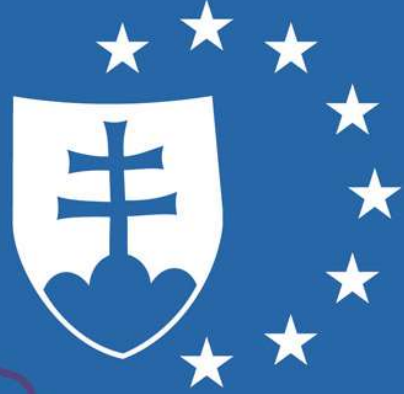


Legislative and policy update

MARCH



SLOVAKIA

WHO STATISTICS

The number of healthy years of Slovaks is about 2.5 times lower than the European average. The worsening state of the inhabitants of Slovakia is confirmed by World Health Organisation Statistics (WHO). The most frequent mortality causes include an unhealthy diet. As the statistics suggest, while 18 percent of Europeans do not eat well, in the case of Slovaks it is 30 percent

05/03/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

CORRUPTION

Slovakia finds itself still among most corrupt EU countries – the country struggles with lack of trust in institutions and weak protection of whistleblowers. In the recent Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International, Slovakia ranked 59th out of 180 countries. It scored 50 out of 100 points and fell two places compared with 2018 and five places compared with 2016, when the third Robert Fico government started its term.

05/03/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

ELECTION

The coalition of non-parliamentary parties Progressive Slovakia (PS)-Together lodged a complaint with the Constitutional Court in connection with the results of the general election, coalition election leader Michal Truban reported on a social network on 11 March. At the same time, they ask the court to take a stance as to whether the rule on coalitions has been applied by the same principle to all entities running in the election and whether the principle of equal access has been respected.

11/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

PRESIDENT

President Zuzana Čaputová signed the bill concerning social insurance, known as the 13th pensions, into law. The President decided not to veto the costly measure MPs passed days before the election in a short-tracked procedure. She did not want the most vulnerable groups to be hostages of the situation, she said. At the same time, she decided to turn to the Constitutional Court regarding the way the law was passed in parliament.

11/03/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Government Declared State of Emergency. The Government on 11 March declared a state of emergency in the whole territory of Slovakia. Acting Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini (Smer-SD) explained that the state of emergency gives the Government tools to force various companies to supply the state with certain goods. "I want companies to be obliged to supply products if they have them," said Pellegrini, adding that it primarily concerns medical goods.

11/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

NEW PARLIAMENT SPEAKER

We Are Family leader Boris Kollar became the new parliamentary chair. Kollar, needing at least 76 votes, was elected in a secret ballot by 106 MPs. He became the second most senior constitutional official, replacing Andrej Danko (Slovak National Party/SNS) in the post.

20/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

NEW PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Slovakia has a new prime minister. Igor Matovič and his cabinet of ministers took over from Peter Pellegrini amid the biggest public health crisis Slovakia and the world has ever seen. "The times and the situation are so serious that we cannot afford to have any other government than one that honors the constitution," president Zuzana Čaputová told the ministers after they were appointed. She told them to be wise and unifying.

21/03/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

ECONOMY

Slovak economy might see a temporary slump of almost 5 percent this year and there's a risk that the new coronavirus pandemic might cause an even more pronounced drop of up to 10 percent, with the recession likely to deprive 75,000-130,000 people of work temporarily, according to potential scenarios for economic development released by the Slovak Central Bank (NBS).

24/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

PANDEMIC CRISIS

Nearly 16,000 firms in Slovakia said to be affected by COVID-19. The pandemic crisis will have a huge impact on thousands of firms in Slovakia, a recent study finds. PM Igor Matovič (OĽaNO) refused to speculate for how long precautions will be in place. The National Bank of Slovakia (NBS) claimed in one of its scenarios that they could remain valid for two months.

24/03/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

CORONAVIRUS MEASURES

Slovaks accepted the measures adopted by the Government to halt the spread of coronavirus infections with understanding, with more than 90 percent viewing these moves as completely or at least rather appropriate, according to a survey carried out by Go4insight agency on a sample of 1,000 people between 17-25 March.

26/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

ECONOMY

Slovakia's Government drafted a 'first-aid' package of economic measures worth €1.5 billion per month to help businesses, the self-employed and employees affected by the coronavirus lockdown, Prime Minister Igor Matovic announced on 29 March.

29/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

SCIENCE

Slovaks developed an alternative to lung ventilation. Slovak scientists Samuel Furko and Daniel Furko developed an alternative to artificial lung ventilation. Its use has been confirmed by the testing conducted at the Department of Simulation and Virtual Medical Education of the Comenius University's Faculty of Medicine. The recent invention may help hospitals during emergencies.

