

Mapping child protection systems in the EU (27)

Slovakia

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1. Legislative and regulatory framework and policies

1.1. Overview of normative and regulatory framework

Please provide an overview of the normative legal and regulatory framework of the national and sub-national child protection system. Include information on the scope of the child protection system, the specific needs it addresses, the human and financial resources allocated, and any relevant cultural, social, and historical factors. Please indicate the current priority areas in child protection.

There is no comprehensive child protection system in Slovakia that addresses this area in its complexity. There is no single legal instrument devoted to child protection and child rights. Child protection is addressed in two main areas.

Social protection of children and social guardianship, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family at the national level, but its performance is also delegated to the subnational level through various entities. The social protection and social curatorship authority (which is represented in Slovakia at the level of each district as part of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) focuses in particular on prevention in situations where the parents of a child are divorcing (the role of a conflict guardian) or in the case of solving other problems and conflicts in the family (including in the area of violence against children). On the basis of Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship¹, the child may also request assistance in protecting his/her rights from other entities, in particular from the municipality, school and school facilities, health care providers or accredited entities (e.g. NGOs).

The protection of children's rights in Slovakia is also ensured by independent human rights institutions. These focus mainly on violations of fundamental rights and citizens' rights before public authorities. The longest-established institution is office of the Public Defender of Rights. The Public Defender of Rights does not deal specifically with children's rights, but complaints in this area are an important part of his agenda (e.g. in the area of social protection of children, the right to education, etc.). New institutes created in 2015 on the basis of Law no. 176/2015 Coll.² are the Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the Office of the Commissioner for Children. Both of them receive suggestions regarding the protection of children's rights, including suggestions directly from children.

The protection of children's rights is also partially addressed in other areas. This is mainly in the field of education - the Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training³ focuses primarily on the aims, conditions and content of education. In the area of children's rights, perhaps the most important provisions are those relating to equality of access to education, inclusive education and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and, in particular, segregation or the prohibition of the use of all forms of corporal punishment in education and training.

¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

² Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and commissioner for people with disabilities, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 June 2015.

³ Slovakia, [Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní v znení neskorších predpisov), 22 May 2008.

1.2. Legal provisions in constitutional, civil, criminal, and administrative law related to children in need of protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
1.2.1. Does the constitution contain any provisions on children's rights and child protection?	x		<p>The second Title of The Constitution of the Slovak Republic⁴ (addresses generally with "Fundamental Rights and Freedoms"), but does not specify children as a special category of the population. The area of children's rights is partially mentioned in other articles of the Constitution:</p> <p>Article 19 (1) Everyone shall have the right to maintain and protect his or her dignity, honour, reputation and good name. (2) Everyone shall have the right to be free from unjustified interference in his or her private and family life. 3) Everyone shall have the right to be protected against unjustified collection, disclosure and other misuse of his or her personal data.</p> <p>Article 38 (1) Women, minors and disabled persons shall enjoy more extensive health protection at work and special working conditions. (2) Minors and disabled persons shall enjoy special protection in employment relations and special assistance in training.</p> <p>Article 41 of the Constitution was amended in 2017 by Law no. 161/2014 Coll.⁵, which added the definition of marriage as a "unique union between a man and a woman".</p> <p>Article 41 (1) Marriage is a unique union between a man and a woman. The Slovak Republic protects marriage in every way and promotes its good. Matrimony, parenthood, and family shall be protected by the law. Special protection of children and minors shall be guaranteed. (2) A pregnant woman shall be guaranteed a special treatment, protection in employment, and adequate working conditions.</p>

⁴ Slovakia, [The Constitution of the Slovak Republic No. 460/1992, as amended](#)⁴ (*Ústava Slovenskej republiky v znení neskorších predpisov*), 1 September 1992.

⁵ Slovakia, [Constitutional Law no. 161/2014, as amended](#), (*Ústavný zákon č. 161/2014 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa Ústava Slovenskej republiky v znení neskorších predpisov*), 4 June 2014.

		<p>(3) Equal rights shall be guaranteed to children born both in a legitimate matrimony and those born out of lawful wedlock.</p> <p>(4) Childcare shall be the right of parents; children shall have the right to parental upbringing and care. The rights of parents may be limited and minor children may be separated from their parents against the parents' will only by a court decision, based on the law.</p> <p>(5) Parents taking care of their children shall have the right to assistance provided by the State.</p> <p>Article 42</p> <p>(1) Everyone shall have the right to education. School attendance is compulsory. A law shall lay down the length of attendance.</p> <p>(2) Citizens shall have the right to free education at elementary and secondary schools and depending on the abilities of the individual and the potential of the society also at universities.</p>
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1.2.2. Is there a single legal instrument devoted to child protection and child rights, e.g. a Children's Act?		x	A significant part of the protection of children's rights is included Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ⁶ .
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1.2.3. Please provide an inventory of key child protection related legislation, including hyperlinks, date of adoption and the areas covered. Please include civil, criminal, and administrative legislation covering different areas of child protection (please add rows, as needed).

Legislation	Date passed	Child protection areas covered
The Constitution of the Slovak Republic ⁷	1 September 1992	The constitution generally anchors fundamental rights and freedoms.
Law no. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination (Antidiscrimination Act) ⁸	20 May 2004	The law stipulates the principles of equal treatment and outlines the means of legal protection in case of these principles' violation.
Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ⁹	25 May 2005	<p>The Law focuses on several areas of social protection of children's rights and contains basic definitions, objectives and competences of social protection bodies. It deals in more detail with the prevention of crisis situations in families and the reduction and elimination of negative influences on children, the field of social guardianship and the procedures of State bodies ensuring the protection of children's rights in the field of guardianship, guardianship and foster care for children, the protection of the life, health and psychological and physical development of the child, including the protection of children subjected to abuse, abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The law also defines the competence of the individual stakeholders of social protection - the state, local governments and the system of accreditation of entities for the provision of services in this area (e.g. NGOs).</p>

⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

⁷ Slovakia, [The Constitution of the Slovak Republic no. 460/1992, as amended](#)⁷ (Ústava Slovenskej republiky v znení neskorších predpisov), 1 September 1992.

⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination \(Antidiscrimination Act\), as amended](#) (Zákon 365/2004 o rovnakom zaobchádzaní v niektorých oblastiach a o ochrane pred diskrimináciou v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 May 2004.

⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

		<p>The law was significantly amended in 2018 by Law no. 61/2018 Coll.¹⁰</p> <p>The amendment addresses three main areas of changes - the area of protection of children's rights, foster family care and the area of execution of procedures in social protection and social curatorship institutions, including resocialisation and the related change in the financing of execution.</p> <p>It creates a new type of institution/facilities, Centres for Children and Families, which will replace the existing foster homes, crisis and re-socialisation centres. The centres should function as a prevention tool to promote and develop parenting skills and to help in the family environment in order to prevent children from being removed from their families.</p>
Law no. 36/2005 Coll. on family ¹¹	11 February 2005	<p>Law no. 36/2005 Coll. is most important legal regulation for family law regulating establishment and dissolution of marriages (First part: Beginning of marriage, Circumstances precluding establishment of marriage, Relations between spouses, End of marriage, Divorce), relations between parents, children and other members of family children (Second part: Rights and obligations of parents, Other rights and obligations of parents and children and relations inside the family, Foster care, Trusteeship and guardianship) and determination of parenthood and adoption.</p> <p>In 2015, the Law was amended by Law no. 175/2015 Coll.¹² The amendment brought two major changes in terms of the protection of children's rights.</p> <p>In Article 3 "Society recognises that a stable family environment consisting of the child's father and mother is most suitable for the child's full and harmonious development."</p> <p>In Article 5 "The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all matters affecting him or her. In identifying and assessing the best interests of the child, the following shall in particular be considered: (a) the level of care of the child,</p>

¹⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 61/2018 Coll., as amended](#) (Zákon č. 61/2018, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele), 6 February 2018.

¹¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 11 February 2005.

¹² Slovakia, [Law no. 175/2015 Coll., as amended](#) (Zákon č. 175/2015, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 36/3005 Z.z. o rodine), 26 June 2015.

		<p>(b) the safety of the child, as well as the safety and stability of the environment in which the child lives,</p> <p>(c) the protection of the child's dignity and mental, physical and emotional development,</p> <p>(d) circumstances relating to the child's state of health or disability,</p> <p>(e) threats to the child's development by interference with his or her dignity and threats to the child's development by interference with the mental, physical and emotional integrity of a person close to the child,</p> <p>(f) the conditions for the preservation of the child's identity and the development of the child's abilities and potential,</p> <p>(g) the child's opinion and his or her possible exposure to conflicts of loyalty and consequent feelings of guilt,</p> <p>(h) the conditions for the formation and development of relational ties with both parents, siblings and other close persons,</p> <p>(i) the use of possible means to preserve the child's family environment when interference with parental rights and obligations is being considered.</p>
<p>Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training¹³</p>	<p>22 May 2008</p>	<p>The law focuses primarily on principles, goals, conditions, scope, content, forms and organisation of upbringing and education at schools and educational establishments. As far as child protection goes, particularly important are the provisions that spell out the ban on discrimination and segregation of children as well as the ban on all forms of corporal punishment and sanctions in the field of upbringing and education.</p> <p>In 2018, the Law was amended by Law no. 415/2022 Coll.¹⁴.</p> <p>In particular, the introduction of the concept of inclusive education is important in the area of children's rights.</p> <p>Article 1, §2:</p> <p>(ai) Inclusive education is the joint education and training of children, pupils, students or participants in education and training, carried out on the basis of equality of opportunity and respect for their educational needs and individual characteristics, and promoting their active participation in the</p>

¹³ Slovakia, [Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní v znení neskorších predpisov), 22 May 2008.

¹⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 415/2022 Coll.](#) (Zákon 415/2021 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní), 20 October 2021.

		educational activities of the school or school establishment.
<p>Law no. 160/2015 Coll. Code of civil procedure¹⁵</p> <p>Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure¹⁶</p>	1 July 2016	<p>Since 2016, two new procedural codes entered into force: the Code of civil procedure, the Code of civil non-contentious procedure. The new codes replaced the Civil Procedure Code (Law no. 99/1963) and brought a number of changes to judicial practice. The Code of civil procedure is based on the fact that there is a group of relationships in which a dispute over the law is not presumed in principle. In these legal matters, state intervention is necessary to balance, seek, maintain and protect the equilibrium. We are talking, for example, about inheritance proceedings, proceedings concerning legal capacity, or proceedings concerning the custody of a minor.</p> <p>In 2022, an important change in legislation was passed that is aimed at improving the protection of the best interests of minor children in situations where their parents are divorcing or separating.</p> <p>The changes introduced by the Ministry of Justice in the amendment to the Code of non-contentious procedure are mainly based on existing problems in family law proceedings - delays in proceedings, lack of specialization of judges in family law cases, or even low use of newer, multidisciplinary approaches.</p>
Law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code ¹⁷	20 May 2005	<p>The Criminal Code defines a child as a person younger than 18, provided it did not come of age earlier (Article 127 Paragraph 1). Article 132 Paragraph 3 introduces the term of “child pornography”. According to Article 139 Paragraph 1 letter b), a child is considered a protected person. The Criminal Code also defines the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings (Article 179) and specifically trafficking in children (Articles 180 and 181) as well as related crimes with respect to children such as sexual abuse (Articles 201 and 202), maltreatment of close or entrusted person (Article 208), kidnapping (Articles 209 and 210), jeopardising moral education of the minors (Article 211), procuring (Article 367), production (Article 368), dissemination (Article 369) and reception (Article</p>

¹⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 160/2015 Coll. Code of civil procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 160/2015 Z.z. Civilný sporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

¹⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

¹⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 300/2005 Z.z. Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 May 2005.

		<p>370) of child pornography, etc., that are punished in compliance with specified provisions of the law.</p> <p>In 2021, the Law was amended by Law no. 236/2021 Coll..¹⁸ The amendment to the Law introduces the concept of electronic harassment.</p> <p>"§ 360b Dangerous electronic harassment</p> <p>(1) Whoever intentionally, by means of an electronic communication service, computer system or computer network, substantially impairs the quality of life of another by</p> <p>(a) humiliates, intimidates, wrongfully acts on behalf of or otherwise harasses him or her for a prolonged period of time; or</p> <p>(b) unlawfully discloses or makes available to a third party a visual, audio or visual-audio recording of his or her speech of a personal nature, obtained with his or her consent, which is capable of materially impairing his or her reputation or otherwise causing him or her serious injury to his or her rights, shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of up to three years.</p> <p>(2) The offender shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of one to four years if he commits an act referred to in paragraph (1)</p> <p>(a) on a protected person, or</p> <p>(b) for a special motive.</p>
Law no. 274/2017 Coll. on victims of crime ¹⁹	12 October 2017	The law regulates the rights, protection and support of victims of crime and the relations between the state and entities providing assistance to victims and financial compensation to victims of crime. The Act defines a child as a "particularly vulnerable victim". At the same time, Art. 1, §3 defines the "Basic Principles for the Protection and Support of Children".
Law No. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and the commissioner for persons with disabilities ²⁰	25 June 2015	<p>The Law establishes two independent human rights institutes, which are also responsible for the protection of children's rights.</p> <p>The Law regulates the scope, status, election, conditions of office and termination of office of the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. It also establishes the Office</p>

¹⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 236/2021 Coll., as amended](#) (Zákon č. 236/2021 Z.z., ktorým sa dopĺňa zákon č. 300/2005 Z.z. Trestný zákon), 27 May 2021.

¹⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 274/2017 on victims of crime, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 274/2017 Z.z. o obetiach trestných činov v znení neskorších predpisov), 12 October 2017.

²⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and the commissioner for persons with disabilities, as amended](#) (Zákon 176/2005 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 June 2015.

		<p>of the Commissioner for Children and the Office of the Disability Commissioner. According to §4 of the Law:</p> <p>(1) Commissioner for Children:</p> <p>a) upon request or on own initiative, examines compliance with rights of a child,</p> <p>b) monitors compliance with rights of a child, in particular by independent investigation on settlement of liabilities resulting from international treaties, by which the Slovak Republic is bound and by researches and surveys aimed at monitoring the situation and developments in the area of children's rights,</p> <p>c) enforces children's interests in the society, cooperates with children either directly or through organisations involved in children's rights protection, consults with children regarding their matters and examines children's opinions and encourages their interest in public matters,</p> <p>d) encourages improving public awareness of children's rights,</p> <p>e) cooperates with foreign and international entities involved in exercise of children's rights or protection of children's rights.</p>
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1.3. Policy framework

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>1.3.1. Is there a specific national or sub-national policy framework and/or a national or sub-national strategy on child rights and/or child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, does it require an integrated approach to child protection?</p>		x	<p>Currently, Slovakia does not have a comprehensive national strategy in place that focuses on the protection of children's rights.</p> <p>The National action plan for children 2013-2017²¹ was valid until 2017. In 2017, in responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, a process of preparation of the new National action plan for children²² was initiated. However, the process was terminated in 2019 with the opinion of the Preparatory Committee, which proposed to fulfil the objectives of the Action Plan through the national strategy Vision and strategy for</p>

²¹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR) (2013), National action plan for children for years 2013 - 2017 ([Národný akčný plán pre deti na roky 2013-2017](#)).

²² More information about the process of preparation of the new Action plan for children available at he the [website](#) of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovak Republic.

		<p>the development of Slovakia until 2030²³. However, this strategy deals with the protection of children's rights only very marginally. It is mainly focused on the field of education.</p> <p>Based on the interview²⁴, we confirmed the information that no material that could be described as a national child strategy in terms of focus and scope is currently being prepared. There were no follow-up processes to the activities carried out by the Preparatory Committee in 2019. Considering that the Committee for Children and Youth coordinates activities in this area across ministries, we can rule out the possibility that such material is being developed under the responsibility of a ministry other than the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which is most responsible for this agenda.</p> <p>In 2014, the National strategy on the protection of children against violence was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic²⁵. Strategy identifies weak spots and risks of policies aimed at protecting children against violence. The document focuses on five basic strategic goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create the National Coordination Framework to tackle violence against children 2. Ensure systematic monitoring and evaluation of systems aimed at protecting children against violence 3. Prevent institutional and systemic violation of the rights of the child 4. Ensure professionalism and quality of policy implementation 5. Raise general awareness of the issue of violence against children. <p>Initially, the implementation of the strategic objectives of the strategy was timed to 2017, but the</p>
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²³ Slovakia, Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo investícií, regionálneho rozvoja a informatizácie Slovenskej republiky*) (2020), Vision and strategy of the development of Slovakia until 2030 ([Vízia a stratégia rozvoja Slovenska do roku 2030 – dlhodobá stratégia udržateľného rozvoja Slovenskej republiky – Slovensko 2030](#)).

²⁴ Information provided by the Secretary of the Committee for Children and Youth of the Slovak Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via interview on 14 April 2023.

²⁵ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), National strategy on the protection of children against violence ([Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím](#)), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

			strategy was updated in 2017 and 2019. Some targets are set to be met by the end of 2022.
1.3.2. Are there national or sub-national plans for action or policies targeting specific groups of children or particular areas, e.g. children with disabilities, children in care?	x		<p>Children victims of abuse, exploitation or neglect: National strategy on the protection of children against violence²⁶</p> <p>Action plan to address bullying in schools and school facilities 2022 - 2023²⁷</p> <p>Children with disabilities: National program on the development of living conditions for persons with disabilities for 2021 – 2030²⁸</p> <p>Strategy on inclusive approach in education²⁹</p> <p>Children in alternative care: National strategy for deinstitutionalising of the social services and alternative care in the Slovak Republic³⁰</p> <p>Children at risk of living in poverty and social exclusion: National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030³¹</p>
1.3.3. Are there national or sub-national child protection policies regarding children in the digital space and when using online media?	x		In 2019, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family adopted the National strategy for the protection of children in the digital space and the

²⁶ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), National strategy on the protection of children against violence ([Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím](#)), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

²⁷ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky*) (2021), Action plan to address bullying in schools and school facilities 2022 – 2023 ([Akčný plán riešenia šikanovania v školách a školských zariadeniach na roky 2022 – 2023](#)).

²⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2014), National program on the development of living conditions for persons with disabilities for 2021 – 2030 ([Národný program rozvoja životných podmienok osôb so zdravotným postihnutím na roky 2021 – 2030](#)).

²⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky*) (2021), Strategy on inclusive approach in education ([Stratégia inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní](#)).

³⁰ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2021), National strategy for deinstitutionalising of the social services and alternative care in the Slovak Republic ([Národná stratégia deinštitucionalizácie sociálnych služieb a náhradnej starostlivosti](#)).

³¹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2022), National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 ([Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030](#)).

		<p>Action plan for the national strategy for 2020-2021³²</p> <p>The document focuses on three main areas - prevention, intervention and aftercare.</p> <p>In the area of prevention, the document sets as objectives to promote effective prevention in formal and non-formal education of students, to promote digital services and content that help to create a more trustworthy, safer and responsible digital space for children, and to support the education of parents and helping professions (e.g. pedagogical employees, youth workers).</p> <p>In the area of intervention, the document sets as an goal to prepare changes in legislation, executive and jurisdictional frameworks aimed at higher success rates in dealing with cases of child endangerment in the digital space, to create a system of counselling and support services to help children and parents, and to increase the success rate of searches for the removal of web content containing or disseminating child pornography and other dangerous content on the territory of the Slovak Republic and outside the territory of the Slovak Republic.</p> <p>In the area of aftercare, the goals were set in particular to ensure effective and efficient aftercare for victims and affected subjects in the framework of the protection of children in the digital space and to ensure adequate re-education for perpetrators of offenses involving the abuse of children in the digital space.</p> <p>In the context of a more detailed overview of threats to children in digital space, the material specifies sexual threats, which include child pornography, prostitution, sexting, sexual violence, grooming, sexual harassment, abuse, sexual coercion, unwanted sexual contacts, erotic phone or video calls, webcam trolling. However, the strategy itself does not define specific actions in this area. The area of sexual abuse in digital space is dealt with more specifically in the Intervention section. Under Specific Objective 2.1, the material declares in general terms the target to increasing the effectiveness and success of dealing with cases of child endangerment in digital space, particularly in the legislative, executive and jurisdictional spheres. However, the material does not provide specific steps.</p>
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³² Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2019), National strategy for the protection of children in the digital space and the Action plan for the national strategy for 2020-2021 ([Národná koncepcia ochrany detí v digitálnom priestore a Akčný plán na roky 2020 – 2021](#)).

