

**INFORMATION ON THE FULFILMENT OF ACTIONS RESULTING FROM
THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN OF THE EUROPEAN CHILD GUARANTEE IN
THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC WITH A VIEW TO 2030**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| 1.1. | Participation..... | 7 |
| 2 | POPULATION OF CHILDREN IN NEED | 8 |
| 3 | LIST OF MEASURES | 10 |
| 3.1 | Effective access to education at all levels and to school activities..... | 10 |
| 3.2 | Effective access to adequate housing and social care..... | 26 |
| 3.3 | Effective access to quality health care..... | 40 |
| 3.4 | Effective access to healthy diet | 49 |
| 4 | INDICATORS, OBJECTIVES AND MONITORING | 49 |
| 5 | FUNDING..... | 50 |
| 6 | GOOD PRACTICE AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS | 51 |
| 7 | CONCLUSION..... | 52 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1 At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate..... | 9 |
| Table 2 Risk and poverty rate according to partial indicators | 9 |
| Table 3 Number of children benefiting from the food subsidy | 52 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP EPSR – Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights
HPA – Health Promotion Assistant
AROPE – At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion indicator
BFHI – Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
CAN – Child Abuse & Neglect
CCF – Centres for Children and Families
FDES – Full-day education system
DDP – Demand-driven projects
ECG – European Child Guarantee
ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
EC – European Commission
ESF – European Social Fund
ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds
EU – European Union
EU SILC – European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FAS – Fetal alcohol syndrome
IMPLEA – Implementation Agency
IHA – Institute for Healthcare Analyses
MTC SR – Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic
ME SR – Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic
MoLSAF SR – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
MRC – marginalised Roma communities
KG – kindergarten
MERDaY SR – Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic
MH SR – Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
NHIC – National Health Information Centre
NIEY – National Institute of Education and Youth
NP – national project
DT NP – Development Teams national project
NP PRIM – Inclusion Project in Kindergartens
LSE – lower secondary education
LSVE – lower secondary vocational education
OP HR – Operational Programme Human Resources
PrS – professional staff
PSP – professional substitute parent
PP – programming period
RRP SR – Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic
AP – assistance professions
PRINED – Inclusive Education Project
ESL – early school leaving
CPSE – compulsory pre-school education
PeS – pedagogical staff
FH – family houses
DAPS – Departments of Advisory and Psychological Services
DES – dual education system
SNCHR – Slovak National Centre for Human Rights
SLPC&SG – Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship
SR – Slovak Republic

FCM – family circle meetings
SS – secondary school
SHDF – State Housing Development Fund
ŠKD – school children club
SB – state budget
SEP – State Educational Programme
OW – outreach work
OSW – outreach social work
UTCS – Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia
OLSAF – Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
LSAF Central Office – Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
OPGRC SR – Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of SR for Roma Communities
GO SR – Government Office of the Slovak Republic
PHA SR – Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic
OMB – Ombudsman
ICP – internal comment proceedings
ECHEC – Early Childhood Education and Care
Un – university
RICHPaP – Research Institute of Child Psychology and Patopsychology
WHO – World Health Organisation
Dis – disability
ATMS – Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia
HR – Healthy Regions
PS – primary school
HD – health disadvantage

1 INTRODUCTION

On 24.03.2021, the European Commission published two initiatives to ensure the rights of the child: Communication on the Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the adoption of Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing the European Guarantee for Children (hereinafter “the Recommendation”), which was approved by the Council of the EU on 14 June 2021. Despite the unprecedented protection that children enjoy in the EU today, they are still subject to frequent violence, socio-economic exclusion, discrimination and an insufficient consideration of their interests. The purpose of the recommendation is to prevent poverty and social exclusion by guaranteeing access for children in need (persons under the age of 18 at risk of poverty or social exclusion) to a set of key services, including gender perspective to take different situations of girls and boys into account, and thereby contributing to the respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of a child and non-discrimination by reducing child poverty and promoting equal opportunities.

In the Recommendation, we committed to submit to the European Commission a National Action Plan of the European Guarantee for Children for the period up to 2030. By Resolution No. 156/2023 of 12 April 2023, the National Action Plan of the European Guarantee for Children in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 was approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic, thus starting the implementation process.

The National Coordination Centre for Addressing Violence against Children of the Human Rights Section of MoLSAF SR (hereinafter “NCC”) was designated as the managing body in charge of the preparation of the AP, which also performs the role of the National Coordinator of the European Child Guarantee in the Slovak Republic, through the Coordinator of the European Child Guarantee appointed by the minister.

In the preparation of the NCC NAP, a working group was established consisting of the following members:

- Ministry of Transport and Construction SR
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR
- Ministry of Health SR
- Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation SR
- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth SR
- Ministry of Interior SR
- Ministry of Justice SR
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs SR
- Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of SR for Roma Communities
- Office of the Commissioner for Children
- Office of the Commissioner for People with Disabilities

The work of the working group on the ECG NAP continues in the implementation process. The group meets several times a year under the leadership of the National Coordinator to discuss the implementation of the actions arising from the ECG NAP as well as future challenges. The members of the working group have also actively participated in the development of the ECG NAP report. We plan to expand the working group to include other subjects as well.

One of the horizontal principles of the ECG NAP is to ensure effective and free access to a safe environment, participation and non-discrimination for children, as all children should have

effective opportunities and support to become active citizens and future promoters of change. They have the right to participate in the formation, implementation and evaluation of policy priorities through the use and application of their rights. With respect to the above-mentioned, last year, for the first time ever, the NCC, as a separate organisational component of the MoLSAF SR, involved children in the development of strategic material concerning them. In 2023, the NCC continued with the idea that if it wants to take some actions for children, it must be done with their participation. In 2023, we devoted our participation to the topics of the new Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence “A Violence-Free Childhood for All Children” and the European Child Guarantee.

1.1. Participation

The children participated in October and November in four locations in Slovakia: Vranov nad Topľou, Michalovce, Banská Bystrica and Senica. A total of 114 children and 49 adults participated. The participation of children took the form of a moderated discussion involving children from primary and secondary schools and adults representing entities working in the field of child protection against violence. The participants started by familiarizing themselves with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had the opportunity to express their views on the respect of children’s rights. The organisers gave them the opportunity to find out what the impact of not respecting these rights is and also how this is reflected in the statistics on child maltreatment, as well as statistics on poverty and social exclusion. Participants also talked about positive examples of how children can help.

The introduction was followed by a discussion with open questions on several topics. This year the participation focused on three topics: mental health, discrimination and reporting or seeking help. Children and adults discussed together questions such as:

- Is mental health important to you? What would you need to improve your mental health and to feel better?
- Do you know what discrimination is? Do you think there is discrimination against children in Slovakia? If so, what are the grounds for discrimination of children in Slovakia? Where is the discrimination most intense? What would you suggest to do about it? What should adults do about it and what could you do about it?
- Who would you contact if something happened to you or your friend? How would you seek help? If something more serious happened, would you go to the police? Do you know how? Would you go alone? In your suggestion, what would it look like when you go to the police/office to tell them what has happened, so that you feel comfortable and not afraid to speak?

On the topic of mental health, children often repeated the need for a psychologist at each school, or a more accessible psychological help. They described mental health as a feeling of being at ease, not feeling pressure from adults and having someone to talk to. They missed the attention from adults, being listened to, understood, accepted, but also being loved and cared for, or even something as small as being praised for their efforts. They also gave specific suggestions on what could be improved, such as creating a relaxation room in the school or providing paints to paint the common areas according to the students’ suggestions.

Children are very sensitive to discrimination and can name and distinguish it; they talked about it as hatred of difference and also that they see hate expressions especially from the elders, whom they have to remind to be more tolerant. They drew attention to specific problems they

experience in their daily lives, such as the lack of wheelchair access in schools, or the categorisation of students based on grades.

Due to the great success of children's participation, we have decided to organise this project in the future, as opinions of children are invaluable feedback and point to specific areas that need to be changed within the topic of poverty and social exclusion in future.

2 POPULATION OF CHILDREN IN NEED

The Slovak Republic plans to promote social inclusion, in particular through poverty reduction, as part of the implementation of the 2030 EPSP AP in the area of social protection. The aim is to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social risk by 70,000 by 2030¹ (compared to the baseline in 2019), i.e. the rate of the risk of poverty or social exclusion should reach a level of about 13.6%.²

At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) – the main indicator for monitoring the EU 2030 target on poverty and social exclusion. This indicator defines the groups of people who live at risk of poverty or social exclusion, i.e. people with low income and/or those who cannot afford some of the critical needs for their lives and/or living in families where nobody works or works only occasionally, i.e. is formed by a combination of three partial indicators.

- Income poverty risk rate³,
- severe material and social deprivation rate⁴,
- very low work intensity⁵,

In terms of age, children in Slovakia were at higher risk of poverty or social exclusion than adults or elderly inhabitants. According to EU SILC 2022 data, the risk of poverty or social exclusion was 24.7% in the 0 – 17 age group, which was 1.5-times higher than in the overall population.

Based on data from the statistical survey on income and life conditions (EU SILC), 252,000 children under the age of 18 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2022. Compared to 2021, this represents an increase by 50,000 children. This increase follows the overall growth in the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Slovakia, which has been driven

¹ Definition of national objectives until 2030 in the context of the Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights – Slovak Government Resolution No. 13/2022.

² Slovak National Programme of Reforms 2024, Annex No. 1 Objectives and indicators Table **Chyba! Len hlavný dokument.**: Overview of the indicators used

³ The rate expresses the proportion of people living below the poverty line, i. e. below 60 % of the median equivalent disposable income of all residents (after social transfers)

⁴ It expresses the proportion of people who cannot afford 7 out of 13 items characterising economic burdens, durable goods, basic leisure and social activities, namely: replacing worn out clothes with new ones (not “second-hand”), two pairs of shoes of appropriate size (including one pair of shoes that is suitable for all weather conditions), spending a small amount of money on oneself each week without having to consult anyone, regular participation in leisure activities, meeting friends/family (relatives) for the purpose of sitting down to eat/drink at least once a month, a computer and an Internet connection; replacing worn out furniture (not “second hand”), eating meal containing meat, chicken or fish every other day, facing unexpected financial expenses, going on one-week holiday away from home once a year, paying mortgage or rent arrears, paying utility bills or repaying hire purchase and other loans, keeping the home adequately warm, having a car, eating meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent every other day, or equipping the home with a colour TV, washing machine, car or telephone

⁵ the proportion of people aged 0 to 64 living in households where there are adults (aged 18 to 64) but excluding students aged 18 to 24 and people who are retired according to their current economic status or receiving any pension (except survivor's pension), as well as people aged 60 to 64 who are inactive and live in a household where the main income is pensions (excluding survivors' pensions) who have worked less than 20% of their total potential combined working time during the previous 12 months

by the evolution of the socio-economic situation in the country. This group accounts for 28.4% of the total number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

One of the important factors influencing the level of risk of poverty or social exclusion is the type of household. In 2022, households with dependent children in SR were up to 1.8-times more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than households without children. While the risk of poverty or social exclusion was 11.4% for households without dependent children, it was 20.6% for households with children. This means that in SR, households with dependent children are significantly more at risk of poverty than households without children. In the category of households with dependent children, single-parent households (1 parent with 1 dependent child) were most at risk, with a poverty or social exclusion risk rate of 46.5%. Furthermore, households with a higher number of children, i.e. 2 adults with 3 or more dependent children (43.8%), were most at risk. This was almost 2.7-times higher than the general population.

The evolution of the risk of poverty or social exclusion or its individual components, whether expressed in absolute terms or as a percentage, is elaborated in the tables below.

Table 1 At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate

| Indicator / year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate of the whole population (abs. in thousands) | 813 | 795 | 744 | 841 | 888 |
| At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate of th whole population (%) | 15.2 | 14.8 | 13.8 | 15.6 | 16.5 |
| At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate of children aged 0 – 17 (abs. in thousands) | 235 | 207 | 183 | 202 | 252 |
| At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate of children aged 0 – 17 (%) | 23.3 | 21.0 | 18.4 | 19.7 | 24.7 |

Source: Statistical Office of the SR

Table 2 Risk and poverty rate according to partial indicators

| Indicator / year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| At-risk-of-poverty rate of children aged 0 – 17 (%) | 20.5 | 19.0 | 17.0 | 17.6 | 22.1 |
| Major material and social deprivation of children aged 0 – 17 (%) | 7.9 | 7.4 | 4.9 | 7.4 | 10.8 |
| Very low work intensity (children aged 0 – 17 in %) | 6.3 | 6.8 | 3.9 | 4.7 | 4.8 |

Source: Statistical Office of the SR

3 LIST OF MEASURES

Implementation of measures resulting from the National Action Plan of the European Guarantee for Children in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030

The information on the implementation of measures resulting from the National Action Plan of the European Guarantee for Children in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 contains information on the implementation of measures in the period from 12 April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

3.1 Effective access to education at all levels and to school activities

Measure: Construction, reconstruction and renovation of childcare facilities for children up to 3 years

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ERDF

Expected value of EU funds: €27,000,000

Expected value of SB: €6,300,000

Indicators:

- capacity of new or upgraded childcare facilities for children under 3 years

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In 2023, the Institute for Labour and Family Research carried out an analysis on the need to reconcile family and work life following the lack of capacity in childcare facilities for children up to three years of age. The analysis is in its final stage. The results of the analysis will be published in 2024.

The MoLSAF SR initiated negotiations with the MIRD SR in December 2023 in order to define the conditions for the grant for the construction of childcare facilities for children up to three years of age.

