

Legislative and Policy Updates

MAY 2021



Slovakia

New Cabinet Approved

The cabinet of the newly appointed prime minister Eduard Heger won the trust of the parliament. Its program statement was approved on 4 May by 89 MPs, 55 were against it. Nobody abstained from the vote, the TASR newswire reported. The parliament has discussed the updated programme statement, which is very similar to the one prepared by the previous cabinet of Igor Matovič.

4/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22652258/hegers-cabinet-has-the-trust-of-the-parliament-mps-approved-its-programme-statement.html>

Assisted Population Census

President of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic issued a decision to start post-enumeration to provide an assisted census. The assisted census will be carried out on the entire territory of Slovakia from 3 May to 13 June. Within this period, the services of assisted census will be provided by each municipality and city of the Slovak Republic for a period of 6 weeks.

4/5/2021 [LINK](#)

150 000 Foreigners in Slovakia

As many as 150,000 foreigners living in Slovakia were registered in the statistics of the Bureau of Border and Foreign Police as of 31 December 2020. This represents some 2.75 percent of the total population in the country, as the Slovak branch of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said. The number is five times higher than in 2006.

5/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22653124/about-150000-foreigners-live-in-slovakia.html>

New Intelligence Agency Director

The Slovak Information Service (SIS) intelligence agency will be led by Michal Aláč. A nominee of the Sme Rodina party was appointed to the post by President Zuzana Čaputová on 6 May. "It's obvious what the most important task will be – to make the public believe that the agency acts as an intelligence service of the democratic state, observing rule of law principles," Čaputová said, adding that SIS should inform the public about its findings, if possible. She also stressed the need to strengthen external control of the intelligence agency.

6/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22653927/intelligence-agency-has-a-new-director.html>

New Police Booking System

The Interior Ministry launched the pilot operation of its new universal booking system on 10 May. It should make it possible to book an appointment for a concrete date and time. For now, the system can be used to make appointments at departments issuing personal documents (like IDs and passports), the cadastral office and the traffic inspectorate. The ministry plans to gradually add options for reporting one's residence and making an appointment at the Foreigners' Police.

10/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22656363/the-interior-ministry-launched-a-pilot-booking-system.html>

Regional Investment Aid

The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic launched a new public call synergy support of projects eligible for regional investment aid. Predominantly, the call is aimed at companies already receiving regional investment aid from public budget of the Slovak Republic in accordance with Law No. 57/2018 on regional investment aid.

11/5/2021 <https://amcham.sk/press-room/news/273531-public-call-on-synergy-support-of-projects-eligible-for-regional-investment-aid>

Human Rights

Never before has the public defender of rights dealt with as many complaints from the people of Slovakia as in 2020. The spreading infection and the measures imposed in an attempt to halt it increased the number of motions submitted to the office of Ombudswoman Mária Patakyová, shows her 2020 annual report that she presented to the parliament in early May. What remained unchanged is the lack of regard most MPs seem to be paying to her work. Just like one year ago, the MPs failed to acknowledge her report.

12/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22658225/ombudswomans-report-on-human-rights-in-slovakia-2020.html>

Referendum on snap election

President Zuzana Čaputová will turn to the Constitutional Court to check whether the referendum on the snap election is in compliance with the Slovak Constitution. “The president’s task is to make a decision that will secure the constitutionality of the referendum and that will not be accompanied with any constitutional doubts,” she said on May 12. If the court decides that the referendum on shortening the current election term is in compliance with the constitution, the President will be ready to act quickly.

12/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22658475/president-turns-to-the-constitutional-court-with-referendum-on-snap-election.html>

National Emergency Ending

The national emergency ended in Slovakia as of Saturday 15 May, Prime Minister Eduard Heger announced at a press conference after the cabinet session on Friday 14 May. The lifting of the national emergency also means the end of the ban on assembly and curfew. The emergency situation declared last March is still in place.

14/5/2021 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22659923/news-digest-national-emergency-ends.html>

Slovak Space Office

The Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) announced its joining of the Slovak Space Office - a joint project with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. The Slovak Space Office consists of two components. The Ministry of Education is responsible for inter-ministerial political coordination and multilateral international cooperation (European Space Agency - ESA, EU, UN). SARIO will be covering the implementation

part of the agenda, especially developing the space ecosystem, local and international partnerships.

20/5/2021 <https://sario.sk/en/news/slovak-space-office-industry-branch>

Structural Challenges of the Economy

On 20 May the National Bank of Slovakia published a comprehensive report monitoring Slovakia's progress in catching up with the standard of living in more advanced economies, review the competitiveness of the Slovak economy, and identify the economy's most serious structural challenges. Special editions of the report provide a more in-depth look at selected areas that reflect the economy's current structural issues.

20/5/2021 <https://www.nbs.sk/en/publications-issued-by-the-nbs/structural-challenges>

EUROPE & WORLD

New EU Industrial Strategy

On 5 May the European Commission put forward its revised industrial strategy, responding to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the urgency to tackle the digital and green transitions. It outlines how the EU plans to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of the Single Market in the global economy.