			<p>The material also describes the poor situation in the area of protection of children from dangerous behaviour in the online space, including sexual abuse, where none of the functional platforms for reporting this type of behaviour and content (Stopline.sk, Zodpovedne.sk or online helplines such as IPcko or LDI) have a permanent additional mechanism created by the state to ensure their continuity and sustainability.</p> <p>More concrete steps for implementation are described in the Action Plan, which is part of the approved material. Slovakia has set as Task 3. the inclusion of the Slovak Republic in the INHOPE network. Slovakia officially, through the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, initiated its entry into this network in May 2022. At the same time, Slovakia set the goal of creating a National Awareness Centre within the ISAFE network by the end of 2022 - but this task has not been fulfilled and no such centre has been established in Slovakia.</p>
<p>1.3.4. Is there a (regular) child participation policy and/or mechanism and/or body related to child rights and/or other child-related governance at national or sub-national level to ensure children have a (direct) voice in or can indirectly influence policy making, e.g. children’s rights forum, child surveys, child participation platform? If <u>yes</u>, are appropriate child protection and safety measures in place?</p>		x	<p>At the local level, several municipalities have a system of youth parliaments/youth town parliaments. This approach has long been supported at national level by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, which, through the directly managed organisation NIVAM - National Institute for Education and Youth³³, carries out information and training activities in this area.</p> <p>In 2022, the Office of the Commissioner for Children launched an initiative to create a child participation platform - the Children and Youth Parliament. It is made up of 26 children and young people representing 20 NGOs, initiatives and school parliaments. No detailed information on the activities of this body is published. In 2023, the Office carried out a representative survey to examine the views of Slovak children. The Office plans to repeat this research on a regular basis.³⁴</p>

1.4. Particular groups of children: information on legislative and policy developments (if any) related to their protection

Please report on any significant developments in the last five years and comment briefly.

³³ More information available at the [website](#) of NIVAM.

³⁴ More information available at the [website](#) of Office of Commissioner for Children.

When answering you should consider all relevant civil, criminal, and administrative legislation, including regulations, ordinances, codes, ministerial decisions. On policy developments please include any relevant action plan, protocol, procedure, or guidance issued by competent authorities. Please always specify how children’s participation in any respective judicial (civil, criminal, and administrative) proceedings are regulated and supported (e.g. procedural safeguards to be in place, ensuring children’s right to be heard).

1.4.1. Children victims of abuse, exploitation, or neglect

In the areas of online and offline sexual abuse, pornography, exploitation and child labour, trafficking; domestic violence and gender-based violence including harmful practices, such as genital mutilation, child/forced marriage, honour-related violence; abuse or discrimination; ICT and cyber bullying; school bullying; neglect and children at risk of abuse and neglect, including street children (begging or selling things)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The National strategy on the protection of children against violence is a key public policy document on the protection of children from violence³⁵. The document was created in 2014 but has been regularly updated, most recently in 2017 and 2019. The implementation of the Strategy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which has created the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children.</p> <p>In 2020, the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children submitted a report on its activities, Information on the Implementation of the Strategic Objectives of the National strategy for the protection of children from violence³⁶. In recent years, the NCC has implemented a number of important activities. Within the framework of the National Project on Supporting Child Protection from Violence³⁷, a regional system of coordinators of child protection from violence was established, aimed at supporting</p>	<p>In 2018, Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship⁴³ was significantly amended. The amendment addresses three main areas of changes, namely the area of protection of children's rights, foster family care and the area of implementation of actions in institutions of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, including re-socialisation and the related change in the financing of implementation.</p> <p>The amendment establishes a new type of facility, "Centres for Children and Families", replacing the existing children's homes, crisis and re-socialisation centres. The Centres should function as a prevention tool to promote and develop parenting skills and to help in the family environment in order to prevent children from being removed from their families.</p> <p>Law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code⁴⁴. The 2017 amendment regulates the rights, protection and support of victims of crime and the relations</p>

³⁵ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), National strategy on the protection of children against violence ([Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím](#)), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

³⁶ Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (*Národné koordinačné stredisko na riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch*) (2017), Implementation of the Strategic Objectives of the National strategy for the protection of children from violence ([Informácia o naplňaní cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pre násilím](#)).

³⁷ More information about National Project on Supporting Child Protection from Violence available at [website](#) of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children.

⁴³ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

⁴⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, as amended](#), (*Zákon 300/2005 Z.z. Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov*), 20 May 2005.

and developing communication between entities dealing with the issue of child protection from violence (social protection and social curatorship authorities, Police services, prosecutor's office, schools and educational institutions, health care providers, accredited entities - NGO's, municipalities, courts, etc.). The NCC has also implemented more than 100 multidisciplinary educational activities. In 2019, a pilot educational programme Working with perpetrators of (sexual) violence against children was also implemented.

In 2019, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family adopted the National strategy for the protection of children in the digital space and the Action plan for the National strategy for 2020-2021³⁸. The document focuses on three main areas - prevention, intervention and aftercare.

In the area of bullying, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has developed the Action plan to address bullying in schools and school Facilities 2022 - 2023³⁹. The focus of the Action Plan is to increase the expertise of pedagogical and professional staff working in the education sector in approaching bullying, to strengthen cooperation with state administration bodies in order to ensure mutual awareness and effectiveness of cooperation, to develop measures to eliminate future risks and to monitor and strengthen information and awareness of bullying. The area of prevention of bullying and cyberbullying is also addressed in the organizational guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Science for the school year - School Year Guide 2022/2023⁴⁰. Department of Education has also regulated processes for reporting bullying, where the school

between the state and entities providing assistance to victims and financial compensation for victims of crime. The Law defines a child as a "particularly vulnerable victim". At the same time, Art. 1, §3 defines the "Basic Principles for the Protection and Support of Children".

Amendment in 2021 by Law no. 236/2021 Coll.⁴⁵ introduces the concept of electronic harassment. In the field of cyberbullying, the amendment of the Criminal Code of 2021 is a significant change, which through Law no. 236/2021 Coll. introduces the concept of electronic harassment and defines what is considered dangerous electronic harassment.

³⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2019), National strategy for the protection of children in the digital space and the Action plan for the national strategy for 2020-2021 ([Národná koncepcia ochrany detí v digitálnom priestore a Akčný plán na roky 2020 – 2021](#)).

³⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky*) (2021), Action plan to address bullying in schools and school Facilities 2022 - 2023 ([Akčný plán riešenia šikanovania v školách a školských zariadeniach na roky 2022 – 2023](#)).

⁴⁰ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky*) (2021), School Year Guide 2022/2023 ([Sprievodca školským rokom 2022/2023](#)).

⁴⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 236/2021 Coll., as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 236/2021 Z.z., ktorým sa dopĺňa zákon č. 300/2005 Z.z. Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov*), 27 May 2021.

<p>principal is required to report incidents of bullying to law enforcement.⁴¹</p> <p>In the area of human trafficking, the Information Centre for Combating Human Trafficking and Crime Prevention of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic developed the National Program for Combating Human Trafficking for 2019 - 2023⁴².</p>	
<p>1.4.2. Children with disabilities</p> <p>Please include children with learning difficulties, autism, and mental health impairments / psycho-social disabilities, severe chronic illnesses that prevent them e.g. from attending onsite school or sports activities</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>In 2021, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family Affairs prepared National Program on the Development of Living Conditions for Persons with Disabilities for 2021 – 2030⁴⁶. The document builds on previous national programmes and very broadly defines the objectives of individual ministries and public institutions in this area. Section 4.6 of the document is specifically addressed children with disabilities and sets out a specific objective aimed at promoting independent living for children with disabilities in institutional care.</p> <p>Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 425⁴⁷ transformed the Committee for Persons with Disabilities into the Council of the</p>	<p>Compensation for the social consequences of severe disability through the provision of financial allowances is legislatively anchored in Law No. 447/2008 on the Provision of Financial Allowance to Compensate Disability⁵⁰. The law does not set a lower age limit for a child to be assessed as severely disabled. The only age restriction is for the Attendance Allowance, which can be claimed up to the child's 6th birthday.</p> <p>The area of inclusive education has been regulated by legislation through the amendment of the Law No. 245/2008 on Education and Training⁵¹ via Law 415/2022⁵². . In the area of inclusion of children</p>

⁴¹ Slovakia, [Directive no. 36/2018 on the prevention and treatment of bullying of children and pupils in schools and school establishments](#) (Smernica č. 36/2018 k prevencii a riešeniu šikanovania detí a žiakov v školách a školských zariadeniach), 1 September 2018.

⁴² Slovakia, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak republic (*Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky*) (2018), National Program for Combating Human Trafficking for 2019 - 2023 ([Národný program boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi na roky 2019 – 2023](#))

⁴⁶ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2014), [Národný program rozvoja životných podmienok osôb so zdravotným postihnutím na roky 2021 – 2030](#), 2014.

⁴⁷ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak republic (*Vláda Slovenskej republiky*) (2022), [Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 425 k návrhu transformácie Výboru pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím na Radu vlády SR pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím](#), 28 June 2022.

⁵⁰ Slovakia, [Law No. 447/2008 on the provision of financial allowance to compensate disability](#) (Zákon č. 447/2008 Z.z. o peňažných príspevkoch na kompenzáciu ťažkého zdravotného postihnutia), 29 October 2008.

⁵¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 22 May 2008.

⁵² Slovakia, [Law no. 415/2022 Coll. that amends the law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training, as amended](#) (Zákon 415/2021 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní), 20 October 2021.

Government of the Slovak Republic for Persons with Disabilities. This platform has therefore obtained a significantly stronger position because, as it is stated in its Statute, the Council has become a permanent expert, advisory, coordinating, consultative and initiating body of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the rights of persons with disabilities. The membership of the Council consists of two separate chambers. The first chamber consists of members of the Council from the state administration, the second chamber consists of members of the Council from non-governmental organisations.

At its meeting on 8 December 2021, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Strategy on inclusive approach in education⁴⁸ submitted by the Ministry of Education. This Strategy has been developed based on the Programme of the Government of the Slovak Republic 2021 – 2024: Area of Equal Opportunities in Education. The long-term goal is to create an environment conducive to inclusive education, motivating schools to become inclusive institutions. In this context, the draft document outlines the basic philosophy of a pro-inclusive education system, aiming at providing education to all children (pupils and students without distinction), respecting the uniqueness and diversity of each individual and enabling him/her to fulfil his/her potential to the fullest extent. The timeframe of the document is until 2030, with some partial changes already reflected in the amendment of the School Act in 2022.

In 2015, the institution of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities was established by law. The status, scope of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, the conditions for exercising this function and the establishment of the Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities are regulated by Law No. 176/2015 on the

with learning difficulties, the introduction of the term "inclusive education" is particularly important. Article 1, §2

(ai) inclusive education is the joint education and training of children, pupils, students or participants in education and training, carried out on the basis of equality of opportunity and respect for their educational needs and individual characteristics, and promoting their active participation in the educational activities of the school or educational institution.

Law No. 176/2015 on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for People with Disabilities⁵³ establishes an independent human rights institute, also responsible for the protection of the rights of children with disabilities. The Act regulates the scope, status, election, conditions of office and termination of office of the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. It also establishes the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Office of the Disability Commissioner.

⁴⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky*) (2021), *Stratégia inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní*, 2021

⁵³ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for People with Disabilities](#) (*Zákon 176/2005 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), 25 June 2015.

<p>Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for People with Disabilities⁴⁹, which entered into force on 1 September 2015. In particular, this Act created institutional arrangements for the public protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Commissioner is involved in the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, promoting and enforcing the rights granted to persons with disabilities by international treaties to which the Slovak Republic is bound (the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol adopted by the UN General Assembly).</p>	
<p>1.4.3. Children in the context of migration</p> <p>Specific thematic areas: unaccompanied-separated children from third countries and within the EU; children in undocumented – irregular migrant families; asylum seeking children; refugee children</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>The National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 foresees the establishment of children's groups for children from Ukraine at the age of entry to compulsory pre-primary education (i.e., 5 years) in 2023. This form of care is provided in a small group of children, with a maximum of four children. It is provided in a home environment (or other environment close to the home environment in terms of space and equipment). In the children's group, the usual childcare task and interest activities are provided. Care in a playgroup does not include, and therefore does not replace, the provision of specialist activities such as education and training provided in the context of childcare in kindergartens. The measure is to be financed by the Human Resources Operational Programme CARE.⁵⁴ In 2022, the Slovak government adopted the so-called Contingency plan in case of an increase in</p>	<p>In May 2022, Law no. 199/2022 on certain measures in the social sphere in connection with the situation in Ukraine was adopted, which introduced into the Social Services Act no. 448/2008 Coll. the children's group as one of the forms of childcare. It also specifies the amount of the public childcare allowance per child in a children's group of EUR 160/month.⁵⁶</p> <p>In the context of the war in Ukraine, the Asylum Act was also amended to regulate the acquisition of temporary protection status for children born to a foreigner seeking or holding temporary protection. Such a child becomes an applicant for temporary protection and the procedure for granting the</p>

⁴⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for People with Disabilities](#) (Zákon 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 25 June 2015.

⁵⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

⁵⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 199/2022 Coll. on certain social measures in connection with the situation in Ukraine as amended](#) (Zákon č. 199/2022 Z.z. o niektorých opatreniach v sociálnej oblasti v súvislosti so situáciou na Ukrajine), Art. IV, 7 June 2022.

incoming refugees from Ukraine. The plan foresees the provision of care to mothers with children in the premises of border crossings in the so-called Points of First Contact. The Contingency plan also addresses the issue of unaccompanied minors from Ukraine. It defines them as children at high risk. Identification of unaccompanied minors from Ukraine is the responsibility of border and foreign police officers. The plan then defines the next procedure, which is in line with the existing legislation in the field of care for unaccompanied minors - handing the child over to the care of a socio-legal protection authority, which will subsequently submit a petition to the court for a decision on an urgent measure, on the basis of which the child will be placed in a centre for children and family.⁵⁵ The Contingency plan is only concerned with humanitarian response to increased numbers of refugees from Ukraine, but not with their further integration. It therefore does not address access of children from Ukraine to services such as education, health care or housing.

status starts with his/her birth. However, the parent must apply for the status for the child.⁵⁷

In 2017, an amendment to the Aliens Residence Act was adopted, making psychological and social services and counselling and crisis intervention available to families with children in detention.⁵⁸

1.4.4. Children in alternative care

Specific thematic areas: residential – institutional care; foster care; adoption (including international adoption)

Policy developments

In 2021, the National Strategy for the deinstitutionalisation of the social services and foster care system was adopted. This strategy sets out the

Legislative developments

Since 2017, the most important legislative change was the adoption of an amendment to the Social Protection Act in 2018⁶¹, which

⁵⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo vnútra SR*) (2022), [Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for responding to the emergency situation in connection with the mass influx of people from Ukraine to the territory of the Slovak Republic caused by the escalation of the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine for the period October 2022 - March 2023](#) (Kontingenčný plán Slovenskej republiky pre riešenie mimoriadnej situácie v súvislosti s hromadným príchodom obyvateľov Ukrajiny na územie Slovenskej republiky spôsobeným eskaláciou ozbrojeného konfliktu na území Ukrajiny pre obdobie október 2022 – marec 2023), UV-41872/2022, Government Resolution No. 665/2022.

⁵⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 55/2022 Coll. on certain measures in connection with the situation in Ukraine as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 55/2022 Z.z. o niektorých opatreniach v súvislosti so situáciou na Ukrajine*), Art. II(8), 26 February 2022.

⁵⁸ Slovakia, [Law No. 82/2017 Coll. amending Law No. 404/2011 Coll. on the residence of foreigners as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 82/2017 Z.z. ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 404/2011 Z.z. o pobyte cudzincov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony*), Art. I(106), 1 May 2017.

⁶¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 61/2018 Coll. amending law no. 305/2005 Coll. and amending certain acts](#) (*Zákon č. 61/2018 Z. z. ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa z. č. 305/2005 Z. z. a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony*), 6 February 2018.

objectives of the transition from institutionalised to community-based forms of service provision and foster care. The long-term goals are: the availability of services at the community level, synergy of provision of different types of services, and the termination of the operation of large-capacity facilities.⁵⁹

The Concept for Ensuring the Execution of Court Decisions - Deinstitutionalisation Plan was adopted in 2020. The aim of the concept is to reduce the number of children in residential institutions on the basis of a court decision on institutional care - this aim is to be met by several tasks, such as providing quality services and support to families in their natural environment, improving the quality of the assessment of the situation of families and determining the level of risk to the child, support for foster care, training of staff and improvement of staffing, or cooperation between different actors in the field of institutional care⁶⁰.

transformed the former children's homes into so-called "centres for children and families", which, according to the amendment, can also begin to provide more intensive ambulatory and terrain social services.

In addition to this amendment, Decree 103/2018⁶² was also adopted, which sets out in great detail the performance of measures in institutions, while also introducing a system for assessing the so-called "child in a risk rate". The level of risk is re-evaluated on the basis of an assessment of the situation of the child, his/her family and the possibilities of the family, relatives and other persons to deal with the child's situation.

In 2022, an amendment to the Foster Care Allowances⁶³ Law was passed. The aim of the amendment is to increase interest in foster care, both for larger sibling groups and for children with disabilities, by adjusting the recurrent allowances to foster parents and supporting foster families.

In 2022, Law 376/2022⁶⁴ on professional parents was adopted. This Act regulates the legal relations in connection with the performance of the work of a professional foster parent, the registration of individuals interested in information on vacancies for professional foster parents, etc.

1.4.5. Children affected by custody disputes, including parental abduction

⁵⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2021), [`Národná stratégia deinštitucionalizácie sociálnych služieb a náhradnej starostlivosti`](#), March 2021.

⁶⁰ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2020) [`Konceptia zabezpečovania vykonávania opatrení v zariadeniach sociálnoprávnej ochrany a sociálnej kurately na roky 2021 – 2025 - Plán deinštitucionalizácie`](#), December 2020.

⁶² Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship](#) (*Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane*), 20 March 2018.

⁶³ Slovakia, [Law no. 107/2022 Coll. amending law no. 627/2005 Coll. on allowances for the support of foster care for a child, as amended](#) (*Zákon 107/2022 ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 627/2005 Z. z. o príspevkoch na podporu náhradnej starostlivosti o dieťa v znení neskorších predpisov*).

⁶⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 376/2022 Coll. on Professional Foster Parents and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts](#) (*Zákon č. 376/2022 Z. Z. o profesionálnych náhradných rodičoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*),

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>There were no major policy developments in the area of litigation during the monitoring period. The Ministry of Justice, in the document Information on the implementation of the strategic objectives of the National strategy on the protection of children against violence⁶⁵, approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 24 September 2021, reported that in order to improve the position of the child in the so-called guardianship proceedings, it has created the conditions for the work of an expert group with a focus on the appropriate conditions in the court for the family law agenda. The ministry wants to create conditions for district courts for the implementation of the so-called Cochem Model. The Cochem Model is a model of conducting the so-called guardianship proceedings, which is based on interdisciplinary cooperation of all professions and institutions involved in the court proceedings. Twelve district courts have been involved in piloting this model.</p>	<p>In 2022, a major reform of the courts, the so-called New Judicial Map, was adopted. By amending Law no. 371/2004 Coll.⁶⁶ on the seats and districts of the courts of the Slovak Republic, the legal framework for the specialization of courts was created. The amendment to the Law envisages, among other things, the creation of specialized courts for family cases from 1 July 2023, which will operate on the principles of the so-called "Cochem model".</p> <p>In 2022, an important change in legislation was passed that is aimed at improving the protection of the best interests of minor children in situations where their parents are divorcing or separating.</p> <p>The changes introduced by the Ministry of Justice in the amendment to the Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure⁶⁷ are mainly based on existing problems in family law proceedings - delays in proceedings, lack of specialization of judges in family law cases, or even low use of newer, multidisciplinary approaches. The purpose of this change is to enable the judge to know the particular family and to be able to assess the whole matter comprehensively and conduct the proceedings more efficiently.</p> <p>Another major change is the explicit adoption of a new form of child custody - joint personal custody of the child by both parents (in addition to personal custody of one parent and alternate personal custody). Joint personal custody of both parents is a form of child custody in which the way the parents decide on child custody remains the same as in the period before the divorce, i.e. it is a matter of maintaining the custody arrangements which the parents already have in place at the time</p>

⁶⁵ Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (*Národné koordinačné stredisko na riešenie problematiky násillia na deťoch*) (2017), Implementation of the Strategic Objectives of the National strategy for the protection of children from violence ([Informácia o naplňaní cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pre násillím](#)).

⁶⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 371/2004 Coll. on the locations and districts of courts of the Slovak Republic, as amended](#) (*Zákon 371/2004 Z.z. o sídlach a obvodoch súdov Slovenskej republiky v znení neskorších predpisov*), 27 May 2004.