30/03/2020, [The Slovak Spectator](#)

HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE

The measures taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 appear to be effective, Health Policy Institute (IZP) director Martin Smatana and Prime Minister Igor Matovic (OĽaNO) reported at the Government Office on 31 March, adding that if Slovakia is able to continue observing them for a longer period of time, it could be ranked among the five countries that best managed the coronavirus pandemic.

31/03/2020 [NewsNow \(TASR\)](#)

WORLD & EUROPE

EUROPEAN CITIZENS

The European Commission decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Voters Without Borders, Full Political Rights for EU Citizens'. The organizers call for 'reforms to strengthen the existing rights of EU citizens to vote and stand in European and municipal elections in their country of residence and new legislation to extend them to regional, national elections and referenda'. The organizers argue that there is an increasing number of EU citizens living and working in Member States other than that of their nationality. The initiative points at barriers and obstacles faced by citizens in exercising voting rights when residing in a different Member State.

04/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

DATA SHARING

EU Commission reached a landmark agreement with Airbnb, Booking, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor on data sharing. This will allow Eurostat, the EU statistical office, to publish data on short-stay accommodations offered via these platforms across the EU. The agreement will for the first time permit access to reliable data about holiday and other short-stay accommodation offered via these collaborative economy platforms. It will contribute to more complete statistics on tourist accommodation around Europe, allow public authorities to better understand the development of the collaborative economy and support evidence-based policies.

05/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

NEW EUROPEAN STRATEGY

The European Commission presented a new Strategy to help Europe's industry lead the twin transitions towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. The Strategy aims to drive Europe's competitiveness and its strategic autonomy at a time of moving geopolitical plates and increasing global competition.

10/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

NEW ALLIANCE

The World Economic Forum announced on 11 March a new alliance of multinationals to fight against the novel coronavirus COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on the deteriorating economy. More than 200 companies already said they will join the new COVID Action platform launched by the World Economic Forum, organizer of the Davos forum.

11/03/2020 [EURACTIV](#)

G7

WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo welcomed the co-ordinated statement by G7 leaders calling for closer cooperation to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and minimize its economic fallout. “This global challenge requires a global response, on the public health front and in the economy,” said Director-General Azevêdo. “It is only by working together that we will find solutions.”

17/03/2020 [WTO](#)

INVESTMENT

EU Commission has approved an investment package worth more than €1.4 billion of EU funds in 14 large infrastructure projects in 7 Member States, namely Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain. The projects cover several key areas such as environment, health, transport and energy for a smarter, low-carbon Europe. They represent a massive investment to boost the economy, protect the environment and improve citizens' quality of life and social well-being.

17/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

STABILITY AND GROWTH PACT

EU Commission proposed the activation of the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) as part of its strategy to respond quickly, forcefully and in a coordinated manner to the coronavirus pandemic. Once endorsed by the Council, it will allow Member States to undertake measures to deal adequately with the crisis, while departing from the budgetary requirements that would normally apply under the European fiscal framework.

20/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

WTO

WTO members are sustaining efforts to craft new rules against harmful fisheries subsidies despite disruptions posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Negotiators have been requested to exchange views in writing on two proposals, which will also serve as helpful input for a consolidated text.

23/03/2020 [WTO](#)

WTO INFORMATIONAL WEBPAGE

The WTO set up a dedicated webpage to help governments, business, the media and the public track the latest information on trade-related responses to the COVID-19 outbreak. The webpage will provide up-to-the-minute information, including relevant notifications by WTO members, the impact the virus has had on exports and imports, and how WTO activities have been affected by the pandemic.

25/03/2020 [WTO](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

EU Commission and the High Representative set out the priorities and way ahead on Human rights and Democracy, adopting a Joint Communication and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024. Further, they put forward a joint proposal to the Council to act by qualified majority voting on issues falling under the Action Plan, reflecting the strategic importance of the Action Plan. It aims at fostering faster and more efficient decision-making on human rights and democracy.

25/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

TRADE

The EU and 15 other members of the WTO decided on an arrangement that allows them to bring appeals and solve trade disputes among them despite the current paralysis of the WTO Appellate Body. Given its strong and unwavering support for a rules-based trading system, the EU has been a leading force in the process to establish this contingency measure in the WTO.

27/03/2020 [European Commission](#)

ECONOMIC RECESSION

According to its internal document, published by Euractiv.com on 31 March, the European Commission expects the economic slump caused by the coronavirus COVID-19 to be deeper than the 2009 Great Recession. The Commission hasn't estimated yet how much the European economy will contract as a result, as the spread of the virus hasn't reached its peak yet. The total impact will depend on the duration of the measures adopted to contain the spread of the disease, the Commission said.

31/03/2020 [EURACTIV](#)