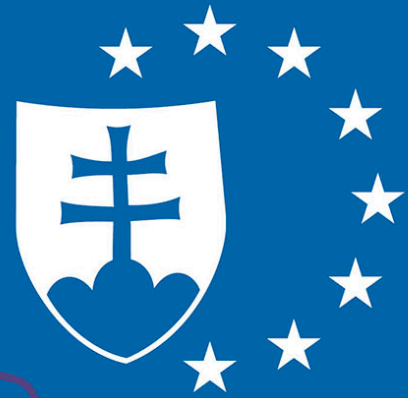


Legislative and policy update

FEBRUARY



SLOVAKIA

MOBILE PRICES

Slovak authority disagrees with the EC study listing mobile broadband and telephony in Slovakia among the most expensive. While a study of the European Commission puts prices for mobile broadband and telephony in Slovakia among the most expensive in the European Union, the Slovak telecom authority claims the opposite. It stated that the selection of just two mobile operators, while as many as four operate in Slovakia, is behind the inaccurate results.

03/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WHO

At its regular session on February 5th the Cabinet approved €200,000 as an increased contribution to the World Health Organisation (WHO) in connection with the coronavirus epidemic. “The WHO will put all such funds together and subsequently use them directly to mitigate consequences of the epidemic in China,” Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini (Smer-SD) said following the Cabinet session.

05/02/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

PRESIDENT

President Zuzana Čaputová during her working trip to Kosice on February 6th was interested in the situation, outlooks and problems in the region and city of Kosice, pointing out the need to address old environmental burdens and the problem of the depopulation of some areas with the departure of young people in particular.

06/02/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

JOBS

Media jobs dominated ahead of administrative work in 2019. Journalism is becoming a popular field among Slovaks. The website Profesia.sk claimed media-related jobs were a new favorite among job seekers in 2019. A total of 37 job seekers applied for one position in the field of journalism and media last year. Compared to 2018, it is an increase by 14 people.

11/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

INDUSTRY

Slovakia's industrial production continued falling for the fifth consecutive month. In December 2019, it fell by 7.1 percent year-on-year, affected mostly by the drop in manufacturing by 8.5 percent, the drop in electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply by 1.9 percent, and the rise in mining and quarrying by 9.7 percent.

12/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

WAGES

Economists evaluate wage costs, labor productivity as well as investments in R&D. While the Slovak automotive industry remains one of the main pillars of the Slovak economy its competitiveness, compared to other countries, is worsening. This is due to the higher growth dynamics of wage costs over labor productivity, as well as too little investment in research and development.

13/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

TECHNOLOGIES

NATO will use Slovak communication technologies in its operations, as a Slovak company called Aliter Technologies has won a tender to supply information and communications technologies for the Communications Gateway Shelters system at the NATO Communication and Information Agency.

14/02/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

ECONOMY

The growth of Slovakia's economy came as a positive surprise to analysts. The gross domestic product at constant prices increased in the final quarter of 2019 by 2.1 percent year-on-year. After seasonal adjustment, GDP rose by 1.9 percent y-o-y and 0.6 percent compared to the previous quarter.

17/02/2020 [The Slovak Spectator](#)

PRICES

Consumer prices in Slovakia went up at the start of 2020 again, with only food products getting costlier at a slower pace. In January 2020, year-on-year inflation rate reached 3 percent in total, and consumer prices increased by 1.2 percent compared to December 2019, the Statistics Office (ŠÚ SR) informed.

18/02/2020 [The Slovak Spectator](#)

ECONOMY

The average Slovak household spent more than one quarter of its monthly expenditures on housing and energy last year, according to data released by Eurostat on Tuesday. The second most demanding item was food with a 17.2-percent share of total expenditures, up more than 2 percent since 2006.

18/02/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment went up slightly in January, stopping at 4.98 percent. Although more seasonal workers, mostly from the construction industry, usually come to labor offices at the start of the year to be registered as unemployed, their number was lower this January than in the past. Labor offices registered 13.2 percent, or 2,900, less jobless people compared to last year.

20/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Slovakia is losing its economic battle after a decade of strong post-crisis economic growth. The European Commission (EC), which recently published a report assessing Slovakia's progress on structural reforms and the prevention of macroeconomic imbalances, said the country did not fully make use of favorable economic times and has failed to sufficiently implement reforms, reduce its deficit and debt, and improve in areas key to economic growth, including R&D, education, and innovation.

26/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

ELECTIONS

A record number of Slovaks living abroad decided to return home before the February 29 elections. The number of Slovaks who booked a flight for the February 29-March 1 weekend is 133 percent higher compared to the 2016 period, when the last parliamentary elections took place, the statistics of the Pelikán travel agency show. The company took into account airports in Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Košice.