⁶⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 161/2015 Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov*), 21 May 2015.

	before the divorce (separation) or during the court proceedings and have an interest in the continuation of such custody. The proposed change also applies to parents, so-called unmarried couples, as well as in the case of a court decision on a change in the modification of the exercise of parental responsibility.
1.4.6. Missing children	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
No relevant developments. ⁶⁸	No relevant developments. ⁶⁹
1.4.7. Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity (AROEPE)	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>In Slovakia, no specific policy document regarding the children at risk of poverty has been adopted in recent years.</p> <p>As for other documents that mention the issue of poverty of children following policy documents were adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2020, the Government adopted National framework strategy for promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (update) (<i>Národná rámcová stratégia podpory sociálneho začlenenia a boja proti chudobe (aktualizácia)</i>)⁷⁰. According to this policy document, children and families with children face a higher risk of poverty. The level of risk of poverty and social exclusion of children has increased in the recent period in Slovakia. The risk of living in poverty is even higher in the case of children living with one parent, living in large families and children 	<p>There were many changes in legislation in the reporting period that had an impact on the situation of children at risk of poverty. The most relevant changes involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in children's allowances – during the COVID-19 pandemic, the children's allowances children were paid once or exceptionally in an increased amount, children from families in material need received a one-time increased allowance. These changes were tide with changes in respective legislation, mainly Law no. 600/2003 Coll. on the child's allowance as amended⁷³. As of the beginning of 2023, the children's allowances have significantly increased from 30EUR to 60EUR per child per month, children who start to

⁶⁸ Information provided by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic upon request on 21 February 2023.

⁶⁹ Information provided by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic upon request on 21 February 2023.

⁷⁰ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2020), [National framework strategy for promoting social inclusion and combating poverty \(update\)](#) (*Národná rámcová stratégia podpory sociálneho začlenenia a boja proti chudobe (aktualizácia)*).

⁷³ Slovakia, [Law no. 600/2003 Coll. on the child allowance, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 600/2003 Z.z. o prídavku na dieťa v znení neskorších predpisov*), 6 November 2003.

from Roma marginalized communities. The National framework strategy sets priorities and aims for reducing poverty and social exclusion, it mainly proposes adoption of measures aimed at reconciling the family and work life within which the formal care possibilities will be supported. Other measures relevant to children involve mainly the measures for the integration of people living in Roma marginalized communities. There are no other specific measures and aims defined for tackling the poverty and social exclusion of children.

- In 2021, the Government adopted the Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030 and in 2022 also the related Action Plans⁷¹ which also partially concerns the children at risk of poverty living in Roma marginalized communities. The documents propose measures aimed at reducing the unemployment in Roma marginalized communities and measures in the area of education.
- In 2022, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family prepared the National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic⁷² which concerns children living in poverty and social exclusion.

visit the first grade of the elementary school receive increased allowances of EUR 110 in the month when they start the school⁷⁴.

- **Subsidies under the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family** – these subsidies involve the subsidy for food and subsidy for school supplies which are intended for children who attend elementary or pre-school in which at least 50% of the children are from the household in material need, also for children who live in a household that is in material need and also for children for which not a single member of the household claimed the tax bonus. The respective legislation (Law no. 455/2010 Coll.⁷⁵) has been amended for several times during the reporting period.
- In 2018, **free of charge lunches** for children during the time of compulsory school attendance were introduced. This measure was cancelled and introduced again in the beginning of 2023 by the amendment of Law no. 455/2010 Coll.⁷⁶ This measure applies as of 1 May 2023 for all children in the last grade of pre-schools and children in elementary schools.

⁷² Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2022) [`Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030`](#).

⁷⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 397/2022 Coll. which amends Law no. 600/2003 Coll. on child allowance and on amendments to the Law no. 461/2003 Coll. on social insurance, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 397/2022 Z.z., ktorým sa mení dopĺňa zákon č. 600/2003 Z.z. o prídavku na dieťa a o zmene zákona č. 461/2003 Z.z. o sociálnom poistení v znení neskorších predpisov), 8 November 2022.

⁷⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 455/2010 Coll. on subsidies under the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic](#) (Zákon č. 455/2010 Z.z. o dotáciách v pôsobnosti Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny v znení neskorších predpisov), 8 December 2010.

⁷⁶ Slovakia, National Council of the Slovak Republic (*Národná rada SR*)(2023), [Government draft law amending Law no. 417/2013 Coll. on assistance in material need and on the amendment of certain laws as amended](#) (Vládny návrh zákona, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 417/2013 Z. z. o pomoci v hmotnej núdzi a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony), 7 February 2023.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2021, the compulsory pre-school education was introduced for children who reach the age of 5 by the amendment of the School Act⁷⁷.
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1.4.8. Children belonging to minority ethnic groups, e.g. Roma, Sami, etc.

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Following policy documents have been adopted regarding children belonging to minority ethnic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2018, the Government adopted the National program for the development of education and training (<i>Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania</i>)⁷⁸ which is a basic policy document in the field of education. One chapter of the document is devoted to the issue of integration and inclusion of children from marginalized Roma communities and socially disadvantaged environment to education system. - In 2021, the Government adopted the Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030 (<i>Stratégia rovnosti, inklúzie a participácie Rómov do roku 2030</i>)⁷⁹ which is a policy document promoting the improvement of the position of the Roma in society touching also the situation of Roma children who face poverty, unequal treatment and discrimination 	<p>Beside the changes in legislation mentioned in section 1.4.7 of this chapter, which have an important impact also on children from Roma marginalized communities since many of the live at risk of poverty, several amendments of the School Act have been adopted to address the situation of children with special needs in education (including Roma children, children with other minority background, children with disabilities, etc.). With this regard, mainly the amendment of the School Act from October 2021 may be considered to be important since it introduces the definition of inclusive education into legislation as well as specifies the transformation of the advisory system in education so that that all pupils with special needs in education are eligible to ask for support and assistance⁸⁴.</p>

⁷⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 27/2019 Coll. amending the Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training](#) (the School Act) (*Zákon č. 209/2019 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon)*), 27 June 2019.

⁷⁸ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2018), [National programme of education and training](#) (*Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania*).

⁷⁹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), [Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030](#) (*Stratégia rovnosti, inklúzie a participácie Rómov do roku 2030*).

⁸⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 415/2021 Coll. which amends Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training \(School Act\) and on amendments and supplements to certain acts as amended](#) (<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2021/415/20211119.html>) *Zákon č. 415/2021 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony*, 20 October 2021.

more often than the overall population of children. In 2022, the Government adopted also the Action plans related to the Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030 that defines the measures within the area of employment, housing, education, access to health care and anti-Roma racism.

- The Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training (*Stratégia inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní*)⁸⁰ was adopted by the Government in 2021 in order to introduce and promote the inclusive education into Slovak education system. The Strategy proposes the approach and measures to tackle the segregation of specific categories of children in education, mainly Roma children and children with disabilities. In 2022, the first Action plan of the Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training for years 2022 - 2024 was adopted⁸¹. The Strategy and its first Action plan were preceded by the Zero Action plan of the Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training which specified the first steps and measures needed to introduce the inclusive approach into Slovak education system⁸²

In 2022, the Ministry of Education published a manual for addressing the problem of segregation in education in Slovakia⁸³. The manual is intended for schools' establishers and school directors who intends to transform the existing system of education that very often excludes children with minority background or children with disabilities into education based on the inclusive approach. Besides the basic concepts,

⁸⁰ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), [Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training](#) (*Stratégia inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní*).

⁸¹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), [The First action plan for the implementation of the Strategy of inclusive approach in Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training for the years 2022-2024](#) (*Prvý akčný plán plnenia Stratégie inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní na roky 2022-2024*).

⁸² Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2020), [Zero Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training for 2021](#) (*Nultý akčný plán plnenia Stratégie inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní na rok 2021*).

⁸³ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2022), [Together in one bench - methodological material of school desegregation for schools establishers and directors](#) (*Spolu v jednej lavici – metodický materiál desegregácie škôl pre zriaďovateľov a riaditeľov*).

<p>documents and data, the manual specifies measures and steps that are needed to implement to prevent or address the problem of segregation in Slovak schools. Case studies of four schools that are on their way to creating an inclusive education are included in the manual.</p>	
<p>1.4.9. Children involved in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses or parties</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>No relevant developments⁸⁵</p>	<p>In 2017, Act no. 274/2017⁸⁶ on victims of crime was adopted, transposing Directive 2012/29/EU on victims of crime, which also applies to children as suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings.</p> <p>In the context of Directive 2012/29/EU on victims of crime, Law 321/2018⁸⁷ amending the Law on Probation and Mediation Officers was adopted in 2018. This ensured special protection for minor victims when they are questioned as witnesses or victims. At the same time, the obligation to appoint a guardian for a minor if his or her legal representative is unable to execute his or her rights has been established.</p> <p>In 2019, the law 231/2019 on detention⁸⁸ was adopted, where the rights of the victim's family members granted by Directive 2012/29/EU were strengthened. This was to prevent personal contact not only between the perpetrator and the victim, but also between</p>

⁸⁵ Information provided by the Ministry of Justice upon request via email on 8 March 2023.

⁸⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 274/2017 Coll. on victims of crime and on amending and supplementing certain laws](#) (Zákon č. 274/2017 o obetiach trestných činov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 12 October 2017.

⁸⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 321/2018 Coll. amending Law no. 550/2003 Coll. on probation and mediation officers and on amendments and additions to certain acts, as amended, and amending and supplementing certain acts](#) (ZÁKON 321/2018, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 550/2003 Z. z. o probačných a mediačných úradníkoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony), 24 October 2018.

⁸⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 231/2019 Coll. on the execution of detention and on amendment and supplementation of certain acts](#) (Zákon 231/2019 Z. z. o výkone detencie a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 23 July 2019.

	<p>the perpetrator and the victim's family members.</p> <p>In 2023, the law 49/2023⁸⁹ was passed that amends, among other things, the Victims of Crime Law. This law changes the word 'perpetrator' to 'a person identified by the victim as the perpetrator, a person who is suspected of a crime or a person against whom a criminal prosecution is being conducted. By preventing contact with such a person, the victim is better protected from secondary victimisation. At the same time, the child may choose the gender of the person by whom he or she will be interviewed, and this right also applies to interpreters.</p>
<p>1.4.10. Children involved in judicial proceedings as suspects or accused persons</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>No relevant developments⁹⁰</p>	<p>In 2017, Act 274/2017⁹¹ on victims of crime was adopted, transposing Directive 2012/29/EU on victims of crime, which also applies to children as suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings.</p> <p>Law 161/2018⁹², which amends Law 300/2005 Criminal Code, transposes Directive 2016/800/EU on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings.</p>
<p>1.4.11. Children at risk of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation; child /forced marriages, honour-related violence</p>	

⁸⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 49/2023 amending Law no. 301/2005 Coll. the Criminal Procedure Code, as amended, and amending Law no. 274/2017 Coll. on victims of crime and on amendments and additions to certain acts, as amended](#) (Zákon 49/2023, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 301/2005 Z. z. Trestný poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa mení zákon č. 274/2017 Z. z. o obetiach trestných činov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 2 February 2023.

⁹⁰ Information provided by the Ministry of Justice upon request via email on 8 March 2023.

⁹¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 274/2017 Coll. on victims of crime and on amending and supplementing certain laws](#) (Zákon č. 274/2017o obetiach trestných činov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 12 October 2017.

⁹² Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2018 Coll. amending law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, as amended, and amending and supplementing certain acts](#) (Zákon č. 161/2018 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 300/2005 Z. z. Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony), 15 May 2018.

Policy developments	Legislative developments
Not applicable in Slovakia	Not applicable in Slovakia
1.4.12. Children whose parents are in prison/custody	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>On the basis of a number of requests for clemency, President of the Slovak Republic decided to initiate a meeting about the conditions of detention of parents of minor children, especially mothers. According to the President, the system of detention is significantly deficient in terms of international human rights standards regarding the best interests of minor children. According to the President, the first step in the necessary change is to make greater use of alternative punishments, such as house arrest, insofar as they also concern parents of minor children, especially mothers. In cases where there is no room for alternative punishments, a specialised facility for the execution of sentences for mothers with young children under the age of three, which has long been discussed, would help. More frequent contact visits to children in cases of separation from parents would also help. The Justice Minister has promised to make every effort to bring about change in all three aspects, which are also part of the current plans for changes in criminal law and the prison system.⁹³</p>	No legislative developments.
1.4.13. Children who drop out of compulsory education and working children under the legal age for work	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The problem of dropping out of compulsory education concerns mainly children from Roma marginalized communities or children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the current legislation, pupils with insufficient education results can repeat a school grade several times, they leave primary school without having finished primary education. In recent years, the Ministry of Education prepared some legislation changes to improve the situation, however,</p>	No legislative developments in the reporting period.

⁹³ Slovakia, President of the Slovak Republic (*Prezident SR*) (2021), [Podmienky výkonu trestu rodičov maloletých detí sa musia zlepšiť](#), 17 December 2021.

the amendments to legislation have not been approved so far. In 2022, the Ministry of Education introduced a manual for schools on how to improve the education of pupils at risk of dropping out of school⁹⁴. The manual specifies concrete steps the school, teachers and other school staff can take to help the pupils to be more successful in education.

Children from Ukraine who registered for temporary protection do not participate in compulsory education. According to the current law, they are not obliged to undergo compulsory education in Slovakia, however, the schools must accept them if their parents or legal guardians are interested to register them at a school. In 2022 and 2023, public authorities have taken steps to enable Ukrainian children to access education. Those steps involved for instance additional funds for the schools to purchase school supplies, subsidies for the schools for educating the Ukrainian children and for organizing the language courses of Slovak language and needed textbooks for teaching Slovak as a foreign language. However, the conditions for the participation of Ukrainian children in compulsory education have not been changed so far⁹⁵. This situation resulted in a relatively low number of Ukrainian children studying at Slovak schools when compared to the total number of children registered for temporary protection. Children who do not attend school in Slovakia, participate in online education at their school in Ukraine or do not participate in education at all.

1.4.14. Please insert any other group of children that is not listed above, such as children with drug or alcohol addictions (*add rows as needed*)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
Children with drug or alcohol addictions	
	The amendment to Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship established the Centres for

⁹⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo vzdelávania, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2022), [Manual – an application tool on how to be more successful at school](#) (Manuál – aplikačná pomôcka ako byť v škole úspešnejší).

⁹⁵ Centrum vzdelávacích analýz (2023), [What the Ministry of Education has done for children from Ukraine](#) (Čo ministerstvo školstva urobilo pre deti z Ukrajiny), 6 March 2023.

	Children and Families. The purpose of the centre may include the implementation of a resocialization program to promote the social inclusion of a child or adult natural person addicted to alcohol, drugs or pathological gambling. ⁹⁶
Children in need of mental health care	
<p>The National Action Plan of the European Guarantee for Children notes a significant increase in mental health problems among minors aged 15-19. In 2021, the Government established a Mental Health Council and within this, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family took over the work of the Primary Prevention Committee for Mental Health. This committee focuses extensively on the mental health needs of children and young children. Its members include education and psychological prevention centres, child psychiatrists, crisis lines, speech and language therapists, general practitioners for children and adolescents and school psychologists.⁹⁷</p> <p>The Family Policy Section of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in 2021 also created a pilot national project "Family Counselling Centres - Counselling and Psychological Services for Individuals, Couples and Families". Its main goal is to contribute to a systemic solution in the field of prevention of mental health difficulties and strengthening of relationships in families.⁹⁸</p> <p>The topic of children and youth accessing mental health care is also addressed in the National Action Plan of the European Guarantee for Children which aims to strengthen multidisciplinary teams and explicitly school psychologists in schools in the framework of prevention and intervention in the field of child and adolescent mental health.⁹⁹</p>	

⁹⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov).

⁹⁷ Slovakia, The Government Committee for Primary Mental Health Prevention (2021), '[Štatút Výboru pre primárnu prevenciu v oblasti duševného zdravia](#)', 17 May 2021.

⁹⁸ Slovakia, Institute for Labour and Family Research of the Slovak Republic (*Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny SR*) (2021), '[Informácia o Národnom projekte Rodinné porade – poradensko-psychologické služby pre jednotlivcov, páry a rodiny](#)', press release.

⁹⁹ Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Národné koordinačné stredisko pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), '[Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti do roku 2030](#)'.

The Youth Strategy 2021-2028 includes several actions dedicated to improving young people's access to anonymous, free, and easily accessible mental health support. This is to be implemented in 2023 by including the needs of young people in the National Mental Health Programme. The strategy also includes a measure to increase the number of child psychiatrists and beds in child psychiatric wards. The target is to be met in 2023 and is led by the Ministry of Health. It also foresees an increase in the number of helpline projects supported under the subsidy scheme of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.¹⁰⁰

The Recovery and Resilience Plan in Component 12 also notes an acute shortage of psychiatric beds for children and proposes to reprofile some of the existing beds from other hospital wards. In the Investment 2.3. it foresees the creation of 13 centres for children aged between 6 and 18 (1 centre per 50 000 children). 8 pilot centres are to be set up by 2026. The Recovery Plan allocates EUR 24.8 million to this measure. The Recovery Plan further proposes Investment 2.5.-Building specialised centres for autism spectrum disorders. The aim is to increase the availability of specialised services and to increase the number of children receiving comprehensive diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders and adequate treatment. To this end, and as part of Reform 2 of the Recovery Plan, a Working Group has been set up with representatives from psychiatry, psychology, and general medicine for children to address the issue of autism spectrum disorders. The group aims to develop a standard operating procedure with a focus on modern diagnosis and treatment of patients with autism spectrum disorder. Anticipated completion of implementation is 4Q 2025.¹⁰¹

1.5. Contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards

Are there any contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards that have been pointed out by international bodies, national human rights

¹⁰⁰ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2021), '[Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre mládež 2021-2028](#)', Government Resolution No. 754 of 14 December 2021.

¹⁰¹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), '[Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic, Component 12 – Humane, Modern and Accessible Mental Health Care](#)', Government Resolution No. 221/2021 of 28 April 2021.

institutions, ombudspersons, or civil society organisations? Please also refer to any contradictions within national and sub-national legislation.

In the process of adopting legislative acts, there are Legislative Rules of Law making¹⁰², which define that the drafting of legislation must comply with the obligations resulting from the international treaties and other international documents. Every law that is approved includes a compatibility clause, which demonstrates the compatibility of the draft law with European Union law. Similarly, in the case of adopted public policies, the materials include their compliance with EU and international standards.

Slovakia has long been criticised, in particular, for the absence of certain measures and functioning mechanisms by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In its last report¹⁰³ it criticised in particular the lack of a coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Convention. The Committee's proposal was to strengthen the role of the Committee on Children and Youth of the Government Council for Human Rights, Minorities and Gender, but this has not happened to date. This role has been partially taken over by the National Coordination Centre for Violence against Children, which the Slovak Republic informed the Committee about in the framework of the Sixth Periodic Report of the Slovak Republic on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁰⁴.

As reaction to criticism by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Slovak Republic also created the Institute of the Commissioner for Children in 2015. However, in its report¹⁰⁵ Committee recommended to the Slovak Republic to ensure the independence of the Institute of the Commissioner for Children in terms of its election process, which is not currently in line with the Paris Principles. The Slovak Republic has not made this change, which has been as well criticised by more than 43 NGOs working to protect children's rights in their appeal "Stop the politicised election of the Children's Commissioner"¹⁰⁶ ahead of the election of the Children's Commissioner in 2022.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has long criticised the Slovak Republic for failing to develop tools for public consultation with children on issues that affect them. The absence of such a mechanism was also criticised by the Commissioner for Children in her 2020 Annual Report¹⁰⁷. She recommends that the relevant national and local authorities commit themselves to taking measures to ensure that the impact on children's rights is considered when laws, local authorities' legislation and public budgets are adopted.

In the Children's Commissioner's Report 2020, the Office notes that there is a need to improve the work of conflict guardians with a view to professionalizing their activities. Collision guardians, who are supposed to ensure the protection of the rights and legally protected interests of the child according to the Law on Social Protection of Children, fail quite often. For this reason, the Office believes that it is necessary to strengthen the labour, social affairs and family offices - departments of social protection and social welfare bodies - both in terms of staff and financial resources.

¹⁰² Slovakia, [Law no. 19/1997 Coll. legislative rules of law making \(Uznesenie Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky k návrhu legislatívnych pravidiel tvorby zákonov\)](#), 18 December 1996.

¹⁰³ UN, Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016), [Concluding observations on the combined 3rd to 5th periodic reports of Slovakia : Committee on the Rights of the Child](#).

¹⁰⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), '[Šiesta periodická správa Slovenskej republiky o implementácii Dohovoru o právach dieťaťa](#)', Government Resolution No. 537/2020 of 2 September 2020.

