

# SKILLS FOR A CHANGING ECONOMY

The first fact to acknowledge is the fundamental transformation Slovakia is facing. Challenges that no European country can avoid: shortages of skilled labor, demographic change, and accelerating technological progress, are reshaping labor markets across the continent. If Slovakia is to remain competitive, it must fully recognize and strengthen its most valuable resource: human capital. As a country, we must focus on developing the potential of the people we already have.

Slovakia, together with its institutions and representatives, must design thoughtful and coordinated solutions to address an ageing population, ongoing brain drain, the mismatch between education and labor-market needs, and growing pressure from digital and green transformation. The most critical priority is sustained investment in education, reskilling, and the development of digital competencies. Artificial intelligence will play a central role in this transition. AI will not eliminate work, but it will fundamentally change its nature by placing greater emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, complex problem-solving, and adaptability, while also creating entirely new professions.



**The future of work in Slovakia will ultimately depend on how effectively we respond to technological and demographic change.**

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES AND TALENT OUTFLOW

An ageing population and declining birth rates are Europe-wide trends. For Slovakia, these dynamics are already deepening skills shortages, particularly in healthcare, education, and technical professions. One important response is to encourage older workers to remain active in the labor market longer, supported by accessible lifelong learning opportunities and more flexible working conditions. At the same time, Slovakia must confront long-standing brain drain. Retaining talent requires more than appeals to patriotism; it demands

improved working conditions, competitive wages, and attractive, long-term career opportunities that allow skilled professionals to grow and thrive at home.

## DIGITAL AND GREEN TRANSFORMATION

The European Union is moving decisively toward an innovative, digital, and green economy, and Slovakia cannot afford to fall behind. Adapting education systems, expanding digital skills, strengthening retraining programs, and supporting dual education are essential steps. Employers should invest in training focused on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and advanced digital competencies. Equally important, the education system must evolve by embedding digital skills across curricula and strengthening cooperation between schools and businesses.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?

Artificial intelligence will not end work, but it will reshape it. Some professions will disappear, many will change significantly, and new ones will emerge. According to the European Commission's AI and Employment in the EU (2024), administrative, accounting, and legal roles face the highest risk of



## MARIÁN VALENTOVIČ

State Secretary, Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR

Ing., MBA Marián Valentovič has served as State Secretary of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic since 15 July 2024.

He holds a degree in socio-economic relations from Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín. He began his professional career at the Ministry as Director of the Labor, Social Affairs and Family Office in Piešťany, later moving to the Central Office of Labor, where he held several senior

management positions. These included Deputy Head of the European Social Fund and Economics Sections (2008–2011) and subsequently Director General (2012–2021).

In 2022–2023, he worked as an expert in lifelong learning, regional labor-market development, and work-organization management, collaborating with employer associations, implementation agencies, and state institutions.

automation, while manual professions remain among the least threatened. This underscores the importance of reskilling and preparing workers for shifting demands rather than resisting technological change.

## THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC EMPLOYMENT POLICY UNTIL 2035

At the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the Slovak Republic, we are preparing a strategic employment policy extending to 2035. This document will focus on investment in human capital, lifelong learning, digital and green transformation, social innovation, and the return of talent to Slovakia. Our goal is to prepare the country for multiple economic and labor-market transitions. Social

partners will be actively involved in both the design and implementation of the strategy to ensure inclusiveness and broad consensus on key measures.

The future of work in Slovakia will ultimately depend on how effectively we respond to technological and demographic change. Human capital remains our greatest asset. If the state, employers, and educational institutions work together to modernize education and adapt working environments, Slovakia can preserve its competitiveness and build a resilient, stable labor market for the future.