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inequality with and for Future generaTions

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Authors	Zuzana Polačková, Nóra Katona, Éva Gerőházi, (Metropolitan Research Institute)
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Summary

- Bratislava functional urban area is the 12th economically strongest NUTS 2 region in the European Union,¹ while other regions of Slovakia are among the least developed ones. This fact shows the outstanding position of the capital of Slovakia both within the country and in Europe.² This means that Bratislava region provides a wide variety of workplaces and educational opportunities, which lures internal migrants from all regions of the country.
- The financial crisis of 2008-2011 had a limited impact on Slovakia and Bratislava. None of the interviewees experienced this period as a turning point even if the GDP per capita has fallen by 5.6% in 2009, but the recovery was fast. The Covid pandemic caused 4.4% fall of GDP in 2020, but it was again gained back in 2021.
- This economic prosperity tends to veil poverty and social problems in Bratislava, which only appears in extreme forms such as homeless people living on the streets or in socially excluded small communities. As regards inequality/poverty in different domains, statistics shows that in general the employment situation is favourable (unemployment rate in 2019 was 2.83%), the educational possibilities have the greatest variety in the country, pupils with socially disadvantaged background are practically non-existent in the statistics, and the number of people obtaining basic social allowances is below one thousand. Vulnerability in Bratislava is represented neither in the registers for social services nor the statistics, because on the one hand the threshold for eligibility criteria for social benefits and services is set on the national level, and on the other hand, as the average income is higher in Bratislava than the national average, vulnerable people in Bratislava fall outside the scope of national registers: even if they would be considered as vulnerable locally, they are not considered vulnerable on the country level.
- The domains of housing and employment are dominated by market forces in the Bratislava functional urban area, where extreme poverty is ignored, partly due of the fact that most of the social policies are financed from the Social Fund of the European Union, for which Bratislava region - due to its high level of development and low unemployment rate - is not eligible. The allocation of state subsidies also prioritizes remote, less developed regions of Slovakia in order to reduce the significant regional disparities. In addition, even if the urban area is relatively rich thanks to its strong economic performance, local authorities have financial difficulties as the revenues are

¹ Based on GDP per capita (PPS) in 2019. This position was even better in the middle of the 2010s.

² On the other hand it is important to emphasize that the outstanding economic position does not necessary translate to individual income: Bratislava region was the 71st among the NUTS 2 regions of Europe in terms of disposable household income in PPS (2018).

mostly coming from part of the personal income tax of the registered residents, while many residents are not registered but need public services.

- Despite decentralisation processes, the main actor with regard to public services is still the state who has most responsibilities over the resources of the public sector, while regional and local self-governments have broader competence in the fields of economic development and secondary education. The local level (Bratislava city, its districts, and the neighbouring municipalities) have limited responsibilities in the field of public services for young people between the age of 15 to 29, as only primary education, certain types of social services, and the provision of social housing are among their competences. Thus, Bratislava's local welfare provision relies heavily on state resources. The regional self-governing authority (which is the functional urban area of Bratislava) is responsible for maintaining secondary schools and dormitories, while the field of employment and the provision of allowances belong directly to the state.
- Based on these statements and the nature of the welfare state, the following picture can be drafted in the major domains:
 - With regard to housing, the rents and the price to income ratio are the highest in Bratislava within the country, which means that there is a great demand pressure on the housing market, while the municipalities (both the city and its districts) have only approximately 2,000 social rental units.
 - Even if Bratislava is an educational centre with a wide variety of schools, the Slovak education system is one of the most segregated in Europe, which increases rather than decreases the differences between children of different social backgrounds.
 - There are new policies and programmes to help the young unemployed to find a job, but these programmes are practically non-existent in Bratislava, as the region is not eligible for EU funding. Due to the same ineligibility, funding is withdrawn from the rehabilitation of smaller scale segregated areas of Bratislava.

Introduction

This report examines the scales and dimensions of inequality affecting the young population in the functional urban area (FUA) of Bratislava in Slovakia. Our purpose is to understand how the drivers of socio-economic inequality operate in this local context, as well as the role of policy interventions in aggravating or reducing the impacts of inequality on the urban youth.

Therefore, particular attention is paid to the room for action of local policies, and the manners in which policy-makers and stakeholders conceptualize and respond to the existing challenges. This corresponds to the meso-level analysis in the UPLIFT project, i.e. between the macro-level analysis of inequality drivers (the focus of WP1) and the micro-level analysis of individual behaviours and strategies (the focus of WP3).

The analysis concentrates on four major domains that have strong relevance in reflecting unequal situations among young people: education, housing, employment, and social protection. The time scale of the analysis is the last 10-12 years, from the great financial crisis until the fourth wave of the Covid pandemic (autumn 2021 in Slovakia).

The territorial scope of the analysis is the Bratislava FUA, which practically corresponds to its NUTS2 region; however, special attention is paid to the city of Bratislava within the FUA.

The current urban report is based on three major sources of information:

- the analysis of the scientific publications, newspaper articles and strategic documents regarding Bratislava and its urban area;
- the analysis of statistical data using publicly available statistical databases;
- online interviews with national and local experts, and civil servants of Bratislava municipality, conducted between January and October 2021.³

In some cases the interviews were conducted with the mediation of a translator. On the one hand, having a translator has enabled us to reach out to experts and civil servants who do not speak English; on the other hand, it constrained the interview process and prolonged the duration of the interviews, which could have had an effect on both the quantity and the quality of information. Due to the Covid pandemic all interviews were conducted online, which was a sufficient substitute of in person encounters, and also turned to be more flexible in terms of organization. On the other hand, due the increase workload and responsibilities of local public actors because of the pandemic, we were rejected in a few cases. In all cases we pursued to reach out to someone who can appropriately substitute our original interviewee.

³ At the beginning of the interview process, we have approached many experts and policy makers, but finally eight interviews were realized due to numerous obstacles, particularly non-response and difficulties with COVID-19. Altogether eight interviews with 11 experts were conducted, which included 6 persons from the municipality of Bratislava, 2 from the central government and its deconcentrated regional office, one person from the regional self-governing level, and two from two NGOs.

1 General description of Bratislava Functional Urban Area

Bratislava Functional Urban Area is located in south-western Slovakia, close to the Austrian and Hungarian borders. It is part of a bigger commuting zone that interlinks parts of the Austrian, Hungarian and Slovakian labour market, dominated by Vienna.

Slovakia is divided into four NUTS 2 regions, and further to eight NUTS 3 regions, that are also self-governing authorities. Bratislava Functional Urban Area is equal to the Bratislava Self-Governing Region, which is a NUTS 2 and a NUTS 3 level unit at the same time. The area of Bratislava Region is 2,053 square kilometres (2001, census), and the density of Bratislava region was 293,5 inhabitants per square kilometre (2011, census).

The governance system of Bratislava FUA is multi-layered. Besides the national level, the self-governing regional level has strong competencies with regard to e.g. road maintenance, secondary education, hospitals, certain residential social services, and cultural infrastructure. The state administration has deconcentrated units into 79 districts of the country, of which 5 are located in Bratislava city (see Figure 1 in the Annex). The city of Bratislava has also 17 districts that are self-governing bodies having competencies e.g. in primary education, certain social services, or the provision of social housing. This also means that in certain cases the distribution of responsibilities is unclear and unsystematically shared between the Bratislava municipality and the local self-governing district municipalities.

As Table 1 (in the Annex) shows, the population of Bratislava city has been slightly growing. However, population data must be interpreted carefully, as according to interviews it is quite common not to officially register one's residence in the capital. Thus, Bratislava has a strong influx of population, which is reflected neither in statistics nor in personal income taxes. For this reason, there is a growing gap between the demand for public services and the financial sources of the public sector (as part of the personal income tax is redistributed to localities).

The number of young people aged 15-29 has been seriously declining (2007: 139,164 persons; 2020: 85,641 persons) according to official statistical data. However, none of the interviewees referred to it as a noteworthy phenomenon, rather as a statistical mismatch.

Only the 82% of the population was Slovakian in 2020. The biggest foreign nationality was Hungarian, accounting for 10.7% of the total population in 2020; while the third biggest ethnicity is the Roma population, representing 2.9% of the whole population in 2020. In the Bratislava region and in the city itself, the proportions are slightly different. The share of Slovaks is 90%, with only 3.7% of Hungarians and 0.1% of Roma registered in the Bratislava Region. Compared to the national level, here the Czech citizens are the third biggest group at 1.2%.

Slovakia is not perceived as a potential target for international migration for various reasons, in part because Slovakia has one of the most restrictive policies set towards refugees in the EU. In summary, it can be claimed that undocumented migration is not a significant phenomenon in Slovakia (Vašečka, 2017).

The Slovak Republic's economy is one of the most developed among EU member transition countries (Szcurek and Tomaszewski, 2017). It is important to note that the Slovak Republic was the first Central European country to join the Eurozone in 2009 (Dąborowski, 2009). In addition, Bratislava region is outstanding in Slovakia in several aspects: per capita GDP, productivity level, high quality infrastructure, influx of foreign direct investment,⁴ growth of the tertiary sector,⁵ concentration of industrial activity and employment (especially high-skilled jobs, which attracts high-skilled workers). This outstanding position is also reflected in the unemployment rate (see Table 1). Despite the fact that the unemployment rate increased during and after the financial crisis of 2008, it did recover since then, as did across the country as a whole.

Slovakia has the second highest regional disparities among 33 OECD countries (OECD, 2018; EU-SPI, 2019; Szcurek and Tomaszewski, 2017). While Bratislava region has been among the top 10 wealthiest European regions for years (EU-SPI, 2019: 8), the eastern regions of Slovakia have been lagging behind in many aspects.⁶ Regional disparities have led to major interregional migration, although tendencies have continuously been changing since the post-socialist period.⁷ *"Migration at the regional level contributed considerably to the outflow of population from central and eastern regions to the south-west, particularly to the Bratislava FUR⁸ and adjacent FURs over the past 20 years"*⁹ (Pregi and Novotný, 2019:98). Bratislava region, the

⁴ Volkswagen (automotive industry), Slovnaft (oil processing), SPP (gas storage and distribution), Slovak Telecom (information technologies), INA Skalica (car components), SAS Automotive (car components), Johnson Controls International (car components), Delphi Slovensko (car components), TESCO (retail), IBM (IT), Dell (IT) and many financial groups (European Commission – Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, 2019) in 2019. (EU-SPI, 2019)

⁵ The sector accounted for some 71.2 % of the region's total employment in 2017, against the Slovak average of 60.1% and the EU-28 average of 71.9 % (SPI EU, 2019).

