

SEEMIG National Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization for Slovakia

***(Proposal for a national strategy on data enhancement and
utilization on migration, labour market and human capital)***

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<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGNationalStrategySlovakia.pdf>.

1. INTRODUCTION

The national strategy presents the most important problems resulting from current and expected demographic development and migration. These problems have a significant impact on several areas of social development and ignoring them can therefore cause serious problems for the functioning of society.

The SEEMIG project also notes most of these problems. Therefore, in addition to the existing strategic materials which are available at the level of the highest governmental bodies in Slovakia, material and output of the SEEMIG project have also been used for the elaboration of the strategy. This means the WP3 and WP4 national reports, the WP4V Action plan, results of national population projection, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the expert discussions organized as part of WP6.

2. BACKGROUND

The period from 1990 to the present can be considered in Slovakia as a transformation period following the fundamental political changes that occurred in 1989. First of all, the 90s were characterized by significant economic and social changes. Moreover at the turn of years 1992 and 1993 Czechoslovakia was divided into two states and the independent Slovak Republic came into existence. Significant societal, economic, social and constitutional changes had significant impacts on reproductive and family behaviour of the population, which led to significant changes in demographic trends.

Population development in Slovakia after 2000 is characterized by a gradual stabilization of demographic trends, which followed a period of significant demographic changes in the 1990s. It is stabilized towards a new model of reproductive and family behavior.

The current fertility development in Slovakia is characterized by on-going trends of postponement of childbearing to the latest age, by trends of an increasing proportion of births outside of marriage and trends of an increasing number of families with one child. The postponement of childbearing is highlighted in the increasing fertility rates of age 30 and over. After a period of very low fertility in the nineties, the total fertility rate of women in Slovakia has been increasing since 2003. However, the overall rateremains fairly low at about 1.45 children per woman. A slight increase of fertility in Slovakia was observed primarily due to the recuperation process. The recuperation which has caused an increase of fertility has been slowed down by the effects of the financial crisis and rising unemployment. It seems that the crisis has primarily affected second births and the childbearing of younger women. The mean age of mothers at childbearing has reached 28.9 years (an increaseof two years since 2001) and the mean age of mothers at first birth has reached 27.4 years (an increaseof three years since 2001). However, women in Slovakia still belong to the group of relatively younger mothers in comparison with their counterparts in the EU-27 countries.

The development of mortality after 1990 is favorable in Slovakia. The mortality of both sexes is decreasing, which confirms the increasing life expectancy at birth of males and females. In comparison with 2001, life expectancy at birth for males is higher by three years and for females by two years. The decrease in the difference between the values of life expectancy at birth for males and females is also evaluated as positive.

The development of international migration in Slovakia is closely linked to the political status and constitutional arrangement within the Slovak Republic. Until the beginning of the 1990s, international migration (besides the Czech Republic) was always of minor importance to the Slovak

Republic. The only exception was migration including the Czech Republic (at that time the internal migration within Czechoslovakia). From 1950 until the end of 1992 the migration losses of Slovakia in favor of the Czech Republic amounted to 240,000 people.

After the change of political regime in 1989, the Slovak Republic again recorded gains from international migration (according to official statistical numbers). The highest number of immigrants are linked to the years 1991-1994. However, this might have also been influenced by a re-emigration of people who registered themselves for permanent residence in the Slovak Republic due to the legal right for property restitution.

The development of migration in the new millennium was influenced by the accession of the Slovak Republic into the European Union (1 May 2004), as well as by the integration of the SR into the Schengen Area (21 December 2007). In 2001-2013 international migration contributed crucially to the population growth of the Slovak Republic. Citizens of the Czech Republic had the largest share among immigrated foreigners in Slovakia, followed by Romanian citizens, Hungarian citizens and citizens of Germany. The number of emigrants is very low in the Slovak Republic and does not reflect the actual migratory situation in the country.

