

# Legislative and Policy Updates

FEBRUARY 2022

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## SLOVAKIA

### Industry Orders

After seasonal adjustments, new orders in industry increased by 2,2% in December 2021 compared to November 2021, amounting to EUR 4 919,3 million. Compared with December 2020, they increased by 8,9%. In 2021, new orders in industry were realized in the amount of EUR 56 347,6 million, which increased by 9,3%, year-on-year.

16/2/2022

[https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail/!ut/p/z1/tVFNb8lwDP01HIPdJmnSYOGsLWNNowDpoLIPahtFBP4CqjH-Mu2yTSDtMF9sS8\\_2e36gYAWq1G3-gpu8KvWu62PlvMxEKAcDy0McTCiG4\\_vFNBje2X7EYfkdIKfzEYZP3qM\\_HzMLGQd1e\\_4ZFKi0bOpmA3GVHPWgmJLk5ZrobdPDrggORcemLQ051gfdnnvYHk2z7bLNbC5cg8TwNCOMYUoSi2qCKXel42gjLvdB1WmeQSwTbVtWkhBmGU6YTijRUjOCa4dypIFnNPsp5zffixy8Eh528-oTMvS9gIkJopz4HEMviObujFLO6Bfgxo644yCucrAELNvcnCAqL5\\_ZweKPEgOEMag8KfqntOhjX0iBVAjJbOY6nNKL5\\_nbfq\\_8zpiqbMx7A6v\\_cKYuokLSM9muH0aUqfgDzhTk4Q!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail/!ut/p/z1/tVFNb8lwDP01HIPdJmnSYOGsLWNNowDpoLIPahtFBP4CqjH-Mu2yTSDtMF9sS8_2e36gYAWq1G3-gpu8KvWu62PlvMxEKAcDy0McTCiG4_vFNBje2X7EYfkdIKfzEYZP3qM_HzMLGQd1e_4ZFKi0bOpmA3GVHPWgmJLk5ZrobdPDrggORcemLQ051gfdnnvYHk2z7bLNbC5cg8TwNCOMYUoSi2qCKXel42gjLvdB1WmeQSwTbVtWkhBmGU6YTijRUjOCa4dypIFnNPsp5zffixy8Eh528-oTMvS9gIkJopz4HEMviObujFLO6Bfgxo644yCucrAELNvcnCAqL5_ZweKPEgOEMag8KfqntOhjX0iBVAjJbOY6nNKL5_nbfq_8zpiqbMx7A6v_cKYuokLSM9muH0aUqfgDzhTk4Q!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/)

### Pandemic Measures

Pandemic measures in Slovakia will start to be eased as of February 28, announced the PM Eduard Heger before the Government session on February 16. The OTP, OP and OP+ modes will be scrapped as part of the first stage of easing. Capacities for low- and medium-risk events will

increase. The second stage of easing will start on March 28, when capacity restrictions will be completely removed and the obligation to wear a respiratory mask or a face mask will be revised.

16/2/2022 <https://newsnow.tasr.sk/featured/heger-pandemic-measures-to-be-eased-beginning-as-of-february-28/>

### **Citizenship Act**

MPs passed the amendment of the Citizenship Act, which was approved by the government in 2021. The amendment was proposed to ease the conditions of losing one's Slovak citizenship after accepting the citizenship of another state, among other things. The MPs sent it on to a second reading on March 18, 2021 and in the second and third reading it had been postponed since then.

16/2/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22842907/parliament-passes-amendment-of-citizenship-act.html>

### **Inflation – consumer price indices**

Consumer prices in January 2022 compared to January 2021 increased by 8,4% in total, compared to December 2021 they rose by 2,7%. The sharp rise in consumer prices was caused mainly by an increase in regulated prices in the network industries, food and non-alcoholic beverages, imputed rent for housing, alcoholic beverages, transport services, outpatient services, insurance

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[https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail/!ut/p/z1/tVHLbslwEPwajsab2I7tY0A0CaWoQFOIL5XzKinkAUSH\\_H2dqpe2AqmH7mV3pZnVzA5WelNVpbviVbdfXem92SPlvCx4IEYjywUYzQgEO\\_vV3B\\_f2V7I8Po7QMyXEwie3EdvOaUWUIbVbf4zVlglVdu0WxzV8UlvUVahosqR3rUDMEN9LI2arsrQqTnq7jKA7pS1O9O1TeyM5xwxkTNEYzNpaRFEWEpkndqaxLI\\_3yRFiiMZC8eAOUoYtxAlQiLJdYpASHASzW1HWD\\_t\\_Nbb24Er5YLhq0\\_I2HN9ymcAYuYxCFw\\_XMoFleCSL8CNG5HRwK9qsDhed0V2xmHVf2aPV3-06AOeYIXE5fCclEMYcsGBcC6oTaXDCOkzL94OB-WaYOqqzd5bvPmPZJoyLAW5oF3-MCFURR9Tk4-0/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail/!ut/p/z1/tVHLbslwEPwajsab2I7tY0A0CaWoQFOIL5XzKinkAUSH_H2dqpe2AqmH7mV3pZnVzA5WelNVpbviVbdfXem92SPlvCx4IEYjywUYzQgEO_vV3B_f2V7I8Po7QMyXEwie3EdvOaUWUIbVbf4zVlglVdu0WxzV8UlvUVahosqR3rUDMEN9LI2arsrQqTnq7jKA7pS1O9O1TeyM5xwxkTNEYzNpaRFEWEpkndqaxLI_3yRFiiMZC8eAOUoYtxAlQiLJdYpASHASzW1HWD_t_Nbb24Er5YLhq0_I2HN9ymcAYuYxCFw_XMoFleCSL8CNG5HRwK9qsDhed0V2xmHVf2aPV3-06AOeYIXE5fCclEMYcsGBcC6oTaXDCOkzL94OB-WaYOqqzd5bvPmPZJoyLAW5oF3-MCFURR9Tk4-0/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/)

