

SLOVAKIA

COUNTRY STUDY

Migration Policies in Visegrad, WB, and EaP Countries: Problems and Challenges

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Introduction

Basic facts about Slovakia:

- Landlocked country in Central Europe
- Borders with Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Ukraine
- Independent and sovereign after dissolution of Czechoslovakia since 1993
- Culturally and ethnically rather **homogeneous** country and society
- Country of **emigration** not immigration (especially during 20th Century)
- Not traditionally a final destinations for migrants
- Since 2004 (EU accession) **illegal and asylum migration decreased** and **legal migration rised** (from 22,108 migrants in 2004 to 278,595 in December 2022)
- Approximately **5 % of foreigners**
- **Main migration drivers:** business, work and study, family reunification

Legal regulation of migration

Among the current strategic documents governing migration and asylum policy in Slovakia we include:

- ***Migration policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025***

In the past, strategic documents were focused on the migration and asylum policy of the Slovak Republic:

- ***Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic overlooking the year 2020***
- ***Conceptual intentions of the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic for the period 2011 – 2015***
- ***The concept of the integration of foreigners in the Slovak Republic 2009-2011***
- ***Concept of migration policy 2005 -2010***

Border and immigration policy

Schengen Agreement: allows for passport-free travel between most European Union (EU) member states. Travelers can move freely between Slovakia and other Schengen countries without undergoing passport controls at internal borders.

External Borders: Slovakia shares its external borders with several countries. These borders are monitored to ensure the security of the Schengen Area and to regulate the flow of people and goods.

Visa Requirements: Slovakia, as an EU member state, follows EU regulations regarding visa policies. Travelers from EU and EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries have the right to enter and reside in Slovakia without a visa. Non-EU citizens typically need a visa or residence permit to live and work in Slovakia.

Residence Permits: Slovakia offers various types of residence permits, including temporary residence permits and permanent residence permits. These permits are typically issued for purposes such as work, study, family reunification, or investment.

Asylum and Refugee Policy: Slovakia participates in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and provides protection to individuals seeking asylum based on international and EU law. Asylum seekers must go through a legal process to determine their eligibility for refugee status.

Integration: Slovakia has policies and programs aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants and refugees into Slovak society. This includes language courses and cultural orientation programs.

Border Control: Slovakia has border controls in place to manage the flow of people and goods at its external borders. These controls are designed to ensure the security of the Schengen Area and to prevent illegal immigration.

EU and International Agreements: Slovakia adheres to EU immigration regulations and international agreements related to immigration and asylum, such as the Geneva Convention on Refugees.

IOM Facts and Figures Slovakia 2023

278,595: The number of foreigners with residence permits in Slovakia in December 2022

3rd: Out of all the EU countries, Slovakia has the third lowest proportion of foreigners after Poland and Romania

67.5 %: The proportion of Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian citizens in the total population of foreigners in the SR

20 %: The citizens of the EU countries account for one-fifth of all foreigners in Slovakia

1/2: The proportion of Ukrainians in the total number of foreigners in Slovakia (56.3 %); Ukrainians are the most numerous group of foreigners in Slovakia both from the EU and outside the EU

79.9 %: The proportion of non-EU nationals in the overall number of foreigners in Slovakia

87,998: The number of foreign employees in the SR in December 2022

11 791: The number of foreigners who in 2022 illegally crossed the borders or illegally resided in the territory of the Slovak Republic

547: The number of applications for asylum in the SR in 2022

Number of Asylum Applications and First Instance Decisions in Years (2010 – 2023)

Year	Applications Total	Asylum Granted	Subsidiary Protection Granted	Negative Decisions	Cessation of Procedure
2010	541	15	57	243	284
2011	491	12	91	120	232
2012	732	32	104	264	340
2013	441	15	34	137	292
2014	331	14	99	99	137
2015	330	8	41	72	128
2016	146	16	12	56	35
2017	166	29	25	34	73
2018	178	5	37	46	69
2019	232	9	19	51	179
2020	282	11	27	40	177
2021	370	29	13	90	212
2022	547	23	48	76	387
2023	634	36	66	100	452

Slovak assistance in numbers



5.08 MILLION
internally displaced
people in Ukraine



6.26 MILLION
people fled Ukraine



1.69 MILLION
people came to Slovakia from
Ukraine of which 1.55 were
Ukrainian refugees

Source of data 24 February 2022 – 16 August 2023: [IOM](#), [UNHCR](#), Ministry of Interior of SR.

OVERVIEW OF OUR ASSISTANCE:



28,209 PEOPLE

benefited from IOM immediate assistance at
borders and centres and from IOM remote
counselling.



21,021 TONS

of humanitarian aid were dispatched
through the IOM supply chain from Slovakia
to Ukraine. The IOM delivered another
270,445 items of material and food
humanitarian aid to people in need who
found refuge in Slovakia.



