

SUPPORT OF FAMILIES WITH SMALL CHILDREN IN SLOVAKIA

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Background

- **Very low fertility level in Slovakia since beginning of the 90s of the 20th century**
- **Current families – changes in form and structure**
 - less complete families
 - more cohabitations, single-parent families and one-person households
 - smaller families (less children, less multigenerational families)
- **The society needs stable families and more children in families**
- **Support of families in Slovakia - wide disparity between theory and practice**

Theory

- **Public opinion** - European Values Study (2008)
 - Marriage or long term relationship are important (78.5% agree or tend to agree)
 - Children are important (80,5% very important, 17,1% rather important)
- **Programs of political parties**
 - All relevant political parties declare the need to support families
- **Governmental materials**
 - Conceptual and strategic materials – 4 main areas of family support – financial support, reconciliation of work and family, housing, stability of families

Practice

- **What is the state support of families with children?**
- **How the four main groups of measures contained in national strategic documents are implemented in practice?**

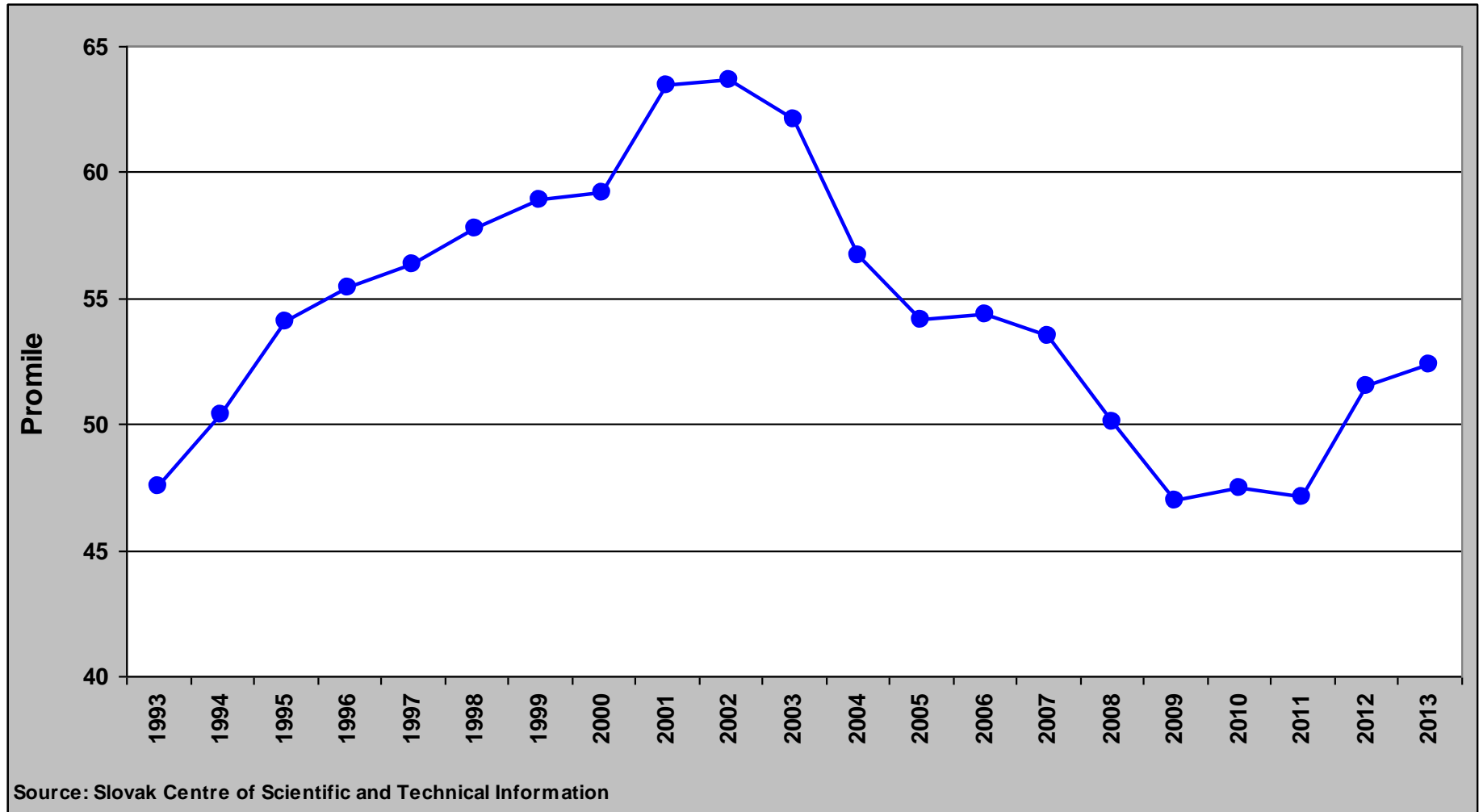
Financial support of families with children