### **EU trust**

Slovaks do not feel very positive about the membership of their country in the EU. Instead, they are becoming more insecure, as stems from a recent Eurobarometer survey titled Future of Europe 2021, which was carried out between September and October 2021. Both the Slovak Spectator and Euraktiv.sk report, that only 39 percent of 1,020 respondents from Slovakia said they consider EU membership a good thing. On the other hand, 10 percent said that it was a bad thing, and the remaining 50 percent has a neutral opinion. Paradoxically, 72 percent of Slovaks said that their country benefits from the EU membership.

14/2/2022 <https://euractiv.sk/section/buducnost-eu/news/slovensko-ma-najnizsiu-podporu-clenstva-v-unii/>

### **Foreign Students**

The number of foreign students at Slovak universities is gradually increasing. While there were 8,427 foreign students studying in Slovakia in 2011 out of a total of 204,158 students, in 2021 that number had risen to 15,775 students among a total of 130,164 students in the first and second stages of university studies. In other words, foreigners had gone from comprising around 4 percent of students at Slovak universities in 2011 to 12 percent by 2021.

11/2/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22838595/slovak-universities-are-attracting-more-foreign-students.html>

### **Defense Cooperation Agreement**

President Zuzana Čaputová ratified the Defence Cooperation Agreement between Slovakia and the US on February 9. Parliament greenlighted the agreement on the same day, 79 MPs out of 140 present MPs voted for it, 60 were against and one abstained. The President reminded the public that the text of the agreement had been negotiated by the current and also previous government.

10/2/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22838256/president-ratified-the-defence-agreement.html>

### **Gross Domestic Product**

Slovakia's gross domestic product is likely to grow by 5.3 percent in 2023, said Finance Ministry State Secretary Marcel Klimek at a joint press conference with representatives of the Financial Policy Institute (IFP) concerning the institute's new macroeconomic forecast. IFP head Juraj Valachy added that GDP growth is expected this year as well, at 3.5 percent. The analysts also expect a sharp increase in the rate of inflation this year.

10/2/2022

<https://newsnow.tasr.sk/economy/ifp-gdp-will-probably-grow-by-3-5-this-year-and-5-3-next-year/>

### **Women Business Leaders**

The proportion of women on the boards of the largest companies in Slovakia is 25 percent, which is more than anywhere else in the world. A global average of just 19.7 percent of board seats are held by women, a 2.8 percent increase compared to data published in 2019. However, a higher

representation of women does not mean that they hold top management posts. There are 6.7 percent of board chairwomen and 5 percent of female CEOs/general directors.

7/2/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22836421/women-hold-a-quarter-of-board-seats-in-the-largest-companies-in-slovakia.html>

### **Euro counterfeits**

The total number of counterfeit euro banknotes recovered in Slovakia in 2021 was 1,162, the lowest ever annual figure since the country adopted the euro in 2009. A total of 1,016 counterfeits were recovered from circulation, 11.3% fewer compared with the previous year (1,145). At the same time, a total of 1,592 counterfeit euro coins were recovered in Slovakia in 2021, more than in any of the previous four years. All of them were recovered from circulation. Counterfeit €2 coins accounted for 88.3% of the total.

28/1/2022 <https://nbs.sk/en/press/all-press-releases/press-releases-common/press-release/status-report-on-euro-counterfeits-recovered-in-2021/d>

## **EUROPE & WORLD**

### **EU Green Deal**

The EU Commission announced an investment of over €110 million into LIFE program integrated projects for environmental and climate protection, selected after a call for proposals covering the year 2020. The funding will support new major environmental and climate projects in 11 EU countries. The projects contribute to a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and support the European Green Deal's objectives of making the EU climate neutral and zero-pollution by 2050.

17/2/2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_864](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_864)

### **Rule of Law conditionality**

Following the EU Court of Justice ruling on the “rule of law conditionality” mechanism, MEPs demand that the Commission applies it and protects EU values. “The rule of law is our treasure”, said Clément Beaune on behalf of the French Presidency of the Council. He welcomed the “necessary legal clarity” given on February 16 by the Court and said that the French Presidency now expects the Commission to implement it. The French Presidency is committed to mobilizing all the tools to protect the rule of law, he stressed.

