

# Slovakia

## About

The Slovakian Constitution sets out equality between human beings in dignity and rights, as well as prohibiting discrimination on the ground of sex (Article 12).

Although Slovakia made some commitments to gender equality in the early 1990s (notably under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, BPfA), gender equality policies were developed further during the European Union (EU) accession negotiations. In 2001, the Concept for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was adopted, which referred to gender mainstreaming as an approach to tackle gender inequality. During the accession period, the implementation of gender equality was enacted through the transposition of the EU Equality Directives.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2007–2013 promoted a dual approach, combining positive actions and gender mainstreaming. This was the first document in Slovakia to provide a definition of gender mainstreaming and to encompass measures tackling structural aspects of gender inequality. In 2010, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for the Years 2010–2013 was adopted by the government and aimed to translate the existing strategy into concrete measures. This was replaced by the National Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for the Years 2014–2019.

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## Legislative and policy framework

Although there is no legal basis for gender mainstreaming at national level, there is a binding policy commitment. The National Gender Equality Strategy for the Years 2014–2019 provides the only framework for gender mainstreaming and foresees it as the principal policy method in the area of gender equality. The Strategy stresses the need for a dual approach, combining a horizontal commitment to including a gender dimension (gender mainstreaming) with specific supports for women (or men, as appropriate) in areas where certain specific disadvantages are most pronounced for those groups [1]. As the Strategy was adopted by the government, it represents a binding commitment. However, the implementation infrastructure for gender mainstreaming is missing. Coordination of state gender equality policy is delegated to the Department for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MLSAF).

The National Gender Equality Strategy is further developed into specific measures by the Gender Equality Action Plan for the Years 2014–2019. The Action Plan assigns responsibility, deadlines and financial resources for every task but does not include indicators to support and measure the implementation of objectives. Despite the fact that gender mainstreaming and positive actions are perceived as the core principles of the policy documents, gender mainstreaming methods are stipulated to a limited level and in many cases relate to the European Structural Funds (ESF) rather than national policy-making processes. The Action Plan is evaluated only after the time period has elapsed, with the evaluation of the former plan published in 2014 and the next evaluation not due until 2020. The evaluation report is prepared and presented to the government by the Department for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities (DGEandEO).

In 2015, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in reporting on the institutional mechanisms of gender machinery and the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), recommended to the state party to ‘strengthen the decision-making capacity and authority of the Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities in order to enhance its coordination role and capacity in the implementation of the national strategy for gender equality for the period 2014-2019’ [2].

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## Structures

### Government responsibilities

The DGEandEO (within the MLSAF) is responsible for coordinating Slovakia's gender equality policy. The Department has been part of the MLSAF since 2012 and is under the direct supervision of the Minister since 2007. It is recognised as the main body responsible for the gender equality agenda at government level, in compliance with the amendment to the Competence Act No. 575/2001 Coll. The status of the DGEandEO is established by the Organisational Order of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which states that the Department fulfils the tasks of the Ministry in developing and coordinating national gender equality and equal opportunities policies [3]. No other ministries or state agencies have a gender equality unit or focal points.

The main mandate of the body concerns gender equality. However, it is also responsible for monitoring Slovakia's anti-discrimination policies that cover other grounds of discrimination, such as age, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion or sexual orientation. Gender equality issues represent 75 % of the Department's agenda, however. The Department is divided into two sections: the gender equality and equal treatment section (GEandEO) and the section for horizontal principles of gender equality and equal opportunities in the ESF. The GEandEO section is responsible for the development, coordination and evaluation of national gender equality and anti-discrimination policies. It creates government documents on gender equality policy, initiates and reviews legislation related to gender equality, coordinates the development of national gender equality indicators and is responsible for the publication of the annual Gender Equality Report. Its mandate also includes the evaluation of gender equality policy in the labour market, social inclusion, social benefits and aid, as well as the position of women and men in economic, public and social life. The horizontal principles section is responsible for the implementation of gender equality as a horizontal priority in EU funds for the period 2014–2020. It plays a role in the coordination, methodological support, information dissemination and training of relevant actors in programming, implementation and evaluation of gender equality horizontal priority. It also compiles annual reports on the implementation of the priority. Both sections are active in information and awareness-raising, training and EU and international affairs [4].

The Department coordinates the activities of the Committee for Gender Equality, an advisory body of the Governmental Council for Human Rights, Minorities and Gender Equality. The Governmental Council was established in 2011 by an amendment to the Competence Act No. 575/2001 Coll. It serves as an expert, advisory and consultative mechanism of the government. It is headed by the Minister of Justice and is composed of high-level representatives of each ministry and experts in the related areas of the Council's responsibilities. The Council adopts statements and approves reports on the fulfilment of [Slovakia's international human rights commitments](#). The Committee for Gender Equality provides the Council with recommendations to improve human rights from a gender perspective, as well as recommendations on legislative and policy development. It comprises representatives from most ministries (with the exception of the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Transport), as well as from the National Labour Inspectorate, the Institute for Labour and Family Research, the National Statistical Office, the Association of Towns and Municipalities, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, the Ombudsperson office and representatives of NGOs, trade unions and employers' associations. The Committee represents public service and civil society representatives equally [5] and is the main mechanism for the involvement of civil society in the gender equality policy-making process.

