

## Foreword

Slovakia enters the new Millennium with optimism. A recent evaluation report released by the Economic Commission concluded that Slovakia is in "excellent negotiating position" to accede to the European Union. Furthermore, in July 2000, the country was invited to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development becoming the 30<sup>th</sup> member. This is an important step in the development of Slovakia because it marks its determination to move towards a society based on democratic rules and social progress.

The transformation which followed the velvet divorce of Czechoslovakia has produced mixed economic and social results. Some economic indicators have been relatively favourable while a social disaster has been avoided. For five years National Human Development Reports (NHDRs) have been prepared by national teams of experts and supported by UNDP. These reports examine the economic, social and political transformation from a human development perspective that puts people at the centre of the development debate.

Every year the NHDRs ably analyse the most important achievements and setbacks in human development. Despite notable progress in the political and the human rights spheres, the country continues to face many other development challenges. For many people, the transformation has not resulted in increased well-being. On the contrary, many social and human indicators have deteriorated even during periods of economic growth. Attempts to stabilize and restructure the economy have not necessarily translated into social improvements. This has been a systematic finding of all the NHDRs which have shown repeatedly that economic growth does not automatically translate into human development. For this to happen, a positive link between growth and human lives must be created through national policies.

The NHDR 2000 again points to many disturbing trends: Almost 11 percent of the population lives below the minimum subsistence level, registered unemployment rate continues to increase, reaching 20 percent in 1999. The youth unemployment rate rose from 24.8 percent in 1995 to 32.1 percent in 1999. This is increasing poverty, social exclusion and marginalization of many social groups in Slovakia, especially the Roma population where 100 percent unemployment rates have been reported in some communities. This exacerbates their already bad economic and social conditions. Almost 80 percent of the Roma population have only primary education and their health status is well below that of the general population.

The report also highlights the gender disparities in Slovakia. Considering their high level of education and knowledge, women continue to be under-represented in decision making positions, concentrated in low paid jobs, and earn only 75 percent as much as men.

If these human development issues are not addressed the country's competitiveness and development would be retarded. Development should focus on increasing people's capabilities, choices and opportunities. The analysis of this year's report clearly shows that Slovakia needs above all a social agreement among relevant development and political stakeholders concerning the necessary reforms. It has become clear that the transformation is not simply a process of privatization and market liberalization. The "social sustainability" of this transformation should be at the centre of policy attention. Furthermore, as the struggle for greater democracy continues, the quality of governance needs to be continuously improved.

UNDP would like to thank the national team of experts and all the persons who have worked on the report. Through the NHDRs UNDP hopes to continue contributing positively to the policy debate in Slovakia.



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# CPHR

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The co-ordinator of the National Human Development Report Slovak Republic 2000 is the Center for Economic Development (CED). CED is a non-profit, non-governmental organization focused on economic and social research. One of its main missions is to support long-term economic development as the prerequisite for a sustainable growth of the quality of life. CED is member of the informal association of non-governmental and non-profit organizations, INEKO GROUP.

## Summary

The 2000 National Human Development Report for the Slovak Republic predominantly deals with two issues. First, are the opportunities for human development in Slovakia equal for both women and men? Second, what is the dimension of poverty in Slovakia?

The status of women and men in Slovakia reflects the historical arrangement of gender relationships whose usual stereotype is man as the bread winner for the family, and woman as the mother in the household. Men and women in Slovakia have equal human rights guaranteed. The system of education offers equal opportunities to both men and women. The greatest gender differences manifest themselves in the labor market and in their representation in social and political life. Women in Slovakia prevail in less paid sectors of the economy and earn, on the average, three quarters of what men do. The participation of women on the decision-making areas of the economy and politics is low compared to their proportion in the society. Women also have a significant share of the unpaid household work, and thus become financially dependent on men. Prerequisites for equality of opportunities in society are to make family relationships democratic, raising the tolerance vis-a-vis other forms of lifestyles, and education of the young generation in the spirit of gender equality. The gender dimension in Slovakia is the focus of the second section of the Report.

The term poverty is not defined in the Slovak legislation, though the phenomenon of poverty is present in a variety of forms. About 11 percent of the population lives in material distress that is the mirror of the Slovak poverty. Poverty mostly strikes the long-term unemployed whose exclusion from the labor market often arises from a low level of education. The groups that are at the highest risk of poverty include the elderly, children, incomplete families and families with several children. Due to lower average income and pensions, women are more likely to suffer from poverty than men. The typical features of poverty, including low level of education, high unemployment rates, dependence on social assistance on the part of the state, are most markedly shown in Slovakia in the Roma population whose large part live in misery. The resolution to the problem of poverty requires that stress be laid on the elimination of reasons that result in the emergence and spreading of poverty, as well as a functioning social net for the groups of population threatened by poverty. The most effective prevention of poverty is education that expands the potential of finding a way in the labor market, and – as a rule – represents a prerequisite for higher income. Measures supporting growth of employment and the targeted nature of the social system also positively affect the reduction of the poverty dimension in Slovakia. An analysis of poverty and social exclusion is contained in the third section of this publication.

In its first section, the Report analyzes developments in key areas of Slovakia's life during the preceding year. It points out that political stability and democratic mechanisms in the functioning of political groupings are prerequisites for a long-term improvement in the quality of life. Slovakia gained an improved political image and was invited to join OECD. With the growing strains among the governmental parties, the dynamics of economic reforms has slowed down. The system of education lacks links with the labor market, and the education sector – despite its strategic importance - has to struggle with a prevailing financial and conceptual crisis. Major features of demographic development include the continuing aging of the population and the growing proportions of women in older age categories. A marked reduction in abortion rates is a positive trend. The life expectancy has had small increases for both women and men, with an 8-year difference in life expectancy that favors women.

Section four of the National Report deals with various aspects of measuring human development. Quality of life is obtained from a combination of measurable and abstract values of life that have innumerable forms. The calculations of a human development index and of indices assessing gender equality are based on the most recent available statistical data. The inclusion of new progressive indicators to the calculation of human development characteristics would substantially improve the value of these quality of life parameters.

The final section contains recommendations for improving the conditions of human development in Slovakia, highlighting the strengthening of an equitable society and dealing with poverty. The statistical annex contains time series and up-to-date data from areas that influence the nature of human development in the Slovak Republic.

## Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ATP	Artificial Termination of Pregnancy
CE	Council of Europe
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
DALE	Disability-adjusted Life Expectancy
DS	Democratic Party
DÚ	Democratic Union
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
EÚ	European Union
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HZDS	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
INSEE	Institute National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques
KDH	Christian Democratic Movement
LSD	Lysergic Acid Diethylamide
NACE	General Classification of Economic Activities
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NR SR	National Council of the Slovak Republic
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SDK	Slovak Democratic Coalition
SDKÚ	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
SDL	Party of the Democratic Left
SMK	Hungarian Coalition Party
SNS	Slovak National Party
SOP	Party of Civil Reconciliation
SOU	Secondary Vocational Establishments for Apprentices
SSDS	Social Democratic Party of Slovakia
SZS	Slovak Green Party
ŠÚ SR	Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization



# Recent Developments and Trends in Slovakia

## The Political Situation

**Political stability** is the crucial factor in determining conditions for long-term human development. The reasons are quite simple. If the very maintenance of democracy has to be struggled for, this reduces the capacity to develop beneficial societal programs. The path to political stability is affected by the condition of the political parties system, such as the relationships within the coalition as well as those between the coalition and the opposition, the legitimacy of the governing political parties, the efficiency of the functioning of the government, and the quality of the institutional environment.

As we approach the mid-point of the electoral cycle, it is fair to state that the coalition still works. There have been problems in reaching consensus under the conditions of a broad coalition. The method of trial and error helped the coalition to master the policy of compromises and bargaining. In spite of the slower rates that would be needed to resolve problems inherited from the third Mečiar's government, it may be stated that the government coalition (SDK-SDE-SMK-SOP)<sup>1</sup> continues to advance in their efforts to resume the normal functioning of parliamentary democracy and to reinstate the rule of law. In spite of the opposition's reluctance to cooperate on issues related to economic reforms, a consensus could be achieved of all parliamentary entities with respect to the foreign-political orientation of Slovakia towards EU and NATO (with respect to NATO, SNS is an exception).

The various social groups' degree of involvement in the decision-making processes has been continuously increasing since the 1998 elections. The Hungarian Coalition Party has functioned constructively in the government. This behavior proves that the worries and suspicions of "anti-Slovakian or irredentist interests of the Hungarian ethnic minority" are unfounded. The aforementioned belief has been voiced by nationalists and also some coalition politicians. The new government has been successful in retrieving the social dialog with the Trade Unions; after intense and protracted negotiations, the General Agreement has been signed in March 2000. The office of the Vice-Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities has been established, and the government has been involved in talks with the Roma ethnic representatives. The government decided to establish the office of the plenipotentiary for the purpose of addressing issues of the Roma ethnic minority. Minorities have acquired a simple majority in the newly appointed Government Council for Ethnic Minorities. A Government Council for Non-Governmental Organizations has been established, comprised of government representatives and representatives of the Gremium of the Third Sector. Government participation with local government representatives has been intense in the preparation of the Public administration reform.

On the other hand, the relationships between the government coalition parties have been marked by conflicts arising from divergent program priorities as well as from continuous competition for votes in the forthcoming elections. Various economic groups have attempted to utilize their links to the government parties for the purpose of railroading their own interests. This has created a serious problem for the government and also has been an underlying problem in a majority of prior conflicts within the government coalition. Disputes within the government coalition, as well as within SDK, do not primarily represent ideological or value-related discrepancies. This is merely a convenient façade. What remains a hidden agenda are the **disputes of economic interest groups** that stand behind the individual parties. The most pronounced example of this type of conflict occurred in April 2000. Jozef Migaš, the Chairman of the Parliament and the leader of the government party SDE, cast his vote in support of the

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<sup>1</sup> For abbreviations please see p. 9.

suggestion presented by the opposition to recall the Prime Minister and thus the entire government. Migaš's vote in favor of impeaching the Prime Minister can be explained in the context of the activities of such a special-purpose grouping. This group was devoted to pursuing its particular objectives, and had no reservations about threatening the political stability of State.

It is therefore not justified to consider people who fuel the public opinion against reforms as the major barrier to reforms. They see that such reforms would directly disfavor them (the unemployed, the pensioners, public servants jeopardized by dismissals), or they cannot visualize change. Although these people enabled the third Mečiar's government to seize the power and to leave a meager economic and institutional heritage, they no longer have a decisive influence to hinder the reforms.

Also part of this heritage are groups that initially benefited from the reforms: the new owners of privatized enterprises, managers of State banks and State enterprises, and some public servants. Not all who easily acquired property during the first wave of the reforms are able to thrive under conditions of open competition run according to transparent rules of game. That is why they are interested in keeping up the "clientelist" capitalism with all its non-transparency, and preventing open competition with other countries. It is in the interests of these groups to hinder some steps of the reform process. Loosing privileges and protection from the very patron that they supported during the election campaign is perceived as a violation of the "silent agreement". They are motivated to fight reform steps, even if this action might result in threatening the stability of the government coalition.

## **The System of Political Parties**

A significant majority of the relevant political parties (with KDH being an exception) was born on parliament's soil, i.e. "from the top", and this also marked the nature of these political parties. The several years of HZDS participation in the parliament and in the government demonstrate a model of a shift in the party's leadership towards the parliament and the executive bodies of State. This supports the growing of government parties into the State and vice versa. A cartel of parties can be identified in Slovakia from the viewpoint of the nature of the political parties' organization. The cartel environment is created by guaranteed State contributions towards the activities of the parties, which are thus not forced to build a broader membership base.

The cartel environment is being formed by the legislative regulations. Examples of this can be seen in the mechanisms of State-provided financing, inter-party relationships at the elite level, and by the stronger position of parties in State compared to civil society. About 5 percent of the population is affiliated with a political party. This is given by the reluctance on the part of individuals to join political parties, and by the degradation of membership in electoral parties. The parties are no longer dependent on membership fees. On the contrary, the party of the rank and file is financially dependent on the headquarters, while the ordinary members have only minimal influence on the making of the party policy. Political ambition in local or central public service authorities remains one of the few incentives to join a political party. In this way, parties increasingly become part of the State and are less prone to voice the interests of the civil society.

Examining political parties through the optics of their intra-party organization leads us to conclude that there is a multiparty system in Slovakia as a precondition of a democratic political system, but not even parties considered democratic based on their program and profile, are democratic in nature as far as their organization is concerned.

A good law on the financing of political parties is crucial, and this belief has been accepted by the political parties. However, it still remains questionable as to whether or not the required raising of the State contribution represents the optimal solution. This method of financing will strengthen the cartel nature of political parties (i.e. their interlinking with the State, and restrict free competition, both within and between the political parties).

The weak connection between civil society and political parties is compensated for by problem-oriented civil initiatives that voice and pursue the interests of the interested public. A successful example of civil initiative can be seen in the efforts to railroad the free access to information act. The alliance of the Civil Initiative for a Good Law, independent media, leaders of the Democratic Party and a portion of the MPs, along with the support on the part of the Prime Minister, has overcome the resistance and brought about success. The act was adopted in its original form. This can be taken as a hopeful predictor of more intense citizen participation in the shaping of an institutional environment that creates guarantees for the consolidation of democracy in Slovakia.

### **Political Parties of the Government Coalition: Present Status**

Internal splitting of the two strongest parties, SDK and SĎĽ, may be considered as the main source of the strain within the government coalition. This in turn complicates and inhibits cooperation between these parties in fulfilling the government program.

The lack of settled relationships within SDK (made up of representatives of five mother parties: KDH, DÚ, DS, SDSS and SZS) has resulted in a standstill between the so-called "coalition wing" (in particular KDH and DS that supported the return to five-coalition) and the Dzurinda's<sup>2</sup> "unionist" wing. In January 2000, Dzurinda's wing published a declaration offering SDK voters the "creation of a union of political streams, directions and personalities as an integration of the reform forces in Slovakia. This union may not be advantageous to small political parties and their representatives, but with certainty it will be advantageous to the citizen."

This declaration ended the futile negotiations between "unionists" and "coalitionists", however, it failed to reduce the tension in any aspect. This struggle for a share of power within the SDK contributed to the loss of the voters' support to this originally (and still) strongest government party. In spite of internal contradictions, the MP club of SDK proved its unity and stability at the parliament by supporting government suggestions. There is disproportion between the majority of MPs that support the platforms of the mother parties and the minority of those who declare themselves as SDK MPs but actually advocate the proclaimed SDKÚ. Also contributing to the problem is the significant share of SDKÚ members holding ministerial offices, which causes constant strains within the club.

Since 1998, the second strongest party of the government coalition, SĎĽ, has had a greater voter attrition rate than any other coalition party. Its supporters dropped from almost 15% to 5 percent (May 2000). The greatest drop was recorded after the former Vice-Chairman, Robert Fico, left the party and created a new one, Smer. SĎĽ voter dissatisfaction with the social and economic situation resulted in their supporting a politician who assumed the position of the "third" power and offered alternative policy. This drop in electoral preferences motivated a portion of the SĎĽ leadership to employ tactics of internal opposition within the government coalition. An example of such tactics was the request for reconstruction of the government, which was rejected by the other coalition partners. The aforementioned tactics of internal opposition could not improve the standing of the SĎĽ; it even caused the party much greater

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<sup>2</sup> Mikuláš Dzurinda, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic since November 1998.



problems. It destroyed the coalition partner's trust and did nothing to halt the drop of electoral preferences. The SDE situation is further complicated by the rivalry of two groups with differing attitudes to the way the party acts within the government.

## **The President**

The president, directly elected by the public, represents a stabilizing element of the political system. Although he has failed in his efforts to reconcile the coalition with the opposition, Rudolf Schuster has achieved acceptance as a non-partisan head of State even by the leaders of the present opposition parties. Still, it may be stated that the relationship between the representatives of the supreme constitutional institutions is of consensual nature, and the president, along with the Prime Minister, pursues a joint foreign-political orientation both at home and abroad. The stabilizing role of the president became even more pronounced during the recent life-threatening illness of Rudolf Schuster. The people became aware of what might happen in such a crisis. The importance of the stability of the presidential office was reflected by the drop of the national currency in response to R. Schuster's health.

## **Political Support through the Glasses of the Polls**

Naturally, support for the government coalition party at the mid-point of the electoral cycle is pronouncedly weaker than it was at the time of the elections. It is now showing a slightly decreasing trend. In addition to the aforementioned reasons, this also has been the result of the unpopular but unavoidable restrictive measures that have resulted in a soaring cost of living for a majority of the population. Another disappointing factor was the failure to address the establishment of fairness with respect to privatization. There is a lack of closure in the investigation of the abduction of M. Kováč jr., and the murder of R. Remiáš. The manifestations of clientelism that has become more apparent due to the many disputes within the SDK as well as through the activities of SDE have resulted in repugnance on the part of many original voters and led to the conclusion that "all politicians are alike".

HZDS has consistently ranked first in political preference polls. Its preferences oscillate around 27 percent. If, in any month, the respective polls' preferences approach 30 percent, the support to SNS drops. Since the reservoir of the potential support to the current opposition parties, HZDS and SNS does not exceed 37 percent, therefore increasing preferences to HZDS mean reduced preferences to SNS and vice versa. The support level to these parties has remained relatively the same since the last elections. This segment seems to represent some social and cultural constant within the distribution of the political and value-related orientations of the people in Slovakia. It also evokes worries in foreign observers who view it as a risk with respect to the stabilization of democracy in Slovakia. A specific explanation may be derived from a socio-demographic analysis of this segment. Statistically it is comprised of elderly people with a lower education level, from small settlements, i.e., from people whose perception of the world, attitudes and values were formed during the time of "socialism building". Political changes have caught them at an age where their flexibility to change is weak, both subjectively and objectively. Moreover, they represent that portion of the population that forms the majority of socio-economic "losers" after November 1989.

The only party of the government coalition (SDK, SMK, SDE and SOP) that could preserve its stable preferences of around 10 percent over long periods of time has been the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK). SMK consistently represents the most stable entity, both internally and externally. Most problems relate to polarized parties of the broad-spectrum coalition – the right-center SDK and the SDE at the opposite poles. A portion of SDK announced the arrival of the new party, SDKÚ, with M. Dzurinda as its leader. This new entity, identified mainly through the persons of its signatories, has been witnessing varying preferences within the interval of

10-14 percent. The original mother parties that did not agree with the "union" model and wished to preserve their identity have lost support. The KDH dropped to around the eligibility limit (e.g., FOCUS agency reported 5.3 percent, ÚVVM 4.6 percent, June 2000). Also, small parties (DS, DÚ, SZS, SDSS) oscillate between zero and 2 percent. The polls suggest that the leaders of the mother parties of the original SDK defend the legitimacy of refusing the "unionist" model of the internal SDK relationships or of merging with SDKÚ; on the other hand, the original SDK voters prefer the existence of a larger political entity to a number of smaller parties to the right of the center. SDE has been slightly better off, with its preferences in recent months oscillating around 6 percent. Simultaneously, this party experienced the most pronounced drop of its potential electorate support.

### **Fico's "SMER" – a New Phenomenon in the Political Scene**

The new party *Smer*, founded by R. Fico after he left SDE in November 1999, has consistently ranked second in political preference surveys, and has thus become an entity with a potentially strong coalition potential. After announcing the establishment of the new party, Fico refused to define its nature from the viewpoint of the known ideal and political models (social democracy, liberalism, conservatism). He stated that "rationalism and pragmatism will be the internal philosophy of the party". He presented the emerging entity as a non-standard formation, both with respect to its profile and the organizational structure.

The leader of *Smer* tries to approach the potential voters by accentuating topics that have traditionally attracted the interest of the public (unemployment, life standard, Roma issues, capital punishment). This approach allows him to take advantage of the politician without any governmental responsibilities who criticizes established parties. It resembles the "anti-establishment" of a party that focuses on the criticism of the system within which it operates. Criticism is directed toward both coalition and opposition parties. The analysis of the constituency of SMER suggests that this party acquires support from a portion of electorate of the former parties of the present government coalition, and from younger voters with higher education.

The major objective of this party is suggested by Fico's statement that "SMER must become part of the government", as well as by his claim that he is ready to talk to anybody who is open to collaboration. In this way, the "one-man" party builds its position of the "scale needle" and suggests that, in theory, it may make a contribution to the majority government and to both HZDS and the parties of the current government coalition.

Consolidation of democracy requires that the present opposition national-populist parties do not get into power at the next elections. This forces the present coalition parties to fuse on the anti-Mečiar platform, and gives them the unhealthy certainty that, in the absence of any other democratic alternative, the democratically oriented voters do not have any alternative choice. The existence of Fico's *Smer* is a warning for these parties that at least a change in the composition of the future government coalition is possible and that some of them may retire from it.

### **The Acting of the Opposition Parties within the Political System**

The opposition parties (HZDS and SNS) refuse to admit any share in the responsibility for the socio-economic problems and subsequent distortions caused by their activities in the past. They use all legal, though not always legitimate, means to cause obstructions at negotiations, be it at the parliament or during the investigation of criminal cases from the times of their government. Nevertheless, these parties cannot be considered as clear-cut anti-systemic parties, in spite of their destructive rhetoric. At its "transformation" convention in March 2000, HZDS declared its

transformation to a party of popular type, however there have actually been no principal changes: HZDS has remained a nationally-authoritarian formation of the leader type. The convention approved the Statutes, which even more strengthened the position of the chairman Vladimír Mečiar, and the position of the moderate wing advocates has become almost negligible. For several months, HZDS has been pursuing the idea of premature elections. With this objective in mind, it initiated a petition action for calling for a referendum on early elections; however, this idea has not met with a significant positive response in the public. Repeated polls suggest that the participation in the referendum would be rather low, about 30 percent only, which would render the referendum invalid (as of June 2000). Similarly, attempts to organize protest manifestations at district and regional towns evidently failed. V. Mečiar, the HZDS leader, apparently has enough energy to prevent opposition to form within the party, but he lacks the energy to lead the party. Due to his resignation of his MP's mandate, he does not have sufficient political space to make his activities visible. Therefore, he repeatedly and unsuccessfully has been inviting political parties to sit at a round table and suggesting the coalition give him a larger share on control powers. The coalition parties do not consider either of these efforts as legitimate.

The Slovak National Party remains the only party to accept HZDS as coalition partner. SNS and HZDS signed an agreement on cooperation some months ago. The agreement was more symbolic rather of any practical importance with respect to the activities of both parties.

### **Institution Building**

Taken from the viewpoint of formal rules, the existing institutions, laws and standards may be considered as sufficient preconditions for the consolidation of democracy. Other problems concern the level of informal standards that are part of "the rules of the game" accepted in both political and public life. Such unwritten rules that represent barriers on the way towards socio-economic transformation including the traditional form of "immoral familism" or, more generally, the standard of the "immoral palship". This informal standard that is significantly widespread in Slovakia means preference of personal links over competence criteria in making decisions on personnel issues. The preference of the personal link criterion over the qualification criterion is a strong barrier to reforms and changes in all areas (accreditation of regional universities, public administration reform, State administration reorganization, etc.).

It will be the amendment to the Constitution, expected to be adopted in autumn 2000, that will show the actual effect of the efficiency of the cooperation of political parties. The purpose of the changes will be to make a contribution towards a better balancing of the regulations concerning the powers of the State authorities and to strengthen the democratic contents of the Constitution. The amendment to the basic law of the Slovak Republic introduces the office of the public protector of civil rights (ombudsman). It will adjust the powers of the president, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Audit Authority, of other public power authorities. It will also regulate the immunity of MPs, and the compatibility of Slovakia's legal system with international legal standards, etc. The reform of the public administration will represent a significant element in further development, focusing on the establishment of the concept of a modern, democratic and decentralized State. In this respect, the most significant barriers are found within the ruling coalition itself. The process of the railroading of this concept is also an example of how consensus has to be sought from a variety of interests and how allies can be acquired, not only on the party basis, but also from NGOs.

The objective of decentralization and transfer of powers to the local and regional level based on a rational concept of reforms is not to weaken the functioning of the State. On the contrary, the objective is to manage public matters more efficiently and, in the end-effect, decrease expenditures. At the same time, it is desirable that the State takes the initiative when the market

forces alone or the private sector do not generate demand for the building of institutions necessary for a decent functioning of a market economy. The specific recommendation for Slovakia is: it is not the State's duty to control production enterprises, banks, insurance companies or public law enterprises. The State has to facilitate an efficient, qualified and well-financed judicial system and provide strong authorities capable of regulating financial markets and natural monopolies. A good system of social insurance and a modern system of educational support are also needed.

The analysis of the political conditions for sustainable human development shows that Slovakia needs a social agreement of relevant political stakeholders concerning the necessary reforms. No significant advancement or successful catching up with what has been missed in the process of the Euro-Atlantic integration can be expected unless politicians stop irresponsible hammering out of political capital by turning down necessary but unpopular measures.

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## Economic Development and the Labor Market

Economic development is considered a basic prerequisite for long-term and good quality human development worldwide. Whenever an economic situation is analyzed, two levels have to be accounted for: first, quantitative parameters – statistical figures describing development and the status quo; and second, qualitative characteristics that determine future trends in the development of the economy. Frequently, optima arising from the monitoring of the above levels are time-shifted and it may be difficult for a lay person, or even an expert, to identify the corresponding causative relationships. Marked improvements in qualitative parameters frequently need several months or even years to appear after effective structural reforms have been implemented, and vice versa. No worsening may become immediately apparent even after a dramatic worsening of the quality of economic policies.

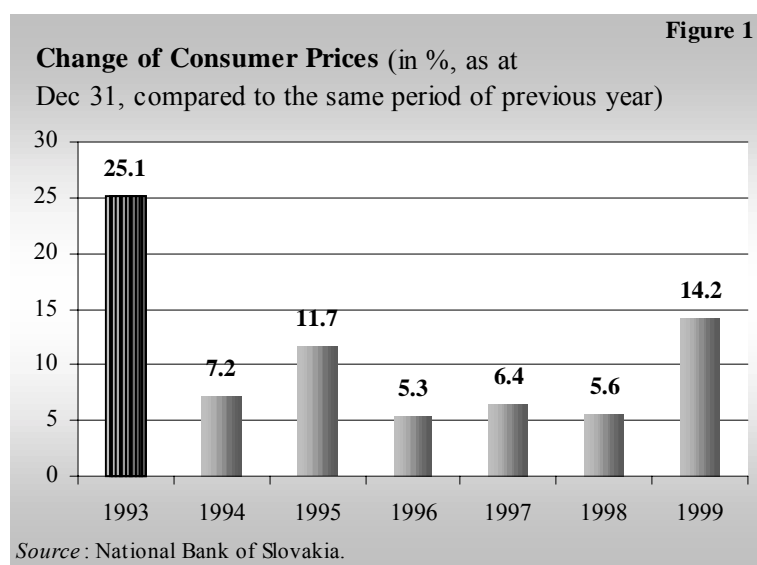
In the early 1990s, economic reform was launched relatively aggressively in Slovakia and this enabled completion of its key components within several years. Due to a variety of objective and subjective reasons, the economic and social reforms were slowed down or even brought to a halt in mid-90s. During the period following the "Velvet Revolution", economic policies made a contribution towards better stability and high rates of economic growth that were maintained for several years. However, the blocking of reforms resulted in a strongly imbalanced state and a slow-down of growth rates. The end of the decade therefore has been and is marked by attempts to stabilize the economy, to complete the principal reforms, and to start new, more demanding reforms. These efforts were clearly voiced in the government's program declaration and became evident in its first steps. This diminished towards the end of 1999, which was the new government's first whole year of functioning. The dynamics of reforms were gradually slowed down by the growing political strains between the coalition parties as well as by the growing problems associated with the implementation of reforms. Naturally, what should be seen behind the behavior of the political elites are effects of reforms on various social layers of the population, on the various regions, as well as responses of Trade Unions, associations of business people and other interest groups. These statements can be supported by figures showing the growth of gross domestic product (Table 1).

Table 1	
Gross Domestic Product GDP <sup>a</sup> (at constant prices)	
Year	GDP growth (%)
1994	4.9
1995	6.7
1996	6.2
1997	6.2
1998	4.1
1999	1.9

*Note:* a. GDP revised by ESA 95 methodology. Data for 1994-1996 are final; data for 1997-1999 are preliminary.

*Source:* Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

A similar view can also be obtained by monitoring the development of inflation and unemployment rates, the State Budget deficit, gross foreign indebtedness, influx of foreign direct investments, or other parameters. The soaring of consumer prices in 1999 was mainly due to increases of some regulated prices that had been postponed for several years (e.g., the prices of electricity remained unchanged from 1993 to 1998). A moderate reduction of inflation rates can be realistically expected for 2000, with a naturally positive effect on the value of the population's savings and thus on development opportunities.



The development of *unemployment rates* has been unfavorable. They surprisingly showed a long-term growth despite relatively high economic growth rates. A more comprehensive analysis is required to determine the underlying causes of this phenomenon. Of particular interest is the strong negative impact of long-term high unemployment rates on the quality of human development. High unemployment rates and other characteristics became visible during the year and have raised worries.

**Table 2**

**Basic Indicators of the Slovak Labor Market**

Indicator	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>Employment</b> (% change in comparison to previous year)							
Registered (corporate reporting)	-2.6	-1.8	2.2	0.8	0.2	-0.4	-2.2
Labor force surveys	-	-	1.7	3.6	-0.9	-0.3	-3.0
<b>Unemployment rate</b> (%), annual average)							
Registered <sup>a</sup>	12.7	14.4	13.8	12.6	13.0	14.5	18.2
Labor force surveys	21.2	13.7	13.1	11.3	11.8	12.5	16.2
<b>Average monthly wage</b>							
Nominal (% change in comparison to previous year)	18.4	17.0	14.3	13.3	13.1	9.6	7.2
Real (index 1989 = 100)	72.8	75.0	78.2	83.8	89.2	91.8	88.2
<b>Number of unemployed per 1 job vacancy</b>	48.0	28.5	21.5	23.4	18.0	38.6	93.8

*Note:* Data include total numbers of registered unemployed. When considering unemployed who are able to take a job immediately, unemployment rates for 1997 and 1998 decrease to 13.7% and 17.3%, respectively.

*Source:* Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the Slovak Republic; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic; National Labor Office.

The average number of working people in 1999 dropped 3 percent below 1998 numbers. The numbers of persons working in selected sectors (according to NACE) in the individual years within 1994-1999 reached the highest value in 1996. Between 1994 and the end of 1999, the number of persons working in the sector of agriculture decreased 26.7%; those working in the sector of mineral production dropped 13.1%. On the other hand, the most pronounced increase within the period of 1995-1999 concerned numbers of persons working in the financial sector (47.7%).

During the recent period, unemployment became the most vulnerable issue in economic development. The unemployment rate reached 14.5 percent (or 12.5 percent according to labor force surveys) as early as 1998. This unfavorable trend continued in 1999, with unemployment rates reaching 20.1% by the end of the year (or 19.2 percent if only those are considered who are able to take up a job immediately).

The average duration that the unemployed were registered with Labor Offices showed a marked growth from 11.6 months in 1998, to 14.2 months in 1999. By the end of 1999, the long-term unemployed made up 43 percent of all unemployed persons, the subgroup of those unemployed for more than two years representing 22 percent of all unemployed.

Table 3

Structure of Unemployed by Duration of Unemployment

	Number of Months in Registration						Long-term Unemployed		
	-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13+	Total	13-18	19-24	25+
As at Dec 31, 1998									
Total	24.8	17.6	11.8	7.6	38.2	100.0	11.4	6.2	20.6
Males	28.5	17.4	11.3	7.8	35.0	100.0	11.4	5.9	17.7
Females	20.4	17.9	12.4	7.4	41.9	100.0	11.4	6.6	23.9
As at Dec 31, 1999									
Total	20.6	14.5	12.9	8.8	43.2	100.0	13.4	7.9	21.9
Males	22.8	14.0	12.3	9.4	41.5	100.0	14.1	7.7	19.7
Females	17.8	15.1	13.7	8.0	45.4	100.0	12.5	8.1	24.8

*Source: Report on the Social..., (2000)*

In 1999, the number of recipients receiving unemployment support reached 130,000. That was 27,000 more persons than in the preceding year, representing a 27 percent growth. Also, the average time during which unemployment support was paid increased from 5.6 months in 1998 to 6.0 months in 1999. In October 1999, an amendment to the Unemployment Act was adopted to reduce the maximum duration of support payments from 12 months down to 9 months. This amendment also reduced the maximum amount of support from SKK 5,400 to SKK 4,845. It also reduced the calculation of the support base from 60% to 50% for the first three months, and from 50% to 45% thereafter. The average amount of the support paid by the end of 1999 was SKK 3,496.

**Table 4**

**Registered Unemployed Receiving Support in Unemployment (as % of total unemployed)**

Indicator	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	34.8	24.9	21.9	26.3	24.9	27.0	26.9
of which: Males	18.5	13.2	11.0	13.6	13.2	15.2	16.1
Females	16.2	11.7	10.8	12.7	11.7	11.8	10.8

*Note: The values are based on average monthly numbers of registered unemployed.*

*Source: Report on the Social..., (2000)*

The increasing unemployment, and in particular long-term unemployment, represents a burden on resources of the National Labor Office and also on State Budget funds allocated for social assistance. This is due to the Social Assistance Act that guarantees basic conditions of life to all citizens. This means that an individual who has been de-registered from the records of job seekers will receive social assistance benefits if in material distress. Within 1993-1999, this benefit was paid to 37% to 48% of the registered unemployed, i.e., an average of 122,000 to 237,000 unemployed people in any month. For the time being, the unemployed have a share of

as much as 90% of the applicants for social assistance benefits due to what is referred to as material distress.

The average numbers of social assistance benefits recipients from among registered unemployed in any month in 1999 represented 237,000 people. This is an increase of 40.1% compared to the preceding year and it represents the steepest growth since 1994.

**Table 5**

**Structure of Unemployed Individuals By Categories of Social Protection**

Indicator	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Unemployed in total	323,216	366,168	349,821	324,278	336,661	379,466	485,202
of which:							
Recipients of support in unemployment	112,409	91,143	76,590	85,241	83,939	102,491	130,339
Social assistance benefits recipients	121,835	158,329	157,570	141,762	143,386	169,039	236,811
Recipients of financial assistance in motherhood <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-	-	3,223	3,483	3,865
Temporarily unable to work <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-	-	11,311	16,045	19,537

*Note:* The values are based on monthly average numbers of registered unemployed. a. Only data for 1997-99 available.

*Source:* Report on the Social..., (2000)

Of the overall (average monthly) numbers of social assistance recipients due to material distress, the registered unemployed made up 71-91 percent in the individual years between 1993-1999, with the highest proportions being reached toward the end of the period analyzed.

#### Box 1

##### Public Works

Since July 2000, long-term unemployment has been dealt with through the *Institute of Public (Community) Works*. This institute of welfare services may be used by municipalities to offer work to unemployed individuals, e.g., cleaning of works in public areas, buildings administered by municipalities, etc. In this way, long-term unemployed get jobs and have the opportunity to regain working habits, though being aware that this is only for a limited period of time. In addition, a positive aspect for the unemployed is the fact that he/she will be entitled to apply for unemployment support as soon as the employment is terminated. There are many critics of these works who mainly argue that the job offered is just temporary. They compare it to a merry-go-round: the individual finds him/herself in the same environment eventually. What is being criticized is the volume of funds spent on these purposes – the critics call these work projects as the most expensive means of cleaning public areas. National Labor Office data from August 2000 suggests a drop in the share of long-term unemployed from 50 to 45.7 percent compared to the previous month. As of August 31, 2000, the overall number of unemployed dropped by 47,986 (17.51%) to 226,045 long-term unemployed.

The hitherto experience suggests that works in the public interest are more efficient in disclosing black market employment than Labor Office procedures. This is mainly the case in villages where people live in less anonymity. The Labor Office provides the mayors of the municipalities with lists of long-term unemployed people, and based on the interest of the unemployed in part time work, mayors can find out quickly who is working under the table. As an example, a district on the outskirts of Košice may be mentioned where 1,200 unemployed could have been de-registered on this basis (SME, September 14, 2000).

The benefits directly related to the social situation of the unemployed and/or their families represented the highest amount paid in the framework of social assistance. In 1999, registered unemployed were paid SKK 8.790 billion in this social assistance benefits from the State Budget funds, i.e., 92.2 percent of the overall volume of benefits paid to recipients in material



distress. Moreover, the unemployed received SKK 5.339 billion from Slovak National Labor Office in support in unemployment; in other words, SKK 14.129 billion were directly paid to the unemployed, with State contributing 62.2% towards this amount. The volume of financial means, paid directly to the unemployed increased 45% over the preceding year.

Unemployment rates also affected parameters that characterize the opportunities of the population to be materially secured. End-consumption by households grew only 0.5%. Real wages were 3.1% smaller in 1999 than the preceding year. Average real income per household member dropped 4.8%, while expenditures were 6.2% smaller.

1999 was expected to be the year of economic stabilization that would bring about conditions for the implementation of structural reforms. These, in turn, were expected to bring about both short-term and long-term economic growth. The 1998 autumn elections were expected to introduce additional changes. The new government was expected to generate potential by not only implementing more aggressive unpopular measures, but also by trying to improve the image of Slovakia abroad and by severing the tight links between politics and economics. This was expected to result in greater accessibility to foreign capital markets, as well as to strengthen the equal opportunities principle.

- As far as macroeconomic stabilization is concerned, it may be stated, with some reservations, that the economic policy did not fail. A so-called small package of remedial measures was adopted in May of 1999. These measures were expected to result first in stabilization and later in economic growth. The trade balance deficit could be reduced to approximately 50%, and public administration management could also demonstrate a better discipline.

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**Table 6**

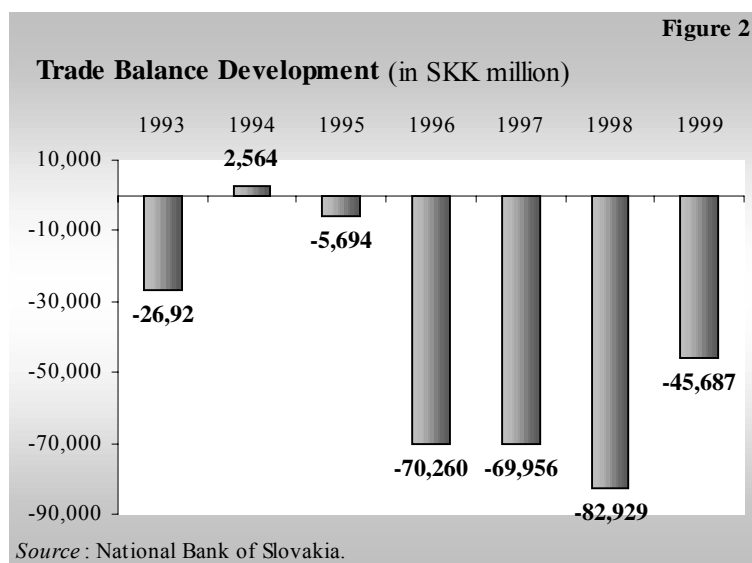
<b>Public Administration Balance (as % of GDP)</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1993	-6,4
1994	-1,6
1995	2,0
1996	-1,6
1997	-4,6
1998	-4,8
1999	-3,6

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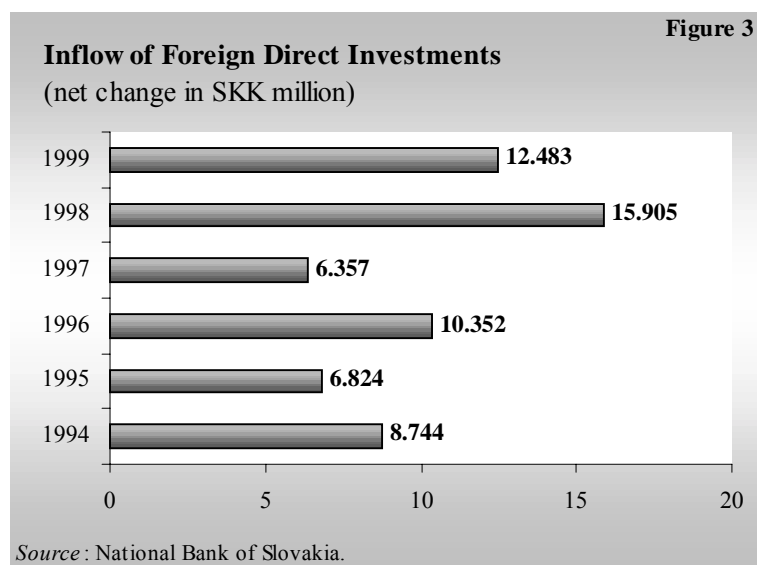
*Source:* Ministry of Finance of the SR (Pravda, April 11, 2000)

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The trade balance deficit during the period of critical shortage of foreign direct investments illustrates the turn in the deepening destabilization of the economy (Figure 2).



- The rates, as well as the quality of structural reforms, were significantly slower in 1999 than expected by both lay people and the expert public. The government reduced corporate tax rates from 40 to 29 percent, with the expectation of producing higher economic growth rates, better employment rates, and consequently a better payment discipline. Also in 1999, the ambitious project of recovering Slovakia's enterprises, in particular banks, was launched. The so-called bad credits are being gradually centralized, and large State banks are becoming stronger with respect to their capital. The project will require about SKK 100 billion, thus becoming the largest reform step of the present government. The privatization of key Slovak banks is expected to be completed by 2001. Important changes in the legislative framework, with regard to business, were introduced in 1999 and 2000. Among them, accent was laid on mainly the amendment to the Bankruptcy and Settlement Act. Past restructuring of Slovakia's enterprises resulted in growing unemployment rates and, moreover, its pace was too slow (Johnson, 2000). In its May session, the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the Freedom of Information Act. The act is expected to bring about (together with other steps such as privatization of some natural monopolies) a substantial reduction of corruption and improved transparency.
- The international image of Slovakia could be significantly improved. The numerous positive statements by prominent politicians from OECD Member States suggested this view. The substantial reduction of a so-called risk surcharge for trading in bonds of Slovakia (conditions were created for yields of Slovakia's Eurobonds dropping several times during the year) was also a positive sign. The improved international perception of Slovakia, however, could not be translated into an improved influx of foreign direct investments (although the fact should be accounted for that the growth of foreign investments in 1998 was evidently the result of property sales to foreigners due to worries about the outcome of the elections).



- The initial euphoria, which was based on promises concerning a draconian restriction of clientelism in the society, was followed by some disappointment. Polls have shown intensified corruption in Slovakia and public access to information did not improve. On one hand, there were police investigations of some business people suspected of engaging in an illegal practice. On the other hand, there was a growing accumulation of cases of suspected new political-economic associations. Again, the process of the creation of a society providing everybody with equal opportunities could not be satisfactorily launched in 1999.

It can be stated that "simple" reforms in Slovakia are basically completed. There are no significant differences in the economic performance of Slovakia and other Central European countries. Data on Slovakia's 1996 level of regional gross domestic product (GDP) can be derived from results presented by the Slovak Statistical Office.<sup>3</sup> Per capita regional GDP for Slovakia, expressed in terms of the purchasing power, reached PPP\$ 8,100 in 1996, representing 45% of the average level achieved in the European Union (PPP\$ 18,100). The average level for Central European countries was PPP\$ 7,000. The per capita regional gross domestic product value for Slovakia ranks fourth among Central European countries, behind Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The highest level of per capita GDP of all Central European countries was recorded for the region of Prague in the Czech Republic (PPP\$ 21,000), which is 120% of the European Union average and 311% of the average for Central European countries. This is followed by the region of Bratislava (PPP\$ 17,500), representing 97% of the European Union average, and 250% of the average for Central European countries. The performance of Slovakia's economy has exceeded its pre-transformation level by 1.5%<sup>4</sup>.

Slovakia stands at the beginning of a new stage of changes, characterized by more sophisticated politics, a slower course, and demands put on know-how. The most important changes include the restructuring of the banking sector, the reform of the business environment, changes in the education and health sectors, the public State administration, improvement of transparency, harmonization with the OECD system, and integration into the OECD and NATO. The year 1999 was a period during which unhealthy economic trends of the preceding period gradually faded away. It became the year of gradually decreasing hopes for an expedient restructuring of the economy. All reforms will apparently require a broader societal consensus that can be achieved in two ways. The first way is by creating a mechanism that will activate key entities

<sup>3</sup> Data from 1996 were used to allow for comparison with the regions of Prague and Bratislava.

<sup>4</sup> Okáli – Gabrielová – Hlavatý – Morvay – Outrata: *Overall Characterization of the Development of the Economy During the Preceding Year*. Hospodárske noviny, April 19, 2000.

outside of the government, such as associations of entrepreneurs, Trade Unions, and other non-governmental organizations. The second way is by waiting for the time when there will be no possibility other than a draconian change. 1999 did not eliminate any opportunity for implementation of the first variant. The year 2000 could become a positive breakthrough with respect to the trend analyzed.

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## Training and Education

The National Human Development Report Slovak Republic 1999 concluded in the subchapter on education that the sector had been able to maintain the principal functionality despite rather painful financial and economic restrictions. It also concluded that this functionality would only survive for a short period of time for continuing the trend of providing for economic viability. The report also contained a rather imperative prediction that persistent societal disinterest in vital needs and the associated marginalization of seeking solutions would cause this area of human development to **collapse**.

