentage of public support dropped from 28.3% in 2014 to 22.8% in 2017. The conditions for drawing state funds depend on the body which covers the relevant service (municipality, higher territorial unit)⁴⁴⁰, provider (public, non-public, for profit), or the statutory duty to operate such service. Although they were growing every year during the monitored period (EUR 2.5 million in 2014, EUR 2.8 million in 2017), their share in the total expenditures was decreasing. Consequently, the load laid upon the providers of these services grew, jeopardising their quality as well as scope. At the same time, there is no regular survey of aggregate data about funding the social services of crisis intervention from the budgets of towns, cities and higher territorial units. Neither the reasons leading to changes in funding are monitored (Ministry of Labour, 2018, Ondrušová and Fico, 2018).

The clients of crisis accommodation facilities stay there on a long-term basis. The 2016 Bratislava homeless census revealed that their housing situation remained unchanged to a substantial extent⁴⁴¹. More than a half of homeless people who used the services of shelters at the time of census also used them a year before. Long-lasting stay in crisis accommodation facilities increases pressure on their capacities which already are restricted anyway. At the same time, this goes against the nature of these services as well as the de-institutionalisation

⁴³⁷ <https://www.iamexpat.nl/housing/netherlands-rentals/social-housing-private-free-sector>

⁴³⁸ <https://www.government.nl/topics/housing/housing-associations>

⁴³⁹ Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services and on amendments and supplements to Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on trade licensing (the Trade Licensing Act) as amended,

⁴⁴⁰ The provision or arrangement of field service of crisis intervention and non-residential services is the responsibility of towns and cities; the same applies to the homeless shelters, although they are financially supported also by the state by way of a contribution paid both to the municipal government and the non-public providers. The temporary accommodation facilities, including those founded by non-public providers, are the responsibility of regional government, higher territorial units, but may be (except the halfway houses) also founded by the municipal government. If the temporary accommodation facilities are founded by a municipal government, they are eligible to be co-funded from the Ministry of Labour's contribution. (Ondrušová and Fico, 2018)

⁴⁴¹ "The comparison of the form of overnight stay at the time of census (in November 2016) and a year before (November 2015) revealed that nearly 80% of people who spent their night at the time of census in a caravan, cabin or garage had spent their night in the same way a year before. Nearly one half (49%) of those who lived rough on the day of census had also lived rough a year before." (Csomor, 2016, Ondrušová and Fico, 2018).

principle the Slovak Republic professes (National Priorities for the Development of Social Services for 2015-2020). One of the reasons is the shortage of affordable, stable housing with regulated rent (Chapter 9.2).

The consolidation of crisis intervention services into an integrated system is not regulated by law at present. This means that the individual components of crisis intervention (field social work, crisis accommodation facilities, social counselling) do not engage in conceptual cooperation and the care for clients becomes ineffective.

This is even though complex and integrated system of crisis intervention could reduce public spending associated with homelessness and substantially increase the quality of life of homeless people. These are the conclusions of the cost and benefit analysis of the Vagus civil association prepared by the Institute of Environmental Policy at the Ministry of Environment (Dráb et al., 2019). The analysis shows that the crisis intervention services have a significant economic effect on working-age people and those who could otherwise avoid health complications. On the other hand, financial savings do not occur with people who would rather live on than contribute to the state budget even if the circumstances were normal and where the integration process is long-term and does not result in immediate savings. Nevertheless, in all cases do the interventions bring important and hard-to-quantify benefits for the affected people in the form of support in crisis situations, smaller pain, dignified death or maintenance of social contacts.

Slovakia does not keep records about homeless people, does not survey their numbers or living conditions. According to the population census, there were 23,483 homeless people in Slovakia in 2011 (Box 27). But this figure can be considered to be the bottom limit whereas the survey made use of the secondary homelessness concept⁴⁴² and did not include homeless people living in the streets⁴⁴³. The situation is not monitored at a national level. Consequently, it is not possible to estimate the demand for crisis accommodation and build the corresponding capacities. The total number of spaces in crisis accommodation facilities grew from 3,274 to 4,386 between 2010 and 2018. However, the offer is substantially undersized considering the estimated number (2018 Annual Statement of Social Services Facilities, Ondrušová and Fico, 2018).

For more effective planning of public policies leading to the homelessness prevention and ending, the review proposes to establish a systematic and regular collection of data about homeless people and people at risk of housing loss. This goal could be achieved if a client registration software solution was procured and administered for all organisations which provide social services to homeless people, including the field services, in accordance with all requirements for personal data protection and the low-threshold nature of certain social services (Ondrušová and Fico, 2018). Compared with occasional censuses of homeless people, this approach allows to monitor the inflow and outflow of homeless people and the duration of homelessness. This would allow to investigate into its causes and evaluate the efficiency of public policies. Many European countries including Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands or Belgium have experience with a shared register of clients (Edgar et al., 2007). As regards people at risk of housing loss, methods of their identification should be researched in cooperation with public and private owners of rental apartments and lodging houses, foster care institutions, public health insurance companies, or labour offices.

For the time being, Slovakia does not have a complex concept of how to address homelessness at a national level. One third of OECD countries have such a strategy, and the experiences of Finland show that the integration of policies at the national level may lead to a more efficient use of public finance (OECD, 2015a). Establishment of a clear cooperation of the state with local governments is also important because majority of savings coming from effective prevention and solution of homelessness are reached within the state's expenditures (e.g. on healthcare and police interventions) while many relevant policies (e.g. in the area of social services) are

⁴⁴² It counted the individuals in a dwelling outside the apartment fund, collective temporary accommodation facilities (homeless shelter, halfway house, reception centres for homeless people, facilities for homeless people), roofless people and in a fictitious house. Roofless people living rough were not included in the count.

⁴⁴³ For example, while the 2011 population census reported 1,800 homeless people in Bratislava, the census conducted by the Institute for Labour and Family Research in cooperation with Bratislava and non-governmental organisations counted at least 2,064 homeless in 2016 (Ondrušová et al., 2016). At the same time, the Vagus civil association have registered more than 4,000 clients in their electronic register of clients during six years of their operation (Dráb et al., 2019).

the responsibility of local governments. **The review therefore proposes to develop and adopt a national homelessness prevention and solution strategy.**⁴⁴⁴

Box 27: Who are the people in housing need?

Homelessness or the phrase "homeless people" are not legally defined in Slovakia. Many European countries use typology of homelessness and housing exclusion titled ETHOS⁴⁴⁵ which was elaborated by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA). It was created in order to allow comparison of data about homelessness at the European level. But it also points out that people living rough are, as most visible group of homeless people, only the tip of the iceberg of a much more serious and widespread social problem. There is a general consensus that homelessness may include multiple life situations (Ondrušová and Fico, 2015).

The main factor considered within the ETHOS typology is the non-existent home. Home is primarily characterised by three areas – physical (appropriate housing used only by the relevant person and his or her family), social (room for privacy and development of relationships), and legal (right to use the dwelling based on an official document). Homelessness or housing exclusion occur when one or more of these areas are missing. Four conceptual categories are distinguished depending on whether the individual (1) is roofless, (2) is houseless, (3) lives in insecure housing, or (4) lives in inadequate housing. The first two categories define homelessness, while the other two identify housing exclusion (Ondrušová and Fico, 2018).

	Conceptual category	Operational category
Homelessness	Roofless	1. People living rough 2. People staying in a night shelter
	Houseless	3. People in a short-term accommodation for the homeless 4. People in a women's shelter due to domestic violence 5. People in accommodation for immigrants 6. People due to be released from institutions 7. People receiving longer-term support due to homelessness
Housing exclusion	Insecure	8. People living in insecure accommodation 9. People living under threat of eviction 10. People living under threat of violence
	Inadequate	11. People living in mobile, non-conventional and temporary structures 12. People living in unfit housing 13. People living in extreme overcrowding

Source: Ondrušová a Fico, 2018

Transitional housing

Transitional housing⁴⁴⁶ integrates rental housing with regulated rent and social services producing multi-tier two-way system of supported housing on a merit-based principle. In this scheme, client/household moves upward from a lower to a higher housing level (e.g. from an emergency accommodation to rental housing of smaller and then larger size) if they meet pre-defined criteria. Downward movement is possible as well. Higher level should offer more comfort, longer-term rental agreement, less strict regime (e.g. control), but also stricter assignment criteria. The aim is to motivate the household to improve their situation. The final outcome should be the household's own, independent housing. The transitional housing scheme also incorporates social work and counselling which

⁴⁴⁴ The Ministry of Labour initiated activities leading to the adoption of such a strategy. The elaboration of the "Basic Material of the National Homelessness Prevention and Solution concept" document (Ondrušová and Fico, 2018) was the first step. Nevertheless, no binding governmental document has been adopted in this respect, yet.

⁴⁴⁵ European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion: <https://www.feantsa.org/download/en-16822651433655843804.pdf>

⁴⁴⁶ Also designated as a social housing system with transitional housing components.

help clients to resolve their personal problems (addiction, depression, etc.) and to make them able to keep their housing. Their intensity reduces as they move to the higher level (Jesenská et al., 2018, Ondrušová and Fico, 2018, Smatanová, 2019).

In Slovakia, the services of crisis intervention are operated independently of the system of rental housing with regulated rent so far, and separate social work and counselling targeted at the clients of rental housing is non-existent. The analysis of community plans of social services of regional capital cities revealed that majority of them (except Banská Bystrica) did not address the issue of access of homeless people to rental housing with regulated rent and housing with support, and only limited themselves to the provision of the social services of crisis intervention or operated accommodation facilities particularly for families with children (in Nitra or Bratislava) (Ondrušová and Fico, 2018).

Incorporation of the transitional housing principles into the system of social housing is the aim of the demand-driven call focusing on municipalities with MRC with an allocation of EUR 52.9 million from the European Regional Development Fund.⁴⁴⁷ The call defines the mandatory principles of the transitional housing system that the applicants must meet. The main principles include promotability – the system must consist of at least 2 levels, must be two-way⁴⁴⁸ and the applicant is obliged to build (through construction, restoration, reconstruction of buildings) at least one housing level within the project. It requires clear definition of the household selection criteria, entrance, exit and transition between individual levels. To prevent households from "getting stuck" in the system, the municipality must declare in the application how they address exit from the system and what options the relevant location offers in the area of individual and affordable housing.⁴⁴⁹ The call differs from the usual approach to transition housing, because it does not include the lowest housing level (homeless shelters, reception shelters, boarding houses, etc.) considering the housing conditions of the target group.⁴⁵⁰

An important aspect is the obligation to provide clients with free accompanying social service at each housing level by way of a housing assistant. His or her role includes complex work and assistance provided to households to build capacities necessary for the transfer to a higher level and independent housing once they successfully exit the system.⁴⁵¹ Households must agree with the accompanying social service, otherwise they cannot join this transitional housing system. The demand of municipalities has been low so far. The reason is that it is difficult to create opportunities of individual housing in their location after the households exit the system.⁴⁵²

"Housing first"

The "housing first" strategy is one of the methods of addressing housing situation of homeless people living in cities. The basic difference from the transitional housing lies in the access to housing and the role of housing in the development of an individual. While the transitional housing system is built on the idea that one first needs to acquire certain habits in order to get and maintain their own housing, "housing first" is based on an assumption that housing should not serve as a motivation, but is a basic human need which is an essential condition

⁴⁴⁷ One of the conditions of the call is to have at each housing level at least 30% of apartment units for people from MRC. Hence, the call does not address the access to housing for homeless people in larger cities, including Bratislava.

⁴⁴⁸ This means that the movement of the households along the levels must be two-way, i.e. if they meet the rules defined by the applicant, they move upwards, if they do not, they move downwards.

⁴⁴⁹https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/mvsr_a_eu/oplz/vyzvy/vyzva_byvanie_2018/P11%20Zasady%20a%20odp%20v%20zneni%20meny%20c.%201.pdf

⁴⁵⁰ Although housing conditions in the MRC are very bad, people living in these locations are not homeless, and therefore they cannot be expected to voluntarily live in a boarding house.

⁴⁵¹ The housing assistant's work is particularly connected with the selection of households, mapping of the housing situation of the target group. The housing assistants motivate households to join the transitional housing system, explain conditions and criteria, may actively attend the meetings of work groups/selection committee organised by the applicant, etc. They also cooperate with the relevant institutions on the analysis and solution of client's social situation, create and maintain strategic partnerships and good relationships with individuals, organisations and institutions. They help with the operation of the household and good financial management. They support members of the household in engaging in the social and work life, taking into consideration individual needs of households. They support development of personal hobbies of household members, and try to prevent and solve crisis situations. They lead household members to independence, self-reliance, independent housing, etc.

⁴⁵² https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/2019/os1_mikuska.pdf

of social integration. "Housing first" does not cover any forms of institutional or segregated housing and offers to people in housing need immediate access to stable, affordable housing in a natural and socially integrated environment⁴⁵³. Contrary to the transitional housing system, this model does not require one to comply with certain conditions (abstinence, psychological therapy, etc.) to get housing. However, clients must agree with setting aside a part of their income for rent and with cooperation with social workers on setting other goals (Škobla et al., 2016b).

Foreign pilot studies of the "housing first" strategy indicate better results and more effective use of public finance than in transitional housing projects in case of certain groups of clients. While 40-50% of clients are usually able to maintain independent housing in the transitional housing system, the "housing first" is twice as high (80-90%) (Pleace, 2013, Tsemberis, 2010). Groups that usually get stuck at lower levels within the transitional housing are the most vulnerable ones, such as people with mental disorders or people addicted to alcohol or other addictive substances. Moreover, the "housing first" strategy is cheaper because it requires smaller accommodation capacity and concurrently reduces the use of crisis services. The estimates from the USA indicate that the costs associated with services for clients living rough on a long-term basis or at the lowest housing level (e.g. the costs of healthcare and police interventions) may be twice as high as the costs of a client in the "housing first" system (Tsemberis, 2010).

Pilot "housing first" projects may be successful also because of a better environment to acquire skills for independent housing and a more effective support and selective choice of clients for the sample researched.⁴⁵⁴ Housing at lower transitional housing levels is usually shared and requires different skills than independent housing. When their acute housing need is resolved, the "housing first" clients may pursue other goals on the way to the social integration. What is more, support by social workers continues on a longer-term basis, while in the transitional housing it ends once the highest level is reached. But it is also possible that positive results are partially caused by the selection of the less troublesome clients (Škobla et al., 2016b).

The volume of positive experiences of foreign countries is sufficient to try similar approach also in Slovakia. The review therefore proposes to do a pilot project in the next programming period to test the "housing first" as a solution of problems of homeless people. The problem of selection can be resolved by random selection of clients for the researched sample and their results can be compared with the homeless people in the existing system.

Box 28: Examples of "housing first" projects in Brno, Finland and Bratislava

Brno:

The rapid re-housing project⁴⁵⁵ was launched in 2016 in cooperation between non-profit organisations of the town hall and the academic institutions. It aimed to provide replacement housing for 50 selected families with children experiencing acute housing need, financial difficulties (debts, unemployment) and discrimination when looking for accommodation. These families were given the opportunity to choose from among unused social rental apartments under advantage conditions and use social work which was most intensive in the first months. Additional 99 families of similar characteristics not assigned an apartment were selected as a control group.

The project evaluation after the first year brought very positive results. As many as 96% (48 of 50) families were able to maintain rental housing during the entire year (78% of them without debts). These families thus spent in stable housing around 4.3 times more time than the families from the control group (11.8 compared with 2.7 months). At the same time, they were half as probable to visit emergency rescue unit as the control group and their exposure to high stress level was 4.5 times as low. As regards public finance, CZK 31,447 was saved on

⁴⁵³ The housing first projects tend to exercise the rule that 20% of apartments at the most may be allocated for that purpose in one apartment house (Škobla et al., 2016b).

⁴⁵⁴ If the selection of interventional and control groups is not random and intervention goes to the less troublesome clients, the comparisons between people with and without intervention may be distorted.

⁴⁵⁵ The housing first variant focuses on fast provision of housing to clients with less complex needs usually without long-term experience with homelessness who are (usually due to financial reasons) at risk of housing loss.

one family, saving as much as CZK 1,5 million (EUR 58 thousand) in the first year. An "Action Plan" was prepared based on those results. It counts on the assignment of 100 apartments to families in housing need on an annual basis and aims to completely eliminate homelessness of families in Brno until 2026 (Ripka et al., 2018).

Finland

The fight against homelessness and the efforts at its reduction/elimination have a long tradition in Finland. Each of the Finnish governments makes this commitment since 1987. However, the strategy changed in 2008 after surveys had revealed that the total number of long-term homeless people remained the same in spite of reduction of the total number of homeless people. The Finnish National Programme was developed to reduce long-lasting homelessness. It was based on the housing first principle⁴⁵⁶ and replaced the existing transitional housing concept.

Finland is currently the only EU country which successfully reduces the number of homeless people. The key factors of a successful system particularly include the intersectoral collaboration, coordinated approach and planning setting long-term goals, complex housing policy focusing on the increase in the number of affordable apartments (through construction or purchase from the private sector), or creation of an inclusive social mix.⁴⁵⁷ The state provides bank guarantees and subsidies for the construction of social apartments owned particularly by local governments as well as non-profit organisations. Local governments then allow the non-profit organisations to use the municipal apartment fund to provide housing and social services (financially supported by the state) for homeless people in line with the housing first principles.

The total amount of the public funds invested so far totals around EUR 250 million, but the estimated savings per one accommodated person a year compared with the situation that the person would otherwise have stayed homeless and used the crisis accommodation services range around EUR 15 thousand. From the beginnings of the programme in 2008, it managed to reduce the number of long-term homeless people by 35%. At the same time, the number of reception centres and homeless shelters has decreased substantially – in Helsinki from 558 in 2008 to 56 in 2016 (Y-Foundation, 2017).⁴⁵⁸

Bratislava

The Cverna project was set off in Bratislava in June 2018 and is expected to last at least 2 years. It is organised by the Vagus civil association in cooperation with the Cvermovka Foundation which procured 3 housing units in the former dormitory building. Housing combined with social work and counselling was provided to 4 individuals chosen based on interviews. The results reached so far are quite positive. The plan also is to prepare a final study documenting the entire process and contribution of the project. It should serve as a background for the implementation of similar projects to a wider extent and with the support of the public sector.⁴⁵⁹

9.4. Self-help housing construction and development of infrastructure in the MRC

Self-help housing construction

Self-help construction of a dwelling supported by a micro-loan is an alternative option to rental housing with regulated rent for certain types of families living in marginalised communities. Selected households

⁴⁵⁶ Generally speaking, the Finnish model is built on 4 main principles: (1) independent housing for the client; (2) client decides the content of the provided social services; complete abstinence of any addictive substances is not required; (3) equal status between client and social workers; (4) building social relations and integration within community

⁴⁵⁷ The following apartment distribution is applied to newly built buildings in Helsinki: 25% social housing, 30% subsidised purchase, 45% private sector

⁴⁵⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/jun/03/its-a-miracle-helsinki-radical-solution-to-homelessness>

⁴⁵⁹ <https://www.vagus.sk/housing-first-cverna/21/o-programe/>, <https://www.dobrenoviny.sk/c/151413/fantasticke-vysledky-vdaka-projektu-housing-cverna-sa-uz-po-par-mesiacoach-ludia-bez-domova-postavili-na-vlastne-nohy>

within the project are granted micro-loans for self-help construction (under professional surveillance) of houses in their ownership on settled plots. The micro-loan is only granted if the applicants prove their ability to save certain amount of money on a regular basis. By saving up, the applicant has funds to share in the costs of construction and shows to be able to repay the debt accrued. This instrument is suitable for families which are capable of taking part in the construction⁴⁶⁰. The institution providing micro-loans must meet all conditions as defined by the National Bank of Slovakia. In Slovakia, this form of housing assistance has been provided by the non-governmental sector only (ETP Slovakia and the DOM.ov project in cooperation with Slovenská sporiteľňa bank) (Box 29).

Self-help construction has a potential to greatly benefit not only the clients themselves, but also the entire community and municipality. Builders supported by professional construction supervisor acquire work habits and skills they may later use on the labour market. Owners taking part in the construction develop a relationship to their own homes and motivation to look after it. Active solution of their housing situation helps fight against the stereotypes about inadaptable Roma living on social benefits, improves the family's social status and motivates other members of the community. The municipality gains new property tax payers and also the pressure on often insufficient capacities of municipal rental apartments is reduced. On the other hand, the construction of their own homes in excluded locations reinforces spatial segregation and reduces labour mobility, which is not the case of rental housing.

The average budget for one house within the Dom.ov project is estimated at EUR 30 thousand. Roughly one half of that amount goes to the purchase of land and material. This amount is funded by the clients themselves from their savings and the loan. The second half comprises the costs of the accompanying services, such as the work of the building construction instructor, construction coordinator and social work developing financial literacy of clients.⁴⁶¹ To compare, average costs of a smaller-size rental apartment supported with a housing development subsidy in 2017 to 2019 amounted to around EUR 28 thousand.⁴⁶² Self-help work of future tenants may also be used during procurement of rental apartments.

The 2018 survey of the Ministry of Finance estimated gap in funding of self-help construction at the level of EUR 8.4 to 13.2 million for 2019 to 2023. The gap means the difference between demand for participation in self-help construction estimated by ETP based on demand for micro-loans (EUR 14.4 to 19.2 million⁴⁶³) and the funds that the private sector could provide for that purpose (EUR 6 million).⁴⁶⁴ The state has not taken part in the funding of self-help construction very much so far.

The financial support for self-help construction in the form of micro-loans should be ensured by a call within the priority axis 6 of the Human Resources Operational Programme with the allocation of EUR 13.6 million.⁴⁶⁵ The eligible applicant in the call is Slovenská záručná a rozvojová banka Asset management a.s., now known as Slovak investment holding (SIH). Its role is to choose financial agents (banks) which will provide micro-loans by way of their network. SIH is also expected to co-fund the loans to clients. Although the contract covering the full allocation was executed in 2016, the micro-loan scheme has not been launched yet. The reason is a lengthy selection process of financial agents through public procurement (condition of the European Commission) and the need to change the investment strategy of SIH to permit funding of loans for individuals as end recipients.

⁴⁶⁰ For example, self-help construction is not suitable for lone mothers with small children, persons with disabilities, or elderly people.

⁴⁶¹ The costs include all cost of material, supplies and work to the extent that the house can be used (all furnishings, surfacing, heating source, etc.) Data provided by Katarína Smatanová from the Dom.ov project.

⁴⁶² Comparability of rental housing and self-help construction of one's own housing is limited, because the form of the housing is different and, also, the comparison does not enable to consider such factors as differences in the average size (houses within self-help construction are larger than the smaller-size rental apartments), materials used, quality, etc., as well as the fact that the costs of self-help construction include the costs of land and the accompanying social work with clients, which is not the case of rental apartments.

⁴⁶³ This amount does not include the costs of support measures for end recipients.

⁴⁶⁴ <https://www.finance.gov.sk/files/archiv/33/Aktualizacia2.pdf>

⁴⁶⁵ Except the self-help construction, the call also aims to support other housing types in MRC, for example the rental housing with regulated rent intended for the inhabitants of MRC.

The success of the micro-loan scheme will depend on the interest of the potential financial agents. Considering small volumes of transactions, paperwork associated with public procurement and access to still cheaper funding in the market, the co-funding from public funds may not be attractive enough for private banks.

Box 29: Self-help construction in Rankovce

One of the successful examples of self-help construction is the project in Rankovce in the Prešov region. The pilot project of self-help construction of ETP⁴⁶⁶ and later also of DOM.ov was initiated in 2013. The candidate families are required to prove that they are able to save up at least EUR 50 a month during one year. The entire process is carefully monitored, as the family builds a habit of repayment of future debts. After one year, they may buy land for the saved EUR 600 with the help of the municipality and apply for a loan from Slovenská sporiteľňa in amount of EUR 9 thousand. Total costs of construction of one house are around EUR 12 to 13 thousand. This means that the family is expected to participate financially and at least one of its members must declare a work earned income to get the loan. Furthermore, the family must agree with active cooperation with field social workers during repayment of the loan. Among other things, they also provide education in the area of financial literacy. The number of houses built within the project has gradually grown (4 in the first phase, 10 in the second and 14 houses in the third phase), 20 more houses are planned to be built now.

Land legalisation process

Unlegalised plots are one of the greatest barriers to the investments in infrastructure in MRC. Allocation of funds and implementation of the projects of the priority axis 6 of the Human Resources Operational Programme is conditional upon legalised property relations and building permits.⁴⁶⁷ The problems with records about ownership of the plots located in the Roma settlements also prevents the municipalities to take any publicly beneficial measures.

Two national projects with the overall allocation of EUR 5.5 million within priority axis 5 of the Human Resources Operational Programme were prepared to help with land legalisation in MRC. At the end of 2018, more than 76% of the allocated funds were contracted from the first call covered with EUR 3.1 million; drawdown was at the level of EUR 137 thousand. In the second half of 2019, a supplementary call to support land legalisation in MRC was announced and closed.

Also the establishment of the so-called simple land re-parcelling helps to settle the lands.⁴⁶⁸ Simple land re-parcelling (SLR) enables the land users to settle the ownership relationships within the land of interest if this cannot be done by other usual means due to their large complexity, number and overall fragmentation. If the dwellings in the MRC stand on someone else's plots, the ownership rights are re-arranged and the owners of such plots are offered a replacement in the form of plots owned by the municipality or state in a different location in exchange for the plots under the dwellings in the MRC which become the property of the municipality. The municipality then transfers the plot to the inhabitant of the dwelling or rents the plot to such inhabitant based on a rental agreement. The re-parcelling is advantageous because it is shorter than the procedure undertaken with complex land re-

⁴⁶⁶ <http://etp.sk/ukoncene-projekty/budujeme-nadej-z-chatrce-do-3e-domu/>

⁴⁶⁷ The application for non-refundable grant must be accompanied by a document proving ownership or other legal relationship of the applicant authorising the applicant to use all properties related to the implementation of the project and the permit for the applicant to build a structure on such property in the extent of the pre-defined condition for the grant (ownership title deed, rental agreement executed for at least 5 years after completion of the project) or other appropriate document proving ownership or other legal relationship of the applicant authorising him or her to use all immovable/movable properties on which the project is to be implemented.

⁴⁶⁸ This legal regulation was laid down in the amendment Act No. 330/1991 Coll. on land consolidation, ownership right arrangement, land offices, land resources and land communities as amended with effect from 1 September 2017.

arrangements (approximately 12 to 24 months) and whereas it only solves the defined plot and not the entire cadastral district, the requested documentation is much simpler.⁴⁶⁹

Roads

The accessibility of roads in Roma settlements is addressed by the demand-driven call for municipalities with MRC announced in June 2019 with the allocation of EUR 12.4 million. The projects will support the construction and reconstruction of roads for motor vehicles, construction and reconstruction of pavements and/or cycle routes, construction and reconstruction of footbridges for pedestrians or for pedestrians and cyclists, and bridges for motor vehicles, construction of public lighting as part of the above supported structures, and other constructions and reconstructions of roads related to the supported infrastructure. To prevent unauthorised use of funds, reconstruction is only eligible when the project also covers construction of new roads, repair and maintenance of roads are not eligible.

Drinking water

Improvement of the access to drinking water in MRC is the goal of the demand-driven call of the priority axis 6 of the Human Resources Operational Programme, but the interest in this call is low. Contrary to the other calls within the priority axis 6, this is the least contracted call – EUR 2.5 million which is 14% of the allocated funds (Graph 9). The largest barrier to the approval of applications for non-refundable grant is the condition of legalised property relations. In certain cases, municipalities resolved the issue of drinking water by setting up point-of-use water dispensers.

The goal of the operational programme until the end of the programming period (2023) is to improve water supply to nearly 27 thousand inhabitants of Roma settlements and increase the percentage of settlements with access to drinking water by nearly 7 percentage points (from 74.6% to 81%). To compare, the total population of Roma settlements without access to public water mains or their own well amounts to nearly 46 thousand according to the 2019 Atlas of Roma Communities. According to the so far approved applications for non-refundable grant, the projects should help to more than 16 thousand people from MRC in total. Based on the 2018 Annual Report on the Implementation of the OP Human Resources, 5 thousand people from minority population gained better access to drinking water until 31 December 2018.

Waste collection

Development of a waste sorting system and municipal waste disposal and reclamation works on illegal waste dumps including the elimination of their negative impacts is covered by the demand-driven call with the allocation of EUR 21.4 million. 74% of the allocated funds were contracted on 31 December 2018, with EUR 3.9 million drawn. All in all, 136 projects were supported in 130 cities and towns accommodating 25% of the Roma population.⁴⁷⁰ The percentage of people from MRC in the concerned municipalities range from 1% to 86% of the total number of residents in the relevant municipality.

9.5. Housing allowance

The housing benefit is provided within the assistance in material need system to partially cover the costs associated with housing.⁴⁷¹ The allowance currently amounts to EUR 57.20 a month for a lone person, and EUR 91.40 in case of a household consisting of more than just one member. Eligible to the allowance are the owners or tenants of an apartment or house, individuals living in facilities providing social service in the year-long residential

⁴⁶⁹ https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/publikacie/Sprievodca%20vysporiadanim%20pozemkov%20v%20obciach%20s%20romskymi%20osidleniami.pdf

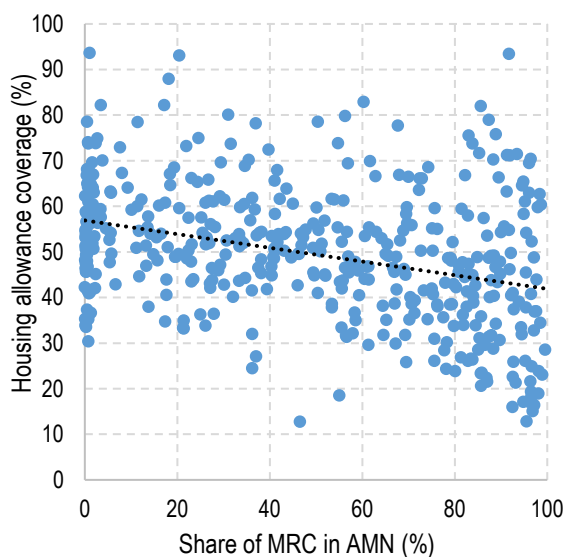
⁴⁷⁰ Older data from the 2013 Atlas of Roma Communities.

⁴⁷¹ The housing benefit is regulated by Act No. 417/2013 Coll. The assistance in material need system is described in Chapter 8.1.

form⁴⁷², and also the households living in an apartment or house based on a right of residence. Since the assistance in material need is low (Chapter 8.1), the housing benefit is a significant housing policy instrument satisfying the basic housing needs and preventing debts in connection with housing (Škobla, 2018; Gerbery, 2009; Kusá, 2009).

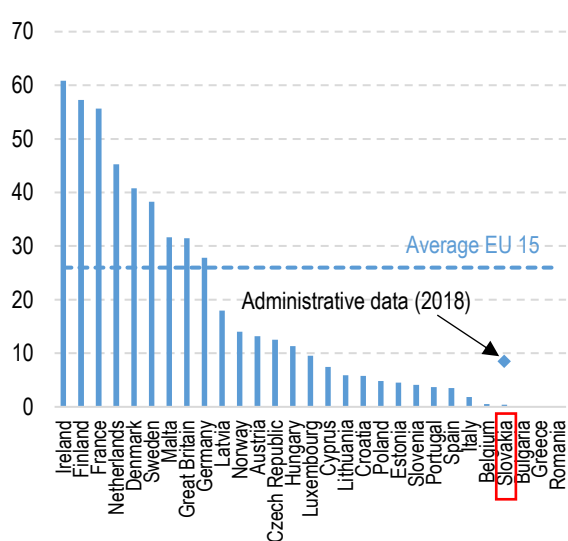
The housing benefit for a household with more than just one member is able to cover the costs of rent in municipal apartments in a half of Slovak cities, as the survey of municipal rental housing in Slovak county cities shows. Of the larger cities, most problematic situation is in Bratislava where the allowance covers less than one half (48.5%) of the average rent in municipal apartments (EUR 184) (Fico et al., 2019).⁴⁷³

Graph 77: Coverage of housing benefit against proportion of MRC among the people in the AMN system in the municipality (2018)



Source: VIM unit based on data of the Ministry of Labour
 Note: Coverage with the allowance is defined as the number of the people in the AMN system who are eligible to the allowance as a percentage of all persons in the AMN system in a municipality.