Measure: Improve the cognitive, emotional and pro-social skills of MRC children aged 0 – 3 through the active participation of children and parents in early childcare programmes

Promoter: MoLSAF SR, MERSaY SR

Collaborating entities: GO (OPGRC), MH SR, NGOs, MI SR, Healthy Regions, ATMS

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB, RRP SR

Financing through EU funds: €1,000,000 +2,388,081 from RRP SR

Financing through SB: €200,000

Indicators:

- prepared and implemented National Development Strategy for Coordinated Early Intervention and Early Care Services 2022 – 30, approved by the Slovak Government
- number of activities implemented to raise awareness of early care programmes (target value in 2023 – 2, 2024 – 1)
- number of methodological materials developed in the framework of implemented projects on early care programmes (target value in 2023 – 1)
- number of employees performing interventions and implementing early care programmes (target value in 2024 – 35)
- number of supported entities (target value in 2024 – 3)
- number of children in early care programmes

- number of supported entities

State of fulfilment: *The task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The Government of the Slovak Republic approved the National Development Strategy for Coordinated Early Intervention and Early Care Services 2022 – 2030⁶ by Resolution No. 435 of 28 June 2022. The aim of the strategy is to contribute to the development of coordinated and integrated early intervention and early care services. The Government of the Slovak Republic, by Resolution No. 244 of 24 May 2023, approved the Action Plan 2023 – 2025 to the National Development Strategy of Coordinated Early Intervention and Early Care Services 2022 – 2030⁷, which is aimed at the implementation of specific measures and tasks resulting from the strategy. For the preparation of the National Development Strategy of Coordinated Early Intervention and Early Care Services 2022 – 2030 as well as the Action Plan, a working group was set up to develop the document *Reaching the Child in Early Childhood*, which provides a framework of information on interventions in the system of support and assistance for the child and his family. This document can also serve as a background material to other methodological materials in the field of early childhood care.

The MERDaY SR has announced the “*grant scheme to support the provision of early care and early intervention⁸ to children aged 0 – 6 years, especially from marginalised Roma communities and generational poverty backgrounds*” in Q1 2023. The amount of the funds from the RRP SR funding mechanism dedicated for the grant scheme is over EUR 6 mil. for the period 2023 – 2026. Subsequently, in Q3 2023, the MERDaY SR announced and evaluated a call for NGOs and other organisations entitled “*Support for the provision of early care and early intervention to children aged 0 – 6 years from marginalised Roma communities and from generational poverty backgrounds*”. The MERDaY SR will support 10 entities from this call and is currently in the process of concluding contracts with these applicants (civic associations and non-profit organisations), who will start implementing interventions and early care programmes in Q4 2023 or Q1 2024 with a minimum duration of the programmes of 2 years. Three beneficiaries have been contracted as of December 2023. Data on the minimum number of early care assistants and children supported will be available once contracts are signed with all beneficiaries. Methodological materials prepared under the projects implemented under this grant programme focusing on early childhood programmes will be available after the completion of the projects as they will focus on measuring the impact of the projects.

The OPGRC is implementing the National Project *Development Teams Phase I* under the Programme Slovakia – 158 members of development teams focused on early care and promoting parenting skills with an emphasis on health and prevention have been employed. The OPGRC implemented within the framework of the OPHR the National Project *Support for Pre-primary Education of Children from Marginalized Roma Communities II* (the project was implemented in 2 stages in the period from 2020 – 10/2023) – 140 parent assistants employed who worked with families in their home environment on the development of parenting skills. Demand-driven projects implemented by NGO entities (3) based on the call OPLZ-PO5-2021-2 (“*Call for support for early childhood education and care programmes for children from the MRC aged 0 to 3 years and related development of parental competences*”) completed their activities of providing ECHEC programmes for children from the MRC in 2023 in order to develop to the maximum extent sensory, motor, intellectual, linguistic, psychological and social potential of the child, including counselling and stimulation of the child in the presence and

⁶ <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/ostatne/narodna-strategia-rozvoja-koordinovanych-sluzieb-vcasnej-intervencie-ranej-starostlivosti.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/vcasna-intervencia-rana-starostlivost/akcny-plan-roky-2023-2025.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.minedu.sk/34965-sk/grantova-schema-na-podporu-ranej-starostlivosti-a-intervencie/>

with the assistance of the parent, working with the family and the child directly in the community.

The MH SR as the intermediary body for the Programme Slovakia published on 24 October 2023 the call “*Implementation of community health education especially for members of MRC and disadvantaged groups for health promotion and disease prevention*” with the deadline of 24 November 2023. The aim of the call is to improve equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable care services, including health care for disadvantaged populations with an emphasis on MRC in all eight regions of the Slovak Republic.

Measure: Promotion of staff capacity in formalised care for children up to the age of entry into compulsory pre-primary education system

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €30,500,000

Financing through SB: €9,500,000

Indicators:

- number of persons providing social services

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In 2023, the Institute for Labour and Family Research carried out an analysis on the need to reconcile family and work life following the lack of capacity in childcare facilities for children up to three years of age. The analysis is in its final stage. The results of the analysis will be published in 2024. Based on the conclusions of the analysis of specific aspects of childcare provision for children under three years of age (e.g. operation, provision of activities in facilities, financing of childcare facilities for children under three years of age), it will be possible to define and specify the need for support and promotion of staff capacities in childcare facilities for children under three years of age.

As part of the development of staff capacities in 2023, the MoLSAF SR has prepared the *National Project on Support and Professionalisation of Professional Capacities in the Field of Social Inclusion* within the framework of which professionals providing early intervention in the system of social services aimed at children aged 0 – 7 years will be able to receive training.

Measure: Creation of flexible forms of care for children up to the age of entry to compulsory pre-primary education

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- number of persons providing care

State of fulfilment: *the measure will be omitted with the update*

Report:

The measure will be excluded from the ECG NAP in the next update as the activities listed in this measure are found in other measures where they are also counted.

Measure: Ensure an effective system of identification and referral of children in need, at full developmental potential, including children with disabilities or children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, to support and assistance systems in the areas of education, health and labour, social affairs and family

Promoter: MoLSAF SR, MERDaY SR, MH SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Indicators:

- number of legal regulations, methodologies, standardised procedures for the provision of early intervention and early care services that include a dimension of cooperation between actors with associated networking of professionals.

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In accordance with the National Strategy for Coordinated Early Intervention and Early Care Services 2022 – 2030 (hereinafter “the Strategy”) as well as the Action Plan 2022 – 2023 (hereinafter “the Action Plan”) for the strategy, the MoLSAF SR, MH SR, MERDaY SR, representatives of 2 local and regional governments, representatives of NGOs – Platform of Families of Children with Disabilities, Association of Providers and Supporters of Early Intervention Services, Independent Platform SocioFórum, Civic Association Cesta von, Union of Private Nurseries and Kindergartens, UNICEF, prof. K. Matulay FUND n. f. collaborated on the development of the material “*The Child’s Journey in Early Childhood*” (hereinafter “*The Child’s Journey*”) – the Child’s Journey is a clearly defined model of accessible care for children aged 0 – 7 years and their families. The goal of promoting optimal child development is to eliminate disparities among children by utilizing existing systems with multiple levels of support as well as creating new systems. Early identification of developmental difficulties is considered important so that the child can access interventions promoting their development in the shortest possible time. The need for the child’s journey stems from the application practice, where parents as well as care professionals often do not have sufficient information regarding the availability of services, interventions, programmes and forms of care that are already established and can be used. In order to set conditions in the Slovak Republic for ensuring an effective system of identification and referral of children in need, at full developmental potential, including children with disabilities, or children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, to the systems of support and assistance in the field of the Ministry of Health, the Slovak translation of the materials is currently undergoing professional proofreading: - Practical manual for working with the International Classification of Functional Ability, Disability and Health (ICF). - The Nurturing Care Framework - Framework on Early Childhood Development in the WHO region

Measure: **Establishment of child groups especially for Ukrainian children up to the age of entry into compulsory pre-primary education system**

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2023

Source of funding: OP HR

Financing through EU funds: €600,000

Financing through SB: €300,000

Indicators:

- number of child groups

State of fulfilment: *the task is being fulfilled*

Report:

The conditions for the provision of childcare in the child group are established within the service for the reconciliation of family life and work life. This form of care is provided in the home environment (or another environment close to the home environment in terms of space and facilities) in a small group of children (maximum four children). There are currently 13 child groups in Slovakia.

Measure: Operation of support teams in schools and educational institutions – health professionals

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+/RRP SR

Indicators:

- number of health professionals in schools and educational facilities

State of fulfilment: *the measure will be omitted with the update*

Report:

The measure will be deleted from the ECG NAP at the next update due to incorrect wording of the measure.

Measure: Development of comprehensive skills and literacy for children, pupils and young people

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: NIEY

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €300,000

Financing through SB: €150,000

Indicators:

- relevant state education programmes

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The MERDaY SR has approved a new State Education Programme (SEP) in 2023. The programme is part of the curriculum reform of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan SR, which aims to meet the needs of education for the 21st century. From September 2023, the first 40 primary schools are educating their first grade pupils according to the new curriculum. All primary schools will start compulsorily teaching according to the new curriculum from the school year 2026/2027.

A key ambition in the development of the new curriculum for primary education was to provide a coherent and comprehensive foundation of general education that gives all pupils a pre-requisite for understanding life, familiarizing with learning tools and basing orientation in global situation. It provides the foundations of cultural literacy and encourages motivation for further education and lifelong learning.

Key cross-cutting skills:

- environmental literacy
- financial literacy
- digital literacy
- civic literacy
- emotional and social literacy
- reading and visual literacy.

An approach oriented towards the promotion and development of the complex skills and literacies of pupils was also initial and formative for the educational area Man and Society. This prepares pupils to express themselves as independent, free and responsible individuals, to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities. It enables them to understand geographical, historical, cultural, religious, economic and political specifications in different parts of the world, leading to respect and consideration for other people, cultures and spiritual values, as

well as for themselves. It develops pupils' positive attitude towards democratic society, the country and the need for sustainability of life on Earth. In addition to knowledge, it develops pupils' abilities to acquire, search, analyse and interpret information in different forms. Pupils draw logically sound conclusions and are able to support and present them in an argumentative manner.

In its objectives and educational standards, the renewed national curriculum for grammar schools also emphasises the promotion and development of students' complex skills and cross-cutting skills (critical thinking, financial literacy, media literacy).

Other supported activities:

1. NIEY (as observer) supported in 2023 Media and Information Literacy Week: panel discussion and workshops⁹
2. Workshops: critical thinking and media literacy; the United Nations Information Service in Vienna, the National Institute of Education and Youth and the NGO Slovak Debating Association organised interactive online workshops, separately for primary school teachers and secondary school teachers¹⁰
3. Educational Programme Development of Media Education and Media Literacy of Children and Pupils, National Project Professional Development of Teachers (TEACHERS)¹¹
4. Guidelines for addressing misinformation and promoting digital literacy in education and training for teachers and educators¹²¹³

Measure: Provide systemic and methodological support to introduce inclusive education for children and pupils from MRC

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: NIEY

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Financing through EU funds: €100,000

Financing through SB: €50,000

Indicators:

- Inclusive Education Strategy developed and implemented
- New state educational programme for primary schools developed and implemented
- number of schools implementing the use of basic and extended educational standards (target in 2023 – 50, 2024 – 200)

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Inclusive Education Strategy developed and implemented: fulfilled

Inclusive education in Slovakia until 2021 has not been provided for in the school law for its effective implementation in practice. The amendment to the school act (approved on 20 October 2021, effective from 1 January 2022) identifies inclusive education as one of the basic principles of education and training and creates elementary possibilities for the introduction of inclusive education in all types of schools. So far, inclusive education has been implemented in educational practice in the form of national projects, which have provided schools with personal assistance in the form of inclusive teams, methodological assistance and material support.

⁹ <https://nivam.sk/tyzden-medialnej-a-informacnej-gramotnosti-panelova-diskusie-a-workshopy>

¹⁰ <https://nivam.sk/workshop/>

¹¹ <https://mpc-edu.sk/sk/edu/program/986>

¹² <https://bit.ly/3webXb7>, <https://bit.ly/3Qyeru6>

¹³ <https://nivam.sk/usmernenia-pre-ucitelov-a-pedagogov-tykajuce-sa-boja-proti-dezinformaciam-a-podpory-digitalnej-gramotnosti-prostrednictvom-vzdelavania-a-odbornej-pripravy/>

The evaluation reports of the national projects Education of pedagogical staff for inclusion of marginalised Roma communities (MRK1), Inclusive model of education at the pre-primary level of the school system (MRK2), Project of inclusive education (PRINED), School Open to All (ŠOV), Support for Pre-primary Education of Children from Marginalised Roma Communities I (NP PRIM I) show that inclusive teams, implementation of the full-day education system (FDES) and school-family cooperation have produced effective educational results.

New state educational programme for primary schools developed and implemented: fulfilled continuously

The Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport SR approved a new State Education Programme (SEP) in 2023. The programme is part of the curriculum reform of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan SR, which aims to meet the needs of education for the 21st century. From September 2023, the first 40 primary schools are educating their male and female pupils according to the new curriculum. All primary schools will start compulsorily teaching according to the new curriculum from the school year 2026/2027.

Number of schools implementing the use of basic and extended educational standards: fulfilled continuously

109 primary schools signed up for the pilot validation, from which the expert team selected a pilot group of 40 schools. Due to the high level of interest, the ministry decided to involve a higher number of primary schools in the first year of the introduction than originally planned.

Supporting events:

1. Educational programmes and events on inclusion¹⁴
2. The Alphabet of School Wellbeing podcast: What is an inclusive school?¹⁵
3. Recovery and Resilience plan¹⁶
4. Catalogue of professional learning activities and programmes – school year 2023/2024¹⁷
5. Educational programme Introducing inclusive principles into the educational process of pre-school children¹⁸

Measure: Implement inclusive education programmes for children and pupils from MRCs at all levels of the education system

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: €1,000,000

Indicators:

- number of inclusive coordination groups in regions with higher concentration of MRCs (baseline by 2021: 150, target value in 2024 – 200)
- number of inclusive education programmes in kindergartens and primary schools (baseline for 2021: 3, target value in 2022 – 5, 2023 – 7, 2024 – 9)
- number of psychologists, PeS, SPeS, and their funding/number of primary schools, kindergartens, secondary schools (baseline for 2021: 466, target value in 2022 – 700, 2023 – 700, 2024 – 900)

State of fulfilment: In preparation/partially under implementation

¹⁴ https://nivam.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ProgramyVzdelavania22_23.pdf, <https://nivam.sk/vzdelavacie-programy-a-podujatia-k-teme-inkluzia/>

¹⁵ <https://nivam.sk/podcast-abeceda-skolskej-pohody-aka-to-je-inkluzivna-skola/>

¹⁶ <https://nivam.sk/plan-obnovy-a-odolnosti/>

¹⁷ <https://nivam.sk/5505-2/>

¹⁸ <https://mpc-edu.sk/sk/edu/program/1002?tab=1>

Report:

Deduction under the Programme Slovakia, programming period 2021 – 2027 – P SK was approved by the EC in November 2022, thus activities from this programme were not implemented in 2022, also in relation to the fact that the relevant management documentation for P SK was not approved in 2022. The MERDaY SR will continue to support inclusive measures within the PP 2021 – 2027 under the Programme Slovakia.

