



**Twenty-fifth anniversary of the  
Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the  
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

**SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

Report elaborated by  
the Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities  
of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic

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## Section One: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

### **1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?**

Government of the Slovak republic adopted on November 20th 2014 the [National strategy for gender equality for years 2014-2019](#) ("the strategy") and a related *Action plan for gender equality for years 2014-2019* ("the action plan"). The strategy and the action plan are interconnected and represent a comprehensive conceptual framework for the promotion of gender equality into practice. The Strategy and related action plan stem from the basic strategic documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe. These bind the member states to adopt positive measures aimed at reaching gender equality.<sup>1</sup>

**The representation of women in decision-making positions** reached a certain breakthrough in 2018 when, after the government's reconstruction in March 2018, most women in modern history of the Slovak Republic were involved in ministerial seats; of the 15 ministers, there are 5 women, representing 33.3%. The positive trend followed in 2019, when the first female president in Slovakia's history has been elected in the popular vote in March 2019.

The highest representation of women is in the judiciary, where women outnumber men approximately by 70%. At the Supreme Court, the proportion of female judges is almost 60%, while the chairwoman and vice-chairwoman are women. The third representation was exceeded by women at the Slovak Constitutional Court: their share in 2018 was 36.4%. At the same time, women were presiding at both courts; a woman is also at the head of an independent body of the Slovak Republic for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms as a Public Defender of Rights, as well as a representative of the Slovak Republic before the European Court of Human Rights.

In the last 5 years, Slovakia has adopted a number of measures to **combat and prevent violence against women**. Even though Slovakia didn't ratify the Istanbul Convention yet, the legislation is already in line with all its requirements. With the aim to establish a comprehensive and systematic response to the problem, the government adopted already the third [National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014–2019](#).

A significant milestone in increasing the level of protection of domestic violence victims was the adoption of the *Act on Victims of Crime* (effective from 1st January 2018) and the amendment of several legal acts, effective 1 Jan 2016. Among others, the expulsion order has been prolonged from 48 hours to 10 days, enabling the victim more time to secure her safety.

An important step was the establishment of the [Coordination-Methodological Center for the Prevention of Violence against Women](#) and the non-stop free of charge helpline for women experiencing violence. As a result, key indicators suggest a positive development during the last years; the prevalence of gender-based violence has decreased while the efficiency of the support system and the prosecution has increased. Both institutions have been financed by diverse public money schemes like European Social Fund, Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the state budget of the SR. The annual budget is about 300 to 500 thousand EUR.

In 2018, the Institute for Labour and Family Research (hereinafter referred to as "ILFR") started in the cooperation with the Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities the activities of the

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<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive list of documents can be found on the website [www.gender.gov.sk](http://www.gender.gov.sk).

**national project** *Prevention and Elimination of Gender Discrimination*. The aim of the project is to ensure the systemic institutional provision of gender-based counselling activity, including gender-based violence, and to strengthen the expertise of the ILFR in implementing policies to eliminate gender-based discrimination. A special activity is the implementation of tasks related to the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, namely the activities of the *Coordination-Methodological Center for the Prevention of Violence against Women*, including the *National Line for Women Experiencing Violence*. The project is a prerequisite for the creation, stabilization and maintenance of an integrated protection and support system for victims of gender-based violence and aligning efforts to reduce and prevent it. It focuses on systematizing and linking the different procedures and measures, both legislative and non-legislative, so that they are coordinated and lead to joint efforts by both public administrations and non-public actors to prevent and reduce gender-based violence while support and protect its victims. The budget of the project is 5 mil EUR supported via European Social Fund (operational programme Human Resources) with a contribution of the state budget.

## Challenges

Despite the positive development in last five years, gender differences in the **labour market** remain the most visible evidence of inequality between men and women in our society. Despite the laws to ensure non-discrimination and equal treatment, analysis and statistics show that women continue to be disadvantaged in accessing jobs and career growth, although their educational level is even higher than in men. However, many indicators showed a positive development.

The disadvantaged position of women in the workforce is due to several influencing factors in Slovak conditions. These include the traditional distribution of gender roles and related ideas about men's and women's work and the gender unequal distribution of childcare, household and dependent members and family members, the lack of balancing and proactive measures such as measures to promote women's career advancement and measures to reconciliation of family and working life, in particular the lack of flexible forms of work for mothers of young children or the unavailability of childcare and dependent members and family members.

In 2018, the employment rate for men in the Slovak Republic was above the EU average (81.3% for the EU compared to 80.2% for the EU), for women the ratio was the opposite. In Slovakia, the proportion of women employed was 68.4% slightly below the EU average of 68.8%.

However, there is a strong gender impact of parenting on women's employment, which varies to a greater extent depending on the age of the children in the family and the retirement age. The biggest gender difference is in the group of parents of children under 6 years of age. Despite the relatively low employment of mothers with children under the age of 6, it has increased substantially faster than the EU average over the past 6 years, when it increased by 5.8 p. b. from 36.8% in 2010 to 42.6% in 2018.

Unlike mothers of small children, mothers of children over 12 years of age are employed in the SR at a significantly higher rate than the EU average; in 2018 it was more than 10 p. b. The increase in employment is manifested in all groups of women, with the exception of the mentioned group with children in preschool age.

Slovak society continues to be relatively conservative, with a large part of the population declaring an affiliation to the Catholic Church. In this conservative environment there is **strong support for the traditional, stereotypical division of tasks** and duties between women and men in the family life. There

continues to be a high level of acceptance for a model of the family where the man is the breadwinner and the woman takes care of children and the household. Policies aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes meet with relative resistance in the conservative environment, which prefers to emphasise the biological differences between men and women and the resulting “natural” division of labour and gender roles.

**Discussion of “gender ideology”** Although the terminology of gender equality has been established for decade and is enshrined in law (for example, the Slovak Republic is obliged to implement gender mainstreaming under Directive 2006/54/EU), in the last year voices have been raised in conservative sections of society criticising or opposing this concept and even gender equality as such. Many of these criticisms fail to grasp gender equality’s fundamentals and principles and often interpret them incorrectly or deceptively. The discussion of so-called “gender ideology” has stirred up negative opinions in a certain section of the population and calls for a return to the “traditional” allocation of gender roles and biological determinism.

Since 2013, a significant increase in opposition against improving gender equality can be noted. Most publicly active actors are predominantly Christian religion-affiliated NGOs and the church itself. They organize numerous lectures, protests, marches, write articles, and publish videos and petition against the ‘gender ideology’ which according to them is in direct conflict with the traditional family values. One of the most important objectives for these actors has been to halt the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

In March 2019, the Parliament requested the Government **to halt the ratification process** of the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*. The resolution was proposed by the coalition party and adopted by the Parliament with 101 (of 133) votes. The coalition party founded the resolution on their concerns that the Convention is “*in conflict with the constitutional definition of marriage, which is worded as a union between a man and a woman. One of the main shortcomings of the text is its definition of gender.*”<sup>2</sup> Based on the adopted resolution, the Government is also expected to announce to the Council of Europe that Slovakia doesn't plan to become a contracting party to the Convention.

In early March 2019, high representatives of the Christian churches adopted a proclamation warning of the unimaginable danger represented by and hidden in ‘gender ideology’. The proclamation defines ‘gender ideology’ as a pseudoscientific and warns of the efforts to incorporate the ideology into the educational systems to affect the citizens in such a way that the statements spread by the ‘gender ideology’ becomes normal. The Christian church representatives reaffirmed and restated its stand from 2018 on the necessary complete rejection of the Istanbul Convention which according to them abuses the topic of violence for spreading the ‘gender-ideology’.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ensri.rtvs.sk/articles/news/191734/parliament-halts-ratification-of-istanbul-convention>

<sup>3</sup> Full text of the proclamation available at <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20190304018>

## Abortion Law

There have been numerous attempts to restrict the law on abortion ever since the current abortion law was adopted in 1986 (amended in 1991 and 2011). Despite the historically lowest numbers<sup>4</sup> of undergone abortions, recently, there have been several parliamentary legislative proposals to restrict access to legal abortion. In 2018, there were two proposals by the far-right opposition party. These proposals focused on nullification the possibility of the woman's free choice to undergo abortion within the first 12 weeks of the pregnancy. The new proposals would legally allow to undergo abortion only if there is a threat to health or life, incorrect genetic development of the embryo or the pregnancy as a result of a serious crime. Also, the proposals aimed at the prohibition of undergoing an abortion for foreign women without a permanent residence in Slovakia. Partly due to a procedural error, the proposals were not adopted.

The latest attempt to restrict the abortion law is from February 2019. An independent conservative MP submitted a proposal to "*improve protection of the right to life of unborn children*" by prohibiting the possibility of women to freely decide to have an abortion on her request. Similarly to the previous attempts, the proposal included legal exceptions to have an abortion. The proposal was admitted for plenary voting on the 8th of February with an outcome of the proposal being rejected.

## 2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes? (please check relevant categories)

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy, transport etc.)
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Digital and financial inclusion for women
- Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience building
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Other

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<sup>4</sup> <https://dennikn.sk/1126696/kotlebovci-a-aj-ini-poslanci-chcu-zakazovat-potraty-patnast-rokov-pritom-kazdy-rok-ich-pocet-klesa/>

## **Legislative and institutional framework**

Institutional and legislative assurance of gender equality is one of the priorities of the overall political framework in the Slovak Republic and presents a relevant part of the *National strategy for Gender Equality of the Slovak Republic*. The Slovak Republic has strengthened its legislative and institutional frameworks for gender equality in accordance with the EU legislation, in particular by amending the Labour Code, the Act on Labour Inspection, and other legislative materials. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex/gender and the obligation of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value for men and women are enshrined in the Labour Code.

*The Act No. 365/2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination and the Amendment of Certain Acts*, also known as the Anti-discrimination Act, regulates the application of the principle of equal treatment and determines available remedies for legal protection.

The Antidiscrimination Act applies to the area of labour law, social security, and healthcare, provision of goods and services and education. The area of labour relations includes access to employment, occupation, or other for-profit activities or functions (hereinafter referred to as “employment”), including requirements for admission to employment and the conditions and method of selection for employment, employment and conditions of work, including employment remuneration, promotion and dismissal, access to vocational training, advanced vocational training and participation in active labour market measures, including access to job counselling services or membership and activity in employee organizations and organizations associating professionals in various fields, including the benefits that these organizations provide to their members.

The Antidiscrimination Act also regulates the use of temporary affirmative actions which are an exception from the principle of non-discrimination. The aim is to eliminate existing disadvantages imposed on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, association with a national minority or ethnic group, gender or sex, age or disability. Their objective is to ensure application of the equal opportunities principle in practice. Such measures may be adopted by state authorities and local governments as well as all legal entities (citizens’ associations, schools, companies, etc.).

In accordance with the Antidiscrimination Act, a party to anti-discrimination case can be represented by a legal person, which is entitled by law. Pursuant to the *Act No. 308/1993 Coll. on the Establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human rights* — an equality body, the *Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (the Centre)* fulfils several tasks in the area of the protection of the principle of equal treatment. The Centre, among others, provides legal assistance to victims of discrimination and manifestations of intolerance, issues expert opinions concerning the observance of the principle of equal treatment (upon request of legal persons, individuals or on its own initiative) and undertakes independent investigations concerning discrimination, prepares and publishes reports and recommendations concerning discrimination.

## **Violence against women**

The most significant development in 2017 is the improvement of the legal situation of victims of a crime. The *Act on Victims of Crime* has been adopted in October 2017 and will be effective from January 1st, 2018. The law represents the full transposition of *Directive 2012/29 / EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 laying down minimum standards on the rights, promotion and protection of victims of crime* into the legal order of the Slovak Republic. The law regulates the rights of

victims of crime, compensation for victims of violent crime and a mechanism to support bodies providing assistance to victims of crime. In particular, the status of crime victims in criminal proceedings is strengthened. The definition of domestic violence is included in the act as well. Victims of domestic violence belong according to the act to vulnerable groups which are entitled to a specific treatment and specialized professional assistance. The act furthermore established the competence of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of SR as the ministry responsible for the area of domestic violence and violence against children. Additionally, the sex as a specific motive of the crime has been included in the Criminal Code.