Graph 78: Proportion of households in the bottom income quintile which receive housing benefit (2017)



Source: OECD Affordable Housing Database, Ministry of Labour, Statistical Office

More than a half of the recipients of the assistance in material need is not eligible to the housing benefit as they do not meet the statutory conditions. On average, 35,115 households were eligible to the housing benefit in 2018. This figure covered 48.8% of all recipients in the assistance in material need system. Since 2013, the coverage with the housing benefit has never exceeded a half of the AMN recipients. The main barriers to the access is the condition to prove payment of the housing cost in the last six months and the requirement to have a legally owned or rented dwelling for permanent residence. But this criterion is difficult to meet for the poorest, such as the families from MRC living in illegal dwellings (Chapter 9.1), or homeless people (Chapter 9.3). **There is a strong negative correlation between coverage with the housing benefit at a municipal level and the share of people from MRC in the total number of residents in the AMN system** (Graph 77).

Even the eligible recipients may lose the allowance if they fail to pay their dues (e.g. for the municipal waste). Moreover, if several households which experience material deprivation share the same housing, the allowance can be paid to only one of them.

Whereas the housing benefit is tied with assistance in material need system and is also subject to restrictive conditions, the accessibility of this assistance to low-income households is relatively low

⁴⁷² It covers individuals living in supportive housing facilities, elder care facilities, centres of social services or a specialised year-long residential facilities, reception centres, halfway houses, emergency shelter facilities or in a crisis centre.

⁴⁷³ One of the reasons for the differences in average rent in municipal apartments across cities is the difference in the share of old municipal apartments in the overall fund of municipal rental housing and the quality of those apartments. That is to say, old apartments are subject to a different rent regulation than apartments built after 1 February 2001.

compared to other countries. The measured coverage rate in the bottom quintile (bottom 20%) of income distribution is substantially higher according to the administrative data⁴⁷⁴ than the coverage based on the EU SILC survey. This may be because the allowance is paid as a part of assistance in material need system.⁴⁷⁵ Even then Slovakia is deep below the EU-15 average (Graph 78).

Slovakia's housing benefit is not standard. Based on the 2016 OECD survey, Slovakia is one of the three OECD countries (together with Slovenia and Romania) where the housing benefit is not separate from the assistance in material need system.⁴⁷⁶ Majority of countries have more than just one instrument of financial assistance helping the households with the housing costs. Also the conditions of eligibility and the amount of the allowance in other countries typically depend on the income of the household, its structure, and the cost of housing (Box 30). Slovak allowance is relatively insensitive to the living conditions of households.

If provided in an appropriate amount and coverage, the housing benefit could be less restrictive for labour force mobility than the rental housing with regulated rent. Whereas assistance is provided to an individual and is not tied with an apartment and often reflects regional differences in rent, it allows the recipients to move for work without losing the eligibility to the assistance. **On the other hand, if the rental housing offer is insufficient, substantial part may be swallowed by landlords in the form of a higher rent.** The estimate of the proportion of the allowance which translated into higher rent ranges from 16% in the USA (Susin, 2002) up to 50% in Britain (Gibbons and Manning, 2006) and 78% in France (Fack, 2006). The option to increase the rent in response to a changed allowance is restricted in case of rental housing with regulated rent.

Referring to the international practice, the review proposes to take out the housing benefit from the assistance in material need system, and change the eligibility criteria to make it accessible to wider groups of the population. At the same time, its amount should reflect the size and structure of the household as well as the actual costs associated with housing. The housing benefit should be accompanied with better offer of housing, otherwise it can artificially increase the rental prices/prices of apartments since it supports demand. The preparation process of the new legal regulation treating housing benefit is currently in progress.⁴⁷⁷

Box 30: Housing allowance abroad

The amount and eligibility conditions for housing benefit provided to low-income households differs from one EU country to another. Several countries which use the allowances test the recipient's income and property taking into consideration the regional differences in housing prices as well as the number of household members.

Country	Number of recipients (households)	% of GDP	Who is eligible?	Amount of allowance	Limitations
Austria	177 TEUR, 4.7% (2014)	0.1	Changes depending on the relevant Land. Four regions have a minimum income set.	Difference of around 25% of the household's income and "reasonable" housing costs (EUR 110 to 220)	Rent paid (depends on region, number of household members and apartment)

⁴⁷⁴ On average, 35,115 households were found to be eligible to the housing benefit in 2018. This figure covered around 8.5% of households in the bottom quintile according to the 2011 population census.

⁴⁷⁵ Respondents in the EU SILC survey may not be aware that they are eligible to the housing benefit, as this allowance is provided as a part of the AMN "package". The error rate of respondents is probably lower in countries which provide the housing benefit separately from the assistance in material need system.

⁴⁷⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/els/family/PH3-2-Key-characteristics-of-housing-allowances.pdf>

⁴⁷⁷ In this context, the Institute for Labour and Family Research prepared an analysis of minimum housing expenses and housing cost burden from the perspective of the household's income. The analysis was submitted to the Ministry of Labour in September 2019. A work group has been set up to find a consensus on the new legal regulation of the housing rent. This group will assess the draft law being prepared by the Ministry of Labour.

Greece	105 TEUR, 2.6% (2009)	0.07	Employee with certain period of insurance, no one in the household owns a property Depending on municipality. Until 2015: income did not exceed 250% of the minimum pension. Does not own property.	Depending on the number of children (from EUR 115 to 215)	Income depending on the number of children in a household (from 12 TEUR to 20 TEUR a year).
Hungary	412 TEUR, 10.3% (2014)	0.06	Tenants with income below the established threshold (22.1 TEUR), limited ownership of property (24.5 TEUR)	Depending on the household income up to EUR 92 Depending on the housing quality (size and furnishings) and location	Income amount Amount of the income and property
Netherlands	1.26 eur million, 16.8% (2016)	0.4	Households with income below double the minimum pension Tenants and owners. Households with children, if they pay rent above the established threshold.	Depending on the rent and income amount. But no more than EUR 500. Depending on income, rent and number of children (around EUR 130 at the most)	Income amount Amount of the income and rent
Italy	n/a	0.02	Households without children, depending on the income	Up to GBP 417 (EUR 470) a week depending on the number of bedrooms, health condition and location	Income amount Amount of the income and savings
Sweden	186 TEUR, 4.2% (2015)	0.12	Low-income rent payer. Savings below GBP 16,000 (18 TEUR)	Depends on the location, number of children and legal relationship to the housing. Average allowance in 2017 amounted to CZK 3,493 (EUR 137).	Amount of the income and rent
Great Britain	4.68 eur million, 17.3% (2016)	1.8	Households whose housing costs exceed 30% of the total income (35% for the capital city), provided that the product of their income and the coefficient 0.3 (0.35) does not exceed the normative housing costs for the relevant dwelling.		Amount of the income and savings
Czech Republic	203 TEUR, 4.6% (2018)	0.14			Housing expenses proportionate to the total income

Source: Kubala and Peciar, 2019, VfM based on the data of the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Statistical Office and ECB

Czech Republic

The housing benefit in the Czech Republic is available to all households whose housing costs⁴⁷⁸ exceed 30% of the total income (35% in case of Prague). The allowance is much more generous than it is in Slovakia. It is flexible and its amount reflects several factors, such as the number of household members, regional differences in rent, size of dwelling in which the household lives, or relationship of the applicant to the housing (rented or owned). The maximum amount for an individual in certain cases may reach as high as triple the amount paid in Slovakia.

Except the housing benefit, the Czech Republic also pays out a housing supplement which forms a part of the assistance in material need system. It serves to supplement the income of the households whose income would be lower than the minimum subsistence income after payment of the housing expenses even though they receive the housing benefit. These two benefits are high enough to cover the rent of low-income families both in rental apartments and commercial lodging houses.

⁴⁷⁸ Except the rent, also the utility fees, waste disposal, etc.

However, some owners of lodging houses were problematic. They artificially increased the rent as they were aware that clients would cover the difference from increased allowance. In some cases, the prices were higher than the market rent in apartments. This practice has been widely criticised and often labelled as the "trafficking in poverty" (Škobla et al., 2016b)

10. Healthcare availability

- People from MRC and those in the assistance in material need system have much shorter life expectancy and higher infant mortality than the average figures for the general population. In the MRC, the percentage of people receiving compensations of social consequences of severe disability grows faster with age.
- In spite of the worse health condition, the use of health care among people from the MRC is significantly below the average, and this is particularly true with younger-age groups. This implies worse accessibility and use of preventive health care, as also evidenced by surveys and children vaccination data.
- The barriers to accessibility include financial cost-sharing by patients in the cost of health care. Unlike in a majority of other OECD countries, measures to mitigate the financial burden due to low income are non-existent in Slovakia. Physical accessibility of healthcare facilities (particularly the gynaecology outpatient clinics) is problematic in municipalities with a large MRC population. Bribery and discrimination of Roma in healthcare facilities is a great barrier as well.
- Many developing countries successfully support demand for preventive care in the setting of generational transmission of poverty by way of conditional financial transfers which compensate the costs associated with a visit of a physician. This is an important part of investment in the health of poor people which returns in the form of lower sickness rate and prevalence of acute health issues.
- The review proposes measures aiming to reduce financial barriers to the access to health care and improve readiness of medical staff for work with the members of MRC. The Chapter 11 proposes a measure to ensure long-term sustainability of awareness-raising activities and health mediation in the environment of MRC.

10.1. Health condition of socially disadvantaged people

The life expectancy at birth is substantially shorter in groups facing adverse social situation than it is in the rest of the population. This implies existence of significant differences in the average health condition. While the life expectancy in 2015 was 76 years for the general population, the people in the AMN system lived seven years shorter (Table 29). Even if the AMN is taken into consideration, life within MRC will remain to be associated with a shorter life expectancy. People in the AMN system living in MRC live only 68 years on average, which is less than the average life expectancy of the Slovak population in 1960⁴⁷⁹ and roughly at the level of today's Cambodia, Bolivia or East Timor.⁴⁸⁰ **Bad health condition of socially disadvantaged groups contributes to their social exclusion in other areas, because it reduces their chances of succeeding in education or labour market.**

Table 29: Life expectancy at birth, 2015

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	67.7	69.7	69.3
non-AMN	70.3	76.7	76.5
Total	69.6	76.4	76.0

Source: VfM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office, Atlas and the central register of policyholders.

Note: Slight deviation of the life expectancy estimate for the entire population from the data of the Statistical Office is caused by exclusion of people living abroad based on the data about the existence of health insurance from the central register of policyholder. Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Gaps in the health indicators between the majority and the socially disadvantaged groups start open already at birth. The mortality of infants in households which receive assistance in material need, and of

⁴⁷⁹ The oldest available data about life expectancy at birth for the entire Slovak population date back to 1960 when it was 70.3 years.

⁴⁸⁰ According to the data of the UN Population Division, the life expectancy at birth in Cambodia was 67.6 years and in Bolivia and East Timor it was 67.7 from 2010 to 2015.

infants in the MRC environment, is more than triple the rate reported for the rest of the population (Table 30). On average, 13.3 infants per one thousand live births died in households in the AMN system and 12.3 infants in the MRC every year from 2006 to 2015. In the population which is not in the AMN system or from MRC, it was 3.9 deaths on average. The above data indicates that high infant mortality is more an issue of poverty than ethnicity. Still the infant mortality in families in the AMN system is 0.5 deaths on average higher in the MRC environment than outside it.

Table 30: Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births), average for the period 2006 – 2015

	MRC	non-MRC	Total
AMN	13.6	13.1	13.3
non-AMN	10.8	3.9	4.3
Total	12.3	4.6	5.5

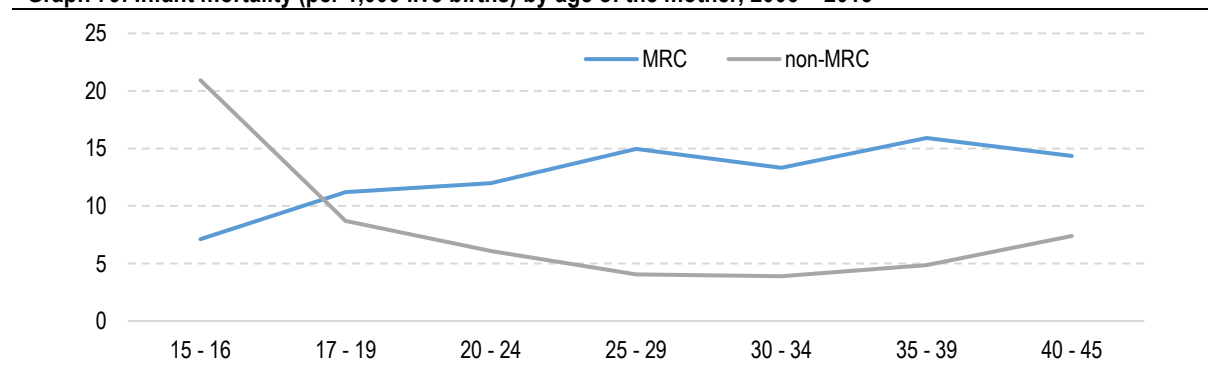
Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC and AMN.

Source: VřM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office, Atlas and the central register of policyholders.

High infant mortality may be caused by worse access to information and health care (řprocha, 2014) as well as by the conditions of life in poverty. For example, Roma women gain less weight during pregnancy because of irregular and low-quality food (Hijova & Madarasova-Geckova, 2012). Dangerous for newborn babies also is the large prevalence of infectious diseases in the MRC particularly due to poor hygiene, housing and environmentally unsuitable environment (Chapter 9 and řupinova et al., 2015).

Infant mortality is also affected by the age of mother at delivery. In the MRC environment, it starts growing at much earlier age of the mother than outside it. This means that early motherhood may be adaptive. Infant mortality normally decreases with the age of the mother and grows later on, but in the MRC it grows during the major part of women fertility (Graph 79).⁴⁸¹ While the infant mortality in the environment outside MRC is lowest when the mother is 25 to 34 years old, in the MRC environment it is much earlier when she is 15 to 16 years old.⁴⁸² Similar trend results from the comparison between Afro-American and white women in the USA. Infant mortality growing with the mother's age remains applicable even when we factor in her education, number of previous children, and risk factors such as multiple pregnancies and smoking during pregnancy (Cohen, 2016). A probable reason is the worsening health condition of women during fertility living in poor environment, as also evidenced by the research comparing allostatic load (wear and tear on the body as a result of exposure to chronic stress) of white and Afro-American women (Geronimus et al., 2006). Therefore, it is not possible to ascribe high infant mortality in the MRC environment to earlier motherhood of Roma women (Chapter 10.2). It can even work as an example of social adaptation to life in extreme poverty.

Graph 79: Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) by age of the mother, 2006 – 2015



Source: VřM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office, Atlas and the Ministry of Interior

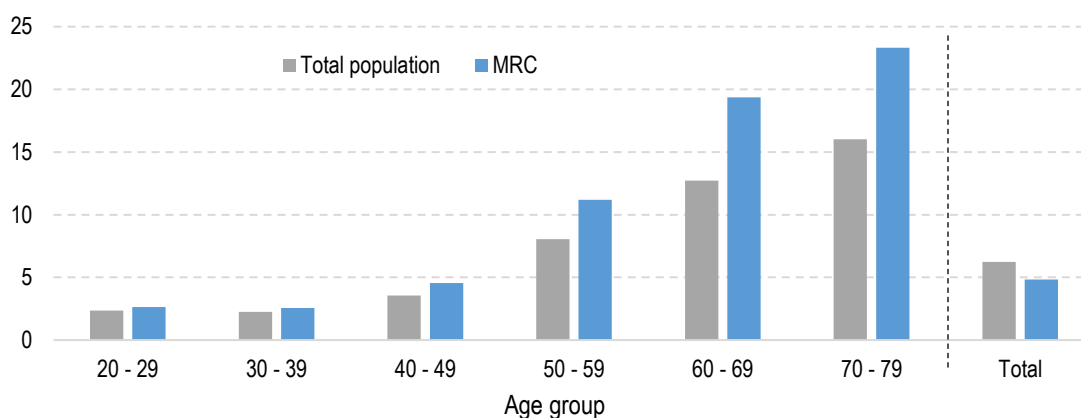
⁴⁸¹ Infant mortality in case of mothers aged less than 15 years is high in both groups. However, deliveries in such a young age cover less than 0.3% in both groups.

⁴⁸² 4.2% of deliveries in this age category were identified in the MRC environment.

Significant differences in infant mortality in the MRC also exist at the regional level. The highest infant mortality is reported in the Košice region (on average, 14.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births from MRC), the lowest in the Trnava region (on average, 5.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births from MRC). The highest infant mortality in the MRC is reported in the Trebišov county. Between 2006 to 2015, it reached more than 27 infant deaths per 1,000 live births on average, which is roughly at the level of today's Guatemala or Algeria.⁴⁸³

Not only do people from MRC live shorter, but they also often live their life in a worse health condition. The most important factors include inappropriate working and living conditions related to poverty (Gavurová & Šoltés, 2013), frequent oncology diseases, substance abuse and related diseases, unhealthy diet (Šoltés et al., 2014). Insufficient access to drinking water and sewer system in segregated areas (Chapter 9) help spread infectious diseases, such as measles and hepatitis A (European Commission, 2014), and respiratory diseases – 60 to 70% of newly diagnosed tuberculosis in underage children come from the MRC (Solovič et al., 2011). People from the MRC environment have worse health condition also because of their greater exposure to the environmental burdens, such as their small distance from waste dumps (legal or illegal) and solid fuel heating (Chapter 9).

Graph 80: Percentage of people provided compensation of social consequences of severe disability, 2018 (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office, Atlas and the Ministry of Interior

The fact that the percentage of people receiving compensations of social consequences of severe disability grows faster with age is another proof of worse health condition in the MRC environment.⁴⁸⁴ While the percentage of recipients of this type of social support in the under 30 age group is similar both in the MRC and general population, in the 60-to-69 age group it is more than a half higher in the MRC (Graph 80). At the same time, the percentage of support recipients is lower in the MRC population than the average figure for Slovakia. The reason is different age structure (larger proportion of young people in the MRC).

10.2. Use of health care in MRC

In spite of worse average health condition and nearly universal coverage with health insurance⁴⁸⁵, the use of health care among people from MRC is 36% lower than in the general population. In 2016, the average spending of public health insurance (PHI) per one person from MRC amounted to EUR 508, while the amount spent on a person from the environment outside MRC totalled EUR 793. This difference reflects, to a substantial extent, the relatively younger age structure of people from MRC – the median age in the MRC is 22 years, while in the rest of the population it is 39 years. The gap in expenditures remains at the level of 4% even if the different age structure is factored in.

The disproportion in the use of health care is largest in the younger-age groups, which indicates insufficient use of preventive health care (Graph 81). In the age group of 5 to 19 years, the expenditures on men from MRC

⁴⁸³ According to the UN Population Division's data, infant mortality in Guatemala was 27 deaths per 1,000 live births and in Algeria it was 28 deaths from 2010 to 2015.

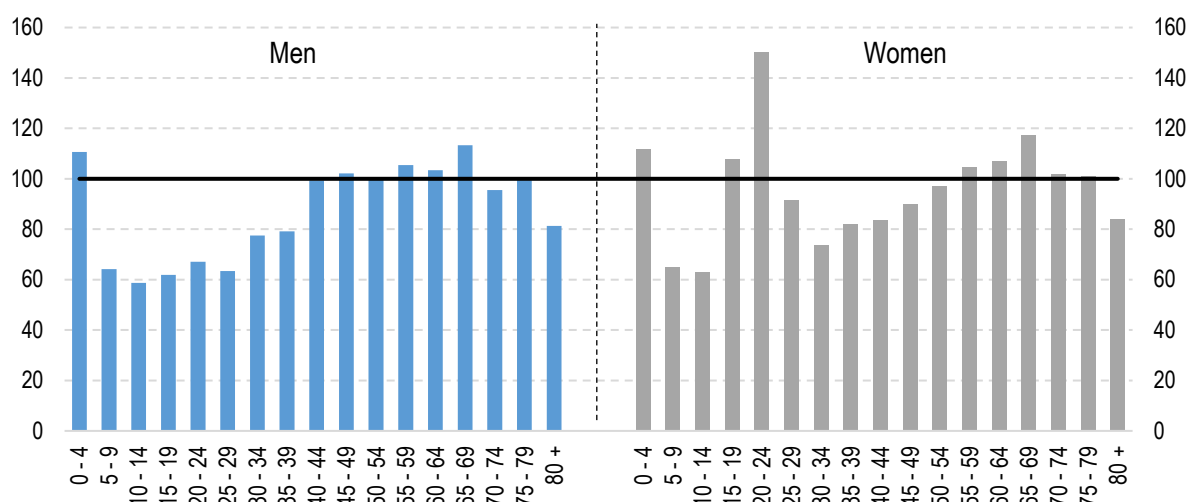
⁴⁸⁴ The compensatory system of social consequences of severe disability is described in Chapter 8.4.

⁴⁸⁵ For example, 95% of Roma in Slovakia have health insurance according to the EU MIDIS II survey (FRA, 2016).

are 38% lower than on men in the rest of the population. This may have a negative impact on the health condition (and the expenditures) at later stages of life as well as on life expectancy. More-than-average use of health care in the MRC in the age group under 4 years may result from the same factors as the relatively high infant mortality. Health issues after birth increase the expenditures on health care for newborns and sometimes they end with death.

The age profile of women is affected by the use of healthcare facilities at delivery. Women from MRC tend to have more children and at a younger age. While the average age of primipara in 2017 was 28.6 years in the population outside MRC, in the MRC it was only 20.9 years.⁴⁸⁶ This difference leads to a temporarily higher use of health care among women from MRC than the average of the general population of women (Graph 81).

Graph 81: Average expenditures of PHI per capita by age – MRC as % of the Slovak average, 2016



Source: IFP based on data of the Ministry of Health, Atlas

Note: Box 3 for definition of MRC.

Different approach to health care employed by people from MRC is also demonstrated by surveys. Less than a half of residents of segregated or separated settlements looks for health care every time they have a health issue, while in the majority population located in their neighbourhood nearly 60% decide to do so (UNDP, 2012). What is more, a much larger percentage of the people from MRC from among those who visit a physician decide not to buy all prescription drugs than the members of majority population. Also, Roma use preventive care only a little, nearly one half of them as contrasted to 1% of the entire population is not vaccinated at all (European Commission, 2014). Even though vaccination is free of charge and compulsory, the vaccination coverage rate among Roma children ranges from 48% to 67% depending on the vaccination type, while in the general population it ranges from 98% to 99% (Popper et al., 2009).

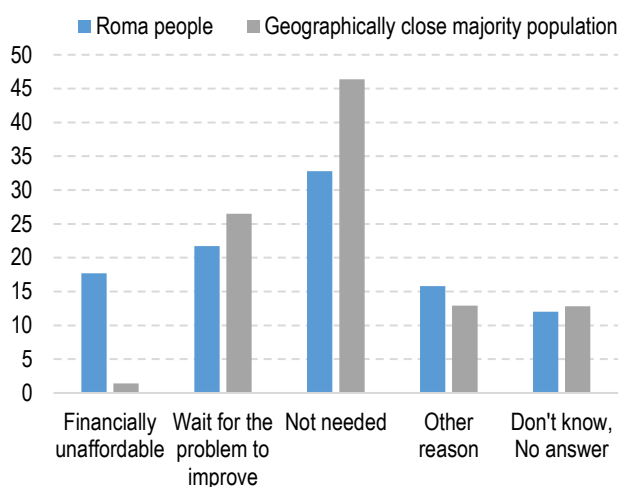
10.3. Barriers to healthcare accessibility and discrimination

The access to health care for poor people is limited due to high transport costs and cost-sharing requirements (Gavurová, Šoltés, & Šoltés, 2014). As many as 18% of Roma respondents in the UNDP survey who did not look for health care even though they needed it explained their decision with financial unaffordability as compared with 1% in the majority population in their neighbourhood (Graph 82).

Cost-sharing in healthcare funding absorbs 2.3% of household consumption on average; this figure is below the EU average (3.1%) (OECD, 2019). The largest portion (71%) of the cost-sharing requirements is swallowed by medications and medical devices. The second largest category are the outpatient services. As regards individual specialisations, Slovaks pay most (pharmacy services deducted) at the dentists, for spa care and gynaecology (Healthcare Spending Review II).

⁴⁸⁶ VFM unit based on data of the Central Labour Office, Atlas and the Ministry of Interior.

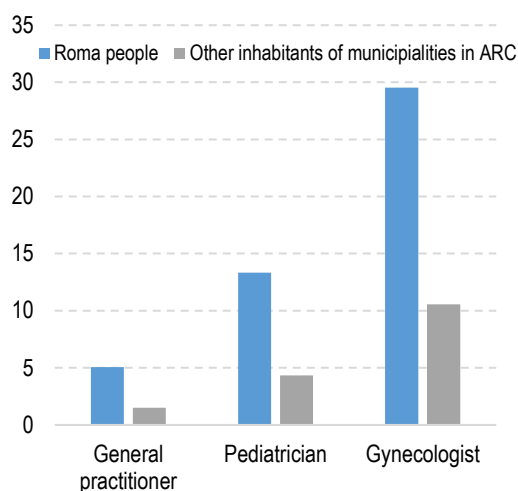
Graph 82: Reasons for not seeking medical care for 6 or more years old persons experiencing health issues (%)



Source: UNDP

Question: What was the main reason why you did not seek medical care, were not provided care or therapy?

Graph 83: Percentage of population living in a municipality 10 or more km from the nearest outpatient office (%)



Source: VFM unit based on data of the 2019 Atlas

Unlike in majority of other OECD countries, measures to mitigate the financial burden due to low income are non-existent in Slovakia (Paris, 2016), although the truth is that the financial burden may be several times higher for poor people than the nationwide average. Slovak legislation only protects pensioners, children under 6 years and disabled against cost-sharing fees for medications. These groups are compensated for the part of the fee which exceeds the limit laid down by the law.⁴⁸⁷ **The review therefore proposes to include people with income below the minimum subsistence income among the protected groups.**

The reasons for low use of health care in Roma communities also include the distance of healthcare facilities from their residence. In the municipalities with Roma communities, the percentage of Roma living 10 or more kilometres from the nearest outpatient office is more than triple the percentage for the majority population. It is worst with the gynaecology offices – nearly one third of women from Roma communities must travel 10 or more kilometres (Graph 83).⁴⁸⁸

The access to high-quality and early health care for poor people may also be restricted by corruption in the healthcare system. According to the Transparency International's surveys, the healthcare system has ranked first in the corruption perception on a long-term basis (Focus, 2015). In the most recent survey conducted in 2015, as many as 64% of respondents admitted existence of bribery in the healthcare system and consider it very widespread, and 22% of respondents admitted to have offered a bribe when they visited a healthcare facility in the past two years. Corruption is a barrier to the access for all, but particularly for the poor people who cannot afford to pay a bribe and who have smaller social capital which does not allow them to use their "acquaintance" to get better care.

Slovakia faces several lawsuits for direct and indirect discrimination against Roma in healthcare which results in lower quality of provided care. The Counselling Centre for Civil and Human Rights documented several discrimination cases in healthcare facilities, such as segregation of Roma women in maternity departments as well as physical violence or degrading behaviour of medical staff to Roma women at delivery (European Commission, 2019).

⁴⁸⁷ No registration is needed for the cost-sharing fee refund. Patient should receive the refund to their account or in the form of a money order in 90 days from the end of a quarter (if the amount is higher than EUR 3, otherwise it is transferred to the next quarter).

⁴⁸⁸ This comparison covered the entire Roma population from the Atlas of Roma Communities (2019), not just the members of MRCs.

Bad experiences of Roma in healthcare facilities may also be caused by the medical staff's lack of knowledge of the Roma language and the specific features of the Roma community. **The review therefore proposes to create a study programme within continuing education in work with MRC for the selected medical professions.**

10.4. Measures to support demand for preventive health care

The demand for preventive health care is supported by the state through punishment principle instead of employing positive motivation. For example, pregnant women lose their eligibility to the child birth allowance within family support as well as the protective allowance within assistance in material need system if they fail to visit preventive examinations at the gynaecologist once a month from the fourth month of pregnancy until delivery. Due to inaccessibility of gynaecology offices in rural areas, and particularly in municipalities with large Roma population (Graph 83), this measure may not hit home within the socially disadvantaged population. A similar measure when patients lose eligibility to free dental care if they fail to attend preventive examination in the previous calendar year affects most the socially most vulnerable patients.⁴⁸⁹

Many countries are successful in implementing measures of conditional financial transfers which are an efficient part of the investment in the health of poor people. Financial assistance focuses on socially weaker families and its amount is set so as to compensate for the financial as well as non-financial costs associated with a visit to a physician. The assistance is conditional upon regular preventive examinations and vaccination of children. In some places, the financial assistance is combined with health mediation to eliminate information and cultural barriers experienced by the disadvantaged groups (in Slovakia, we have a state-subsidised organisation of the Ministry of Health called Healthy Regions which focuses on health mediation, more in Chapter 11). This model proved to effectively support demand for preventive health care in many countries (Rawlings and Rubio, 2005). However, the final impact on health indicators largely depends on the capacities and quality of health care (Evans et al. 2016). **The review proposes to do a pilot test to try financial transfers for people from MRC which would be conditional by use of preventive care specifically focusing on pregnant women and children.**

⁴⁸⁹ According to the 2013 Atlas, nearly 10% of Roma population live more than 10 kilometres away from the nearest dental office. This is nearly triple the distance reported for the majority population. The most recent Atlas (2019) does not monitor this data. The same applies to pharmacies. In 2013, more than 7% of Roma population lived more than 10 kilometres from a pharmacy, while in the majority population it was only 2%.

11. Support programmes for municipalities with MRC

- **Municipalities with MRC have access to multiple support programmes aiming to improve access for the people from MRC to the social and legal aid, counselling, public services, health care, and also preventive activities in the area of health or crime rates. These programmes seem to be essential to social inclusion and are generally assessed positively by clients, workers as well as local governments. But support programmes do not cover all municipalities with MRC whereas their successful implementation depends on the cooperation and engagement of local governments.**
- **Inefficiency in the management of certain support programmes is caused by their splitting into two national projects. Furthermore, a non-existent coordination of individual programmes and reduced opportunity to use the related positive synergies are significant drawbacks.**
- **Support programmes are dependent on European funding schemes whereas municipalities do not have enough funds to finance them within their original competencies. This threatens their long-term sustainability in the current extent and quality.**
- **The review proposes measures to support continuing education of the support programme workers, more efficient coordination of individual programmes, and cooperation with the representatives of other involved institutions, and ensuring long-term sustainability of support programmes by funding them from the state budget.**

11.1. Scope and impact of support programmes

Field social work

The field social work (FSW) is one of the social work methods aiming to prevent social exclusion and its increase, which is performed in the home environment of the relevant individual. Its purpose is to motivate and activate individuals and families to solve problems through common action with the help and support of a field social worker. Particular about it is that it actively looks for and works with people who do not, for various reasons, have access to or do not use social support and public service in full extent and are not captured by the social assistance network intended to identify and support the most vulnerable. Establishment and maintenance of a connection and certain trust between the marginalised person and the majority population (e.g. at a public authority, school or in a hospital) is the basic precondition for any further interventions which could help the person to resolve his or her life situation.

As the problems experienced by individual clients and families are diverse, FSW is, by nature, a cross-sectional service. The field workers try to flexibly respond to a particular situation of the relevant location; in some places, they may lay emphasis on school attendance, in others on the exercise of the civil rights, and still in others on the employment rate.

The FSW has been provided in Slovakia by the public sector since 2005⁴⁹⁰ and is split today to two national projects funded from the ESI Funds being implemented under the shared responsibility between the recipients of the non-refundable grant and local governments. One of the recipients is the Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Implementation Agency) and the other one is the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities (Plenipotentiary Office). The recipients take care of coordination and methodological support, while local governments are the direct employers of field social workers (shared responsibility model). FSW is thus provided based on agreement and cooperation of the municipalities themselves.

The priority target group of the FSW in Slovakia are the people from MRC. However, the Implementation Agency's programme also covers the assistance to people from other target groups (e.g. homeless people) having equal or similar features (high degree of exclusion, distrust towards public authorities, etc.). The Plenipotentiary

⁴⁹⁰ Before, the FSW used to be performed to a smaller extent mainly by non-governmental organisations.

Office performs FSW in the municipalities selected based on the "underdevelopment index" as the municipalities requiring more intervention than other municipalities with MRC.⁴⁹¹

The total expenditures on the FSW in 2018 amounted to EUR 12.4 million funded fully from the ESI Funds (Human Resources Operational Programme) and co-funding schemes. The FSW implemented by the Implementation Agency used EUR 6.3 million of that amount⁴⁹² and the FSW performed by the Plenipotentiary Office EUR 6.1 million.⁴⁹³ The FSW programme is currently underway in 376 municipalities in Slovakia – the Implementation Agency performs FSW in 229 municipalities and the Plenipotentiary Office in 147 municipalities. The programme is performed by way of 497 field social workers and 509 field workers, while 278 of field social workers and 253 field workers are employed within the Implementation Agency's project and 219 of field social workers and 256 of field workers within the Plenipotentiary Office's project.