This perspective characterizes the development during the previous year. The following preparatory activities have been launched: draft concept of training in educational development in Slovakia, the development of universities and colleges, draft law on the financing of schools, draft law on public service, suggestion to delegate powers in the education sector linked to the decentralization and upgrading of Slovakia's public service after 2001, etc., and the implementation of some partial measures. Possible measures included the rationalization of the secondary schools network as of the next school year and of the primary schools network as of the subsequent year, ongoing pedagogical verification of innovative trends concerning the contents, organization and forms of training and education as well as in the framework of international cooperation, a legal amendment extending the powers of self-governing school boards, etc. **There has been no principal breakthrough** in the critical area of financing. This has been suggested by a comparison of the budget for the education sector (except for colleges and universities) approved for 2000 with the data for 1999. Individual chapters of the budget for Slovakia's regions concern key parameters, such as current expenditures and wages and salaries of the employees.

Table 7

**Financing of Pre-School Facilities, Primary Schools, Grammar Schools and Secondary Vocational Schools: Budgetary Data** (in SKK thous.)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Wages and Salaries</i>	<i>Current Expenditures</i>	<i>of which Debt Reduction</i>
<i>Bratislava</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,003,001</i>	<i>1,761,524</i>	<i>58,362</i>
	Approved for 2000	973,861	1,637,040	0
<i>Trnava</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>979,616</i>	<i>1,623,623</i>	<i>47,607</i>
	Approved for 2000	939,410	1,525,404	0
<i>Trenčín</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,034,285</i>	<i>1,709,726</i>	<i>46,913</i>
	Approved for 2000	990,603	1,628,592	0
<i>Nitra</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,213,120</i>	<i>2,059,069</i>	<i>79,866</i>
	Approved for 2000	1,169,301	1,903,952	0
<i>Žilina</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,156,963</i>	<i>1,984,632</i>	<i>72,092</i>
	Approved for 2000	1,076,917	1,692,319	0
<i>Banská Bystrica</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,170,825</i>	<i>1,958,233</i>	<i>110,905</i>
	Approved for 2000	1,146,515	1,834,362	0
<i>Prešov</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,440,800</i>	<i>2,478,686</i>	<i>155,073</i>
	Approved for 2000	1,440,754	2,369,646	0
<i>Košice</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>1,442,801</i>	<i>2,464,271</i>	<i>169,960</i>
	Approved for 2000	1,320,600	2,134,097	0
<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>Is for 1999</i>	<i>9,319,210</i>	<i>16,039,764</i>	<i>587,778</i>
	Approved for 2000	9,057,961	14,725,412	0

Source: The Education Sector at Regional and District Level in Figures. In: *Teachers' Newspaper* No. 21/2000 pp. 5-8

It is evident from the above data that, according to the approved budget, the national average of expenditures on wages and current expenditures makes up SKK 10,092 and SKK 16,090 per learner respectively. After subtracting so-called fixed costs (rents, amenities) from the budget,

what remains is SKK 449 per learner for all other current expenditures, which the school or the teaching institution is expected to provide for.

### **Analysis of the Development and the Status Quo**

Let us look at the actual status of the individual segments of the school system. The development of pre-school establishments in Slovakia could be stabilized. Recently, the unfavorable economic situation has resulted in a continuing reduction of public funds directed towards the training and education sector. The number of kindergartens and teachers has remained relatively constant. But, the number of children accepted (in absolute terms) has been reduced, albeit at a slower rate than the demographic trends. This is confirmed by the discretely growing proportions of pre-school children attending teaching institutions (78.67%, 82.66% and 85.39% respectively in 1997, 1998 and 1999), and – in particular – the proportions of children attending preschool establishments prior to the mandatory school attendance (84.25%, 87.82%, and 89.98% in respectively 1997, 1998 and 1999). In this respect, Slovakia ranks with other leading countries in Europe.

In 1999, a curious situation occurred in the primary schools. For almost 10 years, Slovakia had an Act that required nine years of school attendance that was enforced for the entire population of primary school children. The curious thing was that this happened during the final year specified by the Act. Since that time, an amendment to the Act extended mandatory school attendance to 10 years, effective in 2000. This requirement has affected the performance and thus the statistical parameters for both primary and secondary schools (increments and/or decrements of the corresponding subpopulations). A significant trend of the preceding period, "premature" separation of school-age youth, goes on through expansion of grammar schools to an 8-year study program. This program was originally intended for gifted learners. Approximately 23 percent of all grammar school students have already enrolled in this form of high school studies. Despite the demographic reduction within the primary school system, the trend of "opening shears" has prevailed. The number of learners drops. But, the number of primary schools increases. It is quite evident that this trend cannot last much longer, especially because of the currently unfavorable economic situation.

Secondary schools, in particular the system of vocational training, has been under unpleasant pressure. Legislation failed to standardize founder competencies under the umbrella of the education sector. But, the actual preparatory work for rationalization (read: reduction) of the secondary schools network has started. The unpleasant factor is that operation costs, rather than issues concerning the quality of school, have become the decision-making criterion.

A brief commentary is deserved on the Tables that provide an overview on the structure of Slovakia's education system. The Tables vividly illustrate the typical elements of Slovakia's education system:

- The prevailing dominance of the State system on education is reflected in the overall numbers of schools and educational establishments, as well as in the shares of learners attending the different types and kinds of schools;
- The high level of openness in all streams of secondary schools, colleges, and universities to the population of girls, suggesting that there has been no gender-based "educational" discrimination in Slovakia. The opposite is the case: we may speak of a growing feminization of some less traditional streams (e.g., besides nursing schools);
- The prevailing and increasing feminization of school faculties for both State and non-State schools that will not be stopped at the gates to universities and colleges. The most recent period of time is referred to as the "feminization decade" – with the smallest proportions of women being at secondary vocational establishments for apprentices (59.5%) and the highest ones at primary schools (83.5%);

- The prevailing success in the comparable numbers of both female and male students that graduate in all streams of secondary schools, universities, and colleges.

Table 8

**The Network of Schools and Teaching Institutions in 1999/2000**

<b>Type of Institution</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>of which Girls</b>
<i>Kindergartens</i>	<b>3,314</b>	<b>161,863</b>	<b>74,629</b>
of which: state	3,294	161,173	74,227
private	11	336	165
church	9	354	187
<b>Primary schools</b>	<b>2,482</b>	<b>672,042</b>	<b>327,756</b>
of which: state	2,386	645,720	314,643
private	4	174	70
church	92	26,148	13,043
<b>Grammar schools</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>76,662</b>	<b>43,062</b>
of which: state	156	64,224	36,161
private	17	2,616	1,281
church	36	9,822	5,620
<b>Vocational schools</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>89,542</b>	<b>52,906</b>
of which: state	317	85,217	49,844
private	27	3,572	2,392
church	4	753	670
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>102,896</b>	<b>38,494</b>
of which: state	356	100,453	37,431
private	10	1,549	785
church	5	894	278
<b>Health care schools</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9,528</b>	<b>8,475</b>
of which: state	24	8,231	7,252
private	0	0	0
church	7	1,297	1,223
<b>Special schools</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>30,736</b>	<b>13,279</b>
of which: state	374	30,472	13,170
private	2	24	11
church	5	240	98
<b>Universities <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>18</b>	<b>117,432</b>	<b>60,214</b>
of which: full-time		88,192	42,859
part-time		29,240	17,355

Note: a. State universities and colleges only, without students-foreign nationals.

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education of the Slovak Republic 1999, Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education, Bratislava, (2000).

The following Table 9 presents 1999 data for the key types of educational institutions. The data provides a clear-cut picture of the overall numbers of teachers and the feminization rates within Slovakia's mainstream system of education during 1999. It should be mentioned that there are also other pedagogical workers (educators, wardens, masters of vocational training, etc.) as well as non-pedagogical staff participating directly in the process of training and education besides the teachers in the school system.

Table 9

**Teachers in the Network of Schools and Teaching Institutions in Slovakia in 1999**

Type of Institution	State		Private		Church		Total	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
<b>Kindergartens</b>	15,743	-	30	-	34	-	15,807	-
<i>of which females</i>	15,743	-	30	-	34	-	15,807	-
<b>Primary schools</b>	39,173	2,326	29	15	1,748	175	40,950	2,516
<i>of which females</i>	32,698	1,011	23	8	1,434	83	34,155	1,102
<b>Grammar schools</b>	5,173	636	220	163	772	201	6,165	1,000
<i>of which females</i>	3,786	333	163	104	577	105	4,526	542
<b>Vocational schools</b>	8,916	1,605	295	339	89	52	9,300	1,996
<i>of which females</i>	5,907	837	221	221	74	30	6,202	1,088
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	5,749	956	88	56	45	22	5,882	1034
<i>of which females</i>	3,746	506	61	30	25	9	3,832	545
<b>Special schools</b>	4,276	128	5	-	56	-	4,337	128
<i>of which females</i>	3,594	93	4	-	52	-	3,650	93
<b>Health care schools</b>	747	973	-	-	137	100	884	1,037
<i>of which females</i>	659	621	-	-	121	58	780	679
<b>Primary schools/arts</b>	3,434	75	5	-	56	-	3,498	856
<i>of which females</i>	2,419	59	4	-	52	-	2,461	543
<b>Universities</b>	9,049	2,085	-	-	-	-	9,049	2,085
<i>of which females</i>	3,514	660	-	-	-	-	3,514	660

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic 1999, Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education, Bratislava, (2000).

## Training, Graduates and Employment

Let us now look at the relationship between education and employment. One of the marked parameters of the efficiency of the educational system is how graduates of secondary schools are able to access and function in the labor market. On the other hand, new school graduates are known to be among those at highest risk for entry into the labor market. Unfortunately, Slovakia at present lacks any strategic "planning" to deal with preventive monitoring of employment needs in accordance with both present and future population development, the structure of regional economies, job structures by the individual sectors, expected needs of labor, retraining, etc. As a result, Slovakia's education system has little or no pressure to provide for feedback information on employment opportunities for school graduates. Most Regional Offices in Slovakia (the dominant founders of State secondary schools) do not monitor registries of unemployed graduates. The economy's sectors, agriculture, or associations of production and consumption cooperatives do not follow the fate of graduates. Even the National Labor Office and the Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education do not have the necessary comprehensive information available. The following tables provide a picture of the current situation.

Table 10

**Secondary School Graduates, 1998/1999 (regular and evening courses together)**

Type of Institution	State		Private		Church		Total	
	Total	Females	Total	Females	Total	Females	Total	Females
Grammar schools	13,791	8,010	548	310	1,297	780	15,636	9,100
Vocational schools	26,829	15,916	1,152	787	211	189	28,242	16,892
Health care schools	3,857	3,382	-	-	495	467	4,352	3,849
Special schools	1,111	437	-	-	-	-	1,111	437



Apprenticeships	44,659	17,710	915	421	344	128	45,918	18,259
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Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic 1999, Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education, Bratislava, (2000).

Before going into details about employment of graduates, it would be appropriate to show data on secondary school graduates enrolling directly in colleges and universities.

**Table 11**

**Fresh Secondary School Graduates Enrolling in Colleges and Universities**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Admitted</b>	<b>% of Graduates</b>
Grammar schools	15,636	9,569	61%
Vocational schools	32,594	6,109	19%
Apprenticeships	45,918	1,002	2%

Source: Internal Documents of the Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education, Bratislava, January 2000.

If unemployment rates are considered to be the share of unemployed secondary school graduates on the overall numbers of secondary school graduates, the highest unemployment rates in the Slovak Republic appears to be for graduates of secondary vocational schools (47%), followed by graduates of secondary vocational establishments for apprentices (42%). The "best off" (relatively) are graduates of grammar schools with "only" 25.1% unemployment. This countrywide data is detailed by individual regions in Table 12.

**Table 12**

**Comparison of Unemployment Rates of Secondary School Graduates (% , 1998/1999)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Unemployed Graduates of GrS</b>	<b>Unemployed Graduates of VoS</b>	<b>Unemployed Graduates of Ap</b>	<b>Unemployed Graduates of SeS</b>
Bratislava	12.9	21.6	24.3	20.6
Trnava	24.3	42.8	51.6	42.8
Trenčín	25.9	36.5	46.7	38.3
Nitra	29.3	43.5	52.8	44.5
Žilina	29.1	45.4	48.8	44.1
Banská Bystrica	25.1	40.2	45.9	39.8
Prešov	29.4	51.4	57.3	49.9
Košice	29.9	49.9	51.9	46.9
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>40.9</b>

Note: GrS - Grammar schools. VoS – Vocational schools. Ap – Apprenticeships. SeS – Secondary schools in total.

Source: Internal documents of the Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education, Bratislava, January 2000.

## **The Education System on the Background of the EU Integration Process**

During 1999, Slovakia's process for EU integration intensified with respect to the education system. Various organizations are involved in the process. The SR/EU Association Council, the highest joint board of the Slovak Republic and the European Union, represents the institutional level of the EU relationship, in terms of the European Agreement. It is in charge of supervising the performance of the Agreement. Issues on implementation of the European Agreement are handled by The *Joint Parliamentary Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the European Parliament*, which includes the *SR/EU Association Committee*, *8 association subcommittees*, and *29 working groups of the negotiation team* with representatives of the central authorities of the State administration and professionals at the expert level.

*Working Group No.18 – Education, Vocational Training, and Youth* deals with specific tasks concerning the education system and the process of EU integration. All decisions of the Slovak Government under No.50 of January 20, 1999 (Schedule of Tasks Arising from the Regular Report of the European Commission on the Preparedness of Slovakia for EU Membership) concerning the sector of education have been fulfilled to meet the 1999 deadline. The decisions included a return to the issuance of bilingual report cards, adoption of legislation providing for use of languages of ethnic minorities, and rationalization of the integration structure. All this was positively assessed by the regular EC Report of October 13, 1999. A critical situation

concerning the staff, however, puts at risk the fulfillment of the ongoing task to harmonize the generally binding legal regulations in the system of education with EU legislation. Standards for only 400 out of a total of 830 selected occupations have been drafted to enable comparison of qualifications acquired by vocational training, as adopted by the Resolution of the European Council. In Slovakia, 7 different ministries are responsible for vocational training and education, which makes inter-sector coordination and adjustment of the pedagogical documents difficult.

Closely connected with the integration process is the comparison of expenditures in the sector of education and training by developed European countries and Slovakia. Since statistical data from other countries are time-shifted, total public expenditures by EU Member States at all levels can be compared based on average

#### Box 2 EU Programs in the Area of Education

Slovakia's participation in community programs in the area of education and training of young people – including *Socrates*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, and *Youth for Europe III*, as well as their subprograms, made possible by resolution No. 1/98 of the SR/EU Association Council of 3 March, 1998 – have been assessed positively. The objective of these programs has been direct participation of Slovakia's teaching institutions and organizations for the youth, State administration and the social partners in international EU programs. Slovakia paid for these programs in 1999 as a contribution from the State Budget amounting to EUR 2,309,430, with a portion of the contribution (making up EUR 1,989,430) being covered from PHARE funds. Since the associated countries are not expected to have separate budgets for the individual programs for the second stage of the community programs for 2000-2006 as has been the case so far, criteria for the quality of the submitted projects shall have to be more stringent so that Slovakia will be able to draw down contributed funds.

shares on gross domestic product (GDP) for 1995 (EU) and for the period of 1995-98 (Slovakia). Table 13 confirms that Slovakia's flow of public funds into the education sector were constantly restricted. The table also confirms the deviation from the Slovak Government's declared program goals *"...to gradually increase funds intended to secure the education sector to achieve a share on GDP comparable with EU Member States"*.

Table 13

#### Public Expenditures on Education in Slovakia 1995-1998 (as % of GDP)

Year	Total	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Tertiary Education	Other (pre-school)
1995	5.2	1.5	1.2	0.9	1.6 (0.5)
1996	5.0	1.5	1.2	0.8	1.5 (0.5)
1997	4.8	1.4	1.2	0.9	1.3 (0.4)
1998	4.6	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.3 (0.4)

Source: Internal document for the meeting of the Slovak Government, based on Resolution No. 671 of August 11, 1999.

**Table 14**

**Public Expenditures on Education in Developed European Countries 1995** (as % of GDP)

Country	Total	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Tertiary Education
Belgium	5.7	1.2	2.7	1.2
Denmark	8.0	1.7	3.2	1.9
France	6.0	1.2	3.0	1.1
Netherlands	5.2	1.2	2.1	1.6
Austria	5.6	1.2	2.7	1.1
Finland	7.3	1.8	2.7	2.1
Sweden	7.8	2.0	3.1	2.2
Norway	7.5	2.3	1.7	2.0
EU	5.2	1.0	2.7	1.1

*Source:* Internal document for the meeting of the Slovak Government, based on Resolution No. 671 of August 11, 1999.

At the first glance, 1995 levels of total expenditures (percentages of GDP) were similar, but their internal structure was different. EU Member States spent 4.8 percent of their respective GDP on primary, secondary and tertiary education while Slovakia spent only 3.6 percent. Conversely, EU countries spent 0.4 percent of their GDP on other education-related areas, including pre-school education, while Slovakia spent 1.6 percent (which included 0.5 percent on pre-school education). This is attributable to the fact that Slovakia's other expenditures on education includes expenditures for catering, accommodation, and a portion of education sector expenditures for State administration.

### Quality of Life and the System of Education

Worldwide, the young generation's quality of life is linked to the risk of *drug addiction*. Epidemiological data on the drug problem points to the fact that drugs are easily available and frequently offered to young people. The risk of drug addiction affects the entire population of children.

For years, Slovakia's sector of education has been making an effort, in the framework of the National Program of Fighting Drug Abuse, to reduce the risk of drug addiction. Preventive activities use a variety of strategies as an integral part of the process of education and training from kindergartens through secondary schools. In 1999, in accordance with the document *"Measures to Fight Drugs"* there were 25 centers of educational and psychological prevention operating in Slovakia. The mission has been to provide children at risk with special social, psychological and therapeutic/educational care. The centers run numerous preventative projects in the sector of education. These programs are intended for children and young people, teachers, parents, and the broader community.

Nevertheless, results of the European School Survey on the use of illicit drugs suggested increasing trends in the use of marijuana and synthetic drugs. Besides illicit drugs, young people continue to smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol. Comparative 1995 and 1999 data from representative European School Survey (ESPAD) showed a need for intensifying and expanding systematic preventive activities. Comparisons of ESPAD 95 and ESPAD 99 studies in Slovakia conducted among secondary school students are presented in Tables 15 and 16.

<b>Table 15</b>		
<b>Drugs Taken Once or Several Times Within 30 days (% of 15-18-year old individuals)</b>		
<b>Drug</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1999</b>
Tobacco	30.0	38.2
Alcohol	57.3	64.2
Marijuana	3.1	7.0

*Note:* ESPAD 95 included a sample of 7,975 students, ESPAD 99 a sample of 8,295 students.  
*Source:* Institute for Health Education, National Health Promotion Center, State Health Institute of the Slovak Republic.

<b>Table 16</b>		
<b>Easily and Rather Easily Available Drugs (% of 15-18-year old individuals)</b>		
<b>Drug</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1999</b>
Ecstasy	4.7	17.6
LSD and hallucinogens	8.5	16.4
Amphetamines	8.0	14.1
Tranquilizers	12.3	19.5
Heroin	9.9	12.7
Marijuana	29.1	45.6
Volatile inhalation substances	32.4	39.5

*Note:* ESPAD 95 included a sample of 7,975 students, ESPAD 99 a sample of 8,295 students.  
*Source:* Institute for Health Education, National Health Promotion Center, State Health Institute of the Slovak Republic.

Another significant indicator of the young generation's quality of life is the availability of *communication technologies*. Data from February 1999 shows that more than 90 percent of the households had a color TV, 44.1 percent had teletext, 34.4 percent had a cable TV connection, 37.3 percent had either common or private satellite dish, 45.4 percent had a videorecorder, 9.3 percent had a video camera, 38.1 percent had a CD player, 48.4 percent had a walkman, 75 percent had telephone, 21.7 percent had a PC, and 3.1 percent had Internet connectivity. The research data acquired by Bratislava's National Center of Media Communication also confirmed that household acquisitions of communication technologies is markedly dependent on the education level of the parents. Only 10.9 percent households of respondents with basic education have a PC, whereas the corresponding figure for respondents with tertiary education is as high as 49.5 percent. Internet access is available to 0.7 percent and 13.4 percent respondents with basic and tertiary education, respectively.

The data shows that entertainment electronics is available to secondary school students predominantly in their homes, whereas there are more opportunities to access computers and Internet at school. The opportunity to access communication technologies at other places (such as in parents' office, at friends, at the hostel, etc.) is important with respect to the Internet (almost 30 percent), video camera (31%), facsimile (30.2%), and multimedia computer (36.7%). These are appliances that are mostly not available at home or at school.

Table 17

**Accessibility of Communication Technologies to Secondary School Generation (%)**

<b>Appliances</b>	<b>At home</b>	<b>At school</b>	<b>Elsewhere</b>	<b>Total</b>
Color TV	93.2	58.6	49.9	201.7
Telephone	90.0	29.8	49.1	168.9
Video VCR	49.2	44.2	46.3	139.7
PC	38.5	46.4	37.7	122.6
Walkman	75.8	9.3	34.0	119.1
CD player	55.4	9.7	42.5	107.6
Music tower	55.4	4.8	45.9	106.1
Teletext	57.4	4.9	42.4	104.7
Cable TV	54.5	3.9	35.7	94.1
Multi PC	29.1	19.6	36.7	85.4
Mobile phone	31.2	2.8	36.0	70.0
Common satellite dish	34.2	3.2	26.1	63.5
Internet	5.7	21.6	29.1	56.4
Black&white TV	24.4	4.6	26.4	54.6
Individual satellite dish	28.6	1.6	24.4	54.6
Video camera	13.2	2.1	31.0	46.3
Fax	7.4	4.6	30.2	42.2

Source: Brečka, S.: *Accessibility of Communication Technologies to the Young Generation. (Dostupnosť komunikačnej techniky pre mládež)*. In: *Technology of Education 2/2000*, pp. 11-12.

Table 18

**Accessibility of Communication Technologies at the Individual Types of Schools (%)**

<b>School</b>	<b>Color TV</b>	<b>VCR</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>Multi PC</b>	<b>Internet</b>
Grammar schools	82.1	69.0	58.9	22.0	37.8
Apprenticeships	31.7	14.5	24.9	7.7	2.4
Vocational schools	47.3	31.0	56.1	27.0	17.6
Business schools	47.3	40.4	62.4	24.9	37.1
School of arts	26.1	21.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health care schools	59.0	45.3	24.8	11.1	0.9
Hotel academies	63.9	45.5	46.1	29.8	16.8
Other schools	77.1	45.8	30.1	13.3	2.4
Total	58.6	44.2	46.4	19.6	21.6

Source: Brečka, S.: *Accessibility of Communication Technologies to the Young Generation. (Dostupnosť komunikačnej techniky pre mládež)*. In: *Technology of Education 2/2000*, pp. 11-12.

Table 19

**Accessibility of Communication Technologies at Homes by Gender**

<b>Appliances</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Video VCR</i>	48.0	50.1	49.2
<i>Music tower</i>	59.2	52.9	55.4
<i>CD player</i>	58.9	53.1	55.4
<i>Walkman</i>	74.2	76.8	75.8
<i>PC</i>	43.8	35.0	38.5
<i>Multi PC</i>	36.7	24.1	29.1
Internet	7.1	4.8	5.7

Source: Brečka, S.: *Accessibility of Communication Technologies to the Young Generation*, In: *Technology of Education 2/2000*, pp. 11-12.

The *quality of the education* provided also represents a significant factor that affects the quality of life for the young generation. The quality of education depends on human resources,

specifically on the qualification level and expertise of teachers. The situation in this area is far from optimistic. Young graduates avoid jobs within the education sector due to poor social conditions. The staff gradually ages and the average age of teachers keeps increasing. The share of teachers aged less than 40 decreases and the share of teachers aged above 51 increases. The proportions of teachers-pensioners is also growing: their share at primary and special schools is almost 11 percent, while being about 8 percent at primary schools of arts and secondary schools. The situation developing at tertiary teaching institutions is frightening, with the average age of professors approaching 60 years.

**Table 20**

**Qualification Ranking** (in ascending order by the shares of qualified teachers, in %)

<b>Type of Institution</b>	<b>Qualified Teachers</b>
Special schools	55.61
Primary schools	78.67
Secondary vocational schools	80.45
Primary schools of arts	81.25
Apprenticeships	84.43
Grammar schools	94.29
Kindergartens	96.58

*Source:* Internal materials.

The statistical averages shown in Table 20 will naturally have large deviations, depending on the specific territory of Slovakia.

Within the context of the quality of life, *programs to support special interest activities of children and the young people* may be generally assessed positively as prevention and protection from negative phenomena. Civil associations working with children and young people play an important role in this respect and they receive support from public funds via the budget of the education sector. To a significant extent, such entities provide for a broad range of activities within the area of culture, sports, international contacts, holidays and leisure, spreading of information concerning employment. They also address the negative phenomena that markedly affect children and young people. All this is done through the implementation of projects under protective, supporting, international, holiday and leisure time, training and creative programs. In 1999, SKK 18 million were allocated for sporting civil associations' programs and activities, and SKK 20 million for civil associations of children and young people (who have an 8 percent share on the total population of Slovakia aged below 26 years).

The schools and teaching institutions offer a broad range of special interest activities for gifted children and for children and young people with physical handicaps. In 1999, a total of 70,393 children participated in regular activities of 137 leisure time centers in 4,960 special interest groups (sports, culture, natural and social sciences). 1,548,248 participants attended occasional events (subject competitions, school Olympic games, discussions, trips, etc.). And, 29,170 young people spent time in 861 summer camps.

## Conclusions

It is important to show how the system of schools responds (or should respond) to changing conditions, such as the information explosion, the rapid pace of innovations in technologies, the transition from the primary and secondary to the tertiary sphere of economy, and globalization of the world.

In this respect, the government's verbal declarations on the permanent priority of training and education should be materialized, and appropriate economic and personnel resources should be provided. The creation of a favorable legal and social climate by launching changes, primarily in the philosophy of education, training, and the contents of training, is inevitable. Changes are also planned in the methods of education and in the training of teachers, based on a broad public discussion oriented towards the drafting of the National Program on Education and Training. This will improve educational conditions that could create more favorable lifelong employment opportunities.

The outcome of primary, secondary and tertiary schools, as well as other teaching institutions in Slovakia having been involved in EU programs, have shown that these institutions are able to compete with and to be equal partners to institutions in EU Member States. The number of approved projects per capita demonstrates Slovakia's competitiveness, ranking among the most successful associated countries. Partnership-based cooperation allows comparison and harmonization of education systems. Although every country has its own specifics, mutual cooperation contributes to standardization of results of the training and education process, thus providing graduates with the ability to make their way in the single European labor market. Successful continuation of the integration trends will require the coordination of such programs. In this way, students, young people, teachers, and the general public become significantly aware of their European dimension.

To provide for the quality of life of the young generation, it will be necessary to strengthen prevention and protection of children and the young people from negative phenomena. There will need to be continuing support for special-interest programs so that children and youth will be encouraged to use their leisure time in a positive manner. This will require more pronounced financial, organizational, and legal support for these activities and the institutions involved in the implementation of such activities.

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# Demographic Development and the Situation in Health

## Major Demographic Developments

**Birth rates** are the demographic process that attracts most attention among all the demographic processes because it is a parameter most strongly linked to the future development of the society. In the 1990s, Slovakia could not avoid the media's dealing of the birth rates process. Attention focused mainly on the reduction of the birth rates that was made overly dramatic and frequently dealt with within some ideological frameworks, without any expert discussion. Focusing on gross quantitative parameters without confronting them with so-called "soft" data (surveys of the population climate, value preferences of the population, etc.) frequently results in simplified interpretations and crisis development scenarios. Disputes concern the issues of the reasons and impacts of the reducing birth rates.

It is true that birth rates in Slovakia have decreased throughout the 1990s, as suggested by all natality parameters monitored. This however has not been a homogenous decrease. In monitoring long-term development, approximately three different periods of birth rates reduction can be distinguished in the recent century:

- During the 1920s-1940s, when gross birth rates dropped from 35.3 (1921) to 22.8 live births per 1,000 inhabitants (1940);
- Towards the late 1950s and during the 1960s, with a decrease to the level of 17.0 live births per 1,000 inhabitants (1968);
- After 1976.

The latest reduction in birth rates is a long-term phenomenon that could not have been stopped during the most recent decade. It became even more intensive during the early 1990s and continued. In 1997, live births for the first time dropped below 60,000, and the 1999 gross birth rates reached 10.4 live births per 1,000. Rather than seeking opportunities to improve the conditions of life of children and to improve support of parenthood, these facts are frequently taken out of context and abused to promote political or ideological objectives. Nationalists argue that the nation is getting extinct and jeopardized by the Roma ethnic high birth rates (Slovak National Party, a portion of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia, and most recently also Smer). The most frequently cited religious position for decreasing birth rates is the "adoption of western models" and "orientation of young people towards consumption".

A comparison of European countries toward the end of the 20th century reveals that Slovakia has not at all been out of the general trend. It has even had the highest gross birth rates of all the Central European countries, higher than Poland where abortions are prohibited. By its birth rates level, it has even exceeded traditionally Catholic countries, such as Italy and Spain. Only northern countries have higher birth rates, including high percentages of children born outside of marriage (35-54 percent of all births).

In the past, Slovakia's birth rates had some specific characteristics. The age of women that delivered their first baby was among the lowest found in European countries. Another peculiarity was the high proportion of women that were pregnant at the time of wedding (estimated at almost 50 percent). These facts suggest the low level of freedom of men and women in partner selection and realization of parenthood.

Slovak women's contraceptive methods were mostly the mechanical method of a so-called *intrauterine devices* (e.g., 11.7 percent of childbearing age women used them in 1987), while hormonal contraception was used by only 2.5 percent of childbearing age women. In most cases, prevention of pregnancy was a matter for the woman. Men would expect women to take care of this problem.

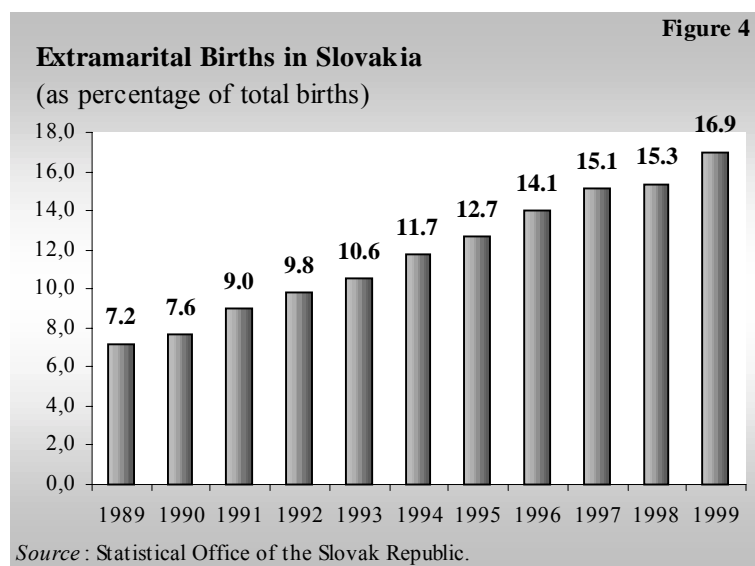


As a rule, the delivery of a first child would be quickly followed by the birth of a second baby, and less frequently by a third baby. Only rarely did a fourth and fifth child follow; higher numbers of children were most typical of Roma mothers. The two-child family model strengthened in Slovakia during the 1980s. More than one fourth of the families were families with two dependent children. There was a decrease in the percentages of families with more than two children and with only a single child.

Mothers would typically return to work when their children were still relatively young. Most children who were born in that period of time attended pre-school facilities, such as day-care centers and kindergartens. Young parents had to cope with changes associated with their working, as well as their marital and parental role starting at almost the same time. Most of them were unable to cope with the situation without receiving assistance from their parents.

After 1989, Slovakia experienced positive trends in the reproductive behavior of its population. The age of the mothers at delivery time gradually increased, shifting from the critical level of 21 years during the 1980s towards 23.6 for primiparas and 26 years for mothers in general during 1999. These age averages helped Slovakia reach the standard levels of Eastern European countries, but still at a level 3-4 years younger than Western European countries. Also, data concerning fertility of women by specific ages confirms this tendency of childbearing shifting towards higher ages. During the recent 5 years, the decrease of birth rates of women aged 25 years+ had stopped and even had a slight increase, as shown by the most recent data.

Compared to Western countries, the proportion of extramarital births in Slovakia is relatively small. They made up 16.9 percent of all births in 1999, i.e., 1.77 babies per thousand persons. Slovakia prevalingly takes a condemning position in this respect because of its low level of tolerance to coexistence forms other than life in marriage.



The main reason for the decreasing birth rates in Slovakia is that *young people postpone parenthood towards higher age* rather than being subjected to "decadence and engulfed by consumption". We should welcome this trend after having a period of immature people marrying, and of frequently pregnancy-enforced parenthood.

For many decades, Slovakia's *marriage rates* were characterized by a high rate of marriage and a low age at wedding time. Both factors have had deep cultural and historical roots, based upon the traditional rural family's values and way of life, and the strong influence of Christian faith for the raising of families. A marital family is considered the universal way for one's life career,

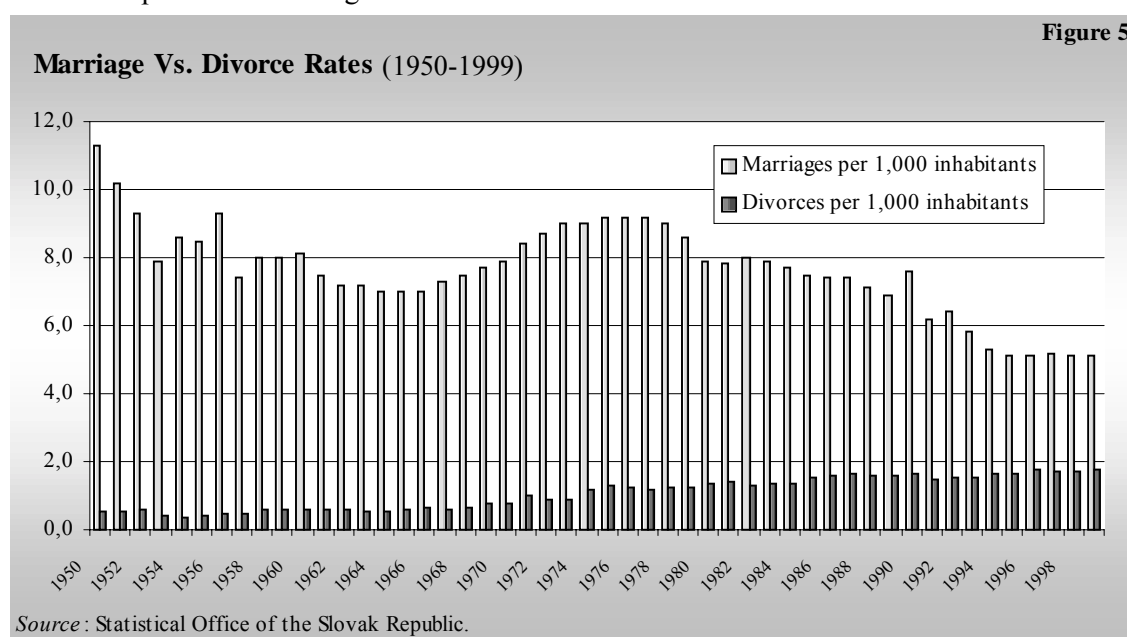
as shown by more than 90 percent of people marrying at least once in their lives. The institution of matrimony, supported by Christian tradition, has always had a high value for Slovakia's population. Several studies in recent years have confirmed that matrimony will remain highly appreciated, since only 6 percent of the population considers marriage as an outdated institution. (*European...*, 1991, Filadelfiová – Guráň 1997)

Under the communist establishment, marriage provided some advantages. It provided a "ticket" to acquire housing, and also provided young married couples an opportunity to obtain advantageous financial credit. These advantages were abolished in 1990, making conditions more difficult for establishment of a family. Setting up one's own household became more difficult for most of young people because housing construction stopped and intensified the shortage of housing. Housing has become financially unaffordable.

Over many years, Slovakia has been among the countries with highest marriage rates and smallest divorce rates. Prior to 1990, marriage rates ranged from 7 to 10 weddings per 1,000. The variations over time were due to changes in the number of people in various age groups, not to any significant behavior changes of young people. Since the end of the 1970s, the marriage rate had a gradual and slight decrease. With the exception of 1990 and 1992, these trends were maintained throughout the mid-1990s, when marriage rates stabilized at approximately 5 marriages per 1,000 inhabitants.

During this period, the average age of both men and women at the first wedding increased. For many prior years, it had been 22.5 for women and 24 years for men. In 1999, the average age of the bride had increased to 24.8 years with respect to all marriages, and to 23.1 years for previously unmarried women. For the bridegrooms, the average age increased to 27.7 years for all marriages, and to 25.6 years for previously unmarried men.

The rate of re-marriage also decreased with the decreasing in overall marriage rates. It was typically the rule in the past that the time between the divorce and the subsequent wedding would be rather short, especially for men. During 1999, 83.5 percent of all marriages were for previously unmarried people. There were also higher rates of re-marriage, with 6 percent of new marriages being between a divorced bridegroom and a previously unmarried bride, and 2 percent less for marriages between a divorced bride and a previously unmarried bridegroom. Less than 5 percent of marriages had both divorced fiancés.



**Divorce** rates are also an important (and discussed) demographic phenomena in Slovakia. However, the actual development with respect to divorce rates is less dramatic. Divorce rates kept increasing slowly and regularly decade after decade. The 1990s have not brought in any significant change to this trend. During the late 1980s, there were 1.6 divorces per every 1,000 people. This trend changed after the political events in 1989, when divorce rates dropped for 3

#### **Divorces in 1999**

There were 1.79 divorces per 1,000 in 1999 in Slovakia. A total of 9,664 marriages ended in divorce, almost 80 percent were filed by women, representing about a 10 percent increase compared to preceding years. The average duration of marriage increased 12.3 years.

#### **Box 3**

consecutive years. A similar situation occurred after 1996. People seem to avoid any radical breaking of family ties in unstable social conditions. These slight oscillations played an episodic role in divorce rates, resulting in no change in the trends.

In the past, only 25 percent of divorces were without children while 75 percent had dependent children. In 1999, it dropped to 70 percent. After a divorce, children mostly remain with their mothers. This long-term trend has influenced the structure of single-parent families. The mother headed almost 90 percent of 190,000 such families in 1991, and the remaining 10 percent were headed by the father. The term single-parent family in Slovakia has come to mean a lonely woman with a dependent child or children in 90 out of 100 cases (more than 60 percent with a single child, almost 30 percent with 2 children, and about 10 percent with three or more children).

In Slovakia's past, the most negative demographic development was **high rates of abortions** to terminate undesired pregnancies. Abortions, also referred to as artificial termination of pregnancy (ATP), have basically replaced contraception, even for women with higher education. This presumably is due to inadequate information on the method of planned parenthood and prevention of pregnancy. Many women have had repeated abortions. This situation has been typical for all communist countries, with Romania as the only exception where abortions had been prohibited before 1989.

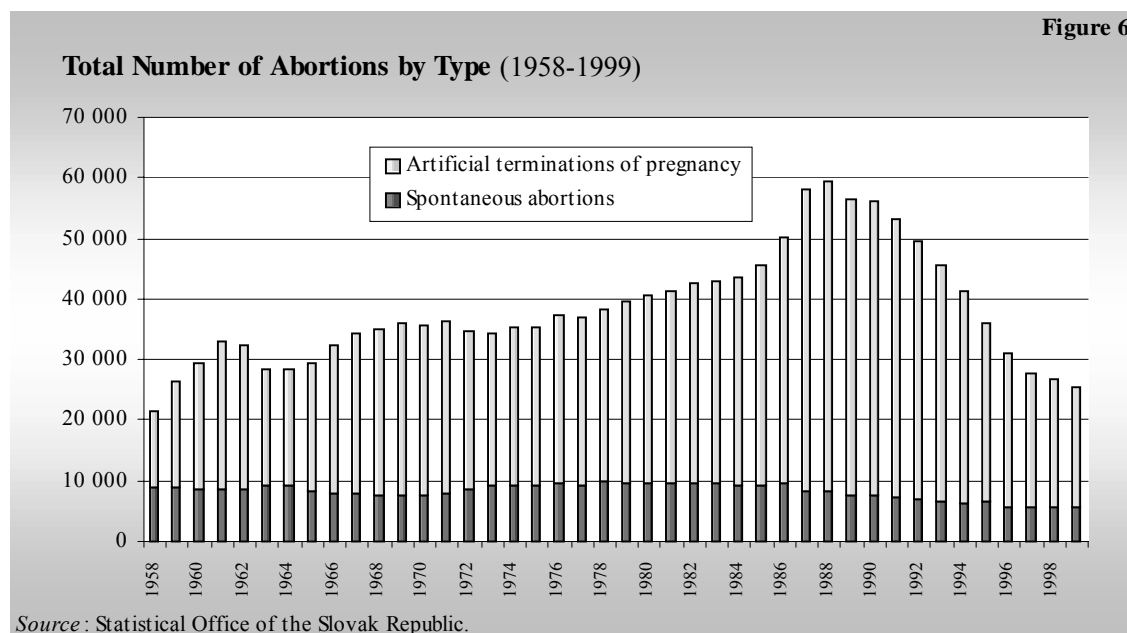
Official data on abortions have been recorded in Slovakia since 1953, and ATPs have been reported separately since 1958, i.e., one year after the adoption of the Abortion Act. During the communist era, abortions would be used instead of contraceptives. This is confirmed by the birth and abortion rates that show mutually opposite patterns, where abortion rates decline with increasing birth rates and vice versa. The overall numbers of pregnancies remained at an approximately constant level.

A sudden growth in the abortion rate resulted from a change in ethical approaches along with a lack of education and contraceptives. The abortion rate grew from the initial value of 13 abortions per 100 births in 1958 up to 61 abortions per 100 births in 1988. In absolute numbers, abortions grew from 12,383 in 1958 to 51,000 in 1988. The highest abortion rates over many years concerned older women, mostly those around 30 years of age. They resolved unwanted pregnancies through abortion, especially for those where it was their third or higher pregnancy.

Slovakia's abortion rate has decreased year after year since the early 1990s, a positive turn that is a unique phenomenon among the former Eastern block countries. The rate has dropped in recent years below the 1958 level, suggesting that the 30-year growth could be reversed. In absolute numbers, there has been an almost 60 percent reduction in the number of abortions (from 59,352 in 1958 to 25,557 in 1999). The gross abortion rates, i.e., abortions per 1,000, dropped by 3/5 (from 11.3 to 4.7).

Not infrequently, the public gets a distorted picture of abortion rates. Overall data on abortion rates are presented as artificial terminations of pregnancy (ATP). The internal structure of

abortion is not taken into account. From a legal aspect, abortions are classified as spontaneous abortions and as artificial (induced) abortions. Within the group of ATPs, demography and gynecology recognize ATPs due to health condition (when life or health of the mother is at risk) and so-called mini-abortions (up to 6 weeks of gestation). Spontaneous abortions make up 16 percent to 25 percent of the total numbers of abortions. Those numbers dropped below 6,000 in recent years. ATPs have been showing an even more pronounced decline than the overall number of abortions, dropping 61 percent since 1988. The 1999 gross ATP rate represents 3.7 ATP per 1,000.



The number of ATPs remains high despite its decreasing and gratifying trend. Experts recommend placing a stronger emphasis on prevention and on prevention incentives, i.e., to a more responsible approach to one's own reproductive health, as defined at the UN (WHO).

Due to differences in the legislation and reporting systems, it is difficult to make meaningful international comparisons of abortion rates. Available data indicates that a majority of Western European countries have relatively low levels of abortion rates, whereas the situation is opposite in the majority of the former Eastern block countries, where the abortion rates are high. There is almost no Western European country with more than 30 abortions per 100 births, whereas the numbers of abortions are much higher than numbers of births in many Eastern European countries (Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Estonia). In Slovakia, there were 38 abortions per 100 births in 1997 and only 35 per 100 in 1999. Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Croatia are on their way to reaching the levels for European Union Member States. The experience of Romania and Poland shows that legislation alone is unable to resolve this problem. Immediately after the liberalization of abortions in Romania, abortion rates soared to the highest level in Europe. As soon as abortions were banned in Poland, so-called "abortion tourism" started to intensify, i.e., people were "commuting" to the neighboring countries (Lithuania, Slovakia, Czech Republic) to have an abortion. The number of illicit abortions and gynecological diseases increased.

Slovakia's history suggests that ATPs were legalized because a high number of illicit abortions in the 1950s resulted in high death rates of mothers, murders of newborns, and a number of other health and social impacts. Therefore, a so-called Abortion Act was adopted in 1957 to enable free of charge ATPs based on the decision of Abortion Committees. Unlike Western Europe, where abortion-related legislation was preceded by promotion of contraception and sex

education, Slovakia went a different way. The absence of contraception and sex education resulted in ATP being perceived as a standard way to terminate undesired pregnancy, resulting in high numbers of ATPs. This development was typical for all communist countries.

The Abortion Act was liberalized in 1986. It cancelled Abortion Committees and made the ATP decision to be that of the woman alone. It was performed free of charge, under health insurance. This resulted in a further increase in the numbers of ATPs. Availability of contraceptives improved after 1989, as did information on issues concerning reproductive health and sexual behaviors. Public moral pressure against ATPs increased. Due to all these factors, the number of ATPs started to decrease dramatically. The legislation was made stricter in 1995. A law was adopted to introduce a fee for an ATP (ATPs were excluded from health insurance). In this way, Slovak legislation got to a level comparable with a majority of European countries.