¹⁰⁵ UN, Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016), [Concluding observations on the combined 3rd to 5th periodic reports of Slovakia: Committee on the Rights of the Child](#).

¹⁰⁶ More information available at [website](#) of the campaign.

¹⁰⁷ Slovakia, Office of the Commissioner for Children (*Úrad Komisára pre deti*) (2021), '[Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2020](#)'.

1.6. Orientation/fragmentation of national child protection policy and legislation

Based on the above information please assess and explain if the national child protection policy and legislation is fragmented and if the child protection system is oriented towards prevention and/or intervention.

Child protection policy and legislation in Slovakia has long been fragmented. The situation continues to persist where different areas of child rights protection are primarily the responsibility of individual ministries and state institutions. However, over the period under review, we see steps towards a greater degree of integration of efforts towards a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the issue. This approach has been particularly successful in addressing the issue of child abuse and violence against children. As reported by the Slovak Republic in the Sixth Periodic Report of the Slovak Republic on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁰⁸, the underlying strategic objective is to achieve a qualitative change in the perception and treatment of violence against children by consistently linking and integrating sub-policies into an effective and functional mechanism for addressing violence against children in a comprehensive and systematic manner. On the basis of Government Resolution No. 24/2014 of 15 January 2014, the National Coordination Centre for Addressing Violence against Children was established. The Centre is an organisational part of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. It coordinates the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Slovak Republic in the field of protection of children from violence and establishes and maintains a mechanism of communication between individual ministries, state institutions, cities, municipalities, NGOs and other entities working in the field of protection of children from violence, and ensures the tasks of the coordinator for the implementation of the Convention and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

The child protection system is permanently focused in particular on the area of intervention through social protection and social welfare bodies. In recent years, however, we have also seen efforts to take a preventive approach, for example, in the area of public policies focusing on bullying and cyberbullying, or in the area of violence against children, where a number of preventive campaigns have also been implemented and the National Helpline for Children at Risk¹⁰⁹ has been launched.

1.7. Development in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection legislation and policies in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

Since 2014, Slovakia has introduced a number of child protection legislation and policies that have contributed to improving child protection.

¹⁰⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), '[Šiesta periodická správa Slovenskej republiky o implementácii Dohovoru o právach dieťaťa](#)', Government Resolution No. 537/2020 of 2 September 2020.

¹⁰⁹ More information about National Helpline available at <https://viacakonick.gov.sk/>

In 2015, the Office of the Commissioner for Children¹¹⁰ and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities¹¹¹ were established. Particularly in the case of the Office of the Commissioner for Children, the establishment of this independent institute was an important step in the protection of children's rights, which has long been recommended to us by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In 2014, the National Strategy on the Protection of Children against Violence¹¹² was adopted by the Government. This strategy represents an important framework for the implementation of the State's activities in the field of protection of children's rights. As one of the objectives of the Strategy, the National Coordination Centre for Addressing Violence against Children was established in 2015, which plays an important role in the implementation of the Strategy but also as a coordinating body for the protection of children's rights and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Centre also reports on a number of activities aimed at raising awareness on the protection of children's rights, focusing on the education of key actors as well as direct prevention programmes for children and young people.

The amendment to Law No. 36/2005 Coll. Family Act¹¹³ of 2015, which entered into force on 1 January 2016, defined the criteria of the best interest of the child in accordance with paragraph 50 of General Comment No. 14.

In the field of education, it has been a long-standing problem in Slovakia that students with special educational needs (e.g. learning difficulties or children with disabilities) have had problems in mainstream education. This practice has also been criticised by a number of NGOs. In 2022, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport adopted the Strategy on inclusive approach in education¹¹⁴ and subsequently introduced the concept of inclusive education in the Law No. 245/2008 on Education and Training¹¹⁵. The area of inclusive education is also an important part of the education reforms to be adopted in 2023.

1.8. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection legislation and policies that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

During its existence, the National Coordination Centre for the Protection of Children from Violence has implemented a number of activities and projects that have contributed to the development of the system

¹¹⁰ More information about Commissioner for Children available at <https://komisarpredeti.sk>

¹¹¹ More information about Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities available at <https://www.komisarprezdravotnepostihnutych.sk>

¹¹² Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2019), '[Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím](#)'.

¹¹³ Slovakia, [Law no. 36/2005 Coll. on Family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 Z.z. o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 11 February 2005.

¹¹⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky*) (2021), '[Stratégia inkluzívneho prístupu vo výchove a vzdelávaní](#)'.

¹¹⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 22 May 2008.

for the protection of children's rights. Also, thanks to the implementation of the National Project¹¹⁶, a number of interesting activities have been launched since 2018.

Within the framework of the implementation of a multidisciplinary approach and, in particular, a regional approach, the system of improving the professionalism of professional staff coming into contact with children at risk of violence has changed. The National Coordination Centre, through the regional coordinators for the protection of children from violence, provides training in a selected, priority topic for the regions. In 2018 and 2019, 220 multidisciplinary training activities were implemented to promote the professionalism of performance. In 2018, 2,300 participants from the participating entities attended the trainings, and in 2019 there were 2,532 participants (Office of the Commissioner for Children, social protection authorities and institutions, municipal police, police forces, health care providers, teachers and educators, prosecutors, representatives of municipalities and regional authorities, district courts and other NGOs and religious organizations). The main topics were identification of all forms of violence, but also crisis intervention, possibilities of communication with the victim, communication with the perpetrator or the victim's family.

Awareness-raising and prevention activities are also carried out at regional and national level. The aim is to increase the awareness of violence, but also to respond appropriately. In 2018-2019, a total of 108,560 participants were involved in prevention and awareness-raising activities.

In 2021 the National Helpline for Children at Risk¹¹⁷ has been launched.

¹¹⁶ Slovakia, [National project Supporting the protection of children from violence](#) (*Národný projekt Podpora ochrany detí pre násilím*).

¹¹⁷ More information about National Helpline available at <https://viacakonick.gov.sk/>

2. Governance, coordination structures, and services

2.1. Primary institutions and main service providers responsible for child protection

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>2.1.1. Is there any lead institution/body (e.g. child protection agency, ministry, etc.) primarily responsible for child protection at the national level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the name in the comments box.</p>	x		<p>Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</p>
<p>2.1.2. Are there different structures sharing the primary responsibility (e. g. departments in the same or different ministries, different agencies etc.)?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the name under the comments box and please also mention which body has the lead in coordinating child protection policies and actions.</p>	x		<p>State administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family - Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth - National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children - Committee for Children and Youth (of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality) <p>Local and regional governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal self-governments - Self-governing regions (Higher territorial units) <p>National human rights institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Defender of Rights - Slovak National Human Rights Centre - Commissioner for Children

			- Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities
2.1.3. Are there child focal points or similar in different ministries or agencies? <u>If yes</u> , in which ministry are they located, what are they called, and what role/functions do they have? How do they coordinate?	x		The individual ministries participate in the Committee for Children and Youth. Beside that there are contact points at the ministries that collaborate with the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children which is one of the departments of the Section of family policy at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Please provide in the table below a list of the national/regional/local bodies or authorities having certain responsibilities related to child protection, e.g. child ombuds institution.

Please note: For the regional and the local levels please indicate only the type of body, do not list all different bodies at regional/local level in the country.

Name of the body	Level (national/regional/local).	Area of responsibility and roles in child protection <i>(for example coordination, legislation, policy making, training, monitoring, financing, implementing)</i>	Comments <i>(for example in case of ombuds institution, compliance with the Paris Principles)</i>
Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislation - Coordination - Policy making - Financing - Implementation 	The Ministry has principal responsibility for the sociolegal protection of children which is specified by the Law no. 575/2001 Coll. on the organization of government activities and the organization of the central state

			<p>administration¹¹⁸. According to the current organisational structure of the Ministry, the protection of children is mainly in the competency of the Section of family policy and its Department of children and family protection strategy and National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (which is one of departments under this Section)¹¹⁹.</p> <p>According to the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is one of the institutions that carries out socio-legal protection of children (Section 71).¹²⁰</p>
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¹¹⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 575/2001 Coll. on the organization of government activities and the organization of the central state administration as amended](#) (Zákon č. 575/2001 Z.z. o organizácii činnosti vlády a organizácii ústrednej štátnej správy v znení neskorších predpisov), 29 December 2001.

¹¹⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2023), [The full text of the organizational order of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 5/2023 of 19 January 2023](#) (Úplné znenie organizačného poriadku Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 5/2023 z 19. januára 2023).

¹²⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele), 25 May 2005.

<p>Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</p>	<p>National</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination - Implementation <p>Subordinated to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</p>	<p>The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (<i>Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny</i>) is a state administration body ensuring the performance of state administration in the area of social affairs and employment services. The institution was established in January 2004 by the Law no. 453/2003 Coll. on state administration bodies in the field of social affairs and employment services, as amended. The Central Office manages, controls, coordinates and methodically directs 46 Labour, Social Affairs and Family Offices in regions.</p> <p>This state administration body is directly responsible for the agenda of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship. Apart from other tasks, it manages and administers the agenda of socio-legal protection of children, providing methodological guidance and elaborating strategies of socio-legal protection of children and prevention of socio-pathological phenomena as specified by the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship.¹²¹</p>
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¹²¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele*), 25 May 2005.

Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the state policy within the area of social affairs including the socio-legal protection of children, 	<p>The Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family are subordinated to the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and implements the policy and measures in various areas of social policy including the socio-legal protection of children. Their competencies in socio-legal protection of children are specified by the Law no. 305/2005 Coll.¹²².</p> <p>Within the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, there are Departments of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship.</p>
Centres for Children and Families	Regional	<p>The Centres for Children and Families provide accommodation, assistance and services to children removed from their families based on a court decision. They also provide other social and expert counselling to children and families. The centres are also established to carry out activities aimed at prevention and addressing the crisis situation in families. The centres also carry out programs for children at risk of human trafficking, abusing drugs, being neglected or sexually abused, etc.</p>	<p>Based on the changes in legislation in 2018¹²³, the former children's homes were transformed into Centres for Children and Families. Of this change, their role and mandate have significantly changed with having started to provide more broad assistance and services to children and families at risk. The centres can be established by the state administration in the area of socio-legal protection as well as by the municipalities, higher territorial units or another legal or physical persons. The centres provide their services in</p>

¹²² Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele), 25 May 2005.

¹²³ Slovakia, [Law no. 61/2018 Coll. which amends the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 61/2018 Z.z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 6 February 2018.

			residence form, outpatient form as well as field form.
Entities accredited for the performance of socio-legal protection of children	Regional, local	A physical or legal person can carry out socio-legal protection measures if it is accredited for their performance according to the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ¹²⁴ . The accredited subjects carry out specific tasks within the socio-legal protection of children for which they have been accredited.	The accreditation procedure is specified by the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection and social guardianship ¹²⁵ and is in the competency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family that also keeps a list of accredited entities ¹²⁶ .
Inspection in Social Affairs of the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family	National, regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Inspection in Social Affairs has the responsibility to monitor and inspect the entities carrying out the socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship. 	The Inspection in Social Affairs has been created recently based on the Law no. 345/2022 Coll. on inspection in social affairs. The Inspection in Social Affairs is a unit under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family which has several departments as well as regional branches. The Inspection is entitled to monitor and inspect the entities providing social services and socio-legal protection of children.

¹²⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele), 25 May 2005.

¹²⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele), 25 May 2005.

¹²⁶ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2023), [List of accredited subjects - sociolegal protection of children and social guardianship](#) (Zoznam akreditovaných subjektov – sociálnoprávna ochrana detí a sociálna kuratela).

National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children ¹²⁷	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination – the National Coordination Centre mainly coordinates the state policy in the area of protection of children against violence, create conditions for mutual cooperation and exchange of information among public authorities and coordinates the implementation of the National strategy on the protection of children against violence¹²⁸. - Subordinated to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family 	National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children has been created within the organisational structure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and has been operating since 2014.
Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth ¹²⁹	National, International	<p>Coordination, implementation</p> <p>Subordinated to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</p>	The Centre fulfils tasks related to implementation of international conventions and legal acts of the European Union, particularly in the field of claiming maintenance in compliance with international conventions, socio-legal protection of children with respect to foreign subjects in compliance with special regulations, cross-border abductions of children, mediating contacts

¹²⁷ Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (*Národné koordinačné centrum pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch*), <https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/>

¹²⁸ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*)(2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (*Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím*).

¹²⁹ Slovakia, Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth (*Centrum pre medzinárodnoprávnu ochranu detí a mládeže*), <https://www.cipc.gov.sk/#>

			between parents and children in compliance with international conventions and other tasks in the field of socio-legal protection with respect to foreign subjects. The role and mandate of the Centre is specified by the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ¹³⁰ .
Regional self-governments (Higher territorial units)	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination - Implementation - Financing - They are independent of the state administration. 	<p>Regional self-governments are responsible for creating and implementing activities and programmes aimed at protecting children's rights and their law-guaranteed interests, elaborate analyses of adverse factors affecting children and families, monitor development trends of socio-pathological phenomena on their respective territories.</p> <p>Regarding the socio-legal protection of children, the self-governing regions cooperate with municipalities, organs of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, accredited subjects and other legal and natural persons that operate in the field of socio-legal protection of children. They keep the list of subjects established for performance of socio-legal</p>

¹³⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele), 25 May 2005.

			<p>protection of children in their territory¹³¹. They can also establish the Centre for Children and Families.</p> <p>In Slovakia, there are altogether 8 regional self-governments. The socio-legal protection of children is in most of the cases in competence of the departments of social services.</p>
Municipal self-governments	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation - Financing - They are independent of the state administration. 	<p>Municipal self-governments carry out measures aimed at preventing complications of children's physical, mental and social development; they also implement programmes designed to help children and families at risk. They take part in execution of measures imposed by courts or organs of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship and provide assistance to children in emergency situations, especially in situations that threaten the child's life, health or favourable physical, mental and social development. The responsibilities of the municipal self-governments are specified by the</p>

¹³¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele*), 25 May 2005.

			Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ¹³² .
Committee for Children and Youth ¹³³	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory function, - Monitoring - Subordinated to the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality 	The Committee for Children and Youth is one of the committees of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality which is an advisory body of the Government. The Committee elaborates proposals for the Governmental Council for changes in legislation and for adoption of systemic changes regarding the protection and respecting children's rights. The other tasks fulfilled by the Committee also involve the exchange of information, initiating of research and giving comments on national policy documents and legislation. The Committee cooperates with individual ministries, other public authorities, self-governing regions, municipalities and national human rights institutions and NGOs. The representatives of these stakeholders are members of the Committee which holds regular meetings ¹³⁴ .

¹³² Slovakia, Law [no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele*), 25 May 2005.

¹³³ Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*), <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/vybor-deti-mladez/>.

¹³⁴ Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*), [Statute of the Committee for Children and Youth](#) (*Štatút výboru pre deti a mládež*), 27 May 2022.

Public Defender of Rights ¹³⁵	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring - Independent body - National human rights institution 	<p>The Public Defender of Rights is an independent body, which in compliance with valid laws protects fundamental rights and freedoms of natural and legal persons in proceedings before public administration bodies and other organs of public power whose activities, decisions or idleness contradicts valid laws.¹³⁶</p> <p>The Public Defender of Rights exercises their powers to the benefit of all inhabitants including children. The Public Defender of Rights deals with individual submissions received from the public as well as sets up their own plan of activities aimed at reviewing the observance of fundamental rights.</p>
Slovak National Human Rights Centre ¹³⁷	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring - Independent body - National human rights institution 	<p>The Slovak National Human Rights Centre is a national human rights institution (NHRI) and anti-discrimination body (equality body). The main mandate of the Centre involves the monitoring of observance of human rights in Slovakia with regard to the international commitments of the Slovak Republic. Based on Anti-discrimination</p>

¹³⁵ Slovakia, Public Defender of Rights (*Verejný ochranca práv*), <https://vop.gov.sk/>

¹³⁶ Slovakia, Law No. 460/1992 Coll. Constitution of the Slovak Republic, as amended (*Ústava Slovenskej republiky*).

¹³⁷ Slovakia, Slovak National Human Rights Centre (*Slovenské národné stredisko pre ľudské práva*), <https://www.snslp.sk/>.

			Act ¹³⁸ , the Centre also monitors the observance of anti-discrimination legislation and provides assistance to victims of discrimination.
Commissioner for Children	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring - Independent body - National human rights institution 	The Commissioner for Children is an independent body that participate in the protection of rights of children to which the Slovak Republic is committed by international treaties, mainly by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commissioner deals with individual submissions and considers whether the rights of the child were respected. The Commissioner also monitors the observance of the children's rights from his own initiative. He also advocates for the children's rights and interests and performs awareness raising activities. The mandate of the Commissioner for Children is specified by Act no. 176/2015 Co. on the Commissioner for children and the Commissioner for persons with disabilities ¹³⁹ .
Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring - Independent body - National human rights institution 	The Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities is an independent body established to protect the rights of persons with disabilities (including

¹³⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in some areas and on protection against discrimination and on the amendment of some laws as amended](#) (Zákon č. 365/2004 Z.z. o rovnakom zaobchádzaní v niektorých oblastiach a o ochrane pred diskrimináciou a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 20 May 2004.

¹³⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and on Amendments to Certain Acts](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotnými postihnutím a zmene doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 15 June 2015.

			children with disabilities) stemming from the international treaties, mainly the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and national legislation. The Commissioner deals with individual complaints on the breach of rights of persons with disabilities and assess also from her own initiative whether the rights of persons with disabilities are observed. The Commissioner also conduct investigation and monitoring of observance of the rights of persons with disabilities. She also cooperates with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. The Commissioner carry out research and monitoring activities, advocates for the rights and interests of the persons with disabilities. Her mandate is specified by the Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities ¹⁴⁰ .
<i>(add rows as needed)</i>			

2.1.4. Please indicate if there were in the past five years any important changes concerning the child protection mandate/roles/responsibilities and outline what caused or influenced these changes (for example, a transfer of responsibility for child protection from one ministry to another ministry or a body or merging of responsibilities, etc. Please indicate notably if an integrated approach has been sought and/or achieved.

¹⁴⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and on amendments to certain acts](#) (*Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotnými postihnutím a zmene doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov*), 15 June 2015.

The most important changes concerning the child protection mandate, roles and responsibilities in recent years involve:

- **Introduction and establishment of Centres for Children and Families into legislation and practice** – based on the change in legislation in 2018, the Centres of Children and Families started to be established or the existing children’s homes (crisis centres and other entities) have been transformed into Centres for Children and Families. The centres not only provide assistance and services to children removed from their families but started to assist whole families at risk or in crisis so that the situation in the family gets stabilized and children do not have to be removed from the family. The centres also should have overtaken some activities carried out by the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in the area of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship since until that time the Offices were entitled to carry out assistance as well as the oversight over the families which was seen an ineffective collision of their functions.
- **Establishment of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children** – the National Coordination Centre has been established within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and is responsible for the coordination of the policies in the area of protection of children against violence. The coordination is carried out mainly among the ministries and other public authorities on the national level, however, the National Coordination Centre also communicates with regional and local municipalities, NGOs, research institutions and other relevant actors. The National Coordination Centre also monitors and evaluates the progress achieved regarding the fulfillment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Coordination Centre was established mainly with the aim to put stress on the issue of protection of children against the violence as well as to strengthen the coordination of policies within this area.
- **Establishment of the Inspection in Social Affairs** – the Inspection in Social Affairs is responsible to carry out monitoring and inspection of subjects in the area of social affairs including the entities performing the socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship. The Inspection in Social Affairs has been created within the structure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, however, it has also regional branches. The Inspection in Social Affairs has been established only recently by the Law no. 345/2022 adopted in November 2022. The Inspection in Social Affairs was established in order to achieve quality and a certain standard in the provision of assistance and services within this area.
- **Establishment of the Commissioner for Children and Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities** – both national human rights institutions were established in 2015. They have the responsibility to deal with individual submissions they get from the public within the area of their competence. They can also set their own priorities in monitoring and assessment of the situation of children and children with disabilities. They act towards public administration bodies in their area of competence. Their role is also to promote and advocate for the rights of children and children with disabilities and carry out awareness-raising activities. The Commissioner for Children as well as the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities once a year submits a report on their activities to the National Council of the Slovak Republic for discussion. They were established mainly with the aim of having independent institutions that would contribute to better protection of children and children with disabilities.

2.1.5. Please indicate, in the table below, the major service providers at national level in the area of child protection. Include family support services /measures (i.e. counselling, financial assistance) that are part of the overall social protection/welfare system for children in risk.