The current and expected population development is significantly influenced by the number, increase and age structure of the population. A decrease of the population will be very likely to happen in Slovakia in the coming decades and the process of population ageing will be irreversible by 2060.

The beginning of the millennium (years 2001-2003) was characterized (for the first time in the modern history) by a natural decrease of the population when the number of deaths exceeded the number of births. The positive total increase of the population was ensured only by a positive net migration. However, the total increase of population was extremely low in this period. The period 2004-2006 was characterized by a stable annual increase of population (4,400 to 4,800 people). In relative terms, it was a very low increase – less than one person per 1,000 population. Despite the fact that the natural increase again reached positive values during this period, migration contributed to the total increase to a much greater extent. The proportion of net migration to the total increase of the population was between 60-85 per cent in this period. The period 2007-2012 was characterized by population growth. Since 2009, the natural increase is higher than net migration. This change is associated particularly with the growth of the number of live births and stagnant mortality. Currently, migration contributes to the total increase of population by one quarter.

Population ageing is one of the main demographic characteristics in Slovakia. Despite the fact that the Slovak population has been ageing since the middle of the 1950s, the ageing process intensified in the 1990s. The accelerating population ageing since 1990 is evident from the permanently increasing average age of the population and the increasing ageing index. Between 2001 and 2013, the ageing index increased by 36 per cent and reached a historical maximum of 88.3 per cent in 2011. The average age of the Slovak population increased from 36.16 in 2001 to 39.59 in 2013, which is also the highest value in history. However, compared with other EU countries, the Slovak Republic still has one of the youngest populations at present.

Changes in the number and the age structure of the population are likely to intensify. During the coming decades a decrease of population is very likely and the very intensive population ageing is irreversible. In the middle of the 21st century Slovakia will be one of the oldest countries in the world and the second oldest country in the European Union.

3. MAIN ISSUES/CHALLENGES RELATED TO MIGRATION IN SLOVAKIA

The current and expected population development will cause a reduction of the population increase and population ageing. These facts, which are irreversible for the coming decades, will have serious consequences for the functioning of society. In particular, population ageing is now seen as a global phenomenon, which has a great impact on the social, cultural and economic aspects of social development, including the lifestyle of families and the overall social climate.

Demographic changes will occur in all areas of social life. One of the most serious consequences is the effect on the economy of the country. The economic burden of the population will increase significantly¹. This will have a direct impact on the number and age structure of the labour force and a mediated impact on economic potential. In the case of the impact on the labour market, migration can play a significant role because immigrants can immediately compensate the insufficient labour force on the labour market. A significant impact is expected in field of social insurance and mainly the pension system. Even though the morbidity of the population will probably decrease, a higher proportion of an older population will cause a significant increase of the requirements and expenditures on medical care. The impact of population ageing on several other areas of social life – education, housing, infrastructure, services, etc. is analogous.

The increase in the elderly population can be called a change of social climate, or simply "social change". The time when the ratio of children and seniors will be opposite as today will bring new written and unwritten societal, cultural and social rules and norms. The influence of older people in society will be higher, not only because of their higher number, but also their higher activity and ability to participate in social life.

The expected demographic development will also bring changes to the regional development. It is likely that in the larger regions, regional disparities will gradually decrease. However, the formation of small regions is expected in which some negative effects of the current and expected demographic development will occur in a concentrated form. Regions with a high proportion of the Roma population can be seen as a specific issue to be addressed.

An increased interest of migrants in the Slovak Republic in the future is very likely. On the one hand, this trend should be supported by higher attractiveness of Slovakia for foreigners resulting from stabilization of Slovak society after the completion of transformation processes. On the other hand, more frequent arrival of migrants to Slovakia can be expected in connection with changes in the labour market, namely with the decline and ageing of the labour force.