1,309 PARTICIPANTS

of IOM training workshops and awareness
sessions for professionals involved in
services for people from Ukraine.



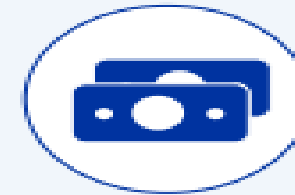
718 PEOPLE

fleeing the war in Ukraine have benefited
from temporary accommodation or the
housing assistance programme in Slovakia.



10,984 PEOPLE

in an emergency situation have benefited
from mental health and psychosocial
support.



737 PEOPLE

received IOM cash assistance for carers of
adults with disabilities and for adults with
specific needs.



2,810 PEOPLE

from Ukraine studied the Slovak language in
143 courses in Bratislava, Gabčíkovo, Nitra,
Trenčín, Prešov, Žilina, Košice, and other.

[➤ Click here for more detailed statistics.](#)

Border crossings from Ukraine – by date. From June 2023, data reported on weekly basis



Temporary shelter based on age and gender (September 2023)

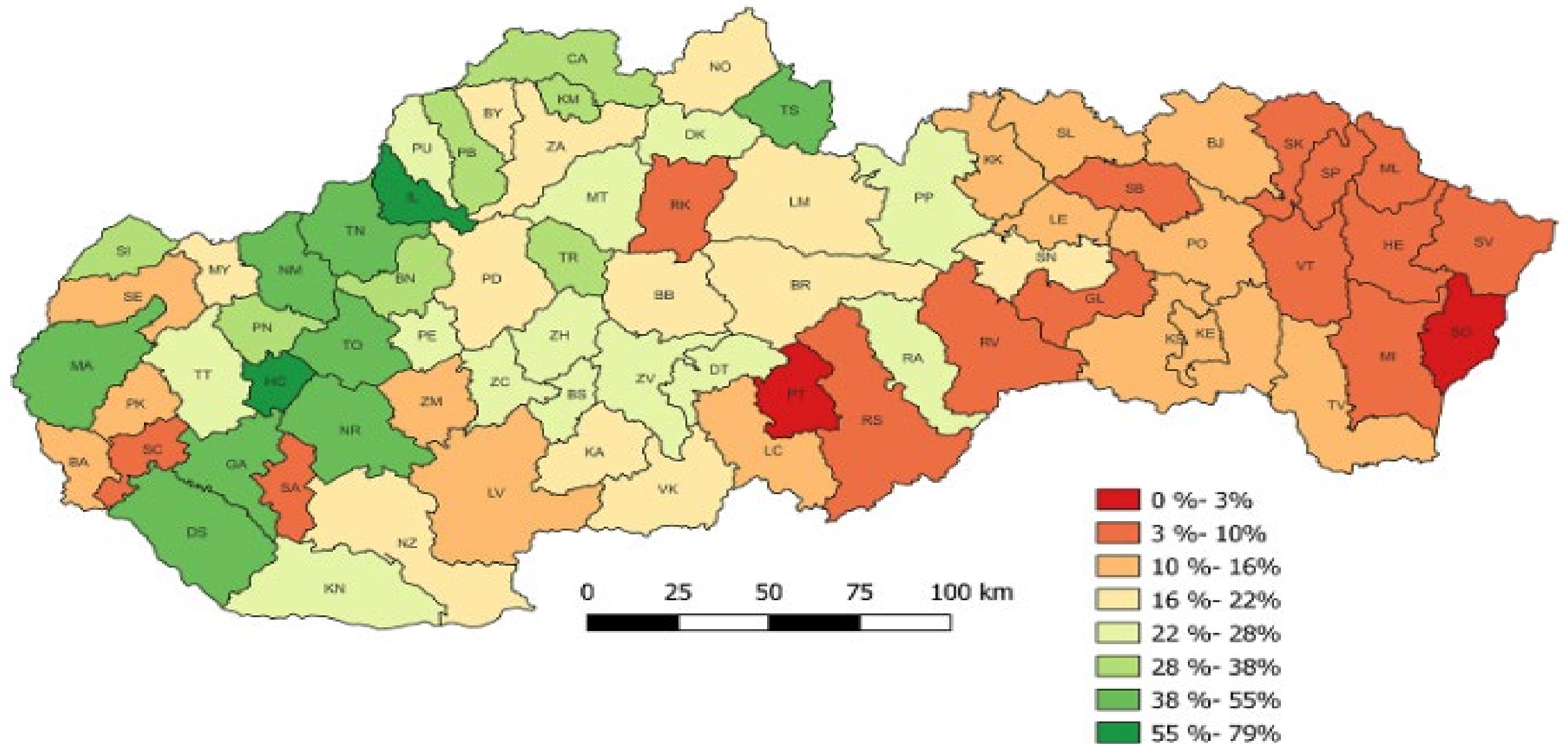
	Age Groups									Total
	0-17		0-17 Total	18-60		18-60 Total	60+		60+Total	
	Men	Women		Men	Women		Men	Women		
Total	18 663	17 659	36 322	15 385	48 360	63 745	2 772	6 237	9 009	109 076

