

## **HUMAN SETTLEMENT COUNTRY PROFILE**

### **SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

#### **Decision-Making**

#### **Programmes and Projects**

- A. Providing Adequate Shelter for All
- B. Improving Human Settlement Management
- C. Promoting Sustainable Land-Use Planning and Management
- D. Promoting the Integrated Provision of Environmental Infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management
- E. Promoting Sustainable Energy and Transport Systems in Human Settlements
- F. Promoting Human Settlement Planning and Management in Disaster-Prone Areas
- G. Promoting Sustainable Construction Activities
- H. Promoting Human Resource Development and Capacity-Building for Human Settlement Development

#### **Status**

#### **Capacity-Building, Education, Training and Awareness-Raising**

#### **Information**

#### **Research and Technologies**

#### **Financing**

#### **Cooperation**

**Decision-Making:** The Ministry of Environment (MŽP SR) is the responsible body for sustainable development. The Ministry of Construction and Regional Development (MVRR SR), Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MPSVR SR), Ministry of Culture (MK SR), Ministry of Economy (MH SR), Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunication (MDPT SR), , Ministry of Education (MŠ SR), Ministry of Finance (MF SR), Ministry of Interior (MV SR), Ministry of Economy (MH SR), National Labour Office (NÚP), and Office for Statistics (ŠÚ SR) are the cooperating bodies assisting with human settlement development. As far as energy-related aspects of atmosphere and transportation are concerned, the specific competence is given to Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic controls the State Energy Inspection (SEI), which has been established under the Article 39 of the Act 70/1998.

**Programmes and Projects:** A. Providing Adequate Shelter for All: Decision of the Government SR No. 355/2000 adopted the Concept of State Housing Policy Until the Year 2005 with a View to Year 2010 inspired by the basic UN programme documents in the field of housing – the Vancouver Declaration of 1976, the Global Housing Strategy of 1988 and the Habitat Agenda of 1996, as well as on the special US study Country Profiles in Housing – Slovakia of 1999. The documents phrases the main intentions and objectives in the development of housing for a 10-year period and specifies tasks of operating nature in an environment of market economy by the year 2005, with the aim of approximating to the principles accepted by the international community and particularly by the European Union countries. Measures have been adopted to make the existing support instruments of housing development more efficient by channelling public funds of the state and municipalities to the development of housing intended for socially weaker population groups. With the aim of mitigating unfavourable consequences of increased housing expenditure, the low-income population has been receiving a social benefit since 1 January 2000 – the housing allowance. The adoption of the act on housing allowances has allowed starting the deregulation of rent, whereby more favourable conditions for construction of rental apartments were introduced. Having passed the act on construction products, the conditions for ensuring the quality of construction products comparable to the European standards have been prepared. Privatization in the sector of construction is almost completed. Current supporting programmes of housing construction development are, however, insufficient and the next problem is deteriorating state of flats. Over 37 % of apartments were built under the mass construction of panel apartment houses and the social structure of their owners does not allow for introducing preconditions for substantial repairs or rehabilitation. The existing restoration programmes help achieving the intentions in housing policy to a very small extent only. The lack of funding resources has not allowed for more comprehensive restoration solutions and such programmes focused rather on energy savings than on enhancing the quality and lifetime of apartments. Social care is social prevention and solution of material need or solution of social need when a citizen himself or with a help of family is not able to ensure the basic living conditions, and the solution of social need of person with the severe health impairment through the compensation of the social consequences of the severe health impairment. The forms of the social need solution are social counselling, socio-legal protection, social services (including care in social services facilities), financial contributions for compensation and financial contribution for attendance.