However, there still are municipalities which are not supported by the FSW in spite of a very bad situation. A necessity index was created within the context evaluation of the FSW conducted by the Implementation Agency in 2018 measuring the need for FSW in individual Roma settlements based on the data about the MRC's exclusion level, housing and local infrastructure quality and registered unemployment rate (Filčák et al., 2019). Of 203 settlements with the highest index (more than 10), 78 (39%) are such where this kind of service is still lacking.⁴⁹⁴ They are mainly small municipalities with less than 100 people in the MRC environment. To strengthen the capacities in these municipalities, around 102 positions of field social workers and 47 of field workers would have to be created (Annex 40). **The review proposes to amend the FSW programme funding to include all municipalities with the FSW necessity index higher than 10 if they show interest.**

Even in the municipalities with a functional FSW, the workers often complain about large numbers of clients and actions and shortage of time for a systematic work with the client aiming to develop their self-reliance and self-confidence. The work of field workers is thus reduced in many locations to "fire quenching", i.e. to one-off problem-oriented approach focused on coping with a specific problem situation (e.g. communication with the debt enforcement officer in case of debts, communication with other institutions, such as physicians or labour office) (Škobla et al., 2019).

Quality assessment of the FSW impact proved individual groups of interventions to have a positive influence on the situation of clients and the community. Interviews with field social workers and the representatives of the institutions which are directly connected with individual circuits of FSW interventions (schools, labour offices, Police, etc.) suggest a significant impact of the FSW on the improvement of school attendance, solution of debt problems, increase of employment rate, and improvement of access to health care (particularly in municipalities not included in the Healthy Regions project) (Škobla et al., 2019).

A significant improvement of FSW compared with the previous programming period can be seen in the education area. While the system of trainings and continuing education of field social workers and field workers was non-existent in past, various trainings in all kinds of topics (e.g. gender equality, debt enforcement procedures, legislation in the social area, social work methods and techniques, poverty culture, etc.) are underway in the current programming period (Škobla et al., 2019). A field social worker needs to complete the graduate level of university education to be qualified. Field workers need to have incomplete secondary education (without the school-leaving exam) or lower secondary vocational education. To help develop career of field workers, they should be supported in their efforts to improve their qualification also by way of continued education at secondary schools and universities and given the opportunity to be promoted to the position of a field social worker.

⁴⁹¹ https://www.minv.sk/?spravy_rk&sprava=aktualny-zoznam-obci-zapojenych-do-narodneho-projektu-take-away

⁴⁹² The allocation for the National Project Field Social Work totals EUR 29,340,353 for a period from October 2015 to September 2019 (<https://www.tsp.gov.sk/>).

⁴⁹³ The total allocation for the National Project Field Social Work and Field Work in Municipalities with Marginalised Roma Communities is EUR 26,511,131 for a period from January 2016 to December 2019 (<https://www.minv.sk/?NP-TSP>).

⁴⁹⁴ <https://www.tsp.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Formy-podpory-1.pdf>

The review therefore proposes to establish a scholarship scheme which would support field workers in their education efforts. Whereas low education level is often a barrier for the people from MRC to finding a job requiring higher qualification, this measure could help gradually increase the number of field social workers coming from MRC.

Methodologically, the quantitative evaluation of the FSW impacts is problematic due to the characteristic features of this type of intervention. First of all, it is because of the above mentioned cross-sectoral nature of the FSW. Contrary to the other instruments, the FSW focuses on a wide range of areas and priorities differ from one location to another based on its specific needs. It is therefore troublesome to use one outcome indicator to assess the impacts of the FSW across various locations. The need for specialist discussion on this topic was also underpinned by the context evaluation of the Implementation Agency (Filčák et al., 2019).

The second fundamental problem of the FSW quantitative assessment is the fact that its success in the attainment of a positive change depends on the access to the follow-up services and their quality in the relevant area. The essence of the FSW lies in the improvement of the access to the existing instruments and services of social assistance. Although the FSW seems to be an irreplaceable part of integration of marginalised persons into the society, the overall impact of the interventions finally depends on the availability and quality of individual services and measures in the relevant location.

Healthy Communities

The most important instrument in Slovakia which expressly focuses on social inclusion in the area of health is the National Project Healthy Communities. The project is being implemented by the state-subsidized organisation called Healthy Regions founded by the Ministry of Health in December 2016. It is a form of a field social work which, unlike the FSW programme, has a narrower focus on the improvement of the conditions for the health of excluded groups, and particularly of the MRC. By way of the healthy lifestyle assistants who work on site with the target group, the organisation performs awareness-raising activities, health mediation (e.g. communication between people from MRC and healthcare facilities), and other support of health (e.g. psychosocial or in the area of material conditions) in the MRC environment. The main aim of these activities is to improve the conditions for health by reducing barriers to the access to health care, improvement of health literacy, improvement of health-related habits (particularly reduction of hazardous lifestyle), and improvement of health-related basic infrastructure.

The total expenditures on the Healthy Regions amounted to EUR 3.2 million in 2018 and were fully funded from the ESI Funds (Human Resources Operational Programme) and co-funding schemes.⁴⁹⁵ On 31 December 2018, Healthy Regions employed 253 healthy lifestyle assistants and 25 coordinators; more than 86% came from the MRC environment.⁴⁹⁶ They served 271 locations engaged in the programme.

In 2018, the Healthy Regions organisation cooperated with 611 physicians who assess the activities very positively. A survey among cooperating first-contact physicians (paediatricians and general practitioners for adults) revealed that 78% of paediatricians and 80% of general practitioners cooperate with healthy lifestyle assistants (HLA) several times a week and 99% of paediatricians and 98% of general practitioners wish to continue in the cooperation in their respective locations. It follows from the survey that 33% of general practitioners for adults and 29% of paediatricians keep track of locations where HLA should be established and also articulated the need to increase the numbers of HLA in larger and more problematic communities.⁴⁹⁷ Complex assessment of the Healthy Regions activities is currently in progress.

⁴⁹⁵ The contracted amount to fund the National Project Healthy Communities 2A from the ESI Funds totalled EUR 11,295,855 until 31 December 2019, and the contracted amount to fund the National Project Healthy Communities 3A from the ESI Funds totalled EUR 303,557 until 30 June 2020.

⁴⁹⁶ <https://zdraveregiony.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Výročná-správa-ZR-2018.pdf>

⁴⁹⁷ <https://zdraveregiony.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Výročná-správa-ZR-2018.pdf>

The review proposes to extend the Healthy Communities programme to completely cover all MRCs within the health support, healthy lifestyle and mediation programme. To that end, 50 assistants and 10 coordinators for awareness-raising in the area of healthy lifestyle need to be hired.

Neighbourhood watch programme (MOPS)

Neighbourhood watch programme forms an important part of the community policing in the MRC environment. The MOPS members are selected usually directly from the community and even though they are not members of the Police, they cooperate with Police specialists in work with Roma communities. Their work focuses on the protection of public order, private and public property, children and youth against negative phenomena, the environment, and smooth and safe traffic. The specific form of work activities performed by MOPS is defined by the employer (municipality). They may include such activities as escorting children to school, organisation of social events, warning the competent bodies of anti-social or criminal activity (e.g. vandalism), reporting illegal waste dumps and monitoring the movement and meeting places of minors and young people in the evening.

MOPS units have been used systematically from the last programming period (2007 – 2013) in Slovakia based on demand-driven calls.⁴⁹⁸ The 2018 drawdown amounted to EUR 5.3 million, fully financed from ESI Funds (Human Resources Operational Program) and co-financing schemes. As of 31 December 2018, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities kept track of MOPS projects in 151 municipalities being home to almost 134,000 Roma, which is a third of the MRC population covered by the Atlas of Roma Communities.

Although the MOPS programme has not undergone quantitative evaluation, a research study from the USA suggests that neighbourhood watch programmes have modest but consistent impact on reducing crime. A systematic evaluation of 18 quasi-experimental controlled experiments showed a reduction in crime compared with the control group of 16 to 26%; however, the referential basis was low, as the studies were performed in mostly middle-class neighbourhoods (Bennett et al., 2006). Field surveys suggests positive evaluation of the programme, as evidenced by the high interest shown by municipalities with MRC. Within the first call from 2017, up to 99% of the total allocation was contracted by the end of 2018, which is the highest of all calls under priority axes 5 and 6 of the Human Resources Operational Program (Chapter 3.5). Due to the high level of interest, a new call was announced in 2018, which is currently underway. The number of participating municipalities will increase from 151 to 249. **The review proposes to amend the MOPS programme funding to include all municipalities with numerous MRC if they show interest.**

Despite they have many years of relevant experience, the career growth of MOPS members is hampered by their failure to complete the basic school. This means they may not continue in education at a police academy and obtain the required qualification for work in the Police Force. The support of the second-chance education (Chapter 5.3) could help resolve this issue.

Support of the selected social services of crisis intervention

The purpose of the social service of crisis intervention (SSCI) is to help when the necessary conditions to satisfy one's living needs are not developed; when a person's integration into the society is threatened due to risky life habits, addiction or harmful activities; in case of severe disability or bad health condition; when one is endangered by the behaviour of another person; or due to dwelling in a spatially segregated location with concentrated and intergenerationally transmitted poverty.⁴⁹⁹

As regards the MRC, the review focuses on three SSCIs supported within the national project of support of Selected Social Services of Crisis Intervention at a Community Level and the national project of Community

⁴⁹⁸ Two calls covering MOPS have been announced so far, in 2017 and 2018. The total allocation of ESI Funds for both calls together amounts to EUR 41.8 million.

⁴⁹⁹ Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services and on amendments and supplements to Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on trade licensing (the Trade Licensing Act) as amended,

Centres in Cities and Towns with Marginalised Roma Communities. They include the community centre (CC), low-threshold day centre (LTDC) and low-threshold social service for children and family (LTSSCF).

The services provided in these facilities include social counselling, legal aid, preventive activities, spare-time activities, assistance with preparations for school education, and support of informal education of children, youth and adults. The above national projects widen the focus on a wider circuit of social services of crisis intervention compared with the previous programming period when the support concentrated on community centres only.

The total expenditures on the two national projects amounted to EUR 5.7 million in 2018 and were fully funded from the ESI Funds (Human Resources Operational Programme) and co-funding schemes. The National Project of Support of the Selected Social Services of Crisis Intervention at a Community Level (EUR 3.9 million in 2018)⁵⁰⁰ is implemented by the Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Implementation Agency) and covers the support of all the three SSCIs. The National Project of Community Centres in Cities and Towns with MRC (EUR 1.8 million in 2018)⁵⁰¹ is implemented by the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities (Plenipotentiary Office) and focuses on the support of community centres.

CC/LTDC/LTSSCF facilities are supported in 159 locations in Slovakia through 454 employees. The Implementation Agency supports CC/LTDC/LTSSCF facilities in 92 locations through 257 employees and the Plenipotentiary Office in 67 locations with 197 employees (Table 31).

Table 31: Number of workers within the supported SSCIs

	NP Support of the Selected Social Services of Crisis Intervention at a Community Level			NP Community Centres in Cities and Towns with MRC			Total
	Profession guarantor	Specialised worker	Worker	Profession guarantor	Specialised worker	Worker	
Community centre	73	66	75	66	64	67	411
Low-threshold day centre	8	7	8				22
Low-threshold social service for children and family	7	5	8				21

Source: VFM unit based on data of the Ministry of Labour and Central Labour Office

The National Project of Support of the Selected Social Services of Crisis Intervention at a Community Level has significantly improved the availability of the SSCI and helped professionalise the provider's activities. However, the project failed to realize the ambition of systematic education of employees aiming to improve the quality of the provided services, as suggested by the impact evaluation of the national project conducted in 2018 by way of quantitative and qualitative questionnaires and structured interviews among clients, SSCI workers and the representatives of cities and towns (Repková et al., 2019). The clients themselves reported in the questionnaire a high degree of satisfaction (80% to 90%) with the services provided in the area of employment, solution of financial situation and housing. The representatives of local governments admitted in the interviews a usually integrational positive effect of the provided services on the overall social policy of the city/town, including reduction of social pathological phenomena and bias held by the general public against the crisis intervention clientèle.

11.2. Management of support programmes and sustainability

Inefficiency in the management of certain support programmes is caused by their splitting into two national projects. This applies to the field social work and support of the selected social services of crisis intervention, the

⁵⁰⁰ The allocation for the National Project of Support of the Selected Services of Crisis Intervention at a Community Level totalled EUR 20,915,000 for a period from October 2015 to September 2019 (<https://www.ia.gov.sk/npkiku/o-projekte/zakladne-informacie-2/>).

⁵⁰¹ The total allocation for the National Project of Community Centres in Cities and Towns with MRC was EUR 18,688,726 for a period from January 2016 to December 2019 (<https://www.minv.sk/?NP-KC-1>).

implementation of which was split between the Ministry of Interior (Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Implementation Agency of the Ministry). Although the projects are geographically distributed to avoid their overlapping and duplicities, their inefficiency consists in duplicate administration, limited economies of scale, limited information and experience sharing between the projects, and duplicate activities at a regional level (Škobla et al., 2019). Even though the coverage of the most lagging municipalities with a special programme to make the access to support programmes simpler was a meaningful step, such splitting should be removed in future and these activities integrated under a single responsible body.

The labour-law relationship of the FSW programme employees with the local government often tempts local governments to assign work tasks to the FSW workers which go beyond, and sometimes even against, their job description. Field social workers and field workers are employed by municipalities, but funded, coordinated, trained and methodologically guided by the recipients of the non-refundable grants (Plenipotentiary Office and Implementation Agency). The local government management and the employees of municipal offices often do not understand the specific status of FSW and perceive it particularly as a means to alleviate the municipal paperwork in relation to the MRC. If field social workers/field workers are requested to perform different work which is contrary to the content and ethical standards of the field social work, it directly affects the quality of their work. Consequently, this undermines the trust between the field social worker/field worker and the client, and finally also the quality and effect of the interventions employed (Škobla et al., 2019).

An alternative solution to the shared responsibility model is the centralised model of operation and management employed in case of Health Regions. Healthy lifestyle assistants are employed by the state-subsidized organisation Healthy Regions and do not have any labour-law relations to local governments where they provide services. This protects them against the pressure of local governments on their work tasks.

The non-existent mutual coordination is a significant drawback of the support programme management. Consequently, the potential of positive synergies is not realised. The interactions between workers of individual programmes and their quality depend on personal relations and are not systematised. This creates room for confusion. For example, if there are any unclear points concerning the setting of services, clients or other stakeholders (e.g. Police specialists) are not sure which service to approach with some specific problem. For example, community centres and field social work have a very similar content of services, which leads to many misunderstandings and errors at a local level.

Regional coordinators of the FSW and the Healthy Communities projects hold quite incorrect and stereotypical views and prejudices about the other project and cooperate only minimally in spite of a similar purpose. Even the relations between two FSW national projects are rather formal and they know very little about their individual activities. Examples of positive cooperation between support programmes and interventions proved the coordination of activities, mutual discussion about interventions, information sharing and aligned approach to more complex interventions to lead to more targeted and effective assistance to clients (Škobla et al., 2019).

Support programmes are currently dependent on European funding schemes. According to the law, social services fall under the original competencies of local governments. But cities and towns are usually able to implement these programmes only when they are funded externally within projects. For example, the costs of FSW exceed 5% of the revenues of the existing local government budgets in three quarters of municipalities where this service is required and 73% of municipalities where FSW would be appropriate (Filčák et al., 2019). Even a 5% increase in the budget allocated to the needs of social services and the subsequent coverage of the FSW costs is a limit which is difficult to attain in reality. At the same time, nearly a half of municipalities in both categories spend more than 10% of the current budget revenues on FSW.

This dependence on the European funds poses a major risk to the long-term sustainability of support programmes of the current scope and quality. Project-based funding of support programmes is not a system solution. It depends on allocations in each new programming period, project cycle and on negotiations with the

European Commission. The experience of the past and current programming period underpin the need for funding the support programmes from the state budget at least during the time between the end of one programming period and the contracting of new resources in the new programming period. The gap in funds and consequent departure of a part of workers to other positions may be devastating for these efforts, whereas their quality often depends on the strength of relations and trust built during long-term work with specific individuals and families from the excluded communities.

The Healthy Regions organisation is a successful model of sustainability in Slovakia. As a state-subsidized organisation, it receives funding from its founder (being the Ministry of Health) also during the transitional period. For example, in 2017, the Ministry of Health provided the Healthy Regions with temporary funding for basic activities until the National Project Healthy Communities 2A under the Human Resources Operational Programme was contracted.

The additionality principle as well as the long-term sustainability and development of support programmes speak in favour of funding well-established programmes from the state budget. The additionality principle means that the funds from the common EU budget should not replace, but be an addition to national regional policy funds. It basically means that projects tested with the help of European funding schemes and proved to work well should be included under the state budget.

Funding from the state budget is also a way to ensure the continuity of programs in municipalities that, for various reasons, do not meet the strict eligibility criteria for European funding. For example, if a municipality is subject to forced administration, it may not participate in demand-driven calls even though it has successfully implemented certain programme (e.g. MOPS) for several years. Funding from the state budget also allows a longer-term planning, employment of workers for a full-time schedule and their continuing education and career growth.

The review proposes to apply the central management model which is used with the Healthy Regions also to other support programmes which proved to be successful in the previous and current programming periods.⁵⁰² The role of management of each support programme should be entrusted to a single organisation falling under the responsibility of the relevant ministry. Field social work as well as provision of social services of crisis interventions should be transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the neighbourhood watch programme to the Ministry of Interior. In addition to the administrative and accounting aspects of the programmes, the managing organisation should also provide methodological support, and take care of supervision and monitoring. Workers within the programmes would become employees of these organisations, and not of the municipalities, in order to strengthen their independence of the local politics and allow them to focus on the needs of clients.

The review also proposes to gradually move funding of the above support programmes under the state budget. Project-based funding of support programmes from the European funds is available until 2020 with a view to possible integration into the next programming period (2021 – 2027). In such event, it is necessary to arrange especially for the short-term bridging funding from the state budget in the inter-project period so that the programmes may continue without interruption. Depending on the volume of the allocation for the new programming period, it is possible to consider a provisional combination of ESI Funds and the state budget so as to maintain at least the current extent of support programmes. After 2027, the support programmes should start to be fully funded from the state budget, or co-funded by local governments.

The review proposes to ensure better coordination of support programmes by setting up work teams at a regional level. In addition to the representatives of individual programmes, such teams could also include the representatives of other involved institutions such as Police specialists in work with Roma communities, teaching assistants, workers of labour offices, local governments or non-governmental organisations operating in the region. Regular meetings could help transform the mostly personal ties between stakeholders to professional ties, define

⁵⁰² Centrally managed and implemented model is also one of the two most perspective models ensuring sustainability and quality of FSW according to the field social work context evaluation (Filčák et al., 2019).

more precisely the boundaries, powers and responsibilities between individual programmes, and improve the position of Roma workers under the programmes in interactions with mostly non-Roma workers of state institutions.

12. Bibliography

Abbott, L. et al. (2011). Key players in inclusion: are we meeting the professional needs of learning support assistants for pupils with complex needs?, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 26 (2), 215-231

Adams, C. (2019) Vienna ranked best city in the world to live in for 10th year running, The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/vienna-best-city-live-quality-life-ranking-mercer-australia-europe-a8820396.html>

[American Academy of Pediatrics \(2008\)](#). Role of the School Nurse in Providing School Health Services. *PEDIATRICS* (ISSN Numbers: Print, 0031-4005; Online, 1098-4275). <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/121/5/1052.full.pdf>

Association of Early Intervention Providers and Supporters (2019). *Obsah a kvalita služby včasnej intervencie podľa súčasných trendov*. [Content and quality of early intervention service – current trends] <https://asociaciavi.sk/obsah-a-kvalita-sluzby-vcasnej-intervencie-podla-aktualnych-trendov/>

Australian National Audit Office (2017), Jobactive: design and monitoring, https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/ANAO_Report_2017-18_04.pdf

Bahna, M. (2018), Ľudí trpiacich dlhotrvajúcim zdravotným problémom je u nás menej, ako tvrdia štatistiky [Statistics to overestimate the number of people having long-lasting health issues], *Denník N* daily <https://dennikn.sk/1145558/ludi-trpiacich-dlhotrvajucim-zdravotnym-problemom-je-u-nas-menej-nez-tvrdia-statistiky/>

Bainbridge J., M. K. Meyers a J. Waldfogel (2003), Child care policy reform and the employment of single mothers, *Social Science Quarterly*, 84(4), 771-791

Ball, J. (2011), *Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual or Multilingual Education in the Early Years*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000212270>

Bauernschuster S. a M. Schlotter (2015), Public child care and mothers' labor supply: evidence from two quasi-experiments, *Journal of Public Economics*, 123(C), 1-16

Bednárík, M., Krok, M., Salomonsová L., a Slobodníková, S. (2018). *Počúvajme potreby včasnej intervencie. Analýza nákladov a prínosov terénnej včasnej intervencie pre deti so sluchovým postihnutím*. [Listen to the early intervention needs. Cost-and-benefit analysis of early intervention for children with hearing impairment.] Bratislava: IJ, ISP, EPI a UHP. https://www.nadacnyfondtelekom.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Analyza_nakladov_a_prinosov_terennej_vcasnej_intervencie.pdf

Bennett T., K. Holloway, and D. P. Farrington (2006). Does Neighborhood Watch Reduce Crime? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *Journal of Experimental Criminology* (2), 437–58

Berglund, J. (2017)., *Education Policy – A Swedish Success Story? Integration of Newly Arrived Students Into the Swedish School System*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/13259.pdf>

Bernhard S. a Wolff J., (2008), Contracting out placement services in Germany. Is assignment to private providers effective for needy job-seekers?, IAB Discussion Paper, 5/2008. <http://doku.iab.de/discussionpapers-/2008/dp0508.pdf>

Blatchford, P., Basset P., Brown P., Martin C., Russell, A. and Webster R. (2009). *Deployment and Impact of Support Staff in Schools*. London: University of London. <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/assets/content/diss1w123r.pdf>

Bordone V., B. Arpino a A. Aassve (2017), Patterns of grandparental child care across Europe: the role of the policy context and working mothers' need, *Ageing and Society*, 37(4), 845-873

- Brňak, M. (2017) Sociálne bývanie na Slovensku [Social housing in Slovakia], Prohuman, 1-20. <https://prohuman.sk/socialna-praca/socialne-byvanie-na-slovensku>
- Burniaux J. M., T. T. Dang, D. Fore, M. F. Forster, M. Mira d'Ercole a H. Oxley (1998), Income distribution and poverty in selected OECD countries, *OECD Economics Department Working Paper*, No. 189: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/income-distribution-and-poverty-in-selected-oecd-countries_730801800603
- Cangár, M., Krupa S., Matej V., Tichá E. and Záhorcová, V. (2016). *Včasná intervencia a diagnostika pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v Slovenskej republike. [Early intervention and diagnostics for persons with disability in Slovakia]* Bratislava: Social Work Advisory Board. http://www.rpsp.sk/joomla/images/publikacie/vcasna_intervencia.pdf
- Card, D., Kluve, J. & Weber, A. (2015). What Works? A Meta Analysis of Recent Active Labor Market Program Evaluations. *NBER Working Papers* 21431, National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21431>
- Cascio E. U. (2009), Maternal labor supply and the introduction of kinderkartens into American public schools, *Journal of Human Resources*, 44(1), 140-170
- Cederberg, M., Hartsmar, N. and Lingarde, S. (2009). *Thematic report: Socioeconomic Disadvantage*. Malmö University. <http://muep.mau.se/bitstream/handle/2043/7982/ThematicSOCfinal.pdf?sequence=1>
- Cimera, R. (2011). Supported versus sheltered employment: Cumulative costs, hours worked, and wages earned. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*. 35. 85-92. 10.3233/JVR-2011-0556. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Robert_Cimera/publication/260782022_Supported_versus_sheltered_employment_Cumulative_costs_hours_worked_and_wages_earned/links/00b4953231da881061000000/Supported-versus-sheltered-employment-Cumulative-costs-hours-worked-and-wages-earned.pdf
- Cohen, P. N. (2016), Maternal Age and Infant Mortality for White, Black, and Mexican Mothers in the United States, *Sociological Science*, 3, 32-38
- Coley, R. L., Leventhal, T., Lynch, A. D., & Kull, M. (2013). Poor quality housing is tied to children's emotional and behavioral problems. Policy Research Brief, MacArthur foundation Sept.
- Conger, R. D., & Conger, K. J. (2002). Resilience in Midwestern families: Selected findings from the first decade of a prospective, longitudinal study. *Journal of marriage and family*, 64(2), 361-373
- Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., & Martin, M. J. (2010). Socioeconomic status, family processes, and individual development. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 685-704
- Cook, V. (2008), *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. London: Hodder Education.
- Courtade G. and Browder M. D. (2016). *Aligning IEPs to State Standards For Students with Moderate-to-Severe Disabilities*. Wisconsin: Attainment Company. <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/dcat/samples/Align-IEPs-Sample.pdf>
- CVEK (2018), *Monitorovacia správa občianskej spoločnosti o implementácii národnej stratégie integrácie Rómov na Slovensku [Civil association's monitoring report on the implementation of the national strategy for Roma integration in Slovakia]*, <http://cvek.sk/monitorovacia-sprava-obcianskej-spolocnosti-o-implementacii-narodnej-strategie-integracie-romov-na-slovensku/>
- Del Boca D., S. Pasqua a C. Pronzato (2008), Market work and motherhood decisions in contexts, *IZA Discussion Paper Series*, No. 3303: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/35007/1/559459408.pdf>

Dessemontet, R. S., & Bless, G. (2013). The impact of including children with intellectual disability in general education classrooms on the academic achievement of their low-, average-, and highachieving peers. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 38(1), 23–30

Dobrova-Krol, a kol. (2019). *Early Childhood Intervention in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia: A situation analysis based on the Developmental Systems Model*. Luxembourg: Eurllyaid.

<https://www.eurllyaid.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019-12-Agora-project-summary-report-A4-version.pdf>

Downes, P., E. Nairs-Wirth, V. Rusinaite (2017), *Structural indicators for inclusive systems in and around schools*, NESET II report, Publications office of the European Union, Luxembourg

http://nesetweb.eu/NESETII_Structural_Indicators.pdf

Dráb J., J. Mikudová, V. Antalová and M. Bendíková (2019), *Práca s ľuďmi bez domova prináša ovocie celej spoločnosti [Working with homeless people a benefit for the whole society]*, Institute for Environmental Policy,

<https://www.minzp.sk/iep/publikacie/ekonomicke-analyzy/praca-ludmi-bez-domova-prinasa-ovocie-celej-spolocnosti.html>

Duncan, I.D. and B. Duncan (1975), Residential Distribution and Occupational Stratification, in C. Peach et al. (eds.), *Urban Racial Segregation*, Longman, London.

Durlak, J.A.; Weissberg, R.P.; Pachan, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 45 (3–4)

Duval, E. R., Garfinkel, S. N., Swain, J. E., Evans, G. W., Blackburn, E. K., Angstadt, M., Sripada, S. Ch. a Liberzon, I. (2017). Childhood poverty is associated with altered hippocampal function and visuospatial memory in adulthood. *Developmental cognitive neuroscience*, 23, 39-44

Eardley, T. (2003). *Outsourcing Employment Services: What Have We Learned From The Job Network*.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228928956_Outourcing_Employment_Services_What_Have_We_Learned_From_The_Job_Network

Edgar. B., M. Harrison, P. Watson a V. Busch-Geertsema (2007), Measurement of Homelessness at european Union Level: https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2007/study_homelessness_en.pdf

Emanuelsson, I. (2001) Reactive versus proactive support coordinator roles: an international comparison, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 16 (2), 133-142

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014. *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe. 2014 Edition*. Eurydice and Eurostat Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. file:///C:/Users/micha/Downloads/gp_daily_WEB_EC0114484ENC_002.pdf.en.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2013). *Európske modely úspešnej praxe v odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave – Účasť žiakov so špeciálnymi vzdelávacími potrebami/zdravotným postihnutím na odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave. [European models of successful practice in professional education and preparation – Engagement of pupils with special education needs/disability in professional education and preparation.]* Odense, Denmark: EASNIE. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/european-patterns-of-successful-practice-in-vet_VET-Report_SK.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2014). *Vocational Education and Training – Summary of Country Information*. Odense, Denmark: EASNIE. <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/VET%20Summary%20of%20Country%20information%202014.pdf>

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2003). *Special Needs Education in Europe*. Odense, Denmark: EASNIE. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/special-needs-education-in-europe_sne_europe_en.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2011) *Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education: An exploration of challenges and opportunities for developing indicators*. Odense, Denmark: EASNIE. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/mipie-report_0.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2011) *Participation in Inclusive Education – A Framework for Developing Indicators*, Odense, Denmark: EASNIE. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/participation-in-inclusive-education-a-framework-for-developing-indicators_Participation-in-Inclusive-Education.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2016). *Financing of Inclusive Education: Mapping Country Systems for Inclusive Education*. (S. Ebersold, ed.). Odense, Denmark

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2017). *Inclusive Early Childhood Education: New Insights and Tools – Final Summary Report*. (M. Kyriazopoulou, P. Bartolo, E. Björck-Åkesson, C. Giné and F. Bellour, eds.). Odense, Denmark

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018). *Evidence of the Link Between Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion: A Review of the Literature*. (S. Symeonidou, ed.). Odense, Denmark. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20%E2%80%93%20A%20Review%20of%20the%20Literature_0.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018a). *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: 2016 Dataset Cross-Country Report*. (J. Ramberg, A. Lénárt, and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark. Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/data/cross-country-reports>

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2019). *Changing Role of Specialist Provision in Supporting Inclusive Education: Mapping Specialist Provision Approaches in European Countries*. (S. Ebersold, M. Kyriazopoulou, A. Kefallinou and E. Rebollo Píriz, eds.). Odense, Denmark

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (1999). *Financing of Special Needs Education*. Odense, Denmark: EASNIE. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/financing-of-special-needs-education_Financing-EN.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. *Basic information*. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/AgencyFlyer2017-SK_A4_electronic.pdf

European Commission (2013). “PES Approaches for Sustainable Activation of People with Disabilities.” PES to PES Dialogue. The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=10932&langId=en>

European Commission (2014), *Roma Health Report*. Brussels: European Commission. https://eige.europa.eu/resources/2014_roma_health_report_en.pdf

European Commission (2016). *Study on the Diversity within the Teaching Profession with Particular Focus on Migrant and/or Minority Background*. European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Education and Training, Brussels, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2016/teacher-diversity_en.pdf

European Commission (2016): Disability and Labour Market Integration. Analytical Paper. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16601&langId=en>

European Commission /EACEA/Eurydice, (2018b). *Compulsory Education in Europe – 2018/19*. Eurydice Facts and Figures. Publications office of the European Union, Luxembourg. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/compulsory_education_2018_19.pdf

European Commission, (2019), Country report, Non-Discrimination, Slovakia 2018, <https://www.poradna-prava.sk/sk/dokumenty/sprava-o-uplatnovani-antidiskriminacnej-legislativy-na-slovensku/>

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2017), *Compulsory education in Europe – 2017/18*, Eurydice facts and figures, Publications office of the European Union, Luxembourg http://eurydice.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care_.pdf

European Commission/EUR/Eurydice (2016), *Structural Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe – 2016*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f0dc0d44-d581-11e7-a5b9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF>

European Commission/EUR/Eurydice (2018a), *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe – 2018*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/structural_indicators_2018.pdf

Evans, D. K., B. Holtemeyer a K. Kosec (2016), *Cash Transfers and Health, Policy Research Working Paper 7882*, World Bank, Washington DC. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/535371478531675550/Cash-transfers-and-health-evidence-from-Tanzania>

Fico, M. D. Ondrušová and D. Škobla (2019), *Prieskum nájomného bývania a mestských ubytovní v okresných mestách SR [Survey of rental housing and lodging houses in county towns in Slovakia]*, Bratislava: Institute for Labour and Family Research, https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2019/Fico/prieskum_najomneho_byvania_fico_ondrusova_skobla_2019.pdf

Filadelfiová, J. (2012), *Obraz rómskej ženy, OZ Quo Vadis*, https://docs.wixstatic.com/uqd/5f2ca1_99da834d21f14edb8a96a4df37e3f7c5.pdf