The number of ATPs kept decreasing throughout the second half of the 1990s. The moral appeal against the liberal law of 1986 shifted during the second half of the 1990s to become anti-propaganda against the philosophy of reproductive health, against prenatal diagnosis, contraception and sterilization, against the use of condoms, as well as against the sexual revolution. The main reason for this argumentation has been the continuing reduction of birth rates.

Opinions and attitudes concerning contraception and ATPs are not consistent throughout Slovakia's population. Surveys indicate that a majority of the population takes a moderate

#### Box 4

##### **Reproductive Health vs Legal and Ethical Norms**

A relatively tough discussion started among advocates of various opinions concerning reproductive health issues. While complaining of insufficient legal protection, physicians – gynecologists took the worst position in this situation. The State obligates doctors to perform numerous activities whose performance relies on the respect of human ethical standards as well as on the signing of various international commitments. However, such commitments are sometimes incompatible with ethical religious positions. With respect to such conflicts, the State leaves doctors in legal uncertainty. There have been several cases of gynecologists refusing to perform abortions because of a "conflict of conscience." For example, all doctors in one hospital refused to perform the intervention. (Conference..., 2000)

position on issues of reproduction, with 86 percent supporting the opinion that *"responsible individuals use contraception and plan their parenthood"*. More than 80 percent of the population would accept abortion when the health of the mother is at risk, in cases of rape and when there is a probability of a handicapped child to be born. About a half of the respondents considers unwanted pregnancy to also be an acceptable reason for abortion. (Reproductive Behaviors ..., 1997) Abortion is a sensitive issue in any society. It frequently polarizes a society and becomes part of public and political discussions and struggles. It should therefore be handled very sensitively and should consider appropriate times to open the issue at the government level. The principal question concerning abortions is, "Should abortions be banned or not?". Experts conclude that restrictive interventions by legislation cannot reduce abortion rates or change birth rate reductions. On the one hand, this would be

against the internationally widely accepted human rights, in particular for the groups of the population that advocate such attitudes. On the other hand, such forced interventions will not resolve the situation and will shift it to other areas. Examples from many countries, such as Romania, Poland, and China, as well as Slovakia's past all confirm that illicit abortions cause a high mortality of women, adverse consequences for the health of women, abortion tourism, distortion of the population structure, etc. Abortion is a sensitive issue for any country. Every country tries its own approach, and it is uneasy to do so. The issue of abortion rates, and in particular ATPs, should not be assessed in isolation, without looking at the clarifying attitudes

and links to other issues of reproduction and reproductive health (birth rates, stillbirth rates, contraception, prevention, sex education, etc.).

After 1989, the abortion rate had the most favorable development of all demographic processes by dramatically decreasing. Other demographic processes have not shown such favorable developments. Mortality has remained relatively high, in particular for younger males. Birth rates have decreased. The natural population growth, the difference between live births and deaths, is minimal. The population has aged and become more feminized through increased proportions and numbers of elderly women in Slovakia's population. If there is anything in the demographic development of Slovakia that should be urgently tackled, it is this problem and the associated consequences.

The use of hormonal contraceptives keeps growing, with 13.1 percent of childbearing age women using such contraceptives in 1998. Yet, their level of use is still only one quarter of the usage level in other countries. Slovakia's low level of use is not caused by an insufficient supply of contraceptives; rather, it is mistrust and fears of adverse effects, or sometimes shyness in many women. Also, financial aspects play a role, especially in young and unemployed women. And, many women just hope that nothing will happen.

Compared to Western European countries, Slovakia's sterilization act is rather restrictive. It only allows sterilization in married women with 3 or more children. Men are allowed to undergo such an intervention only if such an intervention cannot for any reason be performed in their spouses, and otherwise must meet the legal requirements (Kliment, 1998). All conditions are imposed despite the fact that the intervention in males is much less demanding and is used more frequently worldwide.

There are some positive points regarding other issues of Slovakia's reproductive health. ***Illicit abortions*** and ***maternal mortality*** do not currently represent a problem. There are but occasional cases (2 –5 a year in recent years). ***HIV/AIDS infections*** first appeared in Slovakia as late as after 1989. There were 13 deaths and 88 HIV positive individuals recorded in 1998, with only 58 cases attributed to Slovak nationals, including approximately 17 percent of women. A majority of cases occurred in Bratislava and its surroundings. The occurrence of other ***sexually transmitted diseases*** has been relatively stabilized in recent years (4 cases per 100,000 for syphilis, about 25 cases per 100,000 for gonorrhea).

#### Box 5

##### Pregnant Women and Preventive Care

A new problem has emerged in recent years as signaled by gynecologists from Eastern Slovakia. The system of preventive care of the pregnant woman and the unborn child seems to be unknown to some. There are some regions where as many as 20 percent of women appear at medical facilities just to deliver their baby, without any previous medical check-ups or regular follow-ups. The reasons can be looked for in the abolishment of the institute of gynecological nurses, as well as in the new approach that leaves the entire responsibility for the health of the future mother and the unborn child with the women themselves (in the past, payment of maternal benefits was bound to the attendance of regular medical investigations of the future mother). However, some, in particular Roma mothers, have weakened personal responsibility for their own health (Bolfik, 1999). It has therefore been contemplated again to reintroduce the condition mentioned for the payment of benefits in pregnancy and motherhood. A similar system also operates in Sweden or France.

The most important international event dealing with reproduction issues was the UN Conference on the Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. In its Action Program, it committed the signatory countries (including the Slovak Government) to "draw attention to issues of sexual and reproductive health of their citizens" (*Programme of Action...*, 1995). Rather little has been done at an official level in favor of the implementation of the Cairo

Conference during the subsequent years. Activities set forth in the Action Programme were, to a large extent, developed by some non-governmental organizations (Society for Planned Parenthood and Education to Parenthood, Special-Interest Association of Women, and others). The Slovak Government started to implement more consequentially the Action Program of the Cairo Conference in 1999, through its resolution No. 812/1999 item B.2 (workout of the Action Program for the conditions of the individual ministries and other central authorities of state administration), and through resolution No. 194/2000, item B advising the Minister of Labor, Welfare and Family to establish an inter-sector group for the implementation of the conclusions of the Cairo Conference. Further progress occurred in 2000, when the Regional Center of the UN Population Fund for Central and Eastern European Countries was established in Bratislava.

**Mortality** has been among Slovakia's most stable demographic processes for many years. For more than 20 years, the gross death rates have been stabilized around 10 deaths per 1,000 persons. They have been consistently below the 10 deaths level since 1993. Nevertheless, it is not possible to anticipate a greater reduction since Slovakia's mortality depends primarily on the size of groups at the highest risk.

Some mortality rates do not show a favorable direction. The biggest area of concern is that of death rate differences between males and females. All age groups of males show higher mortality rates, both in absolute and relative terms. About 3,500 males more than females die every year. Of all the mortality demographic factors, age has the greatest impact on the death rate difference between males and females. Female death rates are predictable, i.e., the numbers of deaths increase with the increasing age, and a majority of them die after reaching the age of 85. There is no such direct age relationship for males. Most males die around the age of 70, with the number of deaths decreasing thereafter. The number of male deaths per year exceeds the 1,000 level as early as the age of 45-49 years, while it takes 15 more years (60-64 years age) for the female population to reach that level. During the 1990s, Slovak males have died substantially younger and the numbers of male deaths have been substantially higher than female deaths.

Male and female mortality rates for common age groups have remained the most constant in marginal age groups, i.e., below 10 years and over 75 years of age. The age group of 20-29 years has had the greatest difference, with the male mortality rate being four times the rate for females. During the recent years, overall death rates for the female and male populations have had a difference of about 2 points (less than 9 deaths per 1,000 females, and almost 11 deaths per 1,000 males).

The major cause of death in Slovakia is disease of the heart and blood vessel system. This is the cause of death determined for about 15,000 females and 14,000 males every year. The second most frequent reason is tumor diseases, which cause the deaths of almost 5,000 females and more than 7,000 males yearly. The most frequently occurring tumors in males are those affecting the lungs, the digestive system and the prostate. Females die most frequently from malignancies of the breast, the digestive system, and the uterus. One in every 23 Slovak women is likely to suffer from breast cancer. There are 1,500 new breast cancers diagnosed every year in Slovakia, and only 75 percent of them are identified at an early stage. Women aged 40 or more should certainly have a mammography at least once every two years. Yet, the reality is far behind this requirement. Women themselves also contribute to this adverse result. They typically do not give enough attention to their own health in this respect. During the recent years, various associations and clubs have been trying to improve the situation through educational and promotional events (League Against the Cancer, Daffodil Day, etc). (*In Slovakia, sufferers ... 1999*).

Table 21

**Cause of Death for Women and Men (%)**

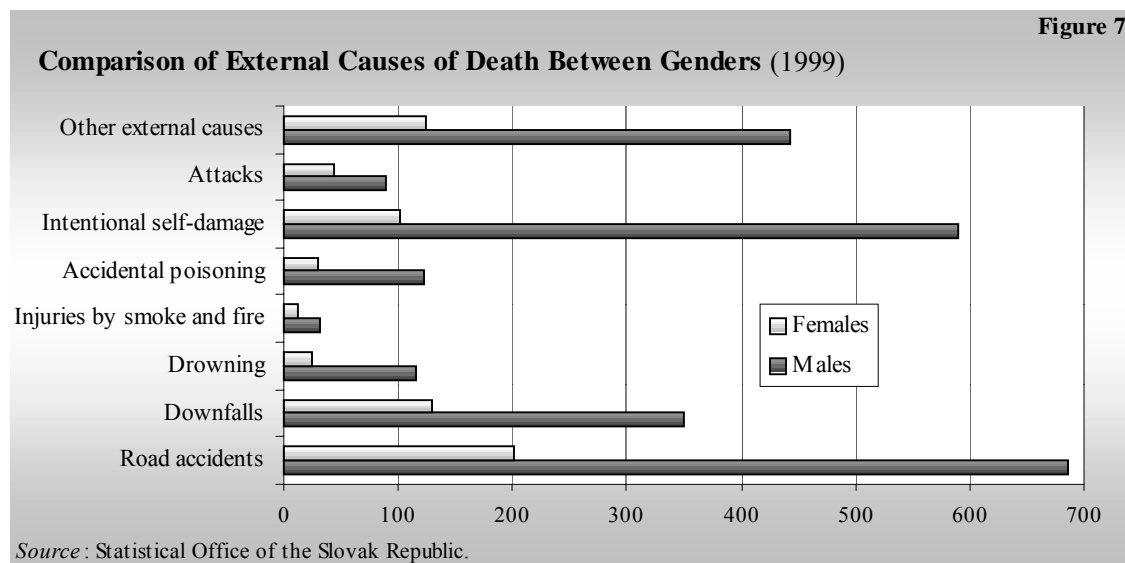
Cause of Death	1997		1998		1999	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Infectious and parasitic diseases	0.39	0.34	0.22	0.23	0.31	0.23
Neoplasms	24.05	18.96	25.68	19.91	25.39	19.77
Diseases of blood and blood-forming organs	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.07	0.05	0.07
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	1.00	1.54	1.09	1.94	1.67	2.50
Mental and behavioral disorder	0.08	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.03	0.01
Diseases of the nervous system	0.60	0.42	0.88	0.74	1.17	0.79
Diseases of the eye	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Diseases of the ear	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00
Diseases of the circulatory system	49.39	60.80	49.33	63.63	48.23	62.20
Diseases of the respiratory system	6.80	7.63	4.74	4.22	5.31	4.63
Diseases of the digestive system	5.02	3.27	5.66	3.47	6.00	3.91
Diseases of the skin and tissue	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.17	0.06	0.15
Diseases of the genitourinary system	1.29	1.48	1.27	1.51	1.39	1.60
Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02
Diseases of the perinatal period	0.49	0.40	0.49	0.43	0.48	0.35
Congenital malformations, deformations and abnormalities	0.31	0.30	0.29	0.33	0.28	0.38
Symptoms, signs and abnormal findings, not elsewhere classified	0.77	0.64	0.77	0.57	1.00	0.63
External causes of morbidity and mortality	9.75	4.05	9.37	2.71	8.64	2.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Status and Movement of Population of the SR for 1998, 1999. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (1999).

Other causes of death include relatively frequent pneumonia, liver conditions, hypertension, and some external factors. 9 percent to 10 percent of males who died in the past three years died of external factors. Most frequently, these included traffic accidents, deliberate self-injury, and falls. Such causes of death in females are three times less frequent. The most pronounced difference between males and females concern traffic accidents and deliberate self-injury (suicides) that are almost six times less frequent in females.



Figure 7



The higher male mortality results in a shorter male *life expectancy*. At birth, Slovak males have a life expectancy that is about 8 years less than for Slovak females. In 1999, life expectancy for males was 68.95 years and 77.03 years for females. Over the past 40 years, the male life expectancy has increased only one year, whereas female life expectancy has grown by four years. Slight deviations occurred in life expectancy during the 1990s. Slight reduction were observed in the early and mid-1990s for both males and females. However, Slovakia did not experience a dramatic drop in life expectancy, as was the case in countries of the former Soviet Union.

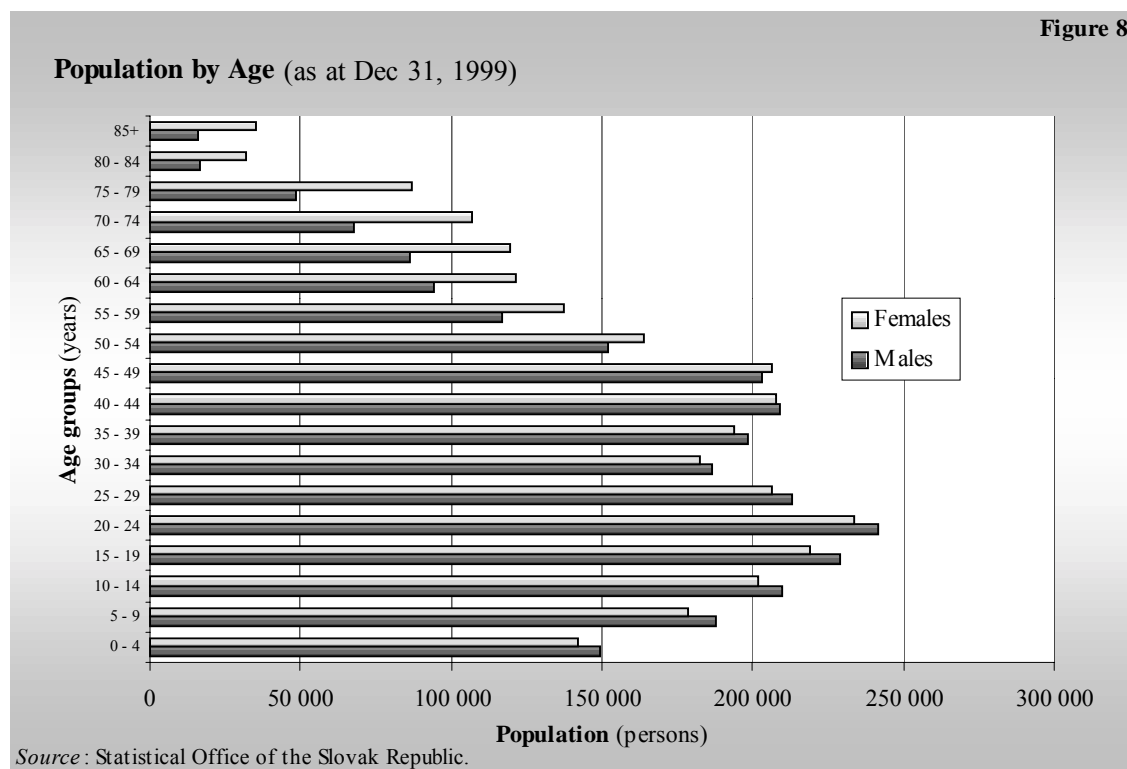
The birth rate and mortality rate trends resulted in a continuous reduction of *population increments* throughout the 1990s. Population growth kept slowing down. Every new year would bring an additional reduction of the natural and overall population increments. The natural increases of 4 individuals per 1,000 in early 1990s dropped to only 0.7 in 1999. The overall population increment of Slovakia decreased from 20,000 in the early 1990s down to 5,275 in 1999.

### Numbers and Age Structure of the Population

The most recent data available shows that there are more than 2.2 million women and about half a million girls living in Slovakia. They made up a total of 51.37 percent of Slovakia's 1999 population. The female share of the overall population has been consistently at the same level (i.e., around 51 percent) throughout the second half of the 20th century, with a slight increase during the most recent 30 years (by 0.7 percent since 1970). This ratio of the female subpopulation is characteristic for most European countries. One exception is Turkey where females make up less than a half of the population. Some countries of the former USSR are also an exception, where women exceed 53 percent of the total population.

As in any standard population, slightly more males than females are also born in Slovakia. Younger age groups therefore have a moderate prevalence of males. As populations age, this ratio shifts to the advantage of females. The ratio of both genders is equalized around the age of 45 years. Females then prevail in higher age groups and the prevalence increases with increasing age. For example, there are 1,008 females per 1,000 males in the population group of 40-49 years, 1,323 per 1,000 in the group of 60-69 years, and 2,022 per 1,000 over 80 years of age. Overall, there were 1,065 females per 1,000 males in the population in 1999.

Figure 8



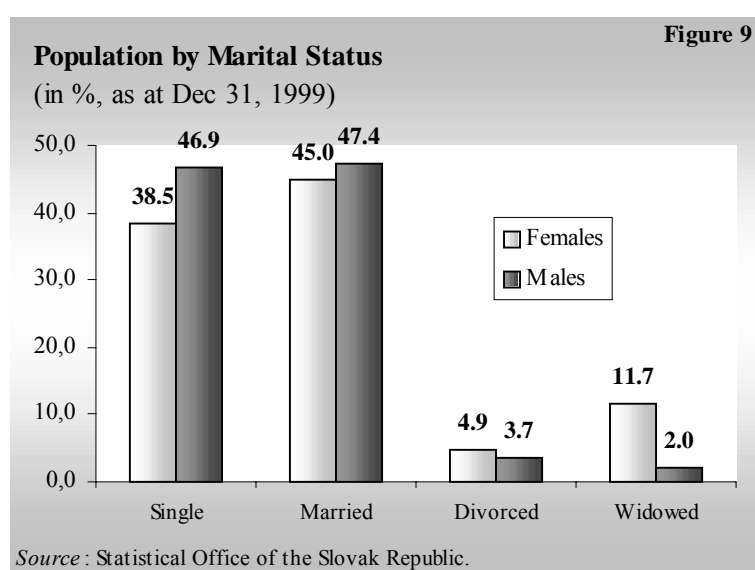
There is also a gender-based difference regarding the population's productive age. In recent years, women made up 48 percent of Slovakia's productive age population and over 65 percent of the post-productive population. This unusually big difference between productive-age males and females in Slovakia is mainly due to the lower retirement age of females. Women retire at 57 or less, depending on the number of children, while men retire at 60. In a majority of EU Member States, the basic retirement age is the same for both men and women, being 65 years of age. If Slovakia joins the Community, it will have to gradually become consistent with other EU countries in this area. Public opinion in Slovakia is not likely to accept this prolongation of the retirement age and its equalization for men and women. Only 9.7 percent of Slovakia's population have stated they would accept it. (*Assessment...*, 1999)

The ratio of females in the Slovak population is increasing in higher age groups. The share of males younger than 20 is 30.6 percent, whereas females are only 28.2 percent. The share of males and females older than 60 years is 12.6 percent for males and 17.8 percent for females. These facts show that the problem of the population aging concerns Slovak females more than males, and that there is a gradual increase of population feminization process with increases in age.

### Structure by Marital Status

Gender based differences in the age structure are also reflected in shifts of the marital structure. The greatest impact shows up in the proportions of widows/widowers. There have been 5.5 times more widows than widowers in recent years, a 4 times ratio in the 1970s, and only a 3.7 times ratio in the 1950s. Each year, the number of widows has increased. For example, there were 321,606 widows in the population in 1993, and 328,386 by 1997. A small reduction of 1,500 widows occurred after 1997. The number of widowers has showed only slight changes (55,000-57,000). The increasing numbers of widows will feminize old age and increase their loneliness, as suggested by various inquiries and surveys in addition to statistical data. (*The current situation...*, 1998)

There are not any great gender based differences in other family statuses, as in the case of widowers/widows. Yet, there are also some disproportions visible. The overviews for the various years suggest that the proportions of unmarried and divorced individuals, both men and women, slightly decrease, as do numbers and proportions of individuals living in marriage. There were 23.6 percent unmarried, 56.0 percent married, 5.8 percent divorced women, and 14.6 percent widows older than 14 years in 1998. The structure for comparably aged males was substantially different. There were far less widowers (only 2.7 percent) and less divorced men (4.5 percent). Married men made up 60.5 percent of all men older than 14 years, while unmarried men made up 32.3 percent. In addition to the aforementioned fact that there are more males than females in younger age groups, the numbers of widowers/widows are impacted by the higher age of males at wedding, higher re-marriage rates of males, and males long-term higher mortality.



## The Health Situation

Women are generally known to have a more responsible approach to health hazards, to the care for health in general, as well as accepting treatments. This gender difference becomes visible not just in mortality and life expectancy figures. Other health conditions show a similar gender based difference. There has been a higher prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases in men. In 1997, the incidence of tuberculosis per 100,000 persons was higher in men by 10 points. In absolute and relative terms, reports of malignancy cases were more numerous for men. There were 335.3 cases of malignancies per every 100,000 women, with a corresponding figure of 409.1 for men. Throughout the 1990s, men also had higher levels of newly recognized occupational diseases and of disability pensions awarded, in spite of the decreasing numbers of cases. Young men are also more frequently psychiatric care outpatients. Men also outnumber women three to one among the drug addicts.

On the other hand, women prevail among those who recover and regain the ability to work, and among those admitted to hospitals. The data available on the incidences of the individual diseases show a higher prevalence of women as diabetes mellitus patients. In almost all infectious diseases reported in 1997, the numbers of women were less than numbers of men. *The Health Care Yearbook of Slovakia* does not show other diseases broken down into male and female patients. It is therefore difficult to determine reasons why women have higher figures for inability to work and for hospitalizations. One possible reason might be that women

have a more responsible approach for their own health. Another possible reason might be that women have higher morbidities for other types of diseases.

There is evidence, based on some health-related parameters, that long-term investment for the health and education of women provide Slovakia some advantages. One form of evidence is a decreased mortality of women at delivery and of infants during the 1990s. These figures dropped far below levels set by the WHO. Other positive forms of evidence have been found in areas of delivery complications, health condition of newborns, and in proportions of low-birthweight live newborns.

Men's higher mortality and morbidity suggest they have worse health conditions than women. Men spend less time on prevention and more frequently develop "bad habits", such as excessive alcohol intake, smoking, preference for fat meals, etc. The number of regular male smokers has been estimated to be twice the number of female smokers. In recent years, the ratio of smokers among young people has been shifting more toward women. Young women have become more at risk of "social diseases". Adolescent girls in Eastern Europe are known to drink alcohol and smoke much more frequently than adolescent males both in their own countries as well as compared to their peers in Western Europe (*Women in Transition*, 1999).

Health risks have been shown to be more frequent in persons with a poor social background. Changes brought about by the transition from communism had both positive and negative implications for women and men. Health is influenced, within an economic perspective, by lower incomes, growing income inequalities, and reduced resources of the health care system. On the other hand, transition has produced new values and changes in the social environment because healthier lifestyles have started to appear.

These trends are also bringing new threats to Slovakia. There have been increases in the use of drugs, in HIV infection, and trade in women for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The development of a sex industry is a threat to women. Prostitution has a negative impact on the overall status of women in the society. It hurts the perception of women's role in society. It makes women vulnerable, both economically and physically. Moreover, there are risks of women's health problems and an increase in violence against women.

In recent years, there has been increasing numbers of Central and Eastern European women that walk the streets of Western European cities. Slovak women are no exception to this rule, although Slovakia has so far not been among the major "supplier countries". This problem frequently arises from forced migration and forced prostitution, based on fraud, abduction, and intimidation (*Trading in Women...*, 2000)

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# The Gender Dimension in Slovakia

## Theories of Democracy and the Gender Aspect

A wide variety of theories and models of democracy present preconditions and principles of a functioning democracy, but all tend to ignore the gender dimension of democracy and citizenship. For many years, this problem has either been ignored or even fully rejected. One example: J. Schumpeter, who has been a recognized theorist of democracy in this century, did not consider the fact that women were denied voting rights a reason to question the democratic nature of the society.

The criterion, which determines whether or not a society is evaluated in terms of democracy, appears to concentrate only on the area of "public life". This arises from the explicitly non-voiced assumption that the "public" and the "private" sectors can be separated from each other. This approach has been the principal criticism of liberal democracy by theorists of democracy who account for its feminist dimension. If we accept the definition of liberal democracy as an establishment based on the importance of free elections, general suffrage, granting of basic civil freedoms and rights, we arrive at the conclusion that almost everywhere in the world, except Scandinavian countries, democracy is deficient with respect to the proportionality of the gender participation. In a majority of countries, there is a marked discrepancy between the proportion of women in the general population and their participation in elected and politically nominated structures. If we performed a "mental experiment" and split all citizens of a country into two groups according to their gender, we would find out that for women, much more than for men, democracy is "electoral democracy". In other words, women find that democracy represents the right to participate in elections, and that their civil activities start and end by the right to participate in the electoral act. Although women formally have the same rights as men, they get elected much less frequently. Feminist authors cite this fact as evidence for the concept of democracy itself giving preference to men rather than as the manifestation of a free decision taken by women. The strict separation of the "public" and the "private" sphere begins to overlap when democracy gets consolidated. Then a free civil society starts forming and includes the private sphere.

The modern feminist concept of democracy emphasizes a democracy with a comprehensive nature and one that attaches importance to values such as equity and individual freedom in the private sphere. Emphasis is also put on family relationships and inter-gender relationships in the workplace. The sensitivity of a society to these values and application of these values in daily life require a concentrated long-term

### Box 6

#### The Gender Aspect

The gender-specific perspective understands human gender as a relevant category. The baseline is the distinction between *sex* as a biological specifics and *gender* as a social construction.

*Sex* marks the biological differences between females and males that are innate and are general – both from the viewpoint of individuals as well as space and time. Thus, these differences concern all individuals, occur everywhere (in every country, region, etc.), and occur all the time, i.e., they do not change over time.

*Gender* refers to social differences between females and males. These differences are not innate, they are acquired and change in time and space – they vary both within and between societies. "...the different status of women and men within the network of social and power relationships is not the consequence of the biological, physiologic-anatomical differences between them, they cannot be derived from, or justified by them." (Szapuová, 1998) This is an acquired status created by existing stereotyped expectations with respect to the roles of women and men in the society. Discrimination against women hinders not only the development of girls and women but also the development of the entire society.

effort from the entire society, especially from the women themselves. Authors who are sensitive to the feminist dimension of democracy state that a democratic society requires a democratic family, a democratic economy, and ultimately democratic sexual and racial relationships. Both the family and the cultural dimensions of democratic sexual and racial relationships must undergo changes.

## Reasons for the Poor Acceptance of the Gender Dimension in Slovakia

About two thirds of Slovakia's population are of Catholic faith. Even though a significant portion of them does not actively participate in the life of the church, they consider the *principal values and standards of Catholic faith* as part of their life beliefs and attitudes. The preferred family model is a *traditional model of the family and marriage* with the father being the key authority and the main breadwinner. Alternatives to the conventional form of the family coexistence occur quite frequently in western societies, but are not prevalent in Slovakia. Some statistics show an increase in the number of non-married couples living in partnerships in Slovakia, and that the age at which people marry has increased. It is also noted that the absolute numbers of marriages and divorces have remained almost unchanged in the last five years. Since most of Slovakia's population lives in medium-sized and smaller settlements, the pressure of the social control linked with the values of conservative Catholicism is an important factor that hinders the acceptance of alternative lifestyles.

The problem of violence against women still remains a taboo issue despite educational attempts by non-governmental organizations. People believe that society is not affected by hidden or open violence and inconsiderate attitudes to weaker groups of the population. But, half of the population studied acknowledged the existence of various forms of violence against women. Family education, prudery, and mistrust of public institutions all support the belief that it is a woman's responsibility to make decision for reporting and disclosing a violent crime.

Also, the official *communist ideology* of the previous establishment has affected the perception of a woman's status in the society. The pursuit of collectivist ideals caused women to accept their status as inconsequential and traditional. In many cases, they claimed that they were not interested in attracting attention to themselves, or motivated to step out of the protective framework of the anonymous collectivism.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the communist regime did change the status of women in society, particularly with respect to increasing both their educational opportunities and their participation in the work force. In a way, this has brought about the transition of the traditional model of the family. The ideology of equity and emancipation did not reach as far as the private sphere and there were no changes in the asymmetric performance of family chores. The man's income was insufficient to secure the family, and the income of the woman supplemented the family household. This resulted in the woman working "two shifts" – both at the workplace and at home, even if the latter was not considered work. That time period created the roots of the current prevalence of women employed in non-favored and less paid sectors of the economy. Even during communist times, a woman's income represented only two thirds of what a man would earn in former Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>1</sup> Although there used to be official mass organizations of women under the communist regime, there was no women's association or a group at that time that would have been founded from the bottom up as a manifestation of common interests or needs; all were created through political pressure from the top.

## A Short Trip to the History – Starting Point of the Transition

The human development indices from the period of socialism do speak in favor of gender equality. Men and women in Slovakia had equal access to basic health care and education. As a result, the education structure was relatively balanced, and as time went by, the education level of women even exceeded that of men at some levels (e.g., secondary school with high school diploma). There was no marked difference in infant and newborn mortality between boys and girls.

The Constitution laid down both the right and the liability to work and most women had paid employment. The gender difference in the extent of participation in the labor market at that time was comparable with North-European countries that had been in the forefront. The key reason for the high involvement of women in the labor market was the extensive industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s. This was a result of Slovakia's labor force shortage, particularly for monotonous and less well paid work in light industries. Later on, women's increased educational level and the inadequacy of a single income to sustain a household strengthened their working activities. Most women returned to their jobs a half year up to two years after the birth of a child because the income of both the husband and the wife were necessary to meet the family needs. On the average, the wages of women were less and it was the men who received tax allowances and family allowances. Men continued to be perceived as breadwinners, despite the mass involvement of women in the workforce.

As years went by, the working involvement of women continued to grow. Women made up 38.7 percent of total employment in 1960, which grew to 45.5 percent at the end of the 1980s. Although feminization of some sectors of the economy was based on industrialization, this trend intensified during the subsequent years.

After 1989, discussions of women returning to the "family hearth" started in the Slovak society. Official "circles" advocated a return to the traditional model of the family. The overall atmosphere of the early 1990s pressures women to leave their jobs and focus on the care of the family and the household. This pressure, however, did not receive an enthusiastic response from women because households still needed two incomes even during the time of transition. Also, educated women did not want to lose their qualifications after they had achieved better opportunities and more personal career options.

The transition of society in the 1990's was a complex development. Identifying the principal problems faced by women during this period requires examining an extensive and complex set of problems. These problems were linked to poverty, women's unemployment, stereotypes of job-related differentiation between genders, barriers in the process of starting up own business activities, inequity of remuneration for work, as well as the prevailing higher work and family-related burden.



Table 22

**Major Problems Faced By Women in Slovakia by Relevance (%)**

Type of Problem	Extent of Relevance for Women			
	Irrelevant at all	Moderately relevant	Highly relevant	Unable to tell
Low income	1.8	7.6	89.3	1.3
Insufficient opportunities for work, unemployment	2.8	15.5	78.9	2.8
Harassment at the workplace	26.2	25.1	19.3	29.4
Unfair division of labor between women and men	10.9	20.1	59.2	9.8
Lack of private time, overburdening	3.8	8.4	84.3	3.5
Violence in families	24.3	26.8	29.2	19.7
Loss of employment due to motherhood	18.6	18.4	53.8	9.2
Poor State support in motherhood	9.2	16.3	68.1	6.4
Disinterest in public work	10.7	22.0	50.4	16.9

Source: Guráň – Filadelfiová (1998)

Slovak women state that the greatest problems were lack of finances and lack of time. The groups most affected were divorced women and women with children that frequently lived at a minimum threshold of subsistence. The threat of poverty grows with increased age since wage differences between males and females grow with increased age. Little has changed for the majority of women with respect to the care of the family and household management. There is a prevailing discrepancy between the declared and the actual level of women's rights in the society. Even though women's rights are declared, the rules are frequently violated and breached in real life. Economic opportunities play a key role in bringing about change in this area of concern.

### Gender Differences in the Labor Market (in Economy)

From the viewpoint of employment status, the most pronounced gender difference is manifested in the very *structure of the productive age and post-productive age portions of the population*. Women make up 48 percent and almost 66 percent of productive and post-productive age population, respectively. This gender gap is due to different definitions of productive age between the genders. For women, the interval 15-54 years is specified and for men 15-59 years is specified. During recent decades, the share of post-productive age women has kept increasing while the share for men has stagnated and remained the same due to their higher death rates. As of 31 December 1998, the numbers of post-productive age women reached 631,018. This is 5.9 percent more than in 1990. During the same period, the number of post-productive age men reached 328,463. This is only 0.8 percent higher than 1990. These increases are reflected in the aging index<sup>2</sup> that has grown from 69.3 in 1980 to 87.1 in 1998 (even 90.5 in 1999). The differences in gender-related trends have created marked differences in the aging index between women and men. There were 58.3 post-productive age men per 100 boys aged below 14 in 1998, whereas there were as many as 117.2 post-productive age women per 100 girls of the same age (and/or 92.3 women older than 59). The overall proportion of post-productive age people in Slovakia's population increased by 0.4 percent, however, the increment only concerned women.

<sup>2</sup> Aging index represents the ratio of post-productive population to pre-productive population.

The ongoing reduction in birth rates resulted in a reduction in the proportion of children, the pre-productive age portion of the population in the 90s, and an associated growth in the mainly productive age portion of the population (by 4.2 percent). This meant that the potential for economic activity and employment kept growing along with the pressure on job opportunities. In an economy whose pension system is mostly based on reciprocity, economically active individuals must generate income not only for themselves, but also for the pre- and post-productive age (children and pensioners) populations. In an economy with a shortage of jobs, increases in productive age population increases in unemployment rates.

The numbers of economically active individuals (i.e., the labor force of the society) kept growing in Slovakia throughout the 1990s. In 1999, it averaged 2,573,000 that was comprised of 45 percent women and 55 percent men. Since the mid-90s, *economic activity* rates of the population have stabilized at the 60 percent level.<sup>3</sup> For all Slovak citizens aged 15 and above, 6 in 10 are economically active. As shown in Table 23, the portion of the male population in the labor force is approximately 19 percent higher than the portion of the female population in the labor force.

Table 23

**Economic Activity Rate of Population (%)**

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	62.1	60.3	59.8	60.1	59.9	59.9	60.0
Males	70.4	69.1	68.9	68.7	68.6	68.9	68.7
Females	54.4	52.2	51.5	52.3	51.8	51.5	52.0

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

In 1999, the average of economically inactive persons was 1,718,500, i.e., *individuals outside of the labor market*. This was 0.6 percent higher than the preceding year's level. Pensioners were the largest group at 60.7 percent. The number of pensioners increased by 18.7 thousand over 1998 numbers. Women accounted for 15,800 of the increase (i.e., almost 85 percent of the year-to-year increase of pensioners). The second largest group of persons outside the labor market was students and apprentices, with a share of 24.3 percent. The next largest groups were housewives (6.6 percent in 1999), mothers on additional maternal leave (3.2%), persons unable to work (3.1%), the group of "discouraged" persons (who do not believe that they would find a job again – 0.6 percent), and persons who do not want or need to work.

The economically active population can be divided into two groups: those who work and those who are unemployed. An increase in the number of economically active individuals does not automatically mean an increased employment rate or an increase in the total numbers of individuals with jobs. Shortage of job opportunities may namely redirect the growth of economic activity towards a growth of unemployment. That is what occurred in Slovakia during the late 1990s. The growth of economic activity in mid-90s was reflected in a growth of persons with a job. In recent years, it has shifted into the growth of unemployment rates.

The average number of employed workers in Slovakia's economy dropped by 4.2 percent between 1996-1999. The most pronounced decrease was in 1999 (by 3 percent, i.e., 67,000). On average, there were more than 2,132,000 persons in Slovakia during 1999 with 45.4 percent being women. Gender differences were manifested in the developmental tendencies of working persons. Other differences in work activities can also be noted. Women are more involved in part-time or unstable jobs than men (temporary, occasional or seasonal work). According to the Labor Force Survey, there were 1.1 percent men and 3.1 percent women working part time

<sup>3</sup> Economic activity rate represents the share of economically active population (employed including women on maternity leave, and registered unemployed) on total population in productive and post-productive age.

during the 4th quarter of 1999. Major reasons reported for part-time work were health condition, matching the overall arrangement of the life of the worker, and the wishes of the employer.<sup>4</sup> In evaluating the willingness of employers to offer flexible working hours to mothers, it may be of interest that only 4 percent of women gave childcare responsibilities as the reason for working part-time (*Report on Social...*, 1999).

Another important factor after 1990 was the emergence of the private economic sector along with areas of the State and/or public economic sectors. The proportions of men and women in these sectors are different. 57.3% of women work in the public sector and make up almost half of its employees. In the private sector, only 43.6% of workers are women. The ratio of women in the self-employed sector is even less favorable at only 25%. For business people having no employees, women make up 26.8%, whereas the corresponding figure for business people with employees is 25.5%. The private sector in Slovakia is still a masculine domain.

Significant **employment segregation** based upon gender also exists in Slovakia as well as in other countries. Women dominate some sectors and positions while men dominate other sectors. However, it should be noted that Slovakia has undergone some marked changes in the overall economic structure and in employment. Since 1970, Slovakia has transformed from an economy with significant agricultural share into an industrial dominant economy. The services sector has also been developing since 1970.

The proportions of persons working in the primary sector dropped to 8.3 percent by 1998, but those working in the secondary sector decreased slightly to 39.4 percent. The tertiary sector, with the total numbers of workers increasing to 52.3 percent, is the only sector that has kept growing. The individual sectors differ substantially in their respective participation of men and women. The tertiary sector is a predominantly a feminine arena, with almost 70 percent of working in it being women. Compared to men, the percentage of women in the primary sector is almost 50 percent smaller and one third smaller in the secondary sector.

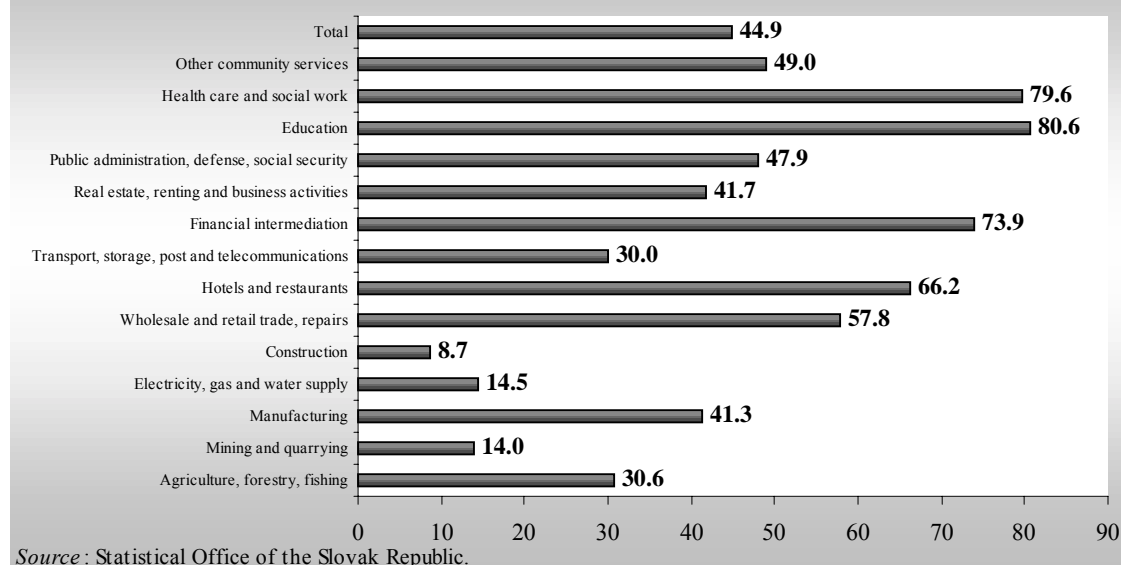
When examining the individual branches of the national economy, one can note that the employment structure shows rather marked gender differences. In the sector structure, men pronouncedly dominate the construction industry, production of mineral raw materials, heavy industries, and agriculture. In addition to the conventional sectors mentioned, men also predominate in sectors such as transport, real estate, and development. Among the classical categories of economic activities, women could achieve predominance in light industries, trade and catering services. The most pronounced differences, with respect to gender, concerns education, health care, social care, as well as the financial and insurance businesses. In these sectors, women comprise more than three-quarters of the employed. These sectors may justifiably be called feminized. With the exception of the financial and insurance businesses, these are the sectors recording the lowest monthly wages. The working activities of women in these feminized sectors have strengthened in recent years. Progress has been made in the financial and insurance businesses and the education sector.

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<sup>4</sup> Women make up 44.8 percent of the labor force with full-time jobs, and their share on the part-time labor is 48.8 percent.

Figure 10

### Share of Women on Total Number of Employed by Economic Activity (in %, 1998)



Education in Slovakia is the most feminized employed sector. Women prevail in all types of schools, except universities and colleges (see also *Training and Education* in this report). Experts frequently mention the lack of male models in education and state that this has a negative impact mainly on the population of boys. Except for grammar schools and secondary schools, boys are more numerous than girls in school. Given the overall economic situation in the country, there is little chance in the future that low wages in the education sector may stop the male element to leave this sector. We are unable to estimate what impact this may have in the future.

Gender "gaps" are also evident in other occupations. The biggest difference, to the benefit of males, is in the group of craftsmen and qualified workers as well as jobs involving the operation of machines and equipment, i.e., laborer jobs where the share of women remains below the 20 percent level. Women in Slovakia typically prevail among the lower wage administrative and operating staffs of the services and trade sectors. The increased educational level of women in Slovakia has also resulted in women achieving majority participation in the second and the third classes of employees (scientific and professional intellectual jobs as well as technical and health professionals). Males and females have approximately equal shares within the category of ancillary, non-qualified, and agricultural laborers. A rather strong differentiation at the highest class of employment does not favor women, which is surprising when one considers the relatively balanced educational structure of men and women in Slovakia. Among the legislators, managers and senior officials, women do not even achieve a 30 percent share. This fact may be interpreted as additional evidence of marginalizing women in Slovakia's society. It also provides evidence for the existence of barriers to a broader participation of women on power and decision making outside of educational areas.

Table 24

**Employed by Classification of Occupation (1998)**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Total (thous.)</b>	<b>Of which Women (%)</b>
1 Legislators, senior officials and managers	128.2	29.8
2 Scientists and brain workers	210.2	60.3
3 Technical, medical, pedagogical professionals	365.3	60.2
4 Administrative workers (officials)	183.0	74.9
5 Workers in services and trade	266.2	67.8
6 Qualified workers in agriculture, forestry and relat. fields	42.2	43.8
7 Craftsmen and qualified producers, repairmen	465.1	18.6
8 Machine and equipment operators	304.2	19.6
9 Supporting and non-qualified staff	231.2	51.6
10 Not classified	3.0	56.7

Note: Data from labor force survey.

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic 1999*. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

A comparison of *average monthly wages* in various sectors of the national economy has shown that lower wages are typical for sectors that are dominated by women. Wages in these sectors do not exceed the level of average wages for the national economy of Slovakia. However, the average wages of men and women also differ in global terms. According to the survey *Information System on Average Wages* (Trexima Bratislava), the average hourly wage gap was SKK 18.87. In the 4th quarter of 1999, women received SKK 60.10 per hour while men received SKK 78.97 per hour. That means the average wages of women was only 76 percent of men's average wages. This gender disparity in remuneration is a long-term issue since a similar difference could be noticed over a longer period of time (actually, it is moderately increasing). So, the difference in average monthly wages between men and women represented SKK 2,609, and in 1998, SKK 200 more than in 1997. This disparity has been confirmed by a comparison of wages of men and women within matching categories of employment and education.

Table 25

**Average Monthly Wage for Females and Males by Completed Education (1998)**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Males (M)</b>	<b>Females (F)</b>	<b>Ratio F/M</b>
1. Primary	8,294	6,001	0.72
2. Apprenticeship	9,590	6,664	0.69
3. Secondary (without exam)	9,346	6,682	0.71
4. Apprenticeship with leaving exam	11,133	8,753	0.79
5. Full secondary general	11,714	8,984	0.77
6. Secondary vocational (vocational school)	12,328	9,119	0.74
7. Post-secondary	15,104	10,278	0.68
8. University	18,824	13,590	0.72
9. Scientific (Ph.D.)	19,865	13,147	0.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,356</b>	<b>8,747</b>	<b>0.77</b>

Source: *Sample Surveys on Structure of Wages of Employees in the Economy of the SR*. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Identical levels of education do not provide identical remuneration for work. Women had lower wages for each category of education, where the difference ranged between 21 and 32 percent of men's wages. The possibility of reducing this disparity with increased education could not be confirmed. The greatest difference concerned secondary education (without leaving exam). The reasons may be from differences due to extra work and night work. Evidence points to the fact that it stems from the significant difference in remuneration between light industries (mainly women) and heavy industries (mainly men). The difference between higher education groups

may be influenced by the different working positions of women and men. The greater willingness of women to work in lower qualification jobs may be reflected here.