Despite the positive outcomes of the analysis among ministries which showed that the Slovak Republic fulfilled the obligations required by the *Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (AKA Istanbul Convention), the lobbying of the conservatives group caused problems with the ratification. Consequently, the activities of the conservative movement supported by the Slovak Catholic Church led to postponing of the ratification of the Istanbul convention after the evaluation of the public discussion with an unknown death line, as agreed by the government on August 18th, 2017.

One of the major steps toward a coordinated system of victim's protection has been the establishment of the *Coordinating Methodical Centre Gender-Based and Domestic Violence* (CMC), as an independent part of the *Institute for Work and Family Research*. By 31 Dec 2016 the KMC employed a total of 62 NGO experts: 5 permanent workers, 50 external contractors and 7 professional consultants that operate the non-stop National Helpline for Women Experiencing Domestic Violence.

The long-term development in the field of criminal conviction of those acts related to violence against women in Slovakia showed a positive development. While there is visible a general decline in violent crime in Slovakia in the long-term development, reported crimes related to violence against women show a different pattern. The significantly increasing trend of reported cases is in the area of intimate partner's violence and sexual violence, which can be explained as a higher confidence of victims in the system and thus the higher number of reported crimes. Particularly the increase of reporting of abuse and stalking by an intimate partner has shown a significant increase.

Supporting services are a vital part of the protection of victims if working professionally and effectively. In last 5 years, the availability and quality of services increased significantly. There are about 23 counselling centres around Slovakia which provide a specialised support to victims of domestic violence, most of them are focusing in particular on female victims. The overall number of existing services which are able to support women (but not specialised only on women) is much higher; CMC identified 51 social services, public or private, offering such a support. Furthermore, there are about 180 family places (1 woman + 1,5 child) in shelters around Slovakia which provide comprehensive specialised assistance for women experiencing violence and their children in residential form until the solution of the woman's problems. The annual expenditure of public funds supporting those services is 1,5 mil EUR. However, a systematic financing mechanism is still a challenge to be dealt with.

The results of the survey by the *EU Agency for Fundamental Rights* on violence against women showed that the Slovak Republic is close to the EU average for the prevalence of violence against women. 23% of respondents from Slovakia stated that as an adult they had experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner (EU average 22%) and 34% from another man (EU average 33%). Violence within the last year from a partner was reported by 6% of women and from another man by 10% of women (data for 2012).

The newest data available from the current CMC report on domestic violence showed a decrease in the prevalence of domestic violence against women to 4%.

## **Economy**

In 2018, the employment rate for men in the Slovak Republic was above the EU average (81.3% for the EU compared to 80.2% for the EU), for women the ratio was the opposite. In Slovakia, the proportion of women employed was 68.4% slightly below the EU average of 68.8%.

While men's employment is constant over their lifecycle, women vary depending on their age and the number of children born. In Slovakia, there is a strong gender dimension of the impact of parenting on women's employment, which varies to a greater extent depending on the age of the children in the family and the retirement age. However, in the final analysis, it is no different from the average employment rate of women within the EU, and it is even above its level at the most productive age.

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family supports the employment of women via ESF particularly by improving conditions for reconciliation of work and family life. Support focuses on flexible working arrangements and childcare facilities. A network of 90 new nurseries with a capacity of 1,800 places will be built in next years. Furthermore, gender equality is a cross-cutting principle for all programs and project supported via ESIF.

Since January 2017, an improved condition for women on maternity leave was an increase in maternity benefit to 75% of the daily assessment base paid for the period 34 weeks. In the case of women who give birth to two or more children and care for at least two of them, the duration of maternity benefit was extended from 37 weeks to 43 weeks. A single mother is entitled to maternity benefit until the end of the 37th week from the start of entitlement to maternity benefit.

Entitlement to a maternity allowance may also be used by the father of a child if the mother returns to the labour market and does not receive any maternity or parental allowance. Thus, a father can combine parental leave with a financial benefit on the maternity allowance. However, the father may not request the maternity benefit before six weeks from the day of delivery (this time is fully dedicated to a mother) and must end until the child is 3 years old.

The maternity allowance paid for the father is the same as for the mother, e.g. 75% of income before taking the leave me (maximum height in 2019 following is on the level of 1 458,50 EUR).

The Social Insurance Agency records the growing number of men receiving maternity allowance. Despite the relatively low numbers, the trend of increasing number of Slovak men as recipients of maternity allowance grows markedly. While in 2014 there were 717 men as maternity beneficiaries, in 2015 their number rose to 1731, in 2016 to 3076, in 2017 to 6553 and in the third quarter of the year 2018, it was already 9,842 men which is about 20% of all maternity benefit recipients.

**Gender pay gap** is one of the most watched and discussed manifestations of gender inequality, respectively, discrimination in the labour market. In terms of legislation, Slovakia is meeting the expected EU requirements; in 2007, an important section of Section 119a was added as part of the amendment to the Labour Code, which in the Slovak legislation enshrines the same wage for equal work and work of equal value for women and men.

In spite of satisfactory legislation, however, it has to be stated that there are considerable differences in the remuneration of women and men in Slovakia. Although since the accession to the EU, the gender

pay gap has declined substantially from 27 % to 18%. At this level, the last five years have stagnated. In other words, the average hourly wage of women is only 82% of the male average wage. In EU Member States, the average has long been between 16 and 17%.

The gender pay gap increased slightly during the year 2018 at median hourly earnings from 12.64% to 13.10% against women (increased from 17.98% to 18.05% for average hourly earnings). The average earnings of women in 2018 exceeded the threshold of one thousand Euros for the first time, 4 years after men who reached this threshold already in 2014. Yet, women in the public sector earned last year on average still below this threshold.

In the business sphere, the gross gender difference slightly decreased year-on-year at median hourly earnings from 17.74% to 17.20% (for average hourly earnings from 19.58% to 19.25%).

**3. Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination? (please check relevant categories)**

- Women living in remote and rural areas
- Indigenous women
- Racial, ethnic or religious minority women
- Women living with disabilities
- Women living with HIV/AIDS
- Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities
- Younger women
- Older women
- Migrant women
- Refugee and internally displaced women
- Women in humanitarian settings
- Other

**Girl child and migration**

Identification of asylum-seeking minors or minors who have been granted international protection in the SR is verified already during the asylum process. If a minor comes from a country with an ongoing armed conflict, his or her application review process should include verification of whether he was involved in the armed conflict.

It is also possible to identify asylum-seeking minors who were involved in armed conflict when assessing a minor's vulnerability in accordance with the Act on Asylum. The MI SR creates suitable conditions for accommodation and care of foreigners in asylum facilities. Suitable conditions are understood as taking appropriate measures to prevent attacks and violence, as well as providing protection to victims of human trafficking.

If an asylum seeker is identified as a minor who was involved in armed conflict, members of staff at the Migration Office of the MI SR are professionally trained to work with such a group of minors. Since 2014, the Migration Office of the MI SR has not had any cases of asylum-seeking minors who were involved in armed conflict.

Protection and promotion of the rights of foreigners, i.e. migrants, refugees and applicants for international protection, is provided in the SR by the Centre for Legal Aid under the authority of the MI SR and by non-governmental organisations.

### **Roma women**

Regarding the implementation of state policy for the support of especially vulnerable population groups from marginalised Roma communities (hereinafter “MRC”), the *Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities* (OGPRC), which is an advisory body to the government of the Slovak Republic, deals with issues affecting Roma communities and to implement systematic measures to improve their standing and social integration, to implement and coordinate more effective policies and to implement systematic measures aimed at preventing the social exclusion of Roma communities and supporting their social integration.

Government Resolution No. 1 of 11 January 2012 approved the *Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma integration to 2020* (hereinafter the “Roma Strategy”) and at the same time made the revised national action plan for the Decade the Slovak Republic’s action plan for Roma integration to 2020 in the areas of education, employment, health and housing. The adopted material also established policies for financial integration, non-discrimination and approaches to majority society — the Initiative for Roma Integration through Communication. The strategy itself is based on the principles of a comprehensive solution, destigmatisation, desegregation and deghettoisation. The implementation principles have been defined on a basis of solidarity, legality, partnership, comprehensiveness, conceptuality, a systematic approach and sustainability, respect for regional and subjective characteristics, gender equality, responsibility and predictability.

One of the global objectives of the Roma Strategy is to focus on the elimination of the multiple discrimination of women and the reduction of gender inequality in the private and public life of marginalised Roma communities and to support the economic independence of Roma women by means of gender equality outreach activities in cooperation with NGOs concerned with gender equality. The Roma Strategy also includes multiple objectives for increasing gender equality in all areas that it covers. Indicators of gender status are specified for the monitoring of task performance for individual objectives in the strategy. The strategy sets special measures, particularly in the recommended areas — i.e. health, employment, housing and education, and also includes measures to increase Roma participation, including women’s participation, in public and political life.

To support the promotion of gender equality and mitigation of the effects of multiple disadvantage and discrimination long faced by Roma women and girls, especially those from marginalised Roma communities, the OGPRC provides grants from the public administration budgets that contribute to improved access to healthcare and support the area of employment and employability.

*The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities* (OGPRC) was strongly involved in work on protection of the rights of women against sexual exploitation, focussing in particular on Roma women, carried out in the relevant commissions, sub-commissions and expert groups (e.g. for the fight against trafficking in human beings within the multidisciplinary working group for the prevention of trafficking in human beings) as well as the advisory bodies of the government of the Slovak Republic. Documents that it cooperated on included relevant crime prevention strategies, the conception for combating extremism, the action plan for preventing all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia,

anti-Semitism and other expression of intolerance, etc. The OGPRC also cooperated in the preparation of a methodological aid for identifying victims of trafficking in Roma communities. The aim of this guide is to strengthen preventative and awareness-raising activities for this vulnerable group carried out by workers in the helping professions (for example, field social workers and community workers) who work in the natural environment of Roma communities with the aim of better identification of victims of trafficking in marginalised Roma communities.

In 2017, in order to improve incentivising measures for disadvantaged groups, the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities signed, on behalf of the MI SR, the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the Field of Increasing Employability and Employment of Members of Marginalised Roma Communities with the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. One of its objectives is cooperation in mobilising engagement of individual target groups from marginalised Roma communities in various national projects with a special focus on the projects financed from European Social Fund. During the 2016-2017, a wide range of measures were implemented by looking for new ways of supporting youth employment, by means of programmes supporting entry onto the labour market, re-training, and by creating conditions for disadvantaged job candidates to enter the labour market through social economy entities.

*The Act on Financing Schools and School Facilities* was amended to ensure better access to kindergarten education for children from marginalized Roma communities. As of 1 January 2018, an allowance is provided to partially cover the costs of upbringing and education to children attending kindergartens within the network of schools who are a year away from commencing compulsory education or are members of households where a household member receives benefits in material need, and their legal guardians can demonstrate this to a school director. The aim of this legislation was to eliminate the problems seen in application practice in accepting these children into kindergartens which hinders significantly the access of women to the labour market.

In 2018, the system of cooperation between the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities and the MI SR includes plans to announce a call for projects to receive a non-repayable financial contribution focusing on the provision of scholarships to secondary school students to raise the standard of education, especially among the Roma. Gender equality is an obligatory principle in all projects supported by European Investment and Structural Funds.