In 2023, the MERDaY SR announced a call for the national project entitled “*Support to Helping Professions 3*”. The intention of the national project for this call was approved by the Commission at the MH PSGR for the objective 4 on 10 May 2023. The project will allow schools to continue supporting the existing positions that have been created under the support schemes implemented so far (including NP *Support for pre-primary education of children from marginalised Roma communities II in kindergartens (PRIM II)*).

Measure: To enable mother tongue education for children and pupils from MRCs at all levels of education.

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: NIEY, RICHPaP

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Financing through EU funds: €100,000

Financing through SB: €50,000

Indicators:

- diagnostic tool developed to map the level of proficiency in the language of instruction for children from the MRCs and for children with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction
- number of support measures targeting the language of instruction

State of fulfilment: *fulfilled*

Report:

Support measures have been introduced in the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (School Act). Pursuant to Section 145a(2)(e), provision of a course in the school’s language of instruction or other support for the acquisition of the school’s language of instruction. The accompanying materials “*Opportunities for acquiring the school’s (Slovak) language of instruction – Slovak as a second language*”¹⁹ and “*Entrance test to determine the level of Slovak language proficiency*” have also been introduced.²⁰

Professional and diagnostic procedures oriented to children and youth of Roma nationality – currently elaborated (through DMO RICHPaP):

1. School competence of a child from a marginalised Roma community
2. A child with a different mother tongue in the counselling and educational process – a child with Roma mother tongue
3. Special pedagogical support of reading skills of a child from a socially disadvantaged environment
4. Delay of psychomotor development in a child from the MRC in a kindergarten environment
5. A new screening test of speech comprehension/language competence to detect problems in the language competence of children from a different language background (also Roma language, Hungarian language, Ukrainian language, ...) (June 2023)

¹⁹ <https://podporneopatrenia.minedu.sk/data/att/27387.pdf>

²⁰ <https://podporneopatrenia.minedu.sk/data/att/27420.pdf>

Educational activities in the field of innovative psychodiagnostics and implementation of a system of support measures:

1. Implementation of the full-time training “Specifics of the Roma language in the context of diagnosis of children from marginalised Roma communities”. The implementation is ongoing: 2022 – 2023 (through DMO RICHPaP).
2. Education of PeZ, PrS through information campaign on the implementation of the system of support measures aimed at desegregation from the RRP SR. Implementation: July – December 2023 (through MERDaY SR, PRO NIEY, DMO RICHPaP).

System of legally eligible support measures in connection with the amendment to the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (School Act) from 9 May 2023 (the Act No. 182/2023 Coll.) with effectiveness and continuous implementation of support measures from 1 September 2023 to 1 September 2026. Their eligibility is conditional on their gradual financial and staffing coverage and transfer to the SB. Financing is under preparation – Methodology for financing support measures/Guideline. The following support measures in Section 145(a) in particular are intended to prevent segregation (and also stigmatisation):

1. activity to support the achievement of school competence;
2. provision of a course in the school’s language of instruction or other support for the acquisition of the school’s language of instruction; this support measure can be used e.g. for the inclusion of Roma pupils who have problems to integrate into the educational mainstream due to the fact that they do not speak Slovak or the school’s language of instruction. It also has a positive impact on the inclusion of other pupils who need support in improving the school’s language of instruction.
3. provision of tutoring;
4. improving the conditions for the education of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (including marginalised communities – MRC);
5. activities to promote social inclusion; here also working with peers of MRC pupils, the whole class, parents of classmates, the pupils themselves, the public;
6. activity to support the prevention of school drop-out in the lower than final year of primary or secondary school; the PeS and PrS will individually teach MRC pupils learning strategies that will motivate them, personal mentoring;
7. ensuring the presence of a teaching assistant in the classroom,
8. provision of self-care activities;
9. provision of adaptations to the school premises designed to promote perception and acquisition of skills;
10. removing physical barriers in the school or school premises and organisational barriers to education and training; removing double entrances, changing rooms where children have been segregated;
11. providing education and training on the basis of adjusting the aims, forms, methods, content of education and training and evaluation of the results achieved by children or pupils in education and training; if a child also has a lower school achievement.

Measure: Prevent spatial and social segregation by methodological guidance and application of desegregation tools

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: MJ SR, ATMS

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds

Financing through EU funds: €200,000

Indicators:

- amendment to the School Act No. 245/2008 Coll. or Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and on protection against discrimination and on amendments and supplements to certain acts (Anti-discrimination Act) and its supplementation with the definition of segregation in the educational process
- methodological guidelines for the application of desegregation tools in primary and secondary schools

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In May 2023 the definition of segregation was established by the Act No. 182/2023 Coll. amending the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (School Act) and on amending and supplementing certain acts, as amended, and amending and supplementing certain acts, in Section 2 “ah) segregation in education and training is an act or omission of an act, which is contrary to the principle of equal treatment under a special regulation 2a) and as a result of which spatial, organisational, physical or social exclusion or separation of a group of children, pupils, students or participants in education and training occurs or is likely to occur without a reason arising from this act”. In fulfilling the milestone of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic (hereafter “RRP SR”), Component 6, Reform 5: Promoting school desegregation, the MERDaY has developed a “*Methodological Guide to Desegregation in Education and Training*”. Following the adopted definition of segregation in education and training, it has been submitted to the ICP and is currently being prepared for approval. The methodological guide specifies what acts and omissions are considered segregation so as to avoid different interpretations. It provides guidance on the prevention and desegregation of segregated education for the various actors in education (e.g. founders, schools and school establishments, principals, teachers, etc.) in practice. The first part of the methodological guide contains an explanation of the definition of segregation in education. The second part contains a description of individual situations that may constitute segregation in education in the specific conditions of the Slovak Republic. The methodological guide also contains guidelines for dealing with individual situations, which will later be elaborated in a participatory manner into model desegregation plans. The desegregation plans will focus on practical solutions applicable in different localities with a concentration of Roma population with different settlement, demographic, regional or linguistic specificities and will be provided for use in localities with a similar type of segregation situation. The methodological guide is also one of the starting points for the creation of a system for monitoring the risk of segregation and for the creation of desegregation standards.

Measure: Systematically mitigate and eliminate the manifestations of segregation in the educational process at all levels of the education system

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: ATMS

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds

Financing through EU funds: Within the ESIFs there are EUR 6 mil. to be provided for a national desegregation project, which is still under negotiation.

Indicators:

- methodology for monitoring segregation in the Slovak school system
- a case study of examples of good desegregation practice
- number of pilot desegregation programmes in regional distribution (target 2023 – 20, 2024 – 10)
- number of participants, projects (target value in 2023 – 200, 2024 – 100)

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The MERDaY SR has committed to the tasks of prevention and desegregation in education and training [1] in the Component 6 (Accessibility, development and quality of inclusive education at all levels) of the Recovery and Resilience Plan SR in the section “Support to desegregation of schools” (K6 R5).

Within the framework of this reform, the MERDaY has committed to the following tasks for 2022 – 2025:

1. publication of a comprehensive monitoring report on segregation at all levels of education based on the new methodology,
2. publication of a monitoring report on the implementation of desegregation standards.

The Education Policy Institute has developed the Concept for Monitoring the Risks of Segregation. The document addresses the first of the above tasks, whereby monitoring of segregation will be understood as monitoring the risk of segregation in education and training in ethnically mixed environments, i.e. in the context of coexistence of the Roma minority and non-Roma majority. This document explains the key background for the design of the monitoring concept, including the main objectives and basic elements of desegregation monitoring. The primary objective of monitoring is to properly set and evaluate desegregation policies with the ambition of translating them into effective inclusive measures. The source is administrative data, but it is not possible to clearly determine whether or not segregated education is occurring in a school or locality. Monitoring is aimed at assessing the signs and risks of segregation in education. It is introduced to contribute to the establishment of a system of targeted support and assistance to localities at risk and to track the evolution of desegregation over time.

The following three indicators are to be part of the National Desegregation Project. Negotiations are ongoing in the presence of the Minister of Education. The project is not yet running in 2023.

Measure: Increase access to mainstream education for MRC pupils by supporting the transformation of special education

Promoter: MERDaY

Collaborating entities: RICHPaP

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: €85,000

Financing through SB: €150,000

Indicators:

- number of methodologies for working with diagnostic tools incl. mapping of good practice

State of fulfilment: *fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The MERDaY SR has approved and published the Standards of professional activities in the system of counselling and prevention.²¹

Measure: Establishing and implementing flexible education programmes (both formal and non-formal), including preventive and second-chance education programmes, with an emphasis on pupils from the MRC

²¹ <https://www.minedu.sk/standardy-odbornych-cinnosti-v-systeme-poradenstva-a-prevencie/>

Promoter: MERDaY

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €100,000

Financing through SB: €50,000

Indicators:

- formal education – relevant state education programmes

State of fulfilment: *in preparation*

Report:

The MERDaY anticipates a contribution to the measure in the framework of the upcoming national projects “Desegregation” (in relation to support for pilot projects on desegregation in schools) and “Prevention of early school leaving through early warning and targeted support in the guidance and prevention system” (in relation to mapping the causes and factors contributing to early school leaving (ESL) and the development of a system of prevention against ESL). The approval of the national project intentions, their contracting and the start of project implementation are foreseen by the MERDaY in 2024.

Measure: Ensuring a higher rate of successful completion of ISCED 2 lower secondary education during compulsory school attendance of children from the MRC

Promoter: MERDaY

Collaborating entities: GO SR (OPGRC), NGO

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB, RRP SR

Financing through EU funds: €6,000,000

Financing through SB: €50,000

Indicators:

- number of primary schools with a FDES programme
- number of pupils from FDES programmes
- number of pupils whose FDES fees are waived
- survey conducted on reasons for early compulsory school leaving
- number of teaching assistants and professional staff in primary schools with underachieving pupils from the MRC
- declining year-on-year trend of underachieving pupils from the MRC (baseline as of 2019: 6%)
- number of marriage and parenthood education programmes implemented to prevent the risk of early pregnancy
- number of LSVE programmes with an integral part of the completion of LSE
- number of updated F disciplines (validated and respecting the principle of equality between women and men)
- number of students in F disciplines (baseline as of 2021: 5,000)
- number of pupils in F disciplines continuing in H disciplines

State of fulfilment: *in preparation/partially under continuous implementation*

Report:

The MERDaY SR has developed the project plan “Prevention of early school leaving through early warning system and targeted support in the guidance and prevention system”, which fulfils the priorities of the following programmes of the RRP SR (Comp.4 Reform 4), Programme Slovakia (specific objective ESO 4.6 and priority 4P4 Youth Guarantee) and the Education Priority Area Action Plan to the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2030 (measure 1.3) to ensure the implementation of the task through the Research

Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology. The project is currently undergoing an internal comment process.

Regarding the activity to *Prevent early CPSE by reducing the percentage of underachieving pupils from the MRC by creating support measures for the purpose of proper completion of compulsory school attendance* and the indicator *Survey conducted on the reasons for early compulsory school leaving* – in 2022, the OPGRC elaborated the *Analysis of absence and measures to reduce absence from compulsory school attendance*. The analysis concludes with recommendations that could help to address the issue of frequent absence, drawn from good practice from abroad and recommendations from schools from the questionnaire survey. The analysis was shared with the MERDaY SR at the Conference on How to Ensure a Systematic Approach to Early Childhood Care in Slovakia, held in Bratislava on 8 November 2022. The analysis can support the development of a survey on the reasons for early compulsory school leaving.

Regarding the activity *Preventing early compulsory school leaving by reducing the percentage of underachieving pupils from the MRC by creating support measures for the purpose of proper completion of compulsory school attendance* – OPGRC participated in the round table on support measures organized by the Ministry of Education on 18 April 2023. OPGRC also participated in the commenting of the catalogue of support measures.

Measure: Support student/graduate training and career development, first work experience, job placement

Promoter: GO SR (OPGRC)

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: State budget

Funding: EUR 60,000

Indicators:

- number of organisations supported (supporting recruitment)

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The activity was not implemented in 2022 due to the fact that the financial amount was not allocated to the subsidy scheme under the competence of the Government Office SR. Act No. 115/2022 Coll. amended the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. Act No. 115/2022 Coll. adds letter d) to section 2 paragraph 1 and inserts a new paragraph 3 to section 2. The amendment is related to the delimitation of OPGRC from MI SR to GO SR.

The Government Office SR, pursuant to section 8(1)(b) of the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and section 8a(1) of the Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the public administration budget rules and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended, announced on 7 July 2023 a *call for applications for the provision of subsidies for the support of social and cultural needs of the Roma community and for the solution of particularly adverse situations of the Roma community for 2023*. In 2023, 4 projects were supported to promote education and training, accompanying youth and children in tutoring and mentoring, supporting the development of financial literacy, media literacy and computer literacy.

Measure: Support to F disciplines

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+, SB

Financing through EU funds: €1,000,000

Indicators:

- number of pupils in F disciplines continuing in H disciplines
- number of support teams/teaching and professional staff

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Deduction according to indicator 1:

With effect from 1 September 2023, there are 9 amendments to the state educational programmes for vocational education and training that provide lower secondary vocational (LSVE) education (F disciplines) in force. The amendments in question define educational standards for lower secondary education (LSE).²² In the school year 2023/2024, there are a total of 4,860 pupils in the first and second year of studies in the F disciplines who are receiving lower secondary education. As this option is being implemented for the first time in a given school year, there are no statistics available on the number of pupils who have successfully completed LSE in the framework of the LSVE and who have also successfully completed studies in the F disciplines and are continuing their studies in H disciplines.

Deduction according to indicator 2:

Based on the Action Plan of the Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation Strategy 2023, the indicators will be reviewed in 2024 for the year 2023.