Filčák, R., Z. Polačková and D. Dokupilová (2019), *Kontextová evaluácia terénnej sociálnej práce [Contextual evaluation of field social work]*, Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Bratislava: <https://www.tsp.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/KONTEXTOVÁ-EVALUÁCIA-TERÉNNEJ-SOCIÁLNEJ-PRÁCE-Zhrnutie-záverečnej-správy.pdf>

Finn, D., (2011), *Subcontracting in public employment services: review of research findings and literature on recent trends and business models*, Brussels, European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6964&langId=en>

Focus (2015), *Percepcia korupcie na Slovensku [Corruption perception in Slovakia]*, <http://www.transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FOCUS-Percepcia-korupcie-na-Slovensku-feb.2015.pdf>

FRA (2016), *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma – Selected Findings*, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_sk.pdf

FRA (2018), *A persistent concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion*, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/roma-inclusion>

Freeman, S. F. N., & Alkin, M. C. (2000). Academic and Social Attainments of Children with Mental Retardation in General Education and Special Education Settings. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21(1), 3–26

Fričová, M., Matej, V. and Tichá E. (2018). *Správa o stave včasnej intervencie na Slovensku. [Early intervention in Slovakia progress report]* Bratislava: APPVI Association. https://asociaciavi.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Spr%C3%A1va_o_stave_v%C4%8Dasnej_intervencie_na_Slovensku_2018.pdf

Gatti, R., S. Karacsony, I. Sandor, K. Anan, C. Ferré and C. de Paz Nieves (2016), *Being Fair, Faring Better, Promoting Equality of Opportunity for Marginalized Roma*, World Bank, Washington, DC <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/292771468196732276/Being-fair-faring-better-promoting-equality-of-opportunity-for-marginalized-Roma>

- Gavurová, B. & Šoltés, V. (2013), *Efektívnosť slovenského zdravotníctva - analýza komparačných aspektov a identifikácia rozvojových možností [Slovak health care efficiency – analysis of comparative aspects and identification of development opportunities]*, Košice: TU Košice.
- Gavurová, B., Šoltés, V., & Šoltés, M. (2014), *Meranie zdravia a zdravotných rizík vo vybraných rómskych osadách na Slovensku - fakty a reflexie [Measuring health and health risks in the selected Roma settlements in Slovakia – facts and reflections]. Nerovnosť a chudoba v Európskej únii a na Slovensku II.[Inequality and poverty in the European Union and Slovakia II]*, pp. 188 - 201.
- Gažovičová, T. (2012), The Romani Language in the Slovak Educational System. *Human Affairs* 22(4), 510-23
- Gehrt, D., Hafner, M., Hocking, L., Gkousis, E., Smith, P., & Pollard, J. (2019). Poor indoor climate, its impact on child health, and the wider societal costs
- Gelbach J. (2002), Public schooling for young children and maternal labor supply, *American Economic Review*, 92(1), 307-322
- Gerbery, D. a R. Džambazovič (2011), *Inovatívne orientácie v sociálnej politike: Perspektíva sociálnej inklúzie*, Univerzita Komenského [Going innovative in social policy: Perspectives of social inclusion], Bratislava
- Geronimus A., T. M. Hicken, D. Keene, a J. Bound (2006), “Weathering“ and Age Patterns of Allostatic Load Scores among Blacks and Whites in the United States“, *American Journal of Public Health*, 96 (5), 826-833
- Geva, A., S. Hidas and G. Machlica (2018), *The benefits of social inclusion of Roma in the Slovak Republic*, Technical background paper, forthcoming.
- Gibb, K. et al. (2007). Pathways to Inclusion: Moving from special school to mainstream, *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 23(2):109-127
- Godvinová, D. Vedúce v kuchyniach sa idú zblázniť. Obedy v školách nie sú zadarmo, rodičia nerozumejú poplatkom. [Canteen managers going crazy. School lunches are not free, parents do not understand fees]. Denník N.
- Goux, D., & Maurin, E. (2005). The effect of overcrowded housing on children's performance at school. *Journal of Public Economics*, 89(5-6), 797-819
- Hagara, E., Š. Kišš and L. Ódor (2019), *Rozpočet 2.0: Ako posunúť Slovensko do prvej ligy vo verejných financiách [Making Slovakia a leader in public finance]*, http://www.nbs.sk/_img/Documents/Publikacie/rozpocet20/Rozpocet_20_Seminar_FV.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3dcYuHnAgDE6E76wajPEM7XM2PN-ZTks7r7jhX2yc-SDo_V4aJ2SDzdQ
- Hanson, J. L., Chandra, A., Wolfe, B. L., and Pollak, S. D. (2011). Association between income and the hippocampus. *PloS one*, 6(5), e18712
- Hapalová, M. (2019). *Vylúčenie časti detí so zdravotným znevýhodnením zo vzdelávania [Excluding part of children with disability from education]*. Bratislava: To dá rozum.
- Hasluck C., Elias P. and Green A. (2003), *The Wider Labour Market Impact of Employment Zones*, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265143256_The_-_Wider_Labour_Market_Impact_of_Employment_Zones
- Heckl, E. and I. Pecher (2008), *Practices of providing reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the workplace*, Austrian Institute for SME Research: file:///C:/Users/thellebrandt/Downloads/material%20for%20publication_accessible.pdf

Hidas S. and V. Horváthová (2018), Women still can't have it all, Economic analysis, Institute for Financial Policy: https://www.finance.gov.sk/files/archiv/priloha-stranky/19961/63/Women_employment_20180511_final.pdf

Hidas S., Z. Lafférová and G. Machlica (2018), Inklúzia Rómov je celospoločenskou výzvou [*Roma inclusion a nationwide challenge*], Commentary of the Institute for Financial Policy: https://www.finance.gov.sk/files/archiv/priloha-stranky/17297/35/2018_18_Inkluzia_final.pdf

Hidas, S., Val'ková, K. & Harvan, P. (2016). Veľa práce na úradoch práce: Efektivita a účinnosť služieb zamestnanosti [*Toiling at labour offices: effect and efficiency of employment services*], *Economic Analysis* 40, Institute for Financial Policy. <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=11228>

Hijová, E. & Madarasová-Gecková, A., (2012). Stravovacie zvyklosti a výživa Rómov [*Eating habits and diet of Roma*]. *Lekársky Obzor*, Issue 61, pp. 358-362.

Holenová, R. (2015). *Architektonické bariéry vo vysokoškolskom prostredí a opatrenia na predchádzanie ich vzniku* [*Architectural barriers at universities and measures to prevent them*]. Bratislava: UK. https://uniba.sk/fileadmin/ruk/cezap/Architektonicke_bariery_voVSprostredi.pdf

Hurrass, J., Heinzow, B., Aurbach, U., Bergmann, K. C., Bufe, A., Buzina, W., ... & Heinz, W. (2017). Medical diagnostics for indoor mold exposure. *International journal of hygiene and environmental health*, 220(2), 305-328

IFP (2014a) Odvodová úľava zlepšila vyhliadky dlhodobo nezamestnaným [*Contribution relief improved the prospects of long-term unemployed*], *Commentary*, Institute for Financial Policy, Bratislava: <https://www.mfsr.sk/sk/financie/verejne-financie/regulacny-komplex-pravnych-noriem-metodicnych-postupov-z-oblasti-rozpocetoveho-procesu/rozpocetova-klasifikacia/uplne-znenie-metodickeho-ustmerenia-ministerstva-financii-slovenskej-republiky-k-c-mf/010175/2004-42-zo-dna-3.html>

IFP (2014b), Bez práce nie sú koláče [No pain, no gain], *Commentary*, Institute for Financial Policy, Bratislava <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=9887>

IMF (2018), Pursuing Women's Economic Empowerment, Washington, D.C., <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment>

EPI (2017), PISA 2015: Povornanie vybraných charakteristík vzdelávacích systémov [*Comparing the selected features of education systems*], *Commentary* 02/2017, Educational Policy Institute <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/11679.pdf>

Jesenská, V., Liptáková, L., Feješ Dananaiová, B. (2018) Zásady a odporúčania sociálneho bývania s prvkami prestupného bývania [*Principles and recommendations for social housing with transitional housing elements*], Ministry of Interior 3-14. https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/mvsvr_a_eu/oplz/vyzvy/vyzva_byvanie_2018/Priloha%20c.%2011%20-%20Zasady%20a%20odporucania.pdf

Johnson, S. B., Riis, J. L., and Noble, K. G. (2016). State of the art review: poverty and the developing brain. *Pediatrics*, 137(4), e20153075

Jurová, A. (2002), Historický vývoj rómskych osád na Slovensku a problematika vlastníckych vzťahov k pôde („nelegálne osady“) [*Historical development of Roma settlements in Slovakia and ownership relations to land ("illegal settlements")*], *Človek a spoločnosť*: <http://www.clovekaspolocnost.sk/jquery/pdf.php?gui=4C1CAWW8VEC76AVNLGD191A7C>

Kamenárová, R., E. Španová, H. Los Ivoriková, M. Mošaťová (2018), *Križom krážom: Metodická príručka – slovenčina A1* [*Criss cross Slovakia: Methodological guide for Slovak language*]. Bratislava: Comenius University in Bratislava.

Karvonen, A. M., Hyvärinen, A., Korppi, M., Haverinen-Shaughnessy, U., Renz, H., Pfefferle, P. I., ... & Pekkanen, J. (2015). Moisture damage and asthma: a birth cohort study. *Pediatrics*, 135(3), e598-e606.

Kešelová et al. (2018): Kvalita služieb zamestnanosti: Individualizované služby zamestnanosti a vybrané skupiny uchádzačov o zamestnanie [*Quality of employment services: Individualised employment services and selected job-seeker groups*].
https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2018/Keselova/kvalita_sluzieb_zamestnanosti_keselova_2018.pdf

Kešelová, D. et al. (2017). *Správa z prieskumu – Podmienky štúdia a prístupnosť akademického prostredia pre študentov so špecifickými potrebami* [Survey report – Conditions of education and accessibility of the academic premises for students with specific needs]. Bratislava: UK.

Kim, P., Evans, G. W., Angstadt, M., Ho, S. S., Sripada, C. S., Swain, J. E., Liberzon, I. and Phan, K. L. (2013). Effects of childhood poverty and chronic stress on emotion regulatory brain function in adulthood. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110(46), 18442-18447

Kiššová, K. (2017) Slovenčinu chcú učiť ako cudzí jazyk, nová mapa ukazuje, kde sa mieša s rómčinou [*Teaching Slovak as a foreign language? A new map of Roma-Slovak mixed locations*], *Denník N*
<https://dennikn.sk/898985/slovenčinu-mozu-ucit-ako-cudzí-jazyk-nova-mapa-ukazuje-kde-sa-miesha-s-romčinou/>

Kregel, J. Ed. D. a Dean, D.H. (2002) *Sheltered vs. Supported Employment : A Direct Comparison of Long-Term Earnings Outcomes for Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities*.
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/aba8/400531ca8e78475bdf4db97a54d6cf76015.pdf?_ga=2.170159968.1940455536.1562077099-978996208.1562077099

Kubala, J., Peciar, V. (2019) V nájme ďalej zájdeš: Podpora bývania na Slovensku [*More haste, less speed in rented housing: Housing support in Slovakia*], Institute for Financial Policy, <https://www.mfsr.sk/sk/financie/institut-financnej-politiky/publikacie-ifp/ekonomicke-analyzy/53-najme-dalej-zajdes-podpora-byvania-slovensku.html>

Kubala, J., Peciar, V. (2019) V nájme ďalej zájdeš: Podpora bývania na Slovensku [*More haste, less speed in rented housing: Housing support in Slovakia*], Institute for Financial Policy: <https://www.mfsr.sk/sk/financie/institut-financnej-politiky/publikacie-ifp/ekonomicke-analyzy/53-najme-dalej-zajdes-podpora-byvania-slovensku.html>

Kureková, L. M. (2014), Review of profiling systems, categorization of jobseekers and calculation of unit costs in employment services – implications and applications for Slovakia, CELSI Research Report No. 8:
https://celsi.sk/media/research_reports/celsi_rr_8_final.pdf

Kureková, L. M., A. Salner, M. Farenzenová (2013), *Implementácia aktivačných prác na Slovensku hodnotenie a odporúčania pre verejnú politiku* [*Implementation of activation works in Slovakia, assessment and recommendations for public policy*], Slovak governance institute, Bratislava http://stary-web.governance.sk/assets/files/publikacie/AKTIVACNE_PRACE_SGI_SK_ZHRNUTIE.pdf

Kusá, Z. (2013), *Tieňová správa o chudobe a sociálnom vylúčení* [*Shadow poverty and social exclusion report*], Slovenská sieť proti chudobe:
http://www.sociologia.sav.sk/cms/uploaded/1858_attach_tienova_sprava_2013_full.pdf

Kuvíková, H., Gondášová, L., Svidroňová, M. (2015) Poskytovanie služieb bývania mimovládny neziskový sektorom [Housing services provided by the non-governmental non-profit sector], Banská Bystrica: Ekonomická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela, 1-12.
https://www.academia.edu/25636031/Poskytovanie_sluzieb_b%C5%BEieb_b%C3%BDvania_mimovl%C3%A1dnym_neziskov%C3%BDm_sektorom_Providing_Housing_Services_through_Non-governmental_Non-profit_Sector

Lajčáková, J., E. Gallová-Kriglerová, J. Kadlečíková, Z. Balážová and A. Chudžíková (2017), *Riešenie nezamestnanosti Rómov* [*Addressing Roma unemployment*], CVEK <http://cvek.sk/riesenie-nezamestnanosti-romov-od-myty-k-praxi-a-spat/>

- Luby, J., Belden, A., Botteron, K., Marrus, N., Harms, M. P., Babb, C., Nishino, T. and Barch, D. (2013). The effects of poverty on childhood brain development: the mediating effect of caregiving and stressful life events. *JAMA pediatrics*, 167(12), 1135-1142
- Lynn A. Karolly et. All (2005). *Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG341.pdf
- [Maughan, E. \(2003\)](#). The Impact of School Nursing on School Performance: A Research Synthesis. *The Journal of school nursing*, Vol 19, Issue 3
- Messing, V. (2014), Methodological puzzles of surveying Roma/Gypsy populations, *Ethnicities*, 14(6), 811-829
- Misra J., S. Moller a M. J. Budig (2007), Work-family policies and poverty for partnered and single women in Europe and America, *Gender and Society*, 21(6), 804-827
- Mizza, D. (2014), The First Language (L1) or Mother Tongue Model Vs. The Second Language (L2) Model of Literacy Instruction. *Journal of Education and Human Development* 3(3), 101-9
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (2019) Súhrnná správa o stave rodovej rovnosti na Slovensku za rok 2018 – Rodová rovnosť na trhu práce [2018 Summary report on gender equality in Slovakia – Gender equality on the labour market], https://www.gender.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SSRR_2018-final.pdf
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (2016, 2017, 2018). *Správa o hospodárení*. <https://www.minedu.sk/sprava-o-hospodareni/>
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (2017), *Analýza zaškolenosti detí v materských školách – rok 2017 [Analysis of kindergarten enrolment rate in 2017]*, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport , Bratislava <https://www.minedu.sk/analyza-zaskolenosti-deti-v-materskych-skolach/>
- Musset, P. and L. Mytna Kurekova (2018). *Working it out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement*. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 175, OECD Publishing, Paris
- Národná asociácia včasnej intervencie (2016). *Recommended Practices in Early Childhood Intervention: A Guidebook for Professionals*. Portugal: Coimbra. <https://indd.adobe.com/view/ce456704-8e75-46a4-a7e6-700b024ed409>
- National Bank of Slovakia (2015), Vybrané aspekty bývania v európskych krajinách [Selected aspects of housing in the European countries], *Makroekonomické otázky*, https://www.nbs.sk/img/Documents/PUBLIK_NBS_FSR/Biatec/Rok2015/09-2015/biatec_09_2015_03Car.pdf
- [NCSE \(2012\)](#). *Curriculum and curriculum access issues for students with special educational needs in post-primary settings: An international review*. https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Access_to_the_Curriculum_19_10_12-2.pdf
- NCSE (2013). *Continuum of Education Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs*. https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Report_13_Continuum_07_08_13.pdf
- NCSE (2014). *Special Needs Assistants Scheme*. <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/NCSE-SNA-Scheme-Information-Pamphlet.FINALwebaccessibleversion.16.01.151.pdf>
- NCSE (2016). *CHANGING SCHOOLS Moving Between Special and Mainstream Settings*. <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2-NCSE-2016-Changing-Schools-2-final-web-27.01.16.pdf>
- Nisbett, R. E., Aronson, J., Blair, C., Dickens, W., Flynn, J., Halpern, D. F., and Turkheimer, E. (2012). Intelligence: new findings and theoretical developments. *American psychologist*, 67(2), 130
- Noble, K. G., Houston, S. M., Brito, N. H., Bartsch, H., Kan, E., Kuperman, J. M., ... and Schork, N. J. (2015). Family income, parental education and brain structure in children and adolescents. *Nature neuroscience*, 18(5), 773.

NUCEM (2018). *Pokyny pre školských koordinátorov k papierovej forme testovania žiakov 9. ročníka ZŠ [Instructions for school coordinators for the 9th grade pupils testing]*. https://www.nucem.sk/dl/818/Pokyny_pre_koordinatorov_T9_2018_final.pdf

Nusslock, R., & Miller, G. E. (2016). Early-life adversity and physical and emotional health across the lifespan: a neuroimmune network hypothesis. *Biological psychiatry*, 80(1), 23-32

Ó Duibhir, P., N. Ní Chuai, L. Ní Thuairisg, C. Ó Brolcháin (2015), *Education Provision through Minority Languages: Review of International Research*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills. https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Events/Gaeltacht-Education-Policy-Proposals/Education-Provision-through-Minority-Languages_Review-of-International-Research_May-2015.pdf

OECD (2007), *No More Failures – Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, OECD, Paris <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/45179151.pdf>

OECD (2010) *Equal opportunities? The labour market intergration of the children of immigrants*, OECD, Paris https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/equal-opportunities_9789264086395-en

OECD (2015). *LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF: A LITERATURE REVIEW*. OECD Education Working Paper no.125. OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jrnzm39w45l-en>

OECD (2015): *OECD Employment Outlook 2015*. OECD Publishing, Paris <http://ifuturo.org/documentacion/Employment%20outlook%202015.pdf>

OECD (2015a), *Integrating Social Services for Vulnerable Groups: Bridging Sectors for Better Service Delivery*, OECD Publishing, Paris https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/integrating-the-delivery-of-social-services-for-vulnerable-groups_9789264233775-en#page1

OECD (2016), *Low performing students: why they fall behind and how to help them succeed*, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/low-performing-students_9789264250246-en

OECD (2016). *PISA 2015 Results (Volume 1)*. Table B1.6 - Results (tables): Socio-economic status, student performance and students' attitudes towards science.

OECD (2017), *Educational Opportunity for All: Overcoming Inequality throughout the Life Course*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264287457-en>

OECD (2018a), *Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care, Starting Strong*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264085145-en>

[OECD \(2018b\), PISA 2015 Results in Focus](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf), OECD, Paris <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

OECD (2019), *Health at a Glance 2019*. Paríž: OECD. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-at-a-glance-2019_4dd50c09-en

Olivetti C., a B. Petrongolo (2017), The economic consequences of family policies: lessons from a century of legislation in high-income countries, *NBER Working Paper Series*, No. 23051: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w23051>

Ondrušová et al. (2018) *Rozvoj spolupráce agentúr podporovaného zamestnávania so zamestnávateľmi a úradmi práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny pri poskytovaní služieb podporovaného zamestnávania [Development of cooperation between supported employment agencies and offices of labour, social affairs and family in provision of supported employment services]*: https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2018/Ondrusova/rozvoj_spoluprace_agentur_2018.pdf

Ondrušová D., D. Gerbery, M. Fico, J. Filadelfiová and G. Csomor (2016), *Záverečná správa z výskumu a sčítania ľudí bez domova na území mesta Bratislavy v roku 2016 [Final report on the homeless people survey*

and census in Bratislava in 2016], Bratislava: Institute for Labour and Family Research: https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2016/Ondrusova/zaverecna_sprava_scitanie_ondrusova_2016.pdf

Ondrušová, D., Fico, M. (2018) Podkladový materiál koncepcie prevencie a riešenia bezdomovectva na národnej úrovni [Basic material of the national homelessness prevention and solution concept], Bratislava: Institute for Labour and Family Research, 68-93. https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2018/Ondrusova/podkladovy_material_koncepcie_ondrusova_2018.pdf

OSN (2018) Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment, UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures#notes>

Páleník, M. (2018), Legislatívne zmeny v zdaňovaní príjmu z práce a ich vplyvy na nízkopříjmové skupiny, Medzinárodná vedecká konferencia Horizonty podnikateľského prostredia IV [Legislative changes in work earned income taxation and their impacts on low-income groups, International science conference Business Horizons IV].

Paris, V. (2016), Health care coverage in OECD countries in 2012. *OECD Health Working Papers, No. 88. Paris: OECD.* https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-care-coverage-in-oecd-countries-in-2012_5jlz3kbf7pzv-en

Peetsma, T. et al. (2001). Inclusion in Education: Comparing pupils' development in special and regular education. *Educational Review*, 53(2), 125–135

Perić, T. (2012), The housing situation of Roma communities: Regional Roma survey 2011, *Roma Inclusion Working Papers*, Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme: <https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/the-housing-situation-of-roma-communities.html>

Petránsky, Ľ (2015) Ako vyzerá sociálne bývanie vo Viedni [Social housing in Vienna], ASB. <https://www.asb.sk/architektura/bytove-domy/ako-vyzera-socialne-byvanie-vo-viedni>

Petráš, J. (2018), Kto chce zať, musí siať: Analýza čistých efektov opatrenia REPAS [No pain, no gain: Analysis of the effects of REPAS measures], Institute of Social Policy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family: https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/analyticke-centrum/analyticke-komentare/kto_chce_zat_musi_siat.pdf

Petráš, J. (2019), Dočasná práca ako šanca pre znevýhodnených: Analýza čistej účinnosti opatrenia 50j [Temporary work as a chance for the disadvantaged: Analysis of the effect of the 50j measure], Institute of Social Policy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/ministerstvo/vyskum-oblasti-prace-socialnych-veci-institut-socialnej-politiky/analyticke-komentare/docasna-praca-ako-sanca-znevychodnenych.html>

Pinto, A. I. et al. (2012). Early childhood intervention in Portugal: an overview based on the developmental systems model. *Infants and Young Children*. 25 (4), 310-322

Pleace, N. (2013), Consumer choice in housing-first, *European Journal of Homelessness*, 7(2): https://www.feantsa.org/download/np_response6502075727440568644.pdf

Podmanická Z., et al. (2015), Rodinné správanie populácie Slovenska [Family patterns in Slovak population], *DemoGraphia a sociálna štatistika*: ftp://193.87.31.84/0212900/Statistika_v_suvvislostiach-Rodinne_spravanie_populacie_Slovenska.pdf

Popper, M., P. Szeghy, and Š. Šarkozy, (2009), *Rómska populácia a zdravie: Analýza situácie na Slovensku* [Roma population and health: Analysis of the situation in Slovakia], Bratislava: Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia. <http://www.gitanos.org/upload/13/60/Eslovaquia-corrected.pdf>

Posner, J.K.; Vandell, D.L. (1994). Low-Income Children's After-School Care: Are there Beneficial Effects of After-School Programs?, *Child Development*. 65 (2): 440–456

Rawlings, L. B. and G. M. Rubio (2005), Evaluating the Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs, *The World Bank Research Observer*, 20:1, pp. 29 to 56. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/18119>

RECI (2017), *Special Report on Roma Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care*, http://osf.sk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/RECI_Slovak-Republic-report_ENG-06-18-2017.pdf

Repková K., M. Bobáková and M. Čierna (2019), *Správa z vplyvovej evaluácie národného projektu Podpora vybraných sociálnych služieb krízovej intervencie na komunitnej úrovni [Report on the impact evaluation of the national project Support of the selected social services of crisis intervention at a community level]*, Implementation agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family: https://www.ia.gov.sk/npkiku/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/IA_Dopadová-zpráva-z-evaluace_17.pdf

Rieser, R. (2008). *Implementing Inclusive Education*. UK: Commonwealth Secretariat. www.worldofinclusion.com/res/internat/Commonwealth_Guide.doc

Ripka, Š., Černá, E., Kubala, P. (2018) Závěrečná evaluační zpráva / Analýza cílového stavu. Dopady zabydlení po 12 měsících od nastěhování „Pilotní testování rychlého zabydlení rodin s dětmi (Rapid Re-Housing) [Final evaluation report/Analysis of the target status. Housing impacts 12 months from moving "Rapid Re-Housing pilot test"]", Ostrava: Operational Programme Employment, 8-76. https://socialnibydeni.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/RRH_Zaverecna-evaluacni-zprava_web.pdf

ROCEPO (2015), Prieskum o postavení žiaka zo SZP v ZŠ [Status of pupils with SEN at BS]. https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/rocepo-dokumenty/na-pomoc-pedagogom/mpc_2012_rc2.pdf

Rollings, K. A., Wells, N. M., Evans, G. W., Bednarz, A., & Yang, Y. (2017). Housing and neighborhood physical quality: Children's mental health and motivation. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 50, 17-23

Saville-Troike, M. (2012), *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Scholl, L. et al. (2004). Youth with Disabilities in Work-based Learning Programs: Factors that Influence Success, *The Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education*, 26 (2), 4-16.

Solari, C. D., & Mare, R. D. (2012). Housing crowding effects on children's wellbeing. *Social science research*, 41(2), 464-476

Solovič, I., P. Juriš, P. Lauková, G. Petrová, A. Kováč a J. Švecová (2011), *Tuberkulóza a parazitózy u marginalizovanej populácie na Slovensku [Tuberculosis and parasitoses in the marginalised population in Slovakia]*, s.l.: Verejné zdravotníctvo.

Stafford B. with others (2007), *New Deal for Disabled People: Third synthesis report – key findings from the evaluation*, Research Report No. 430, Department for Work and Pensions, London, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303548553_New_Deal_for_Disabled_People_Third_synthesis_report_-_key_findings_from_the_evaluation

Svidroňová M., M. (2016) *Neziskový sektor a sociálne bývanie [Non-profit sector and social housing]*, Banská Bystrica: Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Habilitation thesis, 56-145. <https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=67B569DE93B0833F174A60AEA79E&seo=CRZP-detail-kniha>

Szolgayová, E. et al. (2019) *Podpora nájomného bývania [Support of rented housing]*, https://www.zmos.sk/download_file_f.php?id=1254271

Šedovič M. and M. Plavčan (2019), *Flexibilné hodiny pre prácu aj rodiny [Flexible schedules for labour and family]*, Institute of Social Policy

Škobla D., T. Hrustič and O. Poduška (2019), *Evaluácia dopadu terénnej sociálnej práce 2018 [Field social work impact evaluation 2018]*, Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family: <https://www.tsp.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Evaluacia-dopadu-terennej-socialnej-prace-2018.pdf>

Škobla, D. (2018) Systém podpory bývania a príspevkov na bývanie. Identifikácia optimálneho modelu na základe skúseností best practice v medzinárodnej perspektíve [*Housing support system and housing benefit. Identification of the optimum model based on best practice from international perspective*], Bratislava: Institute for Labour and Family Research, 13-25. https://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2018/Skobla/system_podpory_byvania_maj.pdf

Škobla, D., Csomor, G., Filadelfiová, J. (2016a) Zmeny v systéme pomoci v hmotnej núdzi a prieskum dopadov zmien v poskytovaní príspevku na bývanie v rámci pomoci v hmotnej núdzi [*Changes in the assistance in material need system and survey of the impacts of the changes in housing benefit within the social assistance system*], Bratislava: Institute for Labour and Family Research.

Škobla, D., Csomor, G., Ondrušová, D. (2016b) Uplatiteľnosť systému prestupného bývania a „housing-first“ v podmienkach SR [*Applicability of the transitional housing system and "housing first" programme in Slovakia*], Bratislava: Institute for Labour and Family Research. [https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/publikacie/kniznica/FINALuplatnitelnost_systemu_prestupneho_byvania_housing_first_VU_20161%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/publikacie/kniznica/FINALuplatnitelnost_systemu_prestupneho_byvania_housing_first_VU_20161%20(1).pdf)

Šoltés, V., Šoltés, M., & Gavurová, B. (2014), Vývoj mortality v regiónoch s vysokou koncentráciou rómskeho obyvateľstva [*Mortality trend in the regions with high Roma concentrations*]. *Nerovnosť a chudoba v Európskej Únii a na Slovensku [Inequality and poverty in the European Union and Slovakia]*, pp. 202-214.

Šprocha B., B. Vaňo and B. Bleha (2014), Prognóza vývoja rodín a domácností do roku 2030 [*Prognosis of family and household development until 2030*]: http://www.infostat.sk/vdc/pdf/Prognoza_rodin.pdf

Šprocha, B. (2014), *Reprodukcia rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku a prognóza jeho populačného vývoja [Reproduction of Roma population in Slovakia and prognosis of its population growth]*, Bratislava: Demographic Research Centre, Infostat. <http://www.infostat.sk/vdc/pdf/Romovia.pdf>

NIE (2019). Štátne vzdelávacie programy pre žiakov so zdravotným znevýhodnením a intelektovým nadaním [*State educational programmes for pupils with disability and for intellectually gifted pupils*]. <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/deti-ziaci-so-svvp/deti-ziaci-so-zdravotnym-znevychodnenim-vseobecny-intelektovym-nadanim/vzdelavacie-programy/vzdelavacie-programy-ziakov-so-zdravotnym-znevychodnenim-vseobecny-intelektovym-nadanim/zakladne-vzdelavanie-primarne-vzdelavanie-nizsie-s/>

NIE (2020). *Žiak zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia [A pupil from socially disadvantaged background]*.

State School Inspection (2016). *Správa o stave vytvárania predpokladov na zabezpečenie inkluzívneho vzdelávania pre žiakov zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia v základných školách v školskom roku 2016/17 [Progress report on the development of inclusive education for pupils from socially disadvantaged background at basic schools in the school year 2016/17]*. https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/SPRAVY/2017/UZP_Inkluzia_ZS_2016_2017.pdf

State School Inspection (2016a). *Správa o stave poskytovania odbornej činnosti v školských zariadeniach výchovného poradenstva a prevencie v školskom roku 2016/2017 v Slovenskej republike [Progress report on the professional services provided by school counselling centres in Slovakia in the school year 2016/2017]*. https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/SPRAVY/2017/152_TI_CSPP_CPPP_2016_17_SR_2.pdf

State School Inspection (2016b). *Správa o stave a úrovni uplatňovania princípu rovného prístupu k vzdelávaniu pri prijímaní žiakov do špeciálnej základnej školy v školskom roku 2016/2017 v Slovenskej republike [Progress report on the application of equal access to education during admission process at special basic schools in*

Slovakia in the school year 2016/2017].

https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/SPRAVY/2017/151_TI_SZS_2016_17_SR_1.pdf

State School Inspection (2017a), *Správa o výsledku spätnej väzby od riaditeľov škôl, v ktorých sa v školskom roku 2016/17 realizoval výchovno-vzdelávací proces v nulťom ročníku* [Report on the feedback from head teachers of schools which had zero grade in the school year 2016/17]

https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/Vyhodnotenie_0_rocnik_2017_final%281%29.pdf

State School Inspection (2017b). *Správa o stave poskytovania odbornej činnosti v školských zariadeniach výchovného poradenstva a prevencie v školskom roku 2017/2018 v Slovenskej republike* [Progress report on the professional services provided by school counselling centres in Slovakia in the school year 2016/2017].

https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/SVVP_ZVPaP_152_153.pdf

State School Inspection (2018a). *Výchova a vzdelávanie detí so špeciálnymi výchovno-vzdelávacími potrebami v materských školách v školskom roku 2018/2019 v SR* [Education of children with special education needs at kindergartens in Slovakia in the school year 2018/2019].

https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/SPRAVY/2019/UZP_SVVP_MS_18_19.pdf

State School Inspection (2018b). *Správa o stave a úrovni procesu a podmienok organizovania vzdelávania na získanie nižšieho stredného vzdelania* [Progress report on the process and conditions for opening education programmes to achieve lower secondary education level].

https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/UZP_KURZ_ZS_SOS.pdf

Šupinová, M., Hegyi, L. & Klement, C. (2015), *Zdravotný stav Rómov na Slovensku* [Health condition of Roma in Slovakia]. *Hygiena*, pp. 116-119.

