

# SMART INFRASTRUC- TURE, BET- TER REGIONS

The quality of life of the residents of Slovakia's regions is being shaped largely within these regions. This is where everyday needs meet long-term visions. One of the most powerful tools for shaping this future is a high-quality transport infrastructure. The Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic fully recognizes this and has long been working to ensure that transportation is not only functional and safe but also fairly accessible to all regions without exception. Our commitment to modernizing transport in Slovakia is clearly reflected in the fact that the Ministry is among the national leaders in utilizing European Union funds—across all key areas such as fund absorption, contracting, and issuing calls for proposals.

Regional development cannot progress without strong connectivity. Our goal is to create an interconnected Slovakia—where cities, towns, industrial parks, logistics hubs, and tourist destinations are all well linked via road, rail, suburban transit, and cycling routes. Transportation should be a bridge to opportunity, not an obstacle.

Implementing transport projects goes beyond technical execution. It's a strategic investment into the future, one that must consider economic, environmental, and social

impacts. That's why we prioritize projects based on Sustainable Mobility Plans and regional transport strategies. Our starting point is the prioritization of investment activities based on the real transport needs of Slovakia, not on political promises or lobbying. Only this approach ensures that investments are meaningful and truly aligned with the actual needs of each area.



**Well-planned,  
efficiently  
executed  
transport  
projects are  
engines of  
regional  
growth.**

Over recent years, we have invested hundreds of millions of euros from EU funds into projects that are transforming our regions. We are modernizing railway lines and nodes, constructing new motorway and expressway sections, and upgrading first-class roads—which bear over half of regional traffic. We focus on bridge renovations, bypasses, rerouting, accident-prone zones, and intersection upgrades. For example, with

EU support over the past 15 years, we've completed or launched construction on major segments of the D1 and D3 corridors and modernized the rail route from Bratislava to Žilina, continuing further to the north and the east. We're also building city bypasses in Sabinov, Šafa, and Prievidza, with more projects underway.

In public transport, we focus on supporting ecological and sustainable solutions. We are funding the modernization of tram lines in Bratislava and Košice, and supporting the renewal of vehicle fleets—from hybrid trains, trams, and trolleybuses to low-emission buses. Intelligent transport systems are being introduced to streamline traffic and improve passenger information. These measures not only increase comfort but also reduce emissions and improve the environment.

Our work goes beyond construction and project management. We are also shaping a better legal framework. This includes key reforms aimed at simplifying and accelerating the construction of major transport projects. The Strategic Investments Act streamlines the early and planning phases, ensuring dynamic infrastructure development in line with EU directives. The new Construction Act introduces a unified procedure, clear deadlines, and more efficient permitting



## DENISA ŽILÁKOVÁ

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic, responsible for rail and water transport and EU funds

Denisa Žiláková, JUDr., MBA, LL.M., holds law and management degrees from Comenius University in Bratislava, with further studies in EU fund management (Berlin), and European law (King's College London). She also studied at École de Langue – Accord in Paris and earned her MBA from Cambridge Business School in Prague.

For over 20 years, she has worked in EU legislation and funding. She worked

as an advisor at the European Commission Delegation in Brussels (2001–2005). She later served as Director-General at the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications (2005–2007), and as Director of the EU Funds Department at the Ministry of Finance until 2012. From 2016 to 2023, she led the Central Coordination Body for EU funds. Prior to her current role, she advised the Ministry of the Interior on EU funding.

processes. As a result, bureaucratic barriers in the regions are reduced, allowing construction to begin more quickly.

Reducing regional disparities remains one of our core objectives. Different areas have different needs, so we support both major and small-scale projects like renovating bus stops, building transfer terminals, adding barrier-free features, or linking to cycling infrastructure. These may seem minor nationally, but they significantly impact daily life locally.

For this program period, our top priority is better integration of transport modes. Integrated projects enable residents to easily combine trains, buses, cars, and bicycles, boosting mobility and access to jobs, education, and healthcare.

Cooperation is crucial. Regional development isn't the task of one institution alone, it requires coordination with ministries, regional authorities, cities, and towns. We use all available tools—EU funds, the state budget, and financial instruments—to support infrastructure development, including repurposing unused state land and buildings for public benefit.

Well-planned, efficiently executed transport projects are engines of regional growth. They attract investment, create jobs, boost tourism, and enhance quality of life, not just in Bratislava, but across all of Slovakia. Modern, fair, and sustainable infrastructure is what Slovakia needs now. At the Ministry of Transport, we are ready to meet this challenge—working closely with local governments, experts, and the public.