Measure: **Facilitate the transition from education to employment through mentoring, training, internships and dual training**

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: SB, SaPO

Financing through EU funds: €36,657,000

Financing through SB: €11,343,000

Indicators:

- number of participants: in the mentored initiation programmes (target value in 2022 – 1,700; 2023 – 850, 2024 – 3,500)
- number of teaching places within DES/teaching disciplines (target in 2022 – 8,000; 2023 – 9,000; 2024 – 10,000)
- number of employees within DES (target value in 2022 – 700, 2023 – 750, 2024 – 800)

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Deduction according to indicator 1:

Within the framework of the OP Human Resources, programming period 2014 –2020 – in 2022, activities from the OP Human Resources programme were implemented. Support for inclusive education in 2022 was implemented mainly within the national projects “Assisting professions in the education of children and pupils” and “Assisting professions in the education of children and pupils II”, which support positive changes in inclusive education directly in the school environment through educational support by assisting professions (pedagogical assistants, teaching assistants for children and pupils with disabilities and members of inclusive teams) in schools. Approximately 360 schools are involved in the AP project; approximately 1,275 schools are involved in the AP II project. In 2023, the MERDaY SR announced a call for the national project entitled “Support to Assisting Professions 3”. The intention of the national

²² <https://www.minedu.sk/ziskanie-nizsieho-stredneho-vzdelania-uspesnym-absolvovanim-komisionalnej-skusky-na-ziskanie-nizsieho-stredneho-vzdelania-v-ramci-vzdelavacieho-programu-nizsieho-stredneho-odborneho-vzdelavania/>

project for this call was approved by the Commission at the MH PSGR for the objective 4 on 10 May 2023. The project allowed schools to continue supporting the existing positions that have been created under the support schemes implemented so far (including NP Support for pre-primary education of children from marginalised Roma communities II in kindergartens (PRIM II)). Based on the Action Plan of the Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation Strategy 2023, the indicators will be reviewed in 2024 for the year 2023.

Deduction according to indicator 2:

In the school year 2023/2024, 10,124 secondary school pupils are involved in the dual education system, 1,912 pupils hereof are involved in the study courses.

Deduction according to indicator 3:

In the school year 2023/2024, 1,131 employers are involved in the dual education system.

Measure: Support education and training for the labour market through retraining, further and secondary education as well as non-formal education for the long-term unemployed and low-skilled job seekers

Promoter: MERDaY SR, GO SR (OPGRC)

Collaborating entities: MoLSAF SR, NGO

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds

Financing through EU funds: €20,000,000

Financing through SB: €30,000

Indicators:

- number of pupils in H disciplines (including pupils from F disciplines who have continuously moved to H disciplines) (target in 2022 – 3%, 2023 – 4%, 2024 – 5%)
- introduction of legislative changes to the Decree of MERDaY SR 251/2018 Coll. on the system of educational disciplines for secondary schools and on the subject competence of educational disciplines
- number of candidates who have completed the programme for lower secondary education (target value in 2022 – 100, 2023 – 200, 2024 – 400)
- number of visits to Guidance centres for pupils and candidates from MRC (target in 2022 – 100, 2023 – 200, 2024 – 400)
- number of women and girls who have passed educational activities (target in 2024 – 1,000)

State of fulfilment: *in preparation/under continuous implementation*

Report:

As the amendments to the state educational programme for vocational education and training, which provide for lower secondary vocational education (LSVE) and also provide for the possibility to obtain lower secondary education, are in force since 1 September 2023, it is not yet possible to report any pupils who have continuously moved to H disciplines.

Deduction according to indicator 2:

Decree No. 251/2018 Coll. is no longer in force; it has been replaced by Decree No. 287/2022 Coll. on the system of education disciplines for secondary schools and on the subject matter competence of education disciplines, as amended by Decree No. 343/2023 Coll. This, in Annex 3, specifies (among other things) the education disciplines in which a pupil may continue in the 2nd year of the education discipline providing secondary vocational education after obtaining lower secondary education and lower secondary vocational education.

Deduction according to indicator 3:

As mentioned above, we cannot yet report on the opportunity to obtain LSE in the context of LSVE, as the amendments to the SEP for OVP that set the educational standards for LSE are effective from 1 September 2023.

The amendment to the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (School Act) and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter “the School Act”), with effect from 1 January 2022, has modified the conditions and possibilities of obtaining lower secondary education for persons who have not obtained lower secondary education and who have completed compulsory school attendance. One of the options is an education programme for lower secondary education pursuant to section 31a of the School Act (hereinafter “the education programme”) in a primary school designated by the local government authority. For the school year 2023/2024, 142 applicants have applied for the education programme, of which 89 are participating in the educational programme as of 1 September 2023. The resulting number of applicants who have completed the educational programme and obtained lower secondary education in the school year 2023/2024 will be known in the Q4 2024.

Report according to indicator 4:

The guidance centres provide services to all interested persons, including from MRC, but they do not keep statistics, they are not competent to collect this data. It can be assumed that in 2022 the value of 100 is reached out of the number of 1,712 applicants (mentioned in the AP of the Roma Strategy 2030). Based on the Action Plan of the Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation Strategy 2023, the indicators will be reviewed in 2024 for the year 2023.

Deduction according to indicator 5:

Within the framework of the Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027, policy objective 4 – A more social and inclusive Europe, under the responsibility of OPGRC, priority 4P6 includes Active inclusion of Roma communities, under which the specific objective ESO4.10 is set. Supporting the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as Roma (ESF+). Among the activities supported is the activation of Roma girls and women to increase their participation in education, labour market, as well as in programmes aimed at improving housing and health conditions. Within the published timetable of planned calls of the Programme Slovakia, the activation of Roma girls and women is planned for 2025.

General information on the measure:

Representatives of the OPGRC and MERDaY SR participated in joint meetings (20 March 2023, 5 May 2023) with the aim of presenting the new set-up of F disciplines, training centres and qualifications. Within the framework of the expert group for MRC under the auspices of the MH SR, which also included representatives of the OPGRC, the information material “*Information on the proposal of measures to support the increase of employment of disadvantaged persons with emphasis on persons from the environment of marginalised Roma communities*”²³ was created (taken note of, government meeting 27 September 2023). The information material contains proposals and recommendations to address the long-term lack of employability of disadvantaged persons with an emphasis on persons from marginalised Roma communities.

Measure: Promoting accessible free-time and interest activities and a full-day education system

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: NIEY, NGO

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+, SB

Financing through EU funds: €1,000,000

²³ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/28821/1>

Indicators:

- number of supported projects 2 each year

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The MERDaY SR supports leisure and interest activities of children and pupils in non-formal education through the subsidy scheme of the MERDaY SR only from the state budget. The subsidy scheme is divided into seven areas in which 87 civil associations, non-profit organisations and foundations have been supported for a total of EUR 4,258,075.03. Among the areas, leisure activities were mainly addressed by organisations from the areas of Year-round regular and systematic work with youth of a supra-regional character, Volunteer opportunities for youth. A total of 23 organisations were supported in these two areas for a total amount of EUR 2,774,717.73. These funds were covered by the state budget.

Measure: Implementation of community-based and low-threshold programmes and services aimed at working with disorganised youth

Promoter: MERDaY SR

Collaborating entities: NIEY, NGO

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: State budget

Funding: the actual amount in 2023 that was allocated from the state budget to support low-threshold programmes was €183,881.51.

Indicators:

- number of supported projects 3 each year

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The MERDaY SR supports low-threshold programmes for children and pupils in non-formal education through the subsidy scheme of the MERDaY SR. The subsidy scheme is divided into seven areas, one of which is directly dedicated to the issue at hand, called Low-threshold programmes for youth.

3.2 Effective access to adequate housing and social care

Measure: Implement measures to support the arrangement of ownership and use of land under MRC settlements

Promoter: MI SR (SEP), SO GO SR, GO SR (OPGRC)

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: EUR 6,599,000

Financing through SB: EUR 1,240,000

Indicators:

- number of municipalities involved in the project
- number of supported municipalities

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In 2023, the NP activities as well as most of the DDPs (some of them will have the possibility to end their activities in the first half of 2024 under the category of non-working projects) aimed at supporting the settlement of legal relations to land in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities were completed. The activity is to be continued in the framework of PP 2021 – 2027 with the implementation of a new NP and a new call for DDPs under the new intermediary body GO SR – OPGRC.

Regarding the indicator Number of municipalities involved in the project – OPGRC

implemented in the period from 2020 to 8/2023 the national project *Support for the settlement of legal relations to land in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities*. The project was implemented in 148 municipalities. During this period, there were partial land settlements in 19 municipalities and 87 interventions with completed settlement processes – i.e. processes where a purchase contract or lease agreement for land/housing was concluded. Other land settlement processes in favour of MRC or municipality residents are ongoing, as this is a long-term and challenging process involving multiple actors and the success of the transaction depends on the ability of the resident to pay.

Regarding the indicator *Number of municipalities involved* – in the period from September 2023, the OPGRC started to implement the national project *Assistance to municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities in the settlement of legal relations to land under settlements*. Eight working meetings were held and communication was established with 560 municipalities from the Atlas of Roma Communities regarding the possibility of land settlement.

Regarding the indicator *Number of supported municipalities* – the Government Office SR, pursuant to section 8(1)(b) of the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and section 8a(1) of the Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the public administration budget rules and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended, announced on 7 July 2023 a call for applications for the provision of subsidies for the support of social and cultural needs of the Roma community and for the solution of particularly adverse situations of the Roma community for 2023. In 2023, no projects were supported under this activity.

Regarding the indicator *Number of municipalities involved in the project* – the OPGRC plans to announce the call in question not earlier than in 2024.

Financing through EU funds: National project “Support for the settlement of legal relations to land in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities”: €1,330,564.10,
Demand-driven projects: €1,053,591.47

Financing through SB: National project: €234,805; DDP: €123,952.

Measure: Programmes supporting the provision of housing for children in need and their families

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: EUR 9,000,000

Financing through SB: €4,500,000 (the above allocations are for all relevant target groups to be supported in the corresponding actions, i.e. not only for children)

Indicators:

- number of staff providing social or assistance services

State of fulfilment: *in preparation*

Report:

The objective of the call “Implementation of housing-led approaches with accompanying measures to ensure affordable housing” (code: PSK-MPSVR-020-2023-DV-ESF+) is to provide affordable rental housing with accompanying measures to vulnerable groups of population, such as in particular homeless people, low-income people, single-parent families with children, disabled people, young workers, young adults leaving institutional care and vulnerable groups. The aim of newly introduced housing-led approaches (e.g. housing first, rapid re-housing) with accompanying measures is to provide standard, affordable, sustainable and independent housing for a selected target group, together with the implementation of social

interventions and professional assistance (e.g. legal, psychological, etc.), as a preventive measure to protect health and life of people who do not have or have lost access to their own housing.

The call is at the stage of procedural steps according to the methodological guidance of the MA (MIRDI), which needs to be maintained.

Measure: Programmes supporting the maintenance of housing for children in need and their families

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- number of staff providing social or assistance services

State of fulfilment: *the measure will be omitted with the update*

Report:

The measure will be excluded from the ECG NAP in the next update as the activities listed in this measure are found in other measures where they are also counted.

Measure: Providing affordable housing infrastructure

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ERDF

Financing through EU funds: EUR 20,000,000

Financing through SB: €7,000,000 (the above allocations are for all relevant target groups to be supported in the corresponding actions, i.e. not only for children)

Indicators:

- capacity of new or upgraded social housing per year

State of fulfilment: *in preparation*

Report:

A financing agreement was signed with Slovak Investment Holding, allocating part of the allocation to support this topic through the use of financial instruments. Another allocation that was planned for this P SK action is under the responsibility of MIRDI SR and consultations undergo with the concerned ministries on how and in what form it will be used.

Measure: Implement programmes to improve basic technical infrastructure, roads and access to drinking water in MRCs

Promoters: ME SR/SEA, MTC SR, MIRDI SR, MI SR (SEP), IB GO SR, GO SR (OPGRC)

Collaborating entities: ATMS, WS, UTCS, SEI

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: EUR 93,374,000

Financing through SB: EUR 15,714,000

Indicators:

- number of municipalities involved
- number of municipalities with MRCs in which the project has been implemented (subsidy provided)

State of fulfilment: *fulfilled continuously*

Report:

MI SR: Investment projects financed from ERDF under priority axes 5 and 6 of OP HR are either completed as of 31 December 2023 or, in exceptional cases, after agreement with the

IB, they have fallen into the category of non-functioning projects, which will be allowed to complete their activities in the first half of 2024.

Indicator: number of municipalities involved – 289

Indicator: number of municipalities with MRCs in which the project has been implemented (subsidy provided) – 289

Number of MRC inhabitants whose housing conditions have been improved through the construction of a collection yard – number of MRC inhabitants (18,954), number of projects (64)

According to the Schedule of planned calls of the Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027, MIRD SR ensures the preparation and publication of the call for applications for non-refundable financial contribution for Integrated Territorial Investment projects under the specific objective “RSO2. 5 Promoting access to water and sustainable water management” entitled “*Call for support for infrastructure in the field of municipal wastewater management in agglomerations up to 2,000 registered inhabitants in catching-up regions and ensuring access to drinking water and municipal wastewater management in municipalities up to 2,000 registered inhabitants in catching-up regions*”. The call is planned to be published in the Q2 2024 with an indicative amount of the funds dedicated for the call of EUR 35.0 mil. (source: EÚ).

Regarding the indicator Number of municipalities involved – the OPGRC/GO SR as an intermediate body will announce a Call for proposals under the Programme Slovakia (as part of policy objective 4 – A more social and inclusive Europe) on Assisting municipalities with project management, which is planned for 2024.

Regarding the indicator Number of municipalities with MRC in which a project has been implemented (subsidy provided – within the published schedule of planned calls of the Programme Slovakia for 2024, OPGRC plans to announce in 2024 the so-called integrated call for municipalities (Support for investment activities as comprehensive development of entire municipalities (infrastructure)) and integrated call for municipalities – RT (Support for investment activities as comprehensive development of entire municipalities (infrastructure) involved in the project of the development teams).

Additional information – the Government Office SR, pursuant to section 8(1)(b) of the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and section 8a(1) of the Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the public administration budget rules and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended, announced on 7 July 2023 a call for applications for the provision of subsidies for the support of social and cultural needs of the Roma community and for the solution of particularly adverse situations of the Roma community for 2023. In 2023, 9 projects aimed at the access to drinking water, 1 project of reconstruction of the access road to apartment houses, 1 project of building a local road, 3 projects related to the construction of sewerage and water supply, 1 project of building electrical switchboards, 11 projects of repair of doors, windows, chimneys and roofs (apartment houses) and 1 project of renovation of the disrepair technical condition of an apartment house were supported.