In the Slovak Republic, the National Report on Settlement and Housing Development in the Slovak Republic – Istanbul + 5 (hereinafter referred to as the Report) was prepared, which – being adopted by the Government SR – was submitted to a special UN General Assembly held in New York in 2001. Inter alia, the report was devoted to implementation of Agenda 21 in the area of housing, social development and combating of poverty, environmental management, economic development, public administration and international cooperation and set out activities and initiatives in those areas for the future. The Report also features a database of global urban indicators and quality-related data, as well as positive implementation examples. Moreover, in 2002 the Slovak Republic provided for an update of the National Action Plan of Settlement and Housing Development in the Slovak Republic, specifying measures and responsibilities of the different sectors for its fulfilment in time perspectives. The implementation of Agenda 21 has found

reflected in the territorial planning document of the Slovak Republic – the Concept of Territorial Development SR 2001, whose binding part was declared by the Government SR in its order in 2002. In managing the utilisation and layout of the territory of the Slovak Republic, all principles and regulatives are to be complied with, which are referred to in the binding part of the Concept of Territorial Development 2001 regarding the layout of the territory in the international context, settlement and development of the layout of settlements, the territorial layout in the national and trans-regional context, the settlement and development of the settlements structure, development of the rural area and of the urban – rural relationship, preservation, recovery and exploitation of cultural heritage, territorial layout with regard to environmental aspects, protection of nature, natural resources and formation of the landscape structure, economy and regional development, agricultural production and forestry, industry and construction, recreation and tourism, development of social infrastructure, the superior transport facilities and development of the superior utilities. The Concept of Territorial Development of Slovakia 2001 supports sustainable development in all areas of its territory utilisation and in the development of fundamental trends, which have an effect on the territorial development. Stress is laid on the landscape structure and sectoral concepts with territorial implications. Programmes regarding the rural development are provided for by the Ministry of Agriculture SR and the Ministry of Environment SR. They are the National Plan of Rural Development SR and the Programme of Village Restoration.

**B. Improving Human Settlement Management:** The Slovak Republic has determined a living minimum as the socially recognized minimum income limit of the physical person, the existence of the material need begins under this limit. The living minimum amount and the mechanism of its amendment are established in the Act 601/2003 on living minimum and on change and complement of some acts which has entered into force since January 1, 2004. Each citizen of the Slovak Republic whose income is lower than the living minimum, and who cannot ensure or increase his income by his own efforts, he is deemed as the person in material need. The assistance is provided to such a person under the Act 599/2003 on assistance in material need and on change and complement of some acts which has entered into force since January 1, 2004, it is done through paying out the material need benefit and the contributions to this benefit on the grounds of assessment of his income, property and personal activity. One of the contributions to the material need benefit is also the housing contribution which is provided for the reimbursement of expenditures connected with the housing and its amount is set by the act. The citizen in material need is entitled for the housing contribution when he is the owner of the flat, owner of the family house, the tenant of the flat or tenant of the family house and when he reimburse the housing expenditures regularly. The Act 5/2004 on employment services has entered into force since February 1, 2004. The intention of the act is to provide the compatible, modern, effective, comprehensive employment services in seeking the jobs, in changing the job and filling the vacancies, for all labour market participants, through the implementation the active measures on labour market, through the implementation the differentiated approach to the particular groups of applicants for employment and those who are interested in employment, with the impact to their individual needs and interests. The provision of these services is being guaranteed to all applicants for job: mediation of the job, introductory counselling discussion, active measures on labour market (claimable).

The Act contains of 13 contributions for active measures on labour market within them there are 6 new contributions, 8 types of projects and programmes supporting the joining the labour market, specially for disadvantageous applicants for job. The particular active measures on labour market are focused mainly on this group of the applicants for job. Those are people who regarding their age, the duration of registration in the job centre, education, lack of the practice, health status, family reasons find out harder their application on labour market and that is the reason why they need an increased attention. This activity follows the intention to provide the assistance to those who need it most.

C. Promoting Sustainable Land-Use Planning and Management: Support of sustainable development of human settlements is ensured in the framework of the “Programme of Rural Rehabilitation in Slovakia” amended in 1996. Since 1998 realization of development programmes of villages has started. This issue is included in the “Conception of Soil Management Policy” (Ministry of Soil Management of the Slovak Republic) approved in 1993. It concerns mainly maintenance and protection of land resources, countryside and ecological cultivation. The further objective is the conservation of agriculture and traditional forms of cultivation in mountain areas in accordance with adopted Programme and principles of regional policy in agriculture through system of subsidies "Promotion of management in worse natural conditions" (Ministry of Soil Management of the Slovak Republic).