- **Financial assistance**
 - **birth allowance** (once 829,- EUR, 151,- EUR 4+ children)
 - **maternity allowance** (during maternity leave, 70% of gross income, max. 26,42 EUR per day)
 - **parental allowance** (during parental leave, monthly 203,- EUR personal care, max 230,- EUR working parent, child in a childcare facility)
 - **child allowance** (monthly 23,50 EUR, dependent child max. 25 years)
- **Allowance for a child in alternative care** (monthly 138,- EUR per dependent child, 175,- EUR for parents)
- **Tax bonus** (monthly 21,41 EUR per child, only working parents)

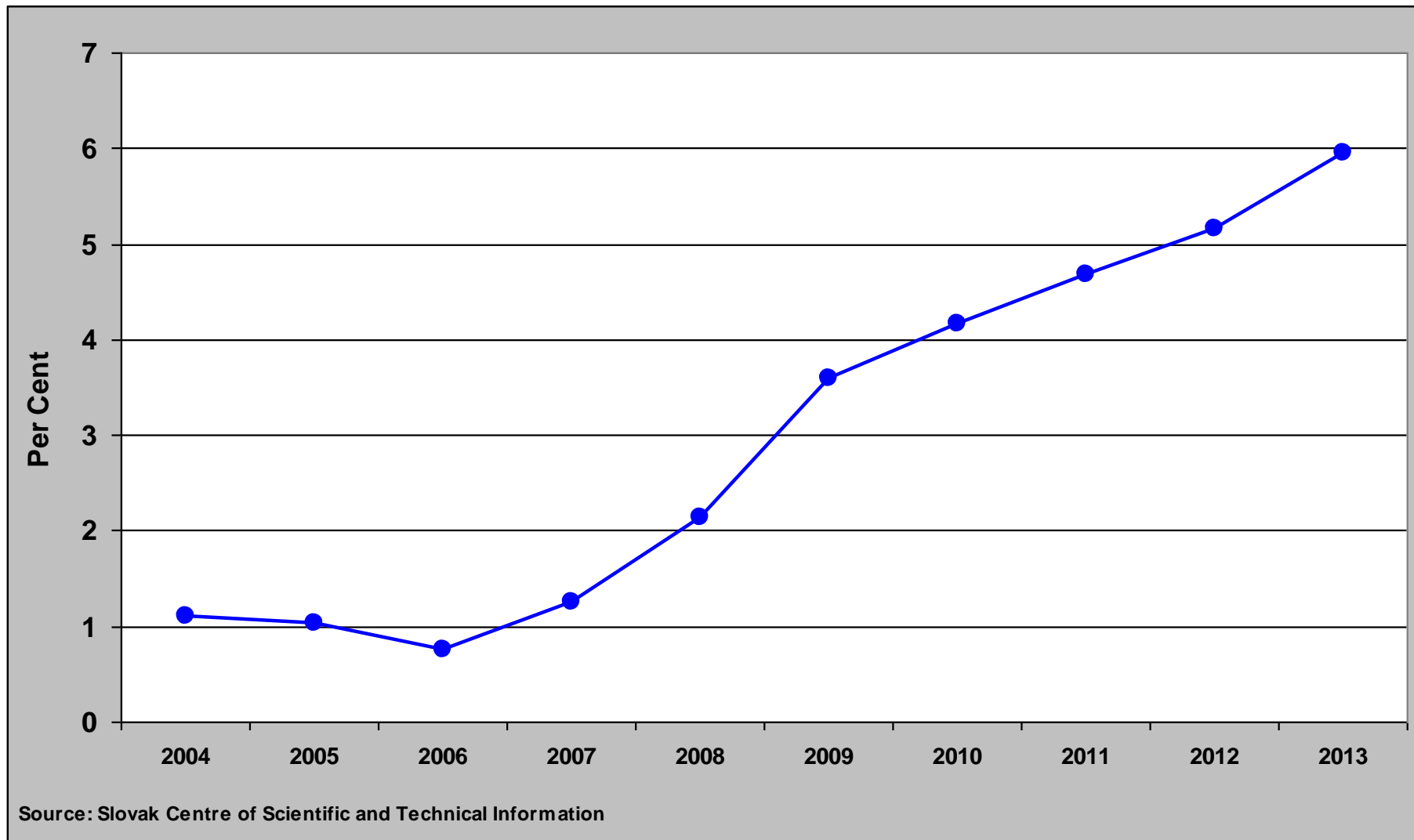
Reconciliation of work and family