Financing through EU funds: 59,085,579 € (2 calls regarding access to drinking water: 9,268,600 €, 2 calls regarding roads: 39,774,118 €, call regarding sewerage/water: 10,042,861 €)

Financing through SB: 7,419,441 € (2 calls regarding access to drinking water: 974,684 €, 2 calls regarding roads: 4,679,307 €, call regarding sewerage/water: 1,765,450 €)

Measure: Support rental housing in towns and villages with the presence of MRCs

Promoters: MoLSAF SR, MTC SR, IB GO SR, MI SR (SEP)

Collaborating entities: GO SR (OPGRC), NGO/provides of social services

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: EUR 8,587,000

Financing through SB: EUR 22,943,000

Indicators:

- number of municipalities with the presence of MRCs to which a subsidy has been allocated
- number of housing assistant jobs created
- number of people involved in pilot projects

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

MI SR: DDP under the call regarding transfer housing (not traditional rental) are either completed as of 31 December 2023 or, in exceptional cases, after agreement with the IB, they have fallen into the category of non-functioning projects, which will be allowed to complete their activities in the first half of 2024.

Regarding the indicator *number of municipalities with MRCs in which the project has been implemented (subsidy provided)* – the activity is managed by MTC SR. In order to map the interest of municipalities included in the Atlas of Roma Communities in the construction of rental housing financed from the subsidy of the MTC SR, credit from the SHDF or other external but also internal sources of municipalities for the future period, OPGRC in cooperation with MTC SR prepared a questionnaire addressed to the municipalities from the Atlas of Roma Communities. The aim is also to monitor the reasons for the non-participation of municipalities in the calls for proposals for rental housing, their subsequent evaluation and the adoption of measures that would increase the interest in construction on the part of the municipalities. Distribution is ensured in cooperation with ATMS and UTCS. The questionnaire is expected to be evaluated at the end of December 2023.

Additional information – the Government Office SR, pursuant to section 8(1)(b) of the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and section 8a(1) of the Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the public administration budget rules and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended, announced on 7 July 2023 a call for applications for the provision of subsidies for the support of social and cultural needs of the Roma community and for the solution of particularly adverse situations of the Roma community for 2023. In 2023, 1 project of reconstruction of lower standard rental flats, 1 project of repair and reconstruction of municipal flats, project documentation for lower standard flats and construction of fuel stores for lower standard flats were supported.

Measure: **Support owned housing in towns and villages with the presence of MRCs**

Promoters: GO SR (OPGRC), SIH, IB GO SR

Collaborating entities: Academia/NGOs/ATMS (building authorities)

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: EUR 3,100,000

Financing through SB: EUR 275,000

Indicators:

- pilot project
- number of dwellings in municipalities with the presence of the MRCs that have been involved in the project
- micro-loan system set up

- number of loans granted
- number of supported projects

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Regarding the indicator *Number of dwellings in municipalities with the presence of the MRCs that have been involved in the project* – the Government Office SR, pursuant to section 8(1)(b) of the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and section 8a(1) of the Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the public administration budget rules and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended, announced on 7 July 2023 a call for applications for the provision of subsidies for the support of social and cultural needs of the Roma community and for the solution of particularly adverse situations of the Roma community for 2023. In 2023, no projects were supported under this activity.

Measure: Implement measures aimed at improving the quality of the environment and living and hygiene conditions in municipalities with the presence of MRCs

Promoter: GO SR (OPGRC), PHA SR, ATMS

Collaborating entities: NGOs/academia, MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Indicators:

- number of municipalities with MRCs in which activities have been performed

State of fulfilment:

Report:

Regarding the activity *Implement activities aimed at improving the quality of life and environment in the MRC by assisting professions (LCOS, OSW, CC, etc.)* and the indicator *Number of municipalities with MRCs in which activities have been performed*

- Within the framework of the NP CC MRC II, the activity was implemented in 102 municipalities (in the period from 2020 to 08/2023); activities implemented: waste separation, cleanliness and beautification of the surroundings, self-help planting of flowers, planting of vegetables, etc;
- Within the framework of NP OSW and OW II, the activity was implemented in 152 municipalities (in the period from 2020 to 8/2023); activities implemented: improvement of housing and surroundings of dwellings, waste separation.

Regarding the activity *Implement activities aimed at improving the quality of life and environment in the MRC by assisting professions (LCOS, development teams, etc.)* and the indicator *Number of municipalities with MRCs in which activities have been performed*

- Within the framework of NP RT, activities are implemented in 58 municipalities (as of September 2023) – NP RT activities related to the proposed measure: preparation of municipal development plans (in process), which set out priority areas for improving the quality of life according to the needs of the target groups (the whole settlement community: people from the majority and people from the MRC).

Regarding the activity *Implement an information and education campaign aimed at the leadership of municipalities and the MRC population to raise awareness of the possible health consequences associated with the use of uncontrolled water sources (publication of information leaflets and their distribution)* and the indicator *Number of municipalities with MRC in which activities have been performed*

- Within the framework of the NP CC MRC II, the activity was implemented in 102 municipalities (in the period from 2020 to 08/2023), activities were

implemented beyond those mentioned in the measure – additional preventive activities such as personal interviews, workshops and thematic meetings, etc.

- Within the framework of the NP OSW and OW II, the activity was implemented in 152 municipalities (in the period from 2020 to 8/2023), activities were implemented beyond those mentioned in the measure – additional preventive activities such as personal interviews, workshops and thematic meetings, etc.

Additional information – the Government Office SR, pursuant to section 8(1)(b) of the Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and section 8a(1) of the Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the public administration budget rules and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended, announced on 7 July 2023 a call for applications for the provision of subsidies for the support of social and cultural needs of the Roma community and for the solution of particularly adverse situations of the Roma community for 2023. In 2023, 3 projects related to extermination and disinsection, 9 projects related to landfill and waste collection were supported.

Measure: Establishment of an accessible and functional network of professional support for children, parents and (foster) families on a voluntary basis

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- number of clients benefiting from services

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

I. In order to promote the implementation of changes resulting from the amendment to the Act No. 305/2005 Coll. on social and legal protection of children and on social guardianship and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, the national project *Support for the deinstitutionalisation of foster care III* (hereinafter “NP SDEIFC III”) was launched in November 2018, which, in combination with the increased funds from the state budget for SLPC&SK, supports the process of deinstitutionalisation of foster care. NP SDEIFC III was completed on 31 December 2023.

The aim of NP SDEIFC III is to support deinstitutionalisation of foster care, in particular to increase the availability of professional assistance and to improve quality of the implementation of measures of social and legal protection of children and guardianship for the child and the family. Through NP SDEIFC III, the implementation of legislative changes in the field of SLPC&SG has been supported in practice, which is based on the change in the philosophy of SLPC&SG measures fulfilled in SLPC&SG institutions. The main activity of the project is “*Support for work with the child and their family*” and all its sub-activities are aimed at preventing the ordering of institutional care, reducing the number of children placed in foster care and providing assistance and support to children and their families. In relation to fundamental changes in the conditions of fulfilment, the processes and internal structure of the SLPC&SG departments of the LSAF offices have also been reviewed and specific recommendations have been proposed to optimise the processes at SLPC&SG workplaces.

The Counselling and Psychological Services Departments (hereinafter “CPSD”) of the LSAF offices, in cooperation with the SLPC&SG departments, provide counselling and psychological services to clients – parents of children and children in cases where parents divorce, separate with the aim of maintaining and promoting parental cooperation and communication in the best interests of the children. This professional activity of CPSD is aimed at preventing families from failing as a result of their breakdown, or preventing the deepening and/or recurrence of situations endangering children due to family breakdown, parental conflict,

other conflict in the family, etc. To ensure the availability and development of new professional activities of CPSD for child clients and their families, 79 positions were created within the NP SDEIFC III as of 1 January 2019, and the methodological leadership of newly recruited NP staff was strengthened (3 methodologist positions of PPS department were created).

Within the NP, professional materials to support professional work with children and their families have been developed and made available to all partners of the NP DDEIFC III. To ensure the availability of professional assistance to children and their families in outpatient and outreach form, 375 positions (250 social workers/social work assistants and 125 psychologists) were created in the Centres for Children and Families (CCF) as of 1 January 2019

In order to support and to achieve professional growth of the staff performing professional activities in CCFs, group supervision was provided (separately for groups of social workers/social work assistants and psychologists). Within the framework of NP, professional materials were developed to support the quality of the performance of professional activities.

In order to increase the availability of assistance to families, activities were carried out in an outpatient form in premises accessible to clients (resources were created in the budget to cover the rent of the premises). The project also ensured the availability of professional assistance through information technology, which enabled flexible responses during the COVID-19 pandemic but also in contact with adolescent children who prefer this form of communication.

II. National project Integrated access to the performance of social work measures by employees of the office of labour, social affairs and family II. (hereinafter “NP IAP II. “) is being implemented from December 2022 by COLSAF throughout the country (all 46 LSAF offices are involved in its implementation). NP IAP II will be completed on 31 December 2023. NP IAP II is aimed, among other things, at supporting the coordination of multidisciplinary assistance to the target group and supporting informal partnerships and networking at territorial and regional level.

The aim is also to support the performance of social work with a focus on the implementation of SLPC&SG measures with clients in their natural environment, with a focus on the implementation of field measures to prevent the removal of the child from the natural environment, the rehabilitation of the family environment, the motivation of parents to prevent neglect of compulsory school attendance of minor children and social surveys in families (also on the basis of the received suggestions).

As of 30 November 2023, 256 of the planned 290 outreach worker posts (i.e. 88.27%) have been filled under the project in the following positions: 131 OWs for families at risk (OW/OWA), 74 OWs for child welfare (OWI/OWAI) and 51 OWs for adult individuals (OWII/OWAII).

Outreach social work is carried out not only in the natural environment of the child and his family, but also in a substitute family environment. Social workers/social work assistants cooperate with institutions (school, paediatrician, municipality) or other entities and thus jointly participate in helping the child and the family.

Social work practice:

1. in families at risk is most often carried out because of insufficient parenting skills, the need to motivate the client to actively participate in solving their social situation, neglect of compulsory school attendance as a consequence of an unfavourable social situation, or lack of care on the part of the parents.
2. in the field of child social welfare it focuses on targeted professional work with children with problematic behaviour (committing offences, criminal activity/other criminal activity, experimenting with drugs, behavioural disorders manifested by problems at school, in the family, in peer groups...) .

In addition to focusing on the child and their family, the performance of field social work has been strengthened for adult social welfare clients (networking of assistance, accompanying the client to institutions, support in finding employment, accommodation, dealing with foreclosures and personal bankruptcy, dealing with documents, assistance in returning to the institution). Strengthening the professional activities of the adult social guardianship has enabled, among other things, improved cooperation between the client and the outreach worker prior to release from imprisonment and intensified contacts after release from imprisonment.

In the period from 1/2023 to 11/2023, the outreach workers for families at risk and the outreach workers for children's social guardianship (OW/OWA) and (OWI/OWAI) implemented SLPC&SG measures in 24,810 families, the outreach workers for PFO implemented measures for 1,816 adults in the same period.

III. On 13.12.2023 the Intermediate Body for the Programme Slovakia – MoLSAF SR published a call for applications for non-repayable financial contribution for the national project “Development of the fulfilment of measures of social and legal protection of children and social guardianship II” (hereinafter “NP Development of the Fulfilment of Measures”). The call is implemented in the form of a direct assignment and the eligible applicant is the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR.

This project will be implemented throughout the territory of the Slovak Republic and will support the continuity of the process of deinstitutionalisation of foster care in the Slovak Republic.

The objective of the NP Development of the Fulfilment of measures will be achieved:

1. through the introduction and pilot testing of personnel standards in selected SLPC&SG bodies for work with children at risk (corresponding increase of personnel capacities for conducting social case work with children at risk), including work with children at risk for whom social welfare measures are implemented and families at risk of socio-pathological phenomena,
2. through the creation of personnel conditions for the provision of psychological assistance in situations of conflict within the family and coordinated professional assistance in the natural environment of families,
3. through ensuring the introduction of the case conference method as a standard for the implementation of measures in the CCF and the implementation of measures in outpatient and outreach form, with a particular focus on the outreach form of implementation of measures (outreach social work, accompanying families) in the CCF,
4. through strengthening the professional teams of residential CCFs to work with families of children placed in CCFs and potential foster families.

NP Development of the Fulfilment of Measures will be implemented from January 2024. The expected implementation duration is 36 months (+1 month for the financial closure of the national project).

Measure: Setting rules for integration and inclusion of children with disabilities placed in CCF

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- development of uniform procedures and standards

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The project “*Implementation of the European Child Guarantee/Inclusion of children with disabilities in the context of deinstitutionalisation of foster care*” (hereinafter “the project”)

is currently being implemented with the support of the European Commission (through the Technical Assistance Facility).²⁴

The aim of the project is to develop an action plan for the transition from the current state to a foster care system ensuring a “child first” approach and the right to inclusion also for children with disabilities in foster care (including the testing of the action plan) and a national framework, standards and/or legislation with regard to the inclusion of children with disabilities in foster care, based on the assessment of current practices, the identification of gaps in the inclusion of children with disabilities in foster care, and the review and development of legislative and policy frameworks.

UNICEF for Europe and Central Asia is the expert investigator of the project and MoLSAF SR is a collaborator in the project and a beneficiary of its outputs.

Further activities in the field of integration and inclusion of children with disabilities placed in CCFs will be directly linked to the project outputs.

Measure: Methodological support to transition teams in the implementation and development of transition plans in the process of deinstitutionalisation

Promoter: MoLSAF SR, NP partners

Collaborating entities: Higher territorial units, cities and municipalities, providers of social services

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €6,800,000

Financing through SB: €1,200,000

Indicators:

- number of transition teams/facilities supported

State of fulfilment: *fulfilled*

Report:

The National strategy for the deinstitutionalisation of the social services and foster care system SR was approved by the Government Resolution No. 222 of 28 April 2021. The individual strategic objectives are continuously implemented through the follow-up National Action Plan for the Transition from Institutional Care to Community Care for 2022 – 2026 (NAP DI).

Of the ten medium-term objectives of the NAP DI, six are directly related to the provision of social services, which are elaborated through selected measures and individual tasks aimed directly at supporting the process of transition from institutional to community-based social services.

In 2023, MoLSAF SR finalised the NP DI – Support to transition teams, with a total of 93 institutions involved in the project, 90 of which have successfully developed a transition plan. All the transition plans of the facilities have passed the final expert review of the project partners.

In 2023, the MoLSAF SR started preparations for a new national project Support for the provision of community-based and quality social services. In cooperation with IMPLEA, a call for proposal was announced in October 2023 for the selection of a NP partner or a consortium of partners who will cooperate in the preparation of the NP plan and its implementation.