Taylor, S. (2017). Contested Knowledge: A Critical Review of the Concept of Differentiation in Teaching and Learning, *Warwick Journal of Education - Transforming Teaching*, Vol 1, 55 – 68

Telljohann S. K. et al. (2004). Effect of Full-Time versus Part-Time School Nurses on Attendance of Elementary Students with Asthma. *The Journal of school nursing*, 20 (6), 331-4

Thomson, H., Thomas, S., Sellström, E., & Petticrew, M. (2013). Housing Improvements for Health and Associated Socio-Economic Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 9(1), 1-348

To dá rozum (2019). *Dáta. Vysoké školstvo* [Data. Tertiary education.].

<https://analiza.todarozum.sk/data/19081607260001hyi1/>

Tsemberis, S. (2010), *Housing first: ending homelessness, promoting recovery and reducing costs*, In: Gould Ellen, I. and O'Flaherty, B. (Eds.) *How to House the Homeless*, pp.37-56. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation)

VfM (2017), *Revízia výdavkov na politiky trhu práce a sociálne politiky: záverečná správa* [Labour market and social policies spending review: final report] <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=11158>

VfM and Educational Policy Institute (2017), *Revízia výdavkov na vzdelávanie: záverečná správa* [Education spending review: final report] <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=11158>

UNDP (2012), *Správa o životných podmienkach rómskych domácností na Slovensku 2010* [Report on the living conditions of Roma households in Slovakia 2010], https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/undp-sprava-2010_na-web.pdf

Unger, A. (2013). Children's health in slum settings. *Archives of disease in childhood*, 98(10), 799-805

UNICEF (2008), *The child care transition*, https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc8_eng.pdf

Central Labour Office (2018). *Ročné výkazy V05 MPSVR SR o poskytovaní starostlivosti a výchovy deťom v detských domovoch a v detských domovoch pre maloletých bez sprievodu* [Annual statements V05 of the Ministry of

Labour, Social Affairs and Family on care for children in foster home and in foster home for unaccompanied minors]

ÚSVPRK (2018), *Metodický výklad k používaniu etnických kategórií pri nastavení štátnych integračných politík* [Methodological explanation of the use of ethnic categories in setting state integrational policies], Office of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, Bratislava
http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/publikacie/Metodicky%20vyklad%20k%20pouzivaniu%20etnickych%20kategorii%20pri%20nastavovani%20statnych%20integracnych%20politik.pdf

Roma Plenipotentiary Office (2019). *Atlas of Roma Communities*. <https://www.minv.sk/?atlas-romskych-komunit-2019>

Roma Plenipotentiary Office (2020). *Národný projekt inklúzie v materských školách* [National project of inclusion at kindergartens]. <https://www.minv.sk/?pre-materske-skoly>

Van Huisen, T. and J. Plantenga (2018) Do Children Benefit from Universal Early Childhood Education and Care? Meta-Analysis of Evidence from Natural Experiments, *Economics of Education Review*, vol. 66, 206-222

Varsik, S. (2019), *Držim ti miesto: Analýza kapacít materských škôl pre 5-ročné deti* [Keeping you a place: Analysis of kindergarten capacities for 5-year-old children], Educational Policy Institute:
<https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/15248.pdf>

Ombudsman (2016). *Správa o výsledkoch prieskumu bezbariérového prístupu do budov škôl a bezbariérovosti v nich* [Report on the survey of barrier-free access to schools and barrier-free design in school premises].
<https://www.vop.gov.sk/files/Sprava%20bezbarierovost%20skoly.pdf>

Webster, R. (2010). *Double standards and first principles: framing teaching assistant support for pupils with special educational needs*, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 25 (4), 319-336

Wells, N. M., Evans, G. W., & Cheek, K. A. (2016). Environmental psychology. Environmental health: From global to local, 203.

Wise, P. H. (2016). Child poverty and the promise of human capacity: childhood as a foundation for healthy aging. *Academic pediatrics*, 16(3), S37-S45

Wolfe, I. and McKee, M. (2013). *European child health services and systems. Lessons without borders*. UK: Open University Press. <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/european-child-health-services-and-systems.-lessons-without-borders-2013>

Y-Foundation (2017), *A Home of Your Own: Housing First and ending homelessness in Finland*:
https://ysaatio.fi/assets/files/2018/01/A_Home_of_Your_Own_lowres_spreads.pdf

Zúbková, M. , Brazdovičova, S. (2008) *Chápanie sociálneho bývania a jeho praktické uplatnenie vo vybranej krajine EÚ* [Understanding social housing and its practical application in the selected EU country], Bratislava: STU BA, *Nehnutelnosti a bývanie* 2008/2, 1-10.
https://www.stuba.sk/buxus/docs/stu/ustavy/ustav_manazmentu/NAB2008_2/clanok1.pdf

13. Annexes:

Annex 1: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

3D	desegregation, destigmatization and degetoization	KG	Kindergarten
ADHD	Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder	LFS	Labour Force Survey
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies	LRNG	Learning disorders
AMN	Assistance in material need	LSSCF	Low-threshold social service for children and family
APPVI	Association of Early Intervention Providers and Supporters	MD	Material deprivation
ARC	Atlas of Roma Communities	MINAG	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
AS	Actual spending (within budget expenditures)	MINED	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
ASC	After school club	MINFIN	Ministry of Finance
ASD	Autism spectrum disorders	MINHLTH	Ministry of Health
ASE	Agency of Supported Employment	MININTR	Ministry of Interior
AUT	Autism	MINJUS	Ministry of Justice
BS	Basic school	MINLBR	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
CC	Community centre	MINTRANS	Ministry of Transport and Construction
CD	Communication disorder	MISSOC	Mutual Information System on Social Protection
CE	Compulsory education	MOPS	Neighbourhood watch
CIC	Counselling and information centre	MRC	Marginalised Roma communities
CSPC	Centre of special-pedagogical counselling	NDC	Low-threshold day centre
CSTI	Centre of Scientific and Technical Information	NEP	National education programme
CSWR	Centre of social and work rehabilitation	NIE	National Institute for Education
CVEK	Ethnicity and culture research centre	NP	National project
D	Disability	OP FEAD	Operational Programme of Food and Basic Material Assistance 2014 – 2020
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education	OP HR	Operational Programme Human Resources
EPI	Educational Policy Institute	P	Proposal (within budget expenditures)
ES	Expected status (within the budget)	PA	Priority axis (within the OP HR)
ESDO	Early school drop-out	PEIS	Providers of early intervention service
ESF	European Social Fund	PHI	Public health insurance
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds	PHYS	Physical disability
ESKO	Efficient Services for Citizens	PPCPC	Pedagogical and psychological counselling and prevention centre
EW	External workplace	PwD	Persons with disabilities
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency	RCVIP	Rehabilitation centre for visually impaired people (in Levoča)
FSW	Field social work/Field social worker	RNP	Register of natural persons
GBR	Generally binding regulation	SC	Special classroom
GYNDPT	Department of gynaecology and obstetrics	SD	Severe disability
HD	Health disadvantaged	SDB	Socially disadvantaged background
HEAR	Hearing impairment	SEN	Special education needs
HTU	Higher territorial unit	SILC	Survey of income and living conditions
IA	Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family	SKG	Special kindergarten
ID	Invalidity pension	SPS	Special basic school
ILR	Institute for Labour Rehabilitation	SSCI	Social services of crisis intervention
INTL	Intellectual disability	SSI	State School Inspection authority
INTL	Intellectual disability	TA	Teaching assistant

IROP	Integrated Regional Operating Programme	UN	United Nations
IS	Information system	UNDP	United nations development programme
ISCED	International standard classification of education	VEGA	Scientific grant agency
ISP	Institute of Social Policy	VfM	Value for Money unit
JS	Job seeker	VSN	Visual impairment
KEGA	Cultural and Educational Grant Agency	VSS	Vocational secondary school

Annex 2: Results by belonging to MRC and gender

Table P 1: Results by belonging to MRC and gender

	MRC		non-MRC	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Education				
Enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 5 years in the school year 2018/19 (%)	32.6	31.2	80.4	79.8
Percentage of 6 years old pupils in the zero grade in the school year 2018/19	43.0	46.6	1.8	2.0
Percentage of pupils who repeated grade in the school year 2018/19 (%)	12.8	14.0	1.5	1.8
Percentage of pupils in special schools in the school year 2018/19 (%)	18.2	20.2	3.0	4.5
Percentage of pupils who completed compulsory education in 2017/18 and did not continue in education (%)	13.0	13.8	6.1	4.9
Percentage of 16 years old children in the education system in the school	52.1	50.4	77.7	79.1
Percentage of 19 to 23 years old people who are or were enrolled at a university in Slovakia (%)	8.5	4.9	56.4	40.0
Labour Market				
Participation of job seekers in the selected ALMP instruments other than activation works in 2017 (%)	9.2	13.0	23.6	21.1
Health				
Average age at which people with severe disability started to receive compensation of social consequences of SD	45.2	39.6	58.1	52.6

Annex 3: Investments pay off: cost-and-benefit analysis of early childhood intervention for children with autistic spectrum disorders

The analysis⁵⁰³ of the Institute of Social Policy (ISP) proved the benefits of early childhood intervention in case of children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) to exceed the cost of such intervention. The benefits of high-quality and intensive early childhood intervention programmes for these children translate in higher quality of their lives, public fund savings in the area of education and social services, as well as better prospects on the labour market. The costs of therapy of the required form and intensity are not covered by the social services system or the public health insurance in Slovakia. Such costs amount to around EUR 50 thousand per one child. The analysis confirms that although the initial costs are quite high, the internal rate of return may be expected to reach 7.4 to 14.2%. International organisations recommend to implement public investments if their return is higher than 3.5 – 5%. Intensive early childhood intervention support is estimated by the ISP to return in 11 to 25 years depending on the target group and therapy intensity. Besides the children with autism spectrum disorders, early childhood intervention is also beneficial for children with other disability as well as those who grow up in a low stimulus environment. More intensive and higher quality therapy generally leads to earlier return on the invested funds.

In the existing system of early childhood intervention funding, it is not possible to provide early intervention services in the necessary form and intensity. Funding is insufficient for more intensive services and therapies which bring the best results, as evidenced by the experiences of other countries. For example, the expected annual cost of intensive early intervention (at least 25 hours a week) in the form of applied behavioural analysis for children

⁵⁰³ Source: ISP's internal material

with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) amounts to around EUR 22,200. This means that the current expenditures would cover the cost of therapy for 64 children at the most, which is less than 1% of the estimated population of children with autism aged 0 to 7 years.⁵⁰⁴ Also, Slovakia lacks professionals trained in certain modern early intervention methods specifically targeted at individual deviations in development⁵⁰⁵.

Annex 4: Number of providers and recipients of early intervention service (2015 – 2018)

Table P 2: Number of providers and recipients of early intervention service (2015 – 2018)

	Number of services (31/12 status)			Number of recipients (31/12 status)		
	Public providers	Non-public providers	Total	Public providers	Non-public providers	Total
2015	1	5	6	2	173	175
2016	6	10	16	29	391	420
2017	9	12	21	129	568	697
2018	13	17	30	230	989	1219

Source: V(MinLbr) 10-01 a V(MinLbr) 07-01

Annex 5: Income of early intervention service providers

Table P 3: Income of early intervention service providers, 2018

	Total on 31/12/2018 (eur million).	current transfers from the state budget	capital transfers from the state budget	thereof			
				from the municipal budget	from the higher territorial unit's budget	from the agreed price for social service paid	sponsorship donations, public fundraising campaigns
Non-public	1.0	67,185	0	26,100	614,532	9,055	279,516
Public	0.4	0	0	0	382,019	1,220	3,100
Total	1.4	67,185	0	26,100	996,551	10,275	282,616

Source: Statements V(MinLbr) 7-01 and V(MinLbr) 10-01

Annex 6: Impact of subsidies on the enrolment rate of 5-year-old children in the MRC

An interesting observation in the MRC environment is that the enrolment rate of pre-schoolers (5-year olds) is higher among children in the AMN system than among the children not included in the AMN system (Graph 10 in the body of the text). This is surprising because the assumption is that the barriers to the accessibility to pre-primary education grow as the poverty deepens, as is also evidenced by the comparison of children within and outside the AMN system in the majority population as well as the comparisons between the majority and MRC populations. The simplest explanation of this phenomenon is that the negative impact of the conditions of poverty on the enrolment rate is outweighed by the positive motivation in the form of subsidised meals for children in kindergartens which are registered in the AMN system.

The impact of multiple effects on a dichotomous dependent variable (for example, whether or not a 5-year-old child attends a kindergarten) can be analysed by a probit model. The predicted probability taking on a value ranging from

⁵⁰⁴ Based on the data from abroad, 580 to 850 children with ASD are estimated to be born in Slovakia every year. ISP's internal material, Eslabagh et al. 2012; Fombonne, 2011; ADDM 2012; Mattila et al. 2011; Saemundsen et al. 2013; Baird et al. 2011, found on Autism Europe website: <http://www.autismeurope.org/about-autism/prevalence-rate-of-autism/>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Baio, 2014) including zero and preparatory grades

⁵⁰⁵ For example, although the academic literature considers the applied behavioural analysis (ABA) to be the best therapy for children with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disorders, we do not have nearly any certified behavioural analysts in Slovakia. (Source: "Value for Money" document for the "Every child counts" national project, interviews with autism experts).

0 to 1 can be interpreted as a probability that the child goes to a kindergarten. The average predicted probability across the entire population concurs with the enrolment rate (percentage of the population which attends kindergartens). It is possible to simulate the enrolment rate of children in the MRC in the model in the event that certain factors which affect it change; for example, enactment of blanket meal subsidies for all children.

Probit model was used on a population of 6,629 5-year-old children from MRC,⁵⁰⁶ identifiable in the administrative data (Table P 4). Model 1 has only one explanatory variable, namely whether or not the child is in the assistance in material need system.⁵⁰⁷ This variable is a good proxy for whether a child receives subsidised lunches in a KG.⁵⁰⁸ Positive coefficient of this variable has confirmed the AMN to have a positive impact on the probability that a child attends a KG.

Model 2 includes other factors which affect the enrolment rate. As expected, the probability that a child from MRC attends KG decreases in municipalities which do not have a KG and in those with low capacity in KG (measured by the percentage of rejected applications of the total number of children in KG in the municipality). On the contrary, employment of the mother and the father⁵⁰⁹ and their work earned income has a positive impact on the probability that a child attends KG (with the mother's status on the labour market having significantly and statistically higher impact than the father's status). Existence of a sibling aged less than 5 years has a negative impact on the enrolment rate.

Model 2 also shows strong dependence between observations – having considered the other variables, the probability that a pre-schooler attends a kindergarten is higher in municipalities with higher enrolment rate of other 5-year-old children in MRC. This effect may reflect the existence of social norms which may differ across municipalities/communities and the impact of the factors affecting the enrolment rate at the municipal level which are not expressly included in the model.

Model 3 also includes two variables – interaction with AMN and employment of parents. This model shows that a strong positive impact of AMN on enrolment rate only exists in those children whose both parents are jobless (in such event, the value of interaction terms is 0). The impact of AMN on enrolment rate in case of children whose mother and/or father is employed is substantially lower (in their case, the impact is calculated as the sum of the coefficients on AMN dummy and on the interaction terms⁵¹⁰). However, there is less than one quarter (23%) of such children among the 5-year-old ones in the AMN system.

Compared with the Model 1, the coefficient on AMN is more than twice as high in Model 2 and nearly three-times as high in Model 3, suggesting that access to subsidized meals has substantially higher impact on the enrolment rate than it may appear based on a simple comparison of the enrolment rate of pre-schoolers in the AMN system and other pre-schoolers (Model 3 shows that this is particularly true for children in the AMN system whose parents are jobless). This is consistent with the above hypothesis that negative impact of the conditions of poverty on the enrolment rate⁵¹¹ is outweighed by positive motivation in the form of subsidised meals for children in kindergartens which are registered in the AMN system.

⁵⁰⁶ The analysis was restricted to pre-schoolers because this group has preferential access to pre-primary education. Consequently, kindergartens have smaller room for excluding Roma pre-schoolers from access to pre-primary education than they have in case of younger Roma children. It is not possible to factor such discriminatory practices in the model.

⁵⁰⁷ Box 3 for definition of AMN.

⁵⁰⁸ Also the children not included in the assistance in material need system receive subsidized meals if they live in a family with income below the minimum subsistence income threshold. The actual impact of subsidies on the enrolment rate may therefore be even higher than as indicated by the coefficients on the AMN dummy in the table.

⁵⁰⁹ Parent is considered as employed if he or she was employed at least 6 months in 2017.

⁵¹⁰ For example, the coefficient on AMN is calculated in case of a child in the AMN system whose mother is jobless and father works as follows: $1 \times 0.4513 + 1 \times 0 \times -0.4311 + 1 \times 1 \times -0.3376 = 0.1137$.

⁵¹¹ The number of children in the AMN system is higher in municipalities without KG or with limited KG capacities, and to a greater extent come from jobless or low-income families.

Table P 4: Probit model of probability of KG attendance by 5-year-old children in the MRC

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coefficien t	St. error	Coefficien t	St. error	Coefficien t	St. error
In the AMN system (dummy)	0.16***	0.03	0.36***	0.04	0.45***	0.04
Municipality without KG (dummy)			-0.47***	0.10	-0.46***	0.10
Rejected applications as a % of children in KG			-0.15**	0.07	-0.15**	0.07
Mother employed (dummy)			0.57***	0.10	0.72***	0.12
Father employed (dummy)			0.22***	0.05	0.40***	0.07
Mother's income			0.09***	0.02	0.08***	0.02
Father's income			0.07***	0.01	0.05***	0.01
Sibling aged less than 5 years			-0.07*	0.04	-0.08**	0.04
Enrolment rate of other children in municipality			2.05***	0.07	2.05***	0.07
AMN*mother employed (interaction)					-0.43***	0.17
AMN*father employed (interaction)					-0.34***	0.09
Constant	-0.18***	0.02	-1.32***	0.05	-1.36***	0.05
Number of observations		6,629		6,629		6,629
Pseudo R ²		0.003		0.218		0.221

Source: VfM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, Atlas and Social Insurance Agency
Note: *** identifies statistical significance at the level of 1%, ** at the level of 5% and * at the level of 10%.

The model enables to simulate the impact of blanket meal subsidies for pre-schoolers on the enrolment rate. Provided that the coefficient on AMN dummy captures the motivational effect of subsidies and that other, not included, factors do not distort the comparison, the enactment of blanket subsidy⁵¹² can be expected to increase the enrolment rate of 5-year-old children in MRC from today's 48% to 55% according to Model 2 or 57% according to Model 3.

The actual effect may be even higher, whereas due to unavailability of data it was not possible to include in the model the distance of residence from a kindergarten. Children from MRC living in segregated settlements outside municipality with limited or non-existent public transport can be expected to be found to a greater extent among children in the AMN system rather than among children outside AMN.

The actual effect also depends on the development of the offer on the side of pre-primary education. If the said variables in the model (existence of KG in a municipality and rejected applications as % of children in KG) inaccurately reflect the current capacity limitations, the impact of subsidies in some municipalities could be lower than as indicated in the simulation if the capacity remains the same. But should the capacity in KGs be substantially increased with the help of European funds (Chapter 5.1), the distortion of the simulation results may be insignificant.

The long-term effect of blanket subsidies also reflects the expectation that if individual motivation to attend KG increases after some time, it could change social norms relating to the attendance of KG established within the MRC environment. Provided that this effect is expressed by a positive coefficient for the "enrolment rate of other children", in the long run the enactment of blanket subsidies could increase the enrolment rate of 5-year-old children in MRC to 72% (according to Model 3).⁵¹³

⁵¹² Enactment of blanket subsidies is modelled with the simulations of Model 2 and Model 3 with the value of the dummy of the "in the AMN system" variable set to 1 for all observations. The values of other variables remain unchanged.

⁵¹³ This estimate is based on the iterative method. Model 3 was first simulated with the original value of enrolment rate of other children in the municipality. The enrolment rate of other children in the municipality was then estimated anew based on the simulation results, and this value was used for the new iteration of the model simulation. Repeated iterations led to the convergence of the estimation of overall enrolment rate in MRC at the level of 72%.

Annex 7: Offer of accredited continuous education programmes for kindergarten (KG) and basic school (BS) teachers focusing on education of children with disabilities or from SDB in 2018

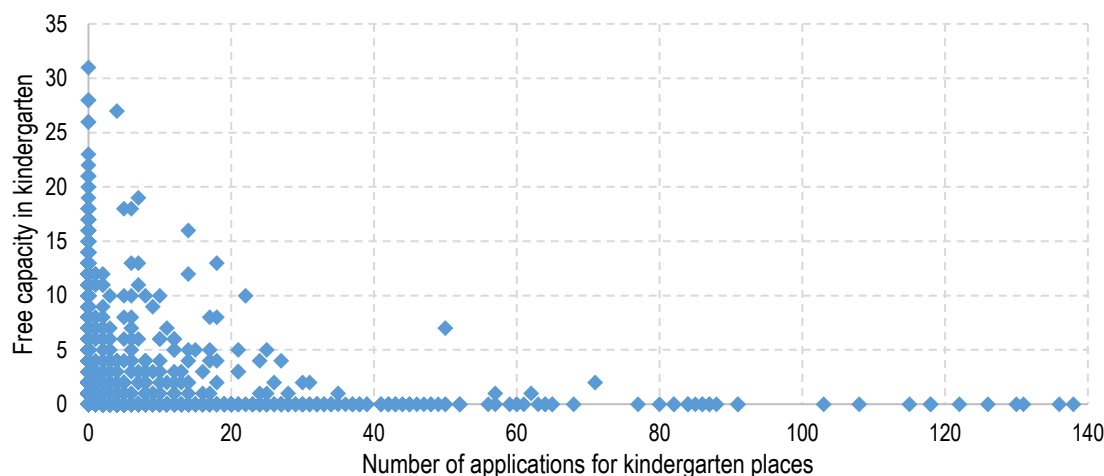
Programme focus	Programme title	Target groups	Number of participants in 2018	Thereof KG teachers
Disability	How to work with pre-school children with speech disorders in kindergartens	KG	30	30
	Multi-sensory environments (Snoezelen) in teacher's and professional employee's work	KG, primary level	0	
	Development of conversation skills with children and pupils with hearing impairment	KG, primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Specific features of the education of pupils with autism spectrum disorder at a basic and upper secondary school	primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Specific features of the education of pupils with moderate intellectual disability	primary level	0	
	Basics of conversation with children and pupils with hearing impairment	KG, primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Emotional, behavioural and learning disorders in pupils	primary and lower secondary level	0	
Socially disadvantaged background	The application of active learning method for children and pupils from socially disadvantaged background with emphasis on the development of psychomotor skills	primary and lower secondary level	108	
	Innovative education of teachers in inclusive education of children from marginalised Roma communities	KG	0	
	Intercultural education at a basic school with pupils from Roma communities	primary level	0	
	Creating positive educational environment and eliminating bias through learning about pupils from marginalised communities	primary and lower secondary level	24	
	Teacher – the creator of learning resources for pupils from marginalised Roma communities, 1067/2013	primary and lower secondary level	15	
Generally about inclusion and education of children with special education needs	How to successfully educate pupils with special education needs in a mainstream classroom at a basic school using the free association method for primary education	primary level	0	
	Self-correcting materials in child-rearing and education of pre-school children	KG	0	
	Inclusion or school for all (from vision and philosophy to transformation and evaluation processes)	primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Inclusive school in the process of creation, reflection and acceptance	KG, primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Inclusive classroom in the process of creation, reflection and acceptance	primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Cooperative learning and teaching within development of inclusive school environment	primary and lower secondary level	29	

	Visualisation options and its implementation into the teaching process with pupils with special education needs	primary level	0	
	Pedagogical diagnostics in a kindergarten setting	KG	0	
	Cooperation of teachers and specialist employees in the system of inclusive support of children and pupils	KG, primary and lower secondary level	1199	398
	Components of systematic school development planning within development of inclusive environment	primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Creation of individual education programmes	primary and lower secondary level	116	
	Fundamentals for the creation of individualised education programmes for pupils with special education needs	primary and lower secondary level	0	
	Use of information and communication technologies and interactive whiteboard in the preparation of education materials for pupils with special education needs	primary and lower secondary level	0	

Source: Internal data of the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre Bratislava (2019)

Annex 8: Kindergarten capacities

Graph P 1: Free capacity and number of admission applications in individual kindergartens, 2018



Source: Educational Policy Institute based on data of CSTI SR

The enrolment rate of children is low also because of insufficient capacity of kindergartens. Nationwide free capacity ranges between 7 to 15 thousand places in the existing KGs. The calculation is based on the data about the total KG capacities resulting from decisions of regional health authority (hygienic capacity)⁵¹⁴ and also reflects the maximum possible number of children per one classroom depending on the age structure of children laid down in the school law.⁵¹⁵ The upper limit takes into account the option to increase the number of children in a classroom by three as a result of increased interest of legal guardians, the bottom limit does not count on this option.⁵¹⁶

In spite of the available capacities, kindergartens received 12,502 applications in the school year 2018/19 which had to be rejected due to shortage of places. This is due to non-ideal distribution of free places at the municipal level. Majority of KGs which received admission applications did not have free places and, on the contrary, majority of KGs which had free spaces did not receive admission applications (Graph P 1). But there also are KGs which have free capacity⁵¹⁷ and concurrently reject applications. This irregularity may be caused, for example, by errors which could occur during collection of data about capacities or the number of rejected applications. They may also result from the nature of the KG space⁵¹⁸ or implementation problems relating e.g. to

⁵¹⁴ According to the data of CSTI SR (2018) in compliance with the Decree No. 527/2007 Coll. of the Ministry of Health on detailed requirements for facilities for children and youth, Article 3(2). There are 133 KGs which have external workplaces/classrooms and which fill in one summary statement for the "core school" as well as for the external workplace/classroom. This is why it is not possible to distinguish spatial capacity, number of classroom or number of children of the "core school" from the external workplace/classroom. The bottom limit presupposes no free capacity in these 133 KGs. The upper limit works with the total "hygienic capacity" declared aggregately for the core school and the external workplace. In certain cases, it is possible to reduce the "hygienic capacity" based on the maximum number of children per classrooms laid down in the school law. The bottom limit counts on this option, the upper does not.

⁵¹⁵ Act No. 245/2008 on child-rearing and education (School Law) and on amendments and supplements to certain laws; Article 28(9), (10) and (12)

⁵¹⁶ The calculation does not reflect the power of KG head teachers to reduce the number of children in a classroom by two for each integrated child with special education needs (SEN). This factor is unpredictable. Neither does it reflect the obligation of no more than two integrated children per one classroom, because it is not possible to accurately determine the prevalence and distribution of children with SEN (School Law, Article 28(12)). Neither does it reflect the provision laying down the maximum number of children in classrooms consisting exclusively of children from socially disadvantaged background (SDB), which is 16 per classroom (Decree No. 322/2008 Coll. on kindergartens). According to the definition currently in force, a child from SDB is only the child who was diagnosed to have SEN on the grounds of growing up in SDB. Data analysis shows that there is currently no KG which would only educate children from SDB. As regards the other KGs also educating children who do not come from SDB, our assumption is that the option of creating smaller classrooms for children from SDB will not be used.

⁵¹⁷ We have relied on the lower limit of free capacities.

⁵¹⁸ For example, if a KG has 2 classrooms and total capacity of 40 places, the implicit assumption is 20 children per classroom. But it is also possible that one classroom has the capacity of 10 and the other one 30, but the school law sets the maximum number of children in a typical classroom to 21. Consequently, the kindergarten may only admit $10 + 21 = 31$ children.

the sufficient number of children for opening another classroom or employing another teacher, etc. It was not possible to factor this data in the calculations.⁵¹⁹

Out of EUR 130 million allocated in the programming period 2014 – 2020 from ESIF for expansion of KG capacities, 68% of funds (around EUR 89 million) were contracted in December 2018 and these funds will lead to the creation of 11,147 places (Table P 5).⁵²⁰ 4,216 new spaces in KGs were contracted in the Operational Programme Human Resources with a EUR 50 million allocation, and 6,931 places in the Integrated Regional Operational Programme with nearly EUR 80 million allocation. The estimated number of other places which could potentially be created from the remaining ESI Funds is 5,619.

Even if the remaining ESI Funds are used for the expansion of KG capacities, there is a risk that the capacities of kindergartens will be insufficient when the compulsory pre-school education for children who have one year to start compulsory education takes effect.⁵²¹ The enrolment rate of 5-year-old children at KGs was at the level of 84% in 2018, which means 9,601 unenrolled children.⁵²² The calculations concerning the existing drawing on ESI Funds indicate that around one third of the contracted places could be occupied by these unenrolled 5-year old children (together 3,314 places, Table P 5).⁵²³ When all currently contracted capacities are built and free capacities taken into account, the numbers of unenrolled 5-year-old children is expected to be highest in Trebišov (161 children), Bratislava-Petržalka (107 children), Richnava (91 children), Bratislava-Ružinov (81 children), Michalovce (82 children) and Podhorany (67 children).⁵²⁴

Table P 5 : Number of potential places in kindergartens from the remaining ESI Funds

	OP Human Resources (MinIn)	Integrated Regional Operating Programme (MinAgr)	Total
Allocation (eur million)	50.0	79.8	129.8
Contracted/approved funds (in eur million)	27.2	61.4	88.6
Number of planned new places from the contracted funds	4,216	6,931	11,147
of that, number of places to be occupied by 5-year-old children	1,139	2,253	3,314 ⁵²⁵
Estimated number of other potential places	3,539	2,080	5,619
of that, number of potential places to be occupied by 5-year-old children	1,052	618	1,670

Source: Educational Policy Institute based on data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Interior

Note: Funds from the OP Human Resources are only intended for the municipalities with a numerous MRC population. Funds from the Integrated Regional Operational Programme are also available to the municipalities without MRC.

Even if the potential places from ESI Funds not yet contracted and the lower limit of free capacity of KGs (see above) are taken into account, the number of unenrolled 5-year-old children remains at 3,172, which translates into the enrolment rate of 94.6 % (Table P 6). If the potential places from the not yet contracted ESI Funds and the

⁵¹⁹ Free capacity of special kindergartens ranges from 59 to 65 children. 48 applications were rejected.

⁵²⁰ Of these 11,147 places, 1,371 (12%) were used in September 2018, as estimated by the Educational Policy Institute.

⁵²¹ The calculation is based on the assumption that enactment of the compulsory pre-school education for 5-year-old children should not lead to the "replacement" of younger children with pre-schoolers considering the generally low enrolment rate of children and high number of rejected applications.

⁵²² The numbers of children at KGs are calculated based on data from the ministerial information system (MIS) which contain dates of birth (i.e. age on 31 Aug) and the permanent residence of the child at a municipal level. The numbers of children in population are calculated based on the data from the Register of Natural Persons (RFP) in which age on 31 Aug and permanent residence of citizens can be retrieved.

⁵²³ The existing drawdown shows that applicants also created higher number of new places than the number of unenrolled 5-year-olds in the municipality (e.g. for a younger or older unenrolled children, they could have taken into consideration the demographic development, etc.).

⁵²⁴ Of these municipalities or city boroughs, only Bratislava-Petržalka has contracted the creation of new places by way of IROP so far. In spite of this support, we may expect 107 unenrolled 5-year-old children.

⁵²⁵ The total number of places to be occupied by 5-year-old children from OP HR and IROP is not identical with the "Total" column, because some municipalities created places from both OPs.

upper limit of the free capacity are taken into consideration, then the number of unenrolled 5-year-old children would be 1,828 and the enrollment rate 96.9%.⁵²⁶

Even when the free capacities and the contracted funds are taken into account, there are 958 municipalities in which new places need to be created in order to achieve full enrolment rate of 5-year-old children without "replacement" of younger children. 267 of them do not have a KG and the remaining 691 do not have free capacity at a KG.

Table P 6: Estimate of the enrolment rate of 5-year-old children after capacity increase (interval depending on the estimate of free capacities at KGs)

The number of missing places to reach full enrolment of 5-year-old children, with free capacities taken into account	5,122 – 7,180
The number of missing places to achieve full enrolment of 5-year-old children after completion of all currently contracted capacities from the European funds and factoring in the free capacities	3,499 – 4,843
The number of missing places to achieve full enrolment of 5-year-old children after completion of all currently contracted capacities from the European funds, factoring in the free capacities and the potential places	1,828 – 3,172
Percentage of 5-year-old children who would have a place at a KG when all currently contracted capacities are completed, free capacities and potential places taken into consideration	94.61 – 96.89

Source: calculations of the Educational Policy Institute based on data of CSTI SR (2018), Ministry of Agriculture (2018), ministerial IS (2018) and the Ministry of Interior (2018)

⁵²⁶ The number of unenrolled children is probably overestimated as it also includes children who live in municipalities which do not have a KG and are not building any. The currently unenrolled children in such municipalities are automatically expected to remain unenrolled in spite of all interventions. But it is probable that at least some of those children will commute to the nearest KGs with free capacity. All in all, there are 266 such municipalities with 607 unenrolled 5-year-olds. In such event, we are able to factor in the migration of children to the three nearest municipalities with a KG. When the migration of children from municipalities without a KG to the three nearest municipalities with a KG is taken into consideration, additional 368 children would be enrolled and the upper enrolment rate limit may grow to 97.52%.