⁶ For instance in terms of long-term unemployment Eastern Slovakia accounts for over 65% of total unemployment, which is the second highest in the whole EU (Szcurek and Tomaszewski, 2017).

⁷ In Slovakia, in-country migration is recorded only when migrants officially change their permanent address, for which the migrant usually has to be the owner of the dwelling or must have the owner's permission. Many migrations are therefore not registered, especially when students or career starters rent a dwelling (Pregi and Novotný, 2019: 96).

⁸ FUR – Functional Urban Region

⁹ Interestingly, even though the literature states that migration from other regions to Bratislava strongly includes young and well-educated people, the number and share of young residents between the age of 15-29 is radically declining according to the official statistics. This shows the huge gap between perceived reality and residential statistics.

most developed region in Slovakia, and among the most developed ones in the European Union, is not eligible for EU structural funds.

Suburbanization or, in other words, deconcentration of the population is also an important trend in Bratislava region: *"In addition, the hinterland of Bratislava is becoming a destination not only for migrants from the capital itself, but with its prominent position attracts migrants from all regions of Slovakia"* (Sveda et al., 2016:894). Suburbanization has been an ongoing process since the early 1990s, from Bratislava to its outskirts. Initially, the construction of new housing in the outskirts was low and continuously below the level of Bratislava city proper, then it began to rise and reached its peak just before the financial crisis in 2008. In addition, during the recovery period new constructions in the outskirts have sharply increased, even exceeding the level of constructions within the city. This clearly shows a growing suburbanization process in the 2010s (Šveda – Madajová – Podolák, 2016).

Even though Bratislava region (and the city itself) is the most developed one in the country, providing the most working opportunities, it suffers from hidden inner social inequalities, which, due to their invisibility, are largely ignored by public policies. In Bratislava, there are smaller segregated, socially excluded areas: Kopčany in Petržalke, Pentagon¹⁰ in Vrakuňa, and Poddunajské Biskupce. Kopčany lies further away from the city centre, separated by a highway and a railroad. The Pentagon is located in a socially heterogeneous urban environment, which breaks the neighbourhood's socially homogenous appearance. The third segregated area, Poddunajské Biskupce, was just recognized as a socially excluded area recently. These segregated areas are inhabited by both Roma and Slovak families, but it is important to mention that Roma inhabitants are overrepresented in all of them.

The Roma population – located mainly in the eastern regions of Slovakia and in the segregated neighbourhoods of Bratislava and its outskirts – is faced with challenges similar to other countries' ethnic minorities (e.g., higher unemployment rate, lower access to quality education, higher dropout rate from schools), with the exception of the language barrier.

¹⁰ The Pentagon received its name after the shape of the housing complex.

2 Findings

2.1 Education

2.1.1 National trends and policies

In Slovakia, educational outcomes are significantly influenced by pupils' socio-economic background. As the final PISA report notes, *"schools reproduce patterns of socio-economic advantage rather than contributing to a more even distribution of learning opportunities and outcomes"*. According to OECD data, up to 18% of the educational outcomes in Slovakia can be explained by socio-economic status, which is above the 12% average of all OECD countries (OECD, 2018). This is confirmed by the results of nationwide Test 9¹¹ and the numbers of pupils repeating a year, where the worst results are achieved each year by pupils from districts with the highest unemployment and relative poverty rates.¹² Between 2009 and 2018, based on PISA results, the most significant decline was measured in reading literacy, while the trend in mathematical literacy was reversed.

Early school leaving became a significant and growing problem in recent years. While in 2011, 5.1% of young people dropped out of education, which was 8.1 percentage points below the EU average, in 2019 the figure reached 8.3%, bringing Slovakia closer to the EU average of 10.2% in 2019.¹³ There is a notable disparity between regions in the rate of early school leavers. The highest rates are measured in the poorest regions of Slovakia, which again confirms the hypothesis of a high rate of reproduction of socio-economic (dis)advantages of pupils and students in the Slovak education system.

Segregation in various forms is present in the education system of Slovakia. 27% of Roma young people aged 7 to 15 attended segregated classes in a segregated school, and 16% of the Roma aged 7 to 15 attended segregated classes in a non-segregated school in 2008-2009. Approximately 60% of the students in special education were Roma (almost 15,000 students). (O'Hanlon, 2016)

It can also be argued that children from weaker socio-economic backgrounds are already facing significant disadvantages when entering the education system. The low enrolment of pre-school age children is a long-standing problem in Slovakia. In 2019, the pre-school enrolment rate in Slovakia was 77.8%, compared to an EU average of 92.8%,¹⁴ while it was only 41% for children from households receiving "material need" benefits, and 32% for children from marginalized Roma communities (MF SR, MoLFAF, MERVaS, 2020).

¹¹ Test 9 is an external testing of pupils of 9th grade at primary schools.

¹² See statistics of National Institute for Certified Educational Measurement, accessible at <https://www.nucem.sk/sk/merania>

¹³ Eurostat: Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (online data code: EDAT_LFSE_14)

¹⁴ Eurostat: Participation in early childhood education by sex (children aged 3 and over) (online data code: SDG_04_31)

The 2019 amendment to Act 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (“School Act”) attempted to address the problem of low enrolment. It introduced compulsory pre-school education for all children from the age of 5. At the same time, the so-called “zero year”, where children from weaker socio-economic backgrounds and marginalised Roma communities were often enrolled, was abolished. The amendment was set to enter into force by September 2020, but due to the insufficient capacity of kindergartens, it was postponed to September 2021. The introduction of compulsory pre-school education is also important for children with health disabilities, who are very often left out of pre-school education. Likewise, given the short duration since the entry into force of the amendment, its practical implementation and outcomes are not yet clear. There are also concerns about the lower access to education for small children. The intermittent period, which should have been used to increase capacity, has not been fully utilised, and hence kindergarten capacity in many regions (especially in western Slovakia and larger cities) is still unsatisfactory.

As regards secondary education, in the last ten years, one of the most intensely discussed topics has been the dual education system: linking education with practice on the job market. The number of students attending vocational secondary schools that provide practical training has been declining, while there is a growing mismatch between the structure of secondary school courses and the needs of the labour market, to which dual education is meant to respond. Two instruments have been introduced legislatively to address this mismatch. The first is the central financial regulation of fields of study, whereby individual professions are classified as having a surplus or insufficient number of graduates, on the basis of which a per-student normative financing is determined. The second is the regional regulation of the number of first year classes in secondary schools. However, these measures have achieved only partial success in matching supply and demand on the labour market (MESRaS SR, 2017). A separate issue is the adoption of Act 61/2015 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training, which addresses the issue of dual education. This is a law that has been prepared for a long time and has been repeatedly amended since its adoption according to several expert statements. However, the legislative regulation in its original setting did not allow for the implementation of dual education as required by practice. The original version of the Coll. targeted and was designed for large companies; the conditions did not favour smaller companies. Recognizing the need for small and medium sized companies to participate, amendments were made to adjust and make smaller companies interested to apply for the programme. Companies have flexibility to make individual agreements on the conditions and possibilities for the students, although the quota of participating students are mostly set by the agreement between the ministry and the regional municipality. Employers are very active on the programme due to the shortage of labour, thus they are eager to invest into students.

In parallel with the manifest political endeavour of encouraging students to attend vocational education rather than grammar schools through policies such as the dual education, the share of students attending vocational schools are noticeably increasing. In 2021-22, 1,731 students started as freshmen in secondary grammar schools and 3,831 in vocational secondary schools in Bratislava.

As regards tertiary education, the share of the Slovak population with tertiary education is growing. According to Eurostat data, between 2012 and 2020 the share of the population with a tertiary education degree increased by almost 6%, growing from 17.8% in 2012 to 23.9% in 2020.¹⁵ In spite of these trends there is a growing proportion of university graduates who continue their studies at a university abroad in the year of graduation. While in 2012, 12% of students went to universities abroad, in 2018 the number was already 17% (Martinák and Varsik, 2020).

The participation of the adult population in lifelong learning programmes remains limited and even decreasing, significantly behind international trends. According to Eurostat data, only 2.8% of the population aged 25-64 participated in further education and training programmes in 2020, compared to an EU average of 9.2%.¹⁶

In terms of competencies, the responsibility for the availability and quality of pre-primary and primary education is shared between local authorities and the state. The municipality, on the basis of so-called delegated competences and thanks to earmarked contributions from the state, ensures the operation and technical support of schools. The state education system is responsible for the content of different educational levels, yet some room is left to individual schools to supplement or to modify the curriculum determined by the State Education Inspectorate.

A similar system is implemented in the case of secondary schools, with the difference that competence is vested not in the local but in the regional government.

Various non-state actors in education (irrespective of the level of education) such as a church, a private person or a foreign entity, are funded according a single formula, but the values of the indicators can vary, which creates somewhat of a market environment for schools. Thus, there is a noticeable difference between the structure and funding of schools governed by different authorities (OECD, 2016).

Considering the low performance of the Slovak education system, the objectives and content of education are ongoing subjects of debate, especially regarding the essence of long overdue reforms. Smaller or larger reforms of the education system are part of just about every government's programme statement.

In March 2017, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic published the National Programme for Development, Education and Training (the so-called "Learning Slovakia" document), which was to become the basis for the implementation of a fundamental reform of education. It can be argued that the adoption of the document has had the most positive impact so far in terms of efforts to improve the quality of higher education, as an independent accreditation agency has been set up to improve the quality and

¹⁵ Eurostat: Population by educational attainment level, sex and age (%) - main indicators (online data code: EDAT_LFSE_03)

¹⁶ Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and age (online data code: TRNG_LFSE_01)

attractiveness of Slovak higher education institutions. In relation to other levels of education, the document did not bring about the expected changes yet. While the document provides complex, comprehensive, and progressive recommendations to reform the education system of Slovakia, it appears to be difficult to implement for the exact same reason; thus the realization of the recommendations have been delayed several times.