- **Childcare facilities for pre-school children**
 - lack of capacity – unfavourable tendency – decrease of kindergartens and increase of live births
 - 87% coverage children 4-6 years, 6% of applications rejected because of lack of capacity, regional differences
- **Motivation of employers to willingness to families with children**
 - mainly part-time work and flexible working time arrangements
- **Leaves**
 - maternity leave (min. 14 weeks, max. 34 weeks)
 - parental leave (max. until 3 years of child age)
- **Services for families**

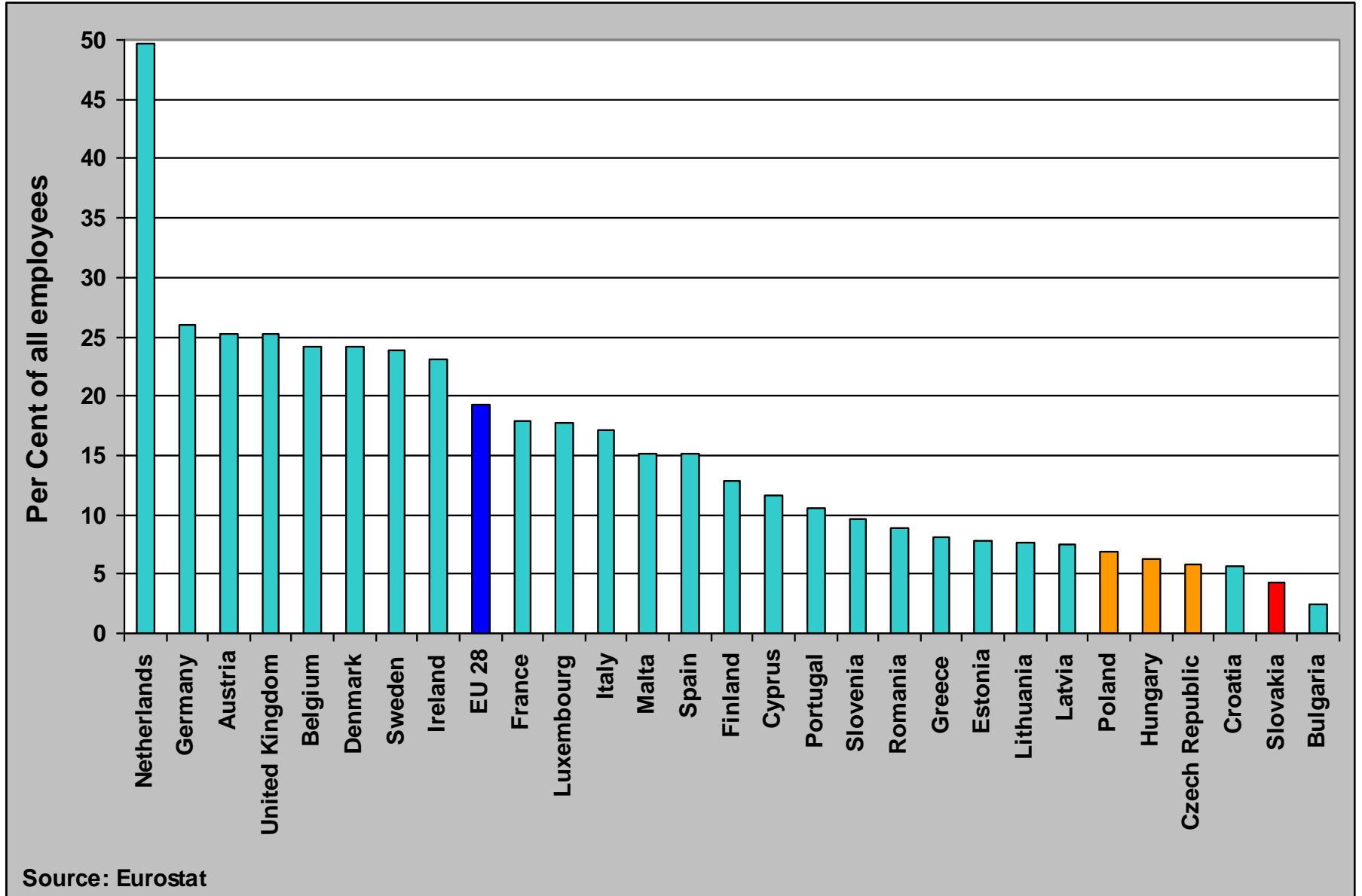
Number of kindergartens per 1000 live births