Service providers <i>(include the name and the type of institution i.e. public authority, NGOs, religious institutions, private)</i>	Type of services <i>(Include counselling, care institutions, day care centres, financial assistance, legal advice, rehabilitation services for victims, education awareness –training activities, etc.)</i>	Target groups <i>(For example, children with disability, children in risk of or living in poverty, immigrant children, children deprived form parental care, child victims of abuse or exploitation. When relevant, please indicate if third country nationals and irregular immigrants are entitled to such services)</i>	Funding <i>(national budget, EU funded, other)</i>
<p>Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Departments of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship</p> <p>(State administration in regions subordinated to the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counselling - Financial assistance - Coordination 	<p>Generally, the mandate and role of departments of socio-legal protection and social guardianship is to protect children’s life, health, or favourable physical, mental and social development. They perform the role of coordinator, which requires the cooperation of other subjects; if necessary, they act as social guardians of specific categories of children for instance unaccompanied minors, children that have been exploited, sexually abused or neglected or are reasonably suspected of being treated that way.¹⁴¹</p>	<p>State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</p>

¹⁴¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele), 25 May 2005.

Centres for Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care institutions - Training and resocialisation programmes - Day care centres 	and The Centres for Children and Families provide accommodation, assistance and services to children removed from their families based on a court decision. They also provide services and assistance to families in crisis or at risk. They also carry out programs for children at risk of human trafficking, abusing drugs, being neglected or sexually abused, etc. The unaccompanied minors are placed in selected Centres for Children and Families.	State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The entity establishing the Centre for Children and Families can use also their own funds or other funds (e.g. grants).
Centrum Slniečko (NGO) ¹⁴²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential care service - legal advice - rehabilitation services for child victims, - education - raising awareness 	Centrum Slniečko provides its assistance and services and assistance to children and families in crisis, specifically they help abused and sexually abused children. Centrum Slniečko established the Centre for Children and Families according to the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship. However,	State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family based on the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ¹⁴³ and Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. ¹⁴⁴ .

¹⁴² <https://centrumslniecko.sk/>

¹⁴³ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. which implements certain provisions of the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 103/2018 Z.z. ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 March 2018.

		Centrum Slniečko also provides assistance and services to victims of domestic violence. They carry out intervention activities as well as prevention and education activities.	Other funds (e.g. grants).
Náruč (NGO) ¹⁴⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential care service - Psychological and other specialized assistance for children's victims - Education - raising awareness 	<p>NGO Náruč provides specialized assistance to abused, neglected and sexually abused children.</p> <p>NGO Náruč established Children's crisis centre with 20 places for abused, neglected and sexually abused children who need expert and specialized assistance and services. The NGO also provides help to victims of violence, support for substitute families, education of experts and advocacy activities for children's rights.</p>	<p>State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family based on the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship¹⁴⁶ and Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll.¹⁴⁷.</p> <p>Other funds (e.g. grants).</p>

¹⁴⁵ <https://naruc.sk/>

¹⁴⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁴⁷ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. which implements certain provisions of the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 103/2018 Z.z. ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 March 2018.

Tenenet (NGO) ¹⁴⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counselling - Psychological counselling - Financial and material aid - Training programmes 	<p>The NGO provides its services through the Centre for Children and Families to families in crisis or divorce/break up period, to children who are neglected, abused or living in poverty.</p> <p>The Tenenet operates the biggest non-state Centre for Children and Families that provides field and outpatient services in all regions of Slovakia. The Centre provides counselling, psychological counselling and therapy, training programmes.</p>	<p>State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family based on the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship¹⁴⁹ and Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll.¹⁵⁰.</p> <p>Other funds (e.g. grants).</p>
Návrat (NGO) ¹⁵¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counselling - Support for substitute families - Assistance and services for families in crisis 	<p>NGO Návrat focuses its activities on the provision of assistance and support to families and children in order to achieve the stay or return of the child to the family. Their services are available in several regions of Slovakia.</p>	<p>State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family based on the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship¹⁵² and Decree of the Ministry</p>

¹⁴⁸ <https://tenenet.sk/centrum-rodiny/>

¹⁴⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll which implements certain provisions of the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 103/2018 Z.z. ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 March 2018.

¹⁵¹ <https://www.navrat.sk/>

¹⁵² Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

	- Education		of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. ¹⁵³ . Other funds (e.g. grants).
Spoločnosť priateľov detí z detských domov Úsmev ako dar (NGO) ¹⁵⁴	- Counselling - Residential care services - Education, training activities	The NGO provides various types of assistance to children living in Centres for Children and Families and young people leaving Centres for Children and Families, families in crisis and substitute families. The NGO also assists to crime victims.	State budget – budgetary chapter of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family based on the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship ¹⁵⁵ and Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. ¹⁵⁶ . Other funds (e.g. grants).

¹⁵³ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. which implements certain provisions of the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 103/2018 Z.z. ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 March 2018.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.usmev.sk/>

¹⁵⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁵⁶ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 103/2018 Coll. which implements certain provisions of the law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 103/2018 Z.z. ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 March 2018.

Liga za ľudské práva (NGO) ¹⁵⁷ (Human Rights League)	- Legal advice	This NGO specialises in providing legal counselling, information or representation in legal proceedings. Most of their activities focus primarily on foreigners including children who are not Slovak nationals or children with migration background.	Funding through EU funds Other funds (e.g.grants)
<i>(add rows as needed)</i>			
Please indicate if any child participation or feedback mechanisms are part of child protection services.			
<p>Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on the socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship¹⁵⁸ contains several provisions that the child's opinion should be detected and if possible, also taken into account when carrying out the socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship.</p> <p>For instance,</p> <p>- the body of socio-legal protection when performing the role of collision guardian should take into account also the opinion of the child (Section 20, para (2)),</p>			

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.hrl.sk/sk>

¹⁵⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

- the body of socio-legal protection shall provide the child with the necessary assistance to enable him/her to express his/her opinion if the child is interested. This provision concerns the detecting the opinion of the child for the purpose of non-dispute civil proceedings (Section 21),

- the opinion of the child shall as be taken into account when preparing for and considering the substitute family care (Section 33, para (4)),

- the opinion of the unaccompanied minor shall be detected before execution actions for the purpose of family reunification or his/her relocation, his/her return to the country where he/he is habitually staying, or other specific legal acts taken (Section 50),

- the Centre for children and families shall take into account the child's opinion when setting the place, time and other circumstances of the meetings of the child with his/her parents (Section 53) in case of the child placed in the Centre for the children and families. The Centre shall also enable the child to express his/her opinion about the provision of pocket money he/she gets (Section 66), etc.

As for the other mechanisms of participation of the children and getting their feedback when providing the services in the area of protection of children, the individual service providers in the area of protection children may have their own mechanisms and procedures.

2.2. Civil society organisations active in the area of child protection. Please consider also including information on the role of religious institutions and groups active in the area of child protection.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.2.1. Is there a registry of civil society organisations operating in the child protection area?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly provide information on the legislative-regulatory framework and the responsible authority.</p>	x		<p>The registry is administered by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family which is also responsible for the accreditation procedure¹⁵⁹. The subjects are registered in compliance with the Law no. 305/2005 Coll.¹⁶⁰</p>
<p>2.2.2. Is there a legal obligation for the accrediting; licensing; registering; inspecting the activity of any type of civil society organisations, e. g. NGOs, charities, church organisations, etc. in the area of child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, which is the responsible authority? How frequent are reviews and inspections?</p>	x		<p>The subjects are accredited in compliance with the Law no. 305/2005.¹⁶¹ The accreditations are granted, extended, altered and revoked by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family after the previous statement of the Accreditation commission which is established by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The accreditations are granted for a maximum of five years. If accredited, the subjects can ask for financing of their activities in socio-legal protection and social guardianship of children from public funds.</p>
<p>2.2.3. Are there cooperation agreements/partnerships between government and the civil society at national or local level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, What is the prevalence of this practice?</p> <p>Please provide <u>indicative examples</u> and information regarding the main</p>		x	

¹⁵⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*), [List of accredited subjects – Socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship](#) (*Zoznam akreditovaných subjektov – sociálnoprávna ochrana detí a sociálna kuratela*).

¹⁶⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

¹⁶¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005, Part 7.

areas covered, type of services targeted, and financial aspects of such partnerships (i.e. if done in view of accessing EU funds).			
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2.3. Inter-agency cooperation in the area of child protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.3.1. Is there <u>coordination between national, regional, or local authorities</u> in developing and implementing policies and legislation in the area of child protection?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, how is this done? Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p><u>For example</u>, is this cooperation – coordination regulated by the legislative framework? Does cooperation take place ad hoc, e.g. addressing specific issues and on specific thematic areas of interest or is it a key feature of the system?</p>	x		<p>The main structure established for the purpose of coordination of actors in the area of protection of children from different areas and levels is the Committee for Children and Youth. However, this Committee has rather advisory role and is not an executive public authority (for more details please see part 2.1 of this report). The coordination function of the Committee is specified in its Statute¹⁶².</p> <p>The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children is responsible for coordination of other ministries, public authorities, municipal and regional self-governments, educational institutions, health-care providers, expert institutions and NGOs in the area of protection of children against violence. Its role is specified by the organisational order of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family¹⁶³. In 2017, the position of regional coordinator of protection of children against violence was established at the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family within the national project Supporting the protection of children from violence (<i>Podpora ochrany detí pred násilím</i>)¹⁶⁴. The regional coordinators are</p>

¹⁶² Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*), [Statute of the Committee for Children and Youth](#) (*Štatút výboru pre deti a mládež*), 27 May 2022.

¹⁶³ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2023), [The full text of the organizational order of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 5/2023 of 19 January 2023](#) (*Úplné znenie organizačného poriadku Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 5/2023 z 19. januára 2023*).

¹⁶⁴ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), [Národný projekt Podpora ochrany detí pred násilím](#).

		<p>responsible for establishing and developing the communication among actors active in protection of children from violence on the regional level. They also carry out prevention activities, analyse the situation, carry out the assessment of needs of children.</p> <p>Certain coordination between national and regional level is secured by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and its subordinated Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in regions. Their main role is to implement policies in area of social affairs involving the socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship¹⁶⁵.</p> <p>The valid legislation does not define any other structure of coordination of actors from national, regional and local level. The Law no. 305/2005 Coll.¹⁶⁶ specifies rather bilateral forms of cooperation between different actors involved in protection of children, however, does not mention any coordinating structure¹⁶⁷.</p>
<p>2.3.2. Is there inter-agency cooperation between the relevant actors having responsibility in the area of child protection (including civil society organisations)?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please mention <u>how this is done</u> (for examples are there standing inter-agency committees or meetings, are digital tools used?). Which actor has a leading role?</p>	x	<p>The inter-agency coordination takes place on the level of the Committee for Children and Youth. The members of Committee involve the representatives of ministries responsible for areas related to the child protection (i.e. ministries of foreign affairs, education, social affairs, culture, healthcare, and interior), municipal self-governments (Association of Slovak Towns and Villages) and regional self-governments (Association of Self-Governing Regions SK8), non-governmental organisations, human rights institutions (e.g. Public Defender of Rights, Slovak</p>

¹⁶⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 453/2003 Coll. on state administration bodies in the field of social affairs and employment services, as amended](#) (Zákon č.453/2003 o orgánoch štátnej správy v oblasti sociálnych vecí a služieb zamestnanosti v znení neskorších predpisov), 30 October 2003.

¹⁶⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁶⁷ Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (*Národné koordinačné stredisko pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch*) (2018), [Subjects working in the field of protecting children from violence](#) (*Subjekty pôsobiace v oblasti ochrany detí pred násilím*).

		<p>National Human Rights Centre, Commissioner for Children) and the Office of Attorney General.¹⁶⁸</p> <p>Another structure for inter-agency cooperation is the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children which is one of the departments of the Section of family policy of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family¹⁶⁹. On the regional level, the positions of coordinator of protection of children from violence have been established to coordinate the activities of various actors active in protection of children against violence.</p>
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2.3.3. What are the main challenges regarding effective cooperation and coordination? (For example, lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and roles of actors, overlaps of responsibilities, and communication between organisations is not adequately structured and resourced)?

In the reporting period, there have been new structures established for cooperation and coordination of the actors involved in protection of children.

First, the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children was established within the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family that support the communication and coordination of actors from different areas involving ministries, human rights institutions, regional and local municipalities, NGOs, etc. On the regional level, the position of regional coordinators of protection of children from violence has been established, their main role is to establish, develop and support the communication of the actors (bodies of socio-legal protection of children, police, prosecution, health care providers, schools and educational institutions and others) involved in the protection of children from violence on the regional level. The frame for the goals, measures and activities carried out on the regional level is set by the National strategy of the protection of children from violence¹⁷⁰. On a yearly basis, an evaluation report on the implementation of the National strategy of the protection of children from violence is discussed by the Government, however, an assessment of the functioning of the coordination structure is not included in the reports.

¹⁶⁸ Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (Výbor pre deti a mládež), [The list of all members of the Committee](#).

¹⁶⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR) (2023), [The full text of the organizational order of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family no. 5/2023 of 19 January 2023](#) (Úplné znenie organizačného poriadku Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny č. 5/2023 z 19. januára 2023).

¹⁷⁰ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR) (2014), [National strategy of the protection of children from violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím).

Question	YES	NO	Comments
2.3.4. Are child protection authorities engaging in <u>transnational cooperation</u> in the area of child protection, for example with regards to missing children, parental abduction, or migrant children?	x		As for transnational cooperation, according to the Law no. 305/2005 Coll., the Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth is responsible for international cooperation in the area of child protection ¹⁷¹ .
<p>If <u>yes</u>, please briefly comment and include information on transnational agreements-protocols of cooperation as well as on the interaction between child protection authorities and other actors involved in transnational cooperation processes, for example law enforcement and judicial authorities, migration authorities, social services, Central Authorities under Brussels IIbis Regulation/Hague Convention, consular or diplomatic authorities. Are there any challenges relating to transnational cooperation? Are the challenges different for cross-border cases among EU countries or with third countries?</p> <p>Please provide information on main relevant agreements – cooperation schemes in two of the following areas: missing children, parental abduction, inter-country adoption, migrant children (family tracing-family reunification –return-relocation).</p>			
<p>The Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth fulfils tasks related to implementation of international conventions and legal rules of the European Union in the field of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - claiming maintenance, - cross-border abductions of children, - cross-border adoptions of children - socio-legal protection of children with respect to foreign subjects. <p>It also provides free legal advice in the field of family law with a foreign element, primarily in the field of alimony, care of minor children and in the field of adoption.</p> <p>As for the international cooperation, the Centre cooperates with receiving authorities and sending authorities of contracting states abroad, with central authorities of contracting states abroad, embassies, central authorities of state administration, banks, branches of foreign banks, local government authorities, local self-government authorities and accredited entities¹⁷².</p>			

¹⁷¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálno-právnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁷² Information published on [the website](#) of the Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth.

In its Annual reports, the Centre summarizes its activities within the respective year and describes the legal basis of its activities¹⁷³.

As for **the parental abductions**, in its Annual report for 2021¹⁷⁴, the Centre summarizes the legal basis of their mandate and responsibilities in this area. The Centre cooperates with central state administration bodies of the other state where the concerned child is present. According to the Centre, the quality of cooperation and the possibility of securing the child's return varies from country to country. The duration of the procedure, the possibilities of filing an appeal against the decision on (non)ordering return and the suspensory effect of the filed appeal also differ. The Annual report does not mention any agreements or protocols concluded with the cooperating states in the area of abductions of children.

Regarding **the inter-country adoptions**, the Centre is the state body responsible for carrying out tasks in accordance with the Convention on protection of children and cooperating in respect of intercountry adoption. As for inter-country adoptions, the Centre also follows the Procedure laid down by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family from 27 September 2018 which regulates the position, powers and procedure of the Centre in the process of interstate adoption of children with habitual residence in the Slovak Republic and outside the territory of the Slovak Republic.

According to the Annual report for 2021¹⁷⁵, the Centre is a party to bilateral agreements, the so-called protocols on cooperation in inter-country adoptions, which are signed between the central authorities of the state of origin and the receiving state. In accordance with the valid protocols in 2021, there was active cooperation between the Centre and France, San Marino, Andorra, Malta, Holland, Monaco, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden, Italy and Luxemburg. The Centre communicates about possible cooperation in inter-state adoption with U.S., Cyprus and Spain. In case of these countries, Slovakia is in position of the state of origin. As a receiving state, Slovakia concluded an agreement with Philippines. As for challenges, the Centre considers the situation of the child and potential parents only on the basis of the documents, their employees have no opportunity to meet with the child, potential parents or visit them in their environments. According to the Centre, it is being considered to change this practice in order to improve mutual information and verify the reported facts. The number of inter-country adoption is stable, according to the Annual report, around 3-4 cases per year.

¹⁷³ Slovakia, Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth (*Centrum pre medzinárodnoprávnú ochranu detí a mládeže*) (2022), [Annual report on the activities of the Center for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth for 2021](#) (*Výročná správa o činnosti Centra pre medzinárodnoprávnú ochranu detí a mládeže za rok 2021*).

¹⁷⁴ Slovakia, Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth (*Centrum pre medzinárodnoprávnú ochranu detí a mládeže*) (2022), [Annual report on the activities of the Center for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth for 2021](#) (*Výročná správa o činnosti Centra pre medzinárodnoprávnú ochranu detí a mládeže za rok 2021*).

¹⁷⁵ Slovakia, Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth (*Centrum pre medzinárodnoprávnú ochranu detí a mládeže*) (2022), [Annual report on the activities of the Center for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth for 2021](#) (*Výročná správa o činnosti Centra pre medzinárodnoprávnú ochranu detí a mládeže za rok 2021*).

2.4. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection governance, coordination structures, and services in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

When compared to the situation in the governance, coordination structures and services in the area of protection of children in 2014 a shift is visible in terms of new institutions have been established as well as coordination structures, there are also changes in the provision of services.

As already mentioned above, the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children has been established within the organization structure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family which has important role in coordinating other ministries, public authorities, regional and local governments etc. in the area of protection of children from violence. In addition, the positions of coordinators of protection of children from violence have been established in regions to initiate and develop the communication and cooperation of actors on the regional/local level.

As for changes in services, the children's homes, crises centres and other facilities that provided the services in socio-legal protection of children have been transformed into the Centres for Children and Families. The newly established centres started to provide broader range of service to families and children also involving the outpatient and field services. According to an evaluation study by the Institute for the Research of Labour and Family¹⁷⁶, the transformation of children's homes into centre for children and families is seen by various actors of this change as positive development. However, some challenges still persist, for instance, an earlier identification of families in crises is needed, additional personal and technical support of the teams providing field services is required, the special pedagogues and more psychologists should be involved in teams providing services in the field and the cooperation of the centres and municipalities should be strengthened. Additional services are also needed, mainly in the area of housing, since many families tackle with the problem of not having housing at all or having inadequate housing.

As for the quality of services provided by various entities active in socio-legal protection of children, the establishment of the Inspection in Social Affairs which deals also with the inspection of subjects providing services in socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship can be seen as an important change. However, the Inspection in social affairs has been established only recently (at the end of 2022) therefore it is too early to evaluate on its operation.

The changes in coordination of various actors of protection of children have not been sufficiently evaluated and reflected so far. This could be seen as a challenge for the upcoming period to assess on

¹⁷⁶ Institute for the Research of Labour and Family (*Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny*)(2022), [Evaluation of experiences with the transformation of facilities implementing measures of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship](#) (*Vyhodnotenie skúseností s transformáciou zariadení vykonávajúcich opatrenia sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately*).

the effectiveness of the changes introduced in establishing new institutions and structures of coordination in the area of protection of children.

2.5. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in governance, coordination structures, and services that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

The establishment of Centres for Children and Families and integration of field and outpatient services for children and families into their activities can be considered as a promising practice since as of this change, the assistance and services for children and families at risk are more accessible in the regions as it was before this change.

3. Capacities (human and financial resources)

3.1. Information on budget allocation and funding

Question	YES	NO	Comments
3.1.1. Is budget allocation on child protection incorporated into legislative and policy instruments?	x		The basic instrument is the State Budget of the Slovak Republic, adopted by law for the particular year. The Operational Programmes can also be considered as an instrument through which the Slovak Republic has/can draw funds from the sources of European Union for various policies, including policies to promote child protection (for various ministries – The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Ministry of Health, The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family). ¹⁷⁷ The eight chapter of the Law No. 305/2005 on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship outlines various models of financing measures of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship. ¹⁷⁸
3.1.2. Is the budget allocated to child protection (alternatively on children’s rights or on social welfare) clearly specified in the annual national budget? Please refer to the specific budget item allocated to this in 2022?		x	State Budget Act features budgetary items entitled Care for Threatened Children, Family Support, State Centres for Children and Families, Non-state Centres for Children and Families, Prevention and rehabilitation, Foster family care, Social services support and many more cat. Unfortunately, the items fail to specify concrete sums as it is a long line of items of the main budgetary category of social inclusion to which the country’s state budget for 2022 allocated a total amount of € 3 173 986 789. ¹⁷⁹ A further more detailed redistribution of earmarked funds is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

¹⁷⁷ Information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic via email on 14 March 2023

¹⁷⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 25 May 2005.