As mentioned above, in relation to the poorer results of children from weaker socio-economic backgrounds, a major problem of the education system in Slovakia is the level of inclusiveness and the support provided to children and young people in need. The system lacks hundreds of teaching assistants, and the positions are only provided on a project basis thanks to European Social Fund resources, which can be considered an irregular and temporary solution.

Only the 2021 amendment to the School Act stipulated inclusive education as one of the main principles of Slovakia's education system. Despite the fact that the obligation to implement the principles of inclusive education in Slovakia had already arisen from earlier international documents,¹⁷ the principle of inclusiveness had not been anchored in the national legislation until the adoption of the amendment. However, it is too early to assess its practical impact.

2.1.2 Local trends and policies

Bratislava is the most important centre of education in Slovakia. The capital dominates both in terms of concentration of educational institutions and educational outcomes. Bratislava is home to, among others, Slovakia's three largest universities, making it one of the regions with the highest student-to-population ratios: there are 106 university students per 100 inhabitants (in the age group 20-24). On the other hand, universities in Bratislava, and in Slovakia in general, lag behind in international comparison, whether in terms of internationalisation and the share of students from abroad, or in terms of ranking in international assessments.

Compared to the rest of Slovakia, Bratislava also dominates in terms of the share of the population with tertiary education, which reached 45.6% in 2020, surpassing the national average by almost 20%.¹⁸

Regarding the provision and quality of secondary education, the local self-government has no competence; this is the responsibility of the regional self-government. There are 111 active secondary schools in the city of Bratislava, of which 66 are state-run, 35 private, and 10 church-run.¹⁹ Regarding private schools, several were established by foreign entities, such as the Deutsche Schule or the Cambridge International School.

The local authorities are responsible for primary and pre-primary education. Primary schools and kindergartens are established by the municipal districts. Pre-schools have an obligation

¹⁷ E.g. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

¹⁸ Eurostat: Tertiary educational attainment, age group 25-64 by sex and NUTS 2 regions (online data code: TGS00109)

¹⁹ Statistics of the Centre for Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic, available at https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/prehlady-skol.html?page_id=9725

to accept students from their locality; however, parents have the freedom of choice to enrol their children into schools in different districts of Bratislava. Nonetheless, pre-care facilities require a monthly fee set on a self-governing level of the municipalities, therefore parents might have to pay higher fees if they enrol their children further away from their home.

Of the total number of 2,551 primary schools in Slovakia, 136 are located in Bratislava. 96 of them are state-run and run by individual municipal districts. In 12 cases the founder is a church, and in 28 cases it is a private entity or a foreign organisation.²⁰ Several of the private primary schools apply alternative pedagogical approaches such as Waldorf or Montessori education, or teach in languages other than Slovak.

In terms of educational outcomes, pupils and students from Bratislava have consistently performed best in all tested categories. Bratislava has the lowest share of the worst performing students.²¹ This fact should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of a concentration of the best schools in Bratislava; rather, it is further evidence of the significant impact of the socio-economic background of pupils and students on their educational outcomes. Of the 38,243 children recognised by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport in 2021 as being from socially disadvantaged backgrounds,²² only 10 are from Bratislava.²³ Although the above number is questionable and the number of children from poor socio-economic backgrounds in Bratislava is undoubtedly higher, the figure demonstrates that the issue of poverty in Bratislava is not a statistically significant phenomenon. One of the reasons for this is that eligibility thresholds for social registers are set on the national level, without taking into account that maintaining an average standard of living is more expensive in Bratislava.

As regards early leavers from education and training,²⁴ Bratislava region has the lowest rate amongst the Slovakian regions (4.7% compared to the national rate of 6.4% in 2013), but it still represents 3,500-4,000 young people between the ages of 18 to 24.

Better access to different types of educational opportunities is perhaps the most significant difference between Bratislava and the rest of Slovakia. The range of accessible educational institutions, whether in relation to primary, and secondary schools or also in extracurricular activities and opportunities for lifelong learning, is fundamentally wider in Bratislava than in

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Results of the "Maturita" and "Testing 9" tests available on the NUCEM website, available at <https://www.nucem.sk/sk/merania>

²² A pupil of a socially disadvantaged background is considered to be a pupil who has a statement from the centre of pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention OR a pupil who is a member of a household whose member is provided with assistance in material need and the pupil's legal representative demonstrates this fact to the principal of the primary school.

²³ Statistics of the Ministry of Education Science Research and Sport available at <https://www.minedu.sk/socialne-znevychodnene-prostredie-prispevok/>

²⁴ The indicator early leavers from education and training is defined as the percentage of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most a lower secondary education and who were not in further (formal or non-formal) education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey.

other parts of Slovakia. On the other hand, public schools often face the problem of a shortage of quality teachers, as teachers' remunerations are subject to public administration salary regulations that take little account of regional specificities. As a result, many quality teachers cannot afford to pursue the desired teaching profession and leave for better-paid jobs. As the officer at the regional education department emphasized: *"Bratislava region lacks qualified teachers, as the market based companies offer higher salaries. In other regions, teaching is more a luring profession. So, the regional office invites teachers from different regions, providing them accommodation for this period."*

The offer of secondary education is also fundamentally influenced by the presence of a number of large employers who actively enter dual education programmes and create their own training programmes. One of the most prominent players in this area is certainly Volkswagen Slovakia, which is also active in the context of bachelor studies. However, it is also possible to mention others in the field of trade (DM drugstore, Lidl, Kaufland, Billa) banking (Tatrabanka, Slovenská Sporiteľňa) and other sectors. Compared to other parts of Slovakia, Bratislava also has a number of small and medium-sized companies involved in dual education programmes, which make the whole educational system in Bratislava more diverse and accessible for a variety of young people. The dual education is implemented on national level, which means that it operates in all regions. Among the regions proportionally Trenčín involved the biggest number of students - 591, which represents the 23% of the total participating students in 2017/2018, while the share in Bratislava was only 13% (Madzinová et al 2018).

2.2 Employment

2.2.1 National trends and policies

Regarding economic trends, the economic activity and employment rate in Slovakia have been experiencing a period of growth, which was only slightly disrupted in 2020 by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2010 and 2019 the employment rate increased from 66.4% to 73.4%, before falling back to 72.5% in 2020,²⁵ in line with the EU-wide trend.

According to Eurostat data, the registered unemployment rate in the Slovak Republic has fallen from 13.6% to 6.7% between 2011 and 2020 (5.8% in 2019), which is almost 1% below EU average.²⁶ The long-term unemployment rate has also been improving, from 9.4% in 2011 to 3.2% in 2020.²⁷

The number of young people in the NEET category fell from 18.8% in 2011 to 13.6% in 2020,²⁸ which is still slightly higher than the EU average. The percentage of jobseekers aged 14 to 24

²⁵ Eurostat: Employment rate by sex, age group 20-64 (online data code: T2020_10)

²⁶ Eurostat: Unemployment by sex and age – annual data, online data code: UNE_RT_A

²⁷ Eurostat: Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (%) (online data code: lfsa_upgan)

²⁸ Eurostat: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), by sex and age - annual data, online data code: LFSI_NEET_A

in the total number of jobseekers is also falling: while in 2011 this group accounted for 33.4% of the total, in 2020 it was only 19.3%.²⁹ However, the unemployment rate of people with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2) remains a significant problem, since this group represents up to 30.6% of all the registered jobseekers in Slovakia, which is the highest in the EU (the EU average is 13.4%).³⁰

The situation is particularly alarming in the perspective of the changing labour market and the massive emergence of robotization and automation in the segment of jobs for low-skilled employees. According to OECD estimates, over the next 10 to 20 years, approximately 10% of jobs in Slovakia will be replaced by automation and another 30% or so will be significantly altered towards increased demands in terms of employee skills. (OECD, 2016)

The employment rate of other disadvantaged groups, such as people from marginalised Roma communities or people with disabilities, also remains low. For the Roma, the employment rate is estimated at 20%,³¹ while for people with health disability at 39% (Polačková, 2019); although a slight increase was measured for both groups. In the case of Roma, the attitude of employers seems to be changing gradually. Whereas a few years ago employers had a strongly hostile attitude towards the employment of Roma, employers have been reassessing and softening their attitudes, especially in light of the labour force shortage of the past few years. However, the Roma continue to predominantly fulfil low-skilled positions, and the high rate of employment without an official contract also remains a problem.

Despite the positive trends on the macro-level, the Slovak labour market suffers from the problem of structural unemployment. The labour supply does not match appropriately with the demand. In addition, regional disparities are high: some regions suffer from labour force shortage, while others from the lack of quality job offers. Moreover, the overall quality of jobs is also a challenge. The recent turn towards expanding the quantity of jobs took place at the expense of their quality.

According to OECD's job quality assessment methodology, Slovakia is one of the countries with the worst overall job quality. (OECD, 2016)

Passive job market measures

Unemployment benefit is part of the social insurance system in Slovakia, which means that individuals are only eligible if they have been contributing to the social insurance scheme for a certain amount of time.³²

²⁹ Eurostat: Unemployment by sex and age (1992-2020) - annual data (online data code: UNE_RT_A_H)

³⁰ Eurostat: Unemployment by sex, age and educational attainment (1998-2020) - annual data (online data code: UNE_EDUC_A_H)

³¹ EU-MIDIS II survey

³² See Act 461/2003 Coll. on Social Insurance

Currently, registered jobseekers are eligible if they have contributed to the unemployment insurance system for at least 24 months (760 work days) in the last 48 months. In an EU comparison, Slovakia is among the countries of low access to unemployment benefits; approximately only one third³³ of the total number of registered jobseekers are eligible for unemployment benefit.

The last change in the unemployment benefit scheme was made in 2020, when, as part of the measures implemented to alleviate the COVID-19 downturn, the period of unemployment benefit was extended by two months, from the original 6 to 8 months. However, this was only a temporary measure, implemented until March 2021.

Unemployment benefit can be combined with income from part-time employment, but it is strictly controlled and tied to a maximum monthly income equal to the subsistence minimum,³⁴ for a maximum of 40 days per year.

Active job market programmes

In Slovakia, the active labour market policy is contained in Act 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services. It is primarily implemented by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereinafter as CoLSAF) and its 46 local branches, with only very little room for the involvement of non-public providers of employment services.