5/5/2021 <http://amchameu.eu/news/new-eu-industrial-strategy-single-market-key-economic-recovery>

EU foreign subsidies proposal

With EU proposal for a regulation on foreign subsidies, the European Commission seeks to address foreign subsidies which risk distorting the EU internal market and undermine a level playing field. The American Chamber of Commerce to the EU (AmCham EU) supports the Commission's efforts to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of the Single Market and find the appropriate balance between fair competition and open trade when addressing non-EU subsidies. However, AmCham EU cautions against an overly broad application that may be disproportionate to the Commission's goals. To promote growth, investment and trade, the rulebook should be balanced and proportionate.

6/5/2021 <http://amchameu.eu/news/statement-eu-foreign-subsidies-proposal>

EU Green Budgeting

On 20 May, the EU Commission is launching its flagship project to support EU Member States in building their capacities to green their national budgets. The EU Green Deal underlines the role of the national budgets and green budgeting tools in redirecting public investment, consumption and taxation to green priorities and away from harmful subsidies. “Green budgeting” covers a variety of practices aimed at identifying and assessing elements of the public budget that affect Member States’ environmental policies.

20/5/2021 https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/green-budgeting-key-driver-meet-environmental-ambition-european-green-deal-2021-may-20_en

GDP growth – Q1 2021 in OECD

Following the unprecedented falls and subsequent rebounds in 2020, growth of real gross domestic product (GDP) in the OECD area slowed to 0.3% in the first quarter of 2021, down from 1.0% in the previous quarter, according to provisional estimates published on 20 May. This slowdown is partly related to the strengthening of COVID-19 containment measures in some countries in early 2021.

20/5/2021 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/gdp-growth-first-quarter-2021-oecd.htm>

Costa Rica – 38th OECD member

Costa Rica formally became an OECD Member, the 38th country to do so in the Organisation’s 60-year history. It completed its domestic procedures for ratification of the OECD Convention and deposited its instrument of accession. This brings to a successful conclusion an accession process that began in April 2015.

25/5/2021 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/publicationsdocuments/bydate/2/>

EU budget: European Public Prosecutor's Office

On 26 May, the EU Commission officially confirmed that the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) will start operating on 1 June. The EPPO is in charge of conducting criminal investigations and prosecutions for crimes against the EU budget. It is the first supranational public prosecution

office. It investigates and prosecutes the different types of fraud and other crimes affecting the EU's financial interests.

26/5/2021 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_2591

EU Digital Covid Certificate

The European Parliament and Council negotiators agreed on an EU Digital Covid Certificate to facilitate travel within the EU without discrimination from 1 July. EU member states have introduced travel restrictions in order to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The European Commission drafted a proposal to create an EU Digital Covid Certificate (initially called “Digital Green Certificate”) to facilitate travel within Europe through a commonly agreed document with a standard format, stating that a person has been vaccinated, has tested negative or has recovered from COVID-19. These three types of certification would be secure and accepted throughout the EU.

26/5/2021 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210505IPR03515/q-a-on-the-eu-digital-covid-certificate>

Public Health in the EU

As of 26 May, new EU rules on medical devices (MDR) enter into application, establishing a modern and more robust regulatory framework to protect public health and patient safety. The new rules start applying after a one-year postponement due to the unprecedented challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, addressing the need for an increased availability of vitally important medical devices across the EU. The Regulation covers medical devices ranging from hip replacements to sticking plasters. It increases transparency and brings EU legislation in line with technological advances and progress in medical science. It improves clinical safety and creates fair market access for manufacturers.

26/5/2021 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_2617

European Green Deal – batteries

The EU Circular Economy Action Plan set out ambitious targets towards more sustainable production and consumption across the EU single market. The recent proposal for a Batteries Regulation inaugurates this new legislative cycle and promises to be a blueprint for forthcoming legislation around electromobility, sustainable products, supply chain due diligence and more.

27/5/2021 <http://amchameu.eu/news/charging-european-green-deal-case-batteries>

Global Trade Recovery

Global merchandise trade is continuing to recover in 2021 following a steep but brief pandemic-induced drop in the second quarter of last year, according to the latest WTO Goods Trade Barometer released on 28 May. The Goods Barometer is a composite leading indicator for world trade, providing real-time information on the trajectory of merchandise trade relative to recent trends. The barometer's current reading of 109.7 is nearly 10 points above the baseline value of 100 for the index and up 21.6 points year-on-year, reflecting both the strength of the current recovery and the depth of the COVID-19 shock last year.

28/5/2021 https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/wtoi_28may21_e.htm

Safe International Travel

OECD Ministers endorsed a new initiative to promote safe international travel during the COVID-19 pandemic at the OECD's annual Ministerial meeting in Paris. The Initiative involves a safe travel blueprint and a temporary international cross-sectoral forum for knowledge sharing. The forum will allow governments and stakeholders to share information in real time on plans and approaches facilitating travel. The blueprint promotes greater certainty, safety, and security in travel as reopening takes place. It builds on existing initiatives and aims to increase interoperability amongst travel regimes. It will be used by countries on a voluntary basis.

31/5/2021 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/oecd-ministers-launch-new-initiative-for-safe-international-travel.htm>

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