Annex 9: Revenues and expenditures of municipalities on pre-primary education

Table P 7: Linear regression of expenditures on pre-school education (standardised coefficients)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Revenues	0.941***										
Equivalised number of children		0.945***	0.942***	0.577***	0.588***	0.401***	0.406***	0.412***	0.574***	0.568***	0.574***
Equivalised number of day-long education classrooms				0.379***	0.365***	0.189***	0.256***	0.250***	0.361***	0.331***	0.338***
Equivalised number of half-day education classrooms				0.044***	0.040***	0.020*	0.030**	0.029**	0.040***	0.037***	0.037***
Equivalised number of children with disabilities at KGs					0.000			0.005	0.002	0.000	0.002
Equivalised number of children from SDB at KGs					-0.007			-0.003	-0.008	-0.009	-0.010
Number of children from MRC at KGs					-0.010			-0.011	-0.008	-0.008	-0.009
MRC-SDB interaction					0.037***			0.020	0.035***	0.034***	0.036***
Equivalised number of employees						0.379***					
Equivalised number of teachers							0.186***	0.186***			
Equivalised number of non-pedagogical employees							0.146***	0.144***			
Equivalised number of teaching assistants							0.013*	0.013			
Equivalised number of beginner teachers									-0.037***		
Equivalised number of independent teachers									0.041***		
Equivalised number of teachers with attestation									0.013		
Equivalised number of employees in the 1 st to 6 th salary bracket										0.047***	
Equivalised number of employees in the 7 th to 12 th salary bracket										0.041***	
Equivalised number of employees with 0 – 5 years of teaching experience											0.003
Equivalised number of employees with 6 – 10 years of teaching experience											-0.020**
Equivalised number of employees with 11 – 10 years of teaching experience											0.027***
Equivalised number of employees with 21 – 10 years of teaching experience											0.012
Equivalised number of employees with 31 – 10 years of teaching experience											0.054***
Equivalised number of employees with more than 40 years of teaching experience											0.019**
County			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

N	1,407	1,407	1,407	1,407	1,407	1,407	1,406	1,406	1,407	1,407	1,407
Adjusted R²	0.886	0.893	0.899	0.909	0.909	0.920	0.921	0.921	0.911	0.911	0.912

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The coefficients are standardised to make them mutually comparable. The expenditures on pre-primary education in the calendar year 2017 constitute the dependent variable. Included are the municipalities which found kindergartens where no kindergartens of another administrator are located. Excluded are the municipalities in which the expenditures on one child were higher than EUR 5,000 or lower than EUR 1,000.

Table P 8 Revenues and expenditures per child, 2017

Number of children	Revenue per child	Number of municipalities/KGs	Number of children at KG	Mean value	Expenditures per child				Proportion of municipalities/KGs which have lower expenditures per child than 90% of revenues per child
					Difference between revenues and expenditures	Median	75 th percentile	90 th percentile	
< 10 children	3,896.3	78	670	2,896.0	1,000.30	2,937.6	3,456.3	4,137.4	75.6
11 – 15 children	3,265.4	160	2,179	2,554.2	711.20	2,503.4	3,010.1	3,341.1	70.6
16 – 20 children	2,784.2	283	5,219	2,247.0	537.20	2,203.4	2,555.0	2,890.4	71.0
21 – 25 children	2,405.6	225	5,014	2,007.3	398.30	1,969.3	2,278.2	2,551.7	67.1
26 – 31 children	2,271.6	74	2,153	2,124.4	147.20	2,010.2	2,378.4	2,742.6	51.4
32 – 34 children	2,271.6	65	2,129	2,137.4	134.20	2,066.7	2,330.8	2,606.7	44.6
35 – 37 children	2,271.6	68	2,466	2,083.7	187.90	2,086.4	2,309.3	2,797.8	48.5
38 – 41 children	2,271.6	75	2,981	2,042.6	229.00	1,971.6	2,210.2	2,525.5	61.3
42 – 44 children	2,271.6	52	2,203	1,903.3	368.30	1,923.6	2,085.4	2,343.4	73.1
45 – 48 children	2,271.6	69	3,199	1,906.0	365.60	1,846.5	2,032.8	2,485.0	75.4
49 – 57 children	2,271.6	64	3,387	2,019.9	251.70	1,960.5	2,173.9	2,390.3	59.4
58 – 66 children	2,271.6	65	4,022	1,925.3	346.30	1,883.2	2,121.3	2,261.1	69.2
67 – 85 children	2,271.6	63	4,719	1,916.2	355.40	1,886.9	2,080.8	2,358.0	66.7
> 85 children	2,271.6	66	7,236	1,926.4	345.20	1,857.5	2,110.1	2,335.1	72.7
Total	2,599.2	1,407	47,577	2,164.8	434.4	2,045.8	2,421.1	2,920.0	66.3

Source: calculations of the Educational Policy Institute based on data of CSTI SR (2016, 2017), Ministry of Finance (2017) and the ministerial IS (2016, 2017)

Only includes municipalities which found KGs and where no KG of another administrator is located. Revenues per child calculated based on the number of children used to calculate the revenue. Expenditures per child calculated based on the real equivalised number of children in KG. Excluded are the municipalities in which the expenditures on one child are higher than EUR 5,000 or lower than EUR 1,000.

Median means the value below which 50% of the observations fall. 75th percentile means the value below which 75% of the observations fall. 90th percentile means the value below which 90% of the observations fall.

Table P 9 : Structure of differences between revenues and expenditures on children at KGs

Compared with expenditures per child, revenues per child are:	Number of municipalities	Number of KGs	Number of children at KG	Difference between revenues and expenditures (EUR)
Higher by				
50 or more percent	259	341	13,941	13,005,262.05
50 to 40 percent	134	148	6,190	4,603,961.01
40 to 30 percent	206	217	9,974	6,020,432.75
30 to 20 percent	287	463	29,164	13,095,735.67
20 to 10 percent	280	440	26,644	7,597,258.54
10 to 0 percent	270	466	25,810	2,844,231.14
Total	1,436	2,075	111,723	47,166,881
Lower by				
0 to 10 percent	203	467	28,102	-2,757,746.58
10 to 20 percent	69	72	2,618	-1,048,222.64

20 to 30 percent	37	38	1,349	-1,037,191.88
30 or more percent	13	14	544	-759,854.21
Total	322	591	32,613	-5,603,315.31
TOTAL	1,758	2,668	144,337	41,563,865.85

Source: calculations of the Educational Policy Institute based on data of CSTI SR (2016, 2017), Ministry of Finance (2017) and the ministerial IS (2016, 2017)

The number of children and KG is the equivalised number for a calendar year 2017. Excluded are the municipalities in which the expenditures on one child are higher than EUR 5,000 or lower than EUR 1,000.

Annex 10: National projects focusing on inclusion in education

The methodological and pedagogical centre as a directly controlled organisation of the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities within the Ministry of Interior currently implement national projects focusing on the improvement of inclusiveness of education with aggregate allocation of more than EUR 109 million. The activities within the projects primarily focus on the support of school staff – employment of teaching assistants (TA) and building inclusive teams of professional employees (PE) consisting of a special and social pedagogue and school psychologist, as well as on the content, methodological and educational support of schools – development of methodologies, early diagnostic systems (screening) and stimulation programmes at KGs, development of education plans, day-long education programmes and informal education programmes, support of cooperation with parents or education of teachers. They include the Implementation of Inclusive Approaches to Education (ZIPE) project and Helping Professions in Education project (June 2019 to December 2022). 610 KGs, PSs and SSs may engage in these projects. The total allocation is more than EUR 96 million⁵²⁷. The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities within the Ministry of Interior implements the Inclusion at Kindergartens Project (PRIM), which is specifically designed for 150 municipalities identified based on the approved methodology of underdevelopment zone index (particularly the municipalities with high proportions of MRC). The total allocation is more than EUR 13 million⁵²⁸. The Methodology and Pedagogy Centre implemented four more projects (MRC, MRC 2, PRINED and School Open to Everyone to All) in 2011 – 2019 for EUR 62.2 million in total. 310 kindergartens and 430 basic schools engaged in them.

National project-based funding of key measures to increase inclusion may pose significant risks for nationwide increase in the support of children and pupils from SDB and with disabilities in the education process. NPs are necessarily limited in time and the number of covered subjects. For example, 50 KGs and 100 PSs from all regions, except the Bratislava region, could apply for support within the PRINED project. Consequently, less than 5.5% of state PSs and less than 2% of state KGs were covered by the project in the eligible regions in the relevant school years.⁵²⁹ Although the number of covered schools grew in the follow-up projects, the support of pupils from SDB and with disabilities also depends on the opportunity and willingness of head teachers to engage in them as they go hand in hand with a higher administrative burden.

Although the implemented measures pursue the principles of inclusive education and the international good practice, it is not currently possible to provide through NPs claimable and stable support to all pupils who need it. It is equally necessary to improve the NP evaluation processes. Although the current evaluation reports suggest improvements of the indicators being monitored, the methodologies of many analyses do not allow us to sufficiently evaluate the results of the performed activities.

⁵²⁷ Information about the NP PRINED is available on: <http://prined.mpc-edu.sk/>; information about the NP School Open to Everyone is available on: <http://npsov.mpc-edu.sk/>; information about the NP ZIPE is available in the Partnership Agreement on: https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/data/files/3071_oplz_2019_06_28_np_pomahajuce-profesie-v-educacii-deti-a-ziakov.pdf; information about the NP ZIPE is available in the Partnership Agreement on: https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/data/files/3071_oplz_2019_06_28_np_pomahajuce-profesie-v-educacii-deti-a-ziakov.pdf.

⁵²⁸ Information about the NP PRIM is available on <https://www.minv.sk/?narodny-projekt-prim-projekt-inkluzie-v-materskych-skolach>.

⁵²⁹ Calculations according to CSTI (2013, 2014).

Annex 11: Index of dissimilarity and segregation in education

The dissimilarity index (Duncan and Duncan, 1975) is a measure of the evenness with which two groups are distributed across units (e.g. classrooms) which form a part of a larger whole (e.g. school grade). The dissimilarity index ranges from 0 if the groups are distributed in the same proportions across units (no segregation) up to 1 if two groups are completely separated from the other units within one whole (total segregation). The value of dissimilarity index may be generally taken as the proportion of the population of one of the groups which would have to move to another unit to reach even distribution of groups across units.

The dissimilarity index is calculated based on this formula:

$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N \left| \frac{a_i}{A} - \frac{b_i}{B} \right|$$

Where (comparing e.g. the Roma and non-Roma population):

a_i = population of group A in unit i , e.g. in a classroom.

A = population of group A in the whole for which the dissimilarity index is calculated, e.g. school grade.

b_i = population of group B in unit i .

B = population of group B in the whole for which the dissimilarity index is calculated.

Spatial segregation at basic schools is measured first at mainstream schools where unit means a classroom and the whole is a grade, and the dissimilarity index measures how the pupils from MRC and from the environment outside MRC are distributed across classrooms within a specific grade at a specific school. Therefore, the sample was limited to schools which had at least two mainstream classrooms in the school year 2017/18 (so the segregation is theoretically possible), then schools attended by pupils from within as well as outside MRC in such manner that each group comprises at least 10% and no more than 90% of pupils in the relevant grade, and which had at least 5 pupils from MRC in the relevant grade.⁵³⁰

Spatial segregation is then also measured at the municipal level. In such event, school is the unit and municipality the whole, and the dissimilarity index measures distribution of these two groups across schools within one municipality. Since we wish to measure segregation within mainstream schools, pupils attending special classrooms at mainstream schools are excluded from the measurement and only the mainstream system is subject to the comparison. The sample is restricted to municipalities with at least two mainstream basic schools and where the population of pupils is mixed within the mainstream school – at least 10% and no more than 90% of pupils in a municipality from each group. External workplaces of basic schools are analysed as independent units whereas they are often spatially separated and may basically contribute to spatial segregation of children from MRC within the primary education level.

In both cases the population of pupils is divided to pupils from MRC and pupils from the environment outside the MRC (as defined in Box 3). Roma pupils scattered across the majority population not identified in administrative data are included in the "non-MRC" group which means that the dissimilarity index cannot be taken simply as the index of ethnic segregation. The partition line moves across the Roma minority and separates Roma from municipalities with concentrated Roma settlements from all other citizens irrespective of their ethnicity.

This also means that classrooms or schools which seem to be mixed based on this division may be purely Roma in reality. If Roma pupils scattered across majority population tend, to a greater extent, to attend schools having a lot of pupils from the MRC, the values of dissimilarity index will underestimate the degree of ethnic segregation.

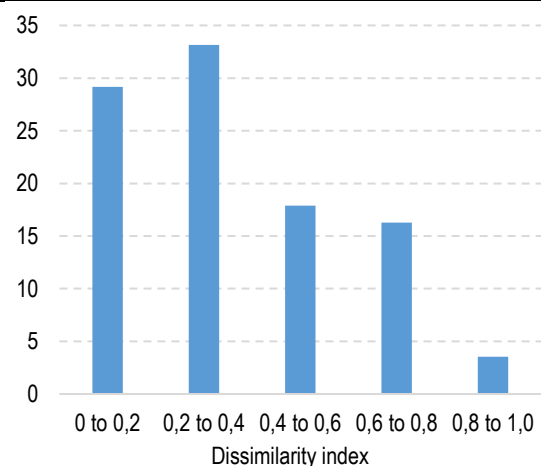
⁵³⁰ The results remain very similar also in case of a narrower range of the permitted proportion of pupils from MRC (e.g. at least 25% and no more than 75%). However, the proportion of pupils from MRC covered by the sample decreases with more restrictive conditions for school selection.

The dissimilarity index in the first grade of mixed mainstream basic schools was 0.35. There were 191 mixed schools in the school year 2017/18 and 16% of first graders attended such schools. This accounted for around one half of pupils from among the first grade pupils from the MRC included in the mainstream education. The value of the index means that more than one third of first graders from MRC (on average) would have to change a classroom in order to achieve even distribution of first graders at such mixed basic schools.

Roughly 30% of first graders from MRC included in the mainstream education attend a school with the dissimilarity index lower than 0.2 and one fifth attends a school with a value higher than 0.6 (Graph P 2). The counties that stand out as those with a relatively even distribution of pupils from MRC and others within the first grade of local schools (mean value of the index below 0.1) include Košice IV, Medzilaborce, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Malacky, Levoča, Liptovský Mikuláš and Zvolen. On the contrary, the representation of first graders in the counties of Stará Ľubovňa, Tmava, Prešov and Sabinov are relatively highly uneven within schools depending on whether or not they come from MRC (mean value of the index above 0.5).

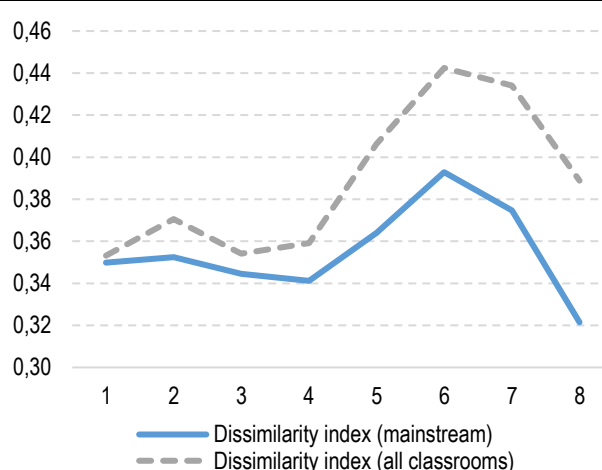
The dissimilarity index grows between the primary (grades 1 to 4) and lower secondary levels (grades 5 to 9). While the mean value of the dissimilarity index in the first grade is 0.35, in the sixth grade it is 0.39 (Graph P 3). It grows most between the fourth and the sixth grade. The value of the index decreases between the sixth and the eight grades. This may be because the worst pupils from MRC do not make it to the eight grade due to multiple grade repetition (Chapter 5.2). The percentage of pupils in the sixth grade of mainstream basic schools who come from MRC was 10.1% in the school year 2017/18, but in the eight grade it was only 7.6% (Graph P 3).

Graph P 2: Percentage of first-graders from MRC at mixed schools by dissimilarity index in the school year 2017/18



Source: VřM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Graph P 3: Mean value of the dissimilarity index by basic school grade in the school year 2017/18



Source: VřM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, and the Atlas

Note: The 9th grade was excluded from comparison because the number of schools which meet the selection criteria for the sample is small in the 9th grade.

Education of pupils from MRC in special classrooms increases the measured level of segregation, particularly at higher grades. The value of the index at the first grade within all classrooms, including the special ones, is very similar to the value within mainstream schools, whereas there are not very many special classrooms at the first grade. Their impact on segregation increases at the lower secondary level and is illustrated by the growing gap between the blue and the dashed grey lines (Graph P 3).

The first grade of basic schools which have a zero grade report higher segregation level than the first grade at schools which do not have a zero grade. Within the mainstream mixed basic schools, the mean value of the dissimilarity index at the first grade in the school year 2017/18 in case of schools which did not have a zero grade in the previous school year was 0.23. The mean value of the index in the first grade at schools with a zero grade was 0.39.

On average, the segregation level between mainstream schools at a municipal level is higher than the segregation level inside schools. 66 municipalities in Slovakia which meet the sample selection conditions have the mean value of the index at the level of 0.44. 13% of all pupils within the mainstream education system in the school year 2017/18 were educated in these municipalities.⁵³¹ From among the pupils within the mainstream education system from MRC, it was around 29%. The value of the index means that if we wanted to achieve even distribution of pupils between mainstream basic schools within these municipalities, nearly one half of pupils from MRC (on average) would have to be relocated to a different school.

Annex 12: Impact of subsidies on school attendance at basic schools

Whereas access to subsidized meals is conditioned by a physical presence of a pupil at school, the eligibility to subsidised lunches can be expected to have a positive impact on school attendance. The data about absences is only available at the school level. Therefore, the number of absences per pupil at schools with blanket subsidy and schools without blanket subsidy was compared for the purposes of this analysis.

Schools with blanket subsidy were those schools which received blanket subsidy in all of the four months from September 2017 to December 2017.⁵³² Schools without blanket subsidies were those schools which did not receive subsidy in any of the months during the above period.

Simple comparison of attendance rates reveals that the average number⁵³³ of absences per pupil is much higher at schools with blanket subsidy (174 lessons a year) than at schools without the blanket subsidy (96 lessons a year). However, this comparison is distorted by the fact that schools with blanket subsidy are attended to a greater extent by children experiencing social or health disadvantage. The attendance rate of these children may be lower for reasons which have nothing to do with subsidies (e.g. lack of clothing, lower engagement of parents and higher sickness rate).

A simple OLS regression analysis reveals that once the differences in the school composition are taken into consideration, the schools with blanket subsidy have significantly better attendance rate than schools without such subsidy (Table P 10). Model 1 shows a simple comparison. Positive coefficient on the dummy variable identifying schools with blanket subsidy shows that these schools report on average 78 lessons higher absence rate per pupil than schools without blanket subsidies. Model 2 covers the percentage of pupils at the school who are in the system of assistance in material need, come from MRC, and are educated within special education stream (special classroom or school). These three variables have a strong positive impact on the number of absences per pupil. When these factors are taken into consideration, the coefficient on dummy variable identifying schools with blanket subsidy will change to significantly negative. School with a blanket subsidy reports on average 31 lessons lower absence rate per pupil than the school with similar composition and without blanket subsidy.

The simulation of Model 2 implies that if blanket subsidies are extended to all schools, the average number of absences per pupil would drop from today's 98 lessons per year to 74 lessons per year.

Table P 10: OLS model of absences per pupil at BS

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	Standard error	Coefficient	Standard error
Blanket subsidy (dummy)	77.92***	5.40	-31.16***	5.36
Proportion of pupils in the AMN system			145.26***	7.87
Proportion of pupils from MRC			23.19***	5.77
Proportion of pupils in the special education system			20.45***	5.73
Constant	95.61***	0.87	80.48***	0.82

⁵³¹ This does not include pupils of the first four grades of 8-year gymnaziums.

⁵³² The eligibility to blanket subsidy is revised every month and depends on a school being able to prove that more than one half of pupils in the relevant month are supported within the assistance in material need system.

⁵³³ This is a weighted average reflecting the school size.

Number of observations	2,009	2,009
R ²	0.094	0.435

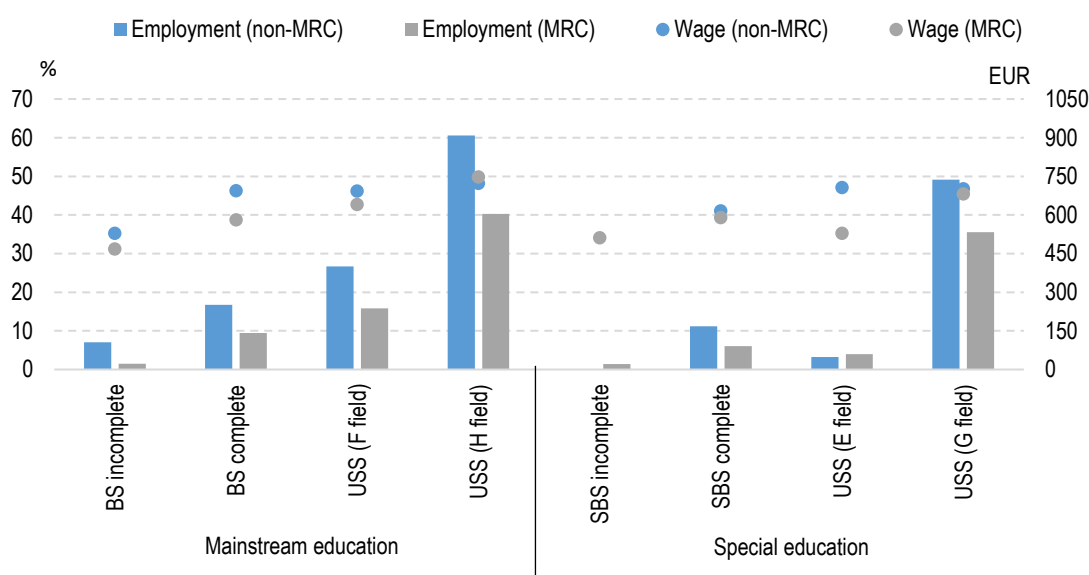
Source: VfM unit based on data of the ministerial IS, CSTI SR, Ministry of Interior and the Atlas

Note: Regression observations were weighted by the number of students in the school. *** identifies statistical significance at the level of 1%, ** at the level of 5% and * at the level of 10%.

Annex 13: Employment rate of graduates by the completed education level

The chances of graduates from the MRC entering the labour market to find a job are worse than the chances of graduates from an environment outside the MRC who completed the same education level. For example, while around 60% of non-MRC graduates⁵³⁴ of the H-type study programmes⁵³⁵ of upper secondary technical schools in the school year 2017/18 found a job in the time period from completion of their studies until the end of 2018⁵³⁶, for the MRC graduates it was only 40% (Graph P 4). Poor prospects on the labour market can be assumed to reduce the motivation to continue in education after completion of the compulsory education.

Graph P 4: Percentage of graduates in the school year 2017/18 who found employment until the end of 2018 (%)



Source: VfM unit based on data of the Social Insurance Agency, ministerial IS, Central Labour Office, Ministry of Interior, and the Atlas
 Note: SPS means graduates of special schools and special classrooms. More information about the national education classification on <http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/3772.pdf>.

The impact of multiple factors on the probability that a graduate found work until the end of 2018 once he or she had completed education in the school year 2017/18 can be estimated through the probit model, similar to the analysis of the enrolment rate of pre-schoolers (Annex 6). Besides the completed education level, the explanatory variables which enter the model also include the variables of being a member of MRC, being a member of a family receiving assistance in material need (AMN), dummy variable for gender (woman), dummy variable identifying graduates who are parents (parent), dummy variables stating that the graduate's mother or father have work, and monthly wage of mother and father (Table P 11).

Model 1 examines the impact of the completed education level of the mainstream education system graduates. The education level achieved enters the model as the polychotomous explanatory variable with the education level of "not completed basic school" as the benchmark against which other completed education levels are being

⁵³⁴ Graduates are categorised by the highest completed education level, whether or not they continued in their education and did not complete it.

⁵³⁵ H-type study programmes are study programmes at upper secondary technical schools completed with a vocational training certificate without the school-leaving exam. <http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/3772.pdf>

⁵³⁶ Job placement means the beginning of a labour relationship as an employee, or based on agreement to perform work (except the student internship programmes) or self-employment. Labour relations with the maximum assessment base (wage) lower than a half of the minimum wage in 2018 (EUR 240), as evidenced in the Social Insurance Agency's data, were excluded from the analysis.

compared. The results show that the probability of finding a job grows with the education level completed even when the other explanatory variables are taken into account. The coefficients at all levels have a statistically significant positive effect. Wald test reveals that also the differences between these coefficients are statistically significant. This means that, for example, the graduates of F-type study programmes are statistically more probable to find work than the graduates of basic school.

Model 2 compares the probability of finding work between the graduates of individual F-type study programmes and the graduates of a basic school. The "completed basic school" education level constitutes the benchmark in the polichotomous dependent variable and the coefficients on individual F-type study programmes show whether the graduates of the relevant study programme are more or less probable to find work compared against the benchmark. The results reveal that when the other explanatory variables are taken into account, the coefficients on the study programmes of mechanical engineering, practical woman, food production and forest production are not statistically different from zero. This means that the chances of these graduates of finding work are not higher than the chances of the graduates of a basic school.

The coefficient on MRC is significantly negative in both models, suggesting that even if we factor in the other variables, including the education level completed, being a member of MRC has a negative impact on the probability of finding work after graduation from school.

Table P 11: Probit model of job finding probability

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	Standard error	Coefficient	Standard error
Completed education (basis: not completed BS):				
Completed BS	0.529***	0.068		
F-type study programme	0.993***	0.076		
H-type study programme	1.580***	0.067		
F-type study programme (basis: completed BS):				
wood processing			0.728***	0.180
agricultural production			0.496***	0.155
technical services in a car repair shop			0.441**	0.181
production in construction			0.353***	0.088
clothing production			0.339***	0.111
mechanical engineering			0.059	0.137
practical woman			0.027	0.165
food production			-0.234	0.231
forest production			-0.265	0.248
Other explanatory variables:				
MRC	-0.279***	0.049	-0.262***	0.063
AMN	-0.166***	0.049	-0.116*	0.063
woman	-0.124***	0.042	-0.077	0.066
parent	-0.306**	0.135	-0.176	0.160
employed mother	0.335***	0.058	0.398***	0.081
employed father	0.274***	0.049	0.336***	0.067
mother wage	0.021***	0.007	0.018*	0.011
father wage	-0.003	0.005	-0.007	0.007
Number of observations	6,663		3,432	
Pseudo-R ²	0.273		0.078	

Source: VfM unit based on data of the Social Insurance Agency, the ministerial IS, CSTI SR, Ministry of Interior and Atlas

Note: *** identifies statistical significance at the level of 1%, ** at the level of 5% and * at the level of 10%.

Annex 14: Children with disabilities at kindergartens in the mainstream and special education system

Table P 12: Number of pre-school children with individual types of disability in mainstream and special education system

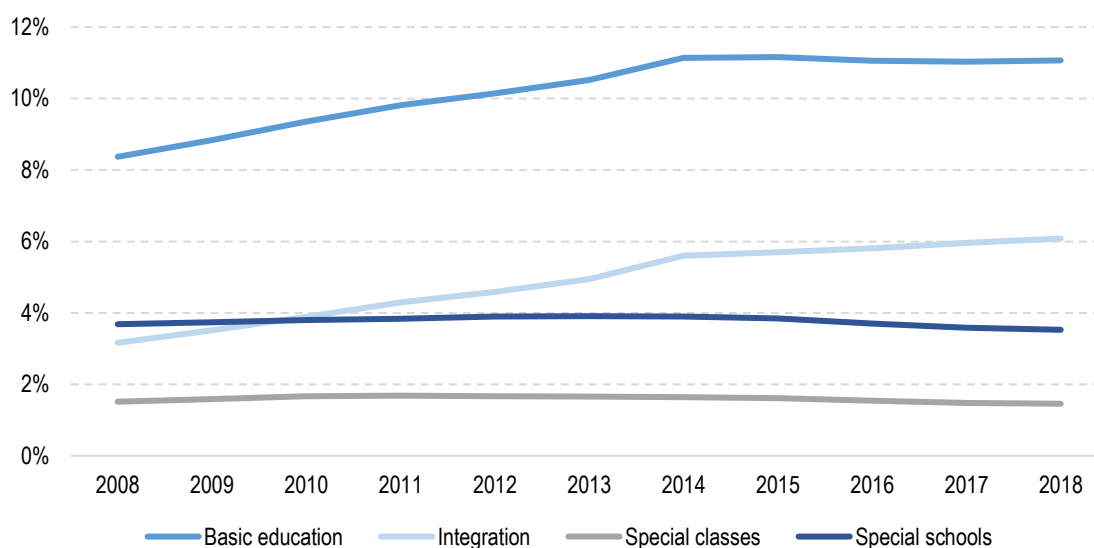
	Mainstream kindergartens	Special kindergartens	TOTAL	Percentage (%)
Autism syndrome (AUT)	44	9	53	4
Intellectual (INTL)	284	262	546	42
Hearing (HEAR)	20	19	39	3
Vision (VSN)	12	1	13	1
Communication disorder (CD)	422	69	491	37
Physical (PHYS)	30	9	39	3
Illness and poor health (IPH)	17	0	17	1
Behavioural disorder (BHVR)	5	0	5	0
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	58	4	62	5
Learning disorders (LRNG)	26	0	26	2
Multiple disability (MD)	14	5	19	1
TOTAL	932	378	1310	100
Percentage (%)	71	29	100	

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the ministerial IS (2017, 2018)

The population of children with intellectual disability includes children with intellectual disability including intellectual disability combined with other disability. The population of children with autism only includes children with autism without intellectual disability.

Annex 15: Development of the percentage of pupils with disabilities at basic schools

Graph P 5: Development of the percentage of pupils with disabilities at basic schools, 2008 – 2018



The basic education category includes pupils with disabilities at mainstream and special basic schools.

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI.

Annex 16: Development of the number of pupils with individual types of disability

Table P 13: Development of the number of pupils with individual types of disability, 2012 – 2018

	2012	2018	Total	%
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder	636	4539	3903	614
Developmental learning disorders	12811	15014	2203	17
Communication disorder	1895	3649	1754	93
Autism	204	743	539	265
Multiple disability	106	450	345	326
Intellectual disability – B variant combined with other disability	211	526	315	149
Intellectual disability – B variant	2488	2777	289	12
Illness and weakened health	84	361	276	328
Intellectual disability – A variant combined with other disability	749	1006	256	34
Hearing impairment	571	673	102	18
Vision impairment	375	394	19	5
Intellectual disability – C variant	1596	1479	-117	-7
Intellectual disability – C variant combined with other disability	584	389	-195	-33
Physical disability	1100	714	-386	-35
Behavioural disorder	1748	930	-819	-47
Intellectual disability - A variant	20674	18226	-2448	-12
TOTAL	45834	51869	6035	13

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2011, 2012 and 2017, 2018). Data about pupils with developmental attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, about pupils who are ill and have weakened health, and about pupils with multiple disabilities was not collected before 2012.

Annex 17: Pupils with disabilities transferred from mainstream to special schools

Table P 14: Number of pupils with disabilities transferred from mainstream to special schools, 2008=2018

	Total	Primary level	Lower secondary level	Share in the population of basic school pupils (%)
2008	1348	974	374	28
2009	1106	840	266	23
2010	1294	928	366	28
2011	1237	928	309	27
2012	1078	802	276	23
2013	1141	878	263	25
2014	1004	787	217	22
2015	1047	805	242	23
2016	866	674	192	19
2017	968	760	208	21
2018	853	688	165	18

Source: Own calculations based on data from CSTI (2008 – 2018).