Active labour market policy in Slovakia, as defined in the above-mentioned Act, can be considered as a set of standard measures that meet the given European conditions aiming at i) increasing employment, ii) improving employability and iii) maintaining jobs.

Compared to other EU countries, however, it shows a low budget share³⁵ and a high dependence on external resources (European Social Fund), through which the dominant part of the individual instruments are financed.

The internal breakdown of expenditure also remains an issue. The focus is on wage supplements paid to employers, while investments in skills development, retraining of jobseekers, counselling services, and supported employment are minimal.³⁶

The situation further deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the active labour market policy was entirely refocused on maintaining existing jobs, while other measures –

³³ Out of the total number of 212,637 jobseekers registered as of 31.6.2021, only 78,816 were eligible to unemployment benefit.

³⁴ In 2021 it is EUR 214.8 per month

³⁵ According to Eurostat, in 2019 the active labour market policy budget represented 0.189% of GDP in Slovakia, while the EU average was 0.391% of GDP.

³⁶ The amount of financial resources invested in education and training programmes in 2016 in Slovakia amounted to 0.01% of the GDP, compared to the OECD average of 0.13%, while the amount invested in direct financial support for job creation in Slovakia was 0.2% of the GDP, against an OECD average of 0.07% (OECD, 2018).

training and counselling activities, and support for new jobs – were suspended for more than a year.

Regarding the support of youth employment, the focus on supporting young people intensified in 2011-2012, when Slovakia was one of the EU countries with the highest youth unemployment rate. Subsequently, the Slovak Republic proceeded to the implementation of the so-called Youth Guarantee programme, and developed the National Plan for the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic (hereinafter as Youth Guarantee National Plan or YG National Plan), which was ratified by the Government of the Slovak Republic on February 5, 2014.

In this context, Act 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services was updated in 2014 and a new measure titled “Allowance to support the creation of jobs for first regularly paid employment” was introduced in effect from the January 1, 2015. The allowance could be granted to an employer who recruits a person under the age of 25 who has been registered as jobseeker for at least three months, or who is under the age of 29 and has been registered as unemployed for at least six months. The jobseeker must not recently have been in regular paid employment (i.e. have held down a job for at least six consecutive months) before being recruited to the newly created position. The allowance is granted from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 12 calendar months, and the amount of the allowance depends on the average rate of registered unemployment. For instance, in the Bratislava region only the costs of obligatory social and health insurance system contributions may be covered from the allowance, while in other regions some level of wage compensation can also be paid.

Another active labour market policy measure exclusively targeted at young people is the so-called “Allowance for graduate traineeship”. This measure pre-dates the implementation of the Youth Guarantee National Plan, but the position of graduate traineeship has been substantially strengthened with the adoption of the National Plan. The measure is addressing unemployed school leavers who have been registered as jobseekers for at least one month. It allows the acquisition of professional skills and practical experience with an employer who offers a post in accordance with the level of education of the school graduate. The graduate traineeship is carried out for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 6 months, without the possibility of extension or reassignment, at a rate of 20 hours per week. The monthly lump sum allowance for school leavers is equal to 65% of the subsistence minimum (in 2021 it is EUR 128.76). A counterfactual evaluation of graduate practice demonstrated the effectiveness of the measure. Indeed, the graduate experience might need some modifications, but in principle it proved to be a very efficient measure.

According to the Youth Guarantee National Plan, citizens under 26 years of age who completed full-time education within two years, who have not been in regular paid employment since leaving school, are covered by the Act 5/2004 Coll. Likewise, they have to be listed at the Employment Services as disadvantaged jobseekers, which in practice means an increase in access to individual benefits and measures.

However, the adoption of the YG National Plan also meant in practice the extension of the Human Resources Operational Programme with a new priority axis called “Youth Employment Initiative” with a budget of EUR 187.5 million. Nonetheless, the existence of a separate priority axis in the Human Resources Operational Programme focused exclusively on young people does not exclude them from participating in programmes and projects financed under other priority axes.

The activities of the individual projects for young people, besides direct subsidies for job creation, were also largely focused on increasing the registration of young people in employment services, as Slovakia has a high number of unregistered NEET young people, who are thus excluded from participating in any active labour market policy measures.

The combination of significant financial resources allocated specifically for youth employment support with critical labour shortage in a period of dynamic economic growth produced an absurd situation, where individual programmes were often unable to operate at their full capacity, as the supply of programmes aimed at young people was often higher than the needs. Despite this disparity, young people in the most difficult situations (homelessness, living with disabilities, young people from marginalised Roma communities) remain excluded from support. The reasons for this is mainly the way active labour market policy is implemented. It is carried out almost exclusively by public employment offices, which do not have sufficient capacity to access the most vulnerable groups and provide specialised services in an individualised way, in order to meet the needs of the most marginalized.

2.2.2 Local trends and policies

Bratislava is located in one of the richest regions of Europe. The economic activity rate in Bratislava region is substantially higher than the EU average, reaching 69.4% Bratislava, against 63.7% in the EU in 2020.³⁷ Likewise, the registered unemployment rate has been at low levels for a long time (3.4% Bratislava, as opposed to 7.1% in the EU in 2020³⁸). The unemployment rate in Bratislava was 2.83% in 2019 compared to the national rate of 4.92%. The situation is similar for young people. Registered youth unemployment (aged 15 to 29) in Bratislava region in 2017 was 8.4% compared to the EU average of 14.2% (and 13.3% in the rest of Slovakia).³⁹

As mentioned in chapter 1, the labour market in Bratislava is characterised by a high degree of specialisation and skill level, defined by both the presence of process support centres of several multinational companies (IBM, Dell) and the largest employers in the country (Volkswagen), and the presence of major universities, together with the proximity of the

³⁷ Eurostat: Economic activity rates by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions (%) [LFST_R_LFP2ACTRT\$DEFAULTVIEW]

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Eurostat: Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions [YTH_EMPL_110\$DEFAULTVIEW]

Austrian and Czech borders. Wages in Bratislava have long exceeded the national average, so the attractiveness of jobs in Bratislava can be considered obvious.⁴⁰

On the other hand, the conditions for people with low educational attainment or a less distinguished employment history are less than perfect. Given its high economic performance, Bratislava has only very limited access to European Structural Funds, which are currently the main source of funding for nearly any public policy, including employment services. Bratislava is also excluded from support under the Youth Employment Initiative, as eligibility for these funds is conditional on 25% youth unemployment, which is not met by Bratislava. Thus, the resources allocated for the support of active labour market policy in the Bratislava region and in Bratislava itself are minimal compared to the rest of Slovakia. Jobseekers from the Bratislava region, regardless of their individual situation, are excluded from almost any initiative. The only exceptions are the measures defined by the Employment Services Act, but these are underfunded, and their range is rather limited. In principle, a jobseeker aged up to 29 from Bratislava can only apply for a graduate traineeship allowance or a first paid job allowance. However, the eligibility criteria for these measures are strict,⁴¹ and exclude most of the young unemployed between the age of 15 to 29.

Compared to the rest of Slovakia, the labour market in Bratislava is quite dynamic and offers many opportunities. People who are not able to take advantage of these opportunities and are registered as jobseeker at the labour office often live in a complicated situation, where unemployment is just a consequence of other problems. Public employment services, as implemented in the Bratislava region, are unable to respond to these often very complex situations; therefore, jobseekers stay without adequate support and remain on the register mainly for their compulsory health insurance, which, which is covered by the state for registered jobseekers.

Public employment services in Bratislava also suffer from a shortage of qualified staff. The salaries of the employees of local employment offices are subject to regulation, and the financial remuneration therefore does not take into account local specificities, such as the average cost of living. Working at the employment office in Bratislava is therefore highly unattractive and vacancies are often difficult to fill.

On the other hand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when labour offices paid allowances to employers to maintain existing jobs, due to the outstanding number of employers in Bratislava, the labour office in Bratislava was one of the busiest in the country, and the situation became unbearable for many of the labour office employees.

The role of the local government (whether the City Hall or individual districts) in the employment of young people is rather vague. According to the Competence Act, employment

⁴⁰ According to data from Statistical Office, the average monthly salary in Bratislava in 2020 was EUR 1,412, while the average for remaining 7 regions was EUR 993.9 per month

⁴¹ E.g. in the case of the graduate apprenticeship allowance, only school graduates can apply for support, young early school leavers are excluded from the programme

is not within the legal scope of local or regional self-government. Nevertheless, the local government is in general considered to be an important employer. It also plays an essential role in activating job seekers, as a number of so-called activation works (often referred to as “public works” in other countries) are carried out in cooperation with the local governments. However, Bratislava is an exception; activation works in Bratislava are almost non-existent.⁴²

Instead, the local municipality in Bratislava is exploring other possibilities of support, such as creating public-private partnerships with the non-profit sector, or creating specialised grant calls funded from the city or district budgets, which provide an important resource for local NGOs working with the most vulnerable groups, including young people. These grants are rather ad-hoc, irregular, and small-scale initiatives, which mainly support NGOs in implementing social public procurements.

Recently, the social aspect in public procurements has become more prominent, with local authorities seeking to implement public contracts in a way that they create jobs for people with limited access the labour market.

2.3 Housing

2.3.1 National trends and policies

According to the latest census in 2011, the Slovak Republic had 1,994,897 dwellings, of which 1,776,698 were inhabited (Szolgayová, 2019). Slovakia suffers from a serious housing shortage: only 370 dwellings for 1,000 inhabitants, while the EU average was 477 in 2020. The shortage contributes to constant high level of rents and prices. A potential buyer in Slovakia would spend 10.6 of their average annual gross salary for a 70m² dwelling, which is amongst the longest time periods in the EU (Deloitte, 2021). Average housing became unaffordable for average families after the GDP growth has reached its peak in the first half of 2018 as, similarly to the general trend, house price increase was not followed by a comparable increase in household incomes. This contributed to the skyrocketing rent levels, further hampering the saving possibilities of households without an own home (Špirková, 2018; Krčmár and Rychtárik, 2013).

All these contribute to the struggles of young people to find affordable housing solutions. According to Eurostat, Slovakia has the third highest share of young people between the ages of 18 to 34 living with their parents in the EU (68.2% as opposed to 48.2% EU average in 2019).

