

## SLOVAKIA

### Transparency of regions

Trenčín Region remains the most transparent Slovak self-governing region, retaining first place for the third time. In the transparency ranking for eight self-governing regions, published by Transparency International Slovakia (TIS) on May 16, Trenčín obtained 80%. Of all the eight regions, up to seven have improved in the last two years, with a slight deterioration observed in Trnava. The regions of Košice, Banská Bystrica and Prešov, which were managed by new chairs since 2017, have made the biggest step forward in the past five years. Compared to 2020, the Bratislava Region improved its position by up to three places.

16/5/2022 <https://samosprava.transparency.sk/rankings/regions>

### Crude and oil import

Talks aiming at agreeing an EU-wide ban on Russian oil imports have gone into an extended phase. Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria are resisting approval and demanding special dispensations to accommodate domestic needs. The main point of contention remains the ambitious timeline envisioned by the European Commission: a phase-out of all Russian crude in six months and all refined oil products by the end of the year. Due to their entrenched dependency on Russian oil, the four countries argue they cannot make the switch to other providers in such a short period of time, without imperiling their national economies.

14/5/2022 <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/05/09/hungary-slovakia-czech-republic-and-bulgaria-still-resisting-eu-ban-on-russian-oil>

## Inflation and consumer price indices

Inflation continued to rise in April 2022, due to higher prices of food, fuel and energy and transport services. Year-on-year inflation rose to 11.8% in April 2022. There was a month-on-month growth by 1.5%, mainly due to high prices of food, fuels, energy and transport services.

13/5/2022

[https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVFNU8lwEP01HDO7pWnTHFvUtsgwAlZoLk7SD6IAWiBT5d8bHC\\_goOPBvWQzefv2vTwQsAKhZd88SdOOWm7tPRf-44ylQRQ5IWI0cTEd3y6myehmGGceLD8Dgun8GtP78C6ej6mD1APx8\\_wDCBCFNp1ZQ96qp1yTSpNG10RuzABt0x52Vk2vK3LsDri\\_DbA\\_VmZjT8lLt5Q-J0wqn9DS94ishiWRNSuUx5RiqjTdTd0VTQl6iogWrKfFrXhPqBHYF55QoiU5gXxzOhl\\_tfNd7toMXKkQ7L94hozhMKJs\\_gBpPYwzRMsmjfuS6G7gfgB45FpSG3OthFHQ6DZd9UL5Dp8-9sYfFHmwnC-LdkbPTN834vQptPq031amD1HwF1u2wXuCeyqa-iKYmXb6sz3il!/dz/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVFNU8lwEP01HDO7pWnTHFvUtsgwAlZoLk7SD6IAWiBT5d8bHC_goOPBvWQzefv2vTwQsAKhZd88SdOOWm7tPRf-44ylQRQ5IWI0cTEd3y6myehmGGceLD8Dgun8GtP78C6ej6mD1APx8_wDCBCFNp1ZQ96qp1yTSpNG10RuzABt0x52Vk2vK3LsDri_DbA_VmZjT8lLt5Q-J0wqn9DS94ishiWRNSuUx5RiqjTdTd0VTQl6iogWrKfFrXhPqBHYF55QoiU5gXxzOhl_tfNd7toMXKkQ7L94hozhMKJs_gBpPYwzRMsmjfuS6G7gfgB45FpSG3OthFHQ6DZd9UL5Dp8-9sYfFHmwnC-LdkbPTN834vQptPq031amD1HwF1u2wXuCeyqa-iKYmXb6sz3il!/dz/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/)

## Short-time work schemes becoming permanent

The Short-Time Work Support Act introducing the permanent government-subsidized short-term work scheme came into effect on March 1, 2022. Under the so-called “Kurzarbeit”, an employer can apply for compensation for a portion of wage costs in emergency situations caused by external factors which result in the employer being unable to assign an employee work. The scheme proved to be a success and the government turned it into a permanent measure to be used when companies find themselves in trouble because of external events, such as a pandemic, or the war in Ukraine.

12/5/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22905826/short-time-work-scheme-becomes-permanent.html>

## Employment and wages

Employment and wages rose year-on-year in March 2022, though real wages have already fallen due to inflation in most sectors. Nominal monthly wages in March 2022 increased year-on-year in all the ten monitored sectors. However, in six of them, the growth failed to keep pace with inflation and the real wages dropped. In the majority of sectors the number of the employed people has grown.