Rejected applications (due to the lack of capacities in kindergartens)



Part-time jobs

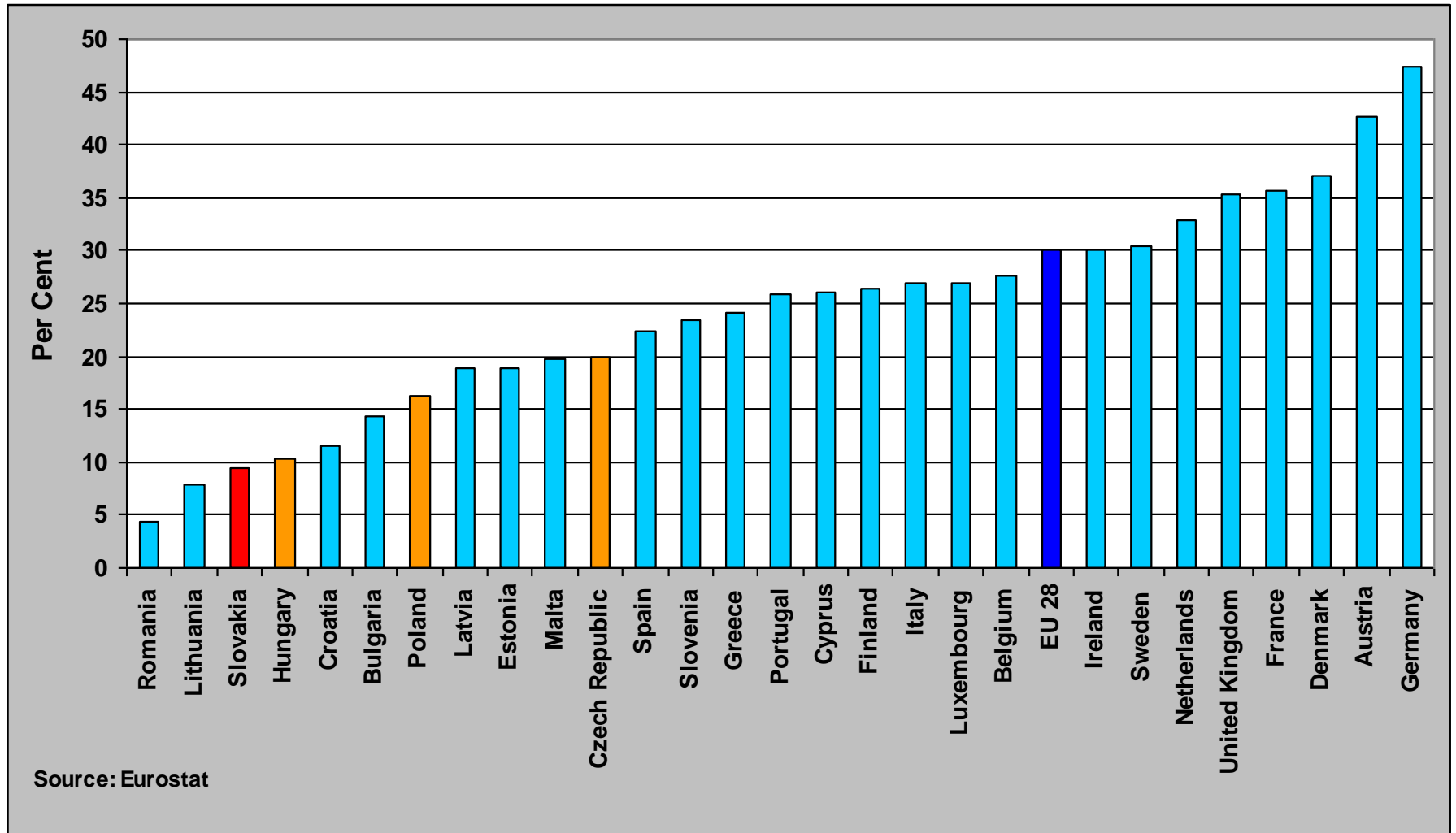


Source: Eurostat

Housing

- **Lack of affordable flats for young families (especially in cities)**
- **Small number of rental flats (3% of housing stock, less than 10% of population)**
- **Tradition of home ownership in Slovakia**
- **Rental flats are generally considered as a solution for socially disadvantaged families**

