

Legislative and Policy Updates

MARCH 2023



SLOVAKIA

Inflation

Inflation in February reached the highest number in recent years- 15.4% for the third time in the last four months. The year-on-year increase in food prices, as the main cause of inflation, was stabilized at a value below 29%, their month-on-month price growth slowed below 2%. The January's adjustment of energy prices, especially heat and gas, will also affect the rate of housing price increases throughout 2023, which, however, were dampened by significant state aid.

15/3/2023

https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVHBUslwEP0ajpls24Smx8BgW0RGwArNxUIJKhVIC2Sq_L2p40UdcDy4I92deW_nvX1Y4BUWRrbVs7RVbeTO7bnoP83CIA0GHgcYTAJlx7eLaTK88eOM4uVXAjvOR5A-8Pt4PiYeElrFdf4jFlisjW3sBud1cZlbpA2qTInk1vbADfvx7950RqNTc5TtuQftSdut60oR0KogKAq0jwglDDFKGQJ_bIkUcSY7s4360rhPOwT6hgUrUFpREBqxAqtKk8iFjE_9AvlfbfzU29nBy4UB8cXH5BhzBMSTgDYJKaQ8iSbr7MgAB58Aq7cyJ2G8KIGL8TLttKvODPdZ3Z48UeLCeDxb6m42KuXw0Fwl01trH6zePUf4TT7bM-CM9qWd6OAIpWdsVX10w!!/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

Employment and Average Monthly Wage

In January 2023, employment was higher year-on-year in most sectors, a drop in real wages was not recorded only in accommodation and food and beverage service activities. The number of employees increased year-on-year in most sectors, employment increased more significantly in accommodation, and particularly selected market services recorded a decline. Despite a dynamic growth of nominal wages across all sectors, only 2 out of 10 sectors did not record a growth of real prices.

14/3/2023

https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVFNT8JAEP01HDc73Q92e1wltkUkAlboXsz2SyqwLdBU-fcuxosaMB6cy8wk703em4c1XmFtTVc9m7aqrdm6PdH9p5mI5GDgKYDBhEI0v1Mw-ENCWKOl18BcjofQfSg7oP5mHnAONbX-Y9YY53ZtmnXOKnTo1mjwqLKlshs2h64oT7snJrOFujYHEX36kF3LNqN67lfepzTDPJgMsRELpFhfo5SRgjh3BOSiPP5JqtynOR9kqUUFMRpniLGMw-lRqTII6kkeb8oOZPf7fzUe7YDF0qB4-sPyDBQIRMTADkJOEQqjOf-iFJQ9BNw5UbiNiiLGjyBl11VvOLYnj-zxYs WgwBj39LxcVevez3WrlsatsWby1e Uc4zS7eSXpCm JuRJI03gGhgyuj/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

LBTIQ+ Equality

Slovakia has persistently failed to adopt an action plan and related legislation aimed at enhancing LGBT+ equality, states the new assessment of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), on how the country implemented previous recommendations. In this connection, ECRI highlights that the October terrorist attack in Bratislava, which resulted in the death of two LGBT+ persons, has been considered as the result of the long-term use of anti-LGBT+ hate speech in political discourse.

13/3/2023 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/23146093/high-time-to-adopt-action-plan-to-help-lgbt-people-in-slovakia-says-ecri.html>

Industrial Production

In January, Slovak industry continued to produce almost by a tenth less than a year ago. In January 2023, industrial production of the SR reached the lowest January's performance since 2017. In industrial production, manufacture of rubber industry and manufacture of computers and electronics decreased mainly. Month-on-month (compared to December 2022), after taking seasonal effects into account, industrial production decreased by 1.5%.

10/3/2023

https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVHBUslwEP0ajplsmqYJx8BgWORGwArNxQklkQqkBTpV t7geFEHHA uZXdn3tt5bx9WeIGV0235rJuycnrr91xFTxOeil6PSIDeiEI6vJ2Nk 5NEGcMz78CxHg6gPRB3sfTYUggZFhd5z9ihVXhmrpZ47xaHvUaGYdKZ5HeNB3wQ3XyeTWtM-hYH3R76kB7NM3GdyYIBLrLUEC4QSEDjsRSWGSa26AglrBCnM XRbnCOdOBjrjIKChWDIWCgiQMivAkuragodU0ot t NR7tgMXSoLnqw9IP5ZJyEcAYhQzSGWSTbsTSkHST8CVG7nXwC9qIBzP29K84sydP7PFsz9aTAAPf0vFx16-7PdK-mwq15i3Bi -I5x6l-0EPaGNvRvQUOXv9mQuaw!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

Gross Domestic Product

The Slovak economy ended the year 2022 with an increase by 1.7%, but it progressed the slowest in the last quarter. The growth of the economy in the last three months of 2022 was caused by the positive result of the majority of the 10 monitored sectors, trade and transportation were the most successful. In total, for the entire

year 2022, GDP growth was supported by significant household expenditures and by the growing investment activities.