**Table 26**

**Average Monthly Wages for Females and Males by Classification of Occupation (1998)**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Males (M)</b>	<b>Females (F)</b>	<b>Ratio F/M</b>
1 Legislators, senior officials and managers	27,497	17,773	0.65
2 Scientists and brain workers	14,617	11,886	0.81
3 Technical, medical, pedagogical professionals	13,251	10,162	0.77
4 Administrative workers (officials)	10,297	8,245	0.80
5 Workers in services and trade	9,668	6,423	0.66
6 Qualified workers in agriculture, forestry	8,070	7,096	0.88
7 Craftsmen and qualified producers, repairmen	9,954	6,974	0.70
8 Machine and equipment operators	9,985	7,418	0.74
9 Supporting and non-qualified staff	7,056	5,537	0.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,356</b>	<b>8,747</b>	<b>0.77</b>

*Source: Sample Surveys on Structure of Wages of Employees in the Economy of the SR. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.*

A comparison of gender based employment differences within occupational groups showed that differences existed in all categories and those differences did not reduce with increased position. The most significant difference (35%) was in the wages paid for legislators and managers. The smallest wage gap was for qualified laborers in agriculture, lower white-collar workers, and scientific workers (less than 20 percent). These tendencies have continued over several years. One explanation may be the type of employment organization. Standard tables of remuneration are used by the public sector that employs most white collar and scientific workers. It is in these areas that a woman may more easily achieve a managerial position. In the private sector, where looser remuneration principles exist, men are dominant. Other explanations may be found in the educational differences of men and women, and in the practical experience differences (men achieve a higher educational level earlier, women have to "catch up" with them, breaks in the working career due to motherhood, care for, or attending family members, etc.).

**Table 27**

**Average Monthly Wages for Females and Males by Age (1998)**

<b>Age category</b>	<b>Males (M)</b>	<b>Females (F)</b>	<b>Ratio F/M</b>
up to 20 years	7,192	6,212	0.86
20 - 24 years	8,975	7,488	0.83
25 - 29 years	10,560	8,018	0.76
30 - 34 years	11,419	8,760	0.77
35 - 39 years	12,035	9,059	0.75
40 - 44 years	12,265	9,273	0.76
45 - 49 years	12,677	9,311	0.73
50 - 54 years	12,753	9,658	0.76
55 - 59 years	11,998	8,835	0.74
60 and more	9,622	6,406	0.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,356</b>	<b>8,747</b>	<b>0.77</b>

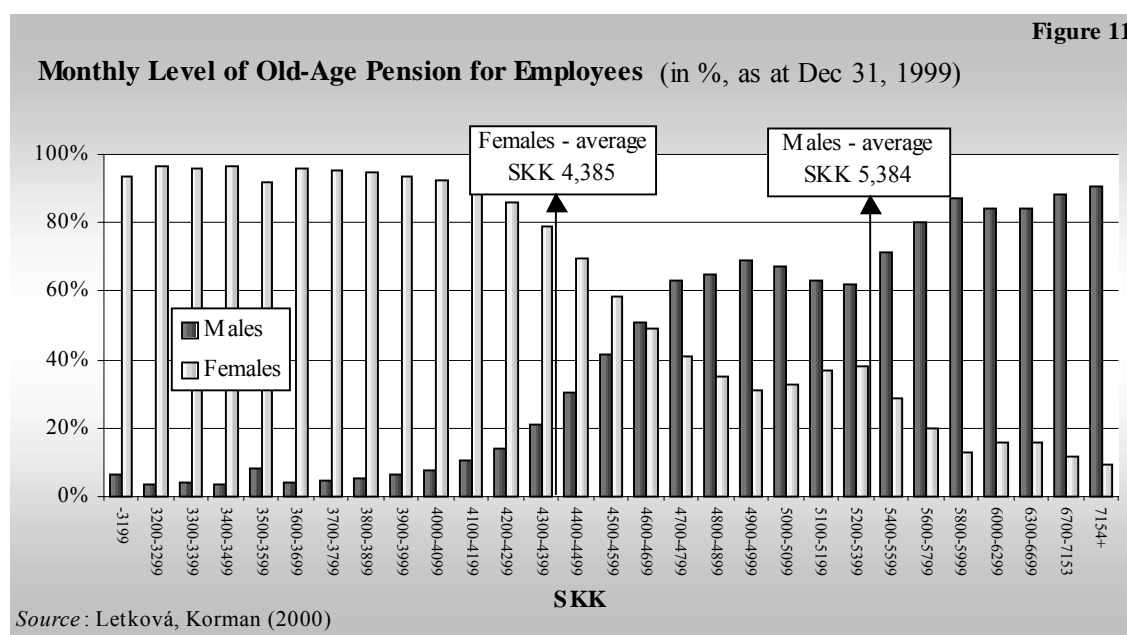
*Source: Sample Surveys on Structure of Wages of Employees in the Economy of the SR. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.*

A comparison of comparable age categories partly confirms the suggested explanation. Namely, age is the only single distinguishing factor that shows a direct connection with wage differences between men and women. The greatest difference exists in the highest age categories (33%). The wage gap becomes smaller with decreases in age (down to 14 percent in the youngest

group). Men's careers are not restricted by maternal responsibilities and they can more readily accept higher and more time-consuming positions.

A comparison of comparable employment-related education and age categories of men and women suggests that there is a prevailing form of discrimination in the appreciation of women's work in our society. However, this comparison does not totally explain the discrimination. Gender based wage differences do not fully reflect gender discrimination at the workplace. As shown by measurements in other countries, the characteristic of the workplace per se and the preparation for employment explain less than a quarter of the difference in wages (*Women in Transition*, 1999). To verify other suggested explanations, a more detailed comparison would be needed (within more specific groups, multi-step analyses). It remains a fact that gender-related differences in wages occur in almost all developed European countries and in the US. No final answers to these issues have yet been found. But, experts need to continue to seek explanation. With Slovakia's conditions, priority solutions are needed for highly feminized sectors and professions. It remains unclear whether low wages are a result or the cause of feminization (see also *Measuring The Quality of Life* in this report).

Gender differences in wages results in women receiving smaller pensions. For 1997, the difference averaged around SKK 1,500. This can cause economic and social problems for a large group of female pensioners who, throughout their lives, worked for a lower salary. The law provides for partial adjustment of the difference by awarding widower's or some other type of pensions (*Report on Social Situation...*, 1999). This relates to the marked feminization and the seclusion of the elderly in Slovakia. There has been a marked growth in the proportions of poor women among the older-age population.

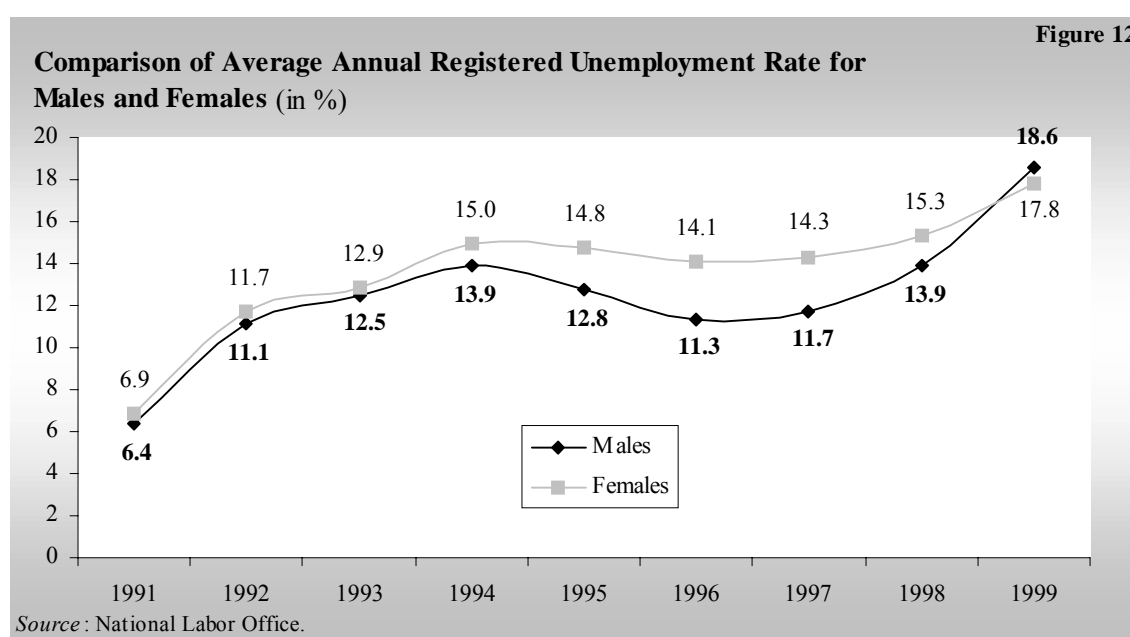


In addition to being employed, women generate significant value by working in their households. This is referred to as "*unpaid work*" (estimates suggesting as much as one-third of the gross domestic product reported for developed countries). There are huge differences among Slovakia's households concerning the participation of men and women on unpaid work. There have been several sociological surveys that show the prevalence of different participation (Bútorová, 1998; Filadelfiová – Gurán, 1997). In the 1990s, no representative survey of time utilization was conducted, which would provide more exact information on gender differences in domestic chores and childcare (see Figure 15 in *Poverty and Social Exclusion*).

As previously discussed, a portion of the economically active population in Slovakia has shifted into growing unemployment during the recent 3 years. **Unemployment** in Slovakia belongs to the most recent social phenomena. After 1990, unemployment emerged as part of the transition to market economy. It showed one of the most significant growth trends of all processes monitored. The monthly numbers of unemployed registered with the Labor Offices in 1999 averaged over 485,000 of which 219,415 were women. There are multiple reasons for this unprecedented unemployment situation. Among the causes were the liquidation of surplus jobs, bad economic results, bankruptcy of many enterprises, growing numbers of economically active persons, changed behaviors of the public, etc.

The share of unemployed women varied slightly during the 1990s. It grew to more than 50 percent and then dropped in 1993 and 1994. It also decreased in the last two years. In 1999, the lowest share of unemployed women was recorded; at that time, women accounted for 45.2 percent of all unemployed persons in Slovakia.

A comparison of yearly registered unemployment rates for women and men suggests that throughout the 1990s the rates for women in Slovakia were 1.0-2.8 percent higher than rates for men. During the last year studied, the unemployment rate for women, for the first time, was below the rate for men. The average registered unemployment rates for the given year were 18.6 percent for men and 17.8 percent for women (17.9% and 16.6%, respectively, when disposable numbers of registered unemployed are considered). The unemployment growth rate for men has grown to be twice that for women and has reached a difference of almost 5 percent.



Since 1994, long-term unemployment in Slovakia has been a continuing issue for both sexes. Long-term unemployment in 1999 was 41.5 percent for men and 45.4 percent for women. Unemployment benefits awarded to women average 14 percent to 18 percent less as a consequence of their lower average wages.

The greatest differences between unemployed men and unemployed women in Slovakia are attributable to age and marital status. The greatest number of unemployed in both men and women are those between 20 and 24 years old. At the same time, this age category shows the most pronounced difference in unemployment between men and women (20.4 percent of unemployed men and 16.1 percent of unemployed women). What is striking within the given frameworks is the huge difference between unemployed married men (approx. 43 percent) and



unemployed married women (approx. 57 percent). It is questionable whether this difference can be explained strictly by the age of the unemployed persons. For example, this might be a

#### **Retraining**

Unemployed women get retrained more frequently than unemployed men. Although the numbers of those who get re-qualified in Slovakia are not overly high (less than 1 percent of all unemployed), the prevalence of women in this group can be characterized as pronounced. It ranges between two-thirds and three-quarters. The numbers of unemployed undergoing retraining draconically dropped in 1999, due to the shortage of funds to be spent on active employment policy.

#### **Box 7**

strategy on the part of some married women with respect to obtaining unemployment benefits. Or, it might be a result of employment policies towards women with families.

The achieved level of education does not result in a more pronounced gender difference in the structure of the unemployed group. The level of education is stronger as a general rule, rather than as gender-related factor. A comparison of the educational level of the employed with that of the unemployed suggests that unqualified labor is eliminated from employment regardless of sex.

The disparity and similarities in the structure of unemployed men and women outlined above are manifesting themselves within a longer time-span and are thus becoming a part of Slovakia's unemployment pattern. There are some year-to-year deviations from this rule, but the principal proportions remain unchanged. From the gender aspect, the development of the unemployment rates in Slovakia does not show any serious deviations that could be characterized as inequality. Unemployment of both sexes started from the same baseline and the developments were parallel during the early 90s. The second half of the 1990s produced a slight worsening of the situation for women. It was towards the end of the decade that tendencies of a broader impact of male unemployment started to appear.

A marked gender difference in employment is a different story. The difference concerns specific aspects of working activities rather than the general development. The greatest employment differences in Slovakia concern, above all, employment-related segregation, feminization of some sectors and professions, male orientation of management positions, wage-related differences, or unfair gender-based division of unpaid work. In the future, more concentrated research, administrative, and legislative attention should be paid to these issues.

## **Gender Dimension in Politics**

The fact that gender equality was a pretense during the communist regime became most evident in the *share of women on power and decision making*. At the communist parliament, women occupied about one third of the seats, a level that at that time was achieved only by Nordic countries. Quotas for women had been set, but the Communist Party determined the slates. The elections were primarily of a confirmatory nature. As early as the first free elections in 1990, the significant participation of women was lost. Only 18 women were elected to the parliament, i.e., 12 percent of all MPs. This social experiment showed the deep failure of the communist government with respect to the development of gender equality. Subsequent parliaments could not increase this share by more than 1.5-2 percent.

A similar situation could be observed during the most recent elections. The proportions of men and women on political party slates for the 1998 parliamentary (National Council of the Slovak Republic) elections was not close to their respective proportions in the population. There were 274 women out of 1,618 candidates, representing 16.9 percent. The proportions of women running for the individual political entities ranged between 7.3 percent (Hungarian Coalition Party) to 44.4 percent (Independent Initiative of the Slovak Republic). The situation was even less favorable in the *ranking on the lists of candidates*. There were a total of 14.1 percent

women in the first half of the list and only 12.3 percent women in the first quarter of the candidates. The slates of a majority of political parties were set so that there was a direct relationship between the ranking on the list and the numbers of women. A higher ranking on the list increased the probability of being elected. The smaller percent of women on top of the list did not help gender equality. Women were assigned the worst positions on the list of the Slovak Democratic Coalition SDK; there were but 5.3 percent women within the first fourth of the slates, and the highest-ranking woman had position 32.

The tendency of reducing the proportions of women to highly rated positions has been also manifested in the structure of the internal party bodies. It showed that the relatively strong participation of women as ordinary members was substantially reduced towards the higher offices. Women are therefore less represented among the party leaders, at the top positions in the national councils, etc. This "upward reduction" is then reflected on the slates for parliamentary elections and the subsequent filling of the parliamentary seats.

The actual numbers of female MPs at the National Council of the Slovak Republic is 21. This is only 7.7 percent of all the female candidates and 14.0 percent of all the *seats at the parliament*. Besides the first post-revolutionary parliament (1990-1992), the present National Council has the smallest participation of women. We may therefore state that participation of women in the legislative power has been relatively constant at a rather low level during the post-revolutionary period. This ratio ranks Slovakia about 20th in Europe. Only four EU Member States have a smaller participation of women in their parliaments than Slovakia. Greece has 6.3 percent, France has 10.9 percent, Italy has 11.4 percent, and Ireland has 12.5 percent. The highest participation of women is 42.7 percent, found in the Swedish parliament.

Table 28

**Representation of Women in National Parliaments** (as of January 15, 2000)

Country	Lower Chamber or Single-Chamber Parliament			Upper Chamber or Senate		
	Elections	Mandates	Women (%)	Elections	Mandates	Women (%)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	09 1998	42	28.6	09 1998	15	0.0
Croatia	01 1999	127	20.5	01 1999	68	?
Estonia	03 1999	101	17.8	-	-	-
Latvia	10 1996	137	17.5	-	-	-
Lithuania	10 1998	100	17.0	-	-	-
Czech Republic	06 1998	200	15.0	11 1998	81	11.1
Poland	09 1997	460	13.0	09 1997	100	11.0
Slovakia	09 1998	150	12.7	-	-	-
Bulgaria	04 1997	240	10.8	-	-	-
Hungary	05 1998	386	8.3	-	-	-
Slovenia	11 1996	90	7.8	-	-	-

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments as at January 15, 2000.

The situation is not much different when it comes to the *participation of women in the government*. The composition of the current cabinet of the Prime-Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda does not deviate from the "post-revolution" traditions. In post-revolution governments, there were 0 to 4 women-members of the government and only two women serving in the current government. They represent 10 percent of the total number of the cabinet members. This level of women's participation in the top executive power makes Slovakia tie in rank with Poland at 24 and 25. However, seven European countries do not have a single female representative in their national governments, including the Czech Republic. Of the EU Member States, only Portugal, Greece and San Marino have smaller representations than Slovakia. Again, the

highest share of women can be found in Sweden with 10 women among 20 members of the government (50 percent).

The *communal policy* parallels the pattern of the big politics: female mayors have only been elected in 6 of all Slovak towns (4.4 percent of all mayors). There were no women elected (or running for) the office of mayor in any regional town. There were only 2 women elected in District towns (2.5 percent of all mayors of District towns). Compared to the preceding term, the share of female mayors increased, though by only 2.2 percent. A better situation can be observed with respect to mayors of villages. During the preceding term, women made up 15.2 percent of all mayors in Slovakia, their share having increased in the current term to reach 17.5 percent. Overall, there were 484 women successful in the communal elections for the office of mayors (among about 2,000 municipalities).

A similar tendency of women's decreasing participation with the increasing importance of the office can also be observed among the staff of the *ministries* in Slovakia and managerial posts at *District and Regional Offices*. Women make up 58 percent of the Slovak ministries staff. There are 35.1 percent women holding the office of department directors, and only 27.6 percent holding the office of sectional director. The highest proportions of women in managerial positions can be found at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (almost 70 percent) followed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Health (about 50 percent). Three additional ministries (Finance, Privatization, and Justice) have populations of women that varies from 40 percent to 50 percent. At the opposite extreme are the Ministries of Construction and Regional Development, Foreign Affairs, and Agriculture. No woman is holding the office of Regional Office Manager; and, there are only 9 women holding the office of District Office Manager. The situation is quite different with respect to the Departments of Social Affairs where there are 65.8 percent female department heads at the district level.

The quantitative situation shown suggests that besides desks and departments of social affairs and so-called weak ministries in Slovakia, women have a share on managerial positions that is far below 30 percent. That is a substantial difference compared to the overall proportions of women in the population. All the data mentioned suggest a ***marked gender difference in the participation on power and decision-making***. Also, participation of women in legislative as well as executive power has been low throughout the 1990s. This low participation is generally considered a reflection of the public life situation in which women are disfavored and marginalized.

The ***reasons*** for the huge differences in the participation of men and women in power and decision-making in Slovakia do not reside in any legislative restrictions. Rather, they stem from the political practice and the prevailing gender stereotypes. After 1989, it has appeared that women have shown less interest in politics than men. This is evidenced by their smaller participation in the elections. This fact, however, does not represent a significant difference in Slovakia's conditions. Looking at the analyses of political preferences, electoral outcomes<sup>5</sup>, at various polling reports<sup>6</sup>, or at various biographic records and memories of male/female players of the November 1989 breakthrough, it remains a fact that the gender dimension has been either totally (perhaps not deliberately) ignored. We come across the phraseology "Men of November" that reflects the gender nature of the structures of Slovak post-November political elites. Prior to the 1989 elections, even those parties who verbally proclaimed their standard democratic orientation failed to list an optically balanced number of women and men in their

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g.: *Slovak Elections '98. Who? Why? How?* Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., the periodically appearing information bulletin of the Institute for Public Opinion Research at the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic *Názory* (Opinions) has mentioned no gender dimension of any problem during the recent two years.

ranks. Female authors fail to challenge the male dominant role. Their social science texts rarely consider the gender dimension of politics. The *political factors* of this fact include:

- Dominance of the masculine model of political life – character features, standards, and the working style including the working time.
- Minimal support to female candidates in political parties. A negative role is also played by internal party mechanisms of selection that do not operate based on clear-cut rules. The lower posts are filled by elections, whereas political decisions frequently interfere with the selection of women to fill higher positions and the formation of candidate slates. For the time being, the classical and natural promotion in the political career from the membership base towards the top is an exception rather than the rule with respect to Slovak women. The biggest chances open up in front of those women who happen to be at the cradle of a political party or a movement.
- Insufficient "visibility" of professionally competent women. The media pay less attention to the creation of politically competent women than it is the case with men. Traditionally, women are considered more for the role of a spokesperson, secretary, protocol staff, or assistant.
- The absence of critical numbers of women in managing and leading positions. According to the comparative survey conducted by the European Commission, women can win real influence on political decision-making provided that their participation in the legislative body and central institution reaches the critical value of 30 percent. However, there also is an alternative interpretation of women's influence on political decision-making that stresses solidarity of women's groupings within the official structures, the standing interest of such groupings to attract attention toward the gender dimension in all areas of the society, and to not simply focus on percentages of representation.

The *socio-economic factors* of the low participation of women in political life include:

- The overall economic transition with the restructuring and macro stabilization processes is based on the assumption that above all, women are responsible for the replacement of labor.
- Problems of poverty and unpaid labor.<sup>7</sup> Due to the cuts in State expenditures on social security and services during the transition of the society, women in the families take over more responsibilities and perform activities that used to be provided for by the State to a significant extent (e.g., the liquidation of the wide network of pre-school facilities, after-school centers, free-of-charge special-interests groups, etc.). This results in much more unpaid work for women and also means that the women have less time to devote to other activities, including political activities.

The *ideological factors* of women's weak political involvement may be summarized as follows:

- The prevailing nature of official debates on the "status of women" in the society. Traditionally, the institutions that have implicitly supported the dominance of males in the society include the *church, State and the school*. We may also add today the *mass media* (they now prevalingly offer a picture of the woman as either a victim, a beauty, or a model).
- The aforementioned institutions make a contribution towards the stereotyping of the social roles, thus exerting pressure on the conformity of the behaviors: women are the sensitive and the weaker gender that needs to be approached in a different way. Since personalities suitable to hold political offices are considered to be strong individuals, women "naturally" are not included in this group.
- Scarcity or even rarity of the role model of a successful female politician in post-communist countries. The few role models encountered are exceptions to this rule, e.g., Hanna Suchocka in Poland or Brigita Schmögnerová in Slovakia.

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<sup>7</sup> The factors of poverty feminization are dealt with in the section *Poverty and Social Exclusion*.

- The poor image of politics under Slovakia's conditions. For many women, the belief that politics "is a dirty matter" creates a barrier to developing an interest in entering politics. International surveys suggest that there is a direct relation between a high degree of corruption in a country and the low participation of women in politics. Countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Bangladesh rank among the most corrupted countries in the world. Women in those countries have a 3 percent to 9 percent representation in the parliaments. On the other hand, countries showing the lowest levels of corruption, including Norway, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, have a relatively high representation of women in "official" politics.
- Prejudice and stereotypes concerning male and female roles that exist in the minds of Slovakia's population have the most pronounced effect. The prevailing attitudes are against women with young children entering politics. Any woman deciding to take up a political career in Slovakia must necessarily get her family's consent. As a rule, she can only obtain a conditional consent – provided that the family will not suffer by such a decision. For such a woman, this means that she will have – besides political responsibilities – to take care of the functioning of the household, moreover in an environment with unsatisfactory and expensive services. The generally restricted potential of mobility in Slovakia determines that the participation of women in high politics effectively equals long-term separation from the family during the week. (*Conclusions of the survey Women in Politics*, 2000)

#### Box 8

##### **Political Activism Outside of the "Official" Politics**

The low representation of women among the "full-time" politicians does not mean that women show no interest in politics at all. They rather prefer indirect participation in politics that would not jeopardize their "female" approach towards treating conflicts, the ability to negotiate, to seek compromises. This is a trend that is not only typical of women in our region but can also be observed in the West, in particular because women getting to the politics are sometimes considered as too "masculine" (e.g. Margaret Thatcher), and this discourages them to choose political career.

However, throughout the Central and Eastern Europe, women are markedly represented on NGOs, on the non-for-profit sector: some statistics suggest as high a share as 70 percent on the activities of these organizations.

When considering the political dimension of women's work in households to raise children and to provide for the family and replacement of the next generation of labor, we arrive at the conclusion that both genders have "activities" that make different forms of contribution to the development of the society. A male's contribution is more visible and financially valued higher. The contribution of a female is less visible and financially valued lower.

When considering the "private" dimension of democracy, i.e., the formation of equal mutual partnership relationships between the genders, it cannot be controlled by adopting new legislation or by taking administrative measures. There are some positive consequences of "forced" emancipation from the period of the communist establishment. However, this ideology has never started to reassess the traditional status of women in terms of sufficient support to actual economic independence of women.

Experience related to the introduction of mandatory quotas as a way to increase the share of women on top politics have been variable. It certainly would not be appropriate to introduce quotas for the parliament as a whole. However, it did prove effective in Scandinavian countries when quotas in statutes of political parties were introduced. Such quotas might be expected to also gradually establish themselves spontaneously in the competition for female voters.

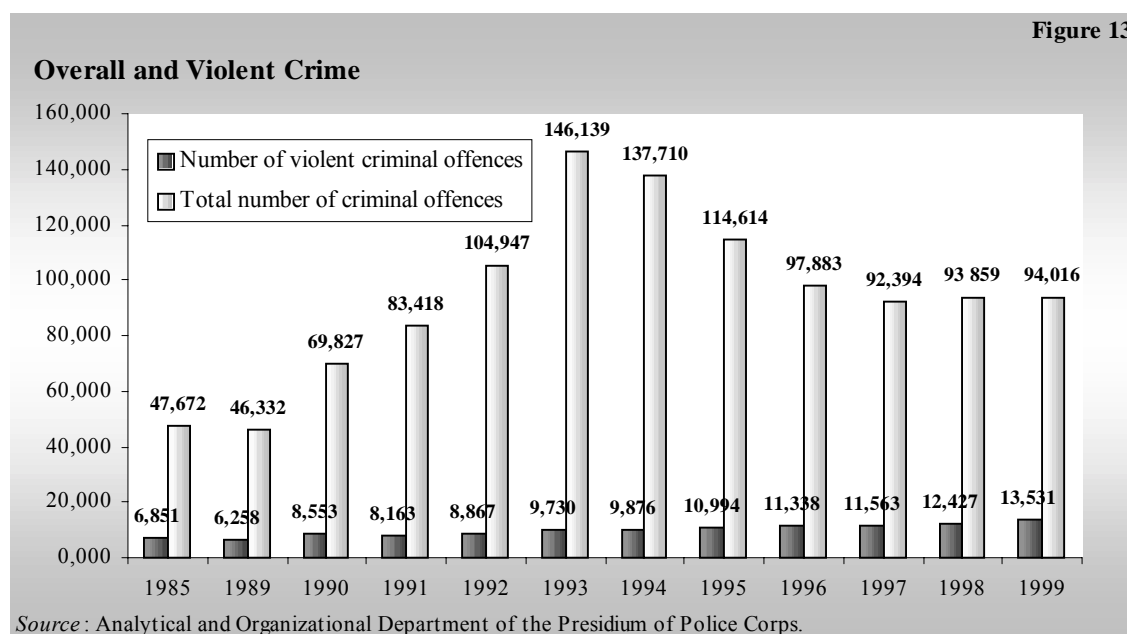
Interestingly enough, it only is HZDS after its "transformation" convention that has a similar provision in its statutes.<sup>8</sup>

A first step might be to make this problem at least "visible" within the society, and to start a broader discussion. A subsequent step might be discussions with political parties. Also, a significant role may be possible improving the efficiency of activities by the Coordination Board for Women Issues and of the Department for Equality of Opportunities at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family. During the past period, a concept of equality of opportunities for women and men was prepared, containing measures and recommendations oriented toward both public and political life.

## Development of Crime and Violence

Crime in Slovakia had relatively stable levels and high-resolution rates until 1989. There were around 46,000 to 47,000 registered crimes a year and almost 90 percent were solved. After 1990, the change in the social conditions instigated a rapid growth in crime accompanied by a parallel reduction of the resolution rates. This growth continued into 1993 when 146,125 crimes were recorded. The reduction of crime rates after this record year was above all due to the amendment of the penal law that re-qualified crime and offence. A majority of former crimes would be now considered an offence. In this context, there was a reduction mainly of crimes against property. The numbers of criminal acts kept decreasing during 1994-1997. In 1997, the numbers of crimes had dropped down to 92,395.

There were 94,017 crimes detected in 1999, an increase of 0.6 percent over the preceding year. The resolution rates oscillate around 50.1 percent, depending on the various types of crime. For vice crimes, 95 percent of the acts could be solved, whereas the corresponding number for thefts was only 30.5 percent.



The growth of crime rates has also been projected in the growth of criminal acts containing an element of violence. The development of violent crime, however, did not parallel the general development of crime rates. The number of violent criminal acts has continuously increased since 1991, reaching approximately 8,000 during the early 1990s, and exceeding 11,000 in

<sup>8</sup> Only HZDS, after its "transformation" convention, has a similar provision in its statutes.

1996. There were 11,912 criminal acts in 1999 that had a violent element, representing an increase of 50 percent over the 1991 level.

In parallel with the growth of crime rates, there has also been an increase in the number of female crime victims. The numbers keep growing in Slovakia with respect to both general and violent crimes. The number of female violent crime victims grew in 1997 to be more than twice as high as reported earlier in the decade. The total number of female crime victims was over 8,000 in 1999, representing 51.71 percent of all victims. Women had a share of 47.6 percent among the victims of violent crime, and as high as 90.4 percent for vice crimes. The corresponding figure for crime against property was 62.8 percent. The aforementioned ratios have been level for several years, with only a slight increase in the proportion of female victims.

The incidence of violent crimes suggests that women are most frequently victims of violence against an individual. This type of crime has also shown the most dynamic growth. The numbers of female victims of this type of crime grew more than six fold. The criminal acts ranking second in frequency, with respect to female victims, are assaults, with an incidence of more than 1,000. A dynamic growth was recorded with respect to female victims concerning sexual abuse, extortion and robbery. The number of murders with a female as a victim has been at the same level of about 40 cases a year throughout the 1990s. The only criminal act showing a reduction in criminal statistics concerns rapes. They were most numerous after 1990 but have been declining since that time.

In 1999, women were victims of 5,500 violent crimes, most frequently violence against an individual (3,491 cases) and assaults (1,100 cases). A total of 258 women were extorted, representing almost twice the numbers registered in 1997. Also, robbery of women showed a similar tendency, increasing by a third as compared to 1997 (381 cases). Last year, 43 women were murder victims and there were 3 cases involving girls where an act of maltreatment of entrusted person was detected. With respect to other types of violent crime, females were victims in 149 cases.

**Table 29**

**Recorded Criminal Offences Committed Against Women (1985-1999)**

Type of Crime	1985	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1999
Homicides	41	30	38	49	44	39	33	41	36	39	43
Robberies	79	79	253	250	262	265	235	248	282	287	381
Injury to health	1,027	958	1,077	1,071	1,245	1,126	1,189	1,207	1,143	1,113	1,100
Violence against individual	361	465	384	438	701	808	1,203	1,430	1,908	2,374	3,491
Extortion	45	59	58	73	86	83	86	118	141	126	258
Maltreatment of ward	10	10	6	15	6	5	6	10	10	4	3
Other violent crimes	122	126	161	147	122	111	115	126	125	129	149
Assault	255	257	318	258	234	210	211	207	207	173	171
Sexual abuse in dependence	71	38	36	40	47	47	42	71	41	42	59
Other sexual abuse	441	345	265	212	248	244	340	339	444	426	363
Soliciting	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trade in women	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	4	5	11

*Source:* Analytical and Organizational Department of the Presidium of Police Corps, Bratislava.

Concerning vice crime and the numbers of criminal acts registered in 1999; there were 59 cases of sexual abuse in dependent girls (17 more than in 1997). There were 363 cases of women – victims of sexual abuse, and 171 cases of rape. Also new types of vice crime, such as soliciting and trade in women have appeared in recent years, but only a few detected cases appear in crime statistics (11 cases of trading in women in 1999).

A comparison of men versus women suggests that females are mostly victims of violent crime against individuals. In other violent criminal acts, it is males who are more frequently the victims. In murders and maltreatment of entrusted person, males are twice as frequently victims as females. The number of assaults, robbery, and extortion against men are threefold the number against women. On the contrary, vice crime almost exclusively concerns women. With respect to sexual abuse, the most threatened group is girls and young women below the age of 18. A similar situation concerns trading in women. Rape concerns all age groups of women.

Table 30

**Victims of Violent Crime by Gender and Age (1999)**

Type of crime	Gender of victim	-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	Total
Homicides	male	6	5	11	11	24	18	11	12	98
	female	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>43</b>
Robberies	male	264	126	99	59	100	124	70	65	907
	female	<b>45</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>381</b>
Injury to health	male	156	415	469	312	528	571	235	152	2,838
	female	<b>29</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,100</b>
Violence against individual	male	27	134	143	119	214	342	184	239	1,402
	female	<b>24</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>3,491</b>
Extortion	male	249	121	91	59	85	106	28	27	766
	female	<b>51</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>258</b>
Maltreatment of ward	male	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	female	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
Other violent crimes	male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	female	<b>25</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>171</b>
Assault	male	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	female	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59</b>
Sexual abuse in dependence	male	60	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	63
	female	<b>363</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>367</b>
Other sexual abuse	male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	female	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Soliciting	male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	female	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>
Trade in women	male	33	9	11	8	14	10	3	6	94
	female	<b>26</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>149</b>

Source: Analytical and Organizational Department of the Presidium of Police Corps, Bratislava.

However, crime statistics only record a portion of the total crime committed in real life. They only provide an overview of criminal acts that could be detected. The incidence of latent crime will be much higher. Since there have been no surveys of latent crime in Slovakia as yet, these rates cannot be estimated. Moreover, the number of criminal acts contained in crime statistics usually do not include victims of *domestic violence*. The most recent official data concerning domestic violence to women is for 1997, when such violence accounted for 72.1 percent of all violent cases against women.

Again, this is but a small portion of the violence actually committed at home. Women who are victims of domestic violence, frequently do not bother to involve the authorities, and do not file petitions to start criminal proceedings. Women are frequently discouraged by offenders or relatives and forced to drop prosecution after having filed a petition with the Police. They typically withdraw their petitions. To open criminal proceedings in Slovakia, the victim must give his/her consent, and may – at any time – withdraw such consent. This frequently happens because of fears and threats of further violence, since the offender and the victim usually remain in the same household during the investigation of a reported criminal act. The consent of the victim in criminal proceedings is necessary when the offender is directly related to the victim, if he/she is a sibling, foster father, foster child, actual or de facto husband, or another person with a personal or family relationship. The institute shown is presented as assistance to



the victim who might perceive the prosecution of the offender as his/her own loss, and this enables the victim to settle his/her relationship with the offender. Representatives of many NGOs and many experts reject this interpretation and require offenders to be prosecuted regardless of whether the female victim has given her consent or not. The law only allows criminal proceedings in such cases that result in death.

Another problem in violence against women is the qualification of the act committed. In criminal proceedings of domestic violence, such an act is handled as an offence rather than as a criminal act. In 1999, there were 713,035 offences committed, an increase of 17,401 cases over the preceding year. Statistics do not show how many women have been victims of cases resolved in the framework of administrative proceedings. Alcohol consumption has a marked contribution to offences. It may only be assumed that the data on offences include many cases of domestic violence when only a slight injury was caused. Offences are sanctioned by penalties that are rarely recoverable. Frequently it is the victim who pays the penalty instead of the offender.

#### Box 9

##### Women as Offenders

As compared to women's share on crime in the role of victims (which is high), the share of female offenders is much smaller. In 1999, a total of 3,537 female offenders were registered, making up 7.6 percent of the total number of offenders (0.6 percent more than in 1998). Their participation in violent crime was 6.1 percent, that in crime against property 6.4 percent, and that in vice crime 3.9 percent. The type of crime committed by women is different from that committed by men. Most frequently, the criminal acts are intended to gain profit, such as fraud, embezzlement or robbery, etc. What follows is crime against children (neglecting of nutrition, rarely - maltreatment and exceptionally murder and/or murder of the newborn). A special group of offenders are women who committed murder or assault. These acts were mostly committed under strong agitation after maltreatment over long years by the partner, or under the influence of alcohol. Women made up around 4 percent among those sentenced; their share grew to almost 7 percent in 1999.

Fighting violence is a difficult and complicated job for State authorities in Slovakia. The principal reason is that the legislation and laws are imperfect. Legal standards that regulate domestic violence and/or violence in families are introduced in several countries, including legal regulations that protect women from violence. It was the most recent amendment to the Slovak Penal Code that introduced protection for maltreated women. Prior to this, the Code had only contained factors that constitute the offence of cruelty to animals, maltreatment of children, and had only provided protection to persons dependent on the care of another person. The law did not protect women, even though they were persons with legal capacity. By including "close persons" into the text of the law, legal conditions were created for this group as well. The definition of maltreatment has also been extended. Nevertheless, no special legal regulation has yet been adopted to address domestic violence. Cases of domestic violence, in the presence of factors that constitute the crime, are assessed according to the general penal law (Chapters five to eight of the Penal Code). The qualifications for some criminal acts are also vague and overly benevolent. For example, assault is defined as injury to health that requires at least 7 days of treatment.

In addition to weak spots in the legislative definition, complications in fighting violence by State authorities resides in the lack of willingness or ability of many victims to seek protection. Many victims are prone to tolerate violence because of their economic dependence on the offenders and because of fears that the family may disintegrate. This is complemented by a relatively benevolent public opinion concerning violent behavior and a low level of public support. It is frequently the victim rather than the offender who is blamed. The Police therefore address family problems only after there are severe consequences.

Under the past government, violence against women could not even be openly mentioned. In many cases, this silence still exists. Violence against women is not a point in Slovakia that can be treated without emotions and taboos. Available data about violence against women suggests that this phenomenon remains in society. However, professionals from justice, medical establishment, social work, and education sectors are not trained to be alert for violence against women and to handle the problem. This is a heritage of the communist regime. At that time, violence could not be mentioned publicly and experts for assisting victims of violence were not given any training.

The growth of violent crime has been huge, and a weak legal awareness prevails in the society. Rape and domestic violence are frequently underestimated, causing insufficient attention to these crimes. The crimes require an expedient introduction of specially trained professionals, social workers, police agents, and lawyers to adequately remedy the situation and to introduce preventive measures.

In Slovakia, NGOs have started activities designed to assist victims of crime and to take preventive measures in matters of violence against women. In recent years, several crisis centers and SOS lines have been established to assist women victims. The crisis centers operate primarily as voluntary organizations with an NGO status. According to the *Beijing Action Platform, measures to eliminate violence* have been formulated into the *National Action Plan for Women*. International pressure has resulted in the establishment of the *Expert Group for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and in Families* at the Government's Council for Crime Prevention. Its task is to develop a *National Strategy of Fighting Violence Against Women and in Families*.

## International and National Support Mechanisms

The international community's interest toward equal status of women and men in the society can be traced back to 1948, the year when the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was proclaimed. Numerous summits have been organized at the international forum since then, and numerous documents have been signed that specified and supplemented the general definition of human rights. The most significant forums have been the *International Pact on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), *Declaration of the Right for Development* (1986), *Convention on Children's Rights* (1989), *World Conference on Human Rights* (Vienna, 1993), *International UN Conference on Population and Development* (Cairo, 1994), and a number of others. The most important international meetings, from a gender viewpoint, included the *4th World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 1995) and the 21st Special Meeting of the UN General Assembly (New York, 2000). The most significant documents are the *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) and the *Beijing Action Platform* (1995).

The concept of men and women's equality has been recognized in Europe and elsewhere in the international community. But, the concept has not been fully developed in Slovakia and other Eastern bloc countries. During the era of socialism, women's emancipation was discussed instead of the equality of women and men. Efforts during that era only focused on the field of labor (status of women in employment, protection of motherhood, etc.).

As early as 1980, the former Czechoslovakia signed the *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* and it came into force in 1982.<sup>9</sup> Since it was published in the Collection of Laws, the *Convention* takes precedence over the national legislation providing that it secures a broader scope of basic rights and freedoms. The Slovak

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<sup>9</sup> Following the separation, Slovakia became party to the *Convention* on 1 January, 1993, through succession notified to the UN Secretary General.

Republic ratified in 2000 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In 1996, Slovakia established the *Coordination Committee for Women's Issues*. The committee was comprised of representatives of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, sectors, and NGOs. In 1997, the Coordination Committee developed the *Action Plan for Women*, in accordance with the action platform adopted at the Beijing World Conference on the Rights of Women. This set forth priorities for a period of 10 years as an attempt to secure equality of genders and to improve the status of women in society (Slovak Government's Resolution No. 650/1997). In 1999, the national machinery to eliminate discrimination against women was supplemented by the establishment of the *Department of Equal Opportunities at the Slovak Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family*. In 1999, the Parliamentary Commission of Women was also established. It operated in the framework of the National Council of the Slovak Republic's Commission for Human Rights and Minorities. In addition to official and public institutions, numerous non-governmental organizations and associations have also promoted related activities in Slovakia.

Since 1989, Slovakia has been going through an intricate process of social transformation. This social transformation has somewhat impacted the full implementation of the *Convention*. There is less space and willingness to take measures that would enable women to fully utilize and exercise their human rights. In preparing measures, the society attaches a stronger importance to the protection of motherhood and the role of women in families than to the woman as a personality. This comment, along with worries expressed with respect to the strengthening of the traditional perception of women as predominantly mothers, was also stated by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in its final comments on the Status Quo Report of Slovakia. (*Evaluation...*, 1998)

## Conclusions

The collapse of communism and the subsequent democratization of Slovakia's society have brought a number of changes to the social status of women and men. The free market economy meant the disappearance of many former services provided by the State. During the initial period after the communism era, women had to take on additional tasks within their families. However, women have refused to be tied to the household, which has contributed to the tedious process of change in male-female relationships.

Since the mid-90s, women have gradually been more accepted in public positions, although they are more accepted in economic than in political structures. The marginalization trend has prevailed both on the part of the women themselves and on the part of the "official" politics, despite the ratified international conventions on equal treatment of women and men, and despite the existence of the National Action Plan for Women in Slovakia. Society very weakly supports the idea of women organizing themselves in the interest of voicing and defending their own interests. Society is not yet ready to consider discrimination against women within the same context as discrimination based on ethnic principle. The opportunities to lobby for women's requirements are still subject to traditional anti-feminist arguments.

The greatest difference in gender is in the participation of women in power and decision-making, as well as some contexts of employment (segregation, lower wages for women). Men's occupations are generally better paid than those occupations that are traditionally filled by women. The participation of women in active politics is lower than their proportions in the population, their educational level, and their professional knowledge. Political and economical reforms have not resulted in the promotion of women into decision-making positions. This will require an environment in which women and men will have a fair access to resources and

opportunities, and in which governments, companies and civil institutions will exercise proactive policies and practice.

In the Central and East European region, there are deep-rooted political and sociological reasons for rejecting western forms of feminism. Changes in gender relationships occur slowly and gradually, both in the private sector and in the public sector.

A democracy modeled on the family relationship is the cornerstone for building equal opportunities in a society. A crucial requirement is to abandon gender stereotypes concerning the roles of men and women. A substantial and key role in this respect can be played by the media and addressed education of the younger generation.

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# Faces of Poverty in Slovakia

## Poverty and Social Exclusion

The mission of human development is to widen the opportunities available to each individual. A variety of reasons typically restrict such opportunities. One reason is the *poverty* that deprives or even excludes people from the current lifestyle of a given society, and even causes regression of human life.

Poverty is a worldwide problem that afflicts even the wealthiest countries in the world. The public in Slovakia gradually became aware of the poverty after November 1989. Due to ideological reasons, the phenomenon of poverty was absent from the official dictionary of socialist Czechoslovakia, which included Slovakia. The communist principle of equality was incompatible with a social inequality such as poverty. Despite this philosophical conflict, the population's standard of life declined because of the country's economic hardships that resulted from a communist regime. Some groups were affected to an extent that prompted the conducting of a survey entitled *Groups of Population with Restricted Opportunities of Consumption*, a euphemism for the poor population. In looking further at the past, we can state that poverty was a standard component of Slovak life under the 19th and early 20th century Hungarian Empire, and that its existence was caused mainly by retarded industrialization.

Slovakia's current society is transforming itself into a modern society. This means that it is becoming a society understood to have social stratification, which includes "poverty is a physical and measurable lower pole of the ideal stratification bipolarity – poverty and wealth". In a socially structured society, poverty is both a reflection and a result of social redistribution of wealth that depends on individual success in a market environment, and on the magnitude of social redistribution performed by State (Tomeš, 1996).

