

## Slovakia



**Population:** 5,470,306 (July 2010 est.)

**Population Growth Rate:** 0.129% (2010 est.)

**Birth Rate:** 10.55 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)

**Life Expectancy:** *total population:* 75.62 years; *male:* 71.7 years; *female:* 79.74 years

**Literacy Rate:** *total population:* 99.6%; *male:* 99.7%; *female:* 99.6% (2004)

**Net Migration Rate:** 0.29 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)

**Unemployment Rate:** 12.1% (2009)

**Gross Domestic Product per Capita:** \$21,200 (2009 est.)

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 68.9%, Protestant 10.8%, Greek Catholic 4.1%, other or unspecified 3.2%, none 13% (2001 census)

**Languages:** Slovak (official) 83.9%, Hungarian 10.7%, Roma 1.8%, Ukrainian 1%, other or unspecified 2.6% (2001 census)

**Ethnic Groups:** Slovak 85.8%, Hungarian 9.7%, Roma 1.7%, Ruthenian/Ukrainian 1%, other and unspecified 1.8% (2001 census)

**Capital:** Bratislava<sup>1</sup>

### Trafficking Routes

Slovakia is a country of origin and transit for trafficking in women and children. Destinations include the Czech Republic, Japan, Slovenia, and several Western European countries. These victims are most often from Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and the Western Balkans, and they are trafficked to Western Europe for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>2</sup> There might also be trafficking within Slovakia.

### Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Very little research has been carried out to comprehensively assess the problem of trafficking within Slovakia. One important factor that surely contributes to the trafficking infrastructure is the lack of an official system of prevention. Information campaigns from international and nongovernmental organizations are all dependent on whether they receive funding. This reliance on money makes it hard to create consistent, operational prevention campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

Poverty, unemployment, and renewed gender discrimination in the labor markets of many of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have also created a fertile ground

<sup>1</sup> CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lo.html>.

<sup>2</sup> EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT, STRATEGY FOR THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC 26 (2009), available at: <http://www.ebrd.com/about/strategy/country/slovakia/strategy.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Human Traffickers Preying on Slovak Women*, THE SLOVAK SPECTATOR, Jan. 16, 2006, <http://www.spectator.sk/articles/view/22051/2/>.

for trafficking to prosper.<sup>4</sup> The Roma population suffers greatly from each of these three factors. It is estimated that nearly 300,000 Roma live in Slovakia in mostly poor and segregated ghettos. Unemployment levels within these ghettos sometimes rise close to 100 percent, putting women and children from the region in greater risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.<sup>5</sup>

When Slovakia joined the European Union in May 2004, the country became a significant EU entry point for smugglers and human traffickers. The increase in illegal migration into Slovakia is perpetuated by the fact that the border is heavily forested and mountainous, making it difficult for police to patrol.<sup>6</sup>

## Forms of Trafficking

As a country mainly of origin, Slovakia's trafficking issues primarily involve women who are lured abroad with promises of jobs as waitresses, au pairs, and bartenders. Once arriving at their destinations, they are stripped of their travel documents and forced into prostitution.<sup>7</sup>

Within many of the poor populations, especially the Roma population, traffickers are generally family members or friends who have gained the victim's trust.<sup>8</sup>

## Government Responses

In 2005, Slovakia's Minister of Interior created an Expert Group for the Prevention and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. Made up of representatives from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Human Rights Council, and various NGOs, the group was assigned to draft the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Later in 2005, the position of National Coordinator for Combating the Trafficking in Human Beings was established to oversee the activities of this group.

In 2007, the criminal code<sup>9</sup> was amended in regards to human trafficking. The amended criminal code prohibits all forms of trafficking and defines the crime as an offense carrying a prison term of between one and 10 years.<sup>10</sup> Longer sentences may be imposed for aggravating circumstances, such as the crime causing the death of several persons or being committed by an organized group. Further amendments dealing with the

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<sup>4</sup>La Strada Foundation, *Trafficking in Women: Why does trafficking occur in Central and Eastern Europe?*, [http://www.strada.org.pl/index\\_en.html](http://www.strada.org.pl/index_en.html) (last visited Mar. 2, 2010).