12/5/2022

[https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVHBTsJAEP0ajpuZdnfp9tiitkVCBKzQvZgt3UoFtgWaKn\\_vQryoAePBucM8t7kvXkgYQHSqK56UW1VG7Wxeyb7zxMvEW\\_HoBljhiGlyvJ-N48GdG6Uc5l8BYjv9xeQxelimQ-Yg4yCv859AglyatmlXkNX5Qa2lNqQyJVHrtod2qPdbq6YzmyhaveqOPewOul3bXnCtXJ9xoh2xJlyVnOSclYRSpn3P427f46fzZblqIOMCHUGVS3JKLTpXigiBLilp3kfh00lV\\_nc7P\\_We7OCFCtDy5RkyiIKYeSNEMYo4JkGcTv0JpRjQT8CVGzNtILM6vls6HA\\_mXaXfIDWn72xg9kebMcLwt2Rs9NXrbicDm09tWv3ewul\\_Amq26VbQl1mXN-GYRPMPAnqUGg!/dz/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVHBTsJAEP0ajpuZdnfp9tiitkVCBKzQvZgt3UoFtgWaKn_vQryoAePBucM8t7kvXkgYQHSqK56UW1VG7Wxeyb7zxMvEW_HoBljhiGlyvJ-N48GdG6Uc5l8BYjv9xeQxelimQ-Yg4yCv859AglyatmlXkNX5Qa2lNqQyJVHrtod2qPdbq6YzmyhaveqOPewOul3bXnCtXJ9xoh2xJlyVnOSclYRSpn3P427f46fzZblqIOMCHUGVS3JKLTpXigiBLilp3kfh00lV_nc7P_We7OCFCtDy5RkyiIKYeSNEMYo4JkGcTv0JpRjQT8CVGzNtILM6vls6HA_mXaXfIDWn72xg9kebMcLwt2Rs9NXrbicDm09tWv3ewul_Amq26VbQl1mXN-GYRPMPAnqUGg!/dz/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/)

## **Inflation relief**

Allowances for foster parents, people in material need, allowances for carers and for personal assistants should be hiked by €100 for May as a one-off measure as relief from the effects of growing inflation in Slovakia. The cabinet of Eduard Heger approved the respective amendment to the decree on some measures in the labor, social and family affairs area at its May 11 session.

11/5/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22907848/100-allowance-as-inflation-relief-sails-through-cabinet.html>

## **Ukrainian job seekers**

Ukrainian job seekers and Slovak employers consider insufficient mastery of Slovak or a foreign language to be the biggest obstacle to finding a job in Slovakia, a survey has found. Trexima Bratislava, which runs the ISTP.sk job search website, conducted the poll on a sample of 750 respondents, of which 450 were Ukrainian jobseekers and 300 were employers.

10/5/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22906890/most-ukrainian-refugees-in-slovakia-seek-work-despite-many-barriers.html>

## **US First lady visit to Slovakia**

U.S. First Lady Jill Biden's visit is a sign of appreciation of the assistance Slovakia has provided Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. She travelled to the eastern part of the country visiting a refugee center in Košice and met on Mother's Day with Ukrainian mothers and children who fled their country following Russia's invasion. On May 9 Biden also met with other members of the government and President Zuzana Čaputová before returning to the United States.

7/5/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22904384/us-first-lady-lands-in-bratislava-pays-tribute-to-murdered-journalist.html>

## **New construction law**

Slovakia will enjoy completely new construction legislation after almost 50 years as the parliament passed new laws authored by Deputy PM Štefan Holý on 3 May. The law follows the idea that the whole permission process should be digital. Every resident should be able to acquire a permit via a smartphone. The law will simplify matters by significantly reducing the number of steps from 83 to 13. Another basic change will be the merger of land and construction proceedings.

3/5/2022 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22900774/a-feast-for-developers-new-construction-law-passed-after-almost-50-years.html>

# EUROPE & WORLD

## EU-US Trade and Technology

The EU and the US reaffirmed their close cooperation on May 16 to address global trade and technology challenges in line with their shared commitment to democracy, freedom and human rights. Meeting at the second Ministerial Meeting of the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) in Paris, both parties reiterated the central role of the TTC for the renewed transatlantic partnership, which has already served to coordinate joint measures being taken by the EU and the US in face of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

16/5/2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_3034](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_3034)

## EU Spring 2022 Economic Forecast

The outlook for the EU economy before the outbreak of the war was for a prolonged and robust expansion. But Russia's invasion of Ukraine has posed new challenges, just as the Union had recovered from the economic impacts of the pandemic. By exerting further upward pressures on commodity prices, causing renewed supply disruptions and increasing uncertainty, the war is exacerbating pre-existing headwinds to growth, which were previously expected to subside. This has led the EC to revise the EU's growth outlook downwards, and the forecast for inflation upwards. Real GDP growth in both the EU and the euro area is now expected at 2.7% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2023, down from 4.0% and 2.8% (2.7% in the euro area), respectively, in the Winter 2022 interim Forecast.

16/5/2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_3070](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_3070)

## Global minimum corporate tax rate

MEPs are expected to back new rules for a global minimum corporate tax rate from 2023 during the plenary session on 18-19 May. On 18 May, EU Parliament will consider a report by the economic and monetary affairs committee on ensuring a minimum corporate tax rate for large multinational corporations. The directive will apply to companies with a turnover of at least €750 million a year. In December 2021, OECD and G20 members reached an agreement for a comprehensive tax reform to tackle tax challenges raised by the digitalization of the economy. Shortly after, the European Commission published its proposal on how to transpose the reform into EU law.