Measure: Expanding and improving methods of work with a child placed in an institution on the basis of a court decision and his/her family

²⁴ <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialnopravna-ochrana-deti-socialna-kuratela/projekt-implementacie-europskej-zaruky-deti-inkluzia-deti-so-zdravotnym-znevychodnenim-kontexte-deinstitutionalizacie-nahradnej-starostlivosti/>.

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- education process participants

State of fulfilment: *the task is being fulfilled*

Report:

Educational activities

Training of the CCF professional team in relational bonding (Dyadic developmental psychotherapy, both therapeutic and counselling level) – in 2020 – 2022, a pilot training of a group of CCF psychologists and social workers in relational bonding and skills training for working with children with relational bonding disorders (specialised training based on Dyadic developmental psychotherapy (DDP)) was carried out. 11 psychologists (therapeutic level of training) and 12 social workers from 18 CCFs (counselling level of training) participated in this training over a two-year period.

CCF staff training in education: CCFs are obliged to take care of the professional development of their staff, which they support with conditions for training and supervision (the budget of COLSAF in 2023 for CCFs under its jurisdiction amounts to €172,200 for training and €244,720 for supervision). CCFs implement training and supervision according to an annual training plan and supervision programme. The objectives for training in the annual training plan are based on the objectives of the professional development plan of the centre for children and families to reflect the current needs of the staff, also with regard to the specific characteristics of the care they provide to children. Training in CCFs is carried out internally, externally and within the framework of the methodological activities of COLSAF. Supervisions are supportive and preventive in nature, with an emphasis on preventing burnout syndrome among CCF staff due to the demanding nature of their profession.

The training in the field of education reflects the needs of CCFs as obtained from the questionnaires for the field of education in CCFs. COLSAF established an online platform “Methodology Mondays” to meet regularly and discuss professionally with educational staff and other staff of self-organised CCF groups on various topics such as therapeutic parenting, relational bonding, pedagogical diagnosis, providing professional help to the child, working with a child with a CAN syndrome, working with a child with FAS, complex developmental trauma, etc. This activity has met with a positive response and will continue. In addition to the online meetings, face-to-face meetings were also held on the basis of an individual request from CCFs or at the regional level (presenting work in the field of education, examples of good practice with a focus on innovative educational methods, professional practices, case studies...).

Training of lecturers, therapeutic education for CCFs, training to improve the quality of educational leadership in CCFs – innovative training in therapeutic parenting/therapeutic parenting for professional foster parents, educators and professional staff who are in direct contact with a child placed in CCFs. The training took place from 2020 to 2021 as a Therapeutic and Counselling Relationship Bonding Training. The training was attended by psychologists and social workers of the centres for children and families (30) as well as representatives of COLSAF (4).

In 2022 – 2023, the training continued as the therapeutic parenting/childrearing training, after the completion of which training twin trainers were created, ready to pass on the acquired knowledge and skills to other interested professional foster parents, educators and professional staff in these new educational methods.

The therapeutic parenting/childrearing training is conducted in 18 sessions with a group of 16 interested trainees. The meetings are set up in 4 one-hour blocks at a frequency of every 2 weeks. The person who attends the training will gain knowledge of complex developmental

trauma, the importance and types of relational bonding as well as the skills of a therapeutic parent/childrearing in communication as well as stressful situations when working with a child.

Training of social workers in CCFs and employees of LSAF offices, SLPC&SG departments in the field of social work with the family using family conferences and case conferences

The conference model of work with the family (especially in the form of family conferences) is in the social systems of developed countries not only a professional method of social work, but above all a principle in the choice and implementation of SLPC&SG measures. In Slovakia it has been successfully implemented since 2006 in the field of prevention and from 2021 it will be implemented in the SLPC&SG system by integrating family conferences into the process of work with families and their targeted use in conducting case-based social work with families in the SLPC&SG system, as well as by creating a new specialisation in a wide range of work activities in the performance of SLPC&SG measures.

In 2021, as part of the pilot testing of the family conferencing model, the position of family conferencing coordinator – Family Circle Meeting (FCM Coordinator) was created. The first 8 FCM coordinators started to work in the CCF outreach and outpatient teams, after the verification of the effectiveness of this model and the benefits of the implemented FCMs, 25 coordinators will work in the CCF from April 2023.

The application practice of LPC&SG measures points to the need to strengthen activities aimed at developing skills in family rehabilitation methods and strengthening the support network around the family at risk through family conferences (family circle meetings), case conferences, etc., as well as to the need to create appropriate conditions for their quality implementation.

In order to support the quality implementation of the conference model of working with families in the LPC&SG system through family conferences (Family Circle Meetings – FCM), 45 online methodological meetings have been implemented since the beginning of the implementation process (since 2021) (15 in 2022 and 30 so far in 2023) and 14 full-time two-day working methodological meetings for FCM coordinators and social workers of CCF and LSAF offices with the aim to develop professional skills, develop teamwork between CCF, LPC&SG authority, local government and other stakeholders in the implementation of LPC&SG measures in the region. Individual methodological support to individual cases in the process of social work with the family is also ensured (44 methodological days were implemented in 20 offices and 24 CCF in 2022 – 2023).

Training implemented within the framework of NP SDEIFC III in the period 2019 – 2023:

In 2019:

- For CCF and CPSD psychologists – training in the “Parents and Divorce” programme (8 three-day training activities; 3 for CCF and 5 for CPSD). A total of 172 psychologists were trained (70 from CCF and 102 from CPSD).

In 2020:

- For CCF and CPSD psychologists – training in the “Child and Divorce/Separation” programme – 3 three-day training activities were carried out for 53 psychologists (15 from CCF and 38 from CPSD).

- For LPC&SG staff – training in the programme “Case social work” – 10 three-day training activities were carried out. A total of 225 employees of LPC&SG departments of CPSD offices were trained.

In 2021:

- For CCF and CPSD psychologists – training in the programme “Child and Divorce/Separation” – 7 three-day training activities were carried out. A total of 121 psychologists were trained (60 from CCF and 61 from CPSD).

- For LPC&SG staff – continuation of the training in the programme “Case social work” – 12 three-day training activities were carried out during 2021. A total of 258 employees of LPC&SG departments of CPSD offices were trained.

In 2022:

- For CCF and CPSD psychologists – training in the “Child and Divorce/Separation” programme – 4 three-day training activities. A total of 48 psychologists (24 from CCF and 24 from CPSD) were trained.

- For LPC&SG staff – continuation of the training in the programme “Case social work” – 11 three-day training activities were carried out. A total of 248 employees of LPC&SG departments of CPSD offices were trained.

- for CCF psychologists, the implementation of training in the programme “Psychodiagnosis of the child” was started – 7 three-day training activities were implemented (in total, 123 psychologists were trained (of which CCF: 88 a CPSD: 35). This training activity continued in the first half of 2023. 150 psychologists were trained in 9 three-day training activities.

- For the social workers/social work assistants of the CCF, training in the programme “Social Diagnosis” was implemented. A total of 22 three-day training activities were implemented. A total of 436 persons were trained.

- Training in the programme “Methods of social work and other departmental activities aimed at working with families in divorce/separation situations” was provided to CCF social workers/social work assistants. A total of 10 three-day training activities were implemented. A total of 208 persons were trained.

Measure: Improving conditions for the performance of professional foster care

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- education process participants

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The need to change the professional status of professional substitute parents (hereinafter “PSP”) and the need to improve the conditions for the performance of PSP has been announced for several years. The status of PSP as a domestic worker, which was governed solely by the Labour Code, was unsustainable, causing problems for both the workers themselves and the employers. The application problems could not be resolved by internal management regulations or by correcting the related provisions of the Labour Code and had to be regulated by a separate law. The new Act No. 376/2022 Coll. on professional substitute parents and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter “PSP Act”), which has been in force since 1 December 2022, regulates legal relations related to the exercise of PSP profession, prerequisites for the exercise of the PSP job, specifics of the employment relationship, including the specifics of the employment contract and termination of the employment relationship, obligations and limitations of PSP, working hours, holidays, obligations of natural persons other than the parties to the employment contractual relationship (the spouse of the PSP and natural persons of legal age living with the PSP in the home environment), wage entitlements of the PSP, etc.

The PSP Act has laid a solid foundation for the PSP profession, brought clear rules and, after only one year in force, it can already be said that many problem areas have been resolved by the new legislation.

Three full-day meetings were held on the new legislation, with a total of 572 people registered online.

In 2022, methodological and educational meetings were held in 10 CCF, attended by 43 professional staff, 8 regional methodological workshops were held that were attended by 222 professional substitute parents. 5 methodological meetings with PSP were also held online with training on “Therapeutic parenting as a new approach to children in the CCF”, where 647 participants were registered in total.

Within the framework of NP SDEIFC III, training on the specific (psychological, physiological and social) needs of children was launched in 2022 for professional substitute parents. In 2022, 2 one-day activities of 8 hours were implemented. A total of 43 persons were trained. This training activity continued in the first half of 2023. Within the framework of 11 one-day trainings, 255 persons (professional substitute parents) were educated.

On 9 November 2023 the Intermediate Body for the Programme Slovakia – MoLSAF SR published a call for applications for non-refundable financial contribution for the national project “Support and Professionalization of Professional Capacities in the Field of Social Inclusion”. The call is implemented in the form of a direct assignment and the eligible applicant is the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR.

The main objective of the call for proposals is to contribute to the creation of a functional system of departmental training and to support the professionalization of professional activities in the field of social inclusion through the planned project activities based on the approved objective of the national project, i.e. the provision of professional capacities for entities in the field of social inclusion and the provision of financial contributions for individual training. Increasing the expertise and strengthening the skills of staff in the field of social inclusion will also contribute to improving the quality of services provided to the department’s clients who find themselves in an unfavourable social situation and are at risk of social exclusion.

The call will be implemented through the following types of actions:

1. “Ensuring professional capacities for entities in the field of social inclusion”
2. “Provision of financial contributions to jobseekers (persons on the labour market) for the purpose of acquiring/changing the skills needed to remain on the labour market or to improve the labour market situation”.

The main activity No. 2 “Provision of financial contributions for individual training” of the national project will provide training for 100 participants in professional substitute parenting, among other things.

Measure: Construction, reconstruction and removing of barriers of SLP&SG facilities

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ERDF

Financing through EU funds: EUR 31,000,000

Financing through SB: EUR 9,000,000

Indicators:

- users of new or upgraded social care facilities per year

State of fulfilment: *the task is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In 2021, 5 properties were purchased for 5 CCFs, including 3 family homes (FHs) and 2 apartments. In 2022, 6 properties were purchased for 6 CCFs, including 5 FHs and 1 apartment. In 2023, 2 properties were purchased for 2 CCFs, including 2 FHs.

The renovation of the facilities is ongoing, according to the financial budget allocated for current and capital expenditure from the element “07C0502 State Centres for Children and Families”.

Barriers cannot be removed with the financial budget available to the COLSAF as the founder of CCFs. In 2022, no funds have been allocated by the LSAF office earmarked that

would be purposefully tied to the implementation of plans to remove barriers developed by CCFs as of 31 December 2021. Nevertheless, the plans of CCFs to remove barriers are being partially fulfilled by implementing minor space and building modifications to the exterior and interior and by purchasing relief items for the interior and exterior in order to make life easier for the children placed.

So far, no projects have been submitted for CCF support from the Programme Slovakia, as the conditions for submitting projects under the new programme period 2021 – 2027 are not publicly available.

On 26 September 2023 the Commission under the Monitoring Committee for the Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 for objective 4 (A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights) of the EU Cohesion Policy approved the national project plan “Development of the Fulfilment of Measures”.

One of the main activities in the mentioned plan is the activity aimed at completing the process of deinstitutionalisation of the CCF Veľké Kapušany, which started in the previous programming period (through the Integrated Regional Operational Programme). The completion of 6 family houses under construction will lead to the relocation of 6 separate groups of 54 clients to newly built detached family houses, reducing the capacity of the main building by 54 clients, providing a substitute environment for clients at community level, creating conditions for their integration into society, individual approach to children, bringing the care of children closer to the course of a normal family (through the implementation of care in family homes), increasing the level of preparation for the gradual independence of children, creating better conditions for working with children placed in CCF on the basis of a court decision, professional families and for working with biological and substitute families.

Estimated value of EU expenditure for this activity: €1,364,250.00, estimated value of SB expenditure for this activity: €240,750,00.

The newly built houses will be barrier-free, which will create optimal conditions also for work with children with physical disabilities at community level for 54 CCF clients.

3.3 Effective access to quality health care

Measure: Establishment of a system to monitor health inequalities between the MRC and the general population

Promoters: MH SR (IHA), PHA SR, RPHA SR,

Collaborating entities: GO SR (OPGRC), ZP HR, NHIC, PHA SR, SAS

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: no budgetary implications

Indicators:

- methodological manual for reporting on health inequalities between the MRC and the general population
- existence of an evaluation report

State of fulfilment: *Fulfilled*

Report:

The MH SR developed a Methodological Manual (hereinafter “Methodology”) for measuring and evaluating disparities in health status and determinants of health status between MRC and the general population, which was presented at the working group meeting, subsequently sent to the members of the working group and submitted to the OPGRC. The methodology is based on comparative analyses of NHIC data for 2022 (this is data on reimbursed health care) and consists of two parts: the first observing differences in health care utilisation, and the second observing the incidence of diseases. Comparison samples of MRC patients (adult general practitioner and child and adolescent general practitioner – providers

working with Healthy Regions, having more than 70% MRC patients by their own educated guess) have been created.

The methodology includes limitations and recommendations. The limitations lie mainly in the data area, as the MH SR only has data on reimbursed care and does not have data on patients registered under per capita payments. The recommendations include possibilities for the development of the methodology for future years, but are conditional on the availability of data that the MH SR does not currently have. Two staff members have been trained on behalf of the MH SR to produce regular monitoring reports on health inequalities between the MRC and the general population according to the developed methodology. Based on meetings with OPGRC, it was agreed that the preparation of these reports would be the responsibility of OPGRC. The datasets produced for the development of the methodology and for the preparation of the Inequalities Report have been sent to OPGRC. MH SR is available to OPGRC for the development of the methodology in the future and will cooperate in the development and interpretation of the data.