D. Promoting the Integrated Provision of Environmental Infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management: See under Freshwater and Sanitation Profiles.

E. Promoting Sustainable Energy and Transport Systems in Human Settlements: As early as 1992 Slovenské elektrárne (the Slovak Power Plants Company) established a division of energy efficiency and elaborated a DSM Programme (promotion of energy efficiency and management on the side of consumption) in collaboration with the company Power Smart Inc. from Canada. The objectives of the programme were a) reduction of consumption in peak hours, b) transfer of burden and c) improvement of efficiency of utilization of electric energy in households and industry. In the framework of this programme pilot projects were developed that are oriented to installation of heat pumps for heating the premises and water in the sector of housing and efficient lighting of houses and streets. On 9 October 1998, the EU Association Council adopted by virtue of Decision No. 2/98 the conditions for the Slovak Republic's participation in EU SAVE II programmes, whereby Slovakia became de jure a member of SAVE II with the possibility of making draft projects. Under the project titled "The European Cogeneration Study", the Slovak Republic prepared an Analysis of obstacles in the implementation of heat and electricity co-generation in the Czech and Slovak Republics and a Manual for local self-governments in the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Romania. In the year 2000 the SEA was allocated the project SAVE 2000 programme called Support of KGJ as a basis for Eastern-Western energy partnership PROCHP. It deals with introduction and support of co-generation units. The further SAVE 2000 programme for Slovakia is the programme called Extension of EXCOs TPF involvement in Public Sector CHP and in DH schemes in the Czech and Slovak Republics. It deals with support of funding projects of co-generation units by a third party (TPF: third party financing).

The Slovak Republic was also involved through SEA in the project Indicators for Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC INDICATORS) aimed to develop the indicators for energy effectiveness for 10 CEECs: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Yet another project Support for energy labeling for existing buildings (PROMENLAB), which is targeted to enhancing the interest in energy labeling in buildings, including the development of efficient instruments, of the methods of their inclusion in the implementation of energy savings, behaviour models on energy efficiency and increasing awareness toward sustainable development, was developed by the Bratislava-based Energy Centre. In addition to these activities, the Slovak Republic has undertaken since 2000 the Programme in support for energy savings and use of renewable sources of energy. This financially promotes projects on a) energy savings in apartment houses and dwellings aimed to purchase and install regulation equipment to ensure their energy-effective operation and backfit thermal sources, b) utilization of alternative sources of energy, i.e. construction of small hydroelectric power plants, energy use of biomass, geothermal and wind power, heat pumps and installation of solar collectors, and c) rationalization and upgrade of technological equipment leading to energy and energy source savings (reconstruction of thermal sources, heating systems and technological processes).

The basic strategic objectives of the transport development are determined by striving for the European integration of the Slovak Republic and represent conditions of permanent direction of development with the aim of sustainable mobility in integrated use of all modes of transport with special focus at intermodality and support of more ecological modes, i.e. railway transport, inland water transport and combined transport, as well as public passenger transport with creation of conditions for air transport accessibility of the Slovak Republic. The Action Plan for the area of transport and the environment was adopted by the resolution of the Government 102/1999. It includes 67 mutually inter-linked measures, which will be in long-term, middle-term and short-term perspective and which are aimed at change of orientation of transport development towards sustainable development. One of these measures is a programme of support of planning and realization of integrated systems of mass passenger transport which deals with issues of planning, creation and possibility of realization of integrated transport systems in passenger transport in Slovakia.