Annex 18: Dissimilarity index⁵³⁷ in relation to pupils with disabilities

To achieve even distribution of pupils with disabilities within the fifth grade of basic schools, 26% of them would have to be transferred to a different classroom within the grade. More than 40% of pupils with disabilities are educated at schools with the index value below 0.20. 17% of pupils with disabilities are educated at schools

⁵³⁷ More detailed information on the index in

with the index value higher than 0.60. Schools which have pupils in special classrooms at the 5th grade report (on average) higher index value (0.31 compared with 0.25). At the same time, the index value decreases at higher grades. The largest average value of the index is reported in the Košice region (0.28) and the lowest in the Žilina region (0.21).⁵³⁸

To have the pupils with disabilities distributed evenly between mainstream basic schools within municipalities⁵³⁹, we would have to transfer on average 16% of pupils with disabilities. However, there are quite big differences between individual municipalities, whereas the index value ranges from 0.01 to 0.43. In some municipalities, nearly one half of pupils would have to be transferred to achieve even distribution. The largest average value of the index is reported in the Bratislava region (0.22) and the lowest in the Žilina region (0.13). The analysis does not suggest significant differences in the index between cities and towns.

⁵³⁸ The analysis covered basic schools with at least two mainstream classrooms with at least three pupils with disabilities within a grade with the percentage of pupils with disabilities ranging from 3% to 97%. 443 basic schools with 2,528 fifth-grade pupils with disabilities were included in the analysis.

⁵³⁹ The municipalities concerned meet the analysis qualification criteria, i.e. municipalities with at least two mainstream basic schools and the number of pupils with disabilities in the municipality ranging from 5% to 95%. All in all, there are 133 such municipalities with 166 basic schools educating 13,400 pupils with disabilities.

Annex 19: Additional cost of education of pupils with disabilities by educational stream and type of disability

Table P 15: Additional cost of education of pupils with disabilities by the educational stream and type of disability, 2018

	Integration			Special classroom			Special schools			TOTAL	
	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Percentage of additional costs within category	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Percentage of additional costs within category	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Percentage of additional costs within category	Number of pupils	Additional costs
Category 2	22,844	35,031,636	70%	5,512	8,453,250	17%	8,688	6,543,071	13%	37,044	50,027,957
Category 3	3,500	7,259,483	56%	930	1,928,257	15%	2,817	3,681,139	29%	7,247	12,868,879
Category 4	183	513,450	53%	18	50,503	5%	195	410,450	42%	396	974,403
Category 5	952	3,694,309	39%	140	541,987	6%	1,578	5,144,110	55%	2,670	9,380,406
Category 6	152	1,277,750	4%	98	825,623	3%	2,883	26,483,084	93%	3,133	28,586,457
TOTAL	27,631	47,776,627	47%	6,698	11,799,621	12%	16,161	42,261,854	41%	50,490	101,838,102

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from Eduzber (2017, 2018).

Annex 20: Average additional costs of education with disabilities in mainstream and special basic schools

Table P 16: Average additional costs of education with disabilities in mainstream and special basic schools, 2018

	Mainstream BS			Special BS		
	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Average costs per pupil	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Average costs per pupil
Category 2	28,356	43,484,886	1,534	8,688	14,032,476	1,615
Category 3	4,430	9,187,740	2,074	2,817	6,109,793	2,169
Category 4	201	563,953	2,806	195	578,260	2,965
Category 5	1,092	4,236,296	3,879	1,578	6,504,697	4,122
Category 6	250	2,103,373	8,413	2,883	28,968,346	10,048
TOTAL	34,328	59,576,248	1,736	16,161	56,193,572	3,477

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from Eduzber (2017, 2018).

Annex 21: Increased normative contributions for a pupil with disability at a basic and special basic school

Table P 17: Average additional costs of increased normative contributions for a pupil with disabilities at a basic and special basic school, 2018

	Basic schools – integration and special classrooms			Special basic schools			Difference per pupil between additional funds at SPS and BS
	Number of pupils	Additional funds per pupil*	Total additional funds	Number of pupils	Additional funds per pupil	Total additional funds	
Category 2	28,356	1,534	43,484,886	8,688	1615	6,543,071	81
Category 3	4,430	2,074	9,187,740	2,817	2168	3,681,139	94
Category 4	201	2,806	563,953	195	2970	410,450	165
Category 5	1,092	3,881	4,236,296	1,578	4121	5,144,110	240
Category 6	250	8,425	2,103,373	2,883	10048	26,483,084	1623
TOTAL	34,328	1,735	59,576,248	16,161	2,615	42,261,854	880

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from Eduzber (2017, 2018).

Annex 22: Specialised employees at basic schools with pupils with disabilities

Table P 18: Specialised employees at mainstream basic schools with more than 20 integrated pupils with disabilities, 2018 (%)

Number of pupils at school	Percentage of schools with more than 20 integrated pupils	Percentage of schools meeting the condition for having a professional employee	Specialised employee's work schedule
up to 50 pupils	0	0	0
51 – 150	5	50	31
151 – 250	15	83	48
251 – 350	21	83	41
351 – 450	21	83	52
451 – 550	15	89	85
551 or more	23	89	95
TOTAL	31	84	63

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from Eduzber (2018), CSTI (2018) and the Quarterly Report on Work in Education (2018).

Annex 23: Requested and approved work schedules of teaching assistants by school type, 2018

Table P 19: Requested and approved work schedules of teaching assistants by school type, 2018 (%)

	Percentage applying schools	Percentage of all requested work schedules	Percentage of approved work schedules	Percentage of at least partially approved applications	Percentage of approved work schedules of the requested work schedules	Percentage of 100% approved applications
Mainstream PSs	58	85	74	84	34	24
Special PSs	82	15	26	98	67	31

Source: EPI's calculations based on data of Eduzber (2018), Ministry of Education's ASIST application (May 2018), and approved work schedules of TA by Ministry of Education (2018).

Annex 24: Applications for teaching assistants by disability, 2018

Table P 20: Applications for teaching assistants by disability, 2018

	Number of pupils for whom a TA was requested	Percentage of all applications within the relevant disability	Percentage of all pupils with the relevant disability for whom TA was requested (%)
INTL	6817	41	28
LRNG	3340	20	23
ADHD	2391	14	52
AUT	1708	10	100
CD	1130	7	32
PHYS	481	3	67
HEAR	293	2	44
IPH	248	1	66
VSN	152	1	39
TOTAL	16,560	100	32

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the ASIST application (May 2018) and the data of CSTI (September 2018). Intellectually disabled pupils include pupils with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disability, including combined disabilities. Teaching assistants are not requested for pupils with behavioural disorders.

Annex 25: Development of the number of pupils with disability and applications for teaching assistants

Table P 21: Development of the number of pupils with disability and applications for teaching assistants, 2012 – 2019

	2012	2019	Increase in %
Total number of disabled pupils	44,395	51,869	17
Number of pupils with disabilities for whom a TA was requested	7,410	16,583	124
Number of requested TAs	1,338	5,845	337
Number of approved TAs	622	2,621	321
Volume of funds allocated	4,475,969	29,061,020	549

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the Ministry of Education

Annex 26: Evaluation of applications for teaching assistants at schools

Table P 22: Evaluation of applications for TAs at schools which applied for TAs only for pupils with one disability type, 2018

	Requested TAs		Approved TAs		Percentage approved		Number of requested TAs per pupil	Number of schools with no funds allocated for TAs	
	Number of pupils	Number of schools	Number of TAs	Number of schools	Schools (%)	TA (%)			
DLD	103	34	56.7	17	14.8	50	26	0.6	17
ADHD	98	64	77.64	32	24.6	50	32	0.8	32
INTL variant A	71	29	32.5	20	17.4	69	53	0.5	9
INTL B	8	2	3	2	2.0	100	67	0.4	0
CD	72	37	40.2	14	14.0	38	35	0.6	23
Visually impaired	11	10	9.28	9	8.0	90	86	0.8	1
Hearing impaired	11	10	10.2	5	5.2	50	51	0.9	5
Impaired mobility, able to walk	12	11	10.65	9	7.6	82	71	0.9	2
Blind	4	4	4	4	3.4	100	84	1.0	0

Impaired mobility, not able to walk	15	14	14.2	11	10.2	79	72	0.9	3
INTL variant C	3	2	2	2	2.0	100	100	0.7	0
VP variant A	15	13	14.28	11	9.8	85	68	1.0	2
AUT without INTL	60	48	56.6	24	21.2	50	37	0.9	24
VP variant C	42	9	17	8	9.0	89	53	0.4	1
AUT with INTL	39	9	18.2	7	9.5	78	52	0.5	2
IPH	12	5	6.65	4	3.5	80	53	0.6	1
TOTAL	576	301	373.1	179	162.1	59	43	0.6	122

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the ASIST application (May 2018) and the Ministry of Education (2018).

Annex 27: Changes in the numbers of pupils with individual types of disability at mainstream and special schools

Table P 23: Changes in the numbers of pupils with individual types of disability at mainstream and special schools, 2012 – 2018

	Difference between 2012 and 2018		
	BS	SPS	Total
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder	3903	0	3903
Developmental learning disorders	2063	140	2203
Communication disorder	1428	326	1754
Autism	539	0	539
Multiple disability	345	0	345
Illness and weakened health	276	0	276
Intellectual disability – B variant	112	177	289
Hearing impairment	105	-3	102
Vision impairment	32	-13	19
Intellectual disability – A variant combined with other disability	11	245	256
Intellectual disability – C variant	3	-121	-117
Intellectual disability – C variant combined with other disability	-11	-184	-195
Intellectual disability – B variant combined with other disability	-14	329	315
Physical disability	-357	-29	-386
Intellectual disability - A variant	-629	-1819	-2448
Behavioural disorder	-710	-109	-819
TOTAL	7097	-1062	6035

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI.

Annex 28: System of fund allocation for assistants – example of good practice from Ireland

System of fund allocation for assistants – example of good practice from Ireland

Ireland is a good example of a transparent system of assignment of assistants to pupils with disabilities. Schools apply for assistants through the network of local special educational needs organiser (SENO)⁵⁴⁰ The application is filed based on medical reports or opinions of other experts which establish significant health needs or significant impairment of physical or sensory functions of pupils. The diagnostics takes place in the so-called National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).⁵⁴¹ But schools may also apply for an assistant if the pupil's behaviour poses risk for his or her classmates or himself/herself. The application for an assistant is accompanied by a strategy

⁵⁴⁰ Each special educational needs organiser is responsible for mainstream and special schools in their region. They communicate with parents and take care that children with special educational needs receive support they are eligible to. <http://ncse.ie/for-parents>

⁵⁴¹ National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Model-of-Service.html>

of how the school plans to use the assistant's services. The need for assistant gradually diminishes (which the school supports) and the pupils should become independent of assistant's support within the lower secondary education level (the upper basic school level in Slovakia), unless the pupil has physical disability or unless the chronic needs resulting from disability do not change with age. At this education level, a more appropriate support instrument is the combination of differentiated and additional instruction.⁵⁴²

The scope of educational support (number of hours) is established by the **National Council for Special Education (NCSE)** based on the extent and frequency of needs and depending on how these needs manifest in the school environment. This means that the decision-making process about the scope of support is not the responsibility of the experts who assess the child's needs. Although expert reports are considered to be an inseparable part of the special need assessment process, their authors do not have an opportunity to observe a pupil in the classroom, are not aware of the situation at the school and do not have information about their resources. Assistants are assigned for **three years for a definite period of time** and their work is revised on an annual basis. After the three years, a complex revision of the need for assistant's support as such is required. The National Council's web site contains publications about the assistant assignment principles, guides for schools and parents, and statistics of assigned assistants by schools and the number of hours⁵⁴³.

Both parents and school have an option to appeal in certain cases. If a pupil is assigned an assistant but parents believe that their child does not receive sufficient support, the appeal is decided by a school head teacher or school council. If a pupil was not assigned any assistant at all or was covered by an insufficient number of hours, the appeal is decided by the special educational needs organiser (SENO) and then, as the second instance, the advisory appeal committee.⁵⁴⁴

Annex 29: Percentage of pupils with completed compulsory education and not continuing in education by disabilities (2018/19)

Table P 24: Percentage of pupils with completed compulsory education and not continuing in education by disabilities (2018/19)

	AUT	CH	INTL	CD	ADHD	BS	HEAR	PHYS	VP	DLD	VSN	Total
Integrated pupils	0.00	1.98	61.02	1.98	3.95	0.56	0.85	0.85	6.78	20.90	1.13	100.00
Pupils in special classrooms	0.26	0.00	98.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.52	0.26	0.00	100.00
Pupils at special schools	0.00	0.00	97.08	0.15	0.00	1.17	0.44	0.58	0.00	0.15	0.44	100.00

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the ministerial IS (2016 – 2019).

The calculation methodology in the table differs from the internationally reported data. Therefore, data in this part is not comparable with internationally reported data. It covers the percentage of pupils with completed compulsory education years and not continuing in education at basic or upper secondary schools. Intellectual disabilities include combinations of intellectual disability and other disability. Except all intellectually disabled pupils and pupils with developmental learning disorders who are integrated, less than 30 pupils are in all categories of disability.

⁵⁴² https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0030_2014.pdf

a

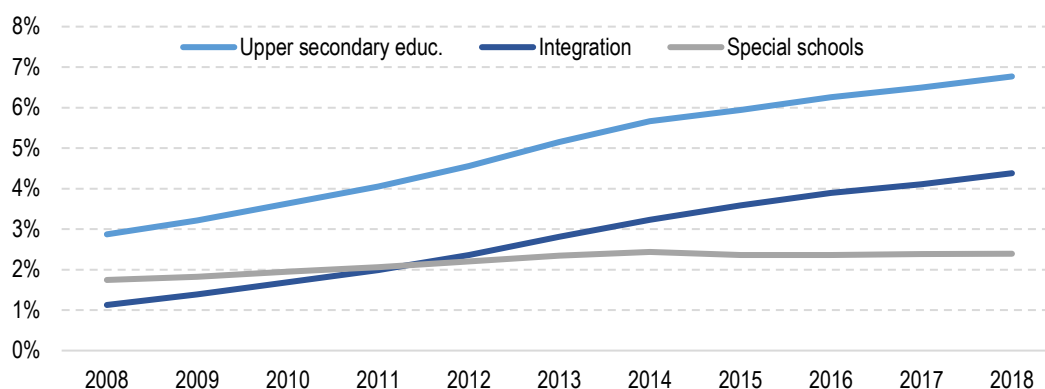
<http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ChildrenWithSpecialEdNeeds1.pdf>

⁵⁴³ <https://ncse.ie/>

⁵⁴⁴ <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/NCSE-SNA-Scheme-Information-Pamphlet.FINALwebaccessibleversion.16.01.151.pdf>

Annex 30: Development of percentage of pupils with disabilities at upper secondary schools, 2008 – 2018

Graph P 6: Development of percentage of pupils with disabilities at basic schools, 2008 – 2018



Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2008 – 2018).

Note: Secondary education includes integrated pupils and pupils at special schools.

Annex 31: Development of the number of pupils with individual types of disability at upper secondary schools, 2012 – 2018

Table P 25: Development of the number of pupils with individual types of disability at upper secondary schools, 2012 – 2018

	Difference between 2012 and 2018			
	2012	2018	Total	Increase in %
Developmental learning disorders	5277	7744	2467	47%
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder	0	896	896	100%
Intellectual disability	4292	4477	185	4%
Autism	48	201	153	319%
Vision impairment	184	195	11	6%
Hearing impairment	388	293	-95	-24%
Behavioural disorder	594	376	-218	-37%
Physical disability	807	532	-275	-34%
TOTAL	11590	14714	3124	27%

Note: Data about pupils with developmental activity disorders were not collected before 2012. Source: EPI's calculations based on data from CSTI (2011, 2012 and 2017, 2018).

Annex 32: Additional costs of education of pupils with disabilities at mainstream upper secondary schools, 2018

Table P 26: Additional costs of education of pupils with disabilities at mainstream upper secondary schools, 2018

	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Percentage of additional costs within category	Average costs per pupil	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Percentage of additional costs within category	Average costs per pupil	Number of pupils	Additional costs	Percentage of additional costs within category	Average costs per pupil
Category 1	283	477,996	51%	1,691	83	316,095	78%	3,793	7,495	14,454,839	87%	1,929
Category 2	129	289,111	31%	2,235	11	72,392	18%	6,581	490	1,605,642	10%	3,275
Category 3	58	178,450	19%	3,059	2	18,989	5%	9,495	138	645,330	4%	4,688
TOTAL	470	945,557	100%	2,010	96	407,476	100%	4,230	8,123	16,705,811	100%	2,057

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from Eduzber (2017, 2018).

Annex 33: Average additional costs of increased normative contributions for a pupil with disability at upper secondary schools, 2018

Table P 27: Average additional costs of increased normative contributions for a pupil with disability at upper secondary schools, 2018

	Mainstream upper secondary schools			Special upper secondary schools			Difference per pupil between additional funds at SPS and BS	
	Number of pupils	Additional funds per pupil	Total additional funds	Number of pupils	Additional funds per pupil	Total additional funds	In %	In %
Gymnaziums	470	2,010	945,557	574	1,116	640,576	-894	-44%
Upper secondary technical schools	8,123	2,057	16,705,811	405	1,778	720,254	-279	-14%
Conservatoriums/Practical schools	96	4,230	407,476	4,704	2,162	10,169,871	105	2%
TOTAL	8,689	2,078	18,058,845	5,683	2,029	11,530,702		

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from Eduzber (2017, 2018).

Annex 34: Students with disabilities at public universities, 2018

Table P 28: Students with disabilities at public universities, 2018

	Number of students	Number of students with disabilities	Percentage of students with disabilities
Catholic University in Ružomberok	3,424	102	3.0%
Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín	1,952	29	1.5%
Comenius University in Bratislava	20,306	278	1.4%
University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice	1,678	22	1.3%
Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra	6,028	78	1.3%
University of Trnava	4,396	49	1.1%
Academy of Performing Arts	915	10	1.1%
Technical University in Zvolen	2,406	25	1.0%
Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica.	6,655	62	0.9%
Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice.	6,500	58	0.9%
Technical University of Košice	8,590	73	0.8%
J. Selye University	1,754	14	0.8%
University of Economics in Bratislava	6,925	48	0.7%
Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava	579	4	0.7%
Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava	10,348	63	0.6%
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra	6,888	39	0.6%
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava	5,203	28	0.5%
Prešov University in Prešov	7,990	41	0.5%
University of Žilina	7,179	30	0.4%
Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica	516	1	0.2%
TOTAL	110,232	1,054	0.96%

Number of students with specific needs status valid on 31 December 2017.

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the budget of universities (2018).

Annex 35: Overview of support for students with individual types of disability

Table P 29: Overview of support for students with individual types of disability

	Support amount	2015	2016	2017	2018
Blind and visually impaired (A1)	2,500	68	108	91	88
Deaf and hearing impaired (B2)	5,400	24	45	41	51
Lower limb disability (C1)	1,800	94	135	131	136
Upper limb disability (C1)	4,000	38	77	83	75
Autism, other pervasive developmental disorders and learning disorders (D)	700	64	114	151	209
Chronic and mental disease, weakened health (EUR)	325	308	453	451	495
TOTAL		596	932	948	1054

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the budget of universities (2015 – 2018).

Table P 30: Volume of requested and allocated funds for students with disabilities

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Requested funds	765,700	1,291,025	1,268,975	1,347,375
Allocated funds	550,000	700,000	700,000	700,000
Percentage of approved applications	72%	54%	55%	52%

Source: EPI's calculations based on data from the budget of universities.

Annex 36: Impact of the proposed change of the assistance in material need system on the inactivity trap

With the current system of social benefits, the long-term unemployed people do much better if they work than they would if they lived on social benefits. The motivation to work is measured by the so-called inactivity trap which measures the proportion of gross income the individual loses due to taxes and the reduced social benefits when the individual finds employment.⁵⁴⁵ The higher the value of this indicator, the lower the financial motivation to go to work instead of being unemployed.

The motivation to work in case of households with children is much higher compared with childless households – the participation tax is lower (Graph P 7). The January 2020 changes (e.g. minimum wage increase) changed this setting only moderately. If one of the long-term unemployed parents finds work for a minimum wage, the inactivity trap is negative.⁵⁴⁶ This means that, on a short-term basis, the household receives higher benefits than before due to various incentives (special allowance, extended activation benefit) and tax instruments (Chapter 8.3). Although the inactivity trap is positive in childless households, it remains to be low even if compared internationally (Graph 53 Chapter 8.1).⁵⁴⁷

The proposed change of the assistance in material need system consists in the increase in the benefits within the AMN system and amendment of the allowance for dependent children to include all children until they complete compulsory education (Box 20) and amendment of the eligibility to a special allowance to include parents who lost the eligibility to AMN when they became eligible to a parental benefit (Chapter 7.2). Even when this proposal is implemented, working will remain a much better option than living on social benefits. In case of lone parents, the motivation would also grow thanks to wider eligibility to special allowance. Their net income from work for minimum

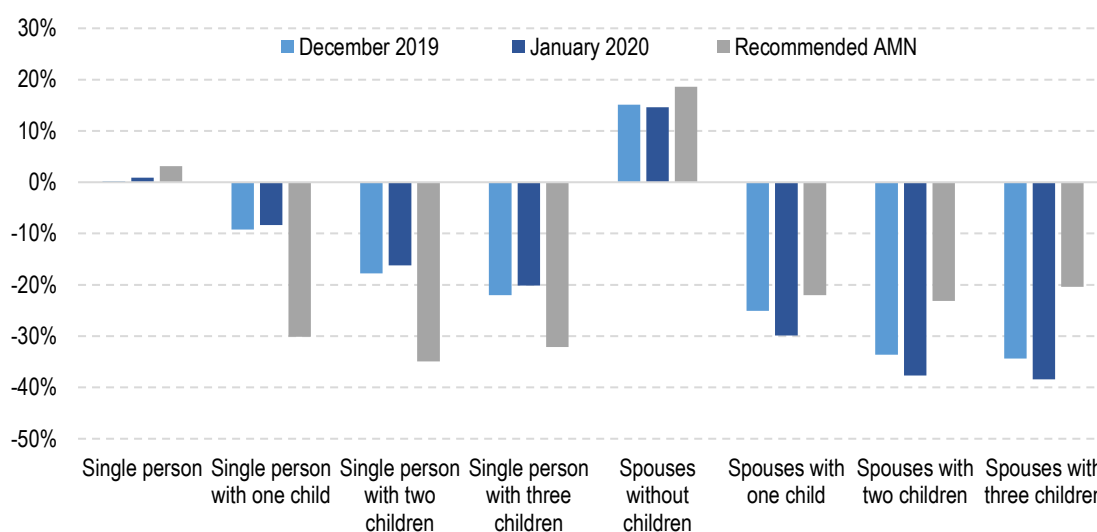
⁵⁴⁵ The inactivity trap calculation includes all available benefits and tax allowances for model households (assistance in material need system with a separate allowance, parental benefit, child allowances, meal subsidies, tax bonus) except the commuting allowance which makes work even more beneficial if granted by the competent labour office.

⁵⁴⁶ The calculation presupposes residence in a most lagging county, jobless partner, long-term unemployment before finding a job (registration longer than 12 months) and at least one child in a household aged less than 3 years (in case of multi-child households, one third of children aged less than 3 years, one third in a KG, and one third in a PS).

⁵⁴⁷ Differences in the inactivity trap size compared with the OECD calculations (Graph 53) can also be explained by the OECD relying on a 2-month unemployment before finding a job, a situation when a job seeker in the AMN system is not eligible to a special allowance after he or she finds job. Neither does the OECD take into account all available benefits if a job seeker finds a job or the age of children relevant to eligibility.

wage compared with benefits is more than 130% of the gross wage. Although the proposal increases the inactivity trap in case of couples with children, it remains substantially negative.

Graph P 7: Inactivity trap: effective tax in case of a job for a minimum wage (%)



Source: VFM based on data from the Employment Institute's wage calculator (<https://www.iz.sk/kalkulacka>)

Annex 37: Impact of parental benefit on the financial situation of poor families with children

Table P 31 shows examples of poor jobless families whose parental benefit only moderately exceeds the aggregate amount of benefits within the assistance in material need system and, at the same time, families cease to be eligible to AMN when they become eligible to the benefit. The bottom row shows the fee limit for having a child in a kindergarten which, if exceeded, reduces the household's income (after payment of the kindergarten fee) in the system with a parental benefit compared with a situation without the parental benefit.

- Family 1: Two parents with one child aged less than 1 year and two children at a KG eligible to one activation benefit, not eligible to housing benefit
- Family 2: Two parents with one two-year old child and one child at a KG not eligible to activation benefit
- Family 3: One parent with one child aged less than 1 year, one child at a KG and two children at a BS eligible to housing benefit
- Family 4: Two parents with a two-year old child, one child at a KG and one at a BS eligible to one activation benefit, not eligible to housing benefit

Table P 32 focuses on the option of increasing the income of a family of two parents with one child aged 1 to 3 years. Parents are long-term unemployed, not involved in activation works and are eligible to a housing benefit. The aggregate amount of AMN benefits totals EUR 264 which means that they cease to be eligible to AMN in the system with a parental benefit. Their total family income in the system with a parental benefit amounts to EUR 294.95 (column 1), which is EUR 6 more than it would be in a system without a PB (column 3). If one of the parents finds a part-time job for EUR 302 a month (52% of the monthly minimum wage and EUR 261.19 net), the family income in a system with PB would reach EUR 556.14 (column 2). However, if the family did not lose eligibility to AMN, a working parent would also receive a special allowance which would increase their income to as much as EUR 681.38. However, the family ceases to be eligible to this allowance with the parental benefit.

Table P 31: Impact of parental benefit on poor families with children at KG (EUR)

	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3	Family 4
Assistance in material need	172.60	172.60	126.20	172.60
Protective allowance	14.60	0.00	14.60	0.00
Activation benefit	67.90	0.00	0.00	67.90
Allowance for a dependent child	0.00	0.00	37.20	18.60
Housing allowance	0.00	91.40	91.40	0.00
a. Total AMN	255.10	264.00	269.40	259.10
b. School lunch	22.00	11.00	33.00	22.00
c. Child benefit	74.85	49.90	99.80	74.85
d. Parental benefit	270.00	270.00	270.00	270.00
e. Income without a parental benefit (a+b+c)	351.95	324.90	402.20	355.95
f. Income with a parental benefit (b+c+d)	366.85	330.90	402.80	366.85
Kindergarten fee limit above which loss occurs ((f-e)/number of children at KG)	7.45	6.00	0.60	10.90

Source: VfM

Table P 32: Impact of the parental benefit on the options to increase income by activation and special allowances (family of two parents and two children aged 1 to 2 years)

	Income with PB – unemployed	Income with PB + employment	Income without PB – unemployed	Income without PB + employment
Assistance in material need	172.60	172.60	172.60	172.60
Protective allowance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Activation benefit (AB)	0.00	135.70	0.00	135.70
Allowance for a dependent child	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Housing allowance	91.40	91.40	91.40	91.40
Sum of AMN benefits	264.00	399.70	264.00	399.70
Sum of AMN benefits with work earned income ⁵⁴⁸	264.00	269.11	264.00	269.11
Sum of AMN benefits with work earned income and PB	0.00	0.00	264.00	269.11
b. Special allowance (SA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	126.14
c. Child benefit	24.95	24.95	24.95	24.95
d. Parental benefit (PB)	270.00	270.00	0.00	0.00
e. Net work earned income	0.00	261.19	0.00	261.19
Family income (a+b+c+d+e)	294.95	556.14	288.95	681.38

Source: VfM

⁵⁴⁸ The assistance in material need are paid relative to the income of the household members. The income is deducted from the total sum of AMN benefits. 50% of the income from dependent activity (employment) based on which a person is provided a special allowance is not considered as income.

Annex 38: List of most hazardous dumps prepared by the Institute of Environmental Policy

Table P 33: List of most hazardous dumps prepared by the Institute of Environmental Policy

Municipality	Year formed	Schools and healthcare facilities		Citizens		Roma population	Extenuating factors		
		Within 1,000 metres	Within 500 metres	Within 300 metres	Within 100 metres	Within 500 metres	Forest	Wind	Type of dump
Košice-Myslava	2002	6	3705	1583	28	3671	✓	X	N
Čadca	2009	1	1311	545	228		X	X	O
Zemianske Kostolany	1998	1	630	294	0		X	X	I
Spišská Nová Ves	1996	0	866	0	0	745	X	X	O
Košice-Šaca	2009	0	393	193	108		X	✓	O, N
Martin	1994	0	331	331	142	331	X	✓	O
Banská Bystrica	1988	0	531	225	13		X	X	I
Maršová	1986	0	184	0	0		X	X	O
Bajtava	1993	0	270	58	0		✓	X	O
Veľké Ozorovce	2010	0	315	73	0	73	X	✓	O
Námestovo	2010	0	368	47	0		✓	X	O
Mokrý Háj	2009	0	205	96	0		X	X	O
Podbrezová	2012	6	148	0	0		✓	X	O
Stará Ľubovňa	2007	0	210	0	0		X	✓	O
Podtureň	2000	1	366	0	0		✓	X	O
Kozárovce	2012	0	77	77	0	77	X	X	I
Strážske	2009	1	96	7	0		X	✓	O, N
Myslina	2001	0	94	0	0		X	✓	O
Michal nad Žitavou	2009	0	78	0	0		X	X	I
Lučenec	1995	0	59	9	0		✓	✓	O
Blatnica	1993	0	63	9	0		X	✓	I

Annex 39: Crisis accommodation facilities

Housing type	Duration of stay	Target group	Other provided services
Homeless shelter	Overnight stay	Persons without housing or unable to use their existing housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social counselling • inevitable clothing and footwear conditions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meal preparation, meal or foodstuff provision • necessary basic personal hygiene
Reception centre	Day-long, for a specific time	Persons without housing or unable to use their existing housing ⁵⁴⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social counselling • assistance in the exercise of rights and legitimate interests • inevitable clothing and footwear conditions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meal preparation, meal or foodstuff provision • necessary basic personal hygiene • cleaning • laundry, ironing, and linen and clothing maintenance • spare-time activities.
Emergency shelter facility	Day-long, for a specific time	Victims of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social counselling • assistance in the exercise of rights and legitimate interests conditions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meal preparation, meal or foodstuff provision • necessary basic personal hygiene • cleaning • laundry, ironing, and linen and clothing maintenance • spare-time activities.
Halfway house	Day-long, for a specific time	Persons with no housing after the social service they receive in other facility ends, after the end of foster care, or the end of protective care ⁵⁵⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social counselling • assistance in the exercise of rights and legitimate interests • Development of work skills • assistance in job placement conditions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meal preparation, meal or foodstuff provision • necessary basic personal hygiene • cleaning • laundry, ironing, and linen and clothing maintenance • spare-time activities.

Source: Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services.

⁵⁴⁹ Social service provider in a reception shelter provides this social service separately for individuals and separately for families/individuals with a child.

⁵⁵⁰ Social service in a halfway home cannot be provided in the premises of a foster home.

