



Legislative and Policy Updates

APRIL 2022

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SLOVAKIA

Migration Crisis

The European Commission has sent additional advance payments from REACT-EU resources worth almost €193.6 million to the accounts of the Slovak Finance Ministry. The additional advance payments are intended for the member states most affected by the refugee crisis. In particular, the European Commission sent €107.7 million for the Operational Programme Human Resources, €66.3 million for the Integrated Regional Operational Programme and €19.6 million for the Operational Programme Effective Public Administration.

3/5/2022 <https://newsnow.tasr.sk/economy/european-commission-sends-slovakia-e193-6-million-to-cope-with-refugee-crisis/>

Slovak Recovery and Resilience Facility

Slovakia sent its request for the first payment from the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility on April 29 in total of 458 million euro, following the final approval of the new court map by the Parliament and other 13 important milestones. On the very same last, exactly one year ago, Slovakia submitted its recovery plan to Brussels for final consultations.

29/4/2022 <https://www.planobnovy.sk/aktuality/slovensko-si-ziada-458-milionov-eur-z-planu-obnovy/>

New Court Map

The Parliament approved major changes to the map of Slovak courts at its April session, just in time for Slovakia to request the first payment from the EU for its Recovery Plan. MPs passed the law, known as the reform of the court map, on April 27. Justice Minister Mária Kolíková, the author of the reform, sees this change as a step towards a better judiciary with a working system and clear agenda in Slovakia, even though some judges seem to disapprove.

27/4/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22895827/court-map-approved.html>

Investing in Slovakia

SARIO was awarded as the Best Investment Promotion Agency for the European Region, following the ceremony held as part of the Annual Investment Meeting 2022 (AIM) and in partnership with KPMG. AIM is one of the most important conferences focusing on foreign direct investments. The theme of this year was 'Investments in Sustainable Innovation for a Thriving Future'.

22/4/2022 <https://sario.sk/en/news/sario-won-award>

Space Industry

Slovakia has more than 40 companies actively involved in the space sector and the number has been dynamically growing over the past years. Although more than half of them are focused on the upstream segment, the majority of the space-related revenue is concentrated in software applications using Earth observation or positioning data.

15/4/2022 <https://spaceoffice.sk/>

Slovak Academy of Science study

Most Slovaks would refuse to fight for their country in a war if Slovakia ever found itself in an armed conflict. In fact, just about a quarter of people, 27.5 percent, would be willing to pick up a gun, the latest "How Are You Slovakia?" poll found. Conversely, 37.1 percent said they would not engage in any fight, and 35.4 percent did not know how to respond to the question. Researchers asked Slovaks whether they would be willing to fight for their own country if Slovakia were on the brink of a war. Surprisingly, in a similar study five years ago, people in Slovakia showed more bravery in defending their motherland.

14/4/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22885338/despite-a-war-across-the-border-most-slovaks-refuse-to-fight-for-their-country.html>

Slovakia and Ukraine

The head of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, Andy Hunder, unveils the role of firms and companies in helping the Ukrainian government as much as they can, even with free cigarettes for soldiers at the front. He also speaks about the crucial role Slovak companies and NGOs have been playing in supporting refugees.

12/4/2022 <https://e.dennikn.sk/2807599/museli-sme-na-velke-firmy-tlacit-nech-po-invazii-odidu-z-ruska-hovori-sef-americkej-obchodnej-komory-na-ukrajine/>

Military support to Ukraine

Slovakia donated its S-300 air defense system to Ukraine, citing article 51 of the UN Charter, to help its neighbor defend itself from Russian attack. Though the S-300 is not the most modern air defense system, it can effectively eliminate enemy planes, drones and missiles. Slovakia was the first NATO country to have donated such a significant weapons system to Ukraine.

8/4/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22881481/slovakia-has-sent-an-s-300-air-defence-system-to-ukraine-heres-what-it-means.html>

Business centers

The business centers industry has silently grown into one of the biggest in Slovakia's economy no longer relying on the economic model of cheap labor. Its representatives say that there is a lot of potential in the country for the arrival of new centers as well as the expansion of existing ones, particularly by taking on more demanding roles. Ultimately, the entire industry contributed by 4% to the state budget income in 2020 as per income taxes and social insurance levies paid, following the automotive and electrotechnical industries.

6/4/2022 <https://index.sme.sk/c/22878315/centra-podnikovych-sluzieb-tazia-z-kreativity-a-sikovnosti-ludi-na-slovensku.html>

European Chief Prosecutor in Slovakia

Laura Codruța Kövesi, the first European Chief Prosecutor, came to Slovakia to oversee the creation of a specialized unit of investigators. In the meantime, she was closely following proceedings against the leader of Smer and other senior figures in the party, and the war in the police. In her opinion, it is important that all honorable prosecutors, police officers, and judges feel the support of the public.