On the other hand, Slovakia is the 2nd best performing country regarding the share of individuals living in housing deprivation in 2018 (below 10%). Looking specifically at young people (aged 15-29), the situation is even better: the Slovak Republic has the lowest share among all European countries (approx. 7%) (D1.3 Atlas).

⁴² According to the statistics of CoLSAF, there were only three people performing activation work in Bratislava in June 2021

The tenure structure of the housing stock is dominated by owner occupation. In 2019, 90.9% of dwellings were owner-occupied, which is much higher than the EU-27 average (69.8%).⁴³

As Table 2 (in the Annex) shows, rents below market price are practically non-existent, partly due to the result of the massive privatization of state/municipal stock between 1992 and 2006.

There is a long tradition of cooperative housing in Slovakia. The construction of housing cooperatives was constantly significant from 1946 to 1981. A new legal framework was introduced in 1992 for co-ops. There are two forms of occupancy in co-ops: owner-occupied, and tenant with no ownership rights. In 2007 there were 97 housing cooperatives registered in the Slovak Union of Housing Cooperatives, with 270,000 dwellings.

The Slovak Republic's housing policy is labelled as a corporatist or work and performance-related welfare state model (along with Germany, Austria, France, and the Netherlands) where social policy is tied to labour, which means a significant dependence on the market mechanisms; while active state intervention also persists (Špirková, 2018). The national housing policy has been revised every 5 years since 1995. The latest National Housing Policy Concept is from 2020.

The State Housing Development Fund, as the major institution for financing the renovation of private buildings and the expansion of the social rental stock was established in 1996. It has become self-sustaining with the repayments of the loans it previously issued. The Fund is an independent organization supervised by the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, and operates on the priorities set in the State Housing Policy Concept of the Government of the Slovak Republic. The entity provides long-term loans with favourable conditions for several purposes.

The state interventions have four major target areas:

- supporting the purchase and construction of private homes in the form of subsidized loans and building savings schemes;
- support for the renovation of privately owned single- and multi-family buildings;
- support for the renovation and construction of social rental flats;
- providing allowance for complementing ongoing housing costs.

Besides buildings savings schemes, home ownership was supported through subsidized mortgage loans primarily for young people (aged 18 to 35). Until 2018, the state support for young people to buy their first home operated in the form of a preferential interest rate loan.⁴⁴

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_lvho02/default/table?lang=en

⁴⁴ The State Housing Development Fund (SHDF) provides loans at favourable interest rates to natural persons that are both citizen and permanent resident of the Slovak Republic aged above 18. The support is targeted mainly on young people and takes the form of a subsidized loan up to 80% of the procurement price, not exceeding 52 300 Euro per flat. It is charged at a 2% interest rate with duration of up to 30 years. Applicants have to fulfil strictly defined conditions, one of them is the amount of income (not exceeding 3,5 times of living minimum)

From 1 January 2018, the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic replaced the preferential interest rate with a so-called tax bonus on interest paid as a deductible item in the tax return. The amount of state issued between 2010 to 2016 was EUR 203 million (0.03% of the GDP per year). The highest per capita share of supported mortgages was directed to the Bratislava and Trnava regions.

Several subsidies were used for the renovation of the housing stock:

- Programme of housing development (1998-) – subsidies for the elimination of systemic faults of system built housing blocks („panelák“): the renovation of 146,830 dwellings was subsidized with EUR 106,46 million in total. This programme was gradually replaced by the JESSICA scheme from 2013. In the 3 phases of the JESSICA program, all in all 52,751 dwellings were refurbished using a budget of EUR 133.78 million and 263.63 million EUR. (Gergely, 2017)
- Single family houses thermal insulation support (2016): 26 family houses finished, 57 in process, a total subsidy amount of EUR 116,308 was provided, and another EUR 37,500 EUR reserved. (Gergely, 2017)

The construction of new social rental flats with full infrastructure has been supported since 2000 by grants and preferential loans.⁴⁵ The flats must retain their social rent level for 30 years, thus eligible for those households with a household income below the triple of subsistence income. Additionally, the beneficiary cannot be an owner of any real estate while being granted with the social rental dwelling. This programme resulted in the construction of 40,858 social rental flats between 1998 and 2016, mainly in rural areas. (Špirková 2018) As the share of social rental flats is marginal, this programme could be considered as less relevant. Nevertheless, the share of new social rental flats within new constructions ranged between 10-20% during the 2000s, although it eventually dropped below 3% by 2015 (Špirková 2018).

A new housing allowance system was introduced in 2000. Households were eligible for this grant if their income was below the subsistence minimum.⁴⁶ Additionally, the applicant must be a legal resident of Slovakia (with official permanent address), and the housing unit may be either owned or rented. In 2003 the social benefit system was cut back drastically, and since then housing allowance has been functioning as a supplement of “material need” benefits: it targets the most vulnerable, but excludes low-income households, poor pensioners, and those not eligible for “material need” benefits. Besides, it provides no support for people without legal residency. The amount of monthly support is EUR 58.5 for a single person. In the case of

⁴⁵ For municipal rental housing construction, the programme provides grants up to 30% of the acquisition costs for usual standard housing, not exceeding the amount of EUR 900 per m²; and up to 75% of the acquisition costs for basic standard housing, not exceeding the amount of EUR 525 per m². It is possible to combine the grant with the long-term low interest loan from the SHDF.

⁴⁶ 1) For one adult: EUR 214.83 per month; 2) For each joint claimant: EUR 149.87 per month; 3) For a dependent minor child and dependent children in material need: EUR 98.08 per month. Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1127&langId=en&intPagelId=4769>

two or more people in a household, the amount of support is 93.4 EUR per month. The claimant (the owner or co-owner occupier or tenant of the property) must be in material need to be eligible. 26,150 recipients received this benefit in June 2021.⁴⁷

Arrears on utility bills affects less households than in the European Union on average (in 2010, 9.6% of families were affected; in 2013, only 5.9%). Altogether only 0.02% of the whole population was evicted according to EU-SILC 2012 data, which shows, along with other studies, that forced evictions are not considered to be common in Slovakia, thanks to strong legal protection of residents. However, Roma families living in illegal shelters/dwellings that are built on others' property were removed, which in some cases reached wider public attention. This phenomenon is increasing in numbers and the tension between the Roma and the majority population is also growing.⁴⁸

Certain protection measures were introduced during the COVID-19 crisis, such as the postponement of loan payments to the State Housing Development Fund for up to 12 months (OECD, 2021).

2.3.2 Local trends and policies

Housing affordability in Bratislava is significantly influenced by the strong demand generated by the influx of newcomers due to the abundance of local job opportunities, especially in high-skilled positions. This phenomenon also contributes to the growth of housing prices, which averaged at EUR 2,805/m², significantly above the country average of EUR 1,941/m², with a yearly growth of 9.66% in 2021 (Deloitte, 2021).

Although Bratislava region has the worst housing affordability among the regions, it is the most attractive location for young people to move, in part because of its lowest rate of unemployment. Thus, there seems to be a trade-off between accepting lower quality housing for a stable and good employment position (Krčmár and Rychtárik, 2013).

There are 204,153 housing units in Bratislava according to the latest census in 2011. As it was already stated in the previous section, Slovakia practically does not have a significant municipal housing stock mostly due to the massive privatization after the transition. Currently there are altogether 875 municipal flats managed directly by the Bratislava municipality, and another 1,100 units are owned and administered by the district municipalities. Only 154 public rental flats were built in Bratislava between 1990 and 2018. The most recent housing concept foresees the construction of 3,000 new housing units by 2030, mainly to improve the housing situation of the most marginalised social groups. Likewise, there are endeavours to set up a Social Rental Agency for the management of social rental housing. As one of the social workers of a temporary shelter of families emphasized, *"a single Roma mother with children does not have a choice but to live in an overcrowded flat with her family, as a small private rental flat is*

⁴⁷ Statistics of Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

⁴⁸ <https://habitat-worldmap.org/en/pays/europe/slovakia/>

over 500 Euros and as families are protected against eviction and Roma names are discriminated in the private market, it is hard for them to find a private rental unit to rent. To be eligible for temporary shelter, permanent address is needed, and there is a waiting list for 1.5 years, and the shelter is available for a maximum of 5 years."

There are smaller segregated areas in Bratislava (The Pentagon, in Vrakuňa; Kopčany in Petržalke, and Poddunajské Biskupce), as already mentioned in the General description section; however, the prosperous overall economic position of the city and the lack of acknowledgement of these areas in the register as segregated areas hamper addressing their challenges. It also means that EU funds are not available at the moment for desegregation purposes in Bratislava.

Many people live in the city without having an officially registered residency there, which is one of the major issues regarding housing in Bratislava. A significant amount of these people have no other option but to pay high private rents, which could often lead to near homeless living conditions in substandard homes. It is among the legal responsibilities of the city to prevent and solve current and future homelessness, even if the city does not receive any income from them as taxpayers.

The first census of homeless people in Bratislava took place in 2016. This was carried out in close cooperation between the municipality, non-profit organisations active in the topic of helping homeless people, and the Slovak Academy of Science. The census identified 2,064 homeless persons, but expert estimates suggest that their number may be as high as 4,000. The largest group is made up of people aged 25 to 49 (35.7%), but the number of homeless people under the age of 17 is alarming, accounting for almost 14% of all homeless people living in the city.⁴⁹

Subsequently, in 2018, the "Concept of Assistance to Homeless People" including an Action Plan was adopted. The Concept seeks to create an integrated system of assistance on the territory of Bratislava, and to strengthen the position of social services in addressing homelessness. It can be assumed that this step also began to increase the budget for activities in the field of crisis intervention. In addition to that, the city's ambition is to focus on preventing homelessness.

In 2016, the whole budget for Bratislava municipality-run activities for homeless people was EUR 621,327, of which 506,769 was spent on homeless shelters. In 2020 Bratislava planned to increase this budget to approximately EUR 814,180. (Gerbery, 2019) The budget for activities implemented by NGOs more than doubled from 2016 to 2020 (from EUR 260,928 to 733,000), which shows the importance of this sector in tackling homelessness and housing exclusion.

In 2020, Bratislava has allocated 9 municipality owned rental flats to implement a pilot project to end homelessness through affordable rental housing and social support. The project is

⁴⁹ Institute for Work and Family Research, Homeless Census Results, 2016

based on several elements of the Housing First approach. It is implemented with the partnership of a number of NGOs. The city has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the participating NGOs on their role to providing social support.