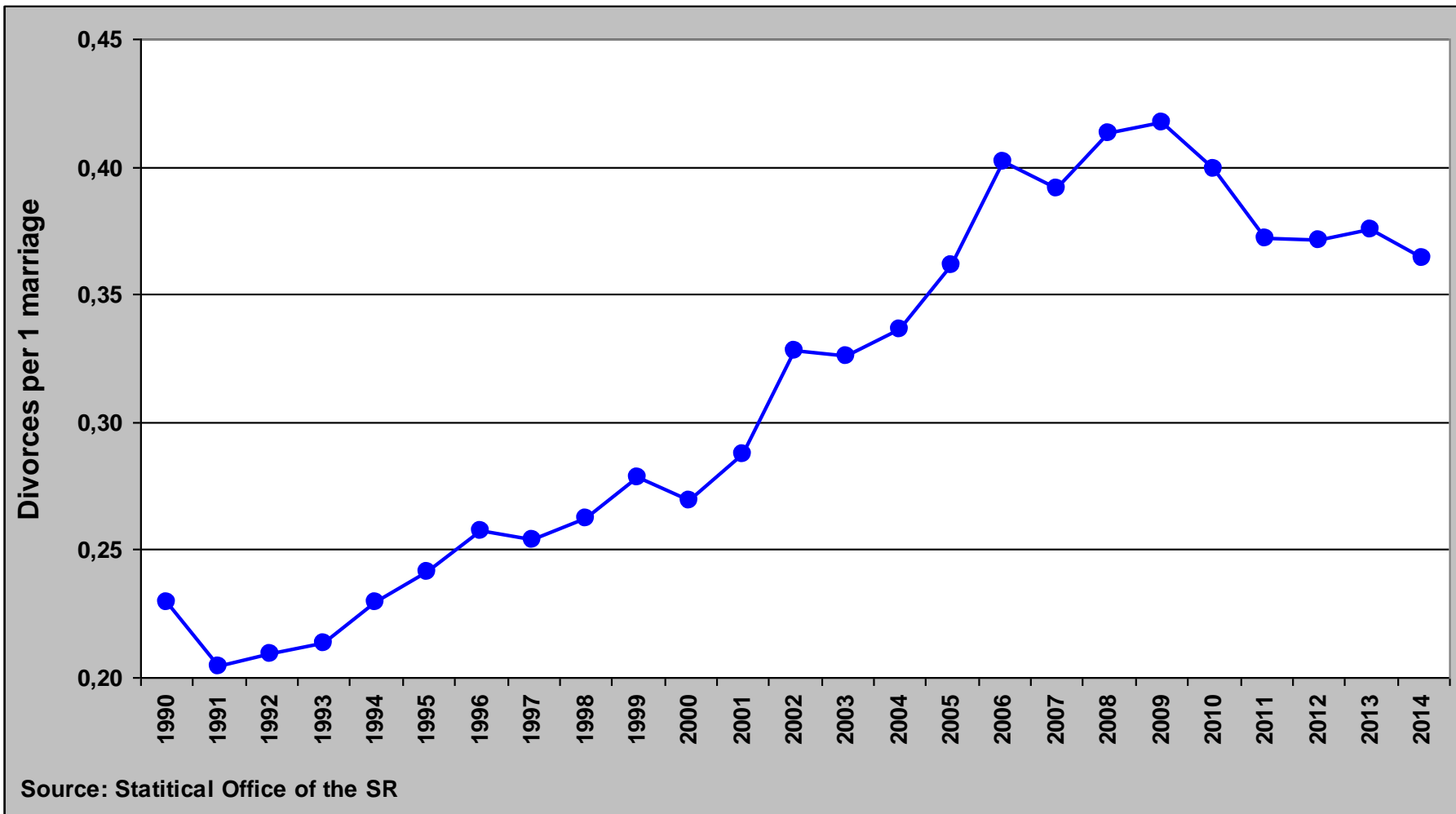
Population by tenure status - tenants



Stability of families

- **Less marriages, more cohabitations**
- **Increase of age at marriage**
- **Increase of divorce rate**

Total divorce rate



Conclusions

- **There is no a comprehensive and long-term stable system of measures to support families with children in Slovakia focused also to fertility increase**
- **Most of the efforts of government are focused on better reconciliation of work and family life**
- **Financial support and housing - small state activity, concerns about abuse with particular regard to the Roma population**