7/3/2023

https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail!/ut/p/z1/tVHBUslwEP0ajplsm6RNj4HBtoiMgBWai5O2qVQgLZCp-vcGx4sHYDy4I92deW_nvX1Y4jWWRvXNq7JNa9TO7bkMXuZhyodDTwAMpwTSyf1ylozu_DhjePUbwGeLMaRP4jFeTKgHIGF5nf-MJZalsZ3d4LwtTmqDtEGNqZHa2gG4oT3unZreaHTqjqr_HEB_OnbrOqkUFD6rUQHAeA1phHhNA1RWmtQ68FIZ-efzXdIUOI-AEK4qQJoVlaI6YigKwEeEeyXzKWfg0Ktbfs924EIJcHz5DRnFlqHh1OmaxgxSkWSLaE4ICPIDuHljdxrCixq8EK_6Rr_jzJw_s8PLP1pMAE9upeJib94OBylcNq2x-sPi9X-E0-2zPsefaFs_jAmV-ReKWQio/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

Wind Energy

State-owned energy supplier SPP recently announced plans to build two wind park projects, suggesting Slovakia is reconsidering investing in wind parks as, amid the ongoing energy crisis, activist obstruction and long environmental processes are no longer much of a deterrent. In Slovakia, the construction of wind turbines has long been met with harsh resistance, with opponents arguing that they disrupt the natural landscape and that their supply is uneven. The energy crisis and the ensuing drive to drop Russian energy dependence are causing a change in attitude.

6/3/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/slovakia-now-turning-towards-wind/>

Corruption sentiment

People trust the traditional media and anti-corruption NGOs most when it comes to reports of corruption, a new poll shows. When seeking the latest information about corruption and seeking justice, people trust politicians the least, shows the survey, conducted by Transparency International Slovakia and polling agency FOCUS. Traditional media and anti-corruption NGOs are in the lead. Establishing justice has become a dominant topic in Slovak society during the five years since the murder of a journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová. The survey was conducted between February 1 and February 8, among 1017 respondents.

3/3/2023 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/23142540/most-slovaks-see-no-improvement-in-anti-corruption-fight-are-they-right.html>

Green Electricity

Slovakia moving forward with biggest investment in green electricity. Slovakia has approximately €122 million earmarked for developing renewable electricity production in the National Recovery plan. The development of renewable energy falls under the Economy Ministry, which already closed the first call. Most of the €39 million, which were available, went to solar energy because environmental assessment usually takes longer for other renewable power plants, such as wind farms. With the first bulk of the money, the state supported 90

companies, primarily industrial enterprises, but also retail chains or energy companies for which electricity production is the main earning activity.

2/3/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/slovakia-moving-forward-with-biggest-investment-in-green-electricity/>

Nuclear Power

Slovakia may build a new nuclear reactor in the future as electricity consumption will increase with the new energy-intensive projects. The Slovak Nuclear Regulatory Authority already has a request for an authorization of construction from the Nuclear Energy Company of Slovakia, which is partly owned by the state. The company wants to build a power plant on the present Jaslovské Bohunice power plant site, which will reach the end of its lifetime sometime after 2040.

28/2/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/slovakia-may-build-new-nuclear-power-plant-as-electricity-consumption-rises/>

Foreign Talent

The Covid-19 pandemic not only accelerated the return of Slovaks working abroad back to their home country, but also squeezed the number of foreigners working in shared and business service centers in Slovakia. Nevertheless, companies operating these centers in Slovakia keep searching for foreign talents, even though it is more demanding than hiring Slovaks.

27/2/2023 <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/23130620/what-slovakia-needs-to-do-to-become-attractive-for-foreign-talents.html?ref=av-center>

EUROPE

EU Electricity Market

The EU Commission proposed to reform the EU's electricity market design to accelerate a surge in renewables and the phase-out of gas, make consumer bills less dependent on volatile fossil fuel prices, better protect consumers from future price spikes and potential market manipulation, and make the EU's industry clean and more competitive. The EU has had an efficient, well-integrated electricity market for over twenty years, allowing consumers to reap the economic benefits of a single energy market, ensuring security of supply and stimulating the decarbonization process. The energy crisis spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine has underlined the need to quickly adapt the electricity market to better support the green transition and offer energy consumers, both households and businesses, widespread access to affordable renewable and non-fossil electricity.