Annex 40: Methodological notes on the calculation of the impact of the measures on public spending

Value

Task	Potential (eur million)	Calculation
1 Support early childhood care for children from MRC aged 0 to 3 years	4.9	Information from the <i>Omama</i> project: staff costs per one child a year amount to EUR 1,000. Number of children living in segregated Roma settlements aged 0 to 3 years: 7,535. Added to that is the lump-sum amount for indirect expenses (15% of the total staff costs; EUR 1.1 million) and expenditures on project management (11% of the total costs; EUR 1.1 million). Maximum expenditures presuppose 50% participation. Current expenditures will depend on the interest, whereas the participation is expected to be voluntary.
2.1 Expansion of the capacities necessary to launch compulsory pre-primary education for children aged 5 years or more and a statutory right to a KG place for 3 and 4 years old children.	34.4	Considering the current free capacity and the contracted places from the ESI Funds, 1,828 to 3,172 places need to be created in order to achieve full enrolment rate of 5-year-old children and additional 8,826 to 9,606 places are necessary to satisfy the demand of legal guardians for younger children. Furthermore, it is envisaged within the eligibility that the demand of legal guardians of disadvantaged children for places at KGs is expected to be a half lower than the demand of the general population. In accordance with the existing average expenditures on the creation of one KG place, the amount should, according to the Ministry of Interior's data, reach EUR 84.0 million to EUR 101.3 million, with EUR 30.6 million to EUR 38.1 million going to disadvantaged children (the potential of the expenditures on inclusion is expressed as a mean value between the minimum and the maximum expenditures on disadvantaged children). They include the funds to co-finance the existing ESI Funds (IROP and OP HR) allocated for the development of KG capacities if they are used to in full extent and the additional funds for KG capacities to achieve full enrolment rate of 5-year-old children and statutory right for 3 to 4 years old children. It does not include funding from the ESI Funds (EUR 41.24 million still not contracted in October 2018)
2.2 Financial support in the form of a development project for removal of structural barriers from kindergartens	0.6	Expenditures determined based on the example of the development project for removal of structural barriers from basic schools.
3 Establish a bus line between segregated settlements and kindergartens and basic schools	0.4	Total number of kilometres from 49 Roma settlements outside a municipality to the nearest municipalities is 173 km. Market survey revealed that 1 km by a rented bus costs EUR 1.45 – EUR 4.26. With a two-way transportation during 190 days of the school year and the maximum capacity of 30 seats in one bus, the rental of buses for all children aged less than 15 years (4,263 children) would cost EUR 213 thousand to EUR 625 thousand a year (cost of km * number of km * number of buses).
4.1 Provision of funds to administrators for teaching assistants, ancillary tutors and professional employees at kindergartens covering 50% of their tariff wage	32.3	The state would, in case of interest, contribute 50% of the tariff wage of teaching assistants (EUR 5,313), ancillary tutors (EUR 4,845) and professional employees (EUR 7,070) of KG administrators within the proposed measure. Assistants for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (SDB)/ancillary tutors: if a KG has 5 to 10 children from SDB (192 KGs), it will be eligible to one full-time TA/AE irrespective of the number of classrooms, and if it has more than 10 children from SDB (67 KGs) in two or more classrooms, it will be eligible to two full-time TAs/AEs. If all KGs used this option, it would cover 326 full-time TAs/AEs and the measure would cost EUR 1,579,435 (lower limit based on the staff costs of ancillary tutors) to EUR 1,814,477 (upper limit based on the staff costs of teaching assistants). Assistants for pupils with disabilities/ancillary tutors: if a KG has 1 or more children with a disability in one classroom, the measure counts on one full-time TA (225 KGs) and if a KG has 2 or more children with a disability in two or more classrooms, it counts on two full-time

		<p>TAs (446 KGs). If all KGs used this option, it would cover 1,117 full-time TAs/AEs and the measure would cost EUR 5,411,744 (lower limit) to EUR 5,888,168 (upper limit).</p> <p>Specialised employees: If a KG has less than two classrooms (1,159 KGs), it is eligible to a 50% part-time professional employee; if a KG has two to four classrooms (1,076 KGs), it is eligible to one full-time professional employee and if it has more than four classrooms (766 KGs), it is eligible to two full-time professional employees. If all KGs used this option, it would cover 3,188 full time professional employees and the measure would cost EUR 22,534,102.</p>
4.2	Full funding of Roma and Hungarian speaking teaching assistants/ancillary tutors	7.6 <p>The calculation is based on municipalities with the Roma or Hungarian language reported as the major language of the Roma population in the 2019 Atlas of Roma Communities. The calculation presupposes that the number of funded assistants in a municipality is set as the lower of: (1) number of KGs in the municipality, or (2) (number of children from MRC aged 3 to 5 years)/5 and rounded downwards. This means that 567 claims would meet the eligibility criteria for assistant funding. Based on the standard scale of unit costs of teaching assistants within the National Project School Open to Everyone, the labour costs of one assistant amount to EUR 1,115 a month. The actual costs will depend on the number of administrators which will use this option as well as on the offer of suitable candidates on the labour market. The calculation presupposes that all administrators who are eligible to this support would eventually use this option.</p>
4.3	Implementation of a pilot scholarship scheme for young people who can speak Roma language to help them complete the necessary education to become qualified teaching assistants, ancillary tutors or teachers at a kindergarten	0.7 <p>The pilot project counts on supporting 5 teachers, 5 assistants and 5 ancillary tutors a year in each of the three regions (BB, PO and KE) The duration of education is 1 year for ancillary tutors and 5 years for teachers and assistants. The scholarship is set at the level of the net minimum wage in 2019 (EUR 430.35) and would be paid 10 months of the school year.</p>
5	Extend the offer of education of teaching and professional staff at kindergartens in work with children from socially disadvantaged background or disabilities	2.1 <p>The course preparation should take one year with the cost of EUR 20/hour for course developers and lecturers (in accordance with the remuneration in the national projects already implemented). The target group counting 11,099 teachers was identified from among all KG teachers based on the percentage of teachers (66%) who reported to feel need for continuing education in teaching pupils with special needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). Teachers will be educated in groups of 10 and the education will take 50 hours a year as is standard in similar courses. The total costs amount to EUR 460 thousand in the first year for course development and EUR 1.6 million a year in the next six years for education of teachers. One teacher is expected to undergo one programme in one year.</p>
6.1	Funding of professional employees at mainstream basic schools	32.9 <p>The calculation is based on an assumption that each school would receive purpose-specific funds to cover for the cost of a school psychologist and another professional employee depending on the size of the school irrespective of the number of pupils with disabilities or those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The work schedule is set in accordance with the Objectivization Model of the Number of Specialised Employees, page 2 (https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/11075.pdf). It covers 1,897 full-time positions in total. The expenditures presuppose the average wage of a professional employee to reach EUR 1,070.20 a month in 2018. (*1.352 coefficient for staff costs * 12 months).</p>
6.2	Increased normative contribution for education of pupils from SDB based on the amended definition	21.7 <p>The increased normative contribution is counted as the minimum amount necessary to pay one full-time teaching assistant/professional assistant with at least 50 pupils from SDB. The annual staff costs of a teaching assistant are estimated to reach EUR 13,044, which will translate into an increased normative contribution by EUR 261 per pupil compared with the normative contribution for a mainstream pupil and the annual staff costs of a professional employee of EUR 17,363, which will translate into an increased normative contribution by</p>

EUR 347 per pupil compared with the normative contribution for a mainstream pupil. The estimated normative contribution is calculated as a mean value of the two values (EUR 304). The amended definition may increase the number of pupils from SDB to 71,344 pupils.⁵⁵¹

6.3		<p>Allowing mainstream schools with after school club (ASC) attended by children with disabilities to apply for extra teaching assistants/ancillary tutors for such clubs within applications for funds to cover the costs of teaching assistants for ASC.</p> <p>The assumption is that around one half of 2,621 full-time teaching assistants funded from non-normative funds work at the primary level and that around 69% of primary level pupils at basic schools and 97% of the primary level pupils of special basic schools go to ASC. Provided that pupils with disabilities showed the same interest in ASC as the general population, schools could only get approval for no more than 887 teaching assistants/ancillary tutors for ASC. All in all, the expenditures amount to EUR 8,595,030 (lower limit based on the staff costs of ancillary tutors) to EUR 10,814,304 (upper limit based on the staff costs of teaching assistants).</p>
6.4	5.7	<p>Separate collection of requests for teaching assistants at upper secondary schools and allocation of a separate volume of non-normative sources to cover the staff costs of such assistants</p> <p>Assuming that pupils with certain types of disability become more independent as they grow up, demand for teaching assistants could be one half lower in case of pupils at upper secondary schools than at basic schools and, consequently, upper secondary schools are expected to need 940 teaching assistants. In order to satisfy requests of upper secondary schools to the extent of 50% at the beginning (analogically as the mean value for 2012 – 2018 at basic schools), we count on allocating funds for staff costs of 470 teaching assistants, i.e. EUR 5,730,850 a year.</p>
6.5	4.7	<p>Development project with regular financial allocation to support mentoring and tutoring of low performing pupils at the lower secondary level (grades 5 to 9) and upper secondary schools</p> <p>The number of pupils threatened by early dropout from basic schools was 1,450 in 2018.⁵⁵² The risk group of pupils at upper secondary schools includes 788 students of upper secondary schools who repeated the first grade. The average costs of a year-long mentoring and tutoring for one pupil threatened by early school dropout amount to EUR 4,158.⁵⁵³ The total costs of preparation of a development project within which basic and upper secondary schools could apply for funds for mentoring and tutoring for all pupils threatened by dropout amount to EUR 4,652,385 a year, if we envisage a 50% participation of poor-performing pupils. Depending on the success of the project and on the implementation of other measures identified in the review, the expenditures should decrease in the upcoming years whereas also the number of pupils who would be threatened by early dropout would decrease. In the first year, the expenditures may be higher if the participation exceeds 50%.</p>
7.1	-2.6	<p>Reformed allowance for pupils from socially disadvantaged background</p> <p>The number of pupils from SDB resulting from the amended definition is expected to reach 71,344 and the expected allowance is EUR 50 a year. Total expenditures amount to EUR 3.6 million which is EUR 2.6 million less than the expenditures spent on the allowance in 2018.</p>
7.2	2.7	<p>Compulsory waiver of the fees for the after school club for pupils from SDB</p> <p>To compensate the gap in revenues of administrators, the measure proposes to introduce (just like in kindergartens) a contribution to partially cover the cost of child-rearing and education in ASC incurred by ASC administrators. The allowance is proposed to be set at EUR 84 a year (7.5% of the minimum subsistence income for one dependent child * 12 months of a calendar year). Assuming that the number of pupils from SDB at the primary level reaches 31,708 (based on the new definition), the expenditures would total EUR 2,663,472 a year.</p>

⁵⁵¹ The calculation takes into account the income of parents (recipients of AMN) and residence in an excluded location. Education and unemployment of parents or different mother tongue of the pupil are not taken into account as the data is not available. But the review proposes to start collecting the data (data and methodology of the measure 2, 3 and 4).

⁵⁵² Calculated as the number of the pupils at basic schools who turned 16 or more in the school year 2017/2018 until the end of June 2018 (i.e. who completed the ten-year compulsory education in the school year 2017/2018) and did not continue in education in the school year 2018/2019.

⁵⁵³ The costs were calculated based on the currently implemented mentoring and tutoring project supported from the European funds. Available at: <http://www.minv.sk/?aktualne-vyzvy-na-predkladanie-ziadosti-o-nenavratny-financny-prispevok&sprava=vyzva-zamerana-na-poskytovanie-mentorskej-a-tutorskej-podpory-pre-ziakov-z-mrk-s-dorazom-na-uspesne-ukoncenie-zs-a-plynuly-prechod-na-ss-oplz-po5-2017-2>

7.3	Increasing the upper secondary school scholarship, with the lowest value reaching the activation benefit paid within the assistance in material need system	4.1	The lowest limit of the scholarship would grow from EUR 23.99 to EUR 67.90 a month, the highest from EUR 47.98 to EUR 135.80. The calculation works with the same number of scholarships as was paid in the school year 2018/2019 (58,960 monthly payments). At the same time, the number of pupils in the AMN system decreases every year, although, on the other hand, higher financial motivation may increase the interest in continued education.
8.1	A grant-funded programme for universities preparing future teachers to transform the study programmes towards greater inclusion	1.5	One transformation project is expected to consume EUR 500,000 ⁵⁵⁴ ; there were 26 departments in 2018/19 which offered study programmes for future teachers. Assuming that the three best projects were supported from the grant-funded call, the expenditures would reach EUR 1.5 million.
8.2	Development of a new course focusing on inter-generational transmission of poverty and its impact on education and development of six new educational courses dealing in the education of children with specific disabilities which currently are not available	4.0	The course preparation should take one year with the cost of EUR 20/hour for course developers and lecturers (in accordance with the remuneration in the national projects already implemented). The target group of 24,873 teachers was identified from among all BS teachers based on the percentage of teachers (69 %) who reported to feel need for continuing education in teaching pupils with special needs (Learning Makes Sense, 2019). Teachers will be educated in groups of 10 and the education will take 50 hours a year as is standard in similar courses. The total costs amount to EUR 307 thousand in the first year for course development and EUR 3.7 million a year in the next four years for education of teachers. One teacher is expected to undergo one programme in one year.
8.3	Development of the educational programme focusing on segregation in education for head teachers of KGs and PSs, mayors as administrators of schools, and officers of county authorities	1.5	The course preparation should take one year with the cost of EUR 20/hour for course developers and lecturers (in accordance with the remuneration in the national projects already implemented). The target group consists of 9,315 people (2,087 BS head teachers; 3,001 KG head teachers; 1,560 BS administrators; 2,272 KG administrators; and 395 employees of county authorities). They will be educated in groups of 10 and the education will take 50 hours a year as is standard in similar courses. A basic common module of the course is expected to be developed for all target groups (head teachers, administrators and county authority employees) and a specific module for each target group. The total costs amount to EUR 153 thousand in the first year for course development and EUR 1.4 million the next year for the education.
8.4	Amendment of the offer of educational programmes to include programmes focusing on the acquisition of competencies in teaching Slovak as the second language	0.6	The course preparation should take one year with the cost of EUR 20/hour for course developers and lecturers (in accordance with the remuneration in the national projects already implemented). The target group of 2,062 teachers includes all primary level teachers at schools in municipalities where Roma speaking population comprises more than 20% of the municipality population. Teachers will be educated in groups of 10 and the education will take 100 hours a year as is standard in similar courses. The total costs amount to EUR 77 thousand in the first year for course development and EUR 618 thousand the next year for the education of teachers.
9	Implement a flexible normative contribution for second-chance education	0.9	The current system allocates 10% of the normative contribution for such pupils, but we propose to establish a flexible normative contribution (10 to 100%). The normative amount would depend on the scope of the framework curriculum set by the head teacher based on student's needs. The additional expenditures arising out of the flexible normative amount are calculated as the difference between the product of the average number of pupils taking part in the second-chance education at individual school types (PSs, general and

⁵⁵⁴ Calculated in accordance with the current call of the OP HR which focuses particularly on the improvement of practical preparation of future teachers studying at universities. This call is allocated EUR 15,000,000 in total, and one project may receive EUR 100,000 to EUR 500,000. Available at: <https://www.itms2014.sk/vyzva?id=344eaa93-7846-4629-bc31-88f0a2d8415e>

vocational SSs) for the past five years (2014-2018) and the flexible normative amount (50% mean value) and the product of the average number of pupils participating in the second-chance education at individual school types (BS, general and vocational SSs) for the past five years (2014-2018) and the original normative amount (10%).

10	Increase the volume of funds to make basic and upper secondary schools barrier-free	0.6	The funds for basic schools are expected to be increased (from EUR 300 thousand to EUR 600 thousand) and a separate development project created for upper secondary schools (EUR 300 thousand).
11	Do a pilot test of school district re-organisation on a de-segregation principle	0.8	The expenditures on the pilot project are modelled based on a larger town/smaller city with three basic schools. The assumption is that pupils from MRC are concentrated in one of the three schools in accordance with the defined school districts, and the remaining two schools have free capacity to integrate these pupils. The aim of the pilot project is to test the voluntary change of school districts and achieve that pupils from SDB start attending the other two schools from the specified school year and the school concentrating pupils from SDB stop admitting such pupils. We count on expenditures for five years (six months for project preparation, four years for implementation at the primary level, six months for processing the project outcomes) for a desegregation supervisor, teaching assistants and professional employees and field social workers. Preparation for the desegregation process will include the development of communication strategy and educational courses for the administrator, officers, head teachers, teaching and professional staff. The support of the desegregation process will also cover the expenditures on free transportation and after school club for all pupils at the primary level of the involved schools. The project also includes a research component which should result in the development of a desegregation methodological material.
12.1	Mandatory repeated diagnostics on an annual basis for pupils with mild intellectual disability at the primary level of mainstream and special schools	0.1	The expenditures on mandatory repeated diagnostics are calculated as the product of the average number of pupils with mild intellectual disability at the primary level of mainstream and special basic schools in 2018 (1,636 pupils) and the cost of diagnostics of a pupil with mild intellectual disability incurred by a state CSPC (EUR 40 broken down to the normative contribution of EUR 30.20 per client and allowance for the diagnostic of mild intellectual disability of EUR 9.80).
12.2	Pilot project of a special school transformation to a mainstream school or a resource centre	0.5	The expenditures on the pilot project are modelled based on a gradual voluntary dissolution of a special school which educates only or mostly pupils with mild intellectual disability. We count on expenditures for five years (six months for project preparation, four years for implementation at the primary level, six months for processing the project outcomes) for a desegregation supervisor, teaching assistants and field social workers. Preparation for the process will include the development of communication strategy and educational courses for the administrators, officers, head teachers, teachers and professional employees. The support for the process will also cover the expenditures on free transportation for pupils who originally attended special school. The project also includes a research component which should result in the development of a methodological material for this type of a transformation process.
12.3	Pilot project of abandonment of special education classrooms at 16 basic schools	1.2	The expenditures on the pilot project are modelled based on gradual voluntary abandonment of special classrooms and the subsequent integration of pupils into mainstream classrooms at eight basic schools (one school in each region). We count on expenditures for six years (six months for project preparation, five years for implementation at the lower secondary level, six months for processing the project outcomes) for the appropriate number of teaching assistants. Preparation for the special classroom abandonment process will include the development of communication strategy and educational courses for the administrators, officers, head teachers, teachers and professional employees. The support of the process will also cover the expenditures on free after school club for all pupils at the primary level of the involved schools. The project also includes a research component which should result in the development of a methodological material for this type of a transformation process.

13	Implement individualised work with disadvantaged groups on the labour market	3.3	The analytical study of the Institute for Labour and Family Research elaborated at request of the Ministry of Labour proposes an ASE funding system consisting of two types of transfers – transfers for individualised counselling for hard-to-place job seekers (for 15 months at the most) and transfers for placement of job seekers on the labour market (for 6 months at the most, but both transfers for 15 months at the most per one job seeker). The costs are estimated to reach EUR 161 a month per one job seeker for provision of individualised counselling and the monthly allowance for one successfully placed job seeker is proposed at the level of 50% of the assessment base of the so placed person. The total annual costs of both transfers are estimated to reach EUR 3,282,000. ⁵⁵⁵
14	Making the labour offices barrier-free	0.6	The calculation is based on all labour offices (9 in total) which did not have barrier-free access based on monitoring conducted by the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in 2016 and all workplaces of those offices which do not have such access up to this date (14 in total). Labour offices which reported to have barrier-free access in the monitoring were not surveyed for barrier-free access of all workplaces, and therefore the actual number of workplaces without barrier-free access could be even higher. The calculation is based on the need for modifications in four categories (parking space, barrier-free entrance, barrier-free interior design and elevator). Three levels of modifications (lowest, medium and highest) have been priced in each category and average price calculated based on that. Smaller modifications, such as entrance ramp without the need of other modifications, were assigned higher weights. The total sum of items in each category results in the average price of barrier removal from one workplace of the labour office. The average reconstruction of one workplace would thus cost EUR 39 thousand.
15.1	Deriving the maximum amount of benefits within the AMN system for families with children (less the housing benefit) plus the child allowance from the equivalent of the minimum subsistence income of a childless individual taking into consideration the size and structure of the household making use of the OECD equivalence scale	22.0	The calculation is based on the same number and structure of households in the AMN system as in 2018. The amount of individual AMN components and minimum subsistence income is based on the 2020 amounts. The difference between the maximum benefits within AMN (without housing benefit) and the SM equivalent for a childless individual (using the OECD equivalence scale) is calculated for each household. This is the amount by which the income of the household would increase irrespective of whether and to what extent the actual amount of benefits is reduced as a result of other incomes. ⁵⁵⁶ The income is adjusted only through the benefit and allowance for a dependent child, which reflects the amendment of the allowance to include pre-school children (the enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 5 years is expected to be 41% (Chapter 5.1)). The eligibility to the other AMN components (activation benefit, protective allowance) remains unchanged. The calculation does not reflect the fact that the allowance for a dependent child for school-age children is conditional upon school attendance, which means that not every single family with a child in the AMN system is eligible to receive it. This effect would slightly reduce the estimated additional expenditures. Neither does the calculation take into account the savings due to cancellation of the housing benefit within the AMN – these savings enter the calculation of expenditures on the new housing benefit (value measure 21). Although the allowance for a dependent child and the assistance in material need are proposed in a higher amount, exclusion of the housing benefit from the AMN system means that the total maximum amount of benefits will remain similar to the amount before the change. Since the benefit and allowance for a dependent child are more accessible than the housing benefit (Chapter 9.5), the change

⁵⁵⁵ Assuming the ASE has 100 employees and each of them works with 10 clients a month during 12 months, the maximum annual costs of individualised counselling by ASE are estimated to reach EUR 1,932,000. Assuming that the ASE places 900 job seekers with disability a year and the average allowance for their placement is EUR 1,500 (for all the 6 months), the annual costs of transfers for placement of job seekers with disabilities on the labour market would total EUR 1,350,000.

⁵⁵⁶ In case of dependent children who completed the compulsory education period, the equivalent of the minimum subsistence income of a jobless individual was decreased by the proposed value of the dependent child allowance, whereas this allowance is not paid for such children within the AMN system.

of the AMN structure can be expected to lead to moderate increase in the number of recipients and jointly assessed persons. This effect is not reflected in the calculation, but it is probable that it would be low.⁵⁵⁷

15.2	Establishment of the third level of activation benefit in amount of EUR 101.80	0.5	The calculation is based on setting the activation benefit at the level of EUR 101.80, which is halfway between the upper (EUR 135.70) and the lower (EUR 67.90) level of the current activation benefit. The actual expenditures will depend on the interest in activation through education and qualification improvement. The calculation expects 50% increase in the average monthly number of recipients compared with 2019 (from 491 to 737).
15.3	Keeping the claim to special allowance for long-term unemployed or inactive parents who ceased to be eligible to the assistance in material need because they became eligible to receive parental benefit and who find job after that	0.3	There were around 2,890 parents in 2016 who ceased to be eligible to AMN when they became eligible to PB. 2,188 (76%) of them met the long-term unemployment or inactivity criterion during the two-year time limit from loss of AMN. 519 (24%) persons from that group started employment within two years from the loss of AMN. There were around 1,737 parents in 2018 who ceased to be eligible to AMN when they became eligible to PB. The calculation is based on the assumption that the percentage of long-term unemployed or inactive persons remained at the level of 76% and the percentage of those from this group who found employment as a consequence of claim to special allowance will grow by 50% to 36%. The calculation is also based on the assumption that the trend of employment retaining among recipients of the special allowance will be similar to the trend in recent past (Graph 52, Chapter 8.1). The calculation reflects the extension of the maximum possible duration of special allowance receipt to 18 months effective from April 2019.
16	Improve the accessibility of the birth allowance	0.8	According to the unit data of the Central Labour Office, 3,159 children were born in 2017 whose parents were not eligible to the child birth allowance six months after birth. The allowance amounts to EUR 829.86 for a child born within the first to third pregnancy who lived at least 28 days (all in all 1,537 children not covered in 2017) and EUR 151.37 for a child born within the fourth and all other pregnancies or if the child was born within the first to third pregnancy, but did not live 28 days (all in all 1,622 children not covered in 2017).
17	Decrease the cost-sharing requirement imposed on an individual with severe disability within one-off financial allowances provided for compensation of social consequences of severe disability	0.2	The amount by which the cost would increase according to Table 28 is derived from the annual volume of one-off allowances paid to persons receiving income below the minimum subsistence income (from 90 to 98% of the price set or, as the case may be, the maximum price based on the financial allowance type.)
18.1	Do a pilot test of the individualised assistance for persons who underwent personal bankruptcy	0.5	The specific amount will depend on the project, size of the intervention group, and type of interventions.
18.2	Do a pilot test of the complex support for lone parents on the labour market.	0.5	The specific amount will depend on the project, size of the intervention group, and type of interventions.

⁵⁵⁷ The scope of this effect depends on the number of households with their own income which is higher than the total sum of benefits less the housing benefit in the current system (and, consequently, they are not eligible to the AMN) but lower than the total sum of the benefits in the proposed setting with a higher assistance in material need and higher allowance for a dependent child (they would be eligible to AMN). In reality, the share of AMN recipients earning their own income is low. In 2018, the expenditures on AMN covered more than 85% of the total benefits within the AMN system, implying that only a small percentage of recipients received reduced AMN due to their own income. Furthermore, households which currently are not eligible to AMN, but would be if the proposed setting is implemented, would only receive part of the total benefits due to AMN reduction. The impact on the total expenditures would therefore be low.

19	Increase protection against cost-sharing requirements related to medications based on income	1.3	The average annual fee by age multiplied by the number of people in the AMN system in individual age cohorts. Since the number of people with income below the minimum subsistence income is slightly higher than in the AMN system, the number was increased by applying the coefficient obtained based on the data about subsidies for schools containing the number of children who are eligible to subsidies based on AMN and based on income below the SM level. The annual fees are for 2017, the numbers of people in the AMN system and the coefficient are based on the 2018 data.
20	Do a pilot test to try conditional transfers at preventive exams	0.1	Children are expected to undergo 16 exams from birth to their 15 th birthday (according to VŠZP) and 4 exams for pregnant women. The transfer was set at EUR 10 per one exam. The exact expenditures will depend on the selection of locations for the pilot project and the age structure of the local MRC population. The calculation was based on the assumption that supported would be 10,000 MRC inhabitants a year who would be evenly distributed from 4 months before birth to persons who turned 15. The average number of exams per year is 1.3 per one person. ⁵⁵⁸
21	Amend conditions for housing benefit granting	48.7	A specific proposal of housing benefit requires a more detailed analysis than the analysis within this review. The calculation was made based on a simplified scenario where the coverage of the households in the bottom quintile of income distribution would grow from 8.5% in 2018 to 15% (around 62 thousand households and slightly below the EU average of 18%). The average amount of the allowance was set at EUR 100 a month. To compare, the average housing benefit in the Czech Republic was around EUR 136 in 2017 (Czech Statistical Office), while in Slovakia it was EUR 71 in 2018. The total expenditures on the allowance in this scenario would amount to EUR 74.2 million a year. The estimated savings from the cancelled housing benefit within the AMN (EUR 25.5 million) is deducted from this amount. This savings were calculated as the amount of eligibilities to housing benefit within AMN multiplied by the proportion of the total expenditures on AMN to the total eligibilities to AMN in 2018 (85.2%).
22	Do a pilot test to try the "housing first" approach as a solution of homelessness	2.9	The size of the tested group is set to 50 households with intervention and at least 50 households without intervention. Once the required number of apartments is procured, the project is expected to take 3 years – 6 months for preparation (sample selection, training of field workers, etc.), 2 years for supported housing of the involved families, and 6 months for project assessment. Items entering the calculation include the wage cost of 8 field social workers (EUR 406,596 for 30 months), one coordinator (EUR 63,530 for 30 months), 1 lawyer (EUR 62,105 for 24 months), and 1 psychologist (EUR 30,631 for 24 months). 15% of wage costs (EUR 84,429) are allocated for indirect costs, just like in the field social work. The costs include the financial support for the involved families amounting to the housing benefit during the first 6 months ⁵⁵⁹ (EUR 26,760) and the guarantee fund which will allow to reduce the rent for the involved families during 2 years of intervention, if necessary, by no more than 1.5% of the acquisition cost (EUR 69,468 in total). The expenditures also include education and professional preparation of field social workers (EUR 25 thousand), record-keeping and preparation of programme participants (EUR 45 thousand) and implementation and professional evaluation of the proposed experiment (EUR 40 thousand). It will also be necessary to procure 50 rental apartments to implement the project. The calculation presupposes funding through housing development subsidy of the Ministry of Transport covering 90% of the average acquisition price of a rental apartment supported by a subsidy in 2019 (EUR 2.1 million in total). The calculation does not reflect the potential savings which could accrue in other areas thanks to the project (health care, Police interventions, crisis intervention services).
23	Support field workers in continued studies	0.3	10 field workers are expected to enter the pilot project every year and after 7 years the total number of involved FW would reach 70, which is approximately 15% of all FW. The studies required to complete the graduate level of university education for field workers with

⁵⁵⁸ If the project was amended to cover all MRC population in this age category, the maximum expenditures would amount to EUR 1.3 million under 100% participation.

⁵⁵⁹ The substitute housing benefit for the project participants who are not eligible to it is only temporary. Once the household proves it pays rent and the cost of services associated with housing, if agreed in the rental agreement, the project participants who are in the system of assistance in material need will become eligible to receive the housing benefit.

			secondary education without school-leaving exam is 7 years. The scholarship is set at the level of the 2019 net minimum wage (EUR 430.35).
24	Amend the field social work programme to include municipalities which do not have it	2.0	It follows from the contextual evaluation of FSW that this service is still non-existent in 78 municipalities with the FSW necessity index above 10 (of the total number of 203 municipalities). 71 of such municipalities are recorded in the 2019 Atlas of Roma Communities. In order to establish these services in those municipalities, 102 additional work positions of field social workers (FSW) would have to be created and 47 additional positions of field workers (FW). ⁵⁶⁰ The total monthly costs of their employment would amount to EUR 168,588.81. The calculation includes the total labour costs and the meal allowance mandatorily paid by the employer (around EUR 76.60 a month). The basic gross wage is expected to reach EUR 866.50 for FSW (wage tariff 8) and EUR 593 for FW (wage tariff 3). The actual expenditures will depend on the interest of the concerned municipalities, whereas it is not possible to perform FSW without their consent.
25	Amend the Healthy Communities programme to include municipalities which do not have it	0.7	According to the Healthy Regions organisations, it is necessary to employ around 50 more assistants and 10 healthy lifestyle coordinators to fully cover MRCs with the support of health, healthy lifestyle and mediation. Additional expenditures would reach around EUR 0.7 million a year for the period of 2020 – 2022. ⁵⁶¹ The calculation of this scenario is based on the average number of around 600 to 700 people from MRC per one healthy lifestyle assistant, and 8 to 10 assistants per one coordinator. ⁵⁶² The average monthly cost of one healthy lifestyle assistant are currently (September 2019) defined by the total labour costs of EUR 701.74; in case of the healthy lifestyle coordinator, it is EUR 1,325.87. The actual expenditures will depend on the interest of the concerned municipalities, whereas it is not possible to implement the Healthy Communities programme without their consent.
26	Amend the neighbourhood watch programme (MOPS) to include municipalities which do not have it	4.5	The calculation is based on the current rules of the call for municipalities within the OP HR. They provide that MOPS activities may only be performed in municipalities with at least 80 persons from MRC. Depending on the MRC population, the maximum limits are set to 4, 8 or 12 full-time MOPS employees. ⁵⁶³ The minimum is two persons. The calculation is based on a complete coverage of the eligible municipalities (629) with the minimum number of MOPS per municipality. The unit price for a job position in MOPS was set at EUR 647.76 a month in 2018, which corresponds to the minimum wage. The 2018 drawdown of EUR 5.3 million was deducted. In reality, coverage of municipalities within MOPS does not depend only on the available funds, but also on the willingness and ability of local governments to join the programme.

⁵⁶⁰ The numbers of the required positions are based on a simple hypothetical model within the yet unpublished FSW feasibility study which assumes 1 FSW for municipalities with 100 or less MRC members, 1 FSW and 1 FW in municipalities with 101 to 200 MRC members, 2 FSWs and 1 FW in municipalities with 201 to 350 MRC members, 2 FSWs and 2 FWs in municipalities with 351 to 600 MRC members, 3 FSWs and 2 FWs in municipalities with 601 to 1,000 MRC members, and 3 FSWs and 3 FWs in municipalities with more than 1,000 MRC members.

⁵⁶¹ Specifically, EUR 658,626 in 2020; EUR 691,014 in 2021; and EUR 723,402 in 2022. The costs take into account the expected growth of the minimum wage.

⁵⁶² Preliminary estimates based on the incomplete data from the healthcare needs of the target MRCs of the Healthy Communities National Project implemented for the purposes of the national project as established by the Faculty of Medicine of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (final data will be available in December 2019).

⁵⁶³ The maximum for municipalities with 80 to 599 members of MRC is set to 4 MOPS workers, for municipalities with 600 to 1,199 members of MRC it is set to 8 MOPS workers, and for municipalities with 1,200 or more MRC members, it is 12 MOPS workers.

Savings

Ref.	Task	Savings (eur million)	Calculation
1	Cancellation of the zero grade at basic schools	5.0	Difference between the normative contribution for a zero grade pupil and the normative contribution for a mainstream pupil of the same basic school
2	Reducing the number of pupils from MRC in the population of pupils with mild intellectual disability	8.1	The savings result from lower normative contributions for pupils enrolled in the mainstream school. The calculation is based on expected reduction of mild intellectual disability diagnosis in the MRC to the level of the population of the pupils in the system of assistance in material need outside MRC.
3	Make support of activation works conditional upon development of participants' skills	0.6	Total expenditures on the allowance amounted to EUR 2.3 million in 2018. This amount only includes the cost of ALMP rail of activation works. Additional costs of municipalities not covered by the allowance within the ALMP rail are not included. The savings will depend on the number of municipalities which will meet the eligibility condition based on the new rules. The calculation presupposes a 25% reduction of expenditures.