## **Independent gender equality body**

The [Slovak National Centre for Human Rights](#) was established in 1993 by Act No. 308/1993 Coll. Since 2004, it has served as a national independent body under the Equal Treatment Directive of the EU. Its role is governed by the Anti-discrimination Act (Act No. 365/2004 Coll.). The Centre monitors, evaluates and issues expert opinions on compliance with the equal treatment principle and the Anti-discrimination Act, provides legal assistance (including legal representation) to victims of discrimination, prepares and publishes reports and recommendations on issues related to discrimination, and carries out training and awareness-raising activities. The Centre is responsible for providing assistance to the victims of discrimination on all grounds covered by the Anti-discrimination Act: sex, gender, religion or belief, race, nationality or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital or family status, skin colour, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or other status [6].

## **Parliamentary bodies**

There is no specific gender equality committee within the Slovak parliament. However, gender equality is included within the agenda of the Committee for Human Rights and National Minorities. Parliamentary committees are established and governed by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Act No. 350/1996 Coll. as amended).

## Methods and tools

Note: the methods and tools listed under this section were the focus of EIGE's 2018-2019 assessment. If certain methods and tools are not mentioned in this section, this does not necessarily mean that they are not used at all by Slovakia.

The gender mainstreaming methods included in the Action Plan for Gender Equality for the years 2014 -2019 refer to the development of a gender impact assessment methodology and piloting gender budgeting [7]. Applying gender mainstreaming methods such as gender analysis, gender indicators, gender equality training, or stakeholder consultations are within the responsibility of the relevant gender equality bodies [8].

## Training and awareness-raising

Gender equality training and awareness-raising are stipulated by the Gender Equality Strategy goal to build competence among public servants [9]. In the years 2013-2019, these activities were mainly related to the ESF. Participants included representatives of the Central Coordination Body, implementation agencies of various ministries, and project evaluators. The training was organised by the DGEandEO and focused on general gender sensitivity, with some information on gender mainstreaming.

Training is organised on an ad hoc rather than a regular basis and is not compulsory. In 2018, out of 38 838 state service positions, 273 state employees were trained: 173 women and 100 men [10]. This means that only a small share of state employees have participated in gender equality training [11], with no equivalent training provided for those at the highest political level.

Representatives of the gender equality institutional mechanism participate in regular training, although this, too, is ad hoc (with the exception of introductory gender equality training that is a mandatory part of new employees' induction, whereas other training is organised on the basis of demand by particular employees). The focus of the training can vary, with each employee asked to prepare an annual educational plan indicating the type of training they intend to pursue [12].

Gender equality training is offered to the employees of the government body and, to a certain extent, employees of the MLSAF. For other ministries, training is limited to those civil servants involved in the management of the ESF, which appears to be the main focus for gender mainstreaming activity.

## Gender statistics

The National Statistical Office is the institution responsible for gathering, analysing and disseminating sex-disaggregated data. It also publishes the [Programme of National Statistical Surveys](#) that serves as the legal basis for the collection of sex-disaggregated data and sets out the areas and institutions obliged to produce this kind of data. As a result, several other institutions are also obliged to produce sex-disaggregated data. The data collection and publication systems can vary, depending on the public sector: some ministries have established a public institution, e.g. National Centre for Health Information. In other cases, specific institutes are established within the ministries, e.g. the Institute of Finance Policies. Arrangements, tasks and functioning also vary depending on the system adopted. The quality of the data gathered is similarly the responsibility of each institution.

The National Statistical Office does not itself have a specialised unit in charge of the production of sex-disaggregated data. Nevertheless, the Unit of Intersectoral Statistics includes employees responsible for promoting the collection of sex-disaggregated data. They mainly deal with social statistics and their primary tasks include the production of gender-equality indicators, the population of the EU databases, and the production and publication of an annual publication on gender equality that includes sex-disaggregated data for several policy areas, such as employment, education, criminality, health, etc. The publication represents the most important collection of sex-disaggregated data in Slovakia. It is distributed in hardcopy to the parliament and to public libraries, as well as being made available online [13]. Some of the sex-disaggregated data gathered by the National Statistical Office are publicly available in online databases, although there is no particular section devoted to gender statistics.

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## Good practices

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## References

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## Endnotes

[1] The National Gender Equality Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the Years 2014 – 2019 ([Celoštátna stratégia rodovej rovnosti v Slovenskej republike na roky 2014 – 2019](#)).

[2] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2015). [Concluding observations. CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6](#), p. 4.

[3] Organisational Order of the MLSAF ([Organizačný poriadok Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny](#)).

[4] Organisational Order of the MLSAF ([Organizačný poriadok Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny](#)).

[5] The Statute of the Committee for Gender Equality ([Štatút Výbru pre rodovú rovnosť](#)).

[6] Anti-discrimination Act No. 365/2004 Coll.

[7] Anti-discrimination Act No. 365/2004 Coll.

[8] Interview with Anna Mondekova on 6 March 2019.

[9] The National Gender Equality Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the Years 2014 – 2019 ([Celoštátna stratégia rodovej rovnosti v Slovenskej republike na roky 2014 – 2019](#)).

[10] According to the Report on the State and Development of the State Service for 2018 ([Správa o stave a vývoji štátnej služby za rok 2018](#)), published by the Council for State Service in 2019.

[11] Interview with Anna Mondekova on 6 March 2019.

[12] Interview with Anna Mondekova on 6 March 2019.

[13] Interview with Ludmila Ivancikova on 25 February 2019.

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