<sup>5</sup>ZUZANA VALTRALOVA AND RENATA BRENNEROVA, IOM, SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, (Dec. 4, 2007), available at: <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2007/social-aspects-of-human-trafficking/slovak-republic-dk07>.

<sup>6</sup>*Sentinel Security Assessment - Central Europe And The Baltic States*, JANE'S, (Feb. 11, 2008), <http://www.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-Central-Europe-And-The-Baltic-States/SECURITY-Slovakia.html>.

<sup>7</sup>*Human Traffickers Preying on Slovak Women* *supra* note 3.

<sup>8</sup>VALTRALOVA *supra* note 5.

<sup>9</sup> Slovenian Penal Code, <http://www2.policija.si/portals/en/zakonodaja/pdf/PenalCode2007.pdf> (last visited: Mar. 5, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* art. 387

trafficking of children no longer require that the trafficker receive monetary compensation, or promise of monetary compensation, to define an act of trafficking as a crime.<sup>11</sup> The constitution provides that “forced labor is prohibited.”<sup>12</sup>

In January 2006, the government of the Slovak Republic approved the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2006–2007 through its Resolution No. 5/2006. The plan involved a multitude of tasks dealing with the collection and evaluation of data as well as information training along with assistance for victims of trafficking. Aside from developing various training events for state administration officers, the plan also institutionalized the cooperation of these authorities with NGOs.

Near the end of 2006, the Expert Group on Trafficking came into existence. [E: first para under Government Response says the group was created in '05 ??] This group would oversee the activities of the national coordinator as well as the activities outlined in the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The budget of this particular group covers expenses associated with promotional materials, educational training and conferences, and subsidies for NGOs assisting human trafficking victims.

In 2008, the new National Program for Combating Trafficking in Persons for 2008–2010 was established. The program aims to develop a comprehensive and effective national plan for the fight against human trafficking by focusing on the coordination of all agencies involved in the issue. Backed by the political and financial support of the government, this initiative creates conditions for the provision of assistance and help to human trafficking victims.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, human trafficking victims are now entitled to a stay of up to 180 days under the status of “tolerated residence.” These persons are also entitled to accommodation if they are unable to provide it themselves.<sup>14</sup>

## **Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses**

In 2008, the Ministry of Interior cooperated with five partner NGOs to implement the Assistance and Protection Program for Human Trafficking Victims. This program dedicates a subsidy amount of SKK 5,200,000 toward victim assistance each year.<sup>15</sup>

The IOM manages the return of trafficked victims to Slovakia through its Return and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons. The program is backed by a network of NGOs and experts who provide various types of reintegration assistance, including but not limited to medical treatment, legal counseling, and job orientation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Id.* art. 180 and 181.

<sup>12</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Slovakia art. 49, available at: <http://www.us-rs.si/en/about-the-court/legal-basis/constitution/ii-human-rights-and-fundamental-freedoms/?lang=1>.

<sup>13</sup> Memoranda, Embassy of Slovak Republic, (May 14, 2009),

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/23/23we35.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OUTLOOK: ANNUAL REPORT 276 (2008) <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/24/41256325.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Memoranda *supra* note 13.

<sup>16</sup> International Organization of Migration (IOM), *Return and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons*, 2005,

<http://www.iom.sk/sk/aktivita/obchodovanie-s-ludmi/dokumenty?download=11%3Aprogram-nvratu-a-reintegracie-obchodovanch-osb>.

## Multilateral Initiatives

The IOM and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime work closely with Slovakia's Ministry of Interior in efforts to combat trafficking.

As an EU member state, Slovakia receives financial support for antitrafficking projects, and the council and commission coordinate activities with international organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Slovakia was among the first two countries to ratify the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, which entered into force in February 2008.<sup>18</sup> According to article 7, paragraph 5, of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international treaties that directly confer rights or impose duties on natural and legal persons have precedence over Slovak laws.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> European Commission, *The EU Against Trafficking in Human Beings*, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/crime/trafficking/fsj\\_crime\\_human\\_trafficking\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/crime/trafficking/fsj_crime_human_trafficking_en.htm) (last visited Mar. 2, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> European Bank *supra* note 2.

<sup>19</sup> Memoranda *supra* note 15.