The project called *“Support of the Settlement of Land Ownership in Marginalized Roma Communities”* has been implemented since 2017, providing assistance to municipalities in the process of settling ownership of land where clustered settlements inhabited by marginalized Roma communities have been built. The objective is to support the settling of ownership of land under Roma dwellings in Roma settlements focusing on improving hygiene standards in marginalized Roma communities and on systematic reduction of the number of illegal housing with extremely low hygiene standards.

**4. Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country?**

YES/NO

5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the **top five priorities** for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the **coming five years** through laws, policies and programmes? (please check relevant categories)

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, hygiene, energy, transport, communication, etc.)
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Digital and financial inclusion for women
- Gender-responsive disaster risk prevention, reduction and resilience building
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Other

**Strengthening women's economic independence through elimination of gender disparities in the labour market**

Economic independence is a necessary condition for the ability of women to have control over their own lives and make decisions freely; it is similarly important for the stability of a family.

When it comes to the work process, women are often faced with **horizontal and vertical segregation**. In fact, the fields of healthcare, social services and education tend to be dominated by women, over four-fifths of the workforce in these sectors consist of women and it is three-fifths for the public policy sector. The private sector with higher average salaries only employs 41 % of women, and the greatest differences can be found among entrepreneurs where the ratio for women and men is 1:3.

The support for better work-life balance has been limited and significant barriers and shortcomings can be detected in the area. The most utilized measure aimed at reaching work-life balance is the flexible working hours option; alternative measures are largely absent. The care for children and other family members in most cases remains the responsibility of women due to pervasive gender stereotypes. Only very few men opt for parental leave. Due to their greater participation in the labour market while still predominantly in charge of care work and household duties, women today are increasingly burdened by both duties. Many of them provide care for their elderly family members without necessary equipment and supporting services. Stereotypes and related expectations often result in limiting one of the parents

(typically the father) in his ability to participate in the care for his children; the post-divorce situations then tend to be specifically strenuous as custody becomes an issue.

**Unpaid work and parenting** are not viewed as equally important as the formal economy and employment. No remuneration for the care work for the family members tends to be the common cause of unequal opportunities for women and men in relation to their careers as it negatively impacts women's opportunities in further education, in professions with higher income, in participation in social dialogue and in enjoying social benefits. On the other hand, the care economy at a certain level of professionalization allows for increase in employment of women in particular.

Women and men experience **poverty and social exclusion** differently. Women are at greater risk of poverty especially when it comes to single parent households and elderly women. The differences in remuneration along with other disadvantages in relation to the labour market, the large number of women outside the economy, more frequent and lengthier career breaks and the burden of unpaid work tend to result in lower lifelong savings and pensions which put women at greater risk of poverty later in life, and the risk of **feminization of poverty in older age**.

In the case of **Roma women from marginalized communities** the geographic-ethnic differences intersect and are reinforced by rigid gender norms along with other disadvantaging factors. Hence the disparities are even greater in the Roma population.

#### **Priorities for the next 5 years are:**

Strengthening women's economic independence through elimination of gender disparities in the labour market, particularly by

- Reducing of the gender pay gap by consistent application of and compliance with existing legislation;
- Elimination of the horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market;
- Creation of systemic conditions and measures to reconcile work, family and private life, and thus increase women's employment;
- Strengthening of the principle of equality and non-discrimination in the field of labour and social policy, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as the Roma women, migrant women and women with disabilities;

Reducing gender inequalities in participation of women and men in decision-making positions, particularly by

- Increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions in political life, including their motivation and opportunities to run for office and participate in decision-making;
- Promoting women's entrepreneurship by creating systematic measures, including the support for reconciliation of work and family life;

Improving gender equality in education, science and research

- Creating a suitable environment and effective mechanisms for the implementation of gender equality in the field of science, research and higher education;
- Enhancing the knowledge on existing forms of inequalities between women and men by strengthening the research in this area as well as up-to-date gender statistics.

Strengthening the autonomy and bodily integrity of women by eliminating the degrading and violent displays of their bodies

- Safeguarding the dignity of women in terms of public images of their bodies by eliminating sexism in the media;
- Increasing public sensitivity to the inequalities between men and women;
- Strengthening the elimination of violence against women and their children and ensuring effective protection, assistance and support to women experiencing violence, all in accordance with the Istanbul Convention;<sup>5</sup>
- Suppressing and prosecuting the acts of sexual harassment and sexual violence against women and men;

Ensuring cross-sectional and participatory institutional mechanisms to promote gender equality

- Strengthening institutional support and expertise in the field of gender equality at the level of public administration as well as at the level of National Council of the Slovak Republic;
- Enhancing the sustainability and independence of NGOs active in the field of gender equality and women's human rights;
- Improving enforcement of compliance with the principle of equal treatment under the Antidiscrimination Act as well as strengthening the tools for its effective enforcement.

Gender mainstreaming in international cooperation

- Ensuring effective cooperation in the field of gender equality at the level of the European Union, the Council of Europe and other organizations;
- Implementing gender mainstreaming in development aid

Violence against women

- To provide fast, effective, accessible and affordable assistance for all women who are exposed to violence or the threat of violence taking into account the specific needs resulting from their situation;
- To provide gender sensitive training for all the helping professions and others interested in the prevention and elimination of violence against women;
- To prevent the occurrence of violence and any situation that contributes to the occurrence or tolerance of violence;
- To create an adequate knowledge base on the incidence and various other aspects of violence against women
- To take all necessary legislative and other measures to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and provide reparation for acts of violence against women that are perpetrated in the workplace.

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<sup>5</sup> The operational objective is elaborated in detail in the National Action Plan for the elimination and prevention of violence against women for the years 2014-2019.

## Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

This section covers progress across the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. To facilitate the analysis, the 12 critical areas of concern have been clustered into six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the BPfA with the 2030 Agenda. This approach is aimed at facilitating reflections about the implementation of both frameworks in a mutually reinforcing manner to accelerate progress for all women and girls.

### **Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work**

#### **Critical areas of concern:**

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

#### **6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?**

- Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation
- Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)
- Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace
- Strengthened land rights and tenure security
- Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women
- Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)
- Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment
- Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions)
- Other – ensuring gender responsible parental leave structure

The Government of the Slovak Republic has long been trying to protect and ensure decent working conditions, in the long run; it promotes a reasonable increase of the minimum wage, which helps to increase the standard of living of the population and in the fight against poverty. Growth in real wages is also greatly improved by raising the standard of living of citizens and reducing the risk of poverty, also thanks to a regular and robust increase in the minimum wage. (By comparison, in 2012 the minimum wage amounted to € 327.20 and € 520 in 2019.) As two-thirds of women working for a minimum wage are women, it also decreases the gender pay gap. In addition to the minimum wage, social benefits, and pensions are increasing every year. The maternity allowance in Slovakia is already at the level of gross salary before joining the maternity leave. All these measures help to make Slovakia one of the most vulnerable countries in the EU at risk of poverty.

The right to access to employment is provided for in the *Act on Employment Services*. A citizen has the right to choose employment freely and work anywhere in the SR, or can choose to work abroad. In accordance with the *Labour Code* women and men are entitled to the same pay for the same work or for work of the same value. Under the *Act on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination (Anti-Discrimination Act)*, sexual harassment at workplaces is prohibited.

*The Act on Social Economy and Social Enterprises* approved by the Government on 10 January 2018 is a key reform for strengthening the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market. The adoption of the cross-cutting legislation will create a favourable environment for supporting social enterprises in the social economy, as well as social innovations.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereafter „MLSAF SR“) continuously adopts measures to reduce the gender pay gap. One of the most significant ones is an outreach campaign highlighting the ever-shrinking salaries paid to women, in addition to offering advice on the website on how to protect against discrimination on the labour market. Another significant measure to reduce the gender pay gap is a gradual minimum wage increase, as women find themselves in low-income jobs more often than men. Another important instrument for increasing employment and income levels for women was the national project *“Family and Work”* supporting labour market opportunities for mothers with small children.

As for the fight against discrimination, an important and indispensable role is played by social partners by promoting equal treatment, for example through monitoring workplace practices, access to employment, professional training and career progression, as well as through monitoring collective agreements, codes of conduct, research, or through sharing experience and best practice. In line with the principle of equal treatment, discrimination on the grounds of marital or family status, colour, language, political or other opinion, engagement in trade unions, national or social origin, disability, age, wealth, gender or other status is prohibited.

The MLSAF SR is preparing a nationwide survey of the occurrence of sexual harassment at workplaces. Results should be available in 2018. Labour directorates monitor discrimination on the labour market and review cases of possible discrimination. The preparation of the Methodology for Labour Inspectorates to ensure effective monitoring of cases of discrimination is underway.

In terms of progress, elimination of **segregation in the labour market** (horizontal and vertical) has become one of the strategic objectives within the framework of the *Strategy for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic 2014-2019*. The overall objective of the strategic area is to strengthen women's economic independence through elimination of gender disparities in the labour market.

Another strategic area is dedicated to increase entrepreneurship of women by placing the focus on mainstreaming women into areas typically known as male with an emphasis on private sector. One of the operational objectives is then to promote women's entrepreneurship by creating systematic measures, including the support for reconciliation of work and family life.

Already young girls are targeted with the aim to help them make informed choices regarding their future studies and careers. Interestingly enough, this particular strategic area received mixed and emotionally-charged feedback. Negative responses were received mainly from catholic based organizations claiming that active motivation of women and girls in favour of entering science, technologies and IT is artificial and unnatural.

Several initiatives and activities in favour of mainstreaming women and girls into entrepreneurship, technologies and IT are in the process of implementation. The initiative has a track of successful events, education activities and courses reaching out to many girls and young women. The Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic launched a comprehensive campaign promoting science to both girls and boys (<http://www.veda-technika.sk/>). The campaign is inclusive and as of its launch it has been providing positive examples and images of girls in science and technologies.

The project *Guardian Angels for Female Entrepreneurs* has been established as a reaction of the Slovak Business Agency and RAIC Presov on a call of the European Commission, known as “*European Network of mentors for Women Entrepreneurs*” which had been targeted at the additional support of businesswomen. The aim of the project is to promote and support women's entrepreneurship in Slovakia and in the EU, through creation of a network of mentors for start-up entrepreneurs. From the successful businesswomen/businessmen will be selected the best ones who through the personal consultations and meetings will give hand to women – start-up entrepreneurs - to overcome the initial problems related to their business careers.

Another project was *Boosting the female entrepreneurship in Slovakia* which had been established to inspire potential entrepreneurs, mainly through business stories and practical advices of ambassadors to embark women on the path of self-employment.

### **Diversity Charter Slovakia**

The *Diversity Charter* is a voluntary initiative supported by the European Commission and the European Diversity Charter Platform, which promotes the dissemination and sharing of diversity management practices, practices and experiences in the Member States of the European Union.

The signatories of the Charter emphasize the effort to "create a culture of mutual respect, trust, empathy, education and inclusion that enables us to employ the best people and help them to be more innovative, powerful and creative in solving problems". Diversity is, from the Charter's perspective, a useful tool for strengthening the signatories' reputation and for building good relationships with employees, suppliers, shareholders, business partners and clients within the Slovak Republic and the world.

Diversity Charter Slovakia is currently one of the youngest charters in the EU, also because it was signed by the first 16 companies and two non-governmental organizations only on May 30, 2017. The authors and authors perceive it as an initiative that unites companies, public administration and NGOs in their efforts to promote workplace diversity. In this way, it was also conceived, that is, in the cooperation of all three sectors.

A signatory may be a company or firm that, in the sign-up form, describes the company's values and activities supporting the principles of diversity and inclusive approach, and commits to the principles of the Charter (see Appendix 1). Membership also includes the possibility of participating in training workshops and seminars and other activities of the Charter. There have been several such acts since the signing of the Charter. In this way, signatories have the opportunity to obtain a wealth of valuable information on diversity management in work processes, which contributes to the expansion of staff and employee skills and encourages them to engage more. It also reduces labour shortages. Last but not least, diverse teams contribute to a better understanding of customer needs and support progress and innovation, thereby giving companies a competitive edge.