Employment and professions of Ukrainian refugees

Sector	Industry	Technical work	Health & Social work	Education	Public Administration	Others
Rate %	42,5%	24,7%	15,7%	7,3%	2%	7,8%

Profession	Assembly workers	Auxillary works in construction, etc	Cleaning services	Operators	Food services
% Rate	22,48%	18,61%	8,86%	8,45%	6,75%

Spatial distribution of refugees' employment



Support by Slovaks towards refugees from Ukraine (March 2022 – December 2022)

Topic	% share – March 2022 (disagree + strongly disagree)	% share – December 2022 (disagree + strongly disagree)
„People from Ukraine who came to live here should have equal rights as other people“	15,9	18,7
„Every refugee should have right to seek asylum in Slovakia without any yearly quota“	26,4	34,5
„Refugees from Ukraine should have the opportunity to come to Slovakia for longer period in order to settle and integrate“	21,2	27,4

Source: Papcunová 2022

Globsec public opinion poll 2022

Questions	Answers
How does the V4 see Ukrainian refugees? SR	Positively – 42%; Negatively – 52%
Would you agree to allow Ukrainian/other refugees entering the country?	Ukrainian refugees – 55%; Others – 54%
Have there been any changes to your life because of Ukrainian refugees coming to country?	Positive – 4%; No change – 65%; Negative – 29%
Support to Ukrainian refugees should be reduced?	Agree – 68%; Disagree – 25%
Who is responsible for starting the war in Ukraine?	Russia – 43%; Ukraine – 7%; US-NATO – 39%; Do not know – 11%

Other research findings

- The Bratislava Policy Institute together with the STEM Agency (2023) in the RevivEU (<https://www.bpi.sk/project/reviveu/>) project focused on researching the attitudes of Slovakian residents on the issue of improving the quality of life.
- The survey was conducted in February 2023 on a set of 1,019 respondents, a year after the military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation.
- According to the results, almost half of the respondents perceived the incoming refugees from Ukraine negatively, who, from their point of view, do not have a positive impact on the improvement of Slovakia as a place to live.
- The arrival of Ukrainian residents means a reduction in the quality of public services and a weakening of the economy, according to 56.6% of respondents.
- 70% of respondents said that they feel that the state cares more for newly arriving refugees than for its own residents.

Eurobarometer poll 2023

Question	Totally Agree		Totally Disagree		Don't know	
	SR	EU27	SR	EU27	SR	EU27
In general, how satisfied are you with response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by ..? (%) - EU	39	56	55	38	6	6
In general, how satisfied are you with response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by ..? (%) - The Slovak Government	34	55	61	40	5	5
Providing humanitarian support to the people affected by the war	86	91	11	7	3	2
Welcoming into the EU people fleeing the war	81	88	15	9	4	3
Providing financial support to Ukraine	53	77	42	19	5	4
Imposing economic sanctions on Russian government, companies and individuals	49	74	44	21	7	5
Financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine	38	65	56	29	6	6
The war in Ukraine has serious economic consequences for our country	95	86	3	11	2	3
The war in Ukraine has serious financial consequences for you personally	78	63	20	35	2	2

After 2023 elections

- Slovakia has never been a leader or best performer in any of the migration crises
- Introduced a system of preferential immigration and controlled economic migration
- After invasion to Ukraine unanimous support by then political elites to support Ukraine and refugees by all means including military support (ammunition, Mig 29s, S-300 batteries, howitzers,...)
- Sparked tensions within then opposition political parties that used the critical narratives to win the general elections of 2023
- Ambiguous East-West political orientation

The impacts on society

- Polarization
- Slovaks are less prone to support Ukrainian refugees compared to 2022
- Political and national populism in parliamentary (2023) and European (2024) elections as evidenced in parties' manifestos
- East-West political orientation, EU integration, NATO membership
- Slovak public support of Ukraine stems to a great degree from the attitude of the authorities and party leaders
- Pro-Russian positions

Globsec country study 2024

- Perception of Russia as a threat is at 49%, while perception of the US as a threat is the highest in the region, at 41%
- Disinformation about the war against Ukraine - more people think that the war is the fault of the West or Ukraine itself (51% in total) than Russia (41%).
- Slovaks are also the least supportive of Ukraine's EU and NATO membership among the region, with support for membership at only 30%.
- Over 60% of respondents agree with providing military aid to Ukraine, but a similar percentage also agree that the aid brings us closer to war
- 36% of respondents also agreed that a totalitarian system without regular elections would be good for Slovakia.
- higher levels of trust in misinformation and manipulative claims, and lower levels of tolerance for diversity - Polarisation campaigns only further reinforce these attitudes

Thank you for your attention

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