¹⁷⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 534/2021 on State Budget for 2022](#) (Zákon č. 534/2021 Z. z. o štátnom rozpočte na rok 2022), 14 December 2021, Annex no. 4

3.1.3. What percentage of the total state budget was allocated to child protection in the last five years? If data is not available, please provide information on the budget allocated to social protection/social welfare in general.

	<i>State expenditures (thousands)</i>	<i>budget (€)</i>	<i>Expenditures allocated to social security (€ thousands)</i>	<i>Percentage share (based on calculations)</i>
2021	24 211 424		5 689 439	23,49%
2020	23 509 056		5 281 817	22,47%
2019	18 027 016		3 681 033	20,42%
2018	16 563 255		3 489 086	21,06%
2017	15 234 261		3 782 358	24,83% ¹⁸⁰

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.1.4. Is the existing budget and funding of child protection services/institutions considered sufficient <u>and</u> sustainable (as compared to only project based for a limited period of time)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national level conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the</i></p>		X	<p>N/A</p> <p>Back in 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Slovakia states that The Committee regrets the State party's decision to cancel the priority task stipulated in the National Action Plan for Children of designing and implementing a method for tracking resources allocated from the State budget for the implementation of children's rights, with a particular emphasis on children in vulnerable situations, including Roma children, and its explanation, set out in the written replies to the list of issues, that specifying funds designated to implement the Convention is not realistic and that the voluntary provision of data on the budget</p>

¹⁸⁰ Slovakia, National Accounts for years 2017-2021.

<p><i>Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>			<p>through annual collection by addressing competent institutions is sufficient.¹⁸¹</p> <p>It is evident from the Children's Commissioner's 2017 activity report and the monitoring undertaken¹⁸², even though it was not separately focused on the area of funding, that public social service providers are financially underfunded. This is particularly evidenced by the understaffing during the monitoring. In the 2019, 2020 and 2021 reports¹⁸³, the Children's Commissioner also recommends that the Centres for children and families should be provided with the personnel, financial and material resources to carry out the activities arising from the Social Welfare Act. According to the reports, the Re-education Centres are also not sufficiently materially, technically, premises, personnel and financially secured.</p>
<p>3.1.5. Do EU funds play a substantial role in the funding of the national child protection system and/or related policies?</p> <p>Please provide information on the child protection areas and related services incl. providers that use EU funds (including what type of funds for which period of time).</p>	<p>x</p>		<p>In recent years, EU funds helped finance several projects in the field of child protection:</p> <p>National project "Pilot support for increasing the efficiency of the provision of benefits and performance of measures of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship in the family environment; implementation period: 02/2014 - 11/2015. The aim of the project is to support the development of social work with clients in a family environment in the field of social assistance.¹⁸⁴</p> <p>National project Support to the deinstitutionalisation of foster care;</p>

¹⁸¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016), 'Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Slovakia', p. 2.

¹⁸² Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2018), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2017 \(Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2017\)](#).

¹⁸³ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2022), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2021 \(Správa o činnosti komisára pre deti za rok 2021\)](#).

¹⁸⁴ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), '[Národný projekt Pilotná podpora zvyšovania efektivity poskytovania dávok a výkonu opatrení SPODaSK v rodinnom prostredí](#)'

		<p>implementation period: 12/2015 - 12/2018¹⁸⁵ and National project Support for the deinstitutionalization of foster care III; implementation period: 11/2018 - 12/2022¹⁸⁶. The main aim of projects is to support the process of deinstitutionalisation of foster care or the transition from institutional to community care.</p> <p>National project Support for the development of social work in the family environment of clients in the field of social affairs and family; period of implementation: 12/2015 - 12/2020. The aim of the project is to support a holistic approach in the provision of assistance to clients of the Department of Social Affairs and Family through the development of social work in a natural environment of the clients of the individual departments of the Department of Social Affairs and Family.¹⁸⁷</p>
<p>3.1.6. Is corporate social responsibility developed at national level in relation to child protection services?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide information on major child protection national programmes and actions that are primarily funded by the private sector or by public-private schemes/synergies.</p>	x	<p>Activities aimed at corporate social responsibility in the country's private sector also focuses on protecting children and enhancing protection and implementation of the rights of the child; however, it is rather difficult to evaluate this area of private subjects' activities as there are no evaluation reports available. Therefore, we chose to mention several initiatives of the country's corporate sector we consider to be the most relevant and visible.</p> <p>The J&T Foundation has long supported various projects, initiatives and individual applicants. The long-term cooperation includes non-profit organisations with which the J&T Foundation has concluded a cooperation agreement. Individuals or (organisations) can apply for a financial contribution from the J&T Foundation. J&T Foundation provides financial, material assistance and counselling. Based on experience</p>

¹⁸⁵ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), '[Národný projekt Podpora deinštitucionalizácie náhradnej starostlivosti](#)'.

¹⁸⁶ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), '[Národný projekt Podpora deinštitucionalizácie náhradnej starostlivosti III](#)'.

¹⁸⁷ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), '[Národný projekt Podpora rozvoja sociálnej práce v rodinnom prostredí klientov v oblasti sociálnych vecí a rodiny](#)'.

		<p>from the field, it strives for systemic changes in the prevention and care of families at risk. One of the areas of support is the support of foster families who have adopted a child who cannot grow up in their biological family for any reason.¹⁸⁸</p> <p>In the long-term, Orange Foundation has been funding several organizations or projects. For example, the Orange Foundation supported the Crisis Helpline, which was set up by OZ IPčko in view of the acute needs and the enormous increase in requests for help.¹⁸⁹</p>
<p>3.1.7. Has the involvement of the private sector in child protection recently significantly increased? Are there projects or programmes receiving governmental funding which outsource protection services for children? Please include civil society organisations and private companies contracted by government/local authorities to provide services.</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please explain the changes and the reasons hereof. Please provide information on the legal provisions regulating this and on the main services / groups of children that are covered. Provide information based on indicative examples.</p>	x	<p>There are no reports about significant increase of the involvement of the private sector in child protection on national level. However, after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, many companies have been helping people fleeing the war in a big way, a large part of whom were mainly mothers with children. Several Slovak companies and entrepreneurs from the richest circles decided to contribute larger amounts of money thanks to the #KtopomůžeUkraine initiated by the Donio fundraising platform. Many entities, hotels and guesthouses contributed in other ways than financially.¹⁹⁰</p> <p>Act No. 305/2005 Coll. on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship¹⁹¹ regulates the conditions under which so-called non-state bodies can operate in the field of socio-legal protection of children , including the conditions for granting accreditation, which is a fundamental condition for the operation of non-state bodies in the field.</p> <p>Act No. 305/2005 Coll. and Regulation No. 103/2018 Coll. regulate the mechanism of</p>

¹⁸⁸ Nadacia J&T, '[NADÁCIA J&T](#)'.

¹⁸⁹ Nadaciaorange.sk, '[Krizová linka pomoci](#)'.

¹⁹⁰ Dinková, M. (2022), '[Zbierka hlási viac ako milión eur. Utečencom pomáhajú firmy aj najbohatší Slováci](#)', Forbes.sk, 9 March 2022.

¹⁹¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended \(Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov\)](#).

			<p>involvement and financing accredited bodies. They also regulate the conditions under which a state socio-legal protection of children may ensure the implementation of measures defined by law through an accredited body or in cooperation with an accredited body.</p> <p>The state socio-legal protection of children authority may provide the defined scope of measures in an ambulant or field form in Centres for Children and Families, through calls for projects by accredited entities (which are not Centres for Children and Families) and by social workers carrying out independent practice of a social worker.</p> <p>The mechanism of financing the performance of measures by accredited bodies through identified priorities with clearly defined rules and amounts of financial contributions for the performance of measures in the ambulant form and for the performance of measures in the field form is regulated by Sections 89, 89a to 89d of Act No. 305/2005 Coll.¹⁹²</p>
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3.2. Information on human resources, qualification requirements, and training

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.2.1. Are the allocated human resources in the area of child protection at all levels sufficient? (services, institutions etc.)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		x	<p>In 2015, the Institute for Work and Family Research published Exploring the Child Protection System from Violence Document named several human resource issues in the child protection system. The following findings emerged from the examination: Socio-legal protection workers reported being overburdened with necessary administrative work and a lack of staff to work directly in the field. On a day-to-day basis agenda, resulting from various work duties, handling files, solving various complaints, makes it impossible to have direct contact with children living in families where violence is present. As a result of the work organisation of socio-legal protection, there is no systematic work and several social workers</p>

¹⁹² Information provided by The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic via email on 14 March 2023.

		<p>rotate on one file of family/client. When dealing with complaints of violence in the family environment, given the organisational structure and staffing, it is not possible to follow up all families where situations of neglect, truancy and violence occur. If the socio-legal protection service is understaffed, does not work systematically with the family and does not follow the latest developments, the family's problems may be exacerbated again. In the current organisation of the workload, situations arise in which given the personnel situation, socio-legal protection extinguishes only the most acute cases acutely and there is no room for primary or tertiary prevention. There is also a high turnover of socio-legal protection staff.¹⁹³</p> <p>Also the employee of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has highlighted several issues. There are lacking capacities in the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as the number of cases per worker is too high. There is high fluctuation of the employees which can be connected to the low financial reward.¹⁹⁴ Also, the Commissioner for Children emphasize in her report the need to increase the wage of the workers of the body of socio- legal protection of children and social guardianship as the fluctuation influence the functioning of the body.¹⁹⁵ The employee of Ministry of Labours, Social Affairs and Family has proposed that there needs to be set quotas on the personal, professional capacities which the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family should possess.¹⁹⁶</p> <p>Many of the Children's Commissioner's reports state that family centres, social services and re-education centres are understaffed. Please see section 3.1.4.</p>
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¹⁹³ Slovakia, Institute for Work and Family Research (*Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny*) (2015), '[Skúmanie systému ochrany detí pred násilím](#)'.

¹⁹⁴ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

¹⁹⁵ Slovakia, Office of the Commissioner for Children (*Úrad komisára pre deti*) (2022) '[Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2021](#)', February 2022.

¹⁹⁶ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

		<p>Both the 2017¹⁹⁷ and 2019¹⁹⁸ Updates of the National Strategy on the Protection of Children Against Violence state that in practice there is a significant understaffing of all actors and a high level of administrative burden. The baseline outputs also mention staffing and financial undersizing of sub-policies for the protection of children from violence.</p>
<p>3.2.2. Are the allocated human resources competent in the area of child protection and appropriately trained?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The Institute for Work and Family Research in its publication Exploring the Child Protection System from Violence Document named also several issues in the child protection system related to training and competences: The publication states, inter alia, that Collision guardians would improve their situation with further legal education. Collision guardians do not have the minimum legal knowledge, they supplement their knowledge by self-study without professional guidance, on the fly, and are often sent to court hearings without any previous experience. Current social protection practice lacks specific guidelines on what to do when violence against children is suspected. There are internal standards on CAN syndrome. There may also be a lack of knowledge or use of the legislation in municipalities, where there is only the formal side of the legislation, without application practice. In real child protection, it is not used or underused. In practice, there may also be situations where the social protection departments themselves may not be aware of the legal options available to them when dealing with child protection. In the law</p> <p>describes and defines the legal instruments that can be used for child protection in the framework of the coordination of socio-legal protection measures for children. However, these do not have to be handled by socio-legal</p>

197 Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2017), Update of National strategy on the protection of children against violence (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), 2017.

198 Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2019), Update of National strategy on the protection of children against violence (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), 2019.

		<p>protection departments protection are always sufficiently familiar with them.¹⁹⁹</p> <p>The obligation of regular supervision directly results from the law for workers of children's homes and crisis centres, workers of socio-legal protection and social guardianship of labour, social affairs and family offices and workers of social service institutions. Supervision is a method of continuous development of the helping professional's competence with the help of a qualified supervisor.²⁰⁰</p> <p>The information on the implementation of the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence and on the activities of the National Coordination Centre for addressing the issue of violence against children states that in order to improve the quality of the content of work and internal processes in the institutions for socio-legal protection of children it is necessary to continuously create conditions for systematic lifelong learning of employees and deepening their expertise associated with the acquisition of the necessary skills. Centres for Children and Families have developed Professional Development Plans and Annual Training Plans. At regular intervals, working meetings are organised for the staff of the Centres for Children and Families, thematically focused on the areas of work with families and on the professional procedures for working with individual specific problems.²⁰¹</p> <p>In 2018²⁰² and 2019²⁰³ reports, the Children's Commissioner has published findings that there</p>
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¹⁹⁹ Slovakia, Institute for Work and Family Research (*Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny*) (2015), '[Skúmanie systému ochrany detí pred násilím](#)'.

²⁰⁰ Asociácia supervízorov a sociálnych poradcov, '[Supervízia](#)'.

²⁰¹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), '[Informácia o napĺňaní strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti Národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch](#)', 24 September 2021.

²⁰² Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2019), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2017 \(Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2018\)](#).

²⁰³ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2020), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2017 \(Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2019\)](#).

		<p>are a large number of children who have experienced mistreatment in Centres for Children and Families by professionals. In such cases, she said, it is a failure of the professional who must be prepared to deal adequately with the situations that arise and unprofessional treatment is therefore intolerable. In her annual reports, she repeatedly recommends that systematic staff training in all areas be provided in accordance with the needs of the Centres for Children and Families.</p>
<p>3.2.3. Is there a <u>compulsory certification or licencing</u> process for social workers and other professionals who work for child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly describe the process.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Conditions under which socio-legal protection and social guardianship measures may be carried out, including the conditions for the provision of care in social-legal protection of children and guardianship institutions, are regulated mainly by:</p> <p>A, Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship and on Amendments. The qualification requirements for employees of departments of socio-legal protection and social guardianship at offices of labour, social affairs and family are stipulated by Section 93 of the Law No. The law circumscribes the field of study as well as the minimum education status required of social workers. Sections 77 to 86 of the Act specify the conditions for accreditation for individuals or entities to carry out social and legal protection measures for children. Article 79 of the law stipulates that accreditation applicants as well as persons they intend to employ must comply with qualification requirements (Paragraph 1, letters b) and c); Paragraph 2, letter b)). Qualification requirements includes the completion of relevant university studies, knowledge of the law and generally applicable legislation, knowledge of specific regulations and knowledge of the principles of child protection, prevention, prevention of the causes of the emergence and aggravation of negative phenomena and processes in society, depending on the measure for which accreditation is sought. The accreditation applicants must demonstrate their compliance with the qualification requirements by submitting the required documents and passing an interview before the accreditation commission (Article 82). The accreditation is granted for the</p>

			<p>maximum of five years (Article 83, Paragraph 2); after this period expires, the accreditation holder must apply for renewal.²⁰⁴</p> <p>B, Decree No 103/2018 implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and on Social Guardianship and on amendment and supplementation of certain acts. The Decree sets out the essentials of the Centre for Children and Families programme and the specialised programme of the Centre for Children and Families and only sets out the number of staff and the professional structure required.²⁰⁵</p> <p>C, Act No. 219/2014 Coll. on Social Work and on conditions for the performance of certain professional activities in the field of social affairs and family and on amendment and supplementation of some 219/2014 Coll.). This Act establishes in Sections 4 to 13 the professional competence for the performance of social work, the requirements of the permit for the independent practice of a social worker and the conditions and professional competence for the performance of certain professional activities in the field of social affairs and the family. There are no child-specific skills and experiences among the criteria.</p>
<p>3.2.4. Are there any <u>selection criteria</u> (for example qualification requirements) and <u>vetting procedures</u> for volunteers working with children in various areas?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>		x	<p>The conditions for volunteering are regulated by Act No 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering and volunteering is only an activity carried out in accordance with this Act based on a contract on volunteering. The activities that can be carried out by volunteers in the field of socio-legal protection of children include e.g. accompanying children to activities outside the Centres for Children and Families, leisure</p>

²⁰⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social suardianshipas amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov).

²⁰⁵ Slovakia, '[Decree no. 103/2018 on implementing certain provisions of law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and on social guardianship and on amendment and supplementation of certain acts](#)' (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov).

		<p>activities with children, social activities, courses, implementation of various educational activities (workshops, lectures, courses), etc. Volunteers cannot provide direct provision of professional services regulated by Act No. 305/2005 Coll. ²⁰⁶ on Socio-Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship. ²⁰⁷</p> <p>It is not specified by law whether criminal records are required. Volunteers cannot carry out professional activities.</p>
<p>3.2.5. Is there <u>regular training</u> on issues related to the identification, referral, and intervention for children delivered to specialists involved in this area?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please include information on the training of law enforcement officials (judges, persecutors, police), health and education personnel (doctors, nurses, teachers, school counsellors).</p> <p>Please provide information on the mandatory nature of training, its frequency, funding, if it relates to specific needs of children, etc.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Police officers assigned to the criminal police departments of district and regional headquarters regularly participate in training courses on violence against children. This includes training sessions on cybercrime in this area and on the issue of youth crime and crimes against youth. training of Police Force officers in dealing with child pornography is also carried out annually. Within the framework of the project "Special interrogation rooms for child victims and other particularly vulnerable victims of crime", accredited education consisting of training and professional training of Police Corps officers.</p> <p>Further training of health professionals who come into contact with children on a regular basis on the protection and rights of the child, the prevention, identification and addressing of violence against children in all its forms, is provided as a <u>priority through specialisation studies</u>.</p> <p>The training of teaching and professional staff is provided through accredited training programmes and one-off training activities that correspond to the theme of protection of children from violence, prevention of violence against children, human rights, the rights of the child, etc.</p>

²⁰⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov).

²⁰⁷ Information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic via email on 14 March 2023.

		<p>In the field of prevention and education of judges, the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Academy of the Slovak Republic have organised a number of educational and discussion activities, which were, among other things, devoted to the issues of violence against children.²⁰⁸</p>
<p>3.2.6. Are child rights and child protection topics included in the curriculum of studies for professionals other than social workers and psychologists involved in child protection systems? (Please include information regarding law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, health, and education personnel)</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Within the framework of the training of Police Force officers, the teachers of the Police Force Secondary Vocational School and the teachers of the Police Force Academy carry out a constant check of the compliance of the curricula with the legislation in force. The school curricula, whether basic police training or specialised police training, include the issue of violence against children.</p> <p>In the field of health care, child protection is covered in the minimum standards for the specialisation study programmes in the following fields: medicine, paediatrics, paediatric surgery, gynaecology and childbirth and paediatric gynaecology, nursing, paediatric nursing, midwifery, midwifery, midwifery and care of women in the family and the community, and in the health profession of psychologist and in the specialisation field of clinical psychology.²⁰⁹</p> <p>As far as it concerns legal professions, child protection and child rights is a part of some subjects. There is no specific subject on child protection, an element of children's rights and protection may be found in subjects such as Criminal Law, Family Relations and Protection of Human Rights.²¹⁰</p>

²⁰⁸ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR) (2021), '[Informácia o naplňaní strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti Národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch](#)', 24 September 2021.

²⁰⁹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR) (2021), '[Informácia o naplňaní strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti Národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch](#)', 24 September 2021.

²¹⁰ Študijné plány: bakalársky a magisterský študijný program.

<p>3.2.7. Are there <u>joint training activities</u> involving professionals and personnel from various disciplines in place?</p> <p>Please provide some examples.</p>	x	<p>Education in the field of child protection from violence (under the National Coordination Centre for addressing violence against children) is conducted at the national level - there is an established programme of work with juvenile perpetrators. This programme is long-term (112 hours of training spread over the year) and is attended annually by staff working with children who perpetrate violence (probation officers, educators, social workers, psychologists...). This training is carried out with a budget of approximately €4200 per year (from the Ministry's budget).</p> <p>Training in the field of child protection from violence also takes place at national level and is carried out by child protection coordinators. Each coordinator provides 2 multidisciplinary meetings per year in his/her territorial district. The training is provided by external experts and is multidisciplinary, i.e. it is provided to a wider professional public: teachers, social workers, police officers, prosecutors, judges, doctors, etc. The training is set up based on the needs of the participants and is covered by the budget of the National Project for the Support of the Protection of Children against Violence.²¹¹</p>
<p>3.2.8. Outline briefly the <u>main challenges and/ or gaps relating to human resources, qualification requirements and training</u> underlined the relevant authorities and/ or child protection civil society organisations.</p>	<p>There are lacking capacities in the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as the number of cases per worker is too high. There is high fluctuation of the employees which can be connected to the low financial reward.</p>	

3.3. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection capacities in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

²¹¹ Information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic via email on 14 March 2023.