In the Charter, businesses and organizations are committed to improving their diversity policy, as well as ensuring that recruitment and personnel processes are consistent with legislation and further promote inclusive culture by creating a working environment that recognizes diversity, fairness, openness and trust.

At the same time, signatories are publicly subscribing to a commitment to act as a socially responsible company, helping to build a positive image of the company in front of its clients, customers and partners as well as the public.

**7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?**

- Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)
- X Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable
- X Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care
- X Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave
- Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women
- X Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers
- Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work
- Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during marriage
- Other

Regarding the reconciliation of **family and working life**, we would like to point out that the Labour Code includes provision for flexible forms of employment which can have a positive effect on the employment of women who wish to balance family and work duties. The following flexible forms of employment are defined:

- employment with shorter working time (part-time work) — the employer can agree with the employee in the employment contract on shorter working time than the set weekly working time. The reason why this form of employment is not used more often, for example by employees returning from parental leave, is that a part-time worker is entitled only to pay corresponding to the agreed shorter working time;
- a labour-law relationship based on an agreement on the performance of work or agreement on work activity;
- job sharing — this option allows an employer to create a shared job for part-time employees, in which the employees agree with each other on the scheduling of working time and work tasks assigned to the job;
- flexible working time — more adaptable rules on flexible working time — cancellation of the requirement to define optional working time;
- homework and telework — this form of work is used mainly for the transition from parental leave to employment, for parents with young children.

These atypical forms of employment including variable forms of working time increase employees' satisfaction, increase job quality, increase the efficiency of work processes and help employees to reconcile their work and family duties. Each of the above-mentioned flexible forms of employment has its own special characteristics and the employer and employee have the option to choose any of the methods in the current legal framework and the agreed type of labour relationship. Employees in Slovakia make less use of these options than is typical in western European countries. However, their use in practice is very rare.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Slovak Republic (hereafter „MLSAF SR“) already in the previous programming period supported the employment of mothers of young children for flexible forms of work through the National project „*Family and work*“. 765 employers were involved in the pilot project with 1406 jobs being supported for mothers of young children on flexible forms of work - shorter working hours, a shared jobs and home office. At the same time, 33 facilities for flexible forms of childcare were supported with an overall spending 6 mil EUR. On the basis of the evaluation of this pilot project, MLSAF has launched within the operational programme *Human Resources* continuation of the support with the same focus in the form of demand-driven projects. The main objective of the aid is to improve the conditions for reconciliation work and family life to increase the employment of women with parental responsibilities. Within the call, 97 projects have been submitted and 18 approved so far. The evaluation is still ongoing. The budget allocation is 10 mil EUR.

Furthermore, a new national project is being designed to support flexible working arrangements for mothers of small children at pre-school age as well as for caregivers taking care for dependent family members. The launch of the project is expected in the second half 2019 with offices of labour being the providers of the financial aid to employers who created flexible jobs for the mentioned target group.

**The development of childcare services** is still one of the key challenges, both in relation to the greater participation of mothers in the labour market as well as supporting early childhood development. Also ensuring the availability of social services for families with children is one of the pillars of the active inclusion strategy and approach to social investment. For the period 2014 - 2020, financial, material and personal opportunities were also provided for the construction of childcare facilities within three years in various regions of Slovakia. This is the link between the two operational programs, the Human Resources Operational Program and the Integrated Regional Operational Program. A network of 90 new nurseries with a capacity of 1,800 places will be built in next years.

One way of improving the inclusion of women on the labour market by the state is also creating and maintaining conditions for better reconciliation of work and family life. At the same time, initiating and **motivating fathers** to participate more actively in childcare through the possibility of taking maternity benefit (once regular legal maternity leave fully spent by the mothers) in the duration of 28 weeks. The Social Insurance Agency records the growing number of men receiving maternity benefit. Despite the relatively low numbers, the trend of increasing number of Slovak men as recipients of maternity benefits grows markedly. While in 2014 there were 717 men as maternity beneficiaries, in 2015 their number rose to 1731, in 2016 to 3076, in 2017 to 6553 and in the third quarter of the year 2018, it was already 9,842 men.

**8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?**

YES/NO

**If YES, have assessments on their impact on women and men, respectively, been conducted?**

- Yes, their impact on women/men was estimated before measures were put in place.
- Yes, the impact was assessed after measures were put in place.
- No, the impact on women/men has not been assessed.

**If YES, please describe the findings (1-2 pages).**

### Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

#### **Critical areas of concern:**

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and health
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

### **9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

- Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures
- Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services
- Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities
- Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)
- Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty
- Other

The Slovak Republic has a system of special measures established in law to support particularly vulnerable members of society. The system of assistance in material need, through which assistance is provided if the income of members of a household is less than the subsistence minimum defined by applicable legislation, sets conditions for entitlement to the provision of assistance in material need that are the same for women and men.

Material need assistance is provided in the form of a material need allowance (hereinafter referred to as the "Allowance") and supplements which are provided in monetary, material or combined forms. The aim of the Allowance and Supplements, together with the income of the persons and the natural persons who are connected to this person is to ensure basic living conditions and material need assistance with the contribution of their active participation in addressing their social situation.

The provision of the Allowance and Supplements is carried out pursuant to Act No. 599/2003 Coll. on Material Need Assistance. For the purpose of this Act, basic living conditions are defined as one warm meal a day and the necessary clothing and shelter. Material need allowances and supplements provided by the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family are funded from the state budget.

The subsistence minimum is a socially recognised minimum level of income of a natural person; any person whose income is below this level is considered to be in material need.

The subsistence minimum is always adjusted on 1 July of the current calendar year based on the coefficient of the growth of the net monetary income per capita or the coefficient of the growth of subsistence costs in low-income households. These data are provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Current Subsistence Minimum Levels:

- 198.09 € per month for an adult natural person,
- 138.19 € per month for another considered adult natural person,
- 90.42 € per month for a dependent child or a minor who is provided for.

In order to encourage responsible attitude to the protection of women's health during pregnancy, the healthy prenatal development of the child and parenthood as such, a pregnant woman is entitled to a protective allowance from the fourth month of pregnancy if she attends a regular monthly preventative check-up with a doctor specialising in gynaecology or obstetrics. A parent is also entitled to a protective allowance in the given amount if she/he provides personal, full-time, proper care to a child up to one year of age.

#### 10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

- Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance)
- Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened unconditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions
- Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels
- Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g. women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings)
- Other

Pursuant to *Act No. 43/2004 Coll. on old-age pension saving*, the state pays mandatory contributions to the fully-funded pillar for persons enrolled in old-age pension savings during the period of due care for a child under the age of six years and, in the case of a child with a long-term adverse health condition, after the child's sixth birthday (at longest until the child's 18th birthday), likewise during receipt of a carer's allowance and likewise for a saver for whom, as an employee or self-employed person, the state

pays pension insurance contributions during the provision of maternity benefit. The saver must also satisfy the conditions laid down by Act No 461/2003 Coll. on social insurance, as amended.

In accordance with the Social Insurance Act, the period of unemployment insurance for entitlement to unemployment benefit includes the period in which an employee's mandatory unemployment insurance is suspended due to use of parental leave. This provision means that persons who have taken parental leave pursuant to applicable law are entitled to unemployment benefit if they cannot find work after the end of their parental leave.

Since January 2017, an improved condition for women on maternity leave was an increase in maternity benefit to 75% of the daily assessment base. With effect from 01 January 2011 there was also an extension of the period for which maternity benefit is paid — from the original 28 weeks to 34 weeks. In the case of women who give birth to two or more children and care for at least two of them, the duration of maternity benefit was extended from 37 weeks to 43 weeks. A single mother is entitled to maternity benefit until the end of the 37th week from the start of entitlement to maternity benefit.

Since 2004 the principles the Anti-discrimination Act have been fully incorporated into *Act No. 461/2003 Coll. on **social insurance**, as amended* (hereinafter the "Social Insurance Act"). During the preparation of every amendment of the Social Insurance Act care is taken to ensure that these principles are consistently applied.

The Social Insurance Act lays down **special measures for the protection of pregnant women**. It stipulates that an insured women who is pregnant or who is caring for a new-born child is entitled to maternity benefit if she was insured for at least 270 days in the two years before giving birth. The period of 270 days includes periods during which an employee's mandatory sickness insurance is suspended due to use of parental leave in accordance with applicable legislation and periods of suspension of a self-employed person's sickness insurance if she was entitled to a parental allowance pursuant to applicable legislation and did not perform activities of a self-employed person for which sickness insurance and pension insurance are mandatory. This provision means that if a woman has another child, the period for which sickness insurance was suspended will be counted with period of sickness insurance for the purposes of calculating entitlement to maternity benefit. Another step that has improved the standing of pregnant working women is the extension of the protective period from 6 months to 8 months, which means in practice that if their sickness insurance ends during pregnancy they are entitled to maternity benefit because the protective period lasts until the start of maternity leave.

In accordance with the Social Insurance Act, **a female employee is entitled to an equalisation benefit** if she is assigned to other work during pregnancy because the work that she previously performed is prohibited for pregnant women under applicable legislation or because a medical opinion finds that it would put her pregnancy at risk, and she has a lower income in the work to which she is assigned without any fault on her part. The same applies to women up to the end of the ninth month after birth. Equalisation benefit is paid by the Social Insurance Agency. These provisions protect working women against loss of income by reason of pregnancy or maternity.

In order to improve the social status of persons (who in our conditions are most often women) who care for a child under the age of six years and, in the case of a child with a long-term adverse health condition, after the child's sixth birthday at longest until the child's 18th birthday, the law requires that these persons must have pension insurance and that the state must pay the pension contributions. In

practice, this means that certain pension entitlements are recognised for a period of due care for a child and therefore the period is included in the period of pension insurance and contributes to the amount of the calculation of the pension according to the relevant procedure.

#### 11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

- X Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services
  - Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services
  - Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns
  - Provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers
- X Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes
  - Provided refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian settings with access to sexual and reproductive health services
  - Other

**Sexual and reproductive health** is included in the *National Programme for the Care of Children and Adolescents*, which aim is to particularly ensure high quality care for pregnant women and new-borns. It includes both, the effort and successful implementation of measures to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates, as well as improvement of the health status of new-born infants by providing equal access to health care, including family planning with an emphasis on Roma communities and other disadvantaged population groups. In order to protect the health and life of unborn children, the SR promotes the use of *in utero* medical procedures.

All women in Slovakia have unrestricted access to contraception methods allowing them to choose among a number of methods and suppliers. According to the data from the database of registered medicines at the *State Institute for Drug Control*, there are currently 387 types of hormonal contraceptives and 13 types of topical contraceptives registered in the SR that healthcare providers can prescribe to women. These contraceptives along with other forms of contraception are not covered by public health insurance, with an exception of cases where their use is medically justified; then it can be covered by the health insurance. Condoms are freely available for sale at retail outlets and emergency contraception is available over-the-counter.

As part of its efforts to improve access to healthcare gynaecology and obstetrics wards for marginalised Roma women, the Ministry of Health of the SR (hereafter as "MoH SR") is preparing a pilot scheme within the *Healthy Communities* project to create health education assistant positions in hospitals (i.e. at gynaecology and obstetrics wards). Health education assistants are all employees from among the Roma population who are continuously educated in the field of healthcare and reproductive health. They are a key element in breaking down social barriers to providing healthcare to Roma minorities. Health education assistants will identify and link special needs of Roma women on the hand with the requirements of medical staff on the other, with an emphasis on an intercultural approach. This will allow the monitoring of possible signs of segregation of Roma women in providing healthcare.