The Slovak Republic will gradually become a destination country for immigrants and a large share of them will come from developing countries. Their integration will be one of the key challenges for the society in the coming decades. The opposite side of the problem is the emigration of highly skilled and educated young people. Although the very high projected numbers of emigrants from Slovakia to the Western European countries were not confirmed, the brain drain remains a serious problem. From the demographic point of view it is significant that this group of emigrants are first of all people at an age of highest fertility which negatively affects reproduction.

¹The share of economically inactive persons in the population will increase and this trend will become still more intensive

4. KEY PROBLEMS IN THE DATA SYSTEM

Usual residence

The main problem of migration statistics in the Slovak Republic is the underestimation of emigration data. Many Slovak citizens are living abroad (some even for dozens of years), but for permanent residence they are formally logged in Slovakia (for various reasons). This means that they are included in the population of the Slovak Republic on the basis of permanent residence and at the same time, for example, in European Economic Area countries where they are actually residing, on the basis of usual residence. There was no obligation for foreigners to deregister their residence when leaving the Slovak Republic². The situation concerning emigration of Slovak citizens is similar. Although the law requires citizens of the Slovak Republic to deregister their residence in Slovakia when migrating abroad, this is not always respected by the public (as there are no penalties).

Until now the Slovak Republic has not established usual residence, on the basis of which population and migration flows would be defined. At the national level, migration and population are defined on the basis of permanent residence and for international purposes usual residence must be composed from the available resources.

The Slovak Republic does not currently have all the necessary data for the construction of usual residence. The biggest problem for doing this in accordance with the new regulation on demographic statistics is that, apart from a census database, we have no source of information about citizens with permanent residence in Slovakia, who are living abroad. This reflects the fact that citizens, despite the created legislative conditions, which include the obligation of deregistration from permanent residence when leaving the Slovak Republic permanently, or the obligation to announce a move abroad for more than 90 days, when leaving the Slovak Republic temporary, in many cases ignore this obligation.

In order to get information on the real residence of persons in Slovakia as well as on real migration flows it seems inevitable to implement registration based on usual residence into demographic and migration statistics. Information on the place of usual residence must be added into all statistical reports and administrative databases. Besides methodological and organizational measures for the introduction of usual residence into practice, primarily some legislative measures should be enacted to ensure that the population actually reports their usual residence.

Migrant-specific survey

There is no special survey in Slovakia nowadays managed by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic or other central authorities of state administration which would be focused on migration. Taking into account the existing problems with registration of migration which will not disappear any time soon, the sample survey seems to be a convenient source of information on the residence and migration of the population.

The Labour Force Survey is the most convenient from existing sample surveys for obtaining information about migration (first of all about labour migration). Within the Labour Force Survey, each country annually organizes a one-shot complementary survey – the so called ad-hoc module – which is thematically focused on a specific part of the labour market, education, health or social insurance. Sometimes the additional survey is focused on the issues of migration and foreigners³.

² Since 2011 this obligation is included in the legislation

³ Ad-hoc module of Labour Force Survey in Slovakia was aimed at migrants in 2008 and in 2014.

INFOSTAT will use experience from the preparation of the Reproductive behaviour survey (which after all did not take place due to a lack of finance even though preparation work was in the advanced process phase) and will initiate a new sample survey focused on reproduction and migration. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic might be the administrator of such a survey in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family or Ministry of Interior.

The survey should be focused on three areas – reproduction, family and migration. The main objective of the migratory block will be to obtain information about the intention and motives of people to migrate from Slovakia and as follows to improve the emigration data, which is influenced by inaccurate registration.

INFOSTAT will prepare a complete proposal of the survey, including the subject, description of the content, draft questionnaire, definition of the target population, creation of a sample file, specification of the sample into the interviewer network, time schedule and budget. The proposal will be prepared so that in case it is executed, it will be possible to compare the results with surveys conducted abroad. When creating the migratory block of the new survey in Slovakia the knowledge and experience gained during the creation and implementation of SEEMIG pilot survey focused on migration data enhancement could be used.