Poverty may be viewed as a legitimate component of a modern society. In viewing the Slovak society, it should be stressed that the term "poverty" has not been acknowledged in legislation and that official statistics do not record numbers of the poor, as is the case in the European Union by Eurostat. Yet, poverty has been the object of several surveys that have been conducted paradoxically under different names by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic or the Research Institute of the Slovak Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Family. Slovakia has typically used synonyms for poverty, such as "socially underprivileged population", "low-income households", and "material distress". The latter term has been used in legislation, and in fact refers to poverty.<sup>1</sup>

In Europe, poverty has been investigated since the late 19th century. Its perception has been evolving. Originally, anybody who lived in apparently bad conditions and faced problems with his/her physical survival was considered poor. A broader definition of poverty currently prevails in European countries, consistent with that of the Council of Europe (CE) of December 1984, which is "poverty refers to persons, families or groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural, and social) are limited to the extent that they exclude them from the minimally accepted lifestyle of the countries where they live".

The major characteristic of this "European" definition of poverty is the stress laid on the consequences of poverty, being *social exclusion* of the poor. Exclusion from the minimally acceptable way of life in the given country means that a) a general disfavoring is evident with respect to education, employment, housing or financial resources; b) the opportunities to access

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of Slovakia's integration efforts, it might be appropriate to accept the term *poverty*, including its statistical recording in the same form as it is being done in the EU (by Eurostat).

major social institutions that distribute various social opportunities are substantially smaller than for the remaining population; and c) both a) and b) are a relatively permanent condition (Konopásek, 1991).

For Slovakia, the term *material distress* is used as a synonym for poverty. It also has been defined in legislation as a condition characterized by an individual's income that is below the level of life subsistence specified by separate regulation. In a certain sense, *social distress* may also be considered a term close to that of poverty. Social distress is also defined in Slovak legislation as "a condition associated with the inability of the individual to take care of himself/herself, his/her household, of the protection and exercising of his/her rights and legally protected interests or of the contact with the social environment, in particular because of age, unfavorable health condition, inability to socially adapt himself/herself or the loss of job." Material distress is understood as a consequence of insufficient income, whereas social distress expresses social exclusion due to various reasons as well as its impacts, that may or may not necessarily being connected with poverty. The CE definition of poverty links these two forms of distress. Thus, it would be appropriate to accept this definition in the Slovak language also because Slovakia is a member state of CE.

Unlike material distress, whose definition is too narrow and does not cover the entire serious and extensive problem of poverty, the CE definition of poverty is a broader concept that includes both the background of poverty and its consequences, including social exclusion. It should be noted that, although used together, poverty and social exclusion are not identical. Social exclusion is broader in scope than just poverty. It includes the risk of marginalization and exclusion of individuals and groups in several areas of life, and always includes poverty. Poverty does not necessarily mean social exclusion. Poverty relates to a consumption standard of low or inadequate material means. Some groups who are not considered as poor can suffer systemic exclusion, e.g. racial or ethnic minorities, the handicapped, women, etc. Social exclusion is also associated with inclusion. For example, individuals excluded from one area can at the same time be included into another area (e.g., mothers are excluded from the labor market, but they are included into the family or other areas of the society).

The determination of the poverty line is of principal importance for the definition of poverty. Traditionally, the poverty line is based on income or expenditures, which are not the same. In western countries, including the US and also in Hungary, the poverty line is based on average income of the given country. The poverty line usually represents 50 percent of the arithmetic mean of the net income in the given country. In some countries, the basis may be only 40 percent. Households with incomes lower than the set poverty line are defined as being poor. Although low income itself does not reflect cultural and social aspects, it generally does express poverty.

There is no explicit definition of the poverty line in Slovakia. However, we believe that *life subsistence* can be considered equivalent to this definition because it represents a key point of social policy used to derive various social measures of State. The former Czechoslovakia's Federal Act No. 463/1991 had already defined life subsistence. It was expressed as the "socially recognized minimum limit of income of individuals below which material distress occurs." Citizens of Czechoslovakia were, for the first time, granted that their social situation is subject to the interest of the State's social policy. Adoption of the Life Subsistence Act was preceded by the adoption of the Constitutional Act No. 23/1991 Coll. that introduced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its Article 30 laid down the right of citizens to obtain assistance for the situation of material distress, thereby providing a provision for basic conditions of life. After the split of Czechoslovakia, this right has been guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. Human rights have become the basis in the approach for helping the poor, not

only in the sense of their right for assistance, but also from the aspects of their right for human dignity.

The concept of a subsistence minimum had already been considered during the communist regime. During the late 1960s, life subsistence started to be calculated for retired pensioners. Standards for life subsistence were also set within surveys conducted since 1970 for "groups of the population with restricted opportunities of consumption." In other words, the determination of life subsistence requirements was based on a minimum basket of goods and services calculated in current prices. The minimum was set using a relative method based on average income. Two levels of minimum subsistence were recognized: *existence and social minimum*. Both terms are also being used in current Slovak legislation.

An existence minimum expresses the minimum expenditures for basic existential needs of an individual, including food, necessary clothing and shelter. The relative method sets its computation at 42 percent of average income. The existence minimum is always less than the social minimum, and expresses the poverty line that also is referred to as absolute or extreme poverty. Traditional thinking prefers that we speak of distress or misery instead of poverty. The social minimum expresses a socially minimal level standard of life and requires the fulfilling of current existential needs in the given society, at a corresponding level of economic and social development and at a minimally socially acceptable level. Households that do not reach such a standard of life live in substandard conditions that are associated with suffering and deprivation. They are referred to as poor. Poverty determined based on a social minimum is also referred to as relative poverty.

The Subsistence Minimum Act, adopted in 1991, was in force until 1998. During this period, the subsistence minimum was valorized in 1993, 1995 and 1997. A new Act on subsistence minimum was adopted in Slovakia in 1998. It is based on civil principles and stresses citizen responsibility for his/her unfavorable life situation. Current practice in Slovakia represents a socially recognized minimum of net income that is expected to satisfy household needs at a very modest level (a household being an individual or a family). It includes expenditures on basic needs, such as food, basic personal needs, replacement of the basic household needs, and a minimum of social contacts. A subsistence minimum conceived in this way assumes that life is possible at this level only temporarily, and that there is a real opportunity to improve one's material standing through one's own efforts.

The Subsistence Minimum Act, and the subsequently adopted Social Assistance Act, specifies the application of three formerly defined levels of a subsistence minimum, and thereby also the differentiation of social benefits. The differentiation criterion is based on whether or not the individual caused his/her unfavorable situation himself/herself because of subjective reasons. The monthly subsistence minimum amounts were modified on July 1, 2000 to be SKK 3,490 for one major natural person, and SKK 2,440 for any additional adult natural person assessed together or any maintained minor child, and SKK 1,580 for any dependent child. Individuals that are in material distress due to objective reasons and have no income from earning will receive social assistance benefits to supplement their income in the given month to reach the subsistence minimum, as set forth by a separate regulation.

A *social minimum* provides another level of subsistence minimum. Benefits are paid to individuals in material distress due to objective reasons even though they have income from earnings. They supplement the income in the given calendar month to reach 120 percent of subsistence minimum set forth by a separate regulation. An *existence minimum* represents the lowest level of the subsistence minimum; benefits are granted to individuals in material distress due to subjective reasons. The benefits supplement the income in the given month to reach 50 percent of the subsistence minimum set forth by a separate regulation. The purpose of the



existence minimum is to secure the basic conditions of life, including one warm meal daily, necessary clothing, and shelter.

The Subsistence Minimum Act and the Social Assistance Act apply not only to Slovak nationals within the extent of basic conditions of life, but also to foreign nationals, persons without statehood, refugees, displaced persons, and foreign Slovaks.

The subsistence minimum was set using the relative method based on income of individuals. Income characteristics were determined for households with the lowest 10 percent of income, based on Statistical Office data and subsistence minimum standards for individual components of food, other basic personal needs, and housing expenditures.

State resources to pay for the social benefits are scarce. The introduction of a subsistence minimum concept will require further reductions. Yet, the subsistence minimum of SKK 1,745 monthly pushes a portion of the population to the "misery" line.<sup>2</sup> Based on the methods used in Slovakia as well as those used abroad, the numbers of poor people in the EU during 1993 ranged between 6 percent in Denmark and 26 percent in Portugal (*Income distribution...*, 1997).

Based on procedures used in the communist Czechoslovakia, 21 percent of the population in Slovakia was classified as poor during the late 50s. During the subsequent 30 years, the number classified as poor dropped markedly. The poor made up 9 to 11 percent of Czechoslovakia's total population during 1958-1976 (Hiršl, 1992). Using the same survey method, there were 9.56 percent of all households living below the social minimum level in 1998, which represented 9.02 percent of individuals. 1.13 percent of all households lived below the subsistence minimum limit, which represented 1.25 percent individuals (*Report on the Social...*, 1999).

The number of Slovakia's poor people and/or those in material distress after 1989 can be derived from statistical data for recipients of social benefits. On this basis, there were 584,941 individuals that were considered in material distress (or below the poverty line) in December 1999. That *represented 10.8 percent of the overall population*. It is evident, from the table below, that this has been the largest proportion since 1993.

<b>Table 31</b>							
<b>Population in Material Distress in Slovakia (as at Dec 31 of the respective year)</b>							
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
Number of individuals in material distress	386,323	442,544	408,507	378,637	392,927	506,440	584,941
Share in total population (%)	7.2	8.3	7.6	7.0	7.3	9.4	10.8

*Note:* Figures include dependent persons on recipients of social assistance benefits (until 1998, social care benefits).

*Source:* Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the Slovak Republic, 2000.

From a regional perspective, the largest number of social assistance benefit recipients in December 1999 was from the Region of Košice. That included 16.67 percent of the region's total population and 21 percent of the total numbers of recipients of social assistance benefits in Slovakia. The Region of Prešov had corresponding numbers of 16 percent and 19 percent respectively. The Region of Banská Bystrica's respective numbers were 12 percent and 16 percent, and the Region of Bratislava recorded the lowest numbers of 2.1 percent and 3 percent

<sup>2</sup> A possibly more efficient way to reduce expenditures on social assistance might be through a consistent control of "black labor". The numbers of individuals working "black" and receiving social benefits in Slovakia and even abroad has been estimated at more than 100,000.

(*Report on Social...*, 1999). It is clear from these numbers that the risk of poverty increased when moving in the direction from west to east. In the past, the poor regions (due to retarded industrialization) included the regions of Kysuce, Orava, Northern Zips, Zemplín, the southern part of Gemer, Hont and Novohrad.

There are no unambiguous methods to approach poverty. Undoubtedly, an interesting concept has been presented by the most representative survey of poverty in Slovakia. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, in collaboration with the French INSEE in 1995, conducted the survey under the heading of "Social Situation of Households in Slovakia" and under the *Poverty Project* framework. There were three bases for the determination of poverty, and thus also three forms of poverty recognized in the project:

- Monetary poverty – financial poverty, a term also used in foreign surveys. Its limit is usually given by 50 percent of the average income for the given country. In the survey mentioned, the limit was set at 60 percent because of the low-income differentiation of the Slovak population. Under this definition, 12.1 percent of Slovakia households were living in monetary poverty.
- Household conditions of life – the second approach, as defined by parameters for housing conditions, eating, functional articles owned by households (TV set, washer, refrigerator, etc.). Based on the conditions of life approach, 13.4 percent of the households were poor.
- Viewpoint of the poor themselves – the third approach, was the subjective viewpoint of the poor who were represented in low-income households. Under this approach, 7.7 percent households in Slovakia identified themselves as being poor (*Social Situation...*, 1995).

A significant factor in Slovakia's survey was the subjective opinions of low-income households concerning their situation. This approach to the poor, i.e., those having experience with poverty, is given strong attention in other countries. As pointed out by several authors, poverty is on one hand determined from the outside, by statistical methods and expertise. On the other hand, people themselves are allowed to their own poverty status by stating whether their income covers their basic needs and whether they feel poor or not.

National, supranational, and international organizations have become established in Europe to associate and represent poor people (e.g. the organization Fourth World). They wish to directly speak and propose government actions to ease the situation and position of the poor. They state that only those who know the situation of the poverty, from their own experience, can draft suggestions for solutions. They provide a voice in favor of the poor, identify and propose resolutions of problems, provide the necessary ethical principles, and support the human dignity of the poor. They recognize that poverty is more than indices and percentages, that it is also communication with those who have experienced poverty.

### **Groups at Risk of Poverty**

Not all groups of the population are at equal risk of poverty. From historical aspects, we may see that there has been certain stability in this respect, as well as some shifts. The first type of poverty in the 19th century was the "working class" stricken by pauperization. During 1945 through 1970 social minorities were at risk. Since 1970, it has been the group of unemployed that has had the greatest risk of poverty. This evolution has made poverty "novel", a term that means coping with economic and political problems and the subsequent emerging "underclass" in big cities. Although the data is based on the US experience, analogies can also be found in Slovakia. The unemployed (mainly long-term unemployed) represented 71-91 percent of the total numbers of social assistance benefit recipients during 1993-1999 in Slovakia. The highest percentage has been recorded toward the end of the 1990s. Eurostat data also suggest that the households of the unemployed in the EU are most likely poorer than other households. When it comes to the "underclass" emerging due to unemployment and subsequent poverty, it is the

"ghettos" of metropolitan towns that can be viewed as evidence of this fact. In United Kingdom, there is no clear-cut definition for the underclass, although the development is heading in this direction. The underclass will not only comprise members of ethnic minorities, but also white people from poor areas (Giddens, 1999). Manifestations of the underclass in Slovakia are not visible in big cities (although they have been suggested with respect to some quarters). As an analogy, settlements of Roma people located outside of the current population centers of Slovakia can be clearly considered poor and branded by high unemployment rates. A potential rise of social pathology will be connected with poverty, including crime, prostitution, and drug addictions that all become a standard way of life for the underclass.

An association between the *long-term unemployed* and the group of people at the highest risk of poverty is given by the very definition of a modern society that is perceived as a working society. This means that the condition of the labor market (or even exclusion from its framework) is the most significant poverty risk indicator. A resolution to the problem of poverty is connected with changes required to solve the employment problem. In the past, the solution to the unemployment problem was connected with the development of industrialization. In the 1950s, society was evolving from an industrial society toward a post-industrial and/or information society. In such a society, also referred to as "third-wave" society, the pattern of unemployment undergoes changes. Unemployment was quantitative in an industrial society where the unemployed were a result of redundancy. In a "third wave" society, unemployment is of qualitative nature where adequacy of education is the key criteria for success in the information society's labor market. Slovakia is thus in a situation where a resolution to the unemployment problem (and thus potential poverty) is no longer possible through further industrialization. What is needed is the creation of a "third-wave" economy to prevent the society from heading towards a 21st century Bangladesh (Toffler, 1996).

Two groups at the highest risk of poverty were recently identified in the EU. They include elderly people (which is a traditional group in this respect) and *people with lower levels of education*. People with low level of education in Slovakia are also in a similar position, although the trend is less pronounced. Even if the level of education does not improve income, as is the case in France, and even if intellectual work does not prevent monetary poverty, people with a low level or no education will become a group at the highest risk of poverty. It cannot be ignored that education is a precondition for success in the labor market.

As already mentioned, the position in the labor market or exclusion from its framework is the most significant indicator of poverty. Traditionally, this concerns the *elderly* who are excluded from the labor market due to age. In developed countries, this is being dealt with by continuous valorization of pensions. In this way, State protects from poverty this portion of the population "at risk". The same is true in Slovakia, even though the efficiency is questionable in the view of the diminishing real value of pensions. The amount of a monthly old-age pension has only a minimal difference to the poverty line subsistence minimum. Pensioners who still work can achieve a higher standard of life. As of December 31, 1999, only 8.7 percent of pensioners still worked. We should point out that the retirement age in Slovakia is much lower than in the EU: 60 years for males, 57 years for females (or even less depending on the number of children, one year for every child up to 5 children. The youngest age a woman can in theory retire is therefore at 53 years. This communist-based generosity can no longer be adequately funded, not even with the valorization of pensions. The retirement age will therefore have to be revised, even despite public opinion that is not positively inclined to this idea. Only 9.7 percent of Slovakia's population would be in favor of increasing the retirement age.

Without any doubt, the groups at risk of poverty include *incomplete families with children*. Poverty is a significant threat to incomplete families (divorced families or unmarried parents). The number of single parents in EU Member States has been growing, to be one of the most

pronounced demographic and social trends in recent years. There were almost 7 million single parents in the EU during 1996, Denmark and Sweden not included (*Lone-parent families...*, 1998).

Incomplete families made up 10.4 percent of all households in Slovakia during 1991, primarily due to divorces.<sup>3</sup> The growth of divorce rates may be expected to cause single-parent families to reach 15.5 percent of family households. There is no pronounced tendency for an increase in Slovakia's population of unmarried parents. Children are born mostly to married couples because the cultural environment is not inclined to support extramarital births.

**Children** are very likely to be at risk of poverty, as suggested by both domestic and foreign surveys. However, child poverty is not sufficiently visible because statistics primarily present poverty that affects families or households, leaving child poverty as an undocumented problem. Another reason that child poverty has little visibility is that State decisions focus on the needs of families and children, with family benefits minimizing the needs of children. Several authors have stated that there is no minimum standard of life specified for children. The proportion of children living in poverty is understood to keep growing. In 1993, there were more than 13 million children in the EU 12 that were younger than 16 years, one in five living in poverty (*Income Distribution...*, 1997). By the end of 1999, 16.7 percent of all Slovak families with dependent children were in material distress. From subjective aspect, families with three or more children and incomplete families with children tend to perceive themselves as being the poorest (the number of children is a traditional indicator of poverty).

In addition to recognized groups at risk, there are also poor groups of population that are not included in the statistics (poor beyond statistics) because they cannot be counted. They include **homeless people** that are poor in the very sense of a definition of poverty, both from the aspect of income and from social exclusion (including also offenders serving time in prisons, drug addicts, etc.).

In the more general sense, a homeless individual is one with no housing, socially excluded, and, "included" in non-residential spaces of ruins, garbage bins, basements, canals, railway and bus stations, streets, parks, spaces under bridges, and airport areas. All these spaces can be considered as replacement housing for inclusion of the homeless (according to Giddens, 1999). Their lack of income is "dealt with" by collecting bottles, paper, food remainders taken from garbage bins, and frequent begging.

There is no official definition of the homeless in Slovakia. They are referred to as "socially inadapted persons". Under communism, homelessness was not allowed and was prosecuted under Penal Code sections on parasitism. Sentences of up to three years in prison could be imposed. Many "homeless" exploited the Penal Code during the winter season to get into the "safety of the prison" for escaping deliberate thefts and to protect oneself from possible death due to freezing or undercooling. The number of homeless people in Slovakia is currently estimated at about 2,000 persons. The most frequent causes of homelessness include divorce, family conflicts, completion of term in prison, etc. A homeless way of life is typically branded by social pathologies such as alcoholism and stealing. A typical trait of the homeless is that they do not like asylums that are provided primarily by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They accept them but during the winter season. But, it is a way of life that usually ends tragically.

Homelessness is also viewed in the broader perspective of an absence of housing. In this view, the "homeless" includes adult children and young families that do not want to live with their parents (the prevailing method of coping with Slovakia's alarming housing shortage and high

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<sup>3</sup> Half of this number (5.4%) were incomplete families with dependent children.

costs). The portion of delinquent population that does not pay their rent is also a group at risk of homelessness.

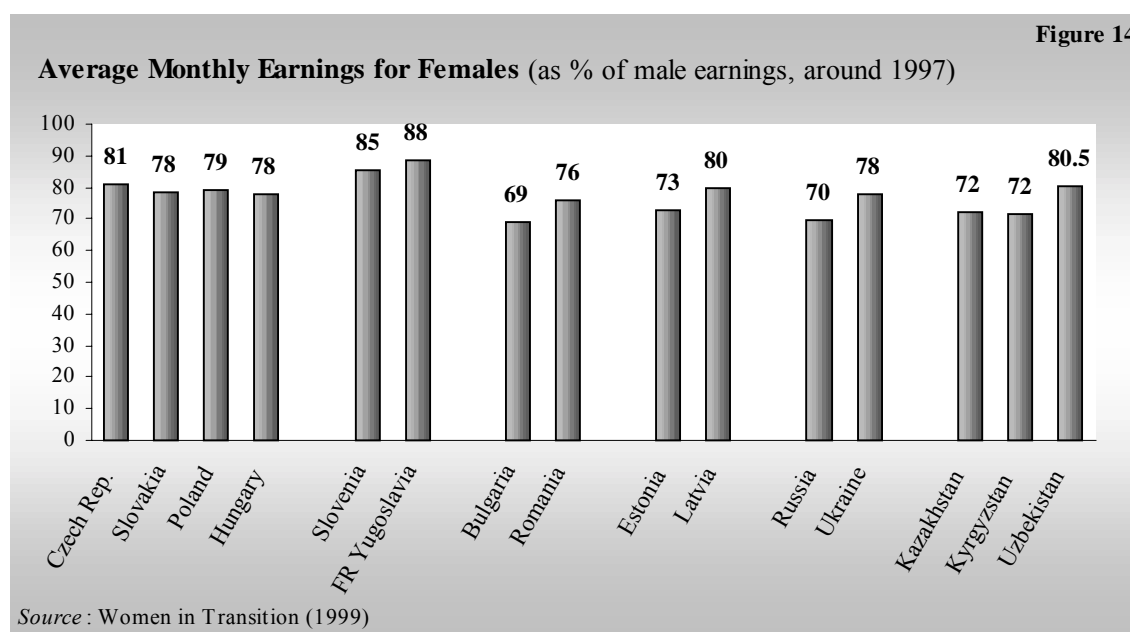
Statistics do not record their ethnic origin of individuals living in poverty because of respect for human rights. Yet, we cannot overlook that a significant portion of the *Roma ethnic* in Slovakia lives in poverty and misery. Their poverty is a result of their exclusion from the labor market that spawns long-term unemployment, from the size of their families, as well as from a low education level (see: *Poverty of the Roma*).

## Feminization of Poverty

Another portion of the population that is markedly at risk of poverty is *women*. There are more women than men worldwide living in absolute poverty. This inequality keeps growing and has serious consequences for women and their children. Women have to face disproportionately more problems connected with the overcoming of poverty, social disintegration, and unemployment.

Poverty is increasingly feminized in Slovakia, as suggested by several surveys. The most important reason for this is the unequal or even discriminatory position of women in the labor market. "Economic power is at the basis of the equality of women that helps women to exercise their human rights. All international commitments contain the imperative of improving equality between men and women" (*Women in Transition*, 1999).

Even if discrimination against women is prohibited by legislation in Slovakia, it still exists in other forms and is common in real life. In the labor market, unequal positions are manifested as segregation based on occupations (where women prevail in low wage sectors, such as education, health care, State administration, etc.) and segregation within individual jobs (where groups of women are paid poorly compared to the higher pay of men). With certain variations, wage inequality and segregation is common in most countries of the world. In the European Union, earnings of women were 28 percent lower than those of men in 1995. The monthly income of women represented 72 percent of the income of men. Figure 14 illustrates the situation in transition countries.



Women's lower wages has the most important impact on the feminization of poverty. It becomes manifested by the fact that lonely elderly women and unmarried women are primarily

**Box 10**

**Women and the Sex Industry**

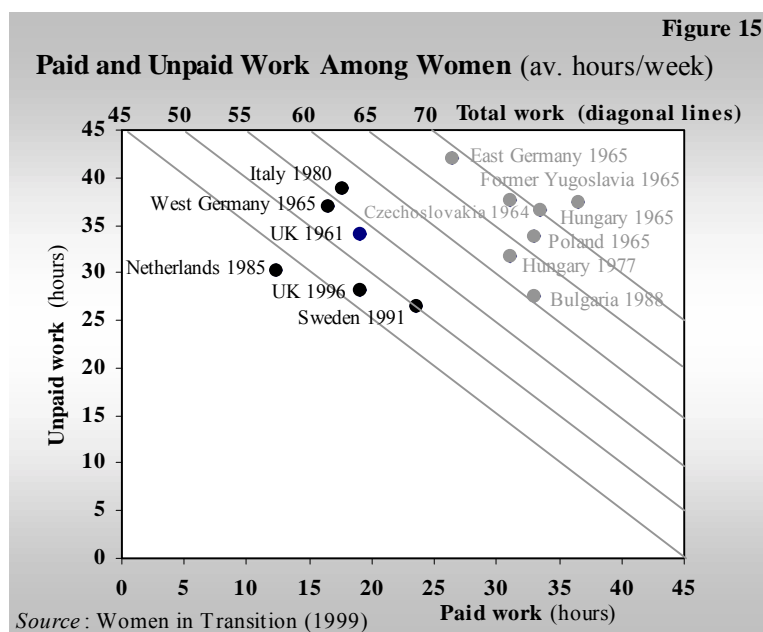
In the context of the feminization of poverty, the inequality of women with respect to income and unemployment, we may speculate about the potential socio-pathological consequences, among which the literally boom of the sex industry is at the foreground in transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It is uneasy to measure the degree of this boom, due to its irregularity and frequently criminal nature, but this phenomenon is openly observable. Numbers of women in countries in transition working as prostitutes have dramatically grown. Women from Eastern and Central Europe predominate as prostitutes in the streets of also many cities of Western Europe, many of them are forced to engage in such activities.

at the greatest risk of poverty. In considering monetary poverty, lonely women are the poorest, which could be interpreted as a consequence of women's income-related inequality.

*Sexual harassment at workplaces* also contributes toward income-related inequality of women. Unlike western countries where it may be legally prosecuted, sexual harassment in Slovakia is being de-tabooed, but to a minimal extent. Tolerance of sexual harassment frequently becomes a precondition for women to be promoted in their jobs, for better remuneration, and for acquiring or keeping a job. Supervisors may require sexual services at the workplace. As a rule,

women work in lower positions (vertical segregation of women), which provide the opportunity for their being sexually abused by their male supervisors. Sexual harassment is a form of social control over women. It prevents women from economic realization, social realization, and reduces their self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result, they may lose the interest in working. There may be a reduction in their working performance, or they may even leave their job. Sexual abuse at workplaces is a silent though strong factor operating in transition countries. In 1991, 10 percent of Czechoslovak women reported such a personal experience with their male supervisors. Sexual harassment at the workplace cannot be prosecuted under the law in Slovakia, and its severity is thus insufficiently visible.

We have examined the feminization of poverty from the view of the unequal position of women in the labor market and from the view of the lower remuneration of their work. Paid work is the key determinant of women's economic independence, a significant starting point for women to exercise their authority in the household, and for their participation in the broader society. There is also the overlooked and underestimated area of unpaid work that is also a reflection of women's inequality in society. Household work, though, is crucial for the economic survival of many families. Former communist countries were also typical in the high level employment of women (full-time jobs). Yet, women still had to work second shifts at home. The data suggests that the full workload of women in Eastern and Central Europe (both paid and unpaid work) averaged 70 hours weekly, which was 15 hours more than in women in Western Europe.



Feminization of poverty is tightly connected with the feminization of old-age and/or is its consequence. Feminization of old age occurs based on the "simple" reason that women live longer than men. Women therefore make up 65.5 percent of the population beyond retirement age. As far as the amount of the pensions is concerned, elderly women may receive more if they receive widow's pension. When the old-age pension is the only source of income, the average is but minimally different from the subsistence minimum. It should be noted that elderly women do not perceive their economic situation as a problem. Instead, they point to their loneliness, social exclusion (*Gender Statistics...*, 1999).

Feminization of old age also comes as a consequence of incomplete families that is a group with a marked risk of poverty. Incomplete families are mothers with children, either divorced or unmarried. Almost 89% of incomplete families are women who are mothers with one to many children. Feminization of poverty is therefore inseparably linked with the poverty of children.

There are several causes for the feminization of poverty. One of them is the *patriarchate*, as a historically created construct of behavior, which dictates the power relationship between man and woman. Even if this phenomenon does not represent a Slovak specific, it is present in all areas of life of the Slovak society, in both public and private spheres.

Patriarchate also exists in western cultures. It is being gradually and systematically eliminated, either due to the exercise of human rights or through feminism whose origin dates back to the 1960s. In this respect, Slovakia has a lot of catching up to do, even though daily life spawns numerous arguments about the sustainability of patriarchate. The most significant argument is that the two-income model of households is typical of Slovakia, high unemployment rates affect both men and women, and that households not infrequently are supported by the income of a woman. Nevertheless, surveys suggest that as much as 92 percent of both male and female respondents expect the "right man" can financially secure the family (Bútorová..., 1999). Based on such expectations, it is not easy to expect the elimination of patriarchate from the labor market and the subsequent elimination of feminization of poverty. There are several non-governmental organizations operating close to feminism in Slovakia. Yet, it mainly is international influence that literally forces Slovakia, in the framework of its efforts to join the EU, to adopt legislative standards that eliminate the inequality of women in society. In this respect, the most important document is the *National Action Plan for Women in the Slovak Republic* that was adopted by the Slovak Government in 1997. The document is based on the

Beijing Action Platform adopted at the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. It comprehensively outlines changes needed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. In this context, it is most important to eliminate the economic disadvantage of women.

An important force for eliminating patriarchy is the effort of men in western countries who are not satisfied with a power role of men toward both women and children. As an inspiration for Slovakia, there has been more than ten years of movement by "new fathers" to overcome the patriarchal role behavior of men in the education of children. That movement can form new patterns of parenthood. It does not mean switching roles with women. Rather, it attempts to change the roles. The legal definition of father's role has also changed in western countries.

## Poverty of the Society

The term poverty is used to refer to a portion of society's population and to a society as a whole in its relationship to other societies. It is a common term for referring to third world countries.<sup>4</sup> "We are witnessing a situation that there are ever more people in the countries worldwide that prosper whereas others live in indescribable poverty. Also, the difference between the wealthy and the poor in the wealthy as well as in developing countries grows bigger, and the difference between developed and many developing countries has grown even bigger." (UN World Summit, 1995). Other important international institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank, pay attention to the issues of poverty as well.

In Slovakia, poor people and individuals in material distress make up approximately 10 percent of the population. However, a portion of the population whose income exceeds the subsistence minimum does not have a standard of life markedly above that of people recognized as poor. For example, the group at highest risk of poverty includes the long-term unemployed. Even so, employment does not guarantee entry to the world of those who are better off. Comparing Slovakia's current minimum wage standard of SKK 4,440 gross (i.e., real SKK 3,884 net) to the subsistence minimum of SKK 3,490 per month, we do not see a significant difference. This does not even consider the demotivating consequences of minimum wages on the reduction of unemployment.

Some jobs for unqualified labor in developed countries establish a new category of the poor, the *working poor*. The term "working poor" may be applied to several of Slovakia's occupations whose average income was SKK 5,249 in 1999. It is alarming that as many as 79 percent of Slovak households are afraid they may drop below the poverty line at some point in future (Fall, Horecký, Roháčová, 1999).

Table 32

**Comparison of per Capita Net Incomes in the Lowest and Highest 10% Income Groups of Households (in SKK) <sup>a</sup>**

Indicator	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Net monthly income per capita in the lowest 10% households	2,014	2,308	2,830	2,768	2,893
Net monthly income per capita in the highest 10% households	7,162	10,964	12,459	13,448	12,934
Ratio of highest 10% to lowest 10%	3.56	4.75	4.40	4.86	4.47

Note: a. Lowest 10% = poorest 10%; highest 10% = richest 10%.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>4</sup> Rather than being limited to just poor, the term "fourth world" is also being used for areas of misery that have major problems, such as starvation, malnutrition, infectious diseases and, in the final effect, survival as such.



Despite the trend of moderately growing income disparities, Slovakia maintains its position among those with lowest levels of income inequality. According to international sources, the share of the poorest 20 percent of households on income and/or consumption is 11.9 percent, while being 31.4 percent for the richest 20 percent of households. Due to the relatively low share of rich households on total income, income inequality in Slovakia was the lowest worldwide in 1987-98.<sup>5</sup>

Constant economic development is the principal precondition to resolve the problem of poverty in a broader sense. The solution to poverty in a narrower sense, being State social policy, is dependent on the same precondition. By legislating a subsistence minimum as the "undrafted" poverty line, State social policy guarantees a citizen her/his legal claim for social assistance. The establishment of social nets is a precondition for preventing social exclusion of the poor.

A significant role is also played in Slovakia by dozens of NGOs that provide the poor with a variety of assistance. In addition to such transparent approaches for dealing with poverty, family transfers play a significant role in Slovakia. Prevention of poverty and the overcoming of poverty's consequences are concentrated in families. Family solidarity, coherence, and assistance are the most efficient mechanisms of protection against poverty. More than a half of all Slovak households accept assistance from relatives, parents, grandparents, children, and siblings.

Domestic Slovak household production (gardens, repairs, etc.) may be considered a specific Slovak approach to preventing and dealing with poverty. This, besides financial revenues, helps households to secure a better standard of life. Unpaid work can also be included since it is something without which many households could not survive. But, dealing with poverty cannot depend solely on "external" approaches. There must also be an "internal" approach that every single citizen has individual responsibility for the dealing with his or her individual situation, as accentuated by State social policy. In this respect, education emerges as a significant precondition for dealing with the problem of poverty and for achieving success in the labor market.

## Conclusions

Poverty is one of the limiting conditions of human development. While there is no definition of poverty in the Slovak legislation, the term material distress can be considered as a synonym. European Union Member States use the definition of poverty developed by the Council of Europe. Slovakia should consider legislation that uses the same definition, in view of Slovakia's efforts to join the EU. The EU definition considers low income as an indicator of poverty and its association with potential social exclusion of the poor.

The poverty line in Slovakia is currently considered to be the subsistence minimum. Numbers of individuals living in poverty can be determined from statistical data on recipients of social benefits. Not all groups of the population are at an equal risk of poverty, which is mainly determined by their position in or exclusion from the labor market. The group at the greatest risk is the long-term unemployed who are the majority of social benefits recipients. Dealing with the issue of poverty thus is now an issue of dealing with unemployment. Previously, it was connected with the development of industrialization. It is now dependent on the development of an information society.

Another group at risk has traditionally been elderly people. This group is now dealt with through continuous valorization of pensions. An incomplete family, where the poverty of

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<sup>5</sup> UNDP: *Human Development Report 2000*, p. 172. Data for individual countries refer to the most recent year available during the period 1987-1998.

children is not sufficiently visible, is another group at risk of poverty. People with lower education levels are yet another group at significant risk of poverty.

Even if Slovak statistics do not record the ethnic affiliation of people living in poverty, it is evident that a significant portion of Slovakia's Roma ethnic population lives in poverty.

Analyses of poverty draw attention to the feminization of poverty, due to women's unequal position in the labor market and due to the lower remuneration for their work. Sexual harassment at the workplace makes a significant contribution to the income-related inequality of women. Tolerance of sexual harassment not infrequently is a precondition for the promotion of a woman's career and for their work remuneration. Another part of women's unequal position in the labor market is the overlooked, underestimated, and unpaid work of women in the household. It is also an expression of their unequal position in the society in general. In its final effect, patriarchy as a prevailing model of behavior of both men and women in Slovakia may be considered a serious reason for feminization of poverty. Eliminating the feminization of poverty will depend on the extent of elimination of patriarchy, either on the part of governmental institutions or NGOs. The activities of men in western countries are an inspiration for elimination of patriarchy.

The term poverty is used not only to refer to a portion of the population of a given society, but also to refer to the society as a whole. Third world countries are considered as poor. Slovakia is a country ranking among the poorer ones, based on the population's income characteristics.

Not even the wealthiest countries of the world have been able to totally resolve their problem of poverty and have their own "third world". There is a similar situation in Slovakia. Every society has and will have its poor that will require support nets to prevent emergence and spreading of permanent poverty.

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## Poverty of the Roma

Any analysis of the so-called Roma issue is subject to a certain amount of generalization. This is due to the inexactness of statistics on the Roma, as well as strong civilization-related differentiation of the Roma (Gypsy) community in Slovakia. Several statistics on the Roma community are based on the data of the 1991 census, and therefore cover only a minority of Slovakia's Roma population. Many statements concerning the Roma in Slovakia should therefore be understood as trends and/or relate to only a specific portion of the Roma community. It should be stated that a majority of Roma in Slovakia are integrated into the majority society and, above all, are not segregated from the majority society. It may therefore be misleading to see the Roma issues by reviewing only the Roma colonies.

### Specificity of Roma as an Ethnic Minority

Roma is the second most numerous minority in Slovakia. During the 1991 census, less than 80,000 individuals claimed to belong to the Roma minority, representing only 1.4 percent of Slovakia's population. Estimates of Roma numbers in Slovakia, however, are several times higher. According to 1989 data of State administration municipal offices, there were 253,943 Roma living in Slovakia in that year (4.8 percent). But, these statistics only recorded individuals in social need. The numbers of Roma in Slovakia may therefore be assumed to be even higher. Expert estimates currently vary between 480,000-520,000, and these numbers keep increasing due to the Roma population's high birth rates.

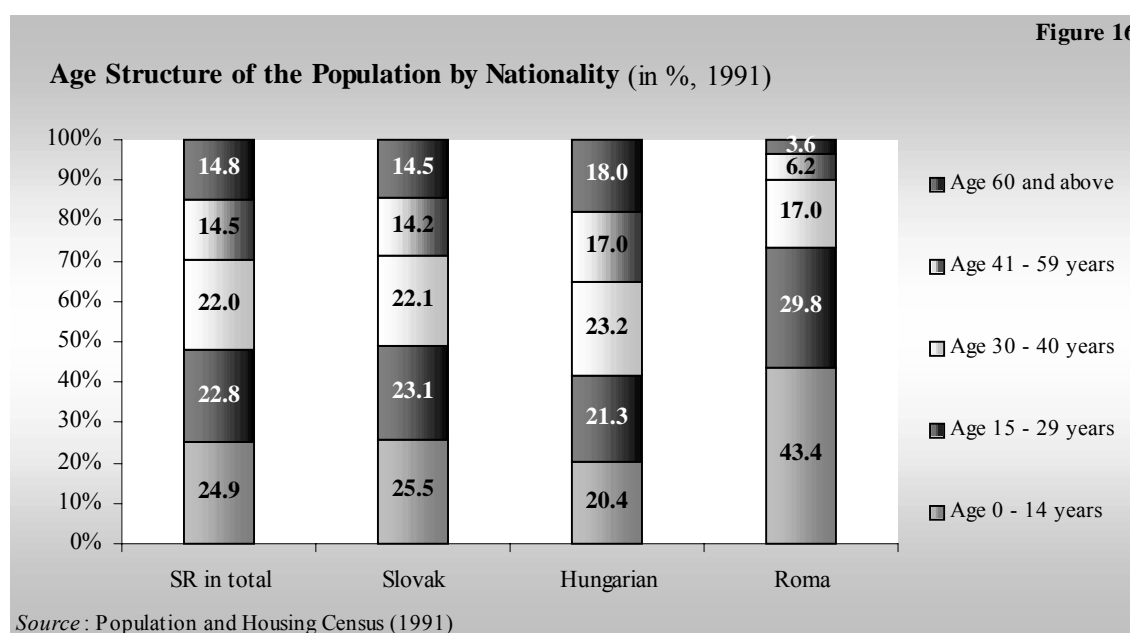
The Roma population represents a specific minority. Dealing with the so-called "Roma problem" therefore requires a more comprehensive approach. The majority of Roma in Slovakia live in a poor socio-economic situation and this raises the question whether Roma are not a social rather than an ethnic minority. Discussions have been increasingly related to the "underclass" issues that address the situation of Roma living in Roma colonies. The principal characteristics of an underclass include long-term unemployment, fragmented work career, problems finding a permanent job in the secondary labor market, and dependence on social State benefits or on activities within the shadow economics. With respect to the majority population, the underclass environment is understood as anomalous, characterized by overall resignation, little respect to authorities, weak social control, reliance on the system of supports, and the absence of working discipline/habits. These general characteristics of the underclass are typical of Roma living in Roma colonies and, more and more frequently, outside the colonies.

The Roma community is strongly differentiated internally. Various cultural and civilization branches make communication within the community and with the outside rather complicated. Some experts on Roma issues state that there are remnants of the caste system within the Roma community that determine the place of any individual within the social system. An important differentiation is the stabilization of the sub-ethnic subgroups Roma in Slovakia. The most numerous are the groups of settled Roma (Rumungers) and of nomadic – Italian Roma (Vlashica Roma), and the remainders of the German Sints represent a separate group. Also, there are differences between Roma in the language and dialects they use, and from which they also take words to be used in the Romany language. In the Slovak environment, Roma use the Slovak language and its dialects. The Hungarian language is used in Southern Slovakia. Similarly, as in the environment of the majority population, Roma in Slovakia are differentiated by their origin in urban or rural environments and their attachment to a certain region of Slovakia. All the above-mentioned differences within the Roma community need to be taken into consideration when determining how to assist with the problems of Slovakia's Roma minority.

## Reproductive Behavior of Roma in Slovakia

The **demographic behavior** and the demographic reproduction of the Roma population differ from the reproductive behavior of the majority population. Its most pronounced manifestation concerns the Roma population's age structure difference as compared to the remaining population. According to the 1991 census, age structure differences are evident with respect to other ethnic groups living in Slovakia. These groups have high numbers of children below the age of 14 years, and low numbers of elderly individuals of post-productive age.

Ethnic differences are determined by several factors that are more pronounced with the Roma minority. They relate to differences in the structure and size of the Roma family. The most important factor is the long-term death rates and birth rates that have been markedly different from Slovakia's general population. Other important factors are the degree of ethnic identity, the extent of assimilation, compactness of the settlement, and percentages of nationally or ethnically mixed marriages. As far as the age structure is concerned, the most numerous age group of the Roma population are children below the age of 14 years (Figure 16). This segment makes up as much as 43.4 percent (a total of 24.9 percent for the remaining population of Slovakia). The share of the age group of 15-29 years is 29.8 percent (22.8%). Other age groups are gradually smaller in size as compared to the structure of the Slovak population: the age cohort 30-40 years 17.0 percent (22.0%), 41 to 59 years 6.2 percent (14.5%), and the age cohort 60+ has a share of 3.6 percent only on the Roma population (14.8 percent for the general population). Due to high birthrates and higher death rates, four fifths of the Roma populations consists of individuals below the age of 34 years (Bačová, Zel'ová, 1993).



The Roma family represents a demographic type entirely different from the majority family. For instance, sexual activity and partnerships frequently start below the age of 18 years. More than half of the couples/parents live together without having legalized their relationship according to the standards of the majority society. Subsequent marriage might occur even after many years of having lived together, which explains why low divorce rates are typical. Divorce as the way to terminate the first marriage was observed in only 3.7 percent of Roma males and 3.4 percent of Roma females. A multiple child Roma family is typical.

The average number of 4.2 children per Roma mother is more than twice the average 1.51 children per non-Roma population mother. The average is as high as 7.8 children per family for

Roma families living in backward colonies. Child allowances are the primary source of income for such large-size families (as suggested by the *Conceptual Plans...*, 1997). Data on the demographic behavior of the Roma population in Slovakia is strongly comparable to the data on the demographic behavior of the non-Roma population several decades ago, and is comparable to data for developing countries. As a matter of fact, the Roma population has shown a "phase delay" in its demographic development when compared to non-Roma population, and is at a stage typical for the majority several decades ago. As an example, the Roma population's infant mortality data for the 1980s were very similar to 1950s data for all of Czechoslovakia. The probable life expectancy for the Roma minority between 1970 and 1980 corresponded to the 1929-33 situation of the entire population of Czechoslovakia (for Roma males) and after W.W.II (for Roma women). The reproductive behavior of the Roma population is far from being extraordinary because it basically corresponds to the social, economic and cultural conditions of the given population group. A majority of other societies would show similar demographics and characteristics under similar conditions and socio-economic development.

Another important feature is the **regional distribution** of the Roma population with some specific characteristics. The Roma population is distributed irregularly over the territory of Slovakia, with the highest concentrations found in Eastern Slovakia and in the southern districts of Central Slovakia. This is where approximately two-thirds of the Roma population lives and where Roma make up the highest proportions of the district population. More than half of the Roma population (52.5%) in 1980 used to live in what was then the Eastern Slovakian region (the region presently has about 55 percent of the Roma population), where there were 77.3 "Gypsy" people per 1,000, compared to a corresponding national average only 40. According to the 1980 census, the Roma ethnic made up as many as 7.7 percent of the population of the Eastern Slovakian Region, with corresponding figures being 2.9 percent for Central Slovakia and 2.6 percent for Western Slovakia. By the end of 1988, the Roma minority in Eastern Slovakia grew, according to the official data, to as high as 9.1 percent of the overall population.

The shares of the Roma minority on the overall population in every district of Eastern Slovakia are high, and exceeded 10 percent in some districts as early as 1980. The Roma population can be expected to grow due to the high birth rates: e.g., one in 17 citizens of Košice was a Roma, one in 12 elementary school students and one in ten kindergarten children was a Roma. The southern districts of Central Slovakia also show high percentages of the Roma ethnic. In the 1980 census, there was more than 10 percent (14.2%) of the Roma population in Rimavská Sobota. Proportions of the Roma ethnic grow markedly, particularly in places where the reproduction rates of non-Roma population are rather low, as well as where there is a negative migration balance. With its reproductive behavior, the Roma population fills a certain "demographic vacuum". As a result, many regions of Slovakia would be unable to sustain its population at a constant level if there were no growth of the Roma population.

Another difference, compared to the majority population, is the Roma population's **settlement structure**. A majority of Slovakia's population lives in an urban environment (58 percent of the population in the early 1990s), whereas the Roma prevail in rural a settlement structure, in rural areas outside of municipalities, at the border of villages or within villages. The settlement structure of Roma living in an urban environment can be characterized as ghettos, at the outskirts of cities, or sometimes in cities. Higher concentrations of Roma population are found in regions or microregions that are among the Slovakia's marginal areas of social space and economic deprivation. The Roma population's traditional way of life is characterized by life in large communities and by rather intensive relationships within broader circles of relatives.