In the practice of child protection, there is a significant understaffing of various entities implementing social and legal protection of children. Staff face a huge administrative burden and there is a high turnover. There is also insufficient funding, which is lacking in this sphere. The resources used by the state for child protection are not clearly defined in the state budget.

3.4. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection capacities that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

N/A

4. Care

4.1. Prevention measures and services

4.1.1. Please provide information on the interaction between the child protection system and the social welfare and social protection system in place. Is there an inherent coordination of measures and interventions? Are responsible authorities and service providers the same or different?

The children's rights protection in Slovakia is regulated mainly by two legal norms- Act no. 36/2005 Coll. Family Act²¹² and Act no. 305/2005 on Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship.²¹³ As a consequence of the latter being the law on "social and legal" protection of children, the biggest share of responsibility for children's rights protection is in the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (later "Ministry of Labour"). The Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Custody (later "Act on social and legal protection of Children") is the principal law that also implements the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that the two systems of "protection" and "social protection" are covered by the same law whose enforcement is in the competence of one main state body of social and legal protection of children- the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (later "Office of Labour"). The social and legal protection of children in Slovakia is the legal instrument that arises from Slovakia's international commitments and aims to protect the human rights and freedoms of the part of the society which, due to its vulnerability and other particularities, deserves extraordinary attention and protection. Therefore, the main aim of the law is to create the conditions for systemic measures and solutions within the field of children's and youth's rights protection. When enforcing children's rights, the law counts with the wider cooperation of relevant subjects. However, the key responsibility lies on the Office of Labour.

The Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children also defines the responsibilities of other state bodies and institutions involved in children's rights protection. The Central Office of Labour, the Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth, municipalities, higher territorial units, accredited legal person, natural person or other accredited subjects (e.g. NGOs), that pursue the social and legal protection of children and social custody as under this Act, are responsible to prevent any threat or violation of children's rights.²¹⁴ The Ministry of Labour coordinates the activities of all above mentioned actors.

4.1.2. Is there evidence that families are supported in their role of primary caregivers? Is the primary position of families in child caregiving and protection recognised and supported through universal and targeted services and through every stage of the intervention, particularly through prevention? Which type of support (incl. financial, medical, psycho/social advice, legal advice, care staff, care equipment, guidance and training etc.) is available to families in need.

²¹² Slovakia, [Law no. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 11 February 2005.

²¹³ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²¹⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §73, 25 May 2005.

Article 3 of the Law on family explicitly states that "a stable family environment is the most suitable for the comprehensive and harmonious development of the child. Society shall provide not only its protection but also the necessary care for parenthood, in particular by providing material support to parents and assistance in the exercise of parental rights and duties."²¹⁵ Paragraph 30 also stipulates that the parents have a decisive role in the upbringing and care of the child.²¹⁶ This principle was introduced into family law by the 2015 amendment to the Family Law Act.²¹⁷

Accordingly, the Law on Social Protection stipulates that the state provides support and protection to families. A parent and a person who personally provides care for a child have the right to ask for assistance from various state administration bodies in exercising their rights and obligations, for example - a body for social protection of children and social guardianship, a municipality, a higher territorial unit, a school, a school institution and a health care provider. These authorities are obliged to provide such assistance to the parent and the person who personally cares for the child within the scope of their competence.²¹⁸

This law also comprehensively regulates the measures provided by the social protection system to prevent various crisis situations in the family and to prevent negative impacts, such as the involvement of families in various preventive programmes and trainings aimed at fulfilling parental responsibilities, promoting parenting skills or preventing negative situations. It also includes the possibility of implementing measures to work with the child directly in the family, specifically measures aimed at helping with various social, psychological, educational or other problems. These measures are primarily implemented in the natural family environment.²¹⁹

The state also provides families with the option of mediation, participation in various professional programmes, psychological counselling and other methods of helping families deal with their unfavourable life situations.²²⁰

The whole system of state social policy is focused and organised through the provision of support to families. The system of state benefits, social assistance in material need, the system of disability compensation, as well as the provision of social services is organised in Slovakia in such a way as to support families and to function as a prevention of poverty and the prevention of the removal of children from their families.²²¹

²¹⁵ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), 11 February 2005.

²¹⁶ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), § 30 11 February 2005.

²¹⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), § 30 11 February 2005.

²¹⁸ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), §9, 25 May 2005.

²¹⁹ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), §11, 25 May 2005.

²²⁰ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), §11, 25 May 2005.

²²¹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), [Šiesta periodická správa Slovenskej republiky o implementácii Dohovoru o právach](#)

4.1.3. When a child in need of care is identified, who coordinates support to the family and the child to ensure protection and prevent abuse and/ or placement of the child and how?

Support and protection for children is provided by various institutions, including in particular:

- the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
- the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Office
- local and regional municipal offices
- other accredited bodies
- social workers

The Ministry of Labour has primarily a managing and coordinating role. The Ministry manages, controls and methodologically guides the performance of state administration in the field of social protection of children and social welfare. At the same time, it coordinates the activities of municipalities, higher territorial units, accredited entities and other legal entities and natural persons operating in the field of social protection of children.²²²

An important coordinating role is also played by the Central Office for Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which coordinates the work of regional labour offices, participates in the development of policy documents, sets up measures to support families, etc. Concrete work with families is mainly carried out by the labour offices, namely

- decide on measures for families and children
- implement specific measures for work with families
- provide ongoing protection for children and families
- provide psychological and other assistance to families
- provide social counselling to families, but also to young adults in foster care
- provide children, families and adult individuals with professional assistance from specialised institutions and participation in programmes and activities organised by the municipality and other stakeholders
- assesses the situation of the child and the family, assesses the possibilities of the parents, other relatives and other close persons of the child to deal with the situation of the child and the family for the purpose of determining the level of threat to the child and determines the level of threat to the child
- draw up social work plans with the family
- coordinate the provision of assistance and social counselling to facilitate the fulfilment of the purpose of foster family care and substitute personal care and performs many other tasks to provide help and support to children and families according to law on socio - legal protection.²²³

4.1.4. What are the crisis emergency responses in place?

[dieťaťa](#), (Sixth periodic report of the Slovak Republic on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) Government Resolution No. 537/2020 of 2 September 2020.

²²² Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §72, 25 May 2005.

²²³ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §73, 25 May 2005.

The Law on Social Protection of Children also provides for emergency response. According to this law, if a child finds himself or herself without any care or if his or her life, health or favourable psychological development, physical development and social development are seriously threatened or disturbed, the authority for social-legal protection of children in whose district the child is located, is obliged to immediately file a petition with the court for ordering an urgent measure.

At the same time, the authority must ensure that the child's basic living needs are met. In the proposal for an urgent measure, it shall specify the natural person or legal entity to whom the institution proposes to entrust the child temporarily, taking into account the protection of the child's family relationships. The child protection authority shall assist the court in the placement of the child in the care of a natural person or legal entity designated by the court; the placement of the child shall be carried out in a manner appropriate to the age of the child and to the child's mental maturity.

At the same time, the authority for the social protection of children shall cooperate with the municipality and accredited entities to adjust the child's family circumstances.²²⁴

The social welfare authorities do not make official decisions in cases of temporary protection of child in need, only the courts can make official decisions in this case.²²⁵

4.2. Identification and reporting procedures

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.2.1. Is there an identification/reporting obligation foreseen in the legislation?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the relevant provisions and indicate authorities and/or individuals that have identification/reporting obligations.</p>	X		<p>According to Section 7 of the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children, everyone is obliged to notify the social and legal protection body of violations of children's rights.²²⁶</p> <p>According to the Family Law, section 37, anyone may report violations of parental obligations towards children or abuse of these obligations to a social welfare authority. Similarly, anyone may report to a social welfare authority, municipality or court that parents are unable or incapable of caring for their children.²²⁷</p> <p>Different legislation ("Section 7(1) of Act No. 305/2005 Coll. - "everyone is obliged" ; Section</p>

²²⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §27, 25 May 2005.

²²⁵ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²²⁶ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §7, 25 May 2005.

²²⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 37, 11 February 2005.

		<p>37(1) of Act No. 36/2005 Coll. on the family ("everyone may") does not cause any problems in practice. The nature of the legislation and the context must be taken into account. Whereas the Family Act (private law) regulates the authorisation (i.e. the 'permissive norm') of natural and legal persons in the section 'Relations between parents, children and other relatives', specifically in the title 'Parental rights and obligations', Act No 305/2005 Coll. (public law) is concerned with the expression of 'desired behaviour' in the general provisions of the Act (the Act does not link the obligation thus formulated with a penalty in the event of non-compliance). In the most serious cases of violations of children's rights, there is a universal obligation to report the offence, coupled with criminal consequences in the event of non-compliance²²⁸.</p> <p>The Criminal Code, provides that whoever learns that another person has committed a crime for which the law prescribes imprisonment for 10 years or more and fails to report such crime to the police shall be punished by imprisonment for up to three years.²²⁹</p>
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4.2.2. Please describe available national and/or sub-national reporting procedures for cases of abuse, exploitation, violence, harassment, discrimination, or neglect against children in all available reporting mechanisms, including, helplines and hotlines. Include the legislative and regulatory framework, actors involved (e.g. police, child protection centres, victims support organisations), and timeframe.

Please provide details such as if there a common or different procedures or helplines/hotlines for specific issues. What is the profession of the staff receiving the reporting? Is the staff competent and trained for the purpose?

As mentioned above, everyone has a duty to bring violations of children's rights to the attention of the social protection authorities.

As a reporting mechanism, the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Office has the possibility to report this fact to any Labour, Social Affairs and Family Office or to the free telephone line 0800 191 200.

The Ministry of the Interior for Victims of Crime has set up information offices where anyone can turn to for help.

²²⁸ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via persemail on 17 April 2023.

²²⁹ Slovakia, [Law Nr. 300/2005, coll. Criminal Code](#), as amended (*Zákon č.300/2005Z.Z. Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov*), §340, 15 May 2018.

The helplines are not primarily set up for reporting, but in the event of a report to any of the helplines, once the details have been made available, each helpline will distribute the assistance of the relevant rescue and police forces or social welfare authorities²³⁰. There are currently several helplines that provide advice to children themselves, but also provide the possibility for third parties to consult or report cases of violations of children's rights.

These lines are:

-linka detskej istoty (nonstop) – 116 111, www.lidi.sk

-linka detskej dôvery – 0907 401 749, odkazy@linkadeti.sk, www.linkadeti.sk

- linka dôvery Nezábudka – 0800 566, www.linkanezabudka.sk

A state-run helpline - More than a nick (nonstop online) - <https://viacakonick.gov.sk>

The National Co-ordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children has set up a 'Violence Free Childhood' website which provides relevant information as well as links to helplines - www.detstvobeznasilia.sk

Other actors:

Police - if, as part of the detection and clarification of criminal activity, a police officer discovers that a child is at risk of psychological or physical violence or is suspected of sexual abuse or violence or abuse, the police officer is obliged to immediately notify the social protection authority of the violation of the child's rights.²³¹

Schools - the Department of Education has regulated processes for reporting bullying, where the school principal is required to report incidents of bullying to law enforcement.²³²

Centres for families and children - have internal procedures and guidelines for reporting suspected or actual cases of violations of children's rights, as ordered by the founder. These documents are non-public, internal to the centre.²³³

In general, however, all state authorities and other institutions (e.g. municipalit, school, health facilities, accredited bodies) have a duty to provide immediate assistance to the child to protect health and life and to provide mediation assistance. The final recipients of the reporting are the social protection authorities and the police (who meet the qualifications for this work and are also trained in this field).²³⁴

²³⁰ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 23 February 2023.

²³¹ Slovakia, Regulation of the Minister of the Interior of the Slovak Republic on the definition of the competence of the units of the Police Corps and the units of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic in the detection of criminal offences, in the identification of their perpetrators and on the procedure in criminal proceedings (*Nariadenie ministra vnútra Slovenskej republiky ovymedzení príslušnosti útvarov Policajného zboru a útvarov Ministerstva vnútra Slovenskej republiky pri odhaľovaní trestných činov, pri zisťovaní ich páchatelov a o postupe v trestnom konaní*), art. 23a, not publicly available.

²³² Slovakia, [Directive No 36/2018 on the prevention and treatment of bullying of children and pupils in schools and school establishments](#) (*Smernica č. 36/2018 k prevencii a riešeniu šikanovania detí a žiakov v školách a školských zariadeniach*), 1 September 2018.

²³³ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 23 February 2023.

²³⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), § 8, 11 February 2005.

Within the framework of the national project Supporting the Protection of Children from Violence, the positions of regional coordinators for this protection have been established. Their basic activities include creating conditions for mutual cooperation and exchange of information between state administration bodies, the Police, schools, educational institutions, municipalities, higher territorial units, health care providers and other entities. The role of the coordination is to establish functional contacts, exchange information, form an overall picture of possible threats to the child and his/her family and set up mechanisms for effective and timely assistance to the child at risk of violence.²³⁵

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.2.3. Do children have the right to report independently?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide information on the availability of <u>age-appropriate and child-friendly</u> reporting procedures (to whom and how children can report child rights' violations and abuse). Is the anonymity and confidentiality of the child in the reporting protected? Please comment briefly.</p>	X		<p>According to Section 8 of the Act on Social and Legal Protection, a child has the right to request assistance in protecting his or her rights from a social and legal protection body for children and social curatorship, another state body that is competent to protect the rights and legally protected interests of the child, an institution, a municipality, a higher territorial unit, an accredited entity, a school, a school facility or a health care provider. All authorities, legal entities and natural persons are obliged to provide the child with immediate assistance in protecting his or her life and health, to take measures to safeguard his or her rights and legally protected interests, including by arranging such assistance. This also applies if the child cannot, because of his or her age and mental maturity, request assistance himself or herself, but through a third party.²³⁶</p> <p>The child has the right to ask for help in protecting his or her rights even without the knowledge of the parents or the person who personally cares for the child.</p> <p>Children can also make use of other forms of reporting, such as helplines, among others. However, if the child's health or life is at risk, anonymity cannot be maintained.²³⁷</p>

²³⁵ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*)(2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

²³⁶ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §8, 25 May 2005.

²³⁷ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 23 February 2023.

		<p>Helplines are not an equal to reporting to law enforcement authorities or to the authorities for social protection of children and social guardianship. Helplines are a tool to help make such a referral - i.e. they provide information to the law enforcement authorities and/or social protection authorities based on what they have learnt during the chat/phone call/otherwise or accompany the caller/writer during the process of referral to the relevant authorities. In order for a family background investigation, an assessment of the risk in which the children are or an investigation to be initiated, the authority having the competence to do so must do so.</p> <p>In the future there are plans to create child-friendly contact points for reporting violence, which should facilitate the reporting process, prevent secondary victimisation and approach the higher standards of other European countries²³⁸.</p> <p>Specific age appropriate procedures of reporting are not in place.²³⁹</p>
<p>4.2.4. Are children informed of their right to report and how they can do it? If yes, by whom and how?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>There are no specific procedures for informing children of their rights to report. Children tend to be informed of their rights in schools, but there is no systemic way of doing this.²⁴⁰</p> <p>The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children has conducted several campaigns in recent years to raise awareness about children's rights, protection from violence and reporting rights violations. These campaigns have targeted the adult general public as well as children themselves. They took place online or as part of television or radio broadcasts.²⁴¹</p>

²³⁸ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 12 April 2023.

²³⁹ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 23 February 2023.

²⁴⁰ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 23 February 2023.

²⁴¹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR)(2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (*Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím*), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014, more information on campaigns also available at the website of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children – www.detstvobeznasilia.sk.

			At present, therefore, children are not sufficiently informed about their work. The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children acknowledges this shortcoming and plans to implement a number of activities in the future, in particular to prepare materials in child-friendly language for all children and especially for children belonging to national minorities (in their mother tongue). ²⁴²
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4.2.5. What are the main challenges and/or gaps relating to identification and reporting procedures underlined by relevant authorities and/or child protection civil society organisations?

An ongoing challenge in the area of violence against children is to increase the identification of such cases and of children at risk. The National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence states that in order to address these shortcomings, it is essential to create sufficient space and opportunities for children themselves to report such cases and to increase their confidence in the protection system, which must guarantee that every reported case (not only) by a child is dealt with by the relevant responsible person/institution. In this context, attention should be paid to capacity building in support services for child victims of violence.²⁴³

According to the Director of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children, the overall theme of promoting children's rights and protection from violence (including reporting) is under-represented in public policies and is significantly under-resourced both financially and in terms of personnel.²⁴⁴

4.3. Referral procedures(s) and investigation and protection

4.3.1. Please describe the referral mechanisms in place following reporting and identification procedures.

²⁴² Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 12 April 2023.

²⁴³ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR)(2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

²⁴⁴ Information provided by the director of National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via email on 23 February 2023.

In the answer please include the legislative and regulatory framework, interagency protocols and guidelines, the actors involved and their role and responsibilities, as well as the applicable timeline. Please also specify the procedure, if different, for other groups of children (e.g. with disabilities, migrant, victim of a particular form of violence etc.)

According to the Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship²⁴⁵, upon the received notice on children's rights abuse, or in case of suspicion, state bodies, municipality, district, school, school and health facility or accredited subject are obliged to directly help the child or assist him/her in obtaining help as well as to refer the case to the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Custody under the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which is the main body of social and legal protection of children in Slovakia.²⁴⁶ The employee of the Office of Labour is responsible for assessing the family situation and needs of the child and suggests further measures, she or he becomes the manager of the case, carries out the decisions and coordinates other actors.²⁴⁷ According to the aforementioned law and internal norm²⁴⁸, after the notice, employee of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family assess the situation and determines the level of threat to the child. To verify the child's situation they can demand information from health care providers, health insurance companies, courts, institutes of the Prison and Justice Guard Corps, the Social Insurance Institution, law enforcement agencies, schools, educational institutions, district offices, other state administration bodies, municipalities and higher territorial units which are obliged to provide it. When the cooperation with other subjects, institutions or experts is needed, the Office of Labour acts as coordinator. The process of assessing the situation of the child and the family is carried out on an ongoing basis so that the level of threat to the child is determined no later than 30 days upon receipt of the notice.²⁴⁹ However, if the notice is about high risk of threat to the child's life, the preliminary assessment must be carried out immediately upon receipt of the notice and no later than 5 days.²⁵⁰ If the employees of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is prevented to check the child's situation while having the information of possible endangerment of child, they can ask the court for permission to enter the

²⁴⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁴⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁴⁷ Slovakia, Internal Norm No. 099/2018 on the procedure of the authority for social-legal protection of children and social guardianship when conducting social case work (*Interná norma č. 099/2018, Postup orgánu sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately pri vedení prípadovej sociálnej práce*), 15 October 2018.

²⁴⁸ Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 067/2012 on Social work planning in the implementation of measures of social protection of children and social guardianship](#) (*Interná norma č. 067/2012, Plánovanie sociálnej práce pri vykonávaní opatrení sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately*), 19 December 2012.

²⁴⁹ Slovakia, Internal Norm No. 099/2018 on the procedure of the authority for social-legal protection of children and social guardianship when conducting social case work (*Interná norma č. 099/2018, Postup orgánu sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately pri vedení prípadovej sociálnej práce*), 15 October 2018.

²⁵⁰ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), [Šiesta periodická správa Slovenskej republiky o implementácii Dohovoru o právach dieťaťa](#), Government Resolution No. 537/2020 of 2 September 2020.

dwelling and the court should decide within 24 hours upon receipt of proposal.²⁵¹ Upon the assessment of child's situation, the employees of Office of Labour suggests further procedure, measures and legal remedies which must ensure the protection of the child, which is necessary for the well-being and best interests of the child.²⁵² They are aimed at a child, an adult person, a family, a group and a community, in particular by means of social work, methods, techniques and procedures. There are no official guidelines that would regulate the timeframe of institution of a measure.²⁵³ Moreover, a plan of social work must be created within 2 weeks after the assessment of the level of threat to the child and in coordination with subjects participating in the solution of the situation of the child and family such as municipality, accredited subjects, centres of pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention, centres of leisure time, social service facilities, teachers or NGOs.²⁵⁴ When creating the plan, criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the activities as well as deadline for reassessing the tasks is set. The plan is regularly reevaluated according to the needs with the parents, the child and other subjects participating on the activities of the plan.²⁵⁵

According to the Section 12, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, "if it is necessary for the interest of a child, the body of the social and legal protection and social custody decides on the infliction of educational remedies, as stated in the specific provision, or the infliction of following educational remedies:

- gives notice to the child, its parents or a person who personally takes care of the child, if their behaviour threatens or disturbs child's normal mental, physical and social development;
- impose an obligation on the child, the parent or the person who personally cares for the child to undergo professional diagnostics in specialized ambulant care, if the diagnostics cannot be provided in another way,
- assigns the child with the obligation to undergo the treatment in specializes ambulant care;
- assigns the child with the obligation to undergo the educational or social program²⁵⁶

The measurements implemented by the Office of Labour can take the form ambulant or field service which can take place in the Centres for Children and Families. According to the Section 12 of the aforementioned law, the Office of Labour, is not entitled to decide on educational remedy that includes child's placement into alternative care and thus cannot remove a child from the personal

²⁵¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. *Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov*), 21 May 2015.