13/5/2022 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/economy/20220506STO29019/parliament-set-to-back-global-minimum-corporate-tax-rate>

## Coal regions transition

The EU coal regions exchange program announced 8 matches between EU regions based on their profile to find the best fits for the most fruitful exchanges on 13 May. Over the next months, delegations from 18 regions in

12 EU countries will come together and work on issues and questions about a just transition for coal regions. The exchanges aim at fostering peer-to-peer learning between these regions, developing strategies for a just transition and establishing a lasting network. The exchanges will take place also in the Upper Nitra region in Slovakia.

13/5/2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/region-matches-exchange-eu-programme-just-transition-coal-regions-2022-may-13\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/region-matches-exchange-eu-programme-just-transition-coal-regions-2022-may-13_en)

## **EU Cybersecurity**

The European Commission welcomes the political agreement reached on 13 May between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union (NIS 2 Directive) proposed by the Commission in December 2020. To respond to the increased exposure of Europe to cyber threats, the NIS 2 Directive now covers medium and large entities from more sectors that are critical for the economy and society, including providers of public electronic communications services, health care, digital services, waste water and waste management, manufacturing of critical products, postal and courier services and public administration, both at central and regional level.

13/5/2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_2985](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2985)

## **Protocol to Cybercrime Convention**

The Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention), aimed at enhancing co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence was opened for signature at a conference organized under the Italian Presidency of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. The Protocol was signed in the presence of several ministers by the following Council of Europe member states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain and Sweden, and by non-member states: Chile, Colombia, Japan, Morocco and United States.

12/5/2022 [https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/news/-/asset\\_publisher/hwwluK1RCEJo/content/enhanced-co-operation-and-disclosure-of-electronic-evidence-22-countries-sign-new-protocol-to-cybercrime-convention/16695?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.coe.int%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fcm%2Fnews%3Fp\\_p\\_id%3D101\\_INSTANCE\\_hwwluK1RCEJo%26p\\_p\\_lifecycle%3D0%26p\\_p\\_state%3Dnormal%26p\\_p\\_mode%3Dview%26p\\_p\\_col\\_id%3Dcolumn-4%26p\\_p\\_col\\_pos%3D1%26p\\_p\\_col\\_count%3D2](https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/news/-/asset_publisher/hwwluK1RCEJo/content/enhanced-co-operation-and-disclosure-of-electronic-evidence-22-countries-sign-new-protocol-to-cybercrime-convention/16695?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.coe.int%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fcm%2Fnews%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_hwwluK1RCEJo%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-4%26p_p_col_pos%3D1%26p_p_col_count%3D2)

## **OECD unemployment rate**

The unemployment rate in the OECD area fell further to 5.1% in March 2022, from 5.2% in February. This represents a continuation of a positive trend for the OECD and the 11th consecutive month of falling or stable unemployment, keeping it below the pre-pandemic rate of 5.3% recorded in February 2020. Indeed, the

unemployment rate was below the pre-pandemic rate in two-thirds of OECD countries in March, compared with just half of them in February. In the euro area, the unemployment rate decreased further to 6.8% in March from 6.9% in February, with the largest declines recorded in Austria, Italy and Latvia.

11/5/2022 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/unemployment-rates-oecd-update-may-2022.htm>

### **New US Ambassador to Ukraine**

U.S. President Joe Biden's nominee to be the next ambassador to Ukraine, H.E. Bridget Brink who served as the ambassador to Slovakia over the last three years, easily won confirmation to a crucial position that has been vacant for a long time after a smooth confirmation hearing on May 10. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held Brink's hearing just two weeks after Biden sent her nomination to the Senate, underscoring the desire from both Biden's Democrats and Republicans to send an ambassador to support Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

10/5/2022 <https://www.reuters.com/world/smooth-sailing-seen-biden-ukraine-ambassador-pick-us-senate-2022-05-10/>

### **Decarbonization of the world's economy**

Global progress to reduce gas flaring has stalled over the last decade. Globally, gas flaring resulted in nearly 400 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent emissions in 2021, further underscoring the urgency to accelerate the decarbonization of the world's economies, says a new report from the World Bank's Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership (GGFR). Satellite data compiled and analyzed for GGFR's 2022 Global Gas Flaring Tracker Report shows that 144 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas was flared at upstream oil and gas facilities last year. Ten oil-producing and flaring countries accounted for three-quarters of all gas flaring, seven of which — Russia, Iraq, Iran, the United States, Venezuela, Algeria, and Nigeria — have remained the top seven consistently over the last ten years.

5/5/2022 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/05/04/a-decade-of-stalled-progress-on-reducing-global-gas-flaring>

### **OECD growth - fourth quarter 2021**

In the OECD area, GDP per capita rose by 1.2% quarter-on-quarter in the fourth quarter of 2021, but real household income per capita fell by 0.3%. Real household income per capita has stagnated during the past six months and trailed growth in GDP per capita for the third consecutive quarter. While the trend in GDP per capita reflects the recovery in economic activity after sharp declines in the early stages of the pandemic, the trend in household income per capita reflects, among other things, reductions in pandemic-related government assistance paid to households since early 2021.

5/5/2022 <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/growth-and-economic-well-being-fourth-quarter-2021-oecd.htm>

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