Estimates

As only a certain part of indicators needed for the construction of usual residence can be identified from actual data sources, it is necessary to make greater use of estimates. Even in case of the enhancement of registration (implementation of usual residence into practice and more intense usage of administrative registers), it is probable that the registration will not be complete and it will be necessary to use estimations as a complementary source of information. In connection with the introduction of usual residence into practice, it is necessary to develop estimates of the number of people leaving the SR temporarily (without any change of permanent residence) with the intention to live abroad for at least one year and estimates of people (with permanent residence in Slovakia), living abroad one year or more. Doing this requires using appropriate statistical methods and mirror statistics. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop estimates of the number of persons (with permanent residence in the SR), who after living abroad returned to the SR (return migration).

Administrative data

The use of administrative data for statistical purposes corresponds to present trends in statistics and is also included in the recommendations of the European Union. It has indisputable advantages, mainly a decrease of costs, an increase of data quality and reducing the administrative burden of the reporting units.

In Slovakia, there are several administrative registers which under certain circumstances could be used for the needs of demographic statistics. The first is the Population register which contains most data needed for demographic statistics. From the demographic statistics' point of view, Social insurance companies, Health insurance companies and local registers (containing data on population, houses and dwellings) are important potential administrative data sources. Furthermore, there are several registers which can be labeled as supplementary or supporting. In term of demographic statistics they contain small amount of data or they concern a small part of the population so their main contribution may be checking the data of the main registers. Those are mainly the Land register, Business register, the Central register of insured persons, Tax register and Register of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Three new registers could have great importance mainly for the population census after they are finished. These are the Register of natural persons, the Register of households and the Register of addresses.

The main problems for the use of administrative data for statistical purposes are:

- Poor communication and cooperation between the administrators of data sources and the statistical office. The lack of political will to improve this cooperation (all stakeholders are central governmental bodies controlled by the government)
- At the same time the actual legislation does not permit the use of administrative data for statistical purposes to the necessary extent.
- Registers are not inter-connected because of the absence of a common ID.
- The accuracy of the data in the administrative databases is not sufficient. A revision of some administrative data on the basis of statistical data is necessary.
- More data would need to be added to the registers. Legislation and the unwillingness of administrators to make changes in the administrative databases are the main obstacles.

A significant challenge for statistics in Slovakia is to integrate administrative data sources into a statistical information system to the greatest extent possible. As the integration of administrative data is a long-term and difficult process, it is necessary to start the preparation phase quickly. Firstly the concept of usage of administrative data for the needs of demographic statistics should be defined, followed by the needed modifications in legislation, ensuring the links between all administrative registers (through a unified and unambiguous identifier or otherwise), modification of the Population register in terms of the content and quality of data, introduction of new registers into practice (Register of natural persons, Register of dwellings and Register of addresses).

Population census

A population census processed in the traditional way cannot provide a sufficiently trustworthy picture of the number, structure and territorial distribution of the population. This is so due to the high rate of non-responses which is extremely high just in the case of questions on residence and migration.

Abandoning the traditional census in favor of a register based census or sample surveys, which do not depend on the goodwill and abilities of respondents to answer questions, emerges as a possible solution. A census based on administrative registers should be the aim in the long term. For the next census in the year 2021, the combination of multiple data sources will be necessary. Data from administrative registers will be necessary to supplement with data from the sample survey or a short questionnaire.

For the needs of population census, administrative data in its current form is not sufficient. To cover the decisive part of census data from administrative sources, it will be necessary to use data from the Population register, Register of foreigners (ECU), Municipal register and data from the three planned registers – Register of natural persons, Register of dwellings and Register of addresses.

If the registers mentioned above are used as the main data source for the population census, it will be necessary to take several measures. First of all, data in the population register must be modified in order to better quality of data or a statistical population register must be created. Furthermore, there is a need to harmonize data from the Municipal register which is being processed using different means and, besides discrepancies in content, there can also be eventual methodological and technological differences. Three new registers need to be operational as soon as possible in order to be able to resolve particular aspects of their usability for census. The interconnection of all main registers is a very important assumption for the use of administrative data in the population census.