27/02/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

ELECTIONS

The OLaNO Opposition party of Igor Matovic won the general election on February 29th on 25.02 percent of the votes, gaining 53 seats in the 150-member House, ahead of the current main governing party Smer-SD on 18.29 percent (38 seats). Other seats in Parliament will be taken up by We Are Family (8.24 percent – 17 seats), the far-right People's Party Our Slovakia (7.97 percent – 17 seats), Freedom and Solidarity (6.22 percent – 13 seats) and For the People (5.77 percent – 12 seats).

29/02/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

EUROPE & WORLD

WORLD POLITICS: The EU on February 4th strongly condemned the decision by US President Donald Trump to lift US restrictions on the usage of landmines. “Their use anywhere, at any time and by any actor remains totally unacceptable to the European Union”, the EU’s diplomatic chief Josep Borrell said in a statement.

04/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

MIGRATION: A new law providing a special registry for all non-governmental organizations (NGOs), their employees and partners, was voted on February 4th. It is supposed to help the government regulate and control who takes part in migration crisis management, as well as the role it plays. The bill came right after new riots began in Northern Aegean islands, both from citizens and refugees, due to the increased number of migrant flows.

05/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

US POLITICS: President Donald Trump was acquitted by the US Senate on February 5th following a historic impeachment trial that shone a harsh light on America’s divisions, without ever shaking the loyalty of his voter base. In a political triumph for the US leader, Trump drew on staunch Republican support to easily defeat a Democratic effort to expel him from office for pressuring Ukraine to help bolster his re-election effort.

06/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

SCIENCE: Marking 11 February, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen praised the extraordinary achievements of women scientists across Europe, reminding our full potential was reached only if we used ‘all our talent and diversity’. She acknowledged that not every woman and girl got a chance to realise their aspirations. “Less than 30 percent of researchers worldwide are women”, von der Leyen said in her video message, quoting UN data. “This must change”, she stressed.

11/02/2020 [European Commission](#)

BUDGET: “All of us must be ready to find a common ground and we must find the right balance between old and new priorities”, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, said about the EU long-term budget at the European Parliament debate. European leaders gathered in Brussels on 20 February for a special meeting called by the President of the European Council Charles Michel, aiming to reach an agreement on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

12/02/2020 [European Commission](#)

TRADE: Goods barometer signals further weakening of trade in first quarter of 2020. World merchandise trade growth is likely to remain weak in early 2020, according to the WTO Goods Trade Barometer released on 17 February. The real-time measure of trade trends now reads 95.5 — less than the 96.6 recorded last November and well below the index's baseline value of 100. This below-trend performance could be reduced further by a new global health threat.

17/02/2020 [WTO](#)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: “All of us must be ready to find a common ground and we must find the right balance between old and new priorities”, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, said about the EU long-term budget at the European Parliament debate. European leaders gathered in Brussels on February 20th for a special meeting called by the President of the European Council Charles Michel, aiming to reach an agreement on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

17/02/2020 [European Commission](#)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: MEPs in charge of negotiating the EU's next seven-year budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), came to Paris to seek France's support before the start of decisive talks on the future European budget. The European Parliament team in charge of negotiating the budget came to plead its case in Paris on February 10th, ahead of a fortnight of talks on the future of EU finances.

18/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: AI technologies carrying a high-risk of abuse that could potentially lead to an erosion of fundamental rights will be subjected to a series of new requirements, the European Commission announced on February 19th. As part of the executive's White paper on AI, a series of 'high-risk' technologies have been earmarked for future oversight, including those in 'critical sectors' and those deemed to be of 'critical use.'

24/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

WORLD CLIMATE: Europe's top companies need to more than double their current level of spending on low-carbon projects to meet the European Commission's flagship goal of 'climate neutrality' by 2050, according to a report released on February 25th. The major study of 882 publicly traded companies across multiple sectors by climate research provider CDP and consultancy Oliver Wyman showed they spent €124 billion on capital investment and research and development in 2019.

25/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The EU Commission will present this autumn a strategy on an integrated EU payments market, to facilitate the use of national payment services across Europe and reduce the dependency from international card operators such as Visa or Mastercard. The Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) provides for uniform credit transfers and direct debits for over 500 citizens in the EU.

27/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)

WTO: At a meeting of the Technical Barriers to Trade Committee on 25-26 February, WTO members discussed how to improve regulatory cooperation on self-driving cars and medical devices. They also exchanged experiences on procedures related to testing and certification. These discussions were followed by a regular meeting of the Committee on 26-27 February, where members discussed 64 trade concerns, 12 of which were new.

27/02/2020 [WTO](#)

EUROPEAN COOPERATION: Twenty-three European countries signed a letter of intent for the Intelligence College in Europe in Zagreb on February 26th, completing the creation of a network of intelligence agencies on the continent. This event was followed by a public discussion on “intelligence cooperation” involving European intelligence community representatives and decision-makers.

27/02/2020 [Euractiv](#)