Measure: Improving health conditions at community level

Promoters: HR, PHA SR, RPHA SR,

Collaborating entities: MoLSAF SR, GO SR (OPGRC)

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Indicators:

- report on the level of health conditions in MRC
- number of health education activities implemented
- number of health education activities performed
- number of health promotion assistants working in communities with MRC
- number of regional facilitators
- number of health promotion interventions
- number of suggestions for structural changes in the field of health promotion of the MRC towards OPGRC or the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Health Promotion of the MRC

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

On 7 April 2021, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 by the Resolution No. 181/2021. Poor information and lack of education contribute (in addition to discrimination and self-exclusion) to less frequent use of health services. The EU Strategic Framework for Roma includes a number of process indicators in its health recommendations: awareness campaigns and programmes, participation in preventive check-ups with particular attention to prevention in pregnancy and for children, and vaccination of vulnerable groups. Based on data from the Roma Community Atlas 2019, only approximately 53% of the MRC population has access to an adult general practitioner within 2 km. In the case of the availability of a paediatric outpatient clinic, the figure is 44%. The disparities in health status between the Roma and the general population lead to the need to ensure healthy lifestyles, disease prevention and equal access to health services, thus eliminating discrimination against Roma in access to health care.

The development of the 2022 – 2024 Action Plans (hereafter “AP”) for the strategy was carried out in a participatory manner within the framework of individual thematic working groups, in which the various ministries were represented, as well as other state institutions and, last but not least, NGOs and non-profit organisations that have long been involved in the inclusion of excluded communities, academia, and also representatives of local and regional government.

Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive policies and their impact on marginalised Roma communities (2016 – 2023). The main objective of the project was to provide comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of inclusive policies and to assess their impact on the Roma population, especially on the MRC, through the collection of data and information on the socio-economic conditions of Roma. The target groups of the project were male/female inhabitants of the MRC and civil servants working with the MRC. The outputs of the project are addressed to experts, academics and the professional public. The focus of the project responded to the need for streamlining individual inclusion measures and increased targeting for monitoring and evaluation of progress in meeting the objectives of the Slovak Republic Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 and its Action Plans.

During the European Immunisation Week 2023, in addition to the compulsory vaccination of children, the PHA SR motivated the population to receive three types of recommended (voluntary) vaccinations: - Vaccination against invasive meningococcal diseases. In the case of meningococcal diseases, it is not so much the number of cases (25 – 45 cases in recent years) that is problematic, but the substantial consequences of the infection. In fact, casualties caused by meningococcal disease are on an upward trend, according to registered data, especially during 2015 – 2022, with mortality rates exceeding 40% in 2022. - Vaccination against viral hepatitis A. Vaccination is important in view of local epidemics of hepatitis A (such epidemics recur cyclically about every 4 – 5 years). The importance of vaccination has also increased due to the interest in travelling to exotic destinations with reduced hygiene standards. - Vaccination against tick-borne encephalitis. In 2022, the highest incidence of tick-borne encephalitis cases in Slovakia in the last 60 years was recorded. Ticks, which can transmit the tick-borne encephalitis virus, are active longer during the year, over a wider area and at a higher altitude than in the past due to climate change.

Regarding the indicator *Number of suggestions for structural changes in the field of health promotion of the MRC towards OPGRC or the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Health Promotion of the MRC* – the manager of this measure is Healthy regions. In 2022, the HR initiated and participated in the preparation of the following solutions to systemic barriers to access to health care for the population from the MRC background in the Slovak Republic: 1) Cooperation in the preparation of the legislative proposal of MH SR for financial support for empowerment of outpatient physicians working with patients from the MRC, 2) Proposal of the methodology of the system for monitoring inequalities in health status and use of health care services between the population of the MRC and the general population (in cooperation with the IHA and OPGRC), 3) Establishment of standard procedures for institutional cooperation in addressing recurrent cases of discrimination in health care services (with SNCHR, the OMB office and the Human Rights Advisory Service), 4) Preparation of accreditation of training of health promotion assistants and their coordinators compatible with the public health education system.

Measure: Ensuring quality prenatal, delivery and postnatal care for all women

Promoter: Ministry of Health of the SR

Collaborating entities: Slovak Paediatric Society and Slovak Gynaecological and Obstetric Society of the Slovak Medical Society

Deadline: 2023 – 2029

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €181,000 incl. national co-financing

Indicators:

- number of clinical audits of BFHI in hospitals

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

By 2020, legislative conditions have been created at national level, in particular the Standard Procedure for the Practice of Prevention: Maternal and newborn care according to the principles of the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) – support for relational bonding and lactation (hereinafter “BFHI SPDaTM”)²⁵, clinical audit (Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on health care providers, health professionals, professional organisations in health care and on amendments and supplements to certain acts, as amended) and the change of health statistics reported from the Newborn Report and the Newborn Record for the re-development of the BFHI area. Based on the BFHI SPDaTM, the MH SR is mapping the results of the internal evaluation of health facilities through an online questionnaire.

In order to meet the objectives of the Programme Slovakia, on 9 November 2023, the Commission under the Monitoring Committee for the Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 for objective 4 of the EU Cohesion Policy approved the MH SR’s drafted plan for the National Project “Supporting the training of health professionals in breastfeeding promotion and relational bonding and conducting clinical audits in the area of Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative” (hereinafter “NP BFHI”), which guarantees the most effective way to ensure the continuous training of health professionals in breastfeeding promotion and relationship bonding and the auditing of the quality system of health care provided to mothers and newborns according to the SPDaTM MH SR across the Slovak Republic. NP BFHI also aims to translate the ABM Clinical Protocol 14 Breastfeeding Friendly Doctor – optimising breastfeeding care and building relational bonding 8 in the scope of general practitioners for children and adolescents and to implement this protocol in the Slovak Republic through training of paediatricians. MH SR uses a number of standard practices in the provision of quality prenatal, delivery and postnatal care for all women, e.g. Prenatal care for low-risk (physiological) pregnancies, Recommended practice for the practice of prevention: Nutrition and physical activity in pregnancy, and Caring for the low-risk expectant mother during childbirth.²⁶

Measure: Provision of community health education in the MRC setting with a focus on pregnant women, mothers and young Roma women

Promoter: Ministry of Health of the SR

Collaborating entities: GO SR (OPGRC)

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- number of staff providing social or assistance services

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Regarding the indicator *Number of staff providing social or assistance services* – OPGRC has implemented 4 national projects under the Human Resources Operational Programme and 1 national project under the Programme Slovakia, within which it contributes to the implementation of the measure through preventive activities:

- National project *Community services in towns and villages with the presence of MRC* (“NP CS MRC II”, the project was implemented in two phases in the period from 1/2016 to 8/2023) – 295 employees employed
- National project *Outreach social work and outreach work in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities* (“NP OSW and OW II”, the project was implemented in two phases in the period from 1/2016 to 8/2023) – 257 outreach social workers and 275 outreach workers employed

²⁵ <https://www.standardnepostupy.sk/standardy-bfhi>

²⁶ <https://www.standardnepostupy.sk/standardy-gyneklologia-a-porodnictvo/>

- National project *Support for activities aimed at addressing COVID-19 related adversities in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities* (project implemented in the period from 10/2020 to 5/2021) – 216 COVID-19 outreach assistants employed
- National project *Support for Pre-primary Education of Children from Marginalised Roma Communities II* (“NP PRIM II”) – the project was implemented in 2 stages in the period from 2020 – 10/2023 – 140 parent assistants employed who worked with families in their home environment on the development of parenting skills.
- National project *Development Teams Phase I* (“NP DT”, from September 2023) – employed 158 members of development teams focused on early care and promoting parenting skills with an emphasis on health and prevention.

Some of the implemented activities (NP CC MRC II, NP OSW and OW II, NP DT, NP PRIM II): sexual and reproductive health, hygiene and health, health prevention, vaccination, dental hygiene, healthy nutrition, early childhood care and parenting skills support, etc. The main tasks, programmes and activities for the protection and promotion of sexual and reproductive health have been established by law in the Slovak Republic.

Within the framework of sexual and reproductive health care, MH SR has promoted the health of women, mothers and children by developing the conditions for the provision of the highest quality health care in the context of childbirth, or preventive programmes to promote breastfeeding, preparation for childbirth, delivery and the postnatal period, and assistance after discharge from the maternity ward. MH SR has created an effective and sustainable tool for setting a welcoming and equitable approach to mothers and newborns with proactive cooperation of all maternity hospitals in the Slovak Republic, according to the recommendations of WHO – BFHI. In order to advance sexual and reproductive health, MH SR is participating in the implementation of the BCA agreement project between the WHO Regional Office for Europe entitled: Support of the sexual and reproductive health using diagnostics 10 and NaProTechnology/Restorative Reproductive Medicine (hereinafter “RRM”) methods. In the area of support for women’s and men’s reproductive health, this involves the introduction of new approaches to infertility treatment through evidence-based policy processes and standard evidence-based policy practices in the field of RRM methods.

Measure: Supporting further training of medical personnel

Promoter: Ministry of Health of the SR

Collaborating entities: Educational entities accredited by MH SR

Deadline: 2023 – 2029

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €99,100 incl. national co-financing

Indicators:

- number of participants involved in training, number of training activities

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

The number of participants involved in training activities as well as the number of training activities for the year 2023 will be submitted to MH SR in 2024.

Measure: Increasing life expectancy by reducing neonatal/infant mortality

Promoter: BSGR

Collaborating entities: HR, GO SR (OPGRC), ZP

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: State budget

Financing through SB: €36,000

Indicators:

- number of paediatric care providers involved in the pilot project
- number of visits to newborns and infants in the MRC setting

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

In 2022, one trip was carried out in 6 villages in cooperation with a primary paediatrician and a gynaecologist under the umbrella of the county polyclinic as a health care provider – the health consultation was focused on prevention education, lactation. On 21 August 2023, a meeting was held between OPGRC and BSGR and MH SR on the activity. The 2023 deduction will be the subject of the 2023 Monitoring Report.

Measure: Implementing programmes focusing on counselling activities for families, including third-country nationals (TCN) with a view to healthy child development and the availability of early childhood intervention systems

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Indicators:

- number of programmes to promote awareness, health literacy and access to early intervention

State of fulfilment: *the measure will be omitted with the update*

Report:

The measure will be excluded from the ECG NAP in the next update as the activities listed in this measure are found in other measures where they are also counted.

Measure: Improving the knowledge and skills of health workers on the specifics of providing health care services to persons from the MRC

Promoter: Ministry of Health of the SR

Collaborating entities: educational establishments

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: State budget

Funding: Activities in this area are part of the tasks of the Ministry of Health SR, which professionally and methodologically manages the further education of health professionals.

Indicators:

- content analysis of the current areas of the minimum standard of specialisation studies, proposal and incorporation of new areas of education on the specifics of providing nursing care to a member of the MRC
- number of graduates of the upgraded specialisation study

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

As of 15 December 2022, the measure of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic from 1 December 2022 No. S20737-2022-OL amending the Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic of 17 September 2010 No. 12422/2010-OL is effective, which lays down minimum standards for specialization study programmes, minimum standards for certification study programmes and minimum standards for lifelong learning study programmes and their structure, as amended. Within the framework of the material, an updated minimum standard for a specialisation study programme in the specialisation field of Community Nursing Care, which is intended for health care workers in the health care profession of nursing, was also approved. Among other things, areas dealing with the specifics of providing nursing care to persons from

MRC have been incorporated into the minimum standard in question. Due to the fact that specialisation studies in the subject field last at least one year, we have not yet registered any graduates from the subject specialisation studies in this period.

Measure: Strengthening the professional qualifications of community health promotion workers

Promoter: HR

Deadline: 2022 – 2024

Source of funding: EU funds/SB

Financing through EU funds: EUR 459,000

Financing through SB: €81,000

Indicators:

- number of performed educational activities aimed at specific topics (target value in 2022 – 39; 2023 – 39, 2024 – 39)
- number educational areas for the health promotion assistants (target value in 2022 – 3; 2023 – 3, 2024 – 3)

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Due to the efficiency and time consuming nature of the training activities, a minimum of 2 area groups (NP HR 2B) of health promotion assistants participated in each training date, hence the expected target was not met. We counted the individual training dates in the indicator value, not the number of groups that participated in a given training date.

NP HR 2B: number of topics for the training of health promotion assistants – 9

Number of topics for the training of female health promotion assistants in hospitals – 2

number of topics for the training of health promotion assistant coordinators – 5

The total number of training sessions in 2022 was 29.

In the training of HPA, there were at least 2 territorial groups present in one session.

The training topics were as follows:

- First Aid Course (8 sessions for HPA/HPAC/HPAN – attended by: 251 HPAs, 23 HPACs and 8 HPANs);
- Improving health care for children in MRC (12 sessions for HPA/HPAC – attended by: 273 HPAs, 19 HPACs);
- Reproductive and sexual health (selective training – 2 sessions, attended by 50 HPAs);
- Harm reduction (selective training – 2 sessions, attended by: 45 HPAs) – violence against children, women and addiction prevention;
- Lactation counselling (3 sessions, 12 HPANs and HPA attended);
- Tuberculosis (selection training, attended by: 66 HPAs, 5 HPACs and 1 HPANs);
- Initial training (for new HPAs, HPANs, 1 session in 2022, attended by: 13 HPAs and 1 HPAC).

257 persons had at least 1 group supervision of 2 hours. The total number of training days in 2022 was 49.

NP HR 3B: number of topics for the training of health promotion assistants HPAN and HPAC – 3

The training topics were as follows:

- Prevention of drug addiction (1 session for 10 HPAs, HPAC and HPAN).
- Early care – new interventions in working with families (1 session for 10 HPAs, HPAC and HPAN);

- Development of health education programmes in the topic First Aid Course (1 session for 10 HPAs, HPAC and HPAN).

HPAs also received supervision for 2 hours in 6 sessions.

32 is the number of sessions in which each OS was trained. There were usually more than one Area Group on each session (in NP HR 2B).

The 2023 deduction will be ready by the deadline set for the AP Health deduction, i.e. by the end of February 2024.

Measure: Disease prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles for children

Promoter: Ministry of Health of the SR

Collaborating entities: © FOND prof. K. Matulay, n.f.