It would be necessary to get additional data as part of census which is not yet available in administrative registers by using an exhaustive questionnaire or via a sample survey. Use of this type of questionnaire would have a considerably smaller scope when compared to previous censuses

performed in a traditional way. This would mean fewer burdens for population and cost savings for the state. However, using such questionnaire would be more expensive and less acceptable for respondents than performing a sample survey. In case of a sample survey, the surveyed indicators could be available in the best case, at the district level, certainly not at the municipal level as could be possible using the questionnaire. In both cases it would be necessary to address the issue of non-responses; this problem would be more evident in the case of a questionnaire survey.

A combination of administrative data with a questionnaire or sample survey seems to be the most convenient way how to manage the census in 2021 in Slovakia. The decisive criteria when deciding between a questionnaire and a sample survey will be the costs, the burden of respondents and the required output details.



Overview table:

Key Issue/Challenge	Establishment of usual residence	Migrant-specific survey	Migration estimates	Use of administrative data for statistical purposes	Transformation of traditional census to another form
Key proposed activities to handle the challenge	Legislative regulation	New sample survey focused on reproduction, family and migration	Elaboration of estimates of unregistered migration	More frequent use of administrative data for statistical purposes	Population census 2021 based on several data sources
Level of intervention	Government of the SR, Statistical office, Ministry of interior	Statistical office	Statistical office	Government of the SR, Statistical office, Ministry of interior	Government of the SR, Statistical office
Relevant stakeholders	Statistical office, Central governmental bodies	Statistical office, Central governmental bodies	Statistical office, Ministry of interior, Ministry of labour, social affairs and family	Statistical office, Central governmental bodies, entities using demographic and migration data	Statistical office, Central governmental bodies, entities using census data
Relevant political level endorsers	Parliament of the SR, Government of the SR	Statistical office, Ministry of finance, Ministry of labour, social affairs and family	Statistical office	Statistical office, Ministry of Interior	Statistical office, Ministry of Interior
Previous policy attempts to tackle the issue (if any)	No	Preparation of Reproductive behaviour survey (not realized due	No	No	No

		to lack of finance)			
Short term (2/3 years) outcomes/achievements of the proposed activities	Usual residence – proposal of construction	Proposal of the survey Pilot survey	Proposal of methods	Legislative regulation, improvement of data in administrative registers, inter-connection of main administrative registers, informing the public	Proposal of census 2021, preparation of administrative registers, preparation of sample survey, preparation of short questionnaire (if necessary), informing the public
Long-term (6/8 years or longer) outcomes/achievements of the activity	Legislative regulation	Realization of the survey	Estimation of nonregistered migration	Use of administrative data for statistical purposes	Realisation of transformed population census in 2021
Potential risks and suggested solution to overcome risks	Obtaining of necessary data	Lack of finance, comparability with other countries	Obtaining of necessary data	Cooperation between Statistical office and administrators of data sources	Lack of administrative data and their low quality
Links to national/EU level policies // transnational character	Use of international experience	Use of international experience	Use of international experience	Use of international experience	Use of international experience
Financial feasibility and sustainability	Financing from the state budget	Budget of Statistical office	Budget for demographic research	Budget of Statistical office	Budget of Statistical office
Proposed monitoring of implementation	Statistical office, Ministry of interior	Statistical office	Statistical office	Statistical office, Ministry of interior	Statistical office

Pipeline interventions					
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5. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Migration is generally considered to be one of the ways to reduce the impact of population development, in particular decreasing population number. Migration can directly affect the situation on the labour market – in a positive and also a negative way. The contribution of migrants to society will depend on the success of their integration. Most of the specific measures in the field of migration are connected with needs of the labour market.