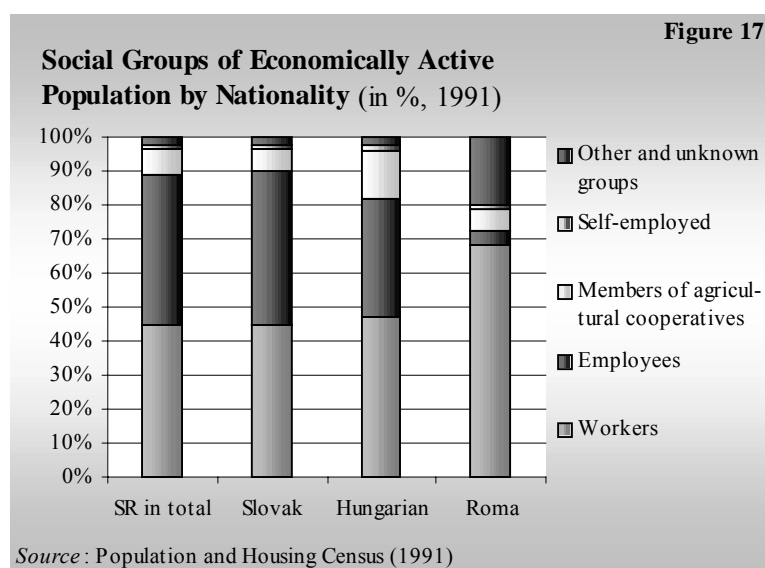
The settlement structure also suggests a significant extent of geographic segregation of Slovakia's Roma population. Regions with a high concentration of Roma population are Slovakia's most economically backwards, with big social and economic problems. No

significant migration can be expected to occur in Slovakia, since the demand has dropped for low cost unqualified labor, even in the large industrial centers. To a large extent, this reduced job opportunities, housing availability (lack of money, limited construction of housing, high prices of real estate), and stopped migration of Roma to cities and core areas of villages, which was typical of the late 1980s. The current trend is to return to the original colonies.

Another factor determining the demographic structure of the Roma family has been the *type of locality*. The type of locality and the presence of a certain form of geographic/spatial segregation of the Roma population serve as significant parameters of assimilation/dissimilation processes. Research uses classification by the type of settlements, including separate colonies, colonies at the outskirts of villages, colonies at the outskirts of cities, villages and towns. The minimal extent and the symbolic nature of social contacts are closely connected with spatial segregation, and also affect reproductive behavior. Most pronounced differences are visible with respect to reproductive behavior of Roma living in towns as compared to colonies. Families living in towns had fewer children (less than three – 59.6 percent; more than six only 9.85 percent) whereas 25.3 percent of families living in Roma colonies had three or less children, and 76.8 percent had four or more children (40.7 percent six or more children). The location of the colony also affects attitudes about the ideal number of children, to the mutual relationships between man and woman, to the value of the child, to the perception of the importance of education, etc. The place of domicile also affects the level of education achieved, as well as the socio-economic and socio-professional status.

### Roma in Social Need

In Central European countries, Roma are among the social categories at the highest risk of exclusion from the labor market, and consequently, among the *socially and economically most underprivileged groups*. In addition, the socio-economic status of Roma is frequently subject to intergeneration reproduction. In the past, a majority of the Roma population would be part of the "traditional old" poverty and formed visible "poverty islands". With the appearance of industrialization, their handicaps accumulated, and Roma found themselves among the lower social categories. After 1989, the transformation period resulted in large proportions of the Roma population being categorized as "losers of transformation" rather than categorized as "winners". The transformation of the economy failed to resolve the problem of marginalized groups of the population, and Roma have become unemployed despite spending own efforts to reverse their unfavorable situation.





Slovakia's Roma are, to a significant extent, homogeneous both from the aspect of their economic class and from their qualification level (Bačová, Zel'ová, 1993). When it comes to the socio-professional status, a majority of them are unqualified laborers. As a result of this status, they have become members of Slovakia's low-income groups. Bačová (1990) confirms this fact when she speaks of a certain "monotype" of the Roma family from the viewpoint of employment. This is the type of families that have unqualified jobs – laborers with no vocational or general secondary education, with low average income per family member, and with a male who works outside the municipality of his domicile. Ten years after the publication of these findings, the unemployment rates of Roma males grows due to mass unemployment in certain regions of Slovakia. As a result, the number of Roma families with unemployed adults keep growing.

The **lack of education** in Roma results in the labor market being closed to them. It also affects the overall socio-economic status and the social potential of the Roma minority. Compared to the preceding period, Roma began cumulating in the secondary labor market since the demand for low cost labor dropped and employment in industrial sectors was reduced. Roma job seekers go to the end of "queuing" job seekers in the labor market. These facts result in the Roma minority being one of the social groups at the highest risk of unemployment.

Long-term and permanent **unemployment** is widespread among the Roma population due to their cumulated handicaps. The result is poverty and the appearance of so-called **poverty cycle** and the **unemployment trap**. Roma then become dependent on social assistance benefits that are offered by State social policy institutions. This results in extremely high rates of long-term unemployment, with intergenerational repetition of this condition. The number of families with long-term unemployed parents and children keeps growing, with the children never experiencing a permanent job. This also creates preconditions for the emergence and repetition of a subculture of unemployed Roma youth with features of pathological behavior.

In considering Roma colonies or socio-spatial marginality of the territory, socially anomalous conditions develop. These territories sometimes have unemployment rates as high as 100 percent. This creates a situation that is referred to in Slovakia as "starving valleys", i.e., the existence of territories with "visible poverty islands". In "starving valleys", there is a threat of total social disorganization and a **poverty culture** as the only possible method to efficiently adjust the situation. This leads to the formation of a so-called underclass, both urban and rural. In the post-communist countries, this situation has a significant ethnic nature.

According to the 1991 census, most Roma have primary education (76.68%) while only 8.07 percent have completed apprentice schools without a secondary school diploma. Less than 2 percent of the entire Roma population attended secondary vocational schools, obtained a complete secondary education, or obtained a university education.

A number of factors, including employment status, place in the labor market, constancy of earning from employment, education level reached, and family structure currently determine status within the social structure. These factors are interlinked and co-determine a person's socio-economic status. The aforementioned handicaps for a significant proportion of the Roma families create risks of poverty and a life in conditions of poverty and social dependence. A marginalized status is emerging, perceived by the majority population as negative. Roma are being perceived as a social category that caused its own poverty and is not motivated to improve their status. Most of the majority population believe that perceived Roma personal characteristics (laziness, lack of strong will, poor working discipline, disinterest in education, inability to manage income, etc.) as the cause of poverty, rather than structural reasons (poverty as the result of injustice in the society). Most of the majority population blames the Roma as personally responsible for their status. *This is a stigmatization that may mouth into social*

*exclusion and into the emergence of the culture of poverty and dependence on the social security system.*

Up to 80 percent of the Roma population is dependent on the State social net (12.5 percent of the unemployed, 60 percent of children and women in household, and 7 percent of pensioners). There are about 60,000 unemployed Roma recorded in Slovakia, representing about 18 percent of the total number of unemployed. While there are no exact unemployment rates statistics for the Roma, estimates can be made based on an assessment of Slovakia's problem regions. Unemployment rates are the highest in regions that have the largest Roma population. Only data of the Statistical Office (Microcensus) can be used because there have been no specific surveys that focus specifically on the socio-economic situation of Roma households. The 1997 Microcensus data provides information on socially needy households whose income did not reach the set subsistence minimum level, and therefore qualified for State social support benefits. This information shows that families with children, representing 60 percent of socially dependent households, remain at the greatest risk of poverty (Woleková, 1998). The Microcensus data also reveals that over 70 percent of households with children had low or modest income. Of the total number of 162,066 low-income households, there were 155,260 households with dependent children aged below 15 years. Poverty and social dependence are the concern of families with multiple dependent children. The number of earning adult persons in a household also impacts the degree of poverty and social dependence.

The fact that most unemployed young Roma have no chance to get a job is a serious problem. Young Roma who completed mandatory school attendance have not continued to be trained for an occupation. They are simply recorded as unemployed and receive social benefits. This does not provide them any motivation to get additional education and training. When a Roma child continues to be trained, it also draws money from the family budget. Parents are not aware of the importance of education and usually prevent their children from getting further training.



Table 33

**Shares of Recorded Unemployed Roma on the Total Number of Unemployed (%)**

Region	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1999 <sup>a</sup>
Bratislava	-	-	-	-	-	5.01	4.34
Trnava	-	-	-	-	-	5.71	7.58
Trenčín	-	-	-	-	-	3.58	3.58
Nitra	-	-	-	-	-	9.81	7.93
Žilina	-	-	-	-	-	4.43	3.12
Banská Bystrica	-	-	-	-	-	26.29	22.74
Prešov	-	-	-	-	-	29.20	2.455
Košice	-	-	-	-	-	35.62	28.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.47</b>	<b>13.97</b>	<b>12.41</b>	<b>16.61</b>	<b>18.96</b>	<b>19.19</b>	<b>15.84</b>

Note: a. As of August 31, 1999.

Source: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the Slovak Republic.

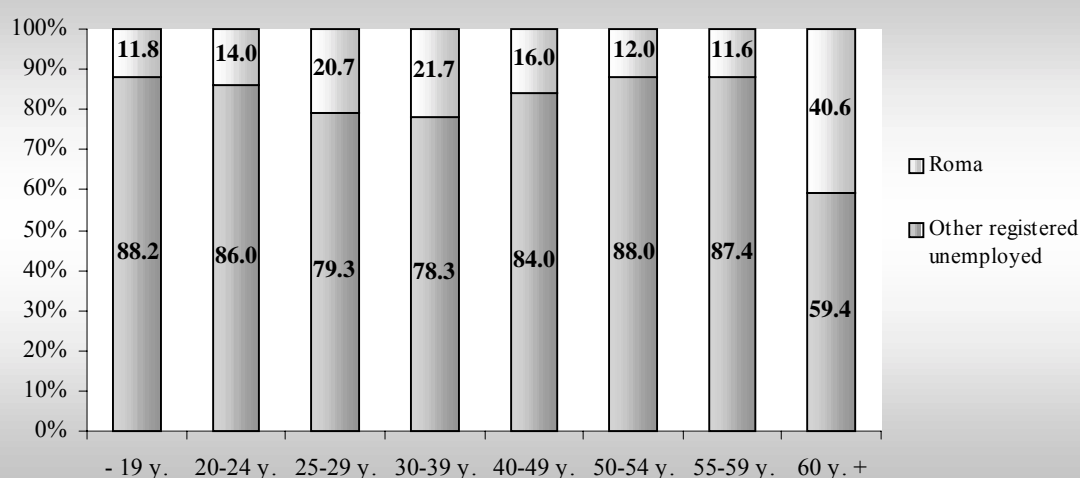
The **unemployment of Roma women**, who barely make their way in the labor market, is an additional problem. The percentage of social benefits recipients in the total number of unemployed recorded with Labor Offices, and the number of job seekers are most critical in the districts of Spišská Nová Ves, Rimavská Sobota, Lučenec, Rožňava, Košice, Michalovce, and Trebišov. These are districts with high concentrations of Roma population.

Unemployment rates for young Roma have reached a culturally ethnic dimension. Roma localities with 80-100 percent unemployment rates fell to the social net and cannot find any way out. Unemployed young people aged 14-24 years make up as many as almost 25 percent (62,532) of all the jobs seekers recorded, with more than 60 percent of young unemployed Roma trying to find a job for more than three years. Young and already large families in this group are unable to change their social situation without outside assistance.

Measures taken by State administration authorities in both passive and active employment policies focused on the creation of jobs of public interest (in 1995 and 1996) as well as on retraining in so-called traditional folk crafts. The effect of these measures on the labor market has remained negligible. The State therefore continues to take further steps to artificially "reduce" unemployment by eliminating "non-cooperating" job seekers from the records. The deepening socio-economic crisis has resulted in soaring crime rates, eroded relationships with the majority population, and ethnic conflicts.

Figure 19

**Share of Roma on Total Registered Unemployed, by Age Groups**  
(in %, as of June 30, 1999)



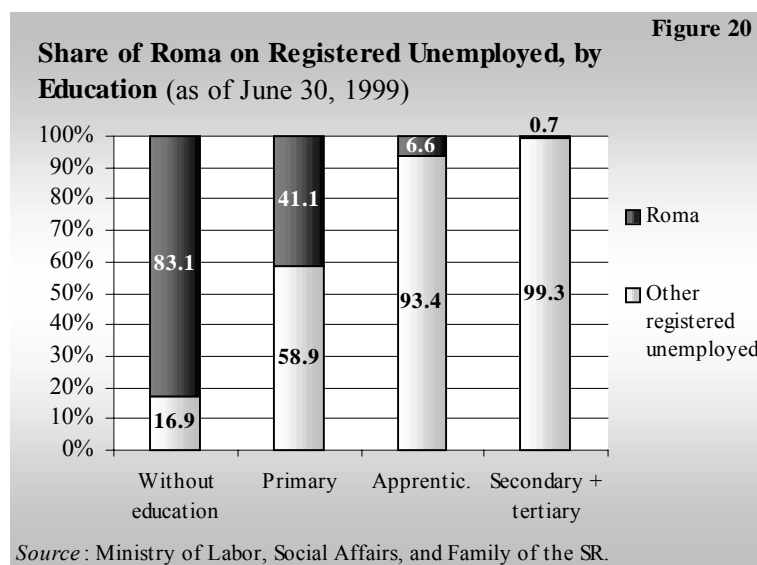
Source: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the SR.

**Table 34**

**Structure of Unemployed by Duration of Recorded Unemployment (as of June 30, 1999)**

Duration of Records	Recorded Unemployed in Total (RUT)	Roma	Share of Roma on RUT (%)
For less than 6 months	194,737	10,380	5.33
For more than 12 months	194,657	59,176	30.40
For more than 24 months	100,020	40,922	40.91
For more than 48 months	42,861	22,399	52.26

Source: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the Slovak Republic.



## Health Condition of the Roma Population

The unfavorable socio-economic situation and the associated unsatisfactory conditions of housing and infrastructure at the place of domicile are causes for the current health conditions of Slovakia's Roma. Statistical data on the health of Slovakia's population are, in a majority of cases, not differentiated based on specific ethnic or nationality. But some data indicates there are health differences between the Roma population and the majority population. With some reservations (since many findings do not apply to the entire Roma population), these sources and data indicate that the health condition of a majority of Roma ethnic persons is worse than that of Slovakia's non-Roma population.

Most published data dealing with the health condition of Slovakia's population currently focus on high incidences of infectious and sexually transmitted diseases among Roma. They show that infectious diseases in the Roma population exceed levels found in the majority population. Disease rates connected with insufficient hygiene, poverty, and other exogenous reasons (starvation, poor quality of housing) therefore become especially serious. In

### Box 11

#### Health Situation in Colonies

In particular, the health situation in Roma colonies is alarming. The incidence of diseases of the upper airways has been growing dramatically since 1989, and some colonies have even experienced the spread of tuberculosis. As a result of the factors mentioned above, there is a risk of outbreaks of various diseases. Typical examples of widespread conditions are diseases of the skin and sexually transmitted diseases; injuries are also frequent. Roma children suffer from infectious diseases that do not affect the majority of the population. A significant threat is meningitis. In addition, high proportions of mental retardation are connected with the socially underprivileged environment.

a portion of the Roma population, poverty leads to deprivation in many dimensions. This results in a shorter life expectancy, high frequencies of diseases, chronic diseases, and permanent reduction of physical and mental performance. Data on health care warn of a poor communication between Roma and health professionals, and of an insufficient understanding of the importance of health prevention on the part of some Roma. All the data available suggest an ongoing deterioration of the health condition, particularly in persons that live in the spreading isolated Roma colonies. After 1989, there was deterioration even in areas where the communist establishment had succeeded in dealing with health condition issues of the Roma population (reduced infant mortality, increasing life expectancy, and elimination of some diseases).

All the aforementioned factors are reflected in the average *life expectancy* for the Roma population. The figure is 55 years for Roma males and 59 for Roma females. These figures are approximately 13 and 17 years less respectively than figures for the general population. In 1998, the respective life expectancy at birth was 76.7 and 68.6 years for the Slovak population females and males.

Health-related measures oriented toward the identification of diseases, early diagnosis, and treatment of diseases among Slovakia's population have always been directed toward the entire population without any discrimination. Large health-related campaigns were gradually organized and launched, such as abating TBC, poliomyelitis, and vaccination against infectious disease, and surveys of Roma colonies. Jurová (1993) reported that many diseases still affect people living in Roma colonies in spite of elimination of outbreaks of typhoid fever, enteric fever, and despite efforts spent to deal with specific conditions such as trachoma, diseases of the airways, enteric diseases and syphilis at the national level. The most frequently occurrences are scabies, pediculosis, pyoderma, mycosis, ascariidosis, sequel of chronic alcoholism and crime-related injuries. Also, cases of consumption of meat from perished animals with subsequent diseases of the digestive tract have been recorded.

### The Housing Situation of Roma

Dissatisfaction with housing and its quality is a factor that creates a perception of an unfavorable socio-economic situation. The most pronounced features of this phenomenon for the Roma minority include *spatially isolated and segregated Roma colonies*. Their numbers have grown by 238, i.e., from 278 Roma colonies recorded in 1988 to 516 colonies recorded in 1997 (official statistical survey). Twenty Roma colonies do not even have a source of drinking water, 15 more than in 1988. A majority of the colonies also face problems of insufficient infrastructure – low quality drinking water and roads, absence of public lighting, no sewerage, gas supply, social establishments, unsatisfactory conditions of housing, no shops, Post offices, schools, etc. The 15 Roma colonies in 1988 without public lighting had increased to 251 by 1997. The 7 Roma colonies in 1988 with no hard access road increased to 34 by 1997.

The numbers of housing units in Roma colonies have increased by 12,361, from 1973 units in Roma colonies in 1988 to 14,334 recorded in 1997. The number of families in Roma colonies increased from 2,543 in 1988 to 22,785 by 1997, an increase of 20,242. The number of Roma families living in shacks also grew, by 2,063, from 2,543 families in 1989 to 4,606 in 1997. The total population living in Roma colonies has grown by 108,046, from 14,988 people in 1988 to 123,034 in 1997.

The number of Roma families per 1 shack in the colony remained at 1.3, the same level as in 1988. Although huge numbers of Roma returned to the colonies, the number of families sharing one shack was maintained thanks to the construction of new shanties. Similarly, the number of persons living in one dwelling in Roma colonies only grew by one, from 7.6 persons per dwelling in 1988 to 8.6 persons in 1997. This figure refers to the group of Roma individuals

who returned to the colonies to their families who were living in existing dwellings. This move was due to a worsening of the individual's socio-economic status. In that particular year, local State administration authorities recorded a total of 591 "dwelling groupings at a low socio-cultural level" (=Roma colonies). Of those Roma colonies, 41 lack a source of drinking water and there are no access roads built to 50 colonies. 94 colonies have still no public lighting and 1,202 out of the total number of 13,882 dwellings have no electricity connection. Some colonies have no electricity at all. Of the number of dwellings mentioned (3,493), as many as 25.2 percent have been built as temporary shelter with randomly acquired materials (timber, sheets of iron) that do not meet basic national standards. In 1998, a total of 4,838 families lived in such dwellings. There are 1.4 families on average living in each such dwelling, which usually consist of a single room.

Roma housing problems cannot be resolved without addressing some Roma community members' antisocial attitudes. This problem was experienced in the 1980s when dealing with Roma housing issues at the Košice residential quarter Luník IX. A political decision was made to move Roma families to 204 apartments that met regular standards. The Roma were moved there without considering the families' cultural level and the degree of integration. As a result, the environment and the units themselves became devastated and became a Roma ghetto. The non-Roma population left the remaining 300 units, and delinquents from Košice who failed to pay rent (almost exclusively Roma) occupied the units.

Housing construction after 1989 has generally been unsatisfactory. Even though there are different sources of financing (home-savings, limited State loans, developing mortgage loans), there is yet no sufficiently developed system in place that would enable an individual with average income to acquire a dwelling in a reasonable time. The public thus responds to any form of injustice in housing policy, allocation of apartments, and extension of soft credits. This does not concern just the Roma, but also other groups (e.g., expatriates moved from the Chernobyl area, antisocial individuals). It is therefore important to support individual Roma efforts for resolving their housing problems by enabling them to construct (under a regulated scheme) dwelling structures that meet basic standards of housing. That effort involves issues such as acquisition of land, surveillance, and legislation. Roma must not be segregated into isolated areas from the aspect of the town planning.

### The Education Level of the Roma Population

Compared to other segments of the Slovak society, the *level of education of Roma is substandard*. Significant portions of the Roma population have an incomplete primary education. An important indicator of success is the type of the settlement they live in. This measure is most significant for isolated Roma colonies, and – in many cases – it is being transferred from generation to generation. Experts speak of a cumulation of handicaps that cause a high level of multiple deprivations, and leave this portion of the Roma ethnic in a social vacuum. There are additional numbers of circumstances that result in the minimum necessary level of education is not being achieved:

- *Closing up of the opportunities to find one's way in the primary labor market.* Currently, the Roma minority finds itself in front of a closed secondary labor market.
- *Overall stigmatization and marginalization.* A large proportion of the Slovak non-Roma population perceives unemployment and poverty as being caused by the Roma themselves. They associate the reasons with laziness, a choice of incorrect life strategies, and poor management by Roma families.

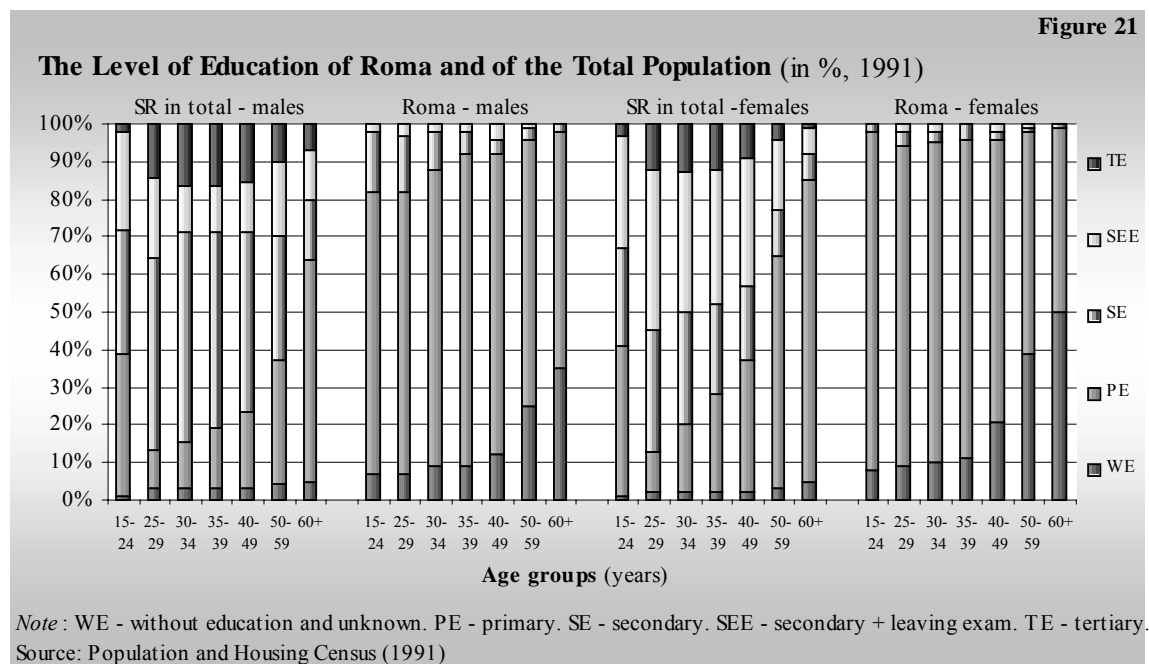
As early as grade one of the primary school, many Roma are not able to cope with the curricula. According to a 1991-1995 survey, 22 percent of Roma learners do not perform well (*Conceptual Plans...*, 1997). Only about 1-2 percent of all pupils at both degrees of the primary

school fail to progress to higher grades while 8-16 percent of Roma fail to progress. A 1990 survey indicates that 56 percent of male Roma respondents and 59 percent of female Roma respondents had not completed even primary school level. When compared to the majority population, Roma show low rates of completed secondary education (only 0.9-1%). In general, there are very few Roma learners at the secondary schools, most of them (about 8%) being trained at secondary vocational establishments for apprentices. Statistically, the percentage of Roma with university education is negligible (less than 0.5 percent).

The aforementioned problems are the underlying reasons for Roma children being placed into special schools, despite the fact that the majority of them meet the intellectual requirements for the attendance of regular primary schools. So-called "Gypsy" classes are being established and are a manifestation of social exclusion. A possible preventive measure that can be expected to resolve the issue of Roma education levels, and thus their cultural capital, is the introduction of so-called "zero classes", i.e., preparatory classes for Roma children to be attended prior to mandatory school attendance. Another option is to establish classes with Romany as the teaching language. This would indirectly continue the period of the real socialism where attendance of the highest kindergarten class was mandatory. Here children receive the opportunity to acquire hygienic skills, learn or improve their proficiency of the majority language, and get accustomed to authority, etc. The issue of a positive discrimination of Roma for enrollment to universities is not yet a controversial problem since it only concerns a very small percentage of Roma youth. When one surveys statistics on Roma at universities, it can be seen (and this has been repeatedly mentioned) that children of Roma origin attending universities are not a part of statistical reports since the majority population perceives them as "trouble free" assimilated Roma.

Pedagogical and psychological probes have provided evidence for unjustified inclusion of Roma children into special schools for handicapped children. Roma currently represent the highest proportions of students at special teaching institutions. Most Roma children have been sent to special schools based on an assessment of insufficient health, nutrition, and educational care on the part of their parents. This care begins during the prenatal period and continues after the birth, with frequently unsatisfactory nutrition of the infant, and by the child being raised in socio-cultural conditions that are threatening its health and life. Numerous secondary negative aspects have accumulated due to the lack of respect by the communist establishment toward ethnic and language differences. This gradually dissolved traditional ethnic habits, traditional culture and social conditions, as well as the tribal hierarchy.

Figure 21



### The Current Approach to So-called Roma Issues in Slovakia

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic adopted by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 1 September 1992 stipulates – with no exceptions and in an imperative manner – the equality of all citizens, regardless of their nationality, religion, faith, social group (Art. 12(2)). Members of national minorities have the right to gain proficiency in the official language, the right to establish and maintain teaching and cultural institutions, be provided with information in their mother tongues, the right to use their mother tongue in official communication, and to participate in the solution of matters concerning national and ethnic minorities (Art. 34, 35 of the Constitution). International organizations, such as the Council of Europe, have not criticized the Slovak legal regulation concerning the status of minorities. Even the known Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe No. 1201 of 1993 focused only on some supplements to the existing legal regulation, without suggesting the necessity of any amendments.

The Vice-Prime Minister of the Slovak Government for human rights, minorities and regional development, Mr. Pál Csáky submitted to the government a new strategy for dealing with Roma ethnic minority issues. This happened in two stages. The Slovak Government adopted, on 27 September 1999, *Resolution No. 821/1999 on the Slovak Government's strategy to deal with issues of the Roma ethnic minority, and on the set of measures for its implementation – stage I*. It is interesting that the Resolution was adopted in an extraordinary session of the Government.

The Strategy (*Stage I*) contains concise and generally formulated principal theses describing the current status of the Roma population in Slovakia, as well as suggestions for scenarios. The Strategy has been relatively well developed with respect to culture and education, and it identifies the areas where Roma are discriminated against. It also suggests ways of dealing with the situation. A weak point of the Strategy is the social area chapter that identifies major problems concerning the Roma population. These problems include unemployment, lack of job opportunities in the labor market, and insufficient links between the systems of social assistance benefits and unemployment benefits. Suggestions for the solutions to these most serious problems of the Roma national minority are to a significant extent very vague. A major problem with the new strategy of the government is the alarming and unfavorable socio-economic status of the Roma minority, and the need to start implementing specific projects as



soon as possible. It does not seem reasonable that a new Roma strategy be required every time a new government is formed. The Strategy adopted in November 1997 could have been slightly amended and applied immediately after the 1998 elections. In trying to predict future efforts, we already see that the government formed for 2002 parliamentary elections will again initiate the development of a new, special concept of the Government's approach to Roma, and such drafting may take a half of the term.

The incorporation of the *In-Process Strategy of the Slovak Government to resolve problems of the Roma national minority* into a set of specific measures for the year 2000 – *Stage II* – was approved by the Slovak Government at its session on 5 May, 2000 (*Government's Resolution No. 870/2000*). It is much more detailed than the Strategy adopted in September 1999 and concerns both individual areas of interest and a list of institutions in charge at national, regional, district, and – at some places – even local levels. Based on the Government's Resolution No. 821/1999, the government instructed ministers and Regional Office managers to develop specific measures for the Strategy in year 2000, including their funding from their own budgetary chapters. The Strategy submitters have thus involved all levels of State administration for dealing with Roma ethnic minority problems. In addition, links have been created between the State administration and the activities of non-governmental organizations. The Strategy is based on civil principles, and stresses a positive stimulation of the Roma population. In some areas, this may be understood as a measure leading to positive discrimination (affirmative action). The draft set of measures for the year 2000 gives preference to areas of interest that, according to the drafters, present a critical situation. The areas are human rights, training and education, issues of unemployment, housing, the social area, as well as issues concerning the health condition. Several chapters vaguely allocate funds for specific tasks and/or the tasks that require funds which were not available in 2000 or by the end of the present government's term. However, the In-Process Strategy addressed the problems of the Roma ethnic minority in a detailed manner. It specifically defines the problems and tasks, focuses on marginal regions and sub-regions, and on the economic transformation of affected areas. It provides the most detailed concepts adopted by the Slovak Government after 1989.

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## Measuring the Quality of Life

Can human development be measured? Can the quality of life in a country be reliably measured? What about the measures of an individual's quality of life? Is there any adequate formula that can be used to determine how we live?

Numerous parameters can be used to quantify the various dimensions of human development. Human health is one key precondition for a good quality of life and can be evidenced by morbidity, life expectancy data, and data on medical establishments. Health conditions can even be compared internationally based on suitable data. Similarly, the level and the opportunities available in the sector of education can be assessed using figures related to the education system and educational outcomes. Some conditions of the human life, however, cannot be easily quantified because they are of a rather abstract, or of a subjective nature, such as the feeling of freedom, personal safety, respect for the environment, morals, love, and also the capacity for people to develop moral values. *Thus, quality of life means the level of existence that is set up by combining measurable and abstract life values (or also tangible and intangible values), and human development may be perceived as an enlargement of people's opportunities and chances to achieve these values.*

If, due to a variety of reasons, man is unable to attain such values, the quality of life necessarily drops. The lack of opportunities or capacities to develop one's own quality of life has a profound effect on a person. The results of a variety of surveys show that unfulfilled life values are reflected in the most pressing social issues (Table 35).

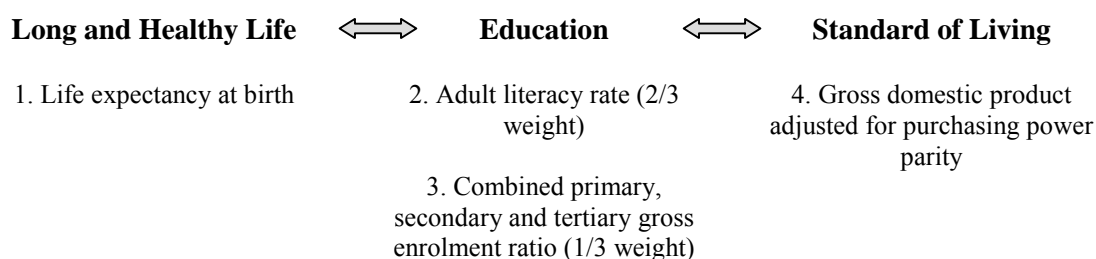
<b>Life Values Versus Social Problems</b>			<b>Table 35</b>
<b>Value</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Selected Indicators</b>	
Family	concerns more or less all following problems	-	
Health	Critical state of the health care sector, low quality of medical services, polluted environment	Life expectancy, health system attainment, emissions of pollutants per capita	
Job (employment)	Unemployment	Unemployment rate, long-term unemployment, number of unemployed per job vacancy	
Standard of living, decent wealth	Poor financial situation of households, low purchasing power, poverty	GDP per capita in purchasing power parity, human poverty index, Gini index	
Security	Crime, violence, drugs, xenophobia	Crimes per 1000 inhabitants, crimes clarified, violent and drug criminality	
Housing	Financial unavailability of housing	Dwellings per 1000 inhabitants, households per dwelling, price of credits	
Education	Worsening conditions of the education sector	Enrolment ratio, literacy rate, Internet connectivity	
Freedom, democracy, moral	Political discrepancies, corruption, clientelism	corruption perception index	

To measure the quality of life in a satisfactory manner, we would need a parameter that would cover at least the aforementioned dimensions of life. It is evident from the above Table that there are some partial parameters (developed by international and national institutions) that may, if combined, provide interesting data on the conditions of the human development. At the international level, the setting up of such a parameter would be constrained by several factors:

- different hierarchies of values in different countries;
- the problem of assigning importance (weights) to the individual conditions;
- unavailability of, and/or outdated suitable data;
- methodological constraints, etc.

## Measuring Human Development

The Human Development Index (HDI) represents the most comprehensive parameter of the quality of life. The principal idea of HDI is to measure the level of human development achieved by using a simple composite index, and to enable international comparisons of all countries worldwide. HDI provides a picture of human development through parameters of three life dimensions that are generally considered the most important ones.



For the construction of the index, fixed minimum and maximum values have been established for each indicators:

- Life expectancy at birth<sup>1</sup>: 25 years and 85 years;
- Adult literacy rate<sup>2</sup>: 0% and 100%;
- Combined gross enrolment ratio<sup>3</sup>: 0% and 100%;
- Real GDP per capita (PPP\$)<sup>4</sup>: 100 and \$40,000.

**Basic Indicators for HDI Calculation for the Slovak Republic (1999)**

**Table 36**

Indicators	Notice	1999
Life expectancy at birth	years	72.99
Adult literacy rate	%	99.00
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio	%	75.03
Real GDP per capita <sup>a</sup>	PPP\$	10,950

*Note:* a. Preliminary data.

*Source:* Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>1</sup> The number of years a new-born infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of birth were to stay the same throughout the child's life.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage of people aged 15 and above who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life.

<sup>3</sup> The number of students enrolled in a level of education, regardless of age, as a percentage of the population of official school age for that level. The combined gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio refers to the number of students at all these levels as a percentage of the population of official school age for these levels.

<sup>4</sup> For this purpose, the GDP per capita in local currency is divided by the purchasing power parity (PPP), defined as the number of units of the country's currency required to buy the same amount of goods and services in the domestic market as one dollar would buy in the United States. PPP allows a standard comparison of real price levels between countries. Normal exchange rates may over- or undervalue purchasing power.

HDI values range from 0 to 1. The respective value for a country shows the distance that it has already traveled towards the maximum possible value of 1. The difference between the value achieved by a country and the maximum possible value shows the country's shortfall – how far the country has to go. A challenge for every country is to find ways to reduce its shortfall.

<b>Partial Indices and the Final HDI for the Slovak Republic (1999)</b>		<b>Table 37</b>
Indices		<b>1999</b>
Life expectancy index		0.800
Educational attainment index		0.910
Adult literacy index		0.990
Gross enrolment index		0.750
Adjusted real GDP (PPP\$) index		0.784
<b>Human Development Index HDI</b>		<b>0.831</b>

*Source: Author's calculations.*

In 2000, the Slovak Republic ranked 40th among 174 countries of the world in the international scale of human development compiled by UNDP.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, the final value of the index brought the Slovak Republic rank up to the high levels of human development. Compared to the preceding survey, this indicates an improvement by two places, and placed two Persian Gulf countries, Bahrain and Qatar, behind Slovakia. The relatively high growth of Slovakia's index was mainly due to a growth in the standard of living parameter – per capita GDP. It should be noted that World Bank data used for the most recent scale were calculated for 1998, i.e., prior to the introduction of austerity measures adopted in May 1999 (increased tax burden, deregulation of energy prices and rents, etc.). The growth of this parameter can be expected to be less pronounced in the future, mainly due to a reduction in the purchasing power of Slovakia's population. On the other hand, an interesting phenomenon could be observed in 2000: consumer prices of some important items included in the consumer basket (food, transportation) recorded decreases despite increasing producer costs.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See international comparison of HDI on the cover of the report.

<sup>6</sup> The GDP per capita (PPP) indicator, to a major extent, depends on the composition of the consumer basket selected for the calculation.

Table 38

**Comparison of EU Candidate Countries from CEE (1997-1998)**

HDI Ranking	Life Expectancy (years)	Adult Literacy rate (%)	Gross Enrolment ratio (%)	GDP per capita (PPP\$)	HDI Value
<b>High human development</b>					
29 Slovenia (1998)	74.6	99.6	81	14,293	0.861
33 Slovenia (1997)	74.4	99.0	76	11,800	0.845
34 Czech Rep. (1998)	74.1	99.0	74	12,362	0.843
36 Czech Rep. (1997)	73.9	99.0	74	10,510	0.833
40 Slovakia (1998)	73.1	99.0	75	9,699	0.825
42 Slovakia (1997)	73.0	99.0	75	7,910	0.813
43 Hungary (1998)	71.1	99.3	75	10,232	0.817
47 Hungary (1997)	70.9	99.0	74	7,200	0.795
44 Poland (1998)	72.7	99.7	79	7,619	0.814
44 Poland (1997)	72.5	99.0	77	6,520	0.802
46 Estonia (1998)	69.0	99.0	86	7,682	0.801
54 Estonia (1997)	68.7	99.0	81	5,240	0.773
<b>Medium human development</b>					
49 Croatia (1998)	72.8	98.0	69	6,749	0.795
55 Croatia (1997)	72.6	97.7	67	4,895	0.773
52 Lithuania (1998)	70.2	99.5	77	6,436	0.789
62 Lithuania (1997)	69.9	99.0	75	4,220	0.761
60 Bulgaria (1998)	71.3	98.2	73	4,809	0.772
63 Bulgaria (1997)	71.1	98.2	70	4,010	0.758
63 Latvia (1998)	68.7	99.8	75	5,728	0.771
74 Latvia (1997)	68.4	99.0	71	3,940	0.744
64 Romania (1998)	70.2	97.9	70	5,648	0.770
68 Romania (1997)	69.9	97.8	68	4,310	0.752

Note: CEE – Central and Eastern Europe.

Source: UNDP: Human Development Report 1999 and 2000.

Improved human development can be noted in the group of transition countries that aspire to join the European Union (including Croatia). There have been improvements within the context of the parameters studied, which is a positive message that can be sent to EU structures. In particular, the Baltic States experienced an extraordinary shift forward; for the first time in recent history, Estonia ranked among the countries with a high level of human development. Although less pronounced, the Balkan countries of Bulgaria and Romania experienced improvements in particular education and incomes. In assessing the Visegrad 4 countries and Slovenia, it should be noted that the potential for marked improvements is limited by their higher baseline position as well as the fact that only the most developed countries rank higher. Nevertheless, Central European countries tend to overtake the wealthy "oil" countries and the most developed economies of South America.

Slovakia's ranking of third among the countries of the former socialist block (position 2 among the V4 countries) as well as the final ranking of Slovakia on the HDI scale can be assessed positively. The results of the international comparison, however, do not reflect the belief of the population itself. Traditionally, Slovaks assess their situation as well as their future expectations pessimistically, even if their real situation may not worsen. This phenomenon can be traced back through recent years, and prevails regardless of the actual deterioration or improvement of economic and social parameters.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See, for example: Deván, D.: "People are Convinced That We Will be Worse Off". (*Ludia sú presvedčení, že nám bude horšie*). Sme, Aug 12, 2000; *Opinions (Názory)*. Periodical of the Public Opinion Research Institute at the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 1995-1999.

We need to acknowledge the limitations of HDI and similar measures. They arise from the limited numbers of variables that were studied, various methodological imperfections<sup>8</sup>, and, last but not least, from the limited availability of trustworthy data. Several interesting observations may be evaluated regarding Slovakia:

- Life expectancy in Slovakia is about 4 years less than the average for OECD Member States, with the difference being greater for males. Even so, Slovakia's population lives about 6 years longer than the world average.
- Numbers of students enrolled at schools (from the corresponding age groups of the population) are considerably smaller than numbers for developed countries. This comes mainly from tertiary studies. The percentage of university students from corresponding age groups is only about 2/3 of the level of OECD countries. The Czech Republic and Hungary report comparably poor parameters.
- Slovakia's per capita product is several times smaller compared to most developed economies of the world. Comparable World Bank data indicates that Slovakia's generated gross per capita domestic product is only one-sixth of developed countries, and only one-tenth of the best performing economies. Relating these data to purchasing power (PPP), the difference is only one-third to one-half.

## Measuring Gender (In)Equality

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary parameter that does not reflect differences between women and men. In 1995, UNDP came up with the idea to assess human development equality for women and men. The Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) studies the quality of life using the same parameters as HDI – life expectancy, educational attainment, and income – while adjusting the results for gender inequality.

According to UNDP calculations, for every country, the GDI value is lower than that of HDI, meaning that there is not full equality of women and men anywhere in the world.<sup>9</sup> (Gender equality would mean that the values of GDI and HDI are equal.) The Slovak Republic is among the countries which rank higher with respect to GDI than HDI. This may be interpreted that opportunities for a better life are more equally distributed between men and women than in some other countries that achieved a generally higher level of human development.

<b>Basic Indicators for GDI Calculation for the Slovak Republic (1999)</b>				<b>Table 39</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Notice</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	
Life expectancy at birth	years	77.03	68.95	
Adult literacy rate	%	99.00	99.00	
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio	%	75.83	74.38	
Real GDP per capita <sup>a</sup>	PPP\$	8,587	13,447	

*Note:* a. Author's calculation based on UNDP methodology. For details, see: UNDP: *Human Development Report 2000*.

*Source:* Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>8</sup> For example, literacy data in HDI are usually estimates since exact data are collected through national population censuses only every 5 or 10 years. Calculation of a gross enrolment ratio is influenced by study programs (levels) duration differences and the corresponding age groups in different countries; it does not consider grade repetition; etc.

<sup>9</sup> See international comparison of GDI on the cover of the report.

The calculation of the gender-related index is along the same lines as that of the human development index, with partial indices – life expectancy, education and income – being adjusted based on the proportions of men and women in the population. The calculation of the income index is based on the women-to-men wages ratio and their representations among the economically active population.

<b>Partial Indices and the Final GDI for the Slovak Republic (1999)</b>		<b>Table 40</b>
Indices		<b>1999</b>
Equally distributed life expectancy index		0.800
Equally distributed educational attainment index		0.910
Equally distributes income index		0.779
<b>Gender-related Development Index GDI</b>		<b>0.829</b>

Source: Author's calculation.

The differences in basic conditions that determine the quality of life of women and men are given mainly by two factors:

1. *Women tend to live longer than men.*
2. *Men tend to have higher incomes than women.*

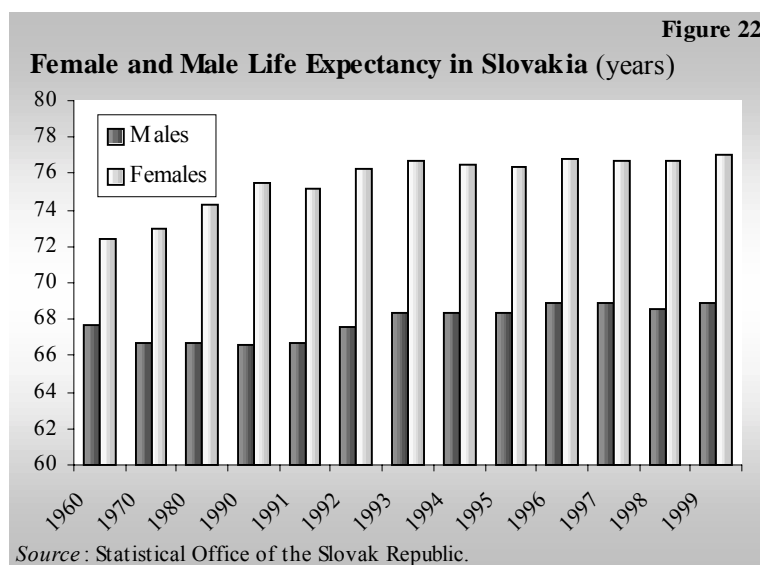
The above-mentioned phenomena are universally valid. In addition to these social and biological factors, there are other determinants that affect the quality of life for women and men, such as different access to education and information (this mainly concerns less developed countries), different physical, mental and motivation attributes, combination of maternal and professional duties of women, higher economic activity of men, lower participation of women in socially important positions, etc. What are the underlying reasons for these differences and what are their dimensions in Slovakia?