F. Promoting Human Settlement Planning and Management in Disaster-Prone Areas: In March 2003 the Government adopted the National Development Plan (NDP) as a basic strategy of the programmes for implementation of the structural and regional policy. This document provides an analysis of the social, ecological and economic situation in Slovakia and defines the objectives of the future development along with a strategy, priorities and measures to fulfill these objectives. NDP is a cross-sectoral document reflecting among others also principles of the National Strategy of the Sustainable Development. The aims of the NDP are further elaborated in four operational programmes. In one of them under a title "Basic infrastructure", issues of flood protection, improvement of water management and land-use planning in natural disaster-prone areas are dealt with.

G. Promoting Sustainable Construction Activities: In 1999 the Government adopted the programme "Wood - the Resource of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". Wood is an important, renewable resource, which is at present used on lower level in Slovakia when compared to developed countries of the European Union. One of the objectives of this programme in mid-term horizon (by 2005) is to harmonize strategies of forest management and wood-processing industry of the Slovak Republic with the aim to utilize synergetic effects of both sectors to increase their effectiveness. This programme has an objective to increase wood processing by 1 mill. m<sup>3</sup> by 2005. It includes particularly use of surplus sorts of wood, which are not currently used and application of wood in other sectors of economy, as well as creation of new jobs. Potential for the future is also use of biomass for energy production purposes. Role of the programme is to promote higher level of application of wood in construction activities, products for flats, construction systems of flats, industrial construction, etc. Products from wood can be easily recycled which increases their competitiveness on the market of developed countries with strict environmental legislation. See also Providing Adequate Shelter for All.

H. Promoting Human Resource Development and Capacity-Building for Human Settlement Development: Through the programmes PHARE CBC and Interreg II the issue of sustainable development is being dealt with in a form of transboundary cooperation with Hungary and Austria. In this way institutional cooperation of local and regional bodies is being created and preparedness of human resources in solution of issues of sustainable development is being increased. In the framework of regional development in collaboration with the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development the Phare 2000 programme has been oriented toward human resources development (education, re-qualification).

**Status:** The average density of population is 109.9 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. This fact is, however, determined by a factor that settlements in Slovakia are primarily concentrated in flats and depressions while mountain areas are populated very sparsely. That means that in the main areas of settlements the density of population is many times higher (in average ca 1,800 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>). The existence of poor population in the Slovak Republic was neither admitted for a long time, nor it was a subject of broad discussion. Changes of

socio-economic situation of citizens due to price liberalization, inflation, growth of living costs and unemployment caused an increase of number of people who were not able to tackle the negative changes of their living conditions immediately without assistance. This required enhanced attention and care from side of the state devoted to these groups of citizens. The most attacked groups were households with four and more children, incomplete households with children and households with unemployed members of family. As far as perceiving the troubles is concerned, housing is the most problematic area for households. According to expert estimates, Slovakia nowadays lacks approx. 225 thousand apartment units, which should be provided for by new construction. The revival of housing construction definitely depends on support economic instruments of the state, like saving in building societies, mortgage loans and a system of supports established in the competency of the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development SR. They are loans of the State Fund for Housing Development and subsidies extended under programmes of housing development for construction of rental apartments for socially weaker population groups and for land development including building of utilities. The government is promoting and encouraging sustainable farming practices and technologies. In 1997, 1998 and 1999 so called "Green Reports" were elaborated which deal with support and development of sustainable forms of management in this area. In 1995, the Government adopted resolutions concerning solution of regional problems in selected districts, where the most serious socio-economic problems have been found. Revitalization of agricultural and forest production of a district and unconventional agricultural production were preferred. These regions were given advantageous subsidies, for instance for elaboration of revitalization programmes.

**Capacity Building, Education, Training and Awareness-Raising:** The main measures oriented to increase of public awareness on impacts of transport on the environment are carried out by problem-oriented programmes of the both state and private TV and radio stations, environmentally and specifically oriented mass periodicals and through a number of non-governmental organizations working in the area of environmental education. The basic measure of this kind is still the economic effectiveness of public passenger transport when compared to individual car transportation. In many cases shorter transport times, comfort and safety of transport play a positive role in favor of public transport. The transport divisions at individual regional offices deal with building cycling-routes on the regional level and in border areas. Their assistance is, however, insufficient in particular because of lack of financial sources. Therefore such projects are proposed as international projects, for which it is possible to get financial assistance from international programmes, e.g. Phare programme.