Bratislava's interest in creating systemic solutions for homelessness was also demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Bratislava city built and made available a quarantine town for homeless people. The quarantine town opened in April 2020, and its initial capacity of 50 places was gradually expanded to 230. In the quarantine town, homeless people had the opportunity to safely wait out not only the period of the illness itself but also suspected illness, with the support of professional staff (social and health workers with the support of a psychiatrist). During the pandemic, the mayor of Bratislava and his team won the Innovation in Politics Award for the Quarantine Village. Although it is just part of the solution, it saved the lives of many.⁵⁰

The COVID-19 seemingly increased, rather than reduced, housing prices and rents in the city, mostly because of the prolonged housing shortage, high demand, and low mortgage rates.

2.4 Social protection

2.4.1 National trends and policies

According to Eurostat data, the share of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion before transfers in the Slovak Republic fell from 20.6% to 16.4% between 2010 and 2020. This in absolute terms means a decrease by 241,000 persons.⁵¹ This trend is confirmed by the data from the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, according to which the number of households receiving "material need" benefits fell by 68% between 2010 and 2020, from 190,4391 households in 2010 to 61,491 in 2020. The decrease in Bratislava was even more pronounced, changing from 3,514 recipients in 2010 to only 830 in 2020, which means a decrease of 76.5%.⁵²

The increase in the minimum wage, which increased in absolute value by 88% between 2010 and 2020 – from EUR 308 in 2010 to EUR 580 in 2020, and then to EUR 623 in 2021, has also had a significant impact on the group of people exposed to at risk of poverty.

The positive trend can be interpreted as the results of the economic boom as well as the development of the labour market in Slovakia. In recent years, the Slovak labour market has begun to suffer from significant labour shortage, which has opened up opportunities for people who were previously excluded from the labour market, and for those whose only income often consisted of material need benefits.

⁵⁰ <https://innovationinpolitics.eu/showroom/project/home-quarantine-without-a-home/>

⁵¹ Eurostat: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (online data code: T2020_50)

⁵² Statistics of Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovak Republic, accessible on https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/statistiky/socialne-veci-statistiky.html?page_id=10826

Despite the positive trends at the macro level, the situation is still more than critical at the level of vulnerable groups. One of the groups at the highest risk of poverty are single parents and their children. The situation of people living in marginalized Roma communities has also not improved substantially, and the share of people at risk of poverty after social transfers remained stagnant in the long run.⁵³ The situation of pensioners is also critical in many respects.

The state is largely responsible for the implementation of social protection measures; the role of local or regional self-governments is important, but still marginal, and it focuses mainly on the implementation of social services.

The basic package of allowances intended for people in need is paid under the Act on material aid. A specific feature of this Act is that material need is not assessed at the level of the individual but at the level of the household in Slovakia. The situation of the whole household is taken into account in determining eligibility for social allowance and the total amount to be allocated. Young people under the age of 25 living in a shared household with their parents are assessed together with their parents, which might be one of the reasons why the at-risk-of poverty rate of urban young people is practically the same as that of the adult population (D1.3 of UPLIFT).

The amount of the material need benefit is defined according to the size of the household, ranging from EUR 67.8 per month for a household of one person to EUR 237.7 per month for a household consisting of a couple with more than four children. This benefit may be complemented in case the individual participates in the activation programmes (EUR 69.4 per month), has a dependent child (EUR 19 per month), is eligible for housing allowance (EUR 58.5-93.4 per month), or the individual was long-term unemployed and found a job (126.14 per month for the first 12 months and EUR 63.07 in the following 6 months). The amount and eligibility to the material need benefit is assessed by the local Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and the State is fully responsible for its payment. It is important to emphasize that other types of allowances (housing, activation benefit etc.) can only be paid if the eligibility for material need benefit was already approved.

Out of a total of 22,403 activation allowances paid in June 2021, up to 20,887 were paid on the basis of participating in the activation programme (public works) for the municipality or county in the form of minor municipal services⁵⁴ (usually street sweeping, landscaping, excavation works etc.). In many cases it is the local municipality or the mayor specifically who decides who can or cannot participate in activation work, i.e. who will have the opportunity to increase their monthly income.

⁵³ Eurostat: People at risk of poverty after social transfers, online data code: T2020_52

⁵⁴ Statistics of Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovak Republic

The public discourse on poverty and social assistance in Slovakia is largely influenced by a neoliberal attitude and the principle of merit – or „deservingness“ – in the approach to social assistance. One of the reasons for this is the fact that material deprivation and the payment of benefits is largely stereotyped as primarily supporting marginalised Roma communities. The debate that even the most basic benefit for people in material need has to be earned has long been the dominant view in Slovakia, resulting in an amendment to the Act on material need in 2013, which makes the payment of the basic benefit in material need conditional on the mandatory work of 32 hours per month in the framework of small municipal services or volunteer activities. However, the recipient of the social benefit has to fulfil this obligation only if the local implementer of such work, which is most often the local self-government, determines that the work in question has to be done.

In 2015 the so-called minimum old age pension came into force. The purpose of the minimum pension is to ensure that retirement age people eligible for old-age pension receive sufficient income so as not to be dependent on material need assistance. The amount of the minimum pension is conditional on the number of years of service, with the minimum threshold currently set at 30 years. The amount of the minimum pension for 2021 is set at EUR 334.3 per month.⁵⁵ If someone cannot justify at least 30 years of formal employment, she/he is only eligible for material need benefit.

On the other hand, in the last ten years, one of the most frequently discussed topics in relation to social insurance has been the receipt of the so-called maternity allowance, which is part of the health insurance system. This is paid for caring for a child up to the age of three. The child's mother, or another insured caretaker, who has contributed to the health insurance scheme through taxation for at least 270 days in the last two years is eligible for the allowance. In addition to the fact that in 2017 the amount of the allowance was increased from 70% to 75% of the income assessment base, the possibilities for fathers to receive the allowance have been significantly expanded. Whereas in 2010 only 107 fathers received maternity allowance, in 2020 this number increased to 14,881.⁵⁶ The maximum period of maternity allowance for fathers is 28 weeks.

As part of a package of measures aimed at reducing the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the performance of activation work (public work) and compulsory service for receiving the benefit was temporarily waived, and the so-called “SOS allowance” was introduced. This was prioritised for individuals who had lost any income from employment or entrepreneurship, and in special cases it could also be paid to a member of a household receiving material need allowance. The amount of the SOS allowance has been set at a maximum of EUR 300 per month, but not more than EUR 1,800 per calendar year. However, in

⁵⁵ Social Insurance Agency web

⁵⁶ Data of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

June 2021 the SOS allowance was suspended, and the requirement of activation work and compulsory service for receiving benefit was resumed.

In the context of social protection, issues related to the social and legal protection of children and to social guardianship⁵⁷ are also important. In the context of young people, this covers in particular the issue of young adults leaving institutional care or people leaving detention facilities. The subject of social and legal protection and social guardianship is entirely the responsibility of the state authorities, but recently opportunities have begun to open up for cooperation with non-public service providers, who provide their services in accordance with the cooperation agreement with the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Closely related to socio-legal protection and social guardianship are crisis intervention services, which are implemented in Slovakia under Act 448/2008 Coll. on social services. In addition to crisis intervention, the Act on Social Services addresses (i) social services to support families with children; (ii) social services to address disadvantages due to severe disability, severe chronic health condition, or reaching retirement age; (iii) social services with the use of telecommunication technologies; and (iv) support services.

Responsibility for the provision of each service is divided between the state, regional governments, and local government according to the type and form of social service, and the service may be provided by both public and non-public providers.

Ensuring fair conditions for non-public providers and putting them on an equal footing with public providers is one of the main topics in the debate on social services. The low availability of services in small municipalities is also a problem, as services that are the responsibility of the local municipality are often not implemented and unavailable due to the lack of resources.⁵⁸

2.4.2 Local trends and policies

As mentioned in the previous section, very few people (830) have received material need benefit in 2020 in Bratislava, which is a marginal share of the population. This benefit is provided by the state, while the competences of local self-governments in the field of social protection are mainly focused on the provision of certain types of social services, as set by the current legislation.

Act 448/2008 Coll. on social services imposes an obligation on local governments, including Bratislava, to draw up, approve, and carry out a so-called "Community plan for social services". However, due to the two-tier government system in the City of Bratislava and its 17 self-governing municipal districts, the situation in the provision of social services is not always clear.

⁵⁷ Social guardianship mainly fulfils preventative tasks in case of crisis situation in a family's life, for instance in case of bullying or domestic violence. <https://www.employment.gov.sk/en/family-social-assistance/social-legal-protection-children/>

⁵⁸ Survey done by SocioForum in 2021

A community plan for social services has been developed and approved both at the level of the city as well as almost each of the seventeen municipal districts, with the quality, scope, and focus of the individual plans differing from each other.

The services indicated in Table 3 (in the Annex) are provided by the city and/or the municipal districts either through municipal organisations within their own jurisdiction, or through non-public providers from whom they purchase services on the basis of a written contract. In 2021, there were nine social facilities (seven of which are facilities for the elderly) within the city's jurisdiction,⁵⁹ so it is evident that the trend in the provision of social services in the city is moving towards the provision of services through non-public providers.⁶⁰

With the election of the new city leadership and city council in 2018, the emphasis on social services and better coordination with the municipal districts has been strengthened significantly. In addition to the budget increase for social services, which has been gradually taking place since 2015, new measures mainly focused on capacity building within the labour force of social services.

The Unit of Social Affairs was transformed into a separate Social Affairs Department. The number of staff has approximately tripled as of January 2020 compared to 2018. The department has also started to systematically develop its activities in areas of the city's social policy that had not previously received adequate attention. Examples for these include security and violence, drug issues, and gender equality among others. The effort to open towards new topics is accompanied by a revision of the current approach to more traditional topics, such as providing support to the elderly, crisis intervention, or relationships with municipal districts. The target group of young people in particular appears as a cross-cutting priority in all the themes, i.e. crisis intervention, addressing and preventing homelessness, an anti-drugs agenda, violence prevention, gender equality etc.