On average, men in Slovakia live 8 years less than women as shown in Figure 22. This difference shows a long-term tendency to increase, but recently has remained quite stable. A similar phenomenon can be seen in a majority of economically developed countries. Available data shows that men live longer than women, or have the same life expectancy as women, only in Maldives, Nepal and Bangladesh. Relatively small differences (to the benefit of women) exist in other Asian and most of the African countries (e.g., India, Namibia). Thus, longevity differences are smaller in developing countries. Studies have suggested that male mortality decreases with the wealth of the country, slower than that of females. In early 20th century, the life expectancy gap between men and women in wealthier countries was two to three years. By 1999, the difference in the same countries increased to seven or eight years, to the benefit of women. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the major reason for this development has been *a substantially higher proportion of smokers among males*. This factor may become unimportant in the future since gradually more women are becoming regular smokers. Some studies point to genetic differences in chromosomes that "draw up" a shorter life span for men, as early as in the early stages of fetal development. Other theories are based on the presence of the female hormone estrogen that, unlike the male testosterone, protects women against heart diseases. Another explanation may be a larger muscle mass and a faster metabolism in men that causes a faster cell death rate in the presence of a limited reproduction. Apart from the genetic factors there are also behavioral reasons. Men generally tend to smoke more, to drink more alcohol, to work in more risky and dangerous jobs, play rougher sports, and undergo greater physical risk.<sup>10</sup> According to WHO, additional reasons for the growing gender based life expectancy differences include a more responsible approach to health issues on the

<sup>10</sup> Haddock, R.: *Exactly Why Do Women Live Longer Than Men?* The Nubian Message Online, Feb 2, 1997.



part of women, their healthier diet, and men's gradual reduction of physical activities compared to their predecessors (exercising, active leisure time).<sup>11</sup> Experts direct men to not neglect symptoms of diseases, to seek professional medical assistance in health-related issues, and to eat substantially more fruits and vegetables, i.e., natural sources of so-called antioxidants.<sup>12</sup>



The answer to women's life span being longer than men's life expectancy is most likely a combination of the above as well as unknown factors. Whatever the reasons may be, it can be stated that women have the "biological advantage" of living longer and thus have more opportunities for human development. In general, we may agree with this hypothesis, however, only to the extent to other factors that are not accounted for and which are less favorable for women.

In Slovakia, both women and men share equal opportunities for education. There are study programs showing unbalanced gender proportions, but this fact is attributed to natural selection (e.g., women tend to select humanities, whereas men chose technical disciplines). In principle, the system of education is equally open to women and men at all levels. The combined enrolment ratios are even slightly higher for women, indicating that from the corresponding numbers of girls aged 6 to 22, higher percentage study at schools than it is the case for men.

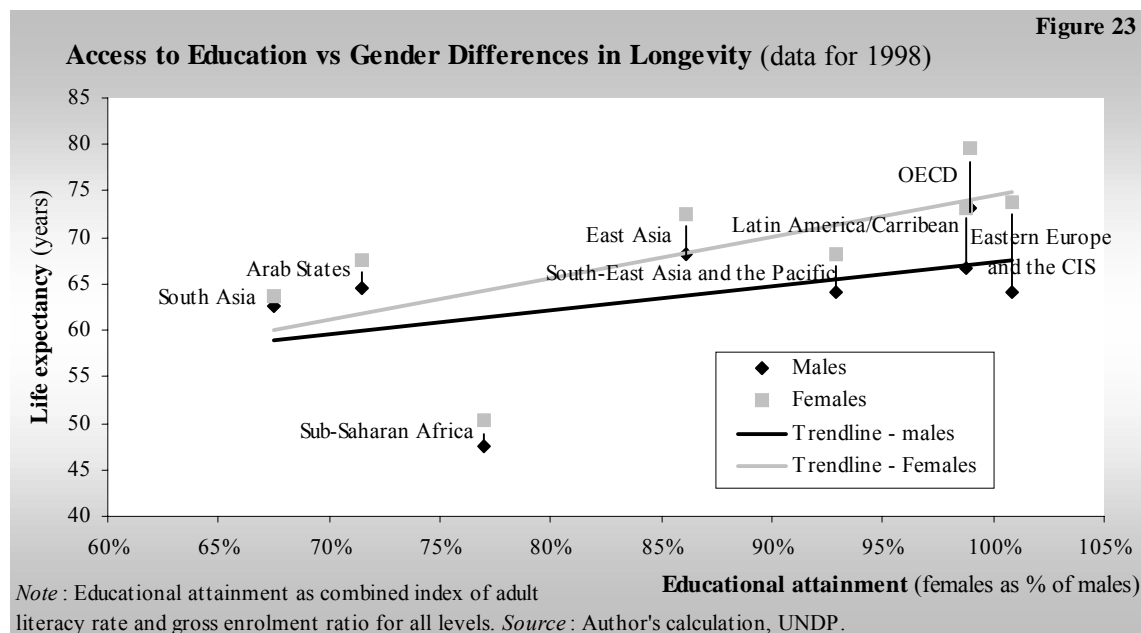
Certainly, there are countries where women's opportunities to study are not equal to those of men. This particularly concerns developing Asian and African countries where women, compared to men, make up a great majority of illiterate populations and have substantially more restricted access to teaching institutions. Statistical data indicate two interesting facts for countries where women have less opportunities for education than men. First, the life expectancies of both genders tend to approach each other. Second, women have a relatively shorter life span than in other countries.<sup>13</sup> It may be assumed that *the worsened access to education and information as compared to men makes the biological advantage of women to live longer lives disappear*. It is difficult to speak of a clear-cut causative relationship – since several other factors such as hierarchy of values, patriarchy, religion, etc. are also part of the game. Yet, there is an evident relationship between these phenomena (see Figure 23).

<sup>11</sup> Source: <http://www.who.org>

<sup>12</sup> Antioxidants have the ability to reduce the process of aging by combating fragments of free oxygen in the human body.

<sup>13</sup> Countries with a markedly higher level of education in men are e.g., India, Yemen, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Togo, Morocco, Guinea. The life expectancy differences in these countries are minimal. This may mislead to the conclusion that men are living healthier in the above mentioned regions than in developed countries. This is denied by data on their generally shorter life expectancy.

Figure 23



Perhaps the most marked gender inequality is with the labor market, specifically concerning income. With smaller or larger deviations, women in any country get lower remuneration for their work. According to the most recent data available, Slovak women earn on average only 75 percent of what men earn. This data may be paraphrased to say that women in Slovakia work for nothing for the first three months in a year, and start earning for their work only in April.<sup>14</sup>

There are equal conditions in the education market, but inequalities and/or discrimination against women when it comes to the labor market. How can we explain the fact that women have the same level of education as men, but their income is less? A portion of this difference is accounted for by structural factors in the labor market that appear as objective and known reasons for the income differences. One of the factors mentioned is the fact that women are employed prevalently in sectors that show the lowest average wages (education, health care, social services, etc.). However, sociologists ask whether the low pay in those sectors is the reason or the consequence of feminization (for details, see *Gender Differences in the Labor Market*). It is worth mentioning that women dominated sectors are key for long-term human development. A similar phenomenon can be observed within identical employment groups, with women filling lower ranking positions and thus paid worse. The slightly higher educational level of the active male population appears to be an objective reason for the income differences between the genders. In building their careers, women are limited by motherhood, thus slowing down their promotion to better positions. On the other hand, men are prevented from quickly achieving higher positions because of mandatory postgraduate service in the armed forces.

Even if the aforementioned factors were to be disregarded, a portion of the gender pay gap would still exist. It may be speculated that the reason is a combination of cultural, social and psychological influences whose deep roots may be looked for in the traditional, accepted perception of the roles of men and women in the family and the society. The belief prevails that it is generally men that have responsibility to provide for the material subsistence of the household, whose decisions weigh more, and who are better leaders and are able to more efficiently cope with a variety of situations. This idea is nourished by the society, including its female portion. Then, the "stronger gender (men) – weaker gender (women)" constellation becomes reflected in the very selection of the occupation and in financial requirements in relation to the job. "The need" for a higher pay for men is similarly perceived and accounted for

<sup>14</sup> According to the author's calculation, the "pay equity" day for 2000 is March 30 (data of the Statistical Office of the SR for the 1999 female/male wage ratio of 75 percent was used).

by employers who are men in a majority of cases. In contrast, women tend to be willing to accept less pay, to have lower career aspirations, and less resolution to achieve higher and hence better paid positions. There is also the perception of men's readiness to take responsibility, even by women themselves (women frequently are prone to believe that it is men who should be the boss<sup>15</sup>). The biological ability of women to bring children into the world serves to complete the image of a "finer" gender and is one of the reasons for their disadvantageous position in the labor market. The difference in pay reflects the perception of women's social status that is inclined toward the traditional understanding of a woman, above all, as a mother.

The private sector provides a greater space for this kind of relationship because the system of remuneration is looser and not linked to the individual wage tariffs as it is the case in the public sector. These aforementioned connections are not only reflected in the labor market (though they are most visible there), but also in other areas of social life, such as politics and administration of State. UNDP constructed the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) to measure the relative empowerment of women and men in political and economic areas.

GEM comprises four variables. The first two variables reflect economic participation and decision-making power: women and men's shares of administrative and managerial positions, and their shares of professional and technical jobs. The third variable, women and men's percentage shares of parliamentary seats, reflects political participation and decision-making power. The last variable, GDP per capita, is used to reflect power over economic resources.<sup>16</sup> In the most recent GEM comparison, Slovakia ranks 28th among the assessed 70 countries of the world. This position made the Slovak Republic rank higher than several more developed countries (such as Japan, Greece or Italy), however, at the same time lower than Venezuela, Latvia or Trinidad and Tobago, i.e. countries ranking behind Slovakia in the average levels of human development. The reason for such a "two-type" assessment of Slovakia has mainly been the weaker representation of women in political decision-making and managerial positions. Traditionally, it was Nordic countries that achieved the best position in international comparison of gender equality, when the first five tiers were taken by Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

Some countries have attempted to resolve the unequal or even discriminatory status of women by so-called *positive discrimination* (affirmative action), e.g., by introducing quotas for the filling of jobs or influential positions by women. Those attempts have shown controversial outcomes. Besides quite clear pros associated with mainly a reduction in poverty of women and elimination of prejudices, these measures brought in a new wave of discrimination and aversion that has proven to be a detriment to the most skilled and qualified women. It should be therefore considered whether similar artificial measures are actually a suitable form to eliminate inequalities. Gender equality – not only in the labor market or with respect to political decision-making, but above all with the family – must be perceived as a natural component of human existence. It would be an illusion to believe that relationships that have been forming for historically long periods of time can be rapidly changed. Therefore, measures to support gender equality in our environment should be directed mainly toward the education and training sector where children and young people can be educated in the value of equality.

## How to Improve Life Quality Measures?

It has been mentioned in the introduction to this section that to be able to measure the quality of life more comprehensively, we should use data from a variety of human life areas to construct a single parameter. The input data should represent the most important values of the human existence (health, education, standard of living, work, housing, etc.). The significance of any parameter is given by its comparability, e.g., from geographical or time aspect. Such a summary

<sup>15</sup> Teliščáková, D.: "Rights and Responsibility". ("Práva a zodpovednosť"). Pravda, March 4, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> For details on GEM methodology, see e.g., UNDP: Human Development Report 2000.

index could probably only serve the purposes of regional-based comparisons of regions or smaller territories of Slovakia (provided that such data are available). Several relevant data on the conditions of our country are not monitored at all. Some data are only monitored nationwide. Others lack the gender dimension, are only collected at irregular intervals, or only once within a certain period of time (such as the census). The implementation of the Public Administration reform and, in particular stabilization of the territorial division of the country, can be expected to give impetus for improvement. Valuable data are expected from the census in 2001. *A regional life quality index could become an adequate tool to monitor the status quo and the future development of regions.*

International comparisons need a simple indicator comprising comparable and – mainly – available data. The human development index HDI, as well as the gender-related index GDI, may be the most appropriate current parameter. This parameter reflects three principal attributes of life: longevity, education, and standard of living. The HDI methodology continues to develop and offers opportunities for improvement in the existing parameters and in the additions of new ones (after having accounted for all the requirements mentioned, including relevance, availability, comparability, and simplicity of calculations). Our suggestions to improve HDI and/or GDI focus on both existing and new groups of variables.

## A. Existing Variables

### 1. Life Expectancy

Within the human development index, life expectancy addresses the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. During a person's life, some non-negligible periods of time is spent in a variety of states that may be referred to as disability (illness, disease, etc.). The calculation of life expectancy (used by both HDI and GDI) is based on the overall life span based on mortality data. The WHO set up a new indicator of the life span, the so-called *disability-adjusted life expectancy* (DALE). The simplest definition of DALE is a healthy life expectancy, a life lived in full health.<sup>17</sup> DALE summarizes the expected number of years to be lived in what might be termed the equivalent of "full health". To calculate DALE, the years of ill-health are weighted according to severity and subtracted from the expected overall life expectancy to give the equivalent years of healthy life. DALE data are available for all countries for which the HDI is calculated, including their gender dimension. Even if the replacement of the "conventional" life expectancy by healthy life expectancy does not cause significant changes in the HDI ranking, it would *more truly reflect the nature of human development.*

WHO rankings show that the number of years lost to disability are substantially higher in poorer countries because of many limitations, including injury, blindness, paralysis, tuberculosis, mental effects of several tropical diseases such as malaria, and the obvious HIV/AIDS epidemic. People in the healthiest regions lose some 9 percent of their lives to disability, versus 14 percent in the least healthy countries.<sup>18</sup> When using DALE, this fact may lead to a relative deterioration of HDI rankings for developing countries.

### 2. Literacy Rate

Within the measures of human development, the adult literacy rate represents the level of educational attainment (two-thirds weight in the HDI). In the majority of developed countries, this indicator functions basically as a constant coefficient being close to 1. There are several definitions and different levels of literacy; e.g., the International Adult Literacy Survey introduced five levels of the so-called functional literacy.<sup>19</sup> A part of the "literacy weight" in the

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<sup>17</sup> WHO: The World Health Report 2000 Health Systems: Improving Performance. <http://www.who.org>

<sup>18</sup> For the calculation of the life expectancy index, minimum and maximum values would have to be changed accordingly (e.g., 20 and 77.5 years).

<sup>19</sup> UNDP uses the first level of this literacy scale for the calculation of the Human Poverty Index for OECD countries (HPI-2). Functional literacy means more than just the ability to read and write. Most of the tasks at this level require

HDI could be overtaken by functional literacy, which more precisely reflects the level of use of acquired abilities in reading and writing. Certainly, this would require identical surveys in all involved countries. That would be difficult, especially for the least developed countries with high levels of general illiteracy.

Nowadays, terms like information and computer literacy are becoming more and more frequent and are expected to soon replace the "literacy of reading and writing". The availability of information technologies, as the precondition of its use, is gaining vigorous importance among human development indicators. Data on the numbers of personal computers and Internet hosts are available (despite some shortcomings) and could very soon replace a part of the "literacy weight" in the HDI computation.

## B. New Variables

### 1. Unemployment Rate

If education is considered the principal tool to improve the quality of life, then one should add that the most efficient form of utilizing the acquired skills and qualifications is employment. To achieve a decent standard of living, one of the basic dimensions of human development, the majority of the population needs to work and earn an income. As mentioned in this report, the unemployed belong in the group at highest risk of poverty. Unemployment, at the same time, is one of the most pressing social problems, considered very sensitively by each and every individual. Though it is true that unemployment affects mostly the productive part of the population, this phenomenon also indirectly interferes with the pre- and post-productive population. For example, children in families where one or both parents are jobless have less opportunity for development. Higher rates of unemployment also decrease the volume of public sources for the valorization of old-age pensions (tax burden grows, pressure on unemployment benefits raises). Unemployment affects the quality of life of the entire society.

Including labor market indicators in the human development index would raise the value of the measure. Employment could capture a part of the income index, and/or a new *standard of living index* could be created (e.g., 2/3 weight for GDP per capita in PPP\$ and 1/3 weight for employment).<sup>20</sup> Data on unemployment are available for almost all countries examined within the HDI.

Naturally, the composition and methodology of international indices cannot be subject to permanent changes. However, some adjustments (e.g., the use of disability-adjusted life expectancy in the HDI calculation) would not dramatically intervene in the methodology and would significantly raise the quality of these complex human development indicators.

Last year's National Report stated that the feeling of a meaningful and happy life comes from the favorable action of the external environment on the development of human choices and the ability of people to develop these choices in accordance with their needs and interests. This condition cannot be exactly measured and compared because it appears in countless forms and each individual may perceive it differently. It is very likely that the chances of well being grow when people enjoy more opportunities to fulfill their life values (see Table 35). It is the increase of human choices and opportunities on which the human development measures are focused. It is not a self-meaningful measurement or comparison of country rankings. The mission is, through the achieved level of development, to point to both positive and negative aspects. The

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the reader to locate a certain information in the text. Example: Use the instructions on the bottle to identify the maximum duration recommended for taking aspirin.

<sup>20</sup> For the calculation of the adjusted HDI, the "employment rate" could be used. The parameter would reflect the gap between the theoretical maximum of full employment (100%) and the average annual unemployment rate of the respective country.

mission is also directed at solving problems in society and in the individual, which hinder human development.

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

Slovakia is a country where people have the opportunity to live a meaningful life. In spite of existing problems and restrictions, a majority of the population has sufficient opportunities for self-development. In general, the health status of the Slovak is considered to be good. People have unrestricted educational opportunities. The standard of living in Slovakia is adequate considering the condition of the economy and its potential. Principles of democracy and freedom are being developed, basic human rights are being respected, and opportunities for the realization of life goals are open to every individual. Slovakia's current development offers expanded opportunities, but not all the barriers that deter human development have been removed. There is room for improvement in many areas of society. For developmental strategy makers, the challenge is to address the problems of the *people*, improve the environment, and create a situation favorable for human development. On the other hand, people are challenged with the task of self-activation. Their responsibility is to develop personal goals that meet their needs, and to utilize the opportunities presented.

This year's National Report views human development through the optics of gender equality. The concept of human development is based on the equality of opportunities of all people, regardless of gender, age, nationality or race. The status of women and men in the family and the society has its roots in both biological differences and in the historical patterns of gender relationships. The stereotyped perception of man as the "breadwinner and protector of the family" and of woman as the "mother and woman in the household" is rooted in history and is not unique to Slovakia. It is a result of the traditional perception of the roles of man and woman that extends beyond all geographical and cultural borders.

In Slovakia, gender disparities most markedly manifest themselves in the lower participation of women in decision-making in politics and in the economy. Lack of participation in these areas is closely related to the higher proportions of women that experience poverty. In the view of a comparable qualification and education level of women, their representation in executive and legislative power bodies is low. For many years, the proportions of women in the cabinet and parliament have been ranging below 15 percent. The weaker status of women in the labor market manifests itself by lower average income due to lower positions and poorly paid occupations. On average, women earn three quarters of what men earn; and, their proportions in leading and managing positions is about 30 percent. It is interesting to note that these figures parallel the averages for countries with a higher level of human development.

What can be done in favor of gender equality?

1. *Education and training in the spirit of gender equality.* It will require gender education to enlighten people's perspective and enable Slovakia to overcome gender stereotypes. The key role in this respect is played not only by the family and the state, but also by teaching institutions and the media. The latter has had a powerful impact and influence upon the formation of, or change in behaviors. Eliminating gender-related prejudices, respecting the opposite gender, and respecting human rights are all hallmarks of a fair society. Gender equality must become a natural component of human existence. Gender equality education should be introduced during the formative years when it has the highest probability of being accepted.
2. *Fair division of paid and unpaid work.* Paid employment and unpaid work at home both have economical value and represent a precondition for a family's survival. Women usually do unpaid work that fosters economic dependence on men. Estimates of the value of unpaid work would support the need for awareness of its importance. If women did not perform the unpaid work, it would have to be completed in a different manner, such as through public or private services. Efforts should result in a more equitable division of labor and a revision of the social system that only accounts for paid work. Representative surveys on the utilization

of time would contribute toward a better understanding of the distribution of paid and unpaid work by gender.

3. *Support of a fair society, not only along the gender axis.* Several societal norms and structures, though not explicitly, disfavor certain groups of population, such as women, children, the handicapped, homosexuals, etc. Elimination of any form of discrimination (both hidden and open) against these groups will strengthen the principles of justice and equality of opportunities.
4. *Analysis of reasons for gender pay inequality and feminization of poverty.* Factors underlying the different levels of remuneration for the work of men and women have not been sufficiently examined and analyzed. A better understanding of this problem will help to reveal the actual extent of wage-related discrimination against women. Activities, such as the monitoring of the "pay equity" day, may be used to bring attention to this disparity of remuneration.<sup>1</sup> Women's lower income and lower old-age pensions increase the probability of their having a higher risk of poverty and associated problems. The feminization of poverty needs to be addressed, and the system of social and pension security reassessed to prevent women from being "disfavored".
5. *Analysis of affirmative action (so called positive discrimination).* The most frequent method of increasing women's participation is to introduce quota systems, i.e., to set the percentages of women expected to participate in a given area. In many countries, similar approaches are being used to address the problem of women's insufficient participation in political representation, in decision-making, employment, etc. Such measures can bring in positive results, but also can create new sources of problems. The introduction of such measures should therefore be preceded by a detailed analysis of experiences of countries that have chosen similar steps, as well as by a careful simulation of potential impacts.
6. *Support of various forms of employment.* It is of particular importance for women to have the opportunity to apply for flexible forms of employment. Part-time work and/or other forms of flexible jobs, such as working from home, enable an easier combination of women's responsibilities as both a mother and as an employee. Growing numbers of women attempt to cope by engaging in independent business activities. Surveys indicate that they face many barriers and have less business experience than men. NGOs and teaching institutions may assist in the organization of women's training activities in areas such as management, legislation, loan schemes, marketing methods, etc.
7. *Support of education.* Better education generally means more opportunities for human development. If there is an equality of opportunity in access to education and information, all investments into this area provide for a higher quality of life and have a positive effect on the gender dimension.
8. *Elimination of violence against women.* Violence committed against women is not just characterized as having a physical nature. It also includes all forms of violent action against women that causes them sexual or mental harm, forces them to act against their own will, or restricts their freedom. Domestic violence and prostitution represent a special set of problems. Violence against women introduces fears, uncertainty, and a loss of self-confidence into their lives and dramatically alters the conditions of their lives. Fighting this underestimated and frequently hidden ailment requires that it be identified and that preventive education be used to increase community awareness. Prevention must start with the revision of existing civil and penal law that is unsatisfactory and benevolent toward the offender. Of similar importance is the cooperation of responsible bodies of the Police, investigators, courts, and international networks for fighting trade in women and girls. There must be an effective system available for victims to exercise their rights via the courts. Legal services could be facilitated by consulting services or centers for victims. Correct sex education at schools is also of equal importance.

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<sup>1</sup> The pay equity day can be calculated as follows: The number of working days expressing the percentage difference between average wages of men and women is subtracted from the total number of working days in a year. For 2000, the pay equity day was March 30.



9. *Acceptance of the right for a choice of lifestyle.* Society has prejudices against life styles deemed different from the "habitual" (traditional) life styles. For example, unmarried and childless women, incomplete families, men working in "female" jobs and vice versa, etc. face a negative image. Preconditions for a fair society includes an individual's right to chose his/her lifestyle, to make decisions concerning his/her family status or remaining unmarried/single, to exercise choice in regard to reproduction, and to choose jobs, interests and related activities. All of these choices (except for those threatening human development) are a precondition for a fair society.

For many years, Slovakia has been ranked among the most developed countries in terms of human development. In recent years, even a slight improvement in Slovakia's status could be observed. However, there is a discrepancy between the positive assessment by international institutions and the public's assessment of the situation. Traditionally, people in Slovakia perceive society's situation, as well as that in their households, from a dysthymic perspective. This is particularly evident in financial matters. A negative assessment prevails regardless of whether the actual situation worsens or improves. In addition to "habitual" pessimism, there is also a variety of societal phenomena that constrain human development and contribute to the negative feelings. Poverty, whose forms and consequences are dealt with this year's national report, is one of such phenomena.

Poverty refers to a condition where resources of an individual are so restricted that the individual is excluded from a minimally accepted standard of life. The term poverty does not yet exist in the Slovakia's official dictionary, but it is referred to by the synonymous term "material distress". In 1999, 10.8 percent of Slovakia's population was reported to be in material distress. That was the highest recorded number of "the poor" since 1993. Currently, the most significant indicators of poverty are exclusion from the labor market and low level of education. The population group at the highest risk is the unemployed (in particular the long-term unemployed) who made up as much as 91 percent of all social assistance benefits recipients in material distress during 1999. Other groups traditionally at risk of poverty includes the elderly, children, incomplete families, and families with multiple children. Women, due to their lower average income, are more prone to be at risk of poverty. All the aforementioned characteristics, particularly a low level of education and exclusion from the labor market, affect the Roma population. A significant portion of the Roma population suffers from poverty or even misery. In the most backward Roma colonies, the *culture of poverty* arises. If people live in poverty over long periods of time, social exclusion and marginalization occur. Poverty can be identified from the outside based on statistical figures, but there is also a subjective feeling of this condition, or the threat of poverty, that is a serious hindrance to human development.

Poverty is present all over the world, even in the most developed countries. Fighting poverty is a global challenge that has no panacea that would help to eliminate it. The comprehensive nature of the problem requires the effort of the whole society. Fighting poverty involves more than simply dealing with the existing or visible poverty. Society needs to eliminate the reasons that cause the emergence and spreading of poverty. Consequently, the tools that may be used to deal with poverty may, with a certain simplification, be divided into two groups:

1. Those dealing with the reasons of poverty.
2. Those that are used to help the poor.

In Slovakia, the following measures may be included in the first group, the reasons of poverty:

1. *Dealing with the unemployment.* Although there are no official statistics concerning the poor, it is obvious that the unemployed are highly represented among the poor or poverty threatened population segments. During recent years, unemployment has become a weakness of the Slovak economy and has been viewed by the public as society's most pressing problem. The main barrier to the development of small and medium enterprises (that represent the engine of the economy and create most job opportunities) has been a

weak business environment. An motivating business environment can be created by measures that promote transparent rules, such as equality of opportunities, simplified conditions for establishing and operating companies, enforcement of law, and amendments to tax and levy-related obligations. Another motivator would arise from measures that would increase availability of credits. Making the bankruptcy law more efficient may help strengthen the business environment and reduce high unemployment rates. Financial resources available from the privatization of natural monopolies and banking institutions can temporarily help boost employment (e.g., in the form of public works). Increase in employment is also connected with a higher mobility, functioning infrastructure and housing market. Inflow of foreign capital may create new job opportunities, but also eliminate non-competitive operations. Supporting mechanisms favorable for housing development and encouraging foreign investor participation may have a positive impact on solving unemployment and poverty problems.

2. *Support of education.* Education is perhaps the most efficient tool to achieve a higher quality of life. Educated persons have more opportunities to make their way in the labor market and to receive more remuneration for their work. Measures that improve access to education and information have a positive effect on prevention of poverty. Investments in education produce huge rates of return that are often underestimated. Budgetary priorities will have to be reassessed; and, possibilities of multi-source financing and management of school facilities will have to be analyzed. The measures must account for demographic development as well as for worldwide education trends. If the financial demands are not successfully overcome, the biggest challenge facing the educational system will be to provide for the growth of the educational level without reducing the quality of the system, despite limited funds. Rationalization of the network of primary and secondary schools will be important. Slovakia's system of education not only suffers from a shortage of funds, but also from gaps in the conceptual legislative and methodological areas, such as finalization on the founder's function of teaching institutions, replacement of outdated teaching aids, a stronger link between facilities for apprentices and business sector and associations, a more flexible system of linkage and recognition of various forms of tertiary studies, and extension of possibilities for additional and life-long education. The missing link between education and the labor market explains why many school graduates are not finding jobs or must find jobs outside their qualified fields. A system will have to be initiated for enabling schools to respond more flexibly to the changing needs of the labor market (changes in curricula, contents and forms of training, assessment, etc.).
3. *Improved accessibility of information sources and new media (Internet).* While this requirement is closely connected with the preceding proposal, it deserves special attention because of the growing importance of media information in everyday life. Society has changed from an industrial to an information society. This change causes a shift in the "nature" of poverty, which is nowadays linked to insufficient levels of education and information, resulting in a difficult position in the labor market. Information media, such as the Internet, is expected to play a key role in the realization of individual and societal needs. Introducing the Internet into backwards regions of some countries has helped to reduce poverty of the local population (e.g., in the backwards Eskimo colonies in Canada). The Internet may replace textbooks in schools, facilitate contacts with various authorities, facilitate job seeking (exchange of job opportunities), create job opportunities, and markedly reduce the costs of communication and traveling. Despite the decreasing cost and the growing accessibility of information technologies, access to the Internet for a majority of the population is limited to workplaces and public institutions (schools, libraries, e-cafes), being used mostly by the young and the middle-aged population. Support to widening public access to the Internet and other information technologies should be a priority (in classrooms, public and academic libraries, as well as for use by official authorities in municipal and city councils, labor offices, social departments, tax authorities, etc.). EU supports such programs and the non-governmental sector plays a key role in this respect. A competitive environment in information and computer technologies and in telecommunications will help to reduce consumers' costs.

4. *Support to the family.* Generally, it holds that favorable interpersonal relations help prevent poverty and other negative societal phenomena. If the family is based on a strong foundation, it is substantially less "prone" to poverty when compared to families with disturbed relationships. Domestic and international statistical reports suggest that incomplete families with children, as well as individuals from disturbed environments, are most frequently at risk of poverty. These are also the people that make up high percentages of the homeless. While children are most affected by poverty, little attention is paid to their situation. A deeper socio-economic analysis is needed for a better understanding of the causes of such problems. A series of measures may help toward the support of sound family relationships, such as a system of specifically allocated family allowances, parenting classes, sex education, reform of the benefits system, housing support, etc. The financial and mental "stability" of parents helps to protect children from poverty. Although the dual-spouse family is the most significant way of life in Slovakia, the degree of tolerance vis-à-vis different family arrangements and alternate forms of coexistence should be increased.
5. *Elimination of discrimination.* An individual has equal opportunities for development only in a society that respects human rights and is non-discriminatory. It is important that the equality (fairness) of the system act on both poles, i.e., that the rules of the social system enable individuals living in poverty to escape this condition and vice versa, that they motivate other people to eliminate behaviors that lead to poverty. It is necessary to prevent practices that condemn individuals to remain poor based on external features.
6. *Roma minority issues.* It is evident that all the factors determining poverty in Slovakia culminate most markedly in the Roma minority. The status of a significant portion of the Roma population bears all the typical features of "Slovak" poverty, including high unemployment rates, long-term unemployment, opportunities only in the secondary labor market, a dependence on social support, insufficient education, and some forms of discrimination. Poverty features that are commonly found in third world countries complicate the situation, including unsatisfactory conditions of housing, insufficient hygiene, poor health conditions, low life expectancy, illiteracy, etc. A number of prejudices and lack of knowledge throughout society has resulted in stigmatizing the "Roma issue". This viewpoint has prevented the resolution of the uneasy Roma situation. From the perspective of the Roma community, the life of the Roma is both diversified and different from the life of the majority population and there is no uniform strategy that can be efficiently adopted. Solutions to Roma issues would require targeted approaches, a thorough knowledge of the actual conditions, and a definition of the different groups of Roma population and their problems (e.g., by the level of poverty and territorial distribution). Based on such analysis, decisions can be made on specific steps. One alternative may be to focus on group two measures (helping the poor) for the most backward Roma localities, and to pursue elimination of reasons for poverty in more developed and prospective areas. In the first case, the point is to provide a relief from the existing poverty rather than to preserve the existing status (a parallel to assistance in third world countries). With respect to the most backwards colonies, measures will have to be taken to provide support for the most basic needs of life – more dignified and safer housing, food assistance, basic health care, and prevention of epidemics. In the case of more developed areas with a higher degree of development, coping with the bad social situation can be oriented toward specific measures, in particular in the field of education and training (e.g., re-introduction of the zero grades of primary schools that have proven useful, support to gifted children), employment (active labor market policy, works of public benefit, etc.), social area (motivating schemes of the social system), support of the start-up of business activities, etc. Another measure that has proven to be effective in the more backwards regions of other countries is the use of small loans and savings deposits in so-called rural banks that are administered by the local population. The core idea is to set up mechanisms that will enable the Roma to get out of the culture of poverty by their own initiative with (temporary) support on the part of the society, and will motivate them to remain out of poverty. From the viewpoint of "breaking through" the culture of poverty, emphasis needs to be placed on programs for the young generation. This will require an open-minded approach on the part of the older generation.

If the measures to assist the Roma are to be a success, both the Roma and the majority population have to accept them. It will be important to involve the Roma themselves in the decision making process and in the implementation of the measures. It has to be recognized that dealing with the complex situation of the Roma goes beyond the scope of Slovakia alone and support from a whole community of countries will be necessary.

The following recommendations can be included in the group of measures to relieve or to support the existing poverty:

7. *Targeted and motivating system of social assistance.* The stress put on a motivating system of assistance can be looked at in two different ways. The first way looks at people who are realistically dependent on the social assistance of state (such as the handicapped, the elderly), and ensure they have dignified (appropriate) conditions of life and a feeling that they represent an important part of the society. The second way looks at recipients of social assistance benefits to ensure they have motivation to actively deal with their bad situation (e.g., the unemployed). This second approach seeks to establish a good control of who receives social assistance, particularly in unemployment assistance, and to provide for an improvement in the targeted nature of the social system. Poverty in Slovakia will have to be defined and identified, including a poverty line (e.g., as defined by the Council of Europe), before the social system can address this problem. The principal pillars of the social network (life and subsistence minimum, minimum wages, pensions) must be based on a realistic potential of the economy. At the same time, it should prevent them from becoming a tool of populism of political groupings. A functioning system of child allowances, housing allowances, and soft loan schemes for low-income households, all belong in this group of measures.
8. *Community programs for children and young people from poor and poverty-threatened families.* Support programs for children and young people from a socially disadvantaged environment are an important form of assistance. Despite a shortage of public resources, the local population, business entities, schools etc. need to enhance their involvement in the organization of out-of-school activities for children (teams, camps, artistic or sports groups, etc.). A tax incentive is one method of gaining their involvement. Specialized assistance is possible with reduced prices at school canteens, travel grants, free-of-charge medical checks, cheaper textbooks, support of gifted children through scholarships, and student loans. An important role is played by the non-governmental sector, not only to direct financial assistance, but also to identify and support new strategies for reducing children's poverty.
9. *Social rescue nets for groups most suffering from poverty.* The target of this group of measures are abandoned children, elderly and infirm individuals, lonely persons and persons with handicaps, refugees, and the homeless. For these marginalized groups, the governmental (state) sector working with the private (non-governmental) sector has to set up a rescue net that would provide at least a minimum level of conditions needed for a dignified life and development. Most measures are charitable in nature, and should be oriented toward the building and providing for the operation of a network of homes for children, orphanages, homes for the elderly, dormitories, and advisory centers. Despite some features of poverty, similar to those observed in developing countries, poor people in Slovakia do not die of starvation or live without a shelter over their heads. Homeless people may represent an exception to this, since their typical way of life bears signs of struggle for mere survival. Church unions and charity foundations play an irreplaceable role in mitigating the misery of the homeless by providing them with warm meals, clothing, and emergency shelters. They also encourage and support activities that involve the homeless in building their own dwellings.
10. *"Mobile" social care.* Poverty is more likely to spread in geographically remote localities that are otherwise segregated from the social infrastructure. In Slovakia, such areas include mainly the backward Roma colonies, where an improvement in the conditions of life might be brought about by mobile social assistance in the field of health care, housing, and

employment. Preventive medical checks, vaccination, dental examinations, safety control of electrical and other networks, hygienic inspections, checks of water supplies, and information on job opportunities would alleviate problems indigenous to the locality.

11. *Assistance from foreign and international institutions.* Assistance from foreign foundations, non-for-profit organizations, and international banking institutions (such as the World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) plays an increasing role in dealing with the problems of poverty in Slovakia. European Union support programs financed under structural funds are expected, in the view of the current situation, to be primarily oriented toward regions showing below-average economic parameters. The efficiency of foreign assistance will be evaluated by the success rate of mobilizing local resources to deal with the region's own problems.

We believe that all measures supporting a gender-related equal society and advocating the elimination of poverty will positively affect human development in Slovakia.

## Impact of the National Report

The Center for Economic Development coordinated the drafting and the publishing of National Human Development Reports for the Slovak Republic in 1998 and 1999. Independent authors from both the non-governmental and academic sectors prepared these reports. The 1998 National Report analyzed the most pressing social problems in Slovakia and addressed recommendations to eliminate barriers to human development. The publication met with a positive response among professionals as well as the lay public at home and abroad. Professor Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel Prize winner for economy and one of the pioneers of the human development concept, conveyed his regards to this Report as a special honor. The 1999 National Report described how significant social and political changes had affected the quality of life of Slovakia's people. The findings presented in the Report were dealt with extensively by the media and were quoted by top state officials. Both publications instigated a broad-based discussion on developmental problems of the country and supported positive changes.

In contrast to other developmental concepts, the strategy of human development advocates the overall development of a society that will enable people to live longer, healthier, and have fulfilling lives. The National Report (NHDR) supports this objective by analyzing the areas of life that have a crucial impact on the creation and widening of peoples' opportunities. The purpose of the Report is designed to address the potential for an improvement of the status quo. Thus, the analysis of sectors such as economy, education, labor market, health, and social situation or politics focuses mostly on existing shortcomings and problems. The scope of the publication does not allow to cover all aspects of human development or to subject them to a detailed analysis. Therefore, every year UNDP, in cooperation with the team of authors, defines the key topics of the report. These topics are then developed into a detailed analysis and recommendations formulated to address the enactment of specific measures.

Work on the NHDR has also contributed to an expanded scope of statistical surveys. The staff of the Social Statistics Department of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic stated that the essence of statistical surveys was shifted partly toward parameters on the quality of life. This was attributed to a cooperative effort with UNDP. Two problem areas that still need to be addressed are collecting data along the gender axis, and monitoring regional data.

The human development concept has only a short existence in Slovakia. The following steps are expected to contribute to its expansion and to the strengthening of its impact:

- *Incorporation of human development issues into the school curricula.* Training course can be developed at universities, which offer economical or socio-political study programs, in cooperation with UNDP.

- *Organization of brainstorming and workshops.* Meetings of UNDP representatives with the NHDR author team and with experts from various fields would enrich the discussion on Slovakia's developmental strategy, and would give added weight to the recommendations.
- *Drafting of partial reports.* This would use the optics of human development to focus on specific areas, such as crime, labor market, human rights, etc. Such specialized studies would provide a deeper analysis of the issue in question, explore various conceptual approaches, and foster qualified suggestions for solutions. Investigative conclusions could be summarized in the National Report, thus making it a more powerful tool to defend and advance changes for the benefit of human development.
- *Improved monitoring of human development parameters.* A wider range of statistical data and figures is a prerequisite for a high quality analysis of human development. In working with UNDP and the national authorities in the field of statistics, the set of parameters and the possibilities of their coverage will have to be defined.
- *Presentation of the human development issues in the media.* The National Report is an appropriate tool to advance human development concepts in the media. Presentation in regional media could help to increase its efficiency. Also, using the Internet could provide broader coverage of the issues contained in the National Report as well as in other UNDP publications.
- *Public opinion polls on quality of life.* Representative polls may help provide a better understanding of the human development dimension in Slovakia. Periodic surveys could focus on key topics of the NHDRs, thus improving the value of the analysis included in the National Report.
- *Expansion of the NHDR distribution into regions.* The National Report is intended for a broad spectrum of readers. However, its limited circulation does not allow it to be distributed to all regional centers (e.g., to libraries, academic institutions). It would help to broaden the Report's distribution area and increase the audience by publishing articles in the regional press. The distribution of the Report via Internet would help to disseminate the findings to regional municipalities, local councils, libraries, and educational institutions.

## Human Development Balance Sheet (1995-2000)

Progress	Setbacks
<b>Demographic Profile</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of reported abortions dropped from 48 (per 100 livebirths) in 1995 to 35 in 1999.</li> <li>Life expectancy at birth grew from 72.4 to 73.0 years during 1995-1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total fertility rate decreased from 1.52 in 1995 to 1.31 in 1999.</li> <li>The aging index (ratio of post-productive to pre-productive population) grew from 78.8 in 1995 to 90.5 in the year 1999.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public expenditures on health increased from 11.4% in 1995 to 14.5% of total public expenditure in 1999.</li> <li>New-born mortality decreased from 8 cases per 1000 livebirths in 1995 to 5 cases in 1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIDS cases have doubled from 0.2 in 1995 to 0.4 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 1999.</li> <li>The number of registered individuals with drug addiction increased from 1,239 in 1995 to 2,199 in 1998.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tertiary full-time enrolment ratio increased from 15.8% in 1995 to 18.8% in 1999.</li> <li>The number of upper secondary graduates (as % of total population in corresponding age) grew from 51.3% in 1995 to 61.6% in 1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total expenditures on education decreased from 5.1% in 1995 to approximately 4.5% of GDP in 1999.</li> <li>Wages in the education sector declined from 86.2% (as a share on the average wage in the economy) in 1995 to 81.8% in 1998.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Indicators</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foreign trade deficit (as a share on GDP) decreased from 12.2% in 1996 to 5.5% in 1999.</li> <li>Share of private sector in GDP increased from 64.9% in 1995 to 84.3% in 1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real GDP growth has slowed from 6.7% in 1995 to 1.9% in 1999.</li> <li>Gross foreign debt has doubled from USD 5.8 billion in 1995 to approximately USD 11.9 billion in 1998.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In July 2000, the project on public works was introduced in cities and municipalities to reduce long-term unemployment (as of August 31, 2000, the overall number of unemployed dropped by almost 50,000).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered unemployment rate increased from 12.9% in 1995 to 18.2% in 1999.</li> <li>The unemployment rate of the youth (15-24 age group) increased from 24.8% in 1995 to 32.1% in 1999.</li> </ul>
<b>Poverty, Income</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average working time consumption necessary for the satisfaction of selected needs decreased from 208 hours in 1996 to 186 hours in 1998.</li> <li>Real financial income per capita in households increased by 14% during 1995-1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of individuals in material distress grew in the period 1995-1999 from 7.6% to 10.8% of total population.</li> <li>In 1995, the income per capita in the richest 10% of households was 3.6 times higher than it was in the poorest 10% of households, while in 1999 the ratio increased to 4.5.</li> </ul>
<b>Politics</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In July 2000, Slovakia was invited to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to become its 30th member.</li> <li>In May 2000, the Act on Free Access to Information was adopted by the Slovak parliament.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of employees in the central state administration increased from 5,692 in 1995 to 8,022 in 1999.</li> <li>The Corruption Perception Index (CPI, data for past three years) has worsened from 3.9 in 1998 to 3.7 in 1999.</li> </ul>
<b>Crime and Safety</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of registered criminal offences decreased from 21 crimes in 1995 to approximately 17 crimes per 1,000 inhabitants in 1999.</li> <li>Percentage of clarified criminal acts increased from 42.9% to 50.1% during 1995-1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The growing trend of violent crime was reflected in a growth from 10,994 violent crimes in 1995 to 13,531 crimes in 1999.</li> <li>Domestic violence against women grew by 35% during 1995-1997.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Equality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tertiary enrollment ratio for both males and females is increasing, while being slightly higher in females.</li> <li>Participation of women in communal politics increased from 15.2% in 1998 to 17.4% in 1999.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation of women in the Slovak government decreased from 14.8% in 1995 to 10% at present.</li> <li>In 1995, women earned 78% of men's wages, and even 75% in 1999.</li> </ul>





## Statistical Appendix

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### Basic Indicators for HDI Calculation for the Slovak Republic (1999)

Indicators	Notice	1999
Life expectancy at birth	years	72.99
Adult literacy rate	%	99.00
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio	%	75.03
Real GDP per capita <sup>a</sup>	PPP\$	10,950

*Note:* a. Preliminary data.

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### Partial Indices and the Final HDI for the Slovak Republic (1999)

Indices	1999
Life expectancy index	0.800
Educational attainment index	0.910
Adult literacy index	0.990
Gross enrolment index	0.750
Adjusted real GDP (PPP\$) index	0.784
<b>Human Development Index HDI</b>	<b>0.831</b>

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### Basic Indicators for GDI Calculation for the Slovak Republic (1999)

Indicators	Notice	Females	Males
Life expectancy at birth	years	77.03	68.95
Adult literacy rate	%	99.00	99.00
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio	%	75.83	74.38
Real GDP per capita	PPP\$	8,587	13,447

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### Partial Indices and the Final GDI for the Slovak Republic (1999)

Indices	1999
Equally distributed life expectancy index	0.800
Equally distributed educational attainment index	0.910
Equally distributes income index	0.779
<b>Gender-related Development Index GDI</b>	<b>0.829</b>

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**Profile of Human Development**

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Indicators	Year	Value
Life expectancy at birth (years)	1999	72.99
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	1999	11
Population per doctor	1999	283
R&D scientists and technicians (per 10,000 people) <sup>a</sup>	1999	44.75
Tertiary full-time equivalent gross enrolment ratio (%)		
Total	1999	21.32
Female		21.72
Daily newspapers (copies per 100 people) <sup>b</sup>	1999	4,248
GDP per capita (current prices, USD)	1999	3,649

*Note:* a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR. b. Includes total number of issued newspapers.

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**Profile of Human Distress**

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Indicators	Year	Value
Unemployment rate (%) <sup>a</sup>	1999	16.2
Youth unemployment rate (% , 15-24 years)	1999	32.10
Adults with less than upper-secondary education (as % of age 15-54F / 59M)	1991	47.50
Ratio income of highest 10% of households to lowest 10%	1999	4.47
Annual rate of inflation (%) <sup>b</sup>	1999	14.20
Injuries from road accidents (per 100,000 people)	1999	213
Reported homicides (per 100,000 people)	1999	2.6
Reported rapes (per 100,000 people)	1999	9.8
Sulphur dioxide emissions (kg of SO <sub>2</sub> per capita) <sup>c</sup>	1999	31.47
Nitrogen oxides emissions (kg of NO <sub>x</sub> per capita) <sup>c</sup>	1999	13.82

*Note:* a. Labor force surveys, annual average. b. Last month of the given period compared to the same month of the previous year (December). c. Data include stationary sources only.