16/2/2022 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220210IPR23017/rule-of-law-conditionality-meps-call-on-the-commission-to-act-immediately>

## **Digital Markets Act**

Landmark EU rules aimed at curbing the power of US tech giants could be agreed between lawmakers and EU countries as soon as April, with sticking points expected to be thrashed out in coming weeks, a key lawmaker leading the talks said on February 15. DMA proposed by EU antitrust chief Margrethe Vestager just over a year ago set out a list of dos and don'ts for online gatekeepers – companies that control data and access to their platforms – reinforced by fines of up to 10% of global turnover. It in effect targets Apple, Alphabet unit Google, Facebook parent Meta, Amazon and Microsoft. It needs approval from EU lawmakers and EU countries before it can become law.

16/2/2022 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/key-eu-lawmaker-aims-for-april-deal-on-digital-markets-act/>

## **EU Satellite Communications**

The EU Commission presented a €6 billion satellite communications plan February 15, as part of a push to cut the EU's dependence on foreign companies. The initiative aims to protect key communications services and surveillance data against any outside interference as concerns grow over Russian and Chinese military advances in outer space and a surge in satellite launches. The push for secure connectivity comes in response to the growing demand for satellite communications. The aim is to develop a multi-orbital space-based connectivity system that will extend the availability of these services.

15/2/2022 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/eu-lays-out-plans-for-secure-satellite-communications/>

## **Foreign Exchange Global Code**

The European System of Central Banks (ESCB) welcomes the July 2021 update of the FX Global Code and the publication of related guidance material. With this global code on foreign exchange, participants in foreign exchange markets aim to promote a robust, fair, liquid, open and appropriately transparent foreign exchange market underpinned by high ethical standards. The Code has been updated by the Global Foreign Exchange Committee to keep it relevant and aligned with the ongoing evolution of the foreign exchange market and will continue to set the standard for good market practice.

15/2/2022 <https://nbs.sk/en/press/all-press-releases/press-releases-common/press-release/european-system-of-central-banks-renews-statements-of-commitment-to-fx-global-code>

## European Data

A joint investigation was launched by 22 national data protection authorities on February 15 on how the public sector uses cloud services. The initiative is the first under the Coordinated Enforcement Framework of the European Data Protection Board (EDPB), the EU body that gathers all European data watchdogs to ensure coordinated enforcement of the GDPR privacy rules. In October 2020, the Board decided to undertake joint probes every year on specific issues that might have cross-border significance as part of its three-year strategy. Last year, the topic was selected among other vital areas such as website security and mobile apps.

15/2/2022 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/data-protection/news/hold-european-data-authorities-launch-a-joint-investigation-on-the-public-sectors-use-of-cloud/>

## Future of Europe

91% of young Europeans (15–24-years old) agree that tackling climate change can help improve their own health and well-being, while 87% of all respondents also share this sentiment. 81% of respondents say they are happy living in the EU. 68% of Europeans agree the EU is a place of stability in a troubled world, while 67% agree the EU project offers a future perspective for Europe's youth. The Special EB517 "Future of Europe" was conducted as a joint survey by the European Commission and the European Parliament between 16 September and the 17 October 2021 in the 27 EU Member States.

14/2/2022 <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2554>

## Women in Science

The latest "She Figures 2021" show that women are still underrepresented as doctoral graduates in STEM fields. With the new requirement to have a Gender Equality Plan in place to be eligible for Horizon Europe funding, the EU is aiming to break down structural barriers and advance long-term institutional change at research organizations. At the same time, the integration of the gender dimension in Horizon Europe proposals has become a requirement by default. This will help ensuring that research takes into account sex and gender differences, and thereby makes new products and services more relevant and beneficial to everyone in society.

11/2/2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/international-day-women-and-girls-science-2022-feb-11\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/international-day-women-and-girls-science-2022-feb-11_en)

## OECD Unemployment Rates

The monthly unemployment rate in the OECD area fell for the eighth consecutive month to 5.4% in December 2021, down from 5.5% in November, bringing it to just 0.1 percentage point above the pre-pandemic rate recorded in February 2020. The number of unemployed workers across

the OECD area also continued to fall (by 0.7 million) reaching 36.1 million, still 0.5 million above the pre-pandemic level. In December, the unemployment rate was below the pre-pandemic level in Australia, Chile, France, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.

8/2/2022 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/unemployment-rates-oecd-update-february-2022.htm>

### **OECD accession members**

The OECD Council decided in late January to open accession discussions with six candidates to OECD Membership – Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru and Romania. This follows careful deliberation by OECD Members on the basis of its evidence based Framework for Consideration of Prospective Members and the progress made by the six countries since their first respective requests for OECD membership.

25/1/2022 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/oecd-takes-first-step-in-accession-discussions-with-argentina-brazil-bulgaria-croatia-peru-and-romania.htm>

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