The increased mobility of the population during last decades makes the traditional statistical registration of population based on permanent residency insufficient and this brings up the question on whether to merely improve, or rather totally change the conventional approach to population registration. Finding a viable solution could prove even more difficult since the problem has to be solved at a transnational, rather than merely at the local level.

As a point of departure we propose to use the case of Slovakia, and examine the possibility for the introduction of the concept of *usual residence*, which could either complement, or replace the contemporarily used concept of *permanent residence*. We will argue below that the replacement - no matter whether gradual or swift - of the existing, *permanent residence* concept of population registry by the new *usual residence* concept will affect the projection of data in all major relevant statistical data sources such as *the population census, the statistical registry of periodical statements, administrative data and data from sample surveys*. In addition, we can take an advantage from the integration of administrative data into the statistical information system when it comes to the population census as well as for the purposes of population registry. Finally, specialized surveys can be used as a supplementary source of information which might help to identify inaccuracies in statistical registries. Nevertheless, such change cannot take place without the implementation of specific measures and these will be mentioned in the policy recommendations below.

Basic measures to be implemented according to usual residence:

- In order to implement registration based on usual residence into demographic and migration statistics, information on usual residence has to be added into all statistical reports and administrative databases.
- In addition to methodological and organizational measures needed for the introduction of usual residence into practice, it is necessary to enact legislative measures which will ensure that the population actually reports changes of usual residence.

Basic measures to be implemented according to administrative data:

- Enact legislation that would make responsible all relevant institutions for the use of administrative data for statistical purposes.
- Introduction of new registers - Register of natural persons, Register of dwellings and Register of addresses.
- Interconnection of all basic administrative registers.
- Modification of the Population register in terms of the content and quality of data, eventual creation of population register under the jurisdiction of the central statistical office.

Basic measures to be implemented according to population census:

- Elaboration of a medium to long-term strategy for the conduct of the population census which will include also the proposal for the population census in 2021.
- Develop a detailed proposal for the design and conduct of population census in 2021. The next census should be based on data from multiple sources (in optimal case administrative registers and sample survey, if necessary supplemented by a short questionnaire).

Basic measures to be implemented according to migrant specific survey:

- Prepare a proposal for the survey focused on reproduction, family and migration, including the subject, description of the content, draft questionnaire, definition of the target population, creation of a sample file, specification of the sample into the interviewer network, time schedule and budget. Compatibility with results of surveys conducted abroad must be taken into account.

ANNEX 1: Stakeholder events, scholarly analyses and policy documents used to develop the strategy proposal.

The SEEMIG strategy proposal has been developed using/referring to the following stakeholder events, scholarly analyses and policy documents, detailed SEEMIG analyses:

SEEMIG STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

- Foresight Exercise – 20 November 2013 - Slovak Academy of Sciences, Comenius University, Slovak Statistical and Demographic Society, Statistical office of the SR, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, INFOSTAT
- Focus Group – 20 May 2011 – Slovak Academy of Sciences, Comenius University, Slovak Statistical and Demographic Society, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, INFOSTAT

REFERENCED SCHOLARLY ANALYSES AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

- Migration Policy in the Slovak Republic
- Conception of State Family Policy in the Slovak Republic
- Conception of Regional Development in the Slovak republic
- Bleha, B., Vano, B. 2007. Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Population Policy and its Conception for the Slovak Republic, *Sociologia*, Vol 30 (1), p. 62-80.
- Eric B. Jensen. 2013. A Review of Methods for Estimating Emigration. *Population Division Working Paper No. 101*, U.S. Census Bureau.

DETAILED SEEMIG ANALYSES

SEEMIG project outputs are available under <http://seemig.eu/index.php/downloads-project-outputs>:

- Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes – country report for Slovakia
- Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and data sources – country report for Slovakia
- Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Slovakia
- Population projections and forecasts in Slovakia
- Foresight synthesis report