Deadline: 2023 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €54,900 incl. national co-financing

Indicators:

- functionally expanded universal preventive programme for general outpatient health care “Health of the Child”

State of fulfilment: *fulfilled continuously*

Report:

MH SR in cooperation with UNICEF and FOND prof. K. Matulaya n. f. within the framework of the universal preventive programme for general outpatient health care “*Health of the Child*” created:

1. The Ukrainian version of the S-PMV and M-CHAT electronic screenings²⁷
2. S-PMV screening questions with short videos to increase clarity and understanding by parents in both language versions.
3. Sending screening questionnaires completed by parents in Ukrainian language to paediatricians’ email addresses, provided in both languages.
4. A manual in Ukrainian language for the administration of screening methods, published in the framework of the standard procedure of MH SR “Standard of examinations of psychomotor development of children at the 2nd – 11th preventive check-up in primary care”²⁸
5. Possibility to write parents’ questions and get the answer also in Ukrainian language through the contact form in case of any confusion when using the web portal Health of the Child²⁹
6. Database for obtaining disaggregated data within the Health of the Child web portal.

The promotion of healthy lifestyles is implemented by the MH SR together with the PHA SR and all RPHAs in the Slovak Republic through the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Obesity for 2015 – 2025 (“NAP”), which aims to create a socially beneficial system that will lead to a reduction in the incidence and prevalence of overweight and obesity in the population and will eliminate the epidemic incidence of overweight and obesity. The secondary effect of the programme, in interaction with prevention programmes specifically targeting selected chronic non-communicable diseases, is to reduce the number of new cases of overweight and obesity-related diseases, as well as to reduce the prevalence and impact of other modifiable risk factors for these diseases, in line with the “Recommendations for health-promoting physical activity in all sectors and the WHO Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2012 – 2016”.

²⁷ www.zdraviedietata.sk

²⁸ <https://www.health.gov.sk/?Prilohy-primarnapediatria>.

²⁹ <https://www.zdraviedietata.sk/kontakt>

The main priorities of the NAP 2015 – 2025 include:

1. Promoting a healthy start in life – ensuring effective early access as soon as possible.
2. Promoting healthier school environments – establish health as a priority in schools.
3. Creating healthy choices – ensure that healthy food choices are widely available for children.
4. Restrict marketing and advertising to children and young people – limit children’s exposure to food/drink advertising high in fats, sugars and salt.
5. Family information – inform and educate parents of children about balanced diets and Good Food Choices.
6. Promote physical activity – increase children’s regular participation in sport or other physical activities.
7. Monitoring and evaluation – monitor and evaluate children’s/adults’ nutritional status and behaviour.

Measure: Implement programmes aimed at the prevention and elimination of violence against children and in the family and awareness-raising activities on violence against children

Promoter: MoLSAF SR

Collaborating entities: MH SR, MI SR MJ SR, MC SR

Deadline: 2023 – 2029

Source of funding: ESF+, EFRR

Financing through EU funds: EUR 13,300,000

Financing through SB: EUR 2,600,000

Indicators:

- number of assistance programmes for people experiencing violence

State of fulfilment: *the measure is fulfilled continuously*

Report:

Within the framework of the national project Support for the Protection of Children from Violence, the coordinators for the protection of children from violence (hereinafter “coordinator”) participate together with entities taking part in the field of protection of children from violence in preventive and awareness-raising activities aimed at raising awareness of violence against children in the territorial district of the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Office, where they are active.

Important cooperating entities in the field of prevention and awareness-raising are representatives of CCFs, the Slovak Police Force, municipal police, NGOs, civic associations, etc. The aim of the coordinator’s work in these activities is to strengthen and promote positive resources in the field of protection of children from violence in accordance with the various articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the implementation of preventive and awareness-raising activities (hereinafter “PARA”), the coordinator shall, in particular, have in mind the sensitisation of the professional and unprofessional public and the promotion of the implementation of activities in all relevant areas of the protection of children from violence.

Number of PARA co-organised by the coordinators in the period: 845

PARA beneficiaries: 4,414 participating entities involved

Number of PARA participants: 48,242 participants

Most frequent forms of PARA:

- lectures, talks, discussions, book readings
- leaflets, posters, information materials
- provision of information (e.g. about the National Helpline for Children at Risk MORE THAN NI(c)K, implementation of online late school, educational offer)
- art, literary, singing competitions, exhibitions

- webinars, podcasts, videos
- articles, reports in local media
- providing information to beneficiaries on the possibilities of PARA
- workshops.

The Professional Guideline of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic on symptoms and diagnostics of neglect, battering or misuse of a minor and on the procedure of healthcare providers in reporting suspected neglect, battering or misuse of a minor No. 07566-2012-IZS from 13 December 2012, effective from 1 January 2013, published in the Bulletin of the MH SR, Volume 6, Issue 39-60, was cancelled and replaced by the new Professional Guideline of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic on symptoms and diagnostics of neglect, battering or misuse of a minor and on the procedure of healthcare providers in reporting suspected neglect, battering or misuse of a minor No. S12320-2023-OZS from 30 January 2023, effective from 2 March 2023, published in the Bulletin of the MH SR, Volume 71, Issue 7-11

3.4 Effective access to healthy diet

Measure: Acting of specialists in physical activity and sport for pupils in schools and school facilities

Promoter: MERDaY

Collaborating entities: NSC

Deadline: 2021 – 2027

Source of funding: ESF+

Financing through EU funds: €10,000,000 for two years

Indicators:

- number of movement specialists in schools and educational establishments

State of fulfilment: *not being fulfilled*

Report:

The measure has been accepted by the European Commission in the framework of the EU Structural Funds Partnership Agreement for the current programming period (2021 – 2027). The project plan has been developed following the projects implemented by MERDaY SR (MODULES and “Trainers in School”). The financial allocation for this measure has not yet been approved, on the basis of which the project itself would be prepared.

4 INDICATORS, OBJECTIVES AND MONITORING

SR has set objectives that are closely related to the implementation of the European Child Guarantee arising from three target values of the AP EPSR that should be achieved by 2030 in the area of employment, skills and social protection in accordance with UN goals within sustainable development. These targets, together with the observed progress, are described below.

Within the partial objective to “*increase the extent of formal early childhood learning and care*” (*hereinafter “ECHEC”*) to facilitate the harmonisation of work and private life and promote greater participation of women on the labour market, a goal was set to increase the availability of services for children from 0 to 5 years by establishing at least 1,000 new places in child care facilities for children under 3 years. According to the SBM MIS data, the capacity of places at the end of 2021 was 3,789. According to reports 7-01 and 10-01 for 2021, the number of providers was 202 and the number of clients was 2,651. As of October 2022, there were 214 childcare facilities for children up to three years of age registered in the Social Services Register, with a capacity of 3,772 places. In 2023, the Institute for Labour and Family

Research carried out an analysis on the need to reconcile family and work life following the lack of capacity in childcare facilities for children up to three years of age. The analysis is in its final stage. The results of the analysis will be published in 2024.

As part of the partial objective to “*decrease the portion of young people in the age of 15 to 29*” who are not in education, employment or training (hereinafter “*NEET*”) a goal was set to approach the EU average, that is from 12.6% in 2019 to 9% in 2030. According to the latest Eurostat statistics, the proportion of young people aged 15 to 29 who are neither working nor participating in any form of education is 11.4%.

As part of the partial objective to “*decrease early school leaving and increase secondary school attendance*” a goal is set to achieve 5% until 2030. The share of early leavers from education and training (18 – 24 years) has fallen to 7.4% in 2022 according to Eurostat statistics and remains below the EU average.

Another objective is “*decreasing the number of children endangered by poverty or social exclusion*” by 21,000 until 2030, while the initial value in 2019 was 210,000 and the number of such children reached 183,000 in 2020. Based on data from the statistical survey on income and life conditions (EU SILC), 252,000 children under the age of 18 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2022. Compared to 2021, this represents an increase by 50,000 children. This increase follows the overall growth in the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Slovakia, which has been driven by the evolution of the socio-economic situation in the country. Further information is provided in chapter 2 of this document.

Monitoring of a set of indicators related to children in need is also ensured in the framework of the annual report on the social situation of the population, which is published on the website of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

5 FUNDING

One of the comments from the EC was that the ECG NAP lists the sources of funding for individual measures but without allocations. Therefore, in the report, the promoters of the measures also indicated, where possible, the funds allocated to individual measures. These allocations are listed in chapter 3 for the measures concerned. In many cases, however, these are only estimated financial allocations, as it is not possible to quantify the exact amounts for all measures.

There are many challenges in the NAP ECG that can be largely characterised as mainstream, i.e. not exclusively for one target group, e.g. children, people from the MRC, etc. They are aimed at all persons in a specified social or economic situation. Children are in many cases affected by the very support that is provided to their parents, but such support is not only for the parents of the children, but also for the children themselves. For these reasons, it is not possible to determine precisely the allocation earmarked for the implementation of the measures set out in the ECG NAP.

A revision of the Slovak OP is currently planned. In the framework of this revision, we plan to develop new measures that will respond to the lessons learned from the report of individual measures, as well as to the identified gaps in the protection of children from poverty and social exclusion and the data collected through child participation, together with the financial allocations for individual measures.

6 GOOD PRACTICE AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In relation to the EC comment, in this section we would like to explain the differences in NAP ECG regarding the provision of the child nutrition subsidy (hereafter “food subsidy”). The food subsidy is provided to ensure lunch or other meals during school hours. The NAP ECG sets out the legal position as it stood at the time of finalisation, i.e. it covers the period from August 2021 to April 2023. Thus, in 2021 (January – July), as is the case now, the food subsidy was/is provided across the board to all children in the last year of kindergarten and in primary school. The legislative conditions for the provision of the food subsidy, not only in terms of its amount but also in terms of the target group, changed again as from 1 May 2023, when the food subsidy started to be provided across the board to all children in their final year of kindergarten and primary school. The amount of the food subsidy per day and per child has also been adjusted from EUR 1.30 to

- EUR 1.40 per child in kindergarten,
- EUR 2.10 per child in primary school,
- EUR 2.30 per child in II. grade of primary school.

Comparison of legal situation in the provision of food subsidy:

- The current legal situation until 30 April 2023 was that the food subsidy was granted for each child if
 - he or she attended a kindergarten or primary school in which at least 50% of children are from households receiving material assistance in need,
 - he or she attended a nursery or primary school and lived in a household receiving material assistance in need or whose income is below the minimum subsistence level,
 - he or she attended the last year of kindergarten or primary school and lives in a household in which no member of the household has claimed the tax credit for that child (for children under 15),
- The current legal situation from 1 May 2023 was that the food subsidy is granted for each child if he or she attends
 - the last year of kindergarten, primary school (in this case, the parent or the natural person to whom the child is entrusted by a court decision must request in writing that the applicant submit an application for a food subsidy for this child),
 - kindergarten, except for a child attending the last year of kindergarten, and lives in a household receiving material assistance in need or whose income is no more than the minimum subsistence level,
 - kindergarten if at least 50% of children in the kindergarten, excluding the child attending the last year of kindergarten, are from households receiving material assistance in need.

Another change took place **as of 1. September 2023**: the target group has been extended to include children in secondary schools if they are attending the first year to the fourth year of an eight-year education programme in secondary school or the first year of a five-year education programme in secondary school after being admitted to secondary school education from the eighth year of primary school (in this case, the parent or natural person whose child is entrusted to their care by a court decision must ask the applicant in writing to submit an application for a food subsidy for that child).

For this new eligible group of secondary school children, the food subsidy is granted in the amount of EUR 2.30 for each day on which the child attends school and takes meals, i.e. the same amount as for children in upper secondary school.

Table 3 shows the evolution of the number of children benefiting from the food subsidy over the course of 2023. Due to the school holidays, the figures for July and August are zero for children in primary school.

Table 3 Number of children benefiting from the food subsidy

| | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total number of children | 56,786 | 55,838 | 56,450 | 56,636 | 441,058 | 442,662 | 64,642 | 64,628 | 484,356 | 489,244 | 490,822 | 491,494 |
| Number of children in kindergarten | 9,094 | 8,957 | 9,108 | 9,152 | 64,602 | 64,795 | 64,642 | 64,628 | 64,726 | 65,235 | 65,370 | 65,434 |
| Number of children in primary school | 47,692 | 46,881 | 47,342 | 47,484 | 376,456 | 377,867 | 0 | 0 | 419,630 | 424,009 | 425,452 | 426,060 |

Source: RSD MIS

In the resolution approving the NAP ECG approved by the Slovak Government, we committed to submit an update to the NAP ECG by 31 December 2024. A review of the OP Slovakia is currently being planned, in which we plan to develop new measures that will respond to the data collected through monitoring of individual measures, the identified gaps in the protection of children from poverty and social exclusion, as well as to the input received through children's participation. Following the evaluation of the results of the NAP ECG, a working group will meet, to which new entities, including the ombudsman, will be invited. The comments of the EC will also be taken into account in the development of new measures.

The National Coordination Centre on Violence against Children will continue to raise awareness of the issue through its communication channels, as well as through the development of campaigns, which will focus in particular on children in need. In raising awareness, we will use mainly digital channels, but also physical contact through awareness-raising at schools and child facilities, as well as through children's participation in the form of moderated discussions.

7 CONCLUSION

The NAP ECG in SR has been approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic through Resolution No. 156/2023 dated 12 April 2023, thus beginning the process of implementation. The implementation process has continued with the work of the working group, which meets several times a year and discusses the implementation of the actions arising from the NAP ECG, as well as future challenges, under the leadership of the National Coordinator. The members of the working group have also actively participated in the development of the ECG NAP report. Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 aims to prevent and combat poverty

and social exclusion by guaranteeing children in need access to a set of key services. The SR has set target values for the AP EPSR targets to be achieved by 2030. The observed progress against these targets is recorded in chapter 3 and chapter 4 of this document, where more information on the implementation of each measure is provided directly by the promoters of these measures.

In the context of the comments from the EC, financial allocations have also been assigned to each measure, but in many cases these are only estimated allocations, as it is not possible to quantify the exact amounts for all measures. At the same time, where possible, baselines as well as targets to be achieved have been assigned to individual measures.

As one of the horizontal principles of the NAP ECG is to ensure effective and free access to a safe environment, participation and non-discrimination of children, the NCS has historically involved children in the development of strategic material concerning them for the first time in the past year. In 2023, the NCC continued with the idea that if it wants to take some actions for children, it must be done with their participation. In 2023, we devoted the participation of children to the topics of the new Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence “A Violence-Free Childhood for All Children” and the European Child Guarantee. We will continue this initiative and will use the input from children in the preparation of new measures and challenges planned under the OP Slovakia.

In preparation of new measures, we will respond to the data collected through monitoring of individual measures as well as to identified gaps in the protection of children from poverty and social exclusion. At the same time, we will continue to raise awareness about child poverty and social exclusion.