Education in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights is provided within selected minimum standards for continuing education of healthcare professionals. Topics focused on sexual and

reproductive health are part of the content of minimum standard theoretical knowledge in the relevant specialised study programmes and certification preparation designed for healthcare professionals involved in the provision of healthcare related to the human reproductive system. Healthcare professionals qualified as doctors (specialisation in gynaecology and obstetrics, specialisation in urology and specialisation in reproductive medicine), healthcare professionals qualified as midwives (specialization in midwifery and care for women in families and communities and certified work in planned parenthood and contraception).

**Sexuality education** is a cross-cutting subject built into the study programmes of all full-time and part-time healthcare education students, which equips students with professional competence to perform professional work activities in accordance with Government Regulation No. 296/2012 Coll. on Vocational Qualifications for the Performance of Healthcare Professions, the Method of Continuing Education for Healthcare Professionals, the System of Specialisations and the System of Certified Work Activities. Condoms are freely available for sale at retail outlets.

## 12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

- Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes
- X Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education
- X Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals
- Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls
- X Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy
- Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings
- Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood
- Other

Among other areas, the *Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic 2014 – 2019* promotes elimination of gender segregation when it comes to the choice of subjects; there is an underlying objective to make science and technical subjects attractive to girls. Already young girls are targeted with the aim to help them make informed choices regarding their future studies and careers. As the issue is being discussed in the public, the society is becoming more open and used to the ideas. More media positive images have already penetrated the mainstream culture. One of the most successful projects in terms awareness raising aiming to provide all relevant and available information to girls and young women regarding information technologies is the '[You too in IT](http://www.ajtyvit.sk/)' (<http://www.ajtyvit.sk/>). The initiative has a track of successful events, education activities and courses reaching out to many girls and young women. Recently, the Ministry of Education of the Slovak republic launched a comprehensive campaign

promoting science to both girls and boys (<http://www.veda-technika.sk>). The campaign is inclusive and as of its launch it has been providing positive examples and images of girls in science and technologies. Along with other smaller-scale initiatives and campaigns, these are rather new, thus it is too early to conclude regarding their impact.

As regards the structure of university teachers, currently there is no specific plan to be adopted new measures or strategies on tackling the gender imbalances in the field.

As of September 2014, the **sexuality education** titled '*The Marriage and Parenthood Education*' has been added to the compulsory crosscutting subjects. The Marriage and Parenthood Education represents a curriculum for three different age groups of pupils (primary school, middle school, secondary school) to address the issues of relationships, sexuality, development and parenthood adequately and effectively. The curriculum aims to facilitate basic knowledge and responsible attitude towards partnerships and parenthood in accordance with scientific and ethical standards.

The content of the curriculum for primary schools consists of the following topics:

- Education in the family
- Principles of healthy life (including the issues of self-confidence and self-esteem, risk of sexual abuse of children, safety in situations of risk, etc.)
- Negative consequences of smoking, alcohol and other drugs on one's health and behaviour
- Gender Equality
- Conception and development of a human being
- Changes in one's body in puberty
- Following topics and thematic areas constitute the curriculum for middle school-age children:
  - Friendship
  - Adolescence
  - Anatomy and physiology of reproductive organs
  - Responsible approach to sexuality
  - The negative impact of drug addiction on one's sexual and reproductive health
  - The principles of safe behaviour (identification of signs of abuse and exploitation of children, dangers of child pornography and sexual exploitation of children, etc.)

Eventually, the secondary school and secondary vocational school curriculum addresses the topics of marriage and family, parenting and intimate relationships in a more complex and comprehensive way.

According to the amendment to the Act on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities effective from 1 September 2018 until 31 December 2018, pupils who, for the purposes of the allowance for improving conditions of upbringing and education for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, qualify as pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds also include pupils who are members of households where a household member receives benefits in material need, and their legal guardians can demonstrate this to a school director.

## Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

### **Critical areas of concern:**

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

### **13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?**

- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment
- Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g. cyberviolence, online stalking)
- Femicide/Feminicide
- Violence against women in politics
- Child, early and forced marriages
- Female genital mutilation
- Other harmful practices
- Trafficking in women and girls
- Other

The Slovak Republic has adopted a number of measures and initiatives to combat violence against women. The cross-cutting nature and difficulty of the issue of violence against women, including the fact that it is an area that has long been a taboo area where unresolved problems have become standard and stereotyped parts of life, have caused problems to grow and accumulate. The situation has been affected not only by misunderstanding and incorrect attitudes to violence against women in society, but also by the absence of coordinated, specialised and well-developed services for assisting the victims of such violence. In an effort to change this adverse situation and to establish a comprehensive and systematic response to the problem, the government of the Slovak Republic adopted already three action plans, the latest is the *National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of violence against Women 2014–2019* (the Plan).

The Plan set out a systematic basis for providing institutional support for survivors of violence against women and domestic violence. The areas of implementation include: strengthening the legal and strategic framework, provisions on assistance and affordable support services, methodology and standards, training for professions providing assistance to survivors, primary prevention, monitoring and research, and violence against women in the workplace. The Plan also set up 63 very concrete tasks, together with assigned bodies responsible for each task, sources of financing, indicators for evaluation and due dates for each task.

In June 2016, the MLSAF of SR submitted to the government an evaluation of the first two years of the implementation of the Plan. According to the evaluation, a significant progress has been made in several areas proposed in the Plan.

Following the tasks set in the Plan, in 2014, two national projects on violence against women supported by the European social fund have been implemented.

The launching of the **free 24/7 helpline for women victims** in March 2015 is another important milestone. Since the launch of these helplines, the counselling centres for women report that the number of women wishing to solve their situation doubled. Detailed statistics are collected in order to monitor the effectiveness of the helpline. The helpline received in 2016 about 6 000 calls and has provided 495 women with a long-term support; 199 of those were evaluated as being high on a risk of violence which means for the guidance counsellor to have elaborated a security plan and continuously follow up on clients. The helpline has become an integral part of the CMC since July 2016. Furthermore, the Office of General Prosecutor established a free helpline and an e-mail address where a specific motion to investigate a case may be reported. The Office refers the reported case to the relevant police department.

With respect to preparation of the ratification of the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (The Istanbul Convention; SR signed on May 11, 2011 in Istanbul), in particular the harmonization of national legislation with the Article 10 of the convention, the MLSAF has set up a *Coordination-methodical Centre for Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence* (CMC). The project has been co-financed through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and European Social Fund.

The aim of the CMC is to create, implement and coordinate a comprehensive national policy in the area of preventing and eliminating violence against women. A team of experts has been set up within the CMC responsible for the coordination and supervision of the implementation of the system of prevention and intervention, victim support and services in the field of violence against women and domestic violence. Training of law enforcement agencies, including police officers, investigators, prosecutors, judges, as well as health care professionals on gender-based and domestic violence represent crucial activities of the CMC in cooperation with the CoE, the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies and other domestic and international experts. Research and monitoring are also among the activities of the CMC.

Regarding particular activities and projects, we would like to mention that the total financial allocation for activities focused on combating violence against women and domestic violence represents 12 million euros in total for the years 2014-2016. A significant contribution in this area was made through the Norwegian financial mechanism; it amounts to 7 million euros.

Besides this allocation, an important financial mechanism is support for social services through self-governing regions, which support accredited organisations providing special advice services for the victims of domestic violence, mainly women, pursuant to *Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services*.

Several projects aimed at establishing new women shelters and counselling centres have been supported via public scheme and from the Norwegian Financial mechanism together with a financial contribution from the state budget. The establishment of these new shelters resulted in providing 170 family spaces altogether; which means we are approaching the standards of the Council of Europe requiring us providing 225 spaces. There are about 23 counselling centres around Slovakia providing services for women survivors of domestic violence.

## Trafficking

The Slovak republic as European Union Member State fully implemented Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. The Slovak Republic fully complies with the international standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers and funding for victim protection. However, courts issued light and suspended sentences for convicted traffickers that did not deter traffickers nor protect victims. Sixteen of the 19 convicted traffickers received suspended sentences; another received a mere fine, and two received sentences of two years' imprisonment.

The Penal Code prohibits all forms of trafficking through Section 179, which prescribes penalties between four and 25 years' imprisonment for trafficking offences. These penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those specified for other serious crimes, such as rape.

The procedure for identifying victims of human trafficking in the Slovak Republic and their inclusion into the *Program of Support and Protection for Victims of Human Trafficking* is defined in the *National Referral Mechanism*. This material contains the structure of cooperating entities through which the governmental authorities fulfil their obligations concerning protection and enforcement of human rights for individuals who became victims of human trafficking while coordinating their efforts as part of the strategic partnership with civil society. Its main aim is to ensure adherence to the human rights of victims of human trafficking and provide them with effective and accessible services. Secondly, the national reference mechanism can help to develop national policies and procedures regarding victims of human trafficking, such as a legal provision in the field of the legalisation of their stay and resettlement, compensation and protection.

Any entity within the state authorities and non-governmental organisations, as well as those from abroad, can identify a potential victim of human trafficking. Thus, members of various services of the Police Force, Prosecution Office, employees of the Migration Office, employees of Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, healthcare staff, employees of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, field social workers, employees of consular offices of the Slovak Republic abroad, non-governmental and international organisations working in Slovakia or abroad, as well as the victims of human trafficking themselves or their family members can initiate identification of victims of human trafficking through the National Helpline for Victims of Human Trafficking at 0800 800 818.

The programme for victims includes isolation from the criminal environment, information about reflection period in the territory of the Slovak Republic and if needed also information about the possibility to provide international protection in case the victims is a third-country national, assistance to a national of the Slovak Republic with voluntary return to the Slovak Republic, social assistance, psychological and social counselling, psychotherapeutic services, translation and interpretation services, legal advice, healthcare, requalification courses, possibility of being included in the Witness Protection Program under special law, possibility for financial compensation under special legislation, assistance to a national of a member state of the European Union and a third-country national with assisted voluntary return to the country of origin and mediation of aid by organization active in the land of origin as well as possibility of safe accommodation.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) in cooperation with government institutions, non-governmental and international organisations, has been working in the area of the counter-trafficking issue since 2003. In this area IOM currently carries out following activities:

- Various preventive activities and information campaigns (mobile application [Safe Travel & Work Abroad](#) to help prevent human trafficking, campaign [Don't become a slave!](#) to raise awareness about helpline for victims of human trafficking);
- [Educates and strengthens](#) the capacity of government experts and helping organisations in the area of prevention, identification of victims and providing comprehensive assistance for victims of human trafficking;
- Develops and offers [information and educational materials](#) for teachers, lecturers, and other professionals (documentary films, didactic and training materials, information brochures, the website about safe travel and work abroad).

### **SAFE – Mobile Application to Prevent Human Trafficking**

Through an interactive game, you can walk in shoes of one of four young people who decided to explore the world. Your goal is to escape the human traffickers by taking responsibility and making the decision that will influence the direction of their lives. Whether the protagonists end up travelling and working abroad safely – or fall into the traps set by traffickers – is in your hands. In addition to the game, the application provides key information about human trafficking, safe travelling principles and tips for working abroad as well as useful contacts in case of emergency. Whether you travel abroad, on holidays or for work, you can find beneficial information here.

The SAFE application is available for free at Google Play and App Store and on the IOM website [www.safe.iom.sk](http://www.safe.iom.sk) in five languages: Slovak, Czech, Polish, Hungarian and English.

### **14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?**

- x Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation
- x Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls
- x Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)
- x Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)
- x Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)
- x Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls
- x Introduced or strengthened measures for improving the understanding of causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for implementing measures on ending violence against women and girls
- x Other

*Please provide details of up to three concrete examples, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)*

## Legal situation

**The Act on Crime Victims** became effective on 1 January 2018. The Act introduces basic concepts such as ‘victim’, ‘particularly vulnerable victim’, or ‘domestic violence crimes’ into the legal system. A domestic violence crime is, among other things, a crime committed by using violence or the threat of violence against a spouse, former spouse, partner, former partner, parent of the same child or to other person who lives or lived in the same household. Particularly vulnerable persons are also persons who are victims of domestic violence crimes.

