

WRITTEN BY



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BUILDING ACT REALITY

The new Building Act No. 25/2025 Coll. is a step in the right direction. Combining zoning and construction proceedings into one, reducing bureaucracy, and digitizing processes are goals the real estate development community fully supports.

However, after more than a year of practical application, a gap remains between intention and everyday reality. This gap is most visible in time and cost impacts. This article is not a critique of the reform, but a call for its completion.

QUICKLY APPROVED, SLOWLY ABSORBED

Parliament passed the act in February 2025, and it entered into force less than two months later. While politically efficient, construction practice requires preparation time. Many implementing decrees — including rules for project documentation, technical requirements, and barrier-free access — were not issued on schedule. As a result, designers, authorities, and investors had to operate under a law without detailed guidance. In projects where every month of delay means significant financial losses, this creates real pressure.

The first months also revealed inconsistencies across authorities. The same situation is often assessed differently in different municipalities, largely due to insufficient methodology and training rather than individual fault. For developers managing multiple projects across regions, this unpredictability can be more problematic than delays themselves.

WHERE THE LAWS ARE SPENT: LOOPHOLES THAT COST REAL MONEY

The new Building Act clearly defines procedures — who submits what, when, and to whom. However, it does

not sufficiently address the interaction with other laws that influence construction. These laws operate in parallel, often without proper harmonization.



The 2025 law is a good foundation. Now it needs to be completed.

A key example is environmental impact assessment (EIA). Although Act No. 24/2006 Coll. has been amended to reflect the new framework, transitional provisions for projects still governed by the old Act No. 50/1976 Coll. are missing. Developers who completed EIA under the old system lack clarity on how to meet current requirements. These are projects with years of preparation and substantial investment, yet the legal path forward remains uncertain. Each month of delay carries tangible financial consequences.

Another example affects residential and commercial projects with underground parking. Slovakia lacks comprehensive legislation or standards regulating electric vehicle charging stations in garages from a fire safety perspective. The Fire and Rescue Service provides guidance, but it is significantly understaffed.

As a result, obtaining necessary statements often takes far longer than legal deadlines anticipate or market needs allow. Meanwhile, demand for charging infrastructure is already standard in new developments.

Similar challenges arise in areas such as hygiene, noise protection, and daylighting. Each area is governed by different authorities with their own methodologies and timelines. The Building Act formally integrates these inputs, but not in a way that resolves conflicting requirements. Designers must reconcile them independently, often without clear legal direction.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS: DE FACTO BINDING, DE JURE NOT

Technical standards deserve particular attention. Although Slovak technical standards are formally non-binding, they effectively become mandatory in practice. Deviating from them and demonstrating equivalent solutions is demanding and difficult.

Many standards are outdated and reflect past approaches to architecture and urbanism. Requirements such as daylight access, spacing, or noise limits can block projects that would be acceptable elsewhere in Europe. While the new law promotes modern construction standards, the technical foundation remains misaligned with these ambitions, limiting innovation and efficiency.

LITTLE EXPERIENCE, A LOT OF UNCERTAINTY

Proceedings under the new law began in April 2025, but most complex projects have not yet reached final decisions. There is a lack of case law, interpretative guidance, and established best practices.

As a result, each major project effectively becomes a pilot case. The cost of this uncertainty is borne by investors rather than the state. Unsurprisingly, part of the market continues to rely on the old legal framework, where expectations are clearer. Paradoxically, the new law is temporarily slowing down the processes it was meant to accelerate.



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This situation is not unusual for major reforms. However, it highlights the importance of managing the transition actively to minimize disruption and build confidence in the new system.

WHAT I AM PROPOSING: AN EXPERT GROUP, NOT ANOTHER AMENDMENT

Another amendment to the Building Act is not the solution. Instead, a professional platform should be created; an expert group under the Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic. This group should systematically address gaps between legislation and practice.

Its work should include:

- harmonizing the Building Act with other regulations affecting construction — including environmental, health, and fire safety — and resolving transitional situations between legal regimes
- revising outdated technical standards that hinder modern, high-quality construction
- developing clear methodologies for authorities to ensure consistent interpretation across regions
- addressing capacity and procedural limitations of institutions that slow down permitting processes

I'm not aiming to define the group's members; that should be for the ministry to decide. What matters is that the expert group has a clear mandate, concrete outputs and deadlines, and includes practitioners who actually deliver projects.

Slovakia can build faster, cheaper and more beautiful. The 2025 law is a good foundation. Now it needs to be completed.