25/4/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22893234/european-chief-prosecutor-police-need-to-feel-support.html>

EUROPE & WORLD

EU Electricity and Gas prices

In the second half of 2021, average household electricity prices in the EU increased sharply compared with the same period of 2020 (€21.3 per 100 kWh), standing at €23.7 per 100 kWh. Average gas prices in the EU also increased compared with the same period of 2020 (€7.0 per 100 kWh) to €7.8 per 100 kWh in the second half of 2021. More recently, wholesale prices for electricity and gas have increased substantially across the EU. Energy and supply costs, caused by several economic factors, mainly drove the increase.

29/4/2022 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220429-2>

European Labor Authority

European Labor Authority (ELA), officially moved to its Bratislava premises in late 2021, is ready to look at circulation mobility with people heading where the economy needs them. Its role is to facilitate labor mobility, to support accessible, informed and attractive mobility, clear and user-friendly information on one side for companies, the rules they need to respect, how they can benefit from the workforce of another country and compliance with rules in place. For citizens it is to advise them about their rights, on how to avoid discrimination in another country, how to have equal conditions with locals and how to find and apply.

29/4/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22896633/european-labour-market-impacted-by-the-shortage-of-healthcare-skills-and-occupations.html>

European Diversity Month

On April 28, the European Commission announced the winners of the first European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Awards, aimed at highlighting towns, cities and regions across the EU leading by example in inclusive policies. The winners, spread across five Member States – Croatia, Germany, Romania, Spain and Sweden – have been recognized for their work to build fairer societies by promoting diversity and inclusion in terms of sex, racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age, LGBTIQ rights and Roma integration.

28/4/2022 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2708

EU Covid Certificate prolonged

The European Parliament Civil Liberties Committee endorsed proposals to keep the EU Digital COVID Certificate framework in place for another year on April 28. To ensure that EU citizens can benefit from their right to free movement regardless of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs approved two reports to prolong the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EUDCC) scheme -set to expire

on 30 June- for another 12 months. Along with extending the validity of the EUDCC scheme until 30 June 2023, the changes also enable member states to grant test certificates based on new types of antigen assay tests.

28/4/2022 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220425IPR27807/eu-covid-certificate-committee-backs-one-year-extension-to-ensure-free-movement>

Climate-neutral EU cities

The Commission announced on April 28 the 100 EU cities that will participate in the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030, the so-called Cities Mission. The 100 cities come from all 27 Member States (including Bratislava and Košice), with 12 additional cities coming from countries associated or with the potential of being associated to Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation programme (2021-2027). Our urban areas are home to 75% of EU citizens. Globally, urban areas consume over 65% of the world's energy, accounting for more than 70% of CO2 emissions. It is therefore important that cities act as experimentation and innovation ecosystems to help all others in their transition to become climate-neutral by 2050.

28/4/2022 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2591

OECD Agenda 2030

Despite progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals (SDGs), OECD countries have met or are close to meeting only a quarter of the targets for which performance can be gauged, according to a new OECD report. Virtually all OECD countries are already securing basic economic needs and implementing the policy tools and frameworks mentioned in the 2030 Agenda. But progress towards 21 targets on issues such as ensuring no one is left behind, restoring trust in institutions and limiting pressures on the natural environment are still way off track.

27/4/2022 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/oecd-countries-advancing-slowly-on-sustainable-development-targets-by-2030.htm>

EU-India Trade and Technology Council

EC President, Ursula von der Leyen, and Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, agreed to launch the EU-India Trade and Technology Council on April 25. This strategic coordination mechanism will allow both partners to tackle challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security, and thus deepen cooperation in these fields between the EU and India. The Trade and Technology Council will provide the political steer and the necessary structure to operationalize political decisions, coordinate technical work, and report to the political level to ensure implementation and follow-up in areas that are important for the sustainable progress of European and Indian economies.

25/4/2022 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2643

French election

Incumbent French President Emmanuel Macron and far-right leader Marine Le Pen faced off in the presidential election's final round on April 24. Projections from multiple polling companies, published after voting stations closed, all showed the centrist president winning about 58 percent of the vote to around 42 percent for Le Pen.

25/4/2022 <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-election-2022-live-blog/>

Hungarian election

While Slovakia and the Czech Republic have seen several changes of prime minister in recent years, Hungary chose to keep the same one it has had since 2010. Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party won another crushing victory, their fourth in a row, in parliamentary elections across Hungary on April 3.

7/4/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22879619/orban-wins-re-election-but-faces-isolation-within-the-region.html>

Inflationary Pressure in Great Britain

The British Chamber of Commerce's Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) for Q1 2022 – the UK's largest independent survey of business sentiment and a leading indicator of UK GDP growth – shows inflationary pressures on firms reaching levels never previously recorded in its 33-year history. The survey of over 5,600 firms also revealed a continuing stagnation in the proportion of firms reporting increased domestic sales and investment, while cashflow weakened slightly in Q1.

1/4/2022 <https://britcham.sk/inflationary-pressures-reach-uncharted-territory-quarterly-economic-survey-q1-2022/>

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