The adoption of the Act on Crime Victims also resulted in amending the provisions of the Criminal Law laying down special motive (§140). In the case of selected criminal offences, having the characteristics of a special motive warrants the use of heavier sentences. The amendment to the Criminal Law also adds sex to the definition of a reason for hatred.

Domestic violence is a criminal offence in the Slovak Republic. The interpretation of these unlawful acts covers all possible situations, while respecting the international definition of this criminal offence. Besides domestic violence crimes, the Criminal Law specifically defines sexual violence crimes, as well as rape, which also includes marital rape. The Slovak legal system does not tolerate any form of rape during marriage.

In recent years, a series of amendments amending a number of provisions of the CL, the Criminal Code and other laws, which were substantially related to prosecution of violence against women including domestic violence, have been adopted in the Slovak Republic. One of the measures is evicting the offender from the shared household. The period of time a police officer is authorised to evict a violent person for has been extended from 48 hours to 10 days. The eviction includes the obligation of an evicted person not to approach the person under threat closer than the distance of 10 metres.

The issues concerning various forms of violence against women and the trafficking of women are dealt with by several Acts, such as *the Penal Code (Criminal Act)*, *the Rules of Criminal Procedure*, *the Act on misdemeanour*, *the Rules of Civil Procedures*, *the Civil Code*, *the Act on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Criminal Acts* and *the Act on Social Services*. Legislation also allows the activities of victim assistance organisations, including the provision of legal advice. Current law guarantees victims the right to legal aid free of charge when claiming compensation in criminal proceedings and also in civil lawsuits through a *Legal Aid Centre*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> At present the Legal Aid Centre does not provide legal aid or legal representation in criminal law proceedings and does not have any branches or offices abroad. The National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014–2019 includes a task assigned to the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (point 15) to provide for the amendment of Act No. 327/2005 Z.z. so that offices of the Legal Aid Centre in the Slovak Republic provide legal advice for, amongst other clients, women at risk from violence and legal representation for the victims of violence against women also in criminal cases.

The *Criminal Code No. 300/2005 Coll.* Section 208 punishes the acts falling within the substance of the offence of battering a close person or a person entrusted on one's care in broader personal scope, in the light of the extension of the legal definition of the term close person covers the former spouse, cohabitee, former cohabitee, the parent of the common child, the person that is close in relation to them and person entrusted in one's care (the adopted child). The lawmaker extended the objective aspect of the merits of this criminal offence and established increased penalty for its commission.

The criminal law also introduces the so-called protective treatment and enables the court to impose it upon a perpetrator who has committed a violent offence against a close or entrusted person, where it may reasonably be expected that he will carry on with the violent acts.

With effect from 01/09/2011<sup>7</sup>, a constituent element of the offence of dangerous harassment under section 360a of the Criminal Code to punish **stalking**, i.e. the long-term harassment of another person that is capable of giving the harassed person grounds to fear for his/her life or health or the life or health of a close person or that significantly impairs the quality of his/her life.

Latest amendments to the §208 Criminal Code and the *Act 372/1990 Coll. the Act on Offences* (Date of entry into force: 01/01/2016) deal with the problem of an offence recurrence. If an act of domestic violence performed by the same perpetrator was classified as an offence (resulting in imposing a fine), and the same perpetrator performs the same or similar act of domestic violence within the following 12 months, this second act will be investigated as a crime, punishable under the §208.

*Criminal Procedure Code* enables prosecuting the offences against a family member start prosecution against the perpetrator ex offa, also without the consent of the victim violence or rape.

Pursuant to the provisions of section 27a of *Act No. 171/1993 on the Police Force*<sup>8</sup> a police officer is authorised to remove and ban a person from a house, flat or other shared dwelling with a person at risk and from its immediate vicinity if evidence has been found to indicate a reasonable expectation that the banned person will make an attack on the life, health or freedom or an especially severe attack on the human dignity of the person at risk, especially if such attacks have occurred previously. The ban includes a prohibition for the banned person to enter the shared dwelling for 10 days from the ban as well as to approach the victim loser than 10 meters. A police officer is entitled to ban such persons in their absence. If a request from an injunction is filed with a court during a ban from a shared dwelling the duration of the ban from a shared dwelling shall be extended until the entry into force of the court's decision on the request.

The *Civil Code* enshrined a provision permitting during community property, i.e., during the life of the marriage, but also after the divorce until the property is divided by a court's decision to prevent the violent person from using the apartment or house of the spouses. The perpetrator's right to live in the flat or house can be restricted or denied in case of domestic violence. The legislation considers that the right to use the dwelling belongs to each of the spouses, and where one spouse by his/her violent conduct makes the use of dwelling virtually impossible for the other one, it is necessary to guarantee the victims the exercise of their constitutional right also by restricting the right of use of dwelling for the violence perpetrator. Equally, the court shall determine when and under what conditions the violence perpetrator is not provided a dwelling replacement.

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7 Act No. 262/2011 Z. z. amending Act No. 301/2005 Z. z. the Criminal Code, as amended, and amending certain acts

8 Act No. 491/2008 Z. z. amending Act No. 171/1993 Z. z. on the Police Force, as amended, and amending certain acts

In linking to the Civil Code, the Civil Procedure Code enabled the courts by a preliminary order to impose on the violence perpetrator not to enter temporarily the house or apartment in which lives the person close to him, or entrusted in his care, in relation to which he is justifiably suspected of committing the offence of violence.

An amendment of *Act No. 448 on social services*<sup>9</sup> introduced the term “gender based violence” as a situation of social crisis in which the life or health of a natural person and his/her family is at risk and which requires immediate action by social services. The amendment made provision for emergency accommodation facilities to be provided separately for a certain selected target group of natural persons and allowed these persons to be guaranteed anonymity. The amendment thus permitted the provision of specialised social advice and the provision of services in emergency accommodation facilities for specific target groups including women at risk of violence. At present a system of accreditation is being prepared for specialised social advice for women experiencing violence or at risk of violence.

In general, **human trafficking** is considered to be a violation of human rights and this is reflected in relevant legislation, namely § 179 of the Criminal Code. The criminal offense of trafficking has been systematically included in a separate part of the Criminal Code under the crimes against freedom and human dignity. At the same time, the Slovak Republic is bound by international conventions on the protection of human rights and freedoms (*The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, etc.*). The relevant legislation applies the definition of human trafficking as stated in the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* which is one of the three additional protocols to the United Nations Convention on transnational organized crime.

The long-term development in the field of criminal conviction of those acts related to violence against women in Slovakia showed a positive development. While there is visible a general decline in violent crime in Slovakia in the long-term development, reported crimes related to violence against women show a different pattern. The significantly increasing trend of reported cases is in the area of intimate partner’s violence and sexual violence, which can be explained as a higher confidence of victims in the system and thus the higher number of reported crimes. Particularly the increase of reporting of abuse and stalking by an intimate partner has shown a significant increase.

**Supporting services** are a vital part of the protection of victims if working professionally and effectively. Having said that, as the most valuable outcome of the program SK 09 can be considered the significant contribution to quantitative as well as a qualitative increase of supporting services around Slovakia. Thanks to the programme, the number of counselling services doubled and a number of available family places tripled.

There are about 23 counselling centres around Slovakia which provide a specialised support to victims of domestic violence, most of them are focusing in particular on female victims. The overall number of existing services which are able to support women (but not specialised only on women) is much higher;

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<sup>9</sup> Act No. 448/2008 Z. z. on social services and amending Act No. 455/1991 Zb. on trade licensing (the Trades Licensing Act) as amended, as amended

CMC identified 51 social services, public or private, offering such a support. Furthermore, there are about 180 family places (1 woman + 1,5 child) in shelters around Slovakia which provide comprehensive specialised assistance for women experiencing violence and their children in residential form until the solution of the woman's problems.

**15. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?**

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education
- Grassroots and community-level mobilization
- Shifting the representation of women and girls in the media
- Working with men and boys
- Perpetrator programmes
- Other

The Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities launched a campaign titled [\*“Because I say No”\*](#) targeted at young people in the age group from 15 to 25. The overall aim of the campaign was to increase awareness, sensitize and inform about sexualized violence, to decrease the public’s tolerance of this kind of violence and open the topic to the public. In the first phase of the campaign we raised awareness on the persistent myths and communicated chosen central messages to the public. Some of them include:

- Nobody wants to experience violence/ nobody deserves violence under any circumstances;
- Only the perpetrator is responsible for violence, the victim is never responsible / secondary victimization;
- A vast majority of perpetrators are known to the victims (88%) and 38% of cases of sexual violence are committed by a current partner;
- Aggression and violent behaviour is not a natural male character trait;
- Sexual violence has serious consequences on the victims, no matter whether a victim fights physically back.

The overall aim of the campaign spots is to encourage and sensitize young people and increase their capacities to recognize and reject all forms of violence.

[Spot 1](#) is aimed at girls and women and communicates the importance and strong value of a given or not given consent, whether verbal or non-verbal, for any type of sexual activity, under any circumstances and in any stage of a relationship. The goal is to encourage girls and women to be aware of their right to say “NO” anytime and anywhere.

[Spot 2](#) is aimed at boys and men and it warns boys and young men that by using pressure or force on involuntary sexual activities, they not only humiliate the other person and behave unacceptably but also they commit a criminal act. Moreover, this spot also works with the concept of “bystander effect” and encourages young people to intervene in case they witness some forms of violence.

During the second phase of the campaign, public figures known to young people joined the campaign and expressed their support which highlighted the fact that everyone can reject violence in any form – whether privately on a regular day or as a part of their profession.

Audio-visual lectures at high schools and at universities reflect the fact that this generation lives in the world of constant updates, that the attention span dropped to 8 seconds and on average this generation receives 3000 messages per month. As a result, the members of this generation are less focused but also they are better multitaskers.

The audio-visual lectures take place in theatres and the lecturers explain gender stereotypes, gender inequalities, and violence against women, including cyber violence while using short previews from selected and up to date movies, TV shows and ads. One lecture of 90 minutes includes over 50 previews. The previews are simultaneously commented on and addressed in the theoretical context of gender equality.

The format of audio visual lectures proved to be an effective way of informal education for students at high schools since the dynamics of the lecture corresponds to the current rapid trend of young people's lives. This kind of lectures makes use of their ability to receive a great deal of information and incentives at the same time.

The total budget for the campaign has been about 250 000 EUR supported via Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the State Budget of the SR. The campaign is available (in Slovak language) at the web page [www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk](http://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk)

**16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

- Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions
- Implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings
- Worked with technology providers to set and adhere to good business practices
- Other

**17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?**

- Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media
- Introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising
- Supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct
- Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media
- Promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media
- Established or strengthened consumer protection services to receive and review complaints about media content or gender-based discrimination/bias in the media
- Other

Self-regulatory measures adopted by media institutions demonstrate an effort to eliminate the negative impact of sexism in media.

[The sexist blunder](#), the anti-award for the most sexist advertisement in the Slovak public space, [www.sexistickykix.sk](http://www.sexistickykix.sk). This anti-award is a reaction to a number of discriminating (sexist) advertisements in the Slovak Republic. Conceptualizing the issues that are induced by sexist adverts is undeniably important since the adverts sell more than just the product. They sell and represent values and cultural representations that influence our worldview and the image of ourselves. Advertising has not invented the gender stereotyped images, however, given its repetitive use of these representations, it contributes to creating an environment that encourages sexist attitudes, sexual harassment and violence against women. It contributes to maintaining gender inequality.