The 'Improvement for Vrakuňa' initiative can serve as an example. Vrakuňa is one of the 17 districts of Bratislava, the 9th largest district in terms of size, with a population of about 20,000. In Vrakuňa there is an exposed locality – the Pentagon - where approximately 400 to 500 people who abuse addictive substances are served annually. Of these, approximately 10% are rough sleepers who live in public areas in and around the Pentagon. This is a long-standing unaddressed problem associated with extreme social exclusion, drug-related crime, and public disorder. The Pentagon is considered synonymous with social exclusion and the concentration of social problems in Bratislava. Based on data from the census of homeless people in the city

⁵⁹ This figure does not include the facilities within the city districts jurisdiction

⁶⁰ According to the data on the City's accounts, e.g. in 2019 the budget for crisis intervention social services amounted to 720,500 EUR, 66% of which was used to purchase services from non-public providers, whereas in 2014 only 16% of the total budget was used in favour of non-public providers. We deliberately do not provide a figure for 2020, as the situation in 2020 was heavily affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.

of Bratislava, it is also estimated that approximately 7.5% of homeless people living in Bratislava come from Vrakuňa.

Despite the clear and demonstrated interest of the City municipality in the development of quality and accessible social services within its territory, they are not treated as a priority by most district municipalities. On the level of the city districts, social services primarily cover elderly care and nurseries. In the past few years, some attention was also placed on services for families with children, as these also include the topic of care for children up to three years of age, which in practice also means the operation of day nurseries, while the availability of day care facilities for pre-school children in Bratislava is a major, and deeply politicized, issue.

3 Innovative post-crisis policies

Identifying innovative policies and programmes that have relevant effect on vulnerable young people is a challenging task in the case of Bratislava. One of the reasons for this is that Bratislava is not eligible for EU funding, which finances many of the pilot programmes in the fields of education, employment, and social services. Social problems are also seldom recognised on the local level, and the local governments (on city and district level) often lack the capacity and resources to carry out effective programmes. The new local government in Bratislava city has been trying to develop a much stronger social profile from 2018, but the programmes and projects have been less innovative in the field of youth policy; they were rather the replication or adaptation of already existing services from other cities of Slovakia and elsewhere in Europe.

Under these circumstances the researchers see the greatest innovation potential in activities aiming at sensitising the public to social exclusion; supporting an ecosystem of organisations that are able to mitigate social exclusion; as well as improving inter-sectoral cooperation, and opening up the municipality towards civil society initiatives that bring about positive bottom-up change.

An example that connects all the above is the cultural and creative centre Nová Cvernovka (New Cvernovka), which is the main venue of the Cvernovka Foundation.

The Cvernovka Foundation was established in 2015 with the aim to enhance the cultural, social and material value of the former industrial site of the Thread factory (Cvernovka) in Bratislava.⁶¹ The Foundation represented the voice of artists and creatives who had worked in the former Cvernovka factory building since the late 2000s, who rented the premises from their private owner, and used them as studios. However, the building changed ownership in 2015, and after several negotiations about the future of the former spinning mill building, it became clear that the new owner's ideas did not coincide with the plan to build a creative centre and the building had to be abandoned by Foundation Cvernovka (Repka, 2021).

In the meantime, however, Cvernovka had become a significant cultural and social hub in Bratislava, so the founders of the Cvernovka Foundation tried to transfer the potential of Cvernovka to another building in Bratislava, building on the energy of the creatives and artists united around the Cvernovka Foundation.

Thanks to the willingness and committed cooperation of the Bratislava Self-Governing Region (regional municipality), in 2017 the Cvernovka Foundation managed to open the so-called New Cvernovka. This was established in the building of a former chemical school owned by the Bratislava Self-Governing Region, which leased it to the Cvernovka Foundation free of charge for a period of 25 years. Thanks to the enthusiasm of the artists and creatives from the "old"

⁶¹ Annual report of Cvernovka Foundation, web of Cvernovka - <https://nadaciacvernovka.sk/>

Cvernovka, the support of the Bratislava Self-Governing Region, the Foundation's partners, and the cooperation of several authorities, it was possible to renovate the building in a relatively short time, to continue the activity of the studios, and to expand the range of activities offered to the public by the Foundation.

Today, the New Cvernovka brings together 132 artistic and creative studios, a community garden, a public park, a playground, a multifunctional space, an outdoor terrace with a stage, a public library, and a shop offering the works and products of the participating studios. The complex provides a wide range of cultural and educational programmes in music, visual arts, literature, film, theatre, and multi-genre activities. It provides internet access, and it is also accessible by wheelchair.⁶²

In 2018, the social programme "Housing Cverna" was launched,⁶³ which in its pilot version rented three housing units for homeless people, building on the Housing First approach. These are located in the dormitory of the former chemical school, and are in direct contact with the community of residents and creatives using the New Cvernovka space.

The Housing Cverna programme illustrates the socially committed attitude of an organisation that is not primarily focused on the provision of social services or social assistance. However, the opening of the space to an initiative aimed at addressing homelessness and the organic integration of this initiative into the broader context of the cultural and creative centre also significantly influences the attitudes of other actors, who, through personal contact with homeless people, are becoming sensitized to issues of deep poverty, and are able to provide opportunities for people from socially excluded backgrounds under their own projects.

The New Cvernovka is perceived by the public as an open space for all, which goes beyond its functions in the creative industry and significantly expands these to include activities that are more inherent to the social sphere.

The founders of the New Cvernovka themselves say that the buildings and the whole area have become a kind of laboratory for them, on which they test new models of governance, coexistence, and participation. The stakeholders refer to themselves as a living community whose values are freedom, responsibility, openness, cooperation, creativity, diversity, civic awareness, experimentation and self-realisation, and which seeks to combat xenophobia, discrimination, racism and prejudices.⁶⁴

The New Cvernovka is, among others, a unique partnership between a regional municipality and a civil society initiative, while the premises used by the Cvernovka Foundation are still fully

⁶² For more info see <https://novacvernovka.eu/>

⁶³ The programme is implemented by the non-governmental organisation Vagus (www.vagus.sk), but hosted by Cvernovka Foundation

⁶⁴ From Manifesto of Cvernovka, accessible on <https://novacvernovka.eu/>

owned by the Bratislava Self-Governing Region. The Bratislava Self-Governing Region also maintains control over the use of the property, and the members of the Supervisory Board of the Cvernovka Foundation are nominated by the Bratislava Self-Governing Region. This means that the Bratislava Self-Governing Region has access to all internal documents and books of the Cvernovka Foundation, and has a real influence on decision-making in relation to the Foundation.

The model is easily replicable in other cities and regions. Local and regional governments often have surplus of real estate assets that are frequently dilapidated, when they could be provided free of charge and on a long-term basis to non-profit initiatives that create creative hubs open to different social groups, thus contributing to the building of local social capital, which is an essential condition for reducing poverty and inequalities at the local level.

The Cvernovka Foundation relies on loans from commercial social banks, but also on volunteering and donations. Although the loans create a financial stability for the foundation, the other resources also contribute to the financial sustainability of its initiatives.

In 2020, the Cvernovka Foundation conducted research on the implementation of similar initiatives in Slovakia, and published the document "Don't Sell! Rejuvenate" (Sidorova, M. et al, 2020), which serves as a guide for local authorities on revitalising underused publicly owned buildings.

4 Discussion and conclusions

The discussion about poverty, social inequalities and social exclusion in the context of Bratislava hardly resonates with its general image. The main reasons for this may include Bratislava's high economic performance, the neo-liberal narrative on social policies emphasizing the dominance of individual effort, work, and merit, or the high level of dependence of public finances for social policies on European structural funds, which are inaccessible for Bratislava region and the city.

Even though Bratislava was hit strongly by the financial crisis in 2008, which was reflected in the steeply growing unemployment rate (especially in youth unemployment statistics) and the growing share of NEET youth, the following recovery was also robust. Housing construction during the recovery period was intensive, and the positive economic cycle has brought the expected results.

Poverty in Bratislava remains hidden and concentrated in small communities that are relatively insignificant in statistical terms. However, the statistically almost insignificant values of the indicators demonstrating the level of poverty in Bratislava do not mean that social exclusion, social inequalities and poverty do not exist in Bratislava: the favourable indicators are more of a result of their criteria being applied at the national level. Given the high level of regional disparities, reaching the second highest level among OECD countries, several of the social policies that are highly relevant in other parts of the country are almost inapplicable and unused in Bratislava (e.g., activation allowance).

Breaking out of poverty in Bratislava is much less assisted than in other regions of the country, relying rather on its structural advantages, like:

- A wide variety of jobs are available for both the highly skilled and the low skilled.
- This variety of employment provides good opportunities for gaining hands-on experience in dual educational in the framework of vocational education.
- There is also a wide variety of educational possibilities, as Bratislava region and the city itself is the largest educational hub of the country.
- The NGO network is strong in Bratislava; and civil society organisations take on more and more responsibilities in many fields.
- There was paradigm shift in the Bratislava city municipality after the political changes of the 2018 municipal elections, which seems to import a greater emphasis on social issues. This manifest in small-scale but promising initiatives, although these initiatives are not organized within a consistent framework. Due to the shortage of resources, the main focus is on housing through gradually increasing the number of social rental units, creating new homeless shelters and temporary shelters for families etc.

On the other hand, serious weaknesses can also be identified:

- Bratislava is an educational centre of the country; however, the strongly selective nature of the Slovakian education system strengthens segregation rather than decreases it, consequently students from unfavourable social background have very limited possibilities to catch up.
- Wages in the public sector are not competitive with market sector jobs. Salaries of public workers, such teachers or social sector employees are not competitive in Bratislava, resulting in
 - a shortage of highly skilled employees, which negatively influences the quality of social services, including education;
 - a risk of precariat position of people working in the public sector in Bratislava, where the cost of living is significantly higher than in other parts of Slovakia.
- The majority of the employment services programmes are not available in Bratislava region, as they are financed from EU resources, for which Bratislava is ineligible due to its high GDP/capita and low unemployment rate.
- Very few (less than 1,000) people are eligible for material need benefit and complementary benefits, thus the allowance system plays a marginal role in Bratislava.
- There is a strong demand pressure on the housing market, which results in the highest rents and housing prices in the country. The public sector can hardly mitigate this pressure, owning only about 2,000 social housing units.
- Slovakia was ranked at the 25 place out of the member states of the European Union in 2020 regarding the Gender Equality Index. This position is rooted less in differences in employment, education or health status, rather in the economic and political power of women and the traditional roles of women defined with regard to family care and housekeeping activities.