²⁵² ²⁵² Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. *o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

²⁵³ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affair and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

²⁵⁴ Slovakia, Internal Norm No. 099/2018 on the procedure of the authority for social-legal protection of children and social guardianship when conducting social case work (*Interná norma č. 099/2018, Postup orgánu sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately pri vedení prípadovej sociálnej práce*), 15 October 2018.

²⁵⁵ Slovakia, Internal Norm No. 099/2018 on the procedure of the authority for social-legal protection of children and social guardianship when conducting social case work (*Interná norma č. 099/2018, Postup orgánu sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately pri vedení prípadovej sociálnej práce*), 15 October 2018.

²⁵⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. *o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

care of the parents or the personal carer of the child.²⁵⁷ This process is in the competence of the courts. Hence, as Section 27 states: “If a child finds himself or herself without any care or if his or her life, health or optimal psychological, physical, and social development are seriously threatened or disturbed”, the local Office of Labour is obliged to immediately submit to the court a proposal for ordering an interim measure.²⁵⁸ According to the Code of civil non-contentious procedure, the interim measure would order that the minor will be placed temporarily, for a maximum period of six months, in the care of a natural or legal person and the court is obliged to decide on child’s placement within 24 hours.²⁵⁹ In relation to the court decision, the Centres for Children and Families have in their competence to carry out interim measure in a residential form.²⁶⁰ After the decision on interim measure placing the child to the Centre, another evaluation of the child’s and family situation need to be done within two weeks as well as other methods such as adjusting the family and social circumstances.²⁶¹ The limitation on the duration of an interim measure shall not apply, if a proposal for initiation of proceedings in the given case has been lodged.²⁶²

If the threat is not immediate but the best interests of the child collides with the interests of the parents, the court appoints the child with a collision guardian who is obliged to represent child’s best interests during the investigation as well as during court proceedings. The collision guardian is usually appointed in cooperation with the Office of Labour and upon the court requests, he/she is responsible to examine the overall situation of a child, his/her opinion, the family circumstances, housing circumstances, social circumstances, and the capacity of both parents to bring up the child personally.²⁶³ This assessment is presented at the court proceedings. After the final decision was made by the court about the alternative care, the Office of Labour submits to the court, at least once every six months, a report about the effects of the measures taken.

In the case of suspicion of a criminal offence committed against a child, it is obligatory to report the relevant facts to the Police or to the competent district prosecutor's office. Based on the court decision, or the agreement with the parents, or the child’s request, the Centres for Children and Families implement specialised programmes in field, ambulant or residential form to prevent the emergence and deepening of crisis situations of a child who is a victim of the offence of human

²⁵⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁵⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁵⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

²⁶⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁶¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁶² Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

²⁶³ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

trafficking and a child who has been abused or sexually abused.²⁶⁴ Also, if the criminal offence is committed by the child (bodily harm, damage to the property of another), the case is referred also to the law enforcement bodies and is investigated by the police and assessed by the court. In case the child's behaviour is assessed as problematic, as defined under Section 16 of Law on Social and Legal protection of Children, the Office of Labour carries out the measures of social custody and assigns the child with a custodian.²⁶⁵ According to the law, custodian is obliged to work with a child and his/her family as well as with other relevant institutions and to carry out the remedies of social custody as defined under Section 17 of the same law including the legal representation of a child.²⁶⁶ Moreover, in 2013, by the instruction of the Prosecutor General of the Slovak Republic, a specialisation of prosecutors was established to deal with the criminal activities of juveniles and persons who are not criminally responsible due to their lack of age, and crimes committed against children and violence in families. In these cases the specialised prosecutors supervise the proceeding.²⁶⁷

The most relevant legal sources affecting referral procedure are:

- Law no. 305/2005 coll. On Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship as the main legal source for social and legal protection of children aiming to “prevent critical situations in family, protect the rights of the child and its legal interests, prevent the development and repeated occurrence of disturbances in mental development of a child as well as natural person and to prevent socially pathological effects”;²⁶⁸
- Law no. 36/2005 coll. On Family that defines the relationship between the child and its parents as well as their responsibilities towards each other;²⁶⁹
- Law no. 161/2015 coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure that regulates the legal procedure in case of children's rights violation;

²⁶⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁶⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁶⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁶⁷ Slovakia, (2019) [‘Informácia o naplňaní strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti Národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch’](#)

²⁶⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁶⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 Z.z. o rodine a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 11 February 2005.

- Law no. 300/2005 coll. Criminal Code²⁷⁰ and Act no. 301/2005 coll. Criminal Procedure Code²⁷¹ that regulate the legal procedure in case of criminal offence committed against children or eventually by the children.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.3.2. Are there applicable standards in the form of legal provisions, guidelines, protocols, interagency agreements or regulatory frameworks regarding investigation and assessment procedures following reporting and identification procedures?	x		The investigation and assessment procedures is modified by the Law no. 305/2005 coll. on Social and Legal Protection of Children ²⁷² , Decree No. 103/2018 coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of the Law No. 305/2005 coll. ²⁷³ and internal norms ²⁷⁴ . The employees of the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children are obliged to inspect all reported cases of children's rights abuse. According to the internal norm the basis of the assessment of the situation of the child comes from: interviews with the child and his/her parents, or persons taking care of the child, neighbours, extended family, or other close persons to the child; investigation of the child's family environment, external observation of the parents' care for the child, and the child's general condition; and cooperation with other actors such as the school, kindergarten, municipality, doctor. ²⁷⁵ The main result of the assessment is the degree to which child is at risk and measure to be

²⁷⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 300/2005 Z.z. Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov), 20 May 2005.

²⁷¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 301/2015 Coll. Criminal Procedure Code, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 301/2015 Z.z. Trestný poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 24 May 2005.

²⁷² Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kurately v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁷³ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Law No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), 20 March 2018.

²⁷⁴ Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 067/2012 on Social work planning in the implementation of measures of social protection of children and social guardianship](#) (Interná norma č. 067/2012, Plánovanie sociálnej práce pri vykonávaní opatrení sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately), 19 December 2012.

²⁷⁵ Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 067/2012 on Social work planning in the implementation of measures of social protection of children and social guardianship](#) (Interná norma č. 067/2012, Plánovanie sociálnej práce pri vykonávaní opatrení sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately), 19 December 2012.

		<p>taken. There are four levels of risk institutionalized in the Decree No. 103/2018 coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Law No. 305/2005 Coll: 1) a situation without endangerment to the child's life, health, favourable psychological, physical or social development, 2) a low level of child endangerment, if the child's favourable psychological, physical or social development is or may be endangered and it is necessary to monitor the development of the child's situation; 3) a medium level of endangerment, if the child's favourable psychological, physical or social development is at risk and there is a need for increased monitoring of the child's situation; 4) a high level of endangerment, in the case, the life, health, favourable psychological, physical or social development of the child is being seriously endangered and it is necessary to continuously monitor the development of the child's situation, or in the case, the child is without any care or the child's life, health, favourable psychological, physical or social development are seriously endangered and it is necessary to take action to provide a substitute family environment, or to ensure the child's admission to the Centre for Children and Families.²⁷⁶ In addition to their evaluations, the employees of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family have also at their disposal a standardized test to improve the determination of the level of threat to the child.²⁷⁷ If the case was referred to the civil court, the time limit for conducting the informative interview is set to be 20 days from the delivery of the court's order on the appointment of the collision from the Office of Labour who represent the child in the proceedings in matters relating to the modification of parental rights and obligations.²⁷⁸</p>
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²⁷⁶ Slovakia, Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), 20 March 2018.

²⁷⁷ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

²⁷⁸ Slovakia, Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Law No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), 20 March 2018.

4.3.3. Is the assessment carried out by a multidisciplinary team of professionals?		x	<p>The main responsibility for the assessment lies on the Office of Labour which can carry out the assessment from its own initiative or at command of the court.²⁷⁹ Whether other professionals and which ones are part of the assessment is case specific and ad hoc to the situation. But usually in the process of investigation and assessment of the case various authorities are consulted or asked for information.²⁸⁰ According to the section 94, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, health care providers, health insurance companies, courts, institutes of the Prison and Justice Guard Corps, the Social Insurance Institution, law enforcement agencies, schools, educational institutions, district offices, other state administration bodies, municipalities and higher territorial units are obliged to provide information for the purpose of verifying the level of care of the child.²⁸¹ Moreover, in 2021 Central Office for Labour, Social Affairs and Family made a pilot testing of the method of family circle meetings and case conferences through trained coordinators in nine Centres for Children and Families.²⁸² Case conferences can involve in the assessment and the search for optimal solutions for the child parents, the child's extended family, the municipality, the school facility, the child's doctor, accredited entities, or other entities participating in the resolution of the child's situation. Thus, according to the situation and the decision of the involved employee of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family such multidisciplinary method can be applied for</p>

²⁷⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁸⁰ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

²⁸¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁸² Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

		<p>assessing the case.²⁸³ According to the internal norm, it is the employee of the Office of Labour who is responsible to assess the case and evaluate the level of threat to the child while using information provided by the family, school, health facility, municipality or other subjects. If the level of threat to the child cannot be clearly determined, the internal norm states that employee of the Office of Labour can use the method of case conferences for determining the threat to the child. Then according to the assessment, the multidisciplinary team of professional is appointed to create the plan and work on the activities helping the child and the family.²⁸⁴</p>
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4.3.4. Please provide information on who is responsible to investigate and assess the situation of the child and the family and how this is done. Please provide information and describe the role and responsibilities of judicial authorities in the reporting and referral procedure.

The main responsibility to assess the situation of a child is in competence of the appointed employees of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.²⁸⁵ They refer either directly to the Office of Labour, in case the assessment was carried out upon the decision of the body of social and legal protection of children, or to the court, in case they were assigned to do so by the court. After the receipt of the notice a specific employee is assigned to the case. They assess the level of endangerment of the child as stated in the Decree No. 103/2018 coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Law No. 305/2005 coll. and according to them decide on the scope and nature of the measures.²⁸⁶ The employee is eligible to personally examine the care applied for the upbringing, health, nutrition and all-round development of the child in particular by visiting the child and interviewing the child, the child's parent, another person who is personally caring for the child or a natural person who has a close relationship with the child. Moreover, the employee is eligible to find out information on the provision of care and upbringing from a school, a school establishment, a provider of general ambulant care for children and

²⁸³ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

²⁸⁴ Slovakia, Internal Norm No. 099/2018 on the procedure of the authority for social-legal protection of children and social guardianship when conducting social case work (*Interná norma č. 099/2018, Postup orgánu sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately pri vedení prípadovej sociálnej práce*), 15 October 2018.

²⁸⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kurately v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

²⁸⁶ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Law No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (*Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane*), 20 March 2018.

adolescents.²⁸⁷ If it is necessary for the purpose of proving a threat to the child's life, the child's health, inhuman or ill-treatment of the child, the employee can make a visual-sound recording and an audio recording without the consent of the present person.²⁸⁸

If a minor child is without any care or child's health and favourable development are seriously endangered or impaired, the Office of Labour is obliged to immediately submit to the court a proposal for ordering an interim measure that places the minor temporarily, for a maximum period of six months, in the care of a natural or legal person and the court should decide within 24 hours.²⁸⁹ The limitation on the duration of an interim measure shall not apply if proceedings on the case are initiated.

The Office of Labour submits proposal to the court relating to the ordering of an interim measure, ordering the institutional care or the abolition of institutional care, the imposition of an educational measure or the abolition of an educational measure imposed by a court, the execution of an intervention in parental rights and obligations, the initiation of proceedings for the fulfilment of the conditions of adoptability.²⁹⁰ The court is responsible for appointing the collision guardian who is obliged to represent child's best interests and examines child's family circumstances, housing circumstances and social circumstances for the purposes of performing the function and legal proceedings²⁹¹. The court is eligible to provide permission to enter the dwelling if the employee of the Office of Labour is prevented to check the child's situation while having the information of possible endangerment of child. Moreover, in the case of the court decision on institutional care, the Office of Labour submits to the court at least once every six months, a report on the effects of the measures taken.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.3.5. Are the roles and responsibilities of the various actors and professionals involved in these procedures (including civil society organisations) clearly	x		In Slovakia, according to the Section 1, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, the authority of the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children under the Office of Labour is to "prevent critical situations in family, protect the rights of the child and its legal interests, prevent the development and repeated

²⁸⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁸⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁸⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

²⁹⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁹¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

<p>stated in the legislative and regulatory framework?</p>		<p>occurrence of disturbances in the psychological, physical and social development of a child as well as persons of legal age and to prevent socially pathological effects".²⁹²</p> <p>The competences as well as obligations of the respective actors responsible for children's rights protection, as defined by the law, are stated in Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Section 72), bodies of social and legal protection of children (Section 73), Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth (Section 74), municipalities (Section 75), higher territorial units (Section 76) or other accredited individuals or institutions (Section 78). The civil society organizations can acquire the accreditation (as defined under Section 79 of the aforementioned law) and become part of social and legal protection of children's rights as accredited subject.²⁹³ Nevertheless, the role of the civil society organizations without being the accredited entities is not stated in the legislative and regulatory frameworks.</p> <p>The role of the Centre for Children and Family (Section 45) is composed of carrying out educational remedies, specialised programmes, re-socialisation programme, measures to prevent crisis situations and disorders in the child's psychological, physical or social development, and measure of temporarily replacing the child's natural family environment or a substitute family environment on the basis of a court decision ordering institutional care, ordering an interim measure or imposing an educational remedy.²⁹⁴</p> <p>Pursuant to the Section 20, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, the collision guardian appointed by the Office of Labour is obliged to</p>
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²⁹² Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁹³ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

²⁹⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

		<p>offer social counselling and help the children and their parents to overcome the problems and disputes, assess the family, social and household situation of a child, based on the findings suggest the changes in child's care and legally represent the child.²⁹⁵</p> <p>Similarly, the role and responsibilities of the custodian are regulated by the same role. He/she is responsible to help to protect children's rights and suggest educational remedies in case the behaviour of the child is problematic.²⁹⁶</p>
4.3.6. Are there any inter-agency cooperation protocols and agreements in place to strengthen cooperation between actors with responsibility in the referral procedure and enhance the efficiency of their actions?	x	<p>In every case of suspicion of a criminal offence committed against a child, an employee of the Office of Labour is obliged to report the relevant facts to the Police or to the competent district prosecutor's office.²⁹⁷ Moreover, the Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children states that at the request of the employee police shall provide protection to the employee and to an invited natural person when entering a dwelling on the basis of a court authorization and verification of the child's condition.²⁹⁸</p> <p>The Section 13, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, subsection (1) states that "the body of social and legal protection of children is allowed to appoint an accredited subject or private person that should assist in carrying out suggested educational remedies" and subsection (2) states that educational remedies in the form of treatment in specialised ambulant care can be</p>

²⁹⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kurately v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

²⁹⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kurately v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

²⁹⁷ Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 067/2012 on Social work planning in the implementation of measures of social protection of children and social guardianship](#) (*Interná norma č. 067/2012, Plánovanie sociálnej práce pri vykonávaní opatrení sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately*), 19 December 2012.

²⁹⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kurately v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

		<p>implemented only after recommendation of a doctor with expertise in the respective field.²⁹⁹</p> <p>If necessary, the Office of Labour acts as a coordinator of several subjects during the assessment and application of measures in the situation of an unaccompanied minor or during the implementation of social care measures for children or provides support for children who are abused, sexually abused, neglected, or there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or trafficking.³⁰⁰</p> <p>Moreover, according to the internal norm³⁰¹, during planning and fulfilment of the concrete tasks, the Office of Labour is coordinating other subjects participating in solving the child's and family situation. Depending on the situation an expert team can be created composed of employee of the Office of Labour, centres of pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention, centres of leisure time, social service facilities, healthcare providers, community worker, municipality, accredited body, NGOs or religious community and other subjects.³⁰²</p> <p>Furthermore, under the National strategy on the protection of children against violence, interagency cooperation is supported as multidisciplinary coordination meetings at local level have been organized including subjects such as the authority for social protection of children and social guardianship, facilities of social protection of children and social guardianship, municipal police, the Police Force, health care providers, teachers, prosecutors, the Office of the Commissioner for Children, representatives of municipalities and higher territorial districts,</p>
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²⁹⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

³⁰¹ Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 067/2012 on Social work planning in the implementation of measures of social protection of children and social guardianship](#) (*Interná norma č. 067/2012, Plánovanie sociálnej práce pri vykonávaní opatrení sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately*), 19 December 2012.

³⁰² Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 099/2018 on the procedure of the authority for social-legal protection of children and social guardianship when conducting social case work](#) (*Interná norma č. 099/2018, Postup orgánu sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately pri vedení prípadovej sociálnej práce*), 15 October 2018.

			<p>district courts and other non-governmental and religious organisations.³⁰³ The coordinators of the meetings are the Offices of the Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The coordination meetings are facilitated on serious cases of violence against children, to assess the situation of violence against children within its territorial jurisdiction, to improve the effectiveness of cooperation of different actors at the local level in particular situations and communicates and supports the implementation of measures taken in relation to the National strategy on the protection of children against violence at the national level.³⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the coordination meetings are not held to deal with a situation of a particular child.³⁰⁵</p>
<p>4.3.7. Is it likely that procedures will differ, depending on the migration – residential status of the child concerned? <i>Please also consider potential divergences depending on main actors involved.</i></p>		x	<p>According to the Section 5, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, all rights granted to the children as well as legal procedures are in concordance with the equal approach principle, therefore any kind of discrimination based on gender, religion, language, skin colour, (...) nationality, social status, (...) are forbidden.³⁰⁶ Also, pursuant to the Section 2 of the same Law, all measurements provided by the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Custody under the Office of Labour are carried out for a child that:</p> <p>1. has a permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic, temporary residence, temporary residence permit, permanent residence permit, tolerated stay, or the child for whom the ordinary residence cannot be determined;</p>

³⁰³ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR) (2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014, more information on campaigns also available at the website of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children – www.detstvobeznasia.sk.

³⁰⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny) (2015) [‘Koordínácia ochrany detí pred násilím’](#).

³⁰⁵ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

³⁰⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

		<p>2. is a citizen of the Slovak Republic and is in the territory of another country;</p> <p>3. is not a citizen of the Slovak Republic and is in the territory of the Slovak Republic unaccompanied by the parent or another adult person in whose personal care the child could have been placed.</p> <p>Therefore, all measurements suggested by the law apply for all children regardless their residential status, including the unaccompanied minors.</p> <p>Nevertheless, there are divergences influenced by the different residential status of a child in the case of unaccompanied minors. The detailed procedure in case of unaccompanied minors is stated under Section 29, Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children.³⁰⁷ The body of social protection of children can contact the country of child's origin and request to relocate the child to the country of residence, if it is clear that it is a safe country. Moreover, the body is eligible to propose measures for reunification to the embassy of the country in which the unaccompanied minor is not a resident but a parent or a person caring for the child is located there. It cooperates with the International Organisation for Migration in arranging the return of the unaccompanied minor to the country of origin or in arranging the departure of the unaccompanied minor to a third country, if the he or she has expressed an interest in such departure. Furthermore, it can arrange for the placement of the unaccompanied minor into a facility. The previous upbringing and cultural and religious differences are taken into account when implementing the court's residential measure. Part of the care provided by the Centre for Children and Family to an unaccompanied minor is education of the Slovak language, unless the Centre provides the education in another way. The centre shall create the conditions for the interview of the unaccompanied minor in the asylum procedure. For the purpose of professional activities and ascertaining the opinion of the</p>
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³⁰⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

			unaccompanied minor, the Centre shall provide translator to the child. ³⁰⁸
4.3.8. Are affected children heard as part of the procedures? If <u>yes</u> , are the hearings child-sensitive and designed age-appropriately and in child-friendly language? Do children receive information and support by competent and trained professionals?	x		<p>Yes, the affected children can be heard as part of the procedures. Finding out of the child's opinion is carried out by the employee of the Office of Labour based on the request of the court or on its own initiative when applying social protection according to the Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children.³⁰⁹ If a minor with ability to express the opinion is part of the court proceedings, the court takes into account the opinion of the child.³¹⁰ According to the Ministry of Justice, there is no guideline or protocol for assessing or evaluating whether a minor child has ability to express the opinion as part of the court proceedings. This ability is to be considered and evaluated by the judges themselves in