**Information:** No information available.

**Research and Technologies:** The number of small hydropower plants has been increased and this trend still continues. The construction of the Žilina hydroelectric power plant was completed in June 1998 and has an installed capacity of 62 MW. The number of campaigns and undertakings oriented to energy utilization of mainly biomass is extending. Solar energy is utilized in particular for heat production. Wind power plants are used only experimentally. Two blocks in the nuclear power plant Mochovce have been completed and put into operation, which contributes to fulfill of Kyoto commitments. A number of management and information systems oriented to optimization of transport process management and to providing inhabitants with transport services are being implemented recently. They help to remove unprofitable traffic services. Integrated transport systems including the suburban railway transport, suburban road transport with urban public transport are being introduced in the area of passenger regional transport in the larger urban regions (Bratislava, Košice, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, etc.). For the road transport there is an absence of similar comprehensive information and management systems of passenger and cargo public transport. Imperfect combustion processes are the primary source of carbon monoxide emissions. Mobile sources, industrial technological processes, and local heating plants were the prime source of carbon monoxide emissions in 1994.

Although the numbers of personal vehicles have been on the increase, they do not necessarily have a direct impact on air pollution in urban areas, due to the introduction of lead-free gas and other technical measures (catalytic converters, etc.). Solid particle emissions have decreased from 308.6 thousand tons in 1990 to 87.3 thousand tons in 1994. Imperfect burning processes are the main source of carbon monoxide emissions.

**Financing:** Since January 1, 2004 under the Act 453/2003 on state administration bodies in the area of the social affairs, family and employment services, the National Labour Office has been cancelled, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the Central of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family have become the state administration bodies in the area of the social affairs and employment services. The Central of Labour, Social Affairs and Family together with the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family under the new Act 5/2004 on employment services provide the employment services in seeking or changing the employment, filling the vacancies through the implementation the active measures on the labour market with the special regard to the working application of the disadvantaged applicants for job. The expenditures of these institutions are drawn on from: the state budget resources which are determined by the Act on state budget of the Slovak Republic and the European Social Fund resources. The Act 461/2003 on social insurance establishes the scope of the social insurance and defines it as the sickness insurance, pension insurance, accident insurance, guarantee insurance and unemployment insurance. The social insurance is carried out by the Social Insurance Agency which is the public-legal institution. The benefits granted from the individual kinds of insurance are financed from the general funds: general fund of sickness insurance, general fund of old-age pension insurance, general fund of invalidity insurance, general fund of accident insurance and general fund of guarantee insurance. The insurance contributions which the determined subjects pay under the law are the main incomes of the individual general funds. The state budget contributes to the Programme of support of savings and utilization of alternative energy resources with a sum of 30 million SKK yearly (for private sector). There is a contribution also to the Programme SAVE II – 3.6 million SKK (private sector).

**Cooperation:** In accordance with conclusions of the Pan-European Conference on Rural Development, which was held in Bratislava in May 1997 under the responsibility of the Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for Agriculture and Rural Development, “the Conception of Rural Development in the Slovak Republic” was worked out and approved by the Slovak Government in 1998. It works out principles which are in compliance with EU principles, e.g. integrated principles, economic and social diversification, sustainability, as well as principle of planning and projecting the development of agriculture and rural areas “from bottom to top”. Social policy was developed via various tools, including legal instruments and the European Social Fund as well as activities oriented to specific issues, e.g. health of inhabitants, poverty and role of the handicapped. The social partnership has been institutionalized on macro (tripartite, Council of Economic and Social Agreement of the Slovak Republic), medium (sectoral and regional sphere), and micro-levels (enterprises) of the social system.

\* \* \*