The main goal of the urban reports was to analyse social inequalities through understanding the national and local performance of the economy and the welfare system. After the thorough analysis of the fields of education, employment, housing and social fields, we came to the conclusion that the prosperous economic position of Bratislava provides a great extent of social security to its citizens: even though private housing is less affordable in Bratislava, this is largely compensated by the availability high-paid jobs, the variety of private and public educational services, abundant employment opportunities for both low and highly skilled workers etc. In the meantime, the social system is inefficient in recognizing, acknowledging, and thus satisfying the needs of the most marginalised citizens, which, in the end, results in widening social gaps in society.

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Annex

Figure 1. State administrative units of Bratislava region (Bratislava I-V are part of the city of Bratislava).



Source: <https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/Public/39/050/39050666.pdf>

Table 1. Basic data on Bratislava Functional Urban Area and comparable big cities of Slovakia

	Population (2008)	Population (2012)	Population (2020)	Registered unemployment rate – 2008 (%)	Registered unemployment rate – 2012 (%)	Registered unemployment rate – 2019 (%)	Net monthly equalised household income 2019 ⁶⁵ (EUR)
Slovak Republic	5,400,998	5,404,322	5,457,873	8.39	14.44	4.92	495.8
Bratislava region	610,850	606,537	669,592	2.27	5.72	2.83	635.1
Bratislava city (I-V governmental units)	426,927	413,192	437,726	I: 1.46 II: 1.87 III: 1.75 IV: 1.75 V: 2.06	I: 4.15 II: 5.48 III: 5.58 IV: 4.66 V: 4.93	I: 2.77 II: 3.22 III: 3.24 IV: 2.97 V: 2	
Bratislava region outer belt: Malacky, Senec, Pezinok)	183,923	193,345	231,866	Malacky: 4.71 Pezinok: 2.78 Senec: 2.36	Malacky: 8.69 Pezinok: 6.98 Senec: 6.78	Malacky: 3.31 Pezinok: 2.41 Senec: 3.25	
Košice (I-IV districts)	234,237	240,688	238,593	I: 6.01 II: 7.56 III: 6.0 IV: 5.89	I: 11.27 II: 10.97 III: 10.17 IV: 9.58	I: 4.01 II: 4.51 III: 2.88 IV: 3.14	466.1 (regional data)
Prešov	165,613	169,828	176,181	10.52	18.75	5.6	425.2 (regional data)
Nitra	164,091	159,422	161,679	4.32	10.37	1.97	482.7 (regional data)

Source: Data Cube data

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[http://statdat.statistics.sk/cognosext/cgi-bin/cognos.cgi?b_action=cognosViewer&ui.action=run&ui.object=storeID\(%22i4FE7ACC138984FEFAEDB65ED8072F92C%22\)&ui.name=Income%20of%20households%20%5bps3001rr%5d&run.outputFormat=&run.prompt=true&cv.header=false&ui.backURL=%2fcognosext%2fcps4%2fportlets%2fcommon%2fclose.html](http://statdat.statistics.sk/cognosext/cgi-bin/cognos.cgi?b_action=cognosViewer&ui.action=run&ui.object=storeID(%22i4FE7ACC138984FEFAEDB65ED8072F92C%22)&ui.name=Income%20of%20households%20%5bps3001rr%5d&run.outputFormat=&run.prompt=true&cv.header=false&ui.backURL=%2fcognosext%2fcps4%2fportlets%2fcommon%2fclose.html)

Table 2. Tenure structure of the Slovakian housing stock compared to the EU average

	Slovakia, 2019	EU, 2019
Owner	90.9	69.8
Owner – with mortgage or loan	20.6	25
Owner – without mortgage or loan	70.3	44.8
Tenant	9.1	30.2
Tenant – rent at market price	7.7	21.1
Tenant – rent below market price	1.4*	9.1

Source: Eurostat [ILC_LVH002]

* Many other information sources state that the social rental sector is around 3% of the housing stock.

Table 3. Division of competencies between Bratislava City and its municipal districts

City municipality	District municipalities
Night shelter	Personal care assistance
Low-threshold day centre	Low-threshold day centre
Low-threshold social service for children and families	Relief services
Facilities for the elderly	Facilities for the elderly
Nursing care facilities	Nursing care facilities
Day care centres	Day care centres

The table below contains social inequality indicators in the way that is the most comparable with other urban areas. Each urban report includes this data table, which is intended to show not only the scale and dimensions of inequalities in the functional urban area of Bratislava, but also indicate the scale of missing data that makes any comparative research difficult to implement.

	National data (Slovakia)	Regional data (Bratislava region, equal to the FUA)	City level data (Bratislava)
Population			
Population in 2007	5,400,998	610,850	426,927
Population in 2012	5,410,836	612,682	415,589
Population in 2019	5,457,873	669,592	437,726
Population aged 15-29 in 2007	1,291,639	139,164	96,273
Population aged 15-29 in 2012	1,133,410	96,010	71,447
Population aged 15-29 in 2019	922,830	87,331	53,305
Income/poverty			
Gini index 2007	24.7	-	-
Gini index 2012	26.1	27.5 (2013)	-
Gini index 2018	25	-	-
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 1 st quintile) 2018	5552	-	-
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 2 nd quintile) 2018	6982	-	-
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 3 rd quintile) 2018	8382	-	-
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 4 th quintile) 2018	10144	-	-
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 5 th quintile) 2018	-	-	-
At risk of poverty rate 2007	10.5	6.9 (2008)	-
At risk of poverty rate 2012	13.2	6.3	-
At risk of poverty rate 2018	12.2	4.3	-
At risk of poverty aged 18-24, 2007	11.6	-	-
At risk of poverty aged 18-24, 2012	14.4	-	-
At risk of poverty aged 18-24, 2019	14.7	-	-
Housing			
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2007	1.7	-	-

	National data (Slovakia)	Regional data (Bratislava region, equal to the FUA)	City level data (Bratislava)
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2012	1.8	-	-
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2019	1.4	-	approx. 1
Average housing price/average income 2007/2008	-	-	-
Average housing price/average income 2011/2012	-	-	-
Average housing price/average income 2021	10.6	-	-
Education			
Early leavers from education and training (18-24) 2007 (%)	6.5	4.3	-
Early leavers from education and training (18-24) 2012 (%)	5.3	4.7 (2013)	-
Early leavers from education and training (18-24)2018/2019 (%)	8.3	-	-
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 2 education 2007	18.4	-	-
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 2 education 2012	15	-	-
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 2 education 2019	14.5	-	-
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2007/2008	86.58	-	-
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2011/2012	85.33	-	-
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2017	84.76	-	-
Employment			
NEET youth aged 15- 24 2007 (%)	12.5	5.8	-
NEET youth aged 15-24, 2012 (%)	13.8	7.1	-
NEET youth aged 15-24, 2019 (%)	10.3	7.9 (2017)	-
Employment rate (15-64), 2007	60.7	70.9	-
Employment rate (15-64), 2012	59.7	71.6	-
Employment rate (15-64), 2019	68.4	77.1	-
Employment rate aged 15-24 2007	27.6	-	-

	National data (Slovakia)	Regional data (Bratislava region, equal to the FUA)	City level data (Bratislava)
Employment rate aged 15-24 2012	20.1	-	-
Employment rate aged 15-24 2019	24.9	-	-
Unemployment rate 2007	11.1	4.4	I: 1.56, II:1.56 III:1.57 IV:1.6 V:1.73
Unemployment rate 2012	13.9	5.6	I: 4.15, II:5.48 III:5.58 IV:4.66 V: 4.93
Unemployment rate 2018	6.5	2.9	I: 2.66, II:2.83 III:2.94 IV:2.62 V: 2.07
Unemployment rate aged 15-24 2007	20.1	-	-
Unemployment rate aged 15-24 2012	34.0	-	-
Unemployment rate aged 15-24 2019	16.1	-	-
Share of precarious employment (Temporary employed – 15-64) 2007 Q4	4.6	-	-
Share of precarious employment (Temporary employed – 15-64) 2011 Q4	6.9	-	-
Share of precarious employment (Temporary employed – 15-64) 2019 Q4	8.2	-	-
Share of precarious employment (Temporary employed – 15-29) 2007 Q4	8.9	-	-
Share of precarious employment (Temporary employed – 15-29) 2007 Q4	11.8	-	-
Share of precarious employment (Temporary employed – 15-29) 2007 Q4	12.4	-	-
Health			
Life expectancy 2007	74.6	76.6	-
Life expectancy 2012	76.3	78	-
Life expectancy 2018	77.4	78.8	-
Teenage birth rate 2007/2008	21.1	6.7	-
Teenage birth rate 2011/2012	22.5	7.04	-
Teenage birth rate 2018/2019	26.2	7.29	-

Sources:

Gini index:

- national level: World Bank
- regional level: OECD: <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=58616#>

At risk of poverty rate:

- National and local for everyone:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tespm010/default/table?lang=en>
- National for youth:
http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/en/VBD_SLOVSTAT/ps2032rs/v_ps2032rs_00_00_00_en

Income quintiles: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

Enrolment into upper secondary school:

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.NENR?locations=SK>

Rate of social housing: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_lvho02&lang=en

Housing price/income: Deloitte, 2021

Early leavers (18-24): <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

NEET: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

Employment rate:

http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/pr3119rr/v_pr3119rr_00_00_00_sk

Unemployment rate: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=urb_clma&lang=en

and <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=SK&view=chart> and

http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/pr3108rr/v_pr3108rr_00_00_00_sk

Share of temporary employed 15-64:

https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsq_etpga&lang=en

Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 2 education:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDAT_LFSE_04_custom_1747452/default/table?lang=en

Life expectancy national: Source: DATAcube, Life expectancy at birth, by sex [eu0013re],

http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/en/VBD_SK_WIN/eu0013re/v_eu0013re_00_00_00_en

Life expectancy regional: Source: Eurostat, Life expectancy at birth by sex and NUTS 2 region (online

data code: TGS0010) <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tgs00101/default/table?lang=en>

Teenage birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19):

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?locations=SK>