In spite of the growing numbers of sexist representations in Slovak public space, this issue has been brought to the close attention of general public in 2016, when the first year of the project started. The aim of the project is therefore to create a space for discussion and also to raise awareness of this problem so that the general public knows how to spot and recognize sexist adverts.

Throughout this project, people can nominate the most sexist adverts they can find in the public space. Running the anti-award in Slovakia has got a great potential as in drawing the attention of people, enabling the general public to get more closely involved in the battle against discrimination and also to provide people with high-quality information on this topic. The project is being supported via MLSAF's grant scheme aimed on gender equality.

**18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?**

YES/NO

See answer to question 3

**Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions**

**Critical areas of concern:**

- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

**19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?**

- Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets
- Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures

- Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programmes
- Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning
- Taken measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics
- Collected and analyzed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions
- Other

Over the years, both men and women have become more interested in elected posts in government and in parliament, which is reflected in an increasing number of male and female candidates in all types of elections. Yet, the percentage of successful women's candidates is generally lower than men's and as a result, women's involvement in the public life is much lower, often due to uneven distribution of care and housework duties hence lack of work-life balance. Of course, other factors interfere and shape the discourse as well as the actual decisions women and men make regarding their careers.

Among other goals, the adopted *National Strategy for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic 2014-2019* (the Strategy) set out to reduce gender inequalities in participation of women and men in decision-making positions. The Strategy emphasizes the need to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions in political life, including their motivation and opportunities to run for office and participate in decision-making.

Specific and partial tasks stemming from the objectives set out in the Strategy include active and consistent support for the increase in representation of women while initiating a public debate on women in politics; introduction of temporary special measures in accordance with the Anti-Discrimination Act and Article 4 of CEDAW as part of necessary strategy for accelerated achievement of substantive equality between women and men; and eventually active encouraging of the political parties to the adopt targets for increasing female representation.

Other objectives target unions of professionals and social partners to gradually initiate self-regulatory measures in favour of increasing gender diversity in management bodies; these should have clear objectives and deadlines.

Reconciliation of work and family life is fundamental to greater representation of women in public and political life in the future. Therefore, the Strategy set out to facilitate creation of systemic conditions and measures to reconcile work, family and private life, and thus increase women's employment and representation in decision-making. The activities include ensuring availability of kindergartens and introducing innovative and flexible forms of childcare. Introducing measures to facilitate women's return from parental leave to the labour market is equally important.

Eventually, in terms of further awareness raising and knowledge gathering on the issue, specific research on obstacles women face in their careers and career progress should be conducted in the foreseeable future.

**20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

- Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership
- Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free Wi-Fi hubs, community technology centers)
- Introduced regulations to advance equal pay, retention and career advancement of women within the media and ICT field
- Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on a voluntary basis
- Provided support to women's media networks and organizations
- Other

An NGO 'You too in IT' was established in 2012 when there were only 5 percent of women studying IT in Slovakia. The number has successfully increased to 10-12 percent in the last 5 years and it keeps increasing.

The purpose of the NGO remains to motivate, involve and support girls and women in studying and working in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT). Its aim is to contribute towards achieving more than 30 percent of girls studying IT and over 40 percent women working in IT. The NGO holds various events, workshops, meetings and mentoring sessions for women and girls in order to make them familiar with the ICT world. In 2016, the organisation interacted with over 2400 girls in the framework of over 50 events. They also work on changing the gender stereotypes surrounding women in ICT and work closely with students, parents and teachers.

The NGO regularly organizes „Women Tester Academy“ which represents a unique opportunity for women with an ambition to work in ICT who often lack any solid background in the field. The Academy provides support for women who have worked in different areas and are interested in a career change as well as recent graduates of various university courses, or mothers looking for new career paths and job opportunities after maternity leave. The Academy offers an intensive course consisting of 42 hours on the topic of Software testing. It also opens door to the necessary networking opportunities and possible internships with partner companies. Every participant has the option of taking a ISTQB exam/certificate at the end of the course. Moreover, the support in finding a job in software testing is also provided.

For more information visit: <https://www.ajtyvit.sk/>

**21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

YES/NO

**If YES, what is the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?**

*Please provide information on the specific areas in which these resources have been invested as well as reflections on achievements and challenges encountered in making budgets gender-responsive.*

**22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

**YES/NO**

As the ODA donor and the EU member, we annually and on a regular basis report objectives of the Gender Action Plan. We also use the OECD tracking system - development and humanitarian projects objectives. However, we, as the ODA donor do not provide a direct budget allocation explicitly for gender equality projects. The implemented projects are focused on different sectoral priorities with gender equality being the important cross cutting theme.

**23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?**

**YES/NO**

**If YES, please list the name of the plan and the period it covers, its priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.**

**If YES, has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?**

**National strategy for gender equality and the National plan for gender equality for years 2014-2019**

Government of the Slovak republic adopted on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 the *National strategy for gender equality for years 2014-2019* ("the Strategy") and a related *National action plan for gender equality for years 2014-2019* ("the action plan"). Specific activities and measures were prepared and discussed in cooperation with NGOs and the Government Council for Human Rights, Ethnic Minorities and Gender Equality. The strategy and the action plan are interconnected and represent a comprehensive conceptual framework for the promotion of gender equality into practice.

The documents address and propose measures in 6 areas of concern:

1. Economic empowerment and independence
2. Decision-making
3. Education
4. Dignity
5. Institutional mechanisms
6. International cooperation

The Strategy and related action plan stem from the basic strategic documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe. These bind the member states to adopt positive measures aimed at reaching gender equality<sup>10</sup>. Both documents simultaneously reflect the recommendations made by relevant international monitoring bodies, particularly recommendations formulated in the *Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Slovak Republic*<sup>11</sup> as well as the commitments made by the Slovak republic itself as a response to these recommendations. Last but not least, the documents incorporate the tasks introduced in the *Partnership Agreement with Slovakia on using EU Structural and Investment Funds for growth and jobs in 2014* and the highlighted importance of equality between men and women as a horizontal principle, as well as the ex ante conditionality for utilizing the ESIF. Eventually, the strategy reflects the recommendations of the Council of the European Union made for the national programme of reforms of the Slovak Republic addressing areas relevant to gender equality.

The budget allocation is depending on concrete tasks particularly using European Social Fund as well as the state budget. The total expenditures for the implementation of the Strategy are approximately 26.5 mil EUR.

The strategy is available in English on-line: [http://www.gender.gov.sk/en/files/2015/06/Strategy\\_EN.pdf](http://www.gender.gov.sk/en/files/2015/06/Strategy_EN.pdf)

**24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?**

YES/NO

**25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?**

YES/ NO

**If YES, does it have a specific mandate to focus on gender equality or discrimination based on sex/gender?**

**If YES, please provide up to three examples of how the NHRI has promoted gender equality. (2 pages max.)**

In accordance with the Antidiscrimination Act, a party to anti-discrimination case can be represented by a legal person, which is entitled by law. Pursuant to the *Act No. 308/1993 Coll. on the Establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human rights* – an equality body, the **Slovak National Centre for Human Rights** (the Centre) fulfils several tasks in the area of the protection of the principle of equal treatment.

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<sup>10</sup> A comprehensive list of documents can be found on the website [www.gender.gov.sk](http://www.gender.gov.sk)

<sup>11</sup> CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/4 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the forty-first session, 30. Jun - 18 July 2008

The Centre, among others, provides legal assistance to victims of discrimination and manifestations of intolerance, issues expert opinions concerning the observance of the principle of equal treatment (upon request of legal persons, individuals or on its own initiative) and undertakes independent investigations concerning discrimination, prepares and publishes reports and recommendations concerning discrimination.

Women victims of discrimination on the ground of gender or any other protected ground can turn to the Centre to seek legal aid and representation in cases before courts regarding the observance of the principle of equal treatment. The Centre receives complaints in person, by post, email, fax and phone. The Centre carefully handles all received complaints. In the first phase, the Centre evaluates whether the complaint falls under its legal mandate as an equality body and a national human rights institution. In case a complaint falls outside its mandate, the Centre provides the complainant with basic legal advice and recommends relevant bodies, institutions and mechanisms which to turn to in order to solve the issue. In case the complaint alleges discrimination, the Centre firstly seeks to obtain all relevant information from the complainant. Afterwards, if deemed necessary, the Centre addresses the claimed violator of the principle of equal treatment. The Centre often seeks to initiate personal meetings with the other party in order to negotiate amicable settlement. In case the settlement is not reached and the Centre believes that the case is supported by sufficient evidence in order to have a reasonable chance for success, the Centre files an anti-discrimination action to court with an approval of the client. The legal representation provided by the Centre is free of charge; however, in case of defeat the client has to bear the costs of the trial. The Centre is often contacted for consultation by individuals who are already represented in court cases by advocates in cases that relate to discrimination (either solely or in connection with other claims). In such cases, the Centre provides its expert opinions, which can be submitted as documentary evidence (e.g. they are not defined as expert opinions under the Rules of Civil Procedure). In general, due to the length of procedures and its costs, the Centre aims to settle the cases out of court and in best interest of its clients.

## Peaceful and inclusive societies

### **Critical areas of concern:**

- E. Women and armed conflict
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

## **26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

- Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security
- Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks
- Used communication strategies, including social media, to increase awareness of the women, peace and security agenda

- Increased budgetary allocations for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda
- Taken steps to reduce excessive military expenditures and/or control the availability of armaments
- Re-allocated funds from military spending to social and economic development, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- Supported inclusive and gender-sensitive conflict analysis, early warning and prevention mechanisms
- Other

A National Plan on Women, Peace and Security is currently in the preparation process.

**27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

- Promoted and supported women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements
- Promoted equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level
- Integrated a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of armed or other conflict
- Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response
- Protected civil society spaces and women’s human rights defenders
- Other

SlovakAid humanitarian project in Iraq implemented in 2016 (154 210,00 €) provided health and preventive care for 72 069 beneficiaries: 11 269 children, 1 786 women attended prenatal care, 233 women received post-natal care, 686 women were provided the useful information about women's family planning and 2 705 women attended reproductive care services.

Another humanitarian project provided quality primary health care to Syrian refugees through a mobile health unit and static health centers in Akkar district of Lebanon in 2016. The project allocation was 197 677,67 €. The health care was provided to 11 181 patients with communicable and non-communicable diseases. 3 746 patients were treated in a static health care clinic. 4 549 pregnant women were examined through mobile health clinic. 5 587 postpartum women were given post-natal examinations. 2 251 women of childbearing age 15 to 49 years were examined for gynecological consultation and screening and 1 408 patients reported to static health care facilities.

**28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

- Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls

- X Strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response
- Strengthened capacity of security sector institutions on human rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Increased access of conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women to violence prevention and protection services
- Taken measures to combat illicit arms trafficking
- Taken measures to combat the production, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs
- Taken measures to combat trafficking in women and children
- Other

In September 2018, the Slovak Republic and UNDP Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation Solutions were signed with a main focus on the goals of sustainable development for 2018-2021. Two core areas are:

Strengthening the Slovak Republic's leadership in Security Sector Reform (SSR). The Slovak Republic supported the second phase of the UNDP initiative "*Women in the Army*", which is the highly important UNDP theme. Initiative activities were also consulted with relevant embassies (Belgrade, Podgorica and Skopje Embassies) that are operating in partner countries and where the initiative will be implemented. During the OSCE presidency, there will be an event organised to discuss security sectors and reforms. A SAIDC expert will be delegated to UNDP for 6 months to support the implementation of this initiative.

Capacity building of MFAF SR and exchange of experience with the aim of effective development cooperation in partner countries. Currently, UNDP's internal selection processes are underway. The UNDP experts will provide training to MFAF SR and SAIDC and to other relevant institutions and ministries how to effectively implement the cross cutting themes (environmental protection and climate change, equal opportunities) into development policy and project cycle.

