

### The Slovak Republic

The Slovak Republic has been showing growing positive net migration since 2002, largely due to a steady increase of inflows. Solid economic growth and improvement of the labour market situation due to EU accession can explain these developments. According to national statistics, positive net migration rose during the last two years, from around 4 900 persons in 2005, to 7 200 in 2006, and reaching 12 800 in 2007. In 2006, both inflows and outflows grew compared to the previous year, but inflows increased 10 times more (from 7 700 to 11 300) than outflows (from 2 800 to 3 100). In 2007, further increase in inflows (14 800) was accompanied by a significant decrease in recorded outflows (2 000).

Officially reported emigration is only a small fraction of actual outflows from the Slovak Republic, as data recorded by the national Statistical Office are based on reporting by residents about their place of permanent residence. In the context of the EU enlargement, Slovak emigration has increased and diversified. According to LFS data, no less than 7% of the labour force was abroad in 2008. Most emigrant Slovak workers are concentrated in the Czech Republic and, to a lesser extent, in Austria and Hungary. The UK and Ireland are important destination countries, although as they went into recession in 2008 the flow of Slovaks to these countries slackened.

Inflows have been traditionally dominated by nationals from neighbouring countries. In 2007, a sharp increase in the inflows from Romania, to around 3 030 from only 400 in 2006, followed Romanian accession to the EU and the consequent opening of Slovakia's labour market to Romanian workers. Romania led inflows (accounting for 20% of the total), followed by the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Germany. Foreign investment in the automobile industry brought immigrants from South Korea, which ranked ninth. The total stock of registered foreign workers was around 11 000 at the end of 2007, of which over 8 000 were from the EU/EEA. Third-country nationals were mainly Ukrainians, Koreans, Serbian and Vietnamese. Approximately 80% were males.

Despite labour shortages emerging in the Slovak labour market over the past few years (notably skilled workers for the growing industrial sector, as well as lower skilled for construction and agriculture), recruitment abroad remains quite limited. Rather than implementing measures to encourage immigration, authorities have recently started to promote the return of skilled Slovaks from abroad. However, despite strong growth and falling unemployment, emigrants have not yet returned in significant numbers, largely because wage differentials persist. In addition, as the country joined the Euro area on 1 January 2009, returning migrants cannot take advantage of exchange rate differentials.

Illegal migration continued to decline in 2007 and 2008. In 2006, around 4 100 illegal immigrants were apprehended at the border. In 2007, their number decreased to around 3 405, and to 661 in 2008. In 2008, most illegal border crossers apprehended crossed the Ukrainian border, the only border that Slovakia shares with a non-EU country. As of 2007, the Slovak Republic had concluded readmission agreements with 25 countries. More than 1 800 illegal migrants were repatriated on the basis of those agreements in 2007, almost entirely to Ukraine.

The number of asylum applications has been falling since 2005. The number of applications submitted fell from around 3 500 in 2005, to 2 800 in 2006, and to 2 600 in 2007. Few applicants received status: of 53 400 applications filed between 1992 and 2007, 604 received refugee status. In 2007, the largest groups of applicants came from Pakistan (650), India (619), Russia (307), Moldova (208), and Georgia (134). Between January 2007 (when amendment of the act on asylum came into force) and September 2008, 126 people were granted a form of subsidiary protection.

New amendments to labour legislation grant work permits to asylum seekers if their case has not been decided after 12 months.

For further information/

[www.minv.sk](http://www.minv.sk)

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