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### Trends in Human Development

Indicators	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Life expectancy at birth (years)							
Total	72.51	72.41	72.37	72.84	72.81	72.66	72.99
Female	76.66	76.48	76.33	76.81	76.72	76.71	77.03
Male	68.35	68.34	68.40	68.88	68.90	68.62	68.95
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	12	6	8	5	3	9	11
Population per doctor	279	290	315	320	294	286	283
Tertiary full-time equivalent gross enrolment ratio (%)	17.7	18.0	19.4	20.8	22.5	23.6	21.7
Real GDP per capita (PPP\$)	5,620	6,389	...	7,323	7,910	10,500	10,460
Expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	5.26	4.43	5.10	4.97	4.53	4.28	4.35 <sup>a</sup>
Expenditure on health care (as % of GDP)	5.25	5.69	6.17	6.58	6.70	6.40	6.65 <sup>a</sup>

Note: a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR.

### Female – Male Gaps

Females as percentage of males	Year	Value
Life expectancy	1999	111.7
Population	1999	105.6
Duration of school attendance full-time study	1999	101.7
Secondary full-time enrolment ratio	1999	101.25
Upper secondary full-time graduates	1999	106.78
Tertiary enrolment ratio	1999	104.3
University enrolment ratio of all forms	1999	103.8
University natural and applied science full-time enrolment ratio	1999	101.23
Labor force	1999	81.9
Employment	1999	83.2
Unemployment	1999	84.0
Wages	1999	75.0

<b>Status of Women</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Value</b>
Life expectancy at birth (years)	1999	77.03
Average age at first marriage (years)	1999	23.0
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	1999	11
Secondary enrolment ratio of women (%)	1999	84.29
Upper secondary full-time study graduates (as % of females of normal graduate age)	1999	72.08
University enrolment ratio of women (%)	1999	21.72
University full-time enrolment ratio of women (%)	1999	18.65
University natural and applied science full-time education (as % of females of normal graduate age)	1999	47.77
Women in labor force (as % of total labor force)	1999	45.0
Administrators and managers (% females)	1998	29.7 <sup>a</sup>
Parliament (% of seats occupied by women) <sup>b</sup>	1999	14

*Note:* a. Source: UNDP. b. September 1998 Parliamentary Elections (16 seats).

<b>Demographic Profile I</b>					
<b>Population as of Dec 31</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000 <sup>a</sup></b>
Total	4 018 405	5 387 650	5 393 382	5 398 657	5 408 691
Females	2 052 126	2 765 645	2 769 690	2 773 531	2 778 211
Males	1 966 279	2 622 005	2 623 692	2 625 126	2 630 480

*Note:* a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR.

<b>Demographic Profile II</b>			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>1960 - 1996</b>	<b>1960 - 1999</b>	<b>2000 - 2001 <sup>a</sup></b>
Annual population growth (%)	0.96	0.88	0.07

*Note:* a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR.

<b>Demographic Profile III</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>1999</b>
Dependency ratio (ratio of pre-productive and post-productive population to productive population, %)	60.62

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**Demographic Profile IV**

Indicators	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total fertility rate	1.920	1.663	1.520	1.471	1.430	1.378	1.311
Number of women using contraception	181,915	190,057	224,611	189,449	231,666	282,281	305,824
% of women using contraception at fertile age	13.17	13.58	15.88	13.27	16.13	19.57	21.11
Population aged 60 and over (%)	15.05	15.11	15.16	15.21	15.24	15.30	15.39
Life expectancy at age 60 (years)							
Total	18.21	17.92	17.80	18.08	18.14	18.02	18.16
Female	20.46	20.15	19.99	20.35	20.34	20.29	20.48
Male	15.95	15.68	15.61	15.81	15.93	15.76	15.84

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**Health Profile I**

Indicators	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Deaths from circulatory system diseases (as % of all causes)	52.26	54.67	55.09	54.45	54.72	55.93	54.71
Deaths from malignant cancers (as % of all causes)	20.33	20.93	21.55	21.74	21.67	23.02	22.78
AIDS cases (per 100,000 people)	0.13	0.17	0.20	0.20	0.35	0.35	0.44
Regular smokers (%)							
Males	...	39	...	40	...	39 <sup>a</sup>	38 <sup>a</sup>
Females	...	16	...	17	...	19 <sup>a</sup>	20 <sup>a</sup>
Public expenditure on health (as % of total public expenditure)	8.3	10.9	11.4	12.0	14.1	14.3	14.5 <sup>a</sup>
Payments of health insurance companies and inhabitants to private health care facilities (as % of total expenditure on health)	...	...	...	...	44.9	47.1	49.1 <sup>a</sup>
Total expenditure on health (as % of GDP)	5.25	5.69	6.17	6.58	7.2	6.9	7.1 <sup>a</sup>

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*Note:* a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR.

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**Health Profile II**

<b>Consumption of selected foodstuffs and tobacco (per capita/year)</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999<sup>a</sup></b>
Alcohol (liters of pure alcohol per adult)	13.9	15.6	14.9	11.1	11.7	12.0	10.7	10.5
Tobacco (pieces of cigarettes per adult)	2,193	2,580	2,329	1,731	1,872	2,193	1,951	1,987
Coffee (kg)	0.7	1.5	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.4	3.1	3.3
Meat and meat products (kg)	60.3	75.8	84.0	63.7	65.0	66.1	65.9	64.8
Milk and milk products (kg)	194.4	211.3	226.3	162.4	162.1	161.8	162.5	161.4
Butter (kg)	4.3	6.1	6.4	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.1	2.9
Vegetable fats and oils (liters)	6.5	8.4	11.9	15.8	16.3	17.0	16.6	16.9

*Note:* a. Preliminary data.

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**Education Profile**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
Enrolment ratio for all levels FTS (% age 6-22)	72.28	72.32	72.26	72.56	73.58	73.75
Upper secondary full-time enrolment ratio (%)	85.94	89.27	91.83	89.94	88.67	78.59
Upper secondary technical enrolment ratio FTS (as % of total upper-secondary)	42.20	41.58	40.27	39.18	37.98	38.40
Tertiary full-time enrolment ratio (%)	15.02	15.78	16.43	17.31	18.54	18.84
Tertiary natural and applied science enrolment FTS (as % of total tertiary)	64.20	65.36	65.72	64.82	65.09	63.27
Expenditure on tertiary education (as % of all levels)	15.35	16.26	12.28	...	13.97	14.10 <sup>a</sup>
Expenditure on higher education (as % of GDP)	...	...	0.59	...	0.60	0.61 <sup>a</sup>
Public expenditure per tertiary student (USD)	...	...	1,331 <sup>a</sup>	...	1,345 <sup>a</sup>	1,350 <sup>a</sup>
Total expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	4.43	5.10	5.07	4.75	4.50	4.52 <sup>a</sup>

*Note:* a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR. FTS – full-time study.

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**Human Capital Formation I**

Indicators	Year	Value
Scientists and technicians (per 1,000 people)	1999	51.80 <sup>a</sup>
R&D scientists and technicians (per 10,000 people)	1999	44.70 <sup>a</sup>
Expenditure on research and development (as % of GDP)	1999	0.84 <sup>a</sup>

*Note:* a. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR.

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**Human Capital Formation II**

Indicators	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Upper secondary graduates FTS (as % of population of normal graduate age: 17 years)	49.84	51.27	55.97	60.14	62.31	61.60
Tertiary graduates FTS (as % of population of normal graduate age: 22 years)	9.08	11.49	10.88	13.58	13.32	14.51
Science graduates (as % of all tertiary graduates) <sup>a</sup>						
Total	5.91	4.13	4.46	1.52	2.45	2.27
Female	3.21	2.30	3.09	0.96	1.61	1.58
Male	8.94	6.36	5.98	2.84	3.46	3.07

*Note:* a. Including part-time study.

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**Employment I**

Indicators	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor force (as % of total population)	46.5	46.2	46.2	47.7
Percentage of labor force in				
Agriculture	8.7	8.3	8.2	7.3
Industry (including construction)	38.6	37.7	36.2	37.0
Services	49.2	49.7	51.5	52.5
Not defined	3.5	4.3	4.1	3.2

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**Employment II**

Indicators	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Future labor force replacement ratio (%) <sup>a</sup>	111	107	104	99	97
Real earnings per employee annual growth rate (%)	4.0	7.1	6.6	2.7	- 3.1
Percentage of labor force unionized	50.3	47.4	43.1	35.9	35.0 <sup>b</sup>
Weekly hours of work (per person in manufacturing)	32.3	32.5	32.3	33.0	33.1
Expenditure on labor market programs (as % of GDP) <sup>c</sup>	0.75	0.75	0.47	0.32	0.06

*Note:* a. Number of population under 15 divided by one third of population aged 15-54 females (15-59 males). b. Expert estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR. c. Expenditures on active labor market policy.

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<b>Unemployment</b>				
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
Unemployed persons (thousands)	284.2	297.5	317.1	416.8
Unemployment rate (%)				
Total	11.3	11.8	12.5	16.2
Female	12.7	12.8	13.2	16.4
Youth (15-24)	21.0	21.7	23.6	32.1
Male youth (15-19)	44.7	37.9	39.3	54.5
Incidence of long-term unemployment (as % of total)				
More than 6 months	67.9	65.8	67.1	68.0
More than 12 months	51.6	50.2	50.7	46.9
Unemployment benefits expenditure for registered unemployed (as % total public expenditures)	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.5
Ratio of unemployment rate of those with only primary education to those with tertiary education				
Males	14.3	11.3	12.4	8.7
Females	6.5	5.9	5.1	5.9

<b>Natural Resources</b>						
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
Land area (thousands of km <sup>2</sup> )	49,030	49,030	49,030	49,030	49,030	49,035
as % of land area:						
Agricultural land	49.9	49.9	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.8
Arable land	30.2	30.2	30.1	30.0	30.0	29.8
Permanent grassland	17.0	17.1	17.2	17.2	17.3	17.5
Non-agricultural land	50.1	50.1	50.2	50.1	50.2	50.2
Forest land	40.6	40.6	40.6	40.7	40.8	40.8
Agricultural land (km <sup>2</sup> )	24,460	24,460	24,456	24,444	24,415	24,422
Irrigated land (as % of agricultural land)	2.8	2.2	1.5	1.2	2.2	1.8



### National Income Accounts

Indicators	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
GDP (SKK billion, current prices)	546.0	606.1	686.1	750.8	815.3
GDP (SKK billion, constant prices of 1995)	546.0	579.9	615.9	641.1	653.3
GDP (USD billions, calculated by the average exchange rate of the given period)	18.362	19.777	20.410	21.304	19.685
GDP per capita (USD)	3 423	3 680	3 791	3 952	3 649
Agricultural production (as % of GDP) <sup>a</sup>	5.3	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.9
Industrial production (as % of GDP) <sup>a</sup>	24.2	23.9	23.1	23.3	23.6
Services (as % of GDP) <sup>a</sup>	50.8	50.8	53.4	53.5	53.5
Share of private sector in GDP (%)	64.9	76.8	82.6	82.4	84.3
Consumption (as % of GDP)					
Private (Households)	50.8	51.8	51.5	52.1	51.2
Government	19.5	22.2	21.9	21.7	19.8
Gross domestic investment (as % of GDP)	27.3	32.9	31.8	36.5	32.2
Gross domestic savings (as % of GDP)	9.0	6.6	7.8	7.7	7.5
Tax revenues (as % of GDP)	25.4	24.3	22.3	21.3	22.1 <sup>b</sup>
Central government expenditure (as % of GDP)	33.2	33.3	33.3	27.5	27.4 <sup>b</sup>
Exports of goods and services (as % of GDP)	59.8	56.7	62.7	67.6	68.7
Imports of goods and services (as % of GDP)	58.0	64.0	68.1	78.5	72.4

Note: a. Based on added values. b. Estimate by the Statistical Office of the SR.

### Trends in Economic Performance

Indicators	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Real GDP change (%)	6.7	6.2	6.2	4.1	1.9
Foreign trade balance (as % of GDP)	-,1.1	-,12.2	-,10.7	-,11.6	-5.5
Annual rate of inflation (%)	7.2	5.4	6.4	5.6	10.6
Consumer price index (%) <sup>a</sup>	109.9	105.8	106.1	106.7	110.6
State budget deficit (as % of GDP)	-1.6	-4.4	-2.6	-2.7	-,2.1
Gross foreign debt (as % of GDP, cumulative)	31.7	39.5	48.5	55.9	53.4
In USD million	5,827	7,807	9,896	11,902	10,518
Inflow of foreign direct investment (as % of GDP)	1.1	1.0	0.2	2.0	1.7

Note: a. Previous year = 100. Sources: Statistical Office of the SR, National Bank of Slovakia.

### Selected Human Development Indicators

Population	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Population (thousands)	5,336	5,356	5,368	5,379	5,388	5,393	5,399
Females (%)	51.3	51.3	51.3	51.3	51.3	51.4	51.4
Age structure (%)							
0-14	23.54	22.89	22.27	21.66	21.05	20.43	19.81
15-54 Females	28.47	28.75	29.00	29.22	29.44	29.67	29.87
15-59 Males	30.58	30.89	31.19	31.50	31.81	32.11	32.39
55 and more - Females	11.29	11.35	11.43	11.52	11.60	11.70	11.83
60 and more - Males	6.11	6.12	6.11	6.10	6.10	6.09	6.10
Marital status							
Females (%)							
Single	38.39	38.45	38.47	38.47	38.47	38.46	38.45
Married	46.19	45.91	45.66	45.41	45.19	45.08	44.96
Divorced	3.67	3.86	4.07	4.28	4.47	4.66	4.86
Widowed	11.75	11.78	11.80	11.84	11.87	11.80	11.73
Males (%)							
Single	46.57	46.65	46.71	46.77	46.80	46.83	46.85
Married	48.51	48.27	48.04	47.80	47.59	47.52	47.44
Divorced	2.70	2.86	3.05	3.24	3.41	3.55	3.70
Widowed	2.22	2.22	2.20	2.19	2.20	2.10	2.01
Live births (per 1,000 inhabitants)	13.8	12.4	11.4	11.2	11.0	10.7	10.4
Deaths (per 1,000 inhabitants)	9.9	9.6	9.8	9.5	9.7	9.9	9.7
Natural increase (per 1,000 inhabitants)	3.9	2.8	1.6	1.7	1.3	0.8	0.7
Total fertility rate (%)	1.920	1.663	1.520	1.471	1.430	1.378	1.311
Births outside marriage (percentage from total live births)	10.6	11.7	12.6	14.0	15.1	15.3	16.94
Marriages (per 1,000 inhabitants)	5.8	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1
Divorces (per 1,000 inhabitants)	1.53	1.62	1.67	1.75	1.70	1.73	1.79
Divorces (per 100 marriages)	26.5	30.8	32.7	34.2	32.7	33.9	35.3
Reported abortions (per 100 live births)	61.9	61.9	58.2	51.4	46.8	46.1	45.4
Total births under 2500 gr.	...	...	4,142	4,079	3,764	3,897	3,867
Live births under 2500 gr.	...	...	3,995	3,939	3,635	3,733	3,725
New-born mortality rate	...	...	7.9	6.9	5.4	5.4	5.1
Deaths of mothers by XV. Class ICD-10	...	...	5	3	2	5	6
Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births	...	...	8.13	4.98	3.38	8.68	10.67
Child mortality (under 5 years)			2.2	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.9

<b>Environment and Pollution</b>							
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
Municipal waste (tons per 1,000 inhabitants)	437	356	454	589	672	715	690
Emissions of sulphur dioxide (kg of SO <sub>2</sub> per capita)	59.8	44.0	44.0	41.7	37.4	33.2	31.5 <sup>a</sup>
Emissions of nitrogen oxides (kg of NO <sub>x</sub> per capita)	34.5	32.3	33.7	25.9	22.9	24.1	13.8 <sup>a</sup>
Emissions of carbon monoxide (kg of CO per capita)	77.1	76.8	75.2	69.4	64.3	58.1	31.9 <sup>a</sup>
Population supplied with water from public water-supply systems (% of total population)	77.8	78.4	79.4	79.7	80.9	82.7	83.2 <sup>b</sup>
Population living in dwellings connected to public drainage (% of total population)	51.5	52.3	52.6	53.0	53.7	53.7	54.0 <sup>b</sup>
Treated waste water discharged into water courses (as % from total waste water)	...	67.0	69.9	72.1	77.2	65.7	67.3 <sup>b</sup>

*Note:* a. Data include stationary sources of pollution only. b. Expert estimate of the Statistical Office of the SR.

Crime and Personal Safety								
Indicators	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Registered crimes (per 1,000 inhabitants)	19.8	27.4	25.7	21.3	18.1	17.1	17.4	17.4
Convicted individuals (%)								
Women	5.3	4.7	4.7	4.1	3.7	3.7	6.8	6.8
Juveniles	4.2	10.6	12.2	15.8	11.2	16.3	13.5	12.3
Habitual offenders	16.2	13.7	8.8	12.4	14.4	12.4	14.4	13.9

## Human Development Index HDI

HDI Rank	Life expectancy at birth (years) 1998	Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above) 1998	Combined first-, second- and third-level gross enrolment ratio (%) 1998	Real GDP per capita (PPPs) 1998	Life expectancy index	Education index	GDP index	Human development index (HDI) value 1998	Real GDP per capita rank minus HDI rank
High human development	77.0	98.5	90	21,799	0.87	0.96	0.90	0.908	-
1 Canada	79.1	99.0	100	23,852	0.90	0.99	0.91	0.935	8
2 Norway	78.3	99.0	97	26,342	0.89	0.98	0.93	0.934	1
3 United States	76.8	99.0	94	29,605	0.86	0.97	0.95	0.929	-1
4 Australia	78.3	99.0	114	22,452	0.89	0.99	0.90	0.929	9
5 Iceland	79.1	99.0	89	25,110	0.90	0.96	0.92	0.927	1
6 Sweden	78.7	99.0	102	20,659	0.90	0.99	0.89	0.926	15
7 Belgium	77.3	99.0	106	23,223	0.87	0.99	0.91	0.925	4
8 Netherlands	78.0	99.0	99	22,176	0.88	0.99	0.90	0.925	6
9 Japan	80.0	99.0	85	23,257	0.92	0.94	0.91	0.924	1
10 United Kingdom	77.3	99.0	105	20,366	0.87	0.99	0.89	0.918	13
11 Finland	77.0	99.0	101	20,847	0.87	0.99	0.89	0.917	8
12 France	78.2	99.0	93	21,175	0.89	0.97	0.89	0.917	5
13 Switzerland	78.7	99.0	80	25,512	0.90	0.93	0.92	0.915	-9
14 Germany	77.3	99.0	90	22,169	0.87	0.96	0.90	0.911	1
15 Denmark	75.7	99.0	93	24,218	0.85	0.97	0.92	0.911	-8
16 Austria	77.1	99.0	86	23,166	0.87	0.95	0.91	0.908	-4
17 Luxembourg	76.8	99.0	69	33,305	0.86	0.89	0.97	0.908	-16
18 Ireland	76.6	99.0	91	21,482	0.86	0.96	0.90	0.907	-2
19 Italy	78.3	98.3	83	20,585	0.89	0.93	0.89	0.903	3
20 New Zealand	77.1	99.0	96	17,288	0.87	0.98	0.86	0.903	7
21 Spain	78.1	97.4	94	16,212	0.89	0.96	0.85	0.899	9
22 Cyprus	77.9	96.6	81	17,482	0.88	0.92	0.86	0.886	3
23 Israel	77.9	95.7	81	17,301	0.88	0.91	0.86	0.883	3
24 Singapore	77.3	91.8	73	24,210	0.87	0.86	0.92	0.881	-16
25 Greece	78.2	96.9	81	13,943	0.89	0.91	0.82	0.875	9
26 Hong Kong, China (SAR)	78.6	92.9	64	20,763	0.89	0.83	0.89	0.872	-6
27 Malta	77.3	91.5	79	16,447	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.865	2
28 Portugal	75.5	91.4	93	14,701	0.84	0.92	0.83	0.864	3
29 Slovenia	74.6	99.6	81	14,293	0.83	0.93	0.83	0.861	4
30 Barbados	76.5	97.0	80	12,001	0.86	0.91	0.80	0.858	9
31 Korea, Rep. of	72.6	97.5	90	13,478	0.79	0.95	0.82	0.854	4
32 Brunei Darussalam	75.7	90.7	72	16,765	0.84	0.84	0.85	0.848	-4
33 Bahamas	74.0	95.5	74	14,614	0.82	0.88	0.83	0.844	-1
34 Czech Republic	74.1	99.0	74	12,362	0.82	0.91	0.80	0.843	3
35 Argentina	73.1	96.7	80	12,013	0.80	0.91	0.80	0.937	3
36 Kuwait	76.1	80.9	58	25,314	0.85	0.73	0.92	0.836	-31
37 Antigua and Barbuda	76.0	95.0	78	9,277	0.85	0.89	0.76	0.833	9
38 Chile	75.1	95.4	78	8,787	0.83	0.90	0.75	0.826	
39 Uruguay	74.1	97.6	78	8,623	0.82	0.91	0.74	0.825	9
<b>40 Slovakia</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>9,699</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.825</b>	<b>5</b>
41 Bahrain	73.1	86.5	81	13,111	0.80	0.85	0.81	0.820	-5
42 Qatar	71.9	80.4	74	20,987	0.78	0.78	0.89	0.819	-24
43 Hungary	71.1	99.3	75	10,232	0.77	0.91	0.77	0.817	-1
44 Poland	72.7	99.7	79	7,619	0.80	0.92	0.72	0.814	10
45 United Arab Emirates	75.0	74.6	70	17,719	0.83	0.73	0.86	0.810	-21
46 Estonia	69.0	99.0	86	7,682	0.73	0.95	0.72	0.801	7
Medium human development	66.9	76.9	65	3,458	0.700	0.73	0.59	0.673	-
47 Saint Kitts and Nevis	70.0	90.0	79	10,672	0.75	0.86	0.78	0.798	-7
48 Costa Rica	76.2	95.3	66	5,987	0.85	0.85	0.68	0.797	18
49 Croatia	72.8	98.0	69	6,749	0.80	0.88	0.70	0.795	7
50 Trinidad and Tobago	74.0	93.4	66	7,485	0.82	0.84	0.72	0.793	5
51 Dominica	76.0	94.0	74	5,102	0.85	0.87	0.66	0.793	27
52 Lithuania	70.2	99.5	77	6,436	0.75	0.92	0.70	0.789	8
53 Seychelles	71.0	84.0	76	10,600	0.77	0.81	0.78	0.786	-12
54 Grenada	72.0	96.0	76	5,838	0.78	0.89	0.68	0.785	13
55 Mexico	72.3	90.8	70	7,704	0.79	0.84	0.73	0.784	-3
56 Cuba	75.8	96.4	73	3,967	0.85	0.89	0.61	0.783	40
57 Belarus	68.1	99.5	82	6,319	0.72	0.93	0.69	0.781	6
58 Belize	74.9	92.7	73	4,566	0.83	0.86	0.64	0.777	25
59 Panama	73.8	91.4	73	5,249	0.81	0.85	0.66	0.776	14
60 Bulgaria	71.3	98.2	73	4,809	0.77	0.90	0.65	0.772	19
61 Malaysia	72.2	86.4	65	8,137	0.79	0.79	0.73	0.772	-10
62 Russian Federation	66.7	99.5	79	6,460	0.69	0.92	0.70	0.771	-3
63 Latvia	68.7	99.8	75	5,728	0.73	0.91	0.68	0.771	6
64 Romania	70.2	97.9	70	5,648	0.75	0.88	0.67	0.770	6
65 Venezuela	72.6	92.0	67	5,808	0.79	0.84	0.68	0.770	3
66 Fiji	72.9	92.2	81	4,231	0.80	0.88	0.63	0.769	23
67 Suriname	70.3	93.0	80	5,161	0.76	0.89	0.66	0.766	9
68 Colombia	70.7	91.2	71	6,006	0.76	0.85	0.68	0.764	-3
69 Macedonia, TFYR	73.2	94.6	69	4,254	0.80	0.86	0.63	0.763	19
70 Georgia	72.9	99.0	72	3,353	0.80	0.90	0.59	0.762	29
71 Mauritius	71.6	83.8	63	8,312	0.78	0.77	0.74	0.761	-21
72 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	70.2	78.1	92	6,697	0.75	0.83	0.70	0.760	-15
73 Kazakhstan	67.9	99.0	77	4,378	0.72	0.92	0.63	0.754	11
74 Brazil	67.0	84.5	84	6,625	0.70	0.84	0.70	0.747	-16
75 Saudi Arabia	71.7	75.2	57	10,158	0.78	0.69	0.77	0.747	-32
76 Thailand	68.9	95.0	61	5,456	0.73	0.84	0.67	0.745	-5
77 Philippines	68.6	94.8	83	3,555	0.73	0.91	0.60	0.744	17
78 Ukraine	69.1	99.6	78	3,194	0.73	0.92	0.58	0.744	26
79 Saint Vincent/Grenadines	73.0	82.0	68	4,692	0.80	0.77	0.64	0.738	2
80 Peru	68.6	89.2	79	4,282	0.73	0.86	0.63	0.737	7
81 Paraguay	69.8	92.8	65	4,288	0.75	0.84	0.63	0.736	5
82 Lebanon	70.1	85.1	77	4,326	0.75	0.82	0.63	0.735	3
83 Jamaica	75.0	86.0	63	3,389	0.93	0.78	0.59	0.735	15
84 Sri Lanka	73.3	91.1	66	2,979	0.81	0.83	0.57	0.733	25
85 Turkey	69.3	84.0	61	6,422	0.74	0.76	0.69	0.732	-24
86 Oman	71.1	68.8	58	9,960	0.77	0.65	0.77	0.730	-42
87 Dominican Republic	70.9	82.8	70	4,598	0.76	0.79	0.64	0.729	-5
88 Saint Lucia	70.0	82.0	68	5,183	0.75	0.77	0.66	0.728	-14
89 Maldives	65.0	96.0	75	4,083	0.67	0.89	0.62	0.725	1
90 Azerbaijan	70.1	99.0	72	2,175	0.75	0.90	0.51	0.722	29

Source: UNDP: *Human Development Report 2000*. New York: Oxford University Press (2000).

## Human Development Index HDI (continued)

HDI Rank	Life expectancy at birth (years) 1998	Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above) 1998	Combined first-, second- and third-level gross enrolment ratio (%) 1998	Real GDP per capita (PPPS) 1998	Life expectancy index	Education index	GDP index	Human development index (HDI) value 1998	Real GDP per capita rank minus HDI rank
91 Ecuador	69.7	90.6	75	3,003	0.75	0.85	0.57	0.722	17
92 Jordan	70.4	88.6	69	3,347	0.76	0.82	0.59	0.721	8
93 Armenia	70.7	98.2	72	2,072	0.76	0.90	0.51	0.721	29
94 Albania	72.9	83.5	69	2,804	0.80	0.78	0.56	0.713	17
95 Samoa (Western)	71.7	79.7	65	3,832	0.78	0.75	0.61	0.711	-3
96 Guyana	64.8	98.3	66	3,403	0.66	0.88	0.59	0.709	1
97 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	69.5	74.6	69	5,121	0.74	0.73	0.66	0.709	-20
98 Kyrgyzstan	68.0	97.0	70	2,317	0.72	0.88	0.52	0.706	19
99 China	70.1	82.8	72	3,105	0.75	0.79	0.57	0.706	7
100 Turkmenistan	65.7	98.0	72	2,550	0.68	0.89	0.54	0.704	14
101 Tunisia	69.8	68.7	72	5,404	0.75	0.70	0.67	0.703	-29
102 Moldova, Rep. of	67.8	98.6	70	1,947	0.71	0.89	0.50	0.700	22
103 South Africa	53.2	84.6	95	8,488	0.47	0.88	0.74	0.697	-54
104 El Salvador	69.4	77.9	64	4,036	0.74	0.73	0.62	0.696	-13
105 Cape Verde	69.2	72.9	78	3,233	0.74	0.75	0.58	0.688	-3
106 Uzbekistan	67.8	88.0	77	2,053	0.71	0.84	0.50	0.686	17
107 Algeria	69.2	65.5	69	4,792	0.74	0.67	0.65	0.683	-27
108 Viet Nam	67.8	92.9	63	1,689	0.71	0.83	0.47	0.671	24
109 Indonesia	65.6	85.7	65	2,651	0.68	0.79	0.55	0.670	4
110 Tajikistan	67.5	99.0	69	1,041	0.71	0.89	0.39	0.663	43
111 Syrian Arab Republic	69.2	72.7	59	2,892	0.74	0.68	0.56	0.660	-1
112 Swaziland	60.7	78.3	72	3,816	0.60	0.76	0.61	0.655	-19
113 Honduras	69.6	73.4	58	2,433	0.74	0.68	0.53	0.653	2
114 Bolivia	61.8	84.4	70	2,269	0.61	0.80	0.52	0.643	4
115 Namibia	50.1	80.8	84	5,176	0.42	0.82	0.66	0.632	-40
116 Nicaragua	68.1	67.9	63	2,142	0.72	0.66	0.51	0.631	4
117 Mongolia	66.2	83.0	57	1,541	0.69	0.74	0.46	0.628	10
118 Vanuatu	67.7	64.0	47	3,120	0.71	0.58	0.57	0.623	-12
119 Egypt	66.7	53.7	74	3,041	0.69	0.60	0.57	0.623	-11
120 Guatemala	64.4	67.3	47	3,505	0.66	0.61	0.59	0.619	-24
121 Solomon Islands	71.9	62.0	46	1,940	0.78	0.57	0.49	0.614	5
122 Botswana	46.2	75.6	71	6,103	0.35	0.74	0.69	0.593	-57
123 Gabon	52.4	63.0	63	6,353	0.46	0.63	0.69	0.592	-60
124 Morocco	67.0	47.1	50	3,305	0.70	0.48	0.58	0.589	-22
125 Myanmar	60.6	84.1	56	1,199	0.59	0.75	0.41	0.585	25
126 Iraq	63.8	53.7	50	3,197	0.65	0.52	0.58	0.583	-22
127 Lesotho	55.2	82.4	57	1,626	0.50	0.74	0.47	0.569	6
128 India	62.9	55.7	54	2,077	0.63	0.55	0.51	0.563	-7
129 Ghana	60.4	69.1	43	1,735	0.59	0.60	0.48	0.556	0
130 Zimbabwe	43.5	87.2	68	2,669	0.31	0.81	0.55	0.555	-18
131 Equatorial Guinea	50.4	81.1	65	1,817	0.42	0.76	0.48	0.555	-4
132 São Tomé and Príncipe	64.0	57.0	49	1,469	0.65	0.54	0.45	0.547	7
133 Papua New Guinea	58.3	63.2	37	2,359	0.55	0.54	0.53	0.542	-17
134 Cameroon	54.5	73.6	46	1,474	0.49	0.64	0.45	0.528	4
135 Pakistan	64.4	44.0	43	1,715	0.66	0.44	0.47	0.522	-4
136 Cambodia	53.5	65.0	61	1,257	0.48	0.64	0.42	0.512	1
137 Comoros	59.2	58.5	39	1,398	0.57	0.52	0.44	0.510	5
138 Kenya	51.3	80.5	50	980	0.44	0.70	0.38	0.508	18
139 Congo	48.9	78.4	65	995	0.40	0.74	0.38	0.507	16
Low human development	50.9	48.8	37	994	0.43	0.45	0.38	0.421	-
140 Lao People's Dem. Rep.	53.7	46.1	57	1,734	0.48	0.50	0.48	0.484	-9
141 Madagascar	57.9	64.9	40	756	0.55	0.56	0.34	0.483	23
142 Bhutan	61.2	42.0	33	1,536	0.60	0.39	0.46	0.483	-4
143 Sudan	55.4	55.7	34	1,394	0.51	0.48	0.44	0.477	0
144 Nepal	57.8	39.2	61	1,157	0.55	0.46	0.41	0.474	7
145 Togo	49.0	55.2	62	1,372	0.40	0.57	0.44	0.471	0
146 Bangladesh	58.6	40.1	36	1,361	0.56	0.39	0.44	0.461	0
147 Mauritania	53.9	41.2	42	1,563	0.48	0.41	0.46	0.451	-11
148 Yemen	58.5	44.1	49	719	0.56	0.46	0.33	0.448	18
149 Djibouti	50.8	62.3	21	1,266	0.43	0.49	0.42	0.447	-2
150 Haiti	54.0	47.8	24	1,383	0.48	0.40	0.44	0.440	-7
151 Nigeria	50.1	61.1	43	795	0.42	0.55	0.35	0.439	10
152 Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	51.2	58.9	33	822	0.44	0.50	0.35	0.430	8
153 Zambia	40.5	76.3	49	719	0.26	0.67	0.33	0.420	12
154 Côte d'Ivoire	46.9	44.5	41	1,598	0.36	0.43	0.46	0.420	-20
155 Senegal	52.7	35.5	36	1,307	0.46	0.36	0.43	0.416	-9
156 Tanzania, U. Rep. of	47.9	73.6	33	480	0.38	0.60	0.26	0.415	17
157 Benin	53.5	37.7	43	867	0.47	0.40	0.36	0.411	0
158 Uganda	40.7	65.0	41	1,074	0.26	0.57	0.40	0.409	-6
159 Eritrea	51.1	51.7	27	833	0.43	0.44	0.35	0.408	0
160 Angola	47.0	42.0	25	1,821	0.37	0.36	0.48	0.405	-34
161 Gambia	47.4	34.6	41	1,453	0.37	0.37	0.45	0.396	-21
162 Guinea	46.9	36.0	29	1,782	0.37	0.34	0.48	0.394	-34
163 Malawi	39.5	58.2	75	523	0.24	0.64	0.28	0.385	9
164 Rwanda	40.6	64.0	43	660	0.26	0.57	0.31	0.382	4
165 Mali	53.7	38.2	26	681	0.48	0.34	0.32	0.380	2
166 Central African Republic	44.8	44.0	26	1,118	0.33	0.38	0.40	0.371	-15
167 Chad	47.5	39.4	32	856	0.38	0.37	0.36	0.367	-9
168 Mozambique	43.8	42.3	25	782	0.31	0.37	0.34	0.341	-6
169 Guinea-Bissau	44.9	36.7	34	616	0.33	0.36	0.30	0.331	0
170 Burundi	42.7	45.8	22	570	0.30	0.38	0.29	0.321	1
171 Ethiopia	43.4	36.3	26	574	0.31	0.33	0.29	0.309	-1
172 Burkina Faso	44.7	22.2	22	870	0.33	0.22	0.36	0.303	-16
173 Niger	48.9	14.7	15	739	0.40	0.15	0.33	0.293	-9
174 Sierra Leone	37.9	31.0	24	458	0.22	0.29	0.25	0.252	0
All developing countries	64.7	72.3	60	3,270	0.66	0.68	0.58	0.642	-
Eastern Europe and the CIS	68.9	98.6	76	6,200	0.73	0.91	0.69	0.777	-
OECD	76.4	97.4	86	20,357	0.86	0.94	0.89	0.893	-
World	66.9	78.8	64	6,526	0.70	0.74	0.70	0.712	-

Source: UNDP: *Human Development Report 2000*. New York: Oxford University Press (2000).

## Gender-related development index GDI (selected countries)

HDI Rank	Gender-related development index (GDI) 1998		Life expectancy at birth (years) 1998		Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above) 1998		Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%) 1997		GDP per capita (PPP US\$) 1998		HDI rank minus GDI rank
	Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
1 Canada	1	0.932	81.9	76.2	99.0	99.0	101	98	11,980	29,294	0
2 Norway	2	0.932	81.3	75.4	99.0	99.0	98	93	22,400	30,356	0
3 United States	4	0.927	80.2	73.5	99.0	99.0	97	91	22,565	36,849	-1
4 Australia	3	0.927	81.2	75.6	99.0	99.0	114	111	17,974	26,990	1
5 Iceland	5	0.925	81.4	76.9	99.0	99.0	89	86	22,062	28,127	0
6 Sweden	6	0.923	81.0	76.4	99.0	99.0	108	95	18,605	22,751	0
7 Belgium	7	0.921	80.7	74.0	99.0	99.0	107	104	15,951	30,801	0
8 Netherlands	8	0.919	80.8	75.1	99.0	99.0	96	99	14,902	29,600	0
9 Japan	9	0.916	83.0	76.9	99.0	99.0	83	86	14,091	32,794	0
10 United Kingdom	10	0.914	80.0	74.7	99.0	99.0	109	99	15,290	25,575	0
11 Finland	12	0.913	80.8	73.2	99.0	99.0	104	95	17,063	24,827	-1
12 France	11	0.914	82.1	74.4	99.0	99.0	94	91	16,437	26,156	1
13 Switzerland	13	0.910	81.9	75.5	99.0	99.0	76	83	16,802	34,425	0
14 Germany	15	0.905	80.3	74.1	99.0	99.0	88	90	15,189	29,476	-1
15 Denmark	14	0.909	78.4	73.1	99.0	99.0	95	90	19,965	28,569	1
16 Austria	16	0.901	80.3	73.8	99.0	99.0	85	86	14,432	32,190	0
17 Luxembourg	20	0.895	80.1	73.5	99.0	99.0	70	68	18,967	48,628	-3
18 Ireland	18	0.896	79.4	73.8	99.0	99.0	92	87	11,847	31,260	0
19 Italy	19	0.895	81.3	75.2	97.9	98.8	83	80	12,665	28,982	0
20 New Zealand	17	0.900	79.9	74.3	99.0	99.0	99	92	13,646	21,040	3
21 Spain	21	0.891	81.6	74.7	96.5	98.4	96	90	9,636	23,078	0
22 Cyprus	23	0.877	80.1	75.6	94.7	98.6	81	79	9,981	25,009	-1
23 Israel	22	0.877	79.9	75.8	93.7	97.7	81	79	11,660	23,034	1
24 Singapore	24	0.876	79.5	75.1	87.6	96.0	71	74	15,966	32,334	0
25 Greece	25	0.869	80.8	75.7	95.5	98.4	80	80	8,963	19,079	0
26 Hong Kong, China (SAR)	26	0.864	81.5	76.0	89.1	96.3	67	64	10,768	29,775	0
27 Malta	29	0.848	79.5	75.1	92.0	90.9	77	78	7,066	26,006	-2
28 Portugal	27	0.858	78.9	72.0	89.0	94.2	94	88	10,215	19,538	1
29 Slovenia	28	0.857	78.3	70.7	99.6	99.7	82	77	10,941	17,841	1
31 Korea, Rep. of	30	0.847	76.2	69.0	95.9	99.0	84	94	8,342	18,529	0
32 Brunei Darussalam	31	0.843	78.3	73.6	86.7	94.1	73	71	10,135	22,790	0
33 Bahamas	32	0.842	77.3	70.7	96.2	94.8	77	71	11,577	17,755	0
34 Czech Republic	33	0.841	77.7	70.6	99.0	99.0	74	73	9,713	15,153	0
35 Argentina	35	0.824	76.9	69.8	96.6	96.7	82	77	5,553	18,724	-1
36 Kuwait	34	0.827	78.4	74.3	78.5	83.2	59	56	13,347	36,466	1
38 Chile	39	0.812	78.4	72.4	95.2	95.6	76	78	4,011	13,660	-3
39 Uruguay	37	0.821	78.2	70.7	98.0	97.2	81	74	5,791	11,630	0
<b>40 Slovakia</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0.822</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>7,701</b>	<b>11,800</b>	<b>2</b>
41 Bahrain	42	0.803	75.5	71.3	81.2	90.2	72	78	4,799	19,355	-3
42 Qatar	41	0.807	75.6	70.2	81.7	79.8	75	72	6,624	28,508	-1
43 Hungary	38	0.813	75.1	67.1	99.1	99.4	75	73	7,452	13,267	3
44 Poland	40	0.811	77.1	68.4	99.7	99.7	79	78	5,821	9,519	2
45 United Arab Emirates	44	0.793	76.7	74.1	77.1	73.4	72	66	5,398	24,758	-1
46 Estonia	43	0.798	74.7	63.4	99.0	99.0	87	82	6,079	9,492	1
49 Croatia	45	0.790	76.7	69.0	96.9	99.3	69	68	4,835	8,795	1
52 Lithuania	47	0.785	75.7	64.7	99.4	99.6	78	74	5,037	7,998	1
55 Mexico	50	0.775	75.7	69.7	88.7	92.9	69	71	4,112	11,365	-1
57 Belarus	49	0.778	74.0	62.3	99.4	99.7	83	79	4,973	7,839	1
60 Bulgaria	53	0.769	74.9	67.8	97.6	98.9	75	69	3,691	5,984	0
61 Malaysia	57	0.762	74.5	70.1	82.0	90.7	66	64	4,501	11,674	-3
62 Russian Federation	54	0.769	72.9	60.7	99.3	99.7	81	75	5,072	8,039	1
63 Latvia	51	0.770	74.5	62.8	99.8	99.8	76	73	4,951	6,655	5
64 Romania	55	0.767	74.1	66.5	96.9	98.9	69	69	4,169	7,178	2
66 Fiji	59	0.755	75.1	70.8	89.9	94.4	79	81	2,047	6,344	0
68 Colombia	58	0.760	74.5	67.6	91.2	91.3	71	70	4,079	7,979	2
72 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	65	0.738	72.4	68.5	65.4	89.6	92	92	2,452	10,634	-3
74 Brazil	66	0.736	71.2	63.3	84.5	84.5	82	78	3,830	9,483	-3
75 Saudi Arabia	76	0.715	73.7	70.2	64.4	82.8	54	58	2,663	16,179	-12
76 Thailand	62	0.741	72.1	65.9	93.2	96.9	59	58	4,159	6,755	3
77 Philippines	64	0.739	70.5	66.8	94.6	95.1	85	80	2,512	4,580	2
78 Ukraine	63	0.740	73.9	64.2	99.4	99.7	80	74	2,327	4,191	4
80 Peru	70	0.723	71.2	66.2	84.3	84.2	77	79	2,104	6,493	-2
81 Paraguay	71	0.723	72.2	67.7	91.5	94.0	64	65	2,058	6,481	-2
82 Lebanon	74	0.718	71.9	68.3	79.1	91.5	77	76	1,985	6,777	-4
83 Jamaica	67	0.732	77.0	73.0	89.9	81.9	63	62	2,629	4,163	4
84 Sri Lanka	68	0.727	75.6	71.1	88.3	94.1	67	65	1,927	4,050	4
85 Turkey	69	0.726	72.0	66.8	75.0	92.9	54	67	4,703	8,104	4
94 Albania	77	0.708	76.0	70.1	76.2	90.5	68	67	1,977	3,594	2
97 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	84	0.691	70.4	68.7	67.4	81.7	67	73	2,137	8,019	-3
99 China	79	0.700	72.3	68.1	74.6	90.7	67	71	2,440	3,732	3
103 South Africa	85	0.689	56.2	50.3	83.9	85.4	94	93	5,205	11,886	0
106 Uzbekistan	87	0.683	70.9	64.6	83.4	92.7	74	78	1,613	2,499	1
107 Algeria	91	0.661	70.6	67.7	54.3	76.5	64	71	2,051	7,467	-2
109 Indonesia	90	0.664	67.5	63.7	80.5	91.1	61	68	1,780	3,526	1
119 Egypt	99	0.604	68.3	65.1	41.8	65.5	66	77	1,576	4,463	0
122 Botswana	101	0.584	47.1	45.1	78.2	72.8	71	70	3,747	8,550	0
128 India	108	0.545	63.3	62.5	43.5	67.1	46	61	1,105	2,987	-2
135 Pakistan	115	0.489	65.6	63.3	28.9	58.0	28	56	776	2,594	-3
144 Nepal	119	0.449	57.6	58.1	21.7	56.9	49	69	783	1,521	0
145 Togo	120	0.448	50.3	47.8	38.4	72.5	47	75	883	1,870	0
146 Bangladesh	121	0.441	58.7	58.6	28.6	51.1	30	40	744	1,949	0
158 Uganda	130	0.401	41.5	39.9	54.2	76.1	36	44	865	1,285	2
169 Guinea-Bissau	140	0.298	46.4	43.5	17.3	57.1	24	43	401	837	0
173 Niger	143	0.280	50.5	47.3	7.4	22.4	11	19	541	941	0
Arab States	-	0.612	67.5	64.6	47.3	71.5	54	65	1,837	6,431	-
East Asia	-	0.710	72.5	68.2	75.5	91.1	67	71	2,788	4,297	-
Latin America and the Caribbean	-	0.748	73.2	66.7	86.7	88.7	73	72	3,640	9,428	-
South Asia	-	0.542	63.6	62.6	42.3	65.7	44	59	1,147	3,021	-
South-East Asia and the Pacific	-	0.688	68.3	64.2	85.0	92.4	63	66	2,316	4,154	-
Sub-Saharan Africa	-	0.459	50.3	47.6	51.6	68.0	37	46	1,142	2,079	-
Eastern Europe and the CIS	-	0.774	73.8	64.1	98.2	99.1	78	74	4,807	7,726	-
OECD	-	0.889	79.6	73.2	96.7	98.2	86	86	14,165	26,743	-
World	-	0.706	69.1	64.9	73.1	84.6	60	67	4,435	8,587	-

Source: UNDP: *Human Development Report 2000*. New York: Oxford University Press (2000).