## 29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

- Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children
- X Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training
- Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases **N/A**
- X Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage
- X Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices
- Implemented policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children **N/A**
- Promoted girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life
- Other

The Slovak Republic ratified the *Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. The instrument of ratification was deposited with the depositary of the

Convention, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, on 1 March 2016. The Convention entered into force for the Slovak Republic on 1 July 2016.

The *National Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence* was approved on 15 January 2014, and at the same time the *National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children* was established as a separate organisational entity belonging to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (MLSAF SR). Since the start of the implementation period of *The National Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence*, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on increasing awareness of the issues violence against children and on ways to help. In connection with this, the National Coordination Centre launched a website in 2015 [www.detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk](http://www.detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk) (childhood without violence), which aims to become the basic information channel providing information related to the issues of violence against children for professionals and adult lay public, as well as children themselves. *The National Project to Support the Protection of Children against Violence* was approved on 23 October 2017, focusing on streamlining the system for protecting children against violence by setting up systemic coordination of entities participating in tasks related to the protection of children.

Coordination meetings of the participating entities include analyses and reviews of the occurrence of violence against children in individual districts, where important indicators include the number of cases of violence against children and the dominant characteristics of these cases on the one hand, and risk factors associated with the occurrence of violence against children on the other. Such findings from coordination meetings appear to be important also in potential detection of criminal acts, including child trafficking. Ad hoc coordination meetings are held when particularly serious cases occur, serving as an important instrument for detecting undesirable phenomena and for improving the procedures used to protect children against violence.

The amendment to the *Act on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and Social Care* effective from 1 January 2009 provides for explicit prohibition of all forms of corporal punishment, as well as other abusive and degrading punishments in the use of measures of social and legal protection of children and social care. The legislation imposing zero tolerance of corporal punishment is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UN Committee Recommendations issued in response to a progress report submitted by the Slovak Republic on the implementation of the Convention. This amendment also provides for the obligation of social and legal protection of children and social care institution to always opt for and use an appropriate measure according to the law every time it is notified of the use of abusive or degrading punishments on a child by a parent or a person who personally cares for the child.

By adopting the amendment to the *Act on Offences* effective from 1 January 2016, the Slovak Republic emphasised the unlawfulness of all violent acts that affect the physical integrity of a close person or a person entrusted to another person for care or upbringing, including a child. In accordance with the amendment to the CL effective from 1 January 2016, repeatedly occurring offences of this nature are treated as a crime of torture of a close or entrusted person. The amendment effective from 1 January 2017 made the provision which lays down the sentences for reoffending more precise, as it led to varying interpretations in actual practice in the past. In accordance with the applicable legal regulations, these acts cannot be legitimised by exercising parental rights and obligations.

The provision of §30 (3) of the *Act on Family* provides that parents are entitled to use appropriate measures in a child's upbringing in a manner which does not threaten its health, dignity, or mental, physical or emotional development. Due to the fact that corporal punishment, as it is commonly understood, has the potential to threaten child's health, dignity, and its mental, physical and emotional development, the applicable legislation no longer tolerates it. It follows from the above that parental rights and obligations in child upbringing are specified in such a way as to ensure protection against a threat to child health, dignity, and to its mental, physical and emotional development, and to allow the use of appropriate measures in child upbringing which take into account the specific circumstances and needs of families.

The provision of §3r on *Upbringing and Education* prohibits the use of all forms of corporal punishment.

Several outreach and education campaigns implemented in the 2014–2017 period focused on preventing human trafficking. A schedule of training courses was created, focusing on increasing the level of professional competence of both government and non-government entities in this field. Staff at Ministry of Interior affairs gives ad hoc lectures at schools, and for children in children's care homes, who are a group at risk in terms of human trafficking. In order to provide information to the public, they attend meetings with various formats (conferences, workshops, panel discussions and round tables, and meetings with journalists).

## Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

### **Critical areas of concern:**

- I. Human rights of women
- K. Women and the environment
- L. The girl child

### **30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?**

- Supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance
- Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)
- Increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources
- Promoted the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment
- Enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labour-saving infrastructure (e.g. access to clean water and energy) and climate-smart agricultural technology
- Taken measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques

- Taken steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in the green economy
- X Monitored and evaluated the impact of environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects on women and girls
- Other

**31. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?**

- Supported women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disasters, in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation policies, programmes and projects
- Strengthened the evidence base and raised awareness about the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters
- Promoted access of women in situations of disaster to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation
- Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)

Section Three: National institutions and processes

**32. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.**

Since 2010, the agenda of gender equality has been discussed and covered in the framework of the Committee of the *National Council for Human rights and National Minorities* of the National Council. In 2011, the reconstruction process of the consultative bodies resulted in creation of a new institutional mechanism - the *Governmental Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality*.

According to the approved statute, the *Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality* is a permanent professional, advisory, coordinating and consultative body of the Government of the Slovak Republic, among other activities responsible for promoting of the principle of equal treatment and equality, including gender equality. It consists of several specific committees. The *Committee on Gender Equality* is one of them. It functions as an advisory body.

In September 2012 the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the government bill amending and supplementing the *Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the Organization of the Activity of the Government and on the Organization of the Central State Administration*, whereby the gender equality and equal opportunities agenda has become the competence of the MLSAF. Since then, MLSAF, specifically the Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities (the Department) has been responsible for coordination of national policy in the area. The Department plays a prominent role in coordinating the implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination horizontal principle across all operational programs of European structural funds. The Department has been very visible last year when implementing a media campaign on equal pay<sup>12</sup> within the national project *Institute of Gender Equality*.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.gender.gov.sk/en/campaign-on-gender-pay-gap/>

Since January 2015 the Department reports directly to the minister which has further strengthened its position. To date, the Department has currently employed 15 + 1 persons (1 for director). The department also ensures the cross-departmental implementation of gender equality within ministry and beyond.

**33. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?**

YES/NO

*If YES, please provide further information*

**34. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

YES/NO

**If YES,**

**a) Which of the following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

**Beijing Declaration and PfA**

- Civil society organizations
- Women’s rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify.....

**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- Civil society organizations
- Women’s rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify.....

**2031 Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?**

YES/NO

*Please provide further details about the mechanisms used. (2 pages max.)*

**2032 Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.**

35. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?

- Yes
- No**
- There is no national plan/strategy for SDG implementation

#### Section Four: Data and statistics

### **36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?**

- Promulgated laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy setting out the development of gender statistics
- Established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
- X Used more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects
- X Re-processed existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics
- X Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- Improved administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- X Produced knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- X Developed a centralized web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
- Engaged in capacity building to strengthen the use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
- Other

*Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)*

The Statistical Office of the SR is dealing with women's role in society in several respects:

- Conducts statistical surveys in order to know and describe factors affecting the position of women in society, based on the necessity of statistical data collection divided by statistics;
- Releases relevant statistical information by all available forms by women and men;
- Provides relevant and comparable statistical data for gender analyses, performs publication activities;
- Actively co-operates in an international project of UN in database completion in the field of gender equality statistics for the SR;
- As regards the National Action Plan for Gender Equality it fulfils tasks in the field of gender equality strengthening in cross-sectional statistics.

The published statistical data aimed at the problem of gender equality shall serve as a starting point for proposing of appropriate measures in decision making of the government and legislative authorities, as well as in summary results and the review whether the principle of integrating equal opportunities between men and women can be applied or not in practice.

The Statistical office of the Slovak republic produces an annual statistical report on gender indicators and data sets. Comprehensive overview of statistical information characterising the status of women

and men in contemporary society. It includes data divided by gender in the field such as demography, labour market, social statistics, and health, education, science and technology, criminality, violence and judicature, public life and decision-making. The content is supplemented with international comparisons and graphic annex. Methodological notes are included. The bilingual report in Slovak and English language for 2018 is available [here](#).

Since 2010, MLSAF produces an **annual report about the state of play of gender equality in Slovakia**. The report contains a latest development on field of gender equality, main activities and actions of public institutions and NGOs as well as a set of gender equality indicators. In an analytical part, the report focuses on a particular area providing gender analysis and a set of good practice examples. Latest reports were focusing on labour market (2018), violence against women (2017), gender pay gap (2016) etc. The reports are available at the web page [www.gender.gov.sk](http://www.gender.gov.sk).

Besides of the regular compilation and annual publication of sex disaggregated data of data under a title *Gender Equality* by the Statistical Office mentioned in the periodic report, following initiatives were developed:

A document titled '*System of Indicators of Gender Equality and Methodological Standards of Construction*'<sup>13</sup> has been elaborated within the framework of the national project *Institute for Gender Equality*. The document points out that the collection of gender-disaggregated statistics in recent years has improved, particularly those by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. However, several areas remain uncovered. The demand for more specific data has increased too. Setting up the system of indicators and methodological standards in a line with the currently accepted indicators of gender equality in the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action, the European Commission, UNECE and OECD will allow comparing the level of gender equality in Slovakia and other countries as well integration into other systems of social and economic indicators in Slovakia (e.g. indicators of social exclusion and poverty). The publication therefore contains an overview of current developments of indicators of gender equality in the EU, the UN and OECD, etc.; as well as a proposal to supplement the data collection; translation of international methodological standards, constructing summary indicators and indexes of gender equality and practical testing (pilot calculating indicators/indexes); design and development of new national indicators and indexes of gender equality, the pilot calculation and applicability for further analyses.

### **37. Out of the following which are your country's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?**

- Design of laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy promoting the development of gender statistics
- Establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)

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<sup>13</sup> PhDr. Ľudmila Ivančíková, ed., Mgr. Barbora Holubová, PhD., Mgr. Róbert Vlačuha: *Systém indikátorov rodovej rovnosti a metodologické štandardy ich konštrukcie*, Bratislava, marec 2014

- X Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects
- X Re-processing of existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics
- X Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
  - Greater utilization and/or improvement of administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- X Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- X Development of a centralized web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
  - Institutionalization of users-producers' dialogues mechanisms
  - Statistical capacity building of users to increase statistical appreciation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
  - Other

Proper collection of statistical data has also been the focus of the National action Plan for Gender Equality 2014-2019. With an aim to deepen the existing knowledge of gender inequalities between women and men, the government set out to:

- continue monitoring of the application of gender equality within the scope of the annual Gender 201X report
- publish a summary report on the state of gender equality in Slovakia on an annual basis
- determine the main and the additional indicators and the form of their systematic monitoring, analytical evaluation and interpretation
- ensure collecting of gender-specific data at all levels of public administrations

### 38. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

- Yes
- X No

**If YES, how many indicators does it include and how many of those are gender-specific<sup>14</sup>?**

**If YES, how many of the gender-specific indicators are additional country indicators (i.e., not part of the global SDG monitoring and indicator framework)?**

*Please provide the indicators in an annex*

**If NO, how many global gender-specific SDG indicators (list provided in Annex 1) are available in your country?**

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<sup>14</sup> The term 'gender-specific indicators' is used to refer to indicators that explicitly call for disaggregation by sex and/or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective. For example, SDG indicator 5.c.1 captures the percentage of countries with systems to track public allocations that are directed towards policies and programmes that promote gender equality—the underlying objective is the promotion of gender equality. The term is also used for indicators where women and girls are specified within the indicator as the targeted population (see UN Women. 2018. *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York).

*Please provide the indicators in an annex*

**39. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?**

- Yes
- No

**If YES, please describe which indicators have been prioritized**

**If NO, explain the main challenges for collecting and compiling data on these indicators**

**40. Which of the following disaggregations<sup>15</sup> is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

- Geographic location
- Income
- sex
- Age
- Education
- Marital status
- Race/ethnicity
- Migratory status
- Disability
- Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

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<sup>15</sup> As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education and marital status.