14/3/2023 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1591

Climate Neutral Building Sector in the EU

Parliament adopted draft measures to increase the rate of renovations and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions on 14 March. The proposed revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive aims to substantially reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy consumption in the EU building sector by 2030, and make it climate neutral by 2050. It also aims to increase the rate of renovations of energy-inefficient buildings and improve information-sharing on energy performance.

14/3/2023 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230310IPR77228/meps-back-plans-for-a-climate-neutral-building-sector-by-2050>

EU Data Act

EU lawmakers adopted their version of the Data Act with an overwhelming majority during a plenary vote at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 14 March. The Data Act is a landmark legislative proposal intended to remove barriers to the circulation of industrial data by regulating the rights and obligations of all the economic actors involved in sharing data from Internet of Things (IoT) products – connected devices capable of collecting and exchanging data. The European Parliament's adoption of the text paves the way for interinstitutional negotiations with the EU Council and Commission, the so-called trilogues. The first political meeting is already scheduled for 28 March.

14/3/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/data-privacy/news/eu-lawmakers-formalise-position-on-the-data-act-in-plenary-vote/>

Migration in the EU

The EU Commission adopted a communication which presents the strategic framework for European integrated border management (EIBM) for 5 years and a recommendation to Member States on the mutual recognition of return decisions and expedite returns. In its extraordinary meeting on 9 February 2023, the European Council reiterated the importance of ensuring effective control of the EU's external land and sea borders as part of a comprehensive approach to migration. Ahead of the next European Council meeting that will take stock on the situation, the Commission delivers through these initiatives on some of the key actions set out in President von der Leyen's letter and in the European Council Conclusions of 9 February.

14/3/2023 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1629

EU-Taiwan relations

Central European countries are key drivers in developing EU-Taiwan relations as they make up 60% of all interactions between EU and Taiwan actors, a new report by the Central European Institute for Asian Studies (CEIAS) reads. From 2019 to 2022, the European Union's Taiwan-related activity increased from 23 recorded interactions – instances of engagement across governmental, parliamentary, cyber security, economic, human rights and aid domains, as well as mutual visits – to 167, according to the data collected by the CEIAS EU-Taiwan

Tracker. Most of this increase can be explained by activities taken in Lithuania, Slovakia, Czechia, and Poland, with the former two having more yearly engagements with Taiwan than bigger countries like France and Germany.

14/3/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/central-europe-drives-eu-taiwan-relations/>

Ukraine Future in Europe

Evaluation by the European Commission of Ukraine's progress in fulfilling the recommendation for EU accession will be presented in May and by then, Kyiv will complete the implementation of most of them, said Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, Olha Stefanishyna. She stated the assessment presentation will be preceded by a discussion between EU member states and Ukraine in March, while the first formalized assessment is expected in late spring.

13/3/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/ukraine-confident-of-positive-eu-progress-assessment-in-spring/>

Georgian protests

Moscow accused foreign countries of fomenting days of mass protests in Georgia, likening them to an attempted coup designed to sow tension on Russia's borders. Hundreds of Georgians rallied for a fourth day outside parliament, as lawmakers dropped controversial "foreign agent" legislation that triggered violent clashes between police and protesters earlier this week. The days-long demonstrations point to turmoil over the future in Georgia, which aims to join the EU and NATO, much to the frustration of Moscow, which invaded in 2008 and recognized two separatist territories in the north of the country.

10/3/2023 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/russia-denounces-georgia-protests-as-coup-attempt/>

Fight for gender equality

From the beginning the European Union has promoted gender equality and a more social Europe. The EU has adopted legislation, recommendations, exchanges and good practices and provides funding to support action by member states. The concepts of EU gender equality policy were shaped by European Court of Justice rulings. The European Parliament regularly adopts own initiative reports on gender issues, calling for more efforts to improve gender equality. Find out what does the EU do to tackle gender inequalities. The European Commission recommended EU candidate status for Ukraine last June, on the understanding that Kyiv undertakes a series of legislative and policy steps, dubbed the seven recommendations.

9/3/2023 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20190712STO56961/the-parliament-s-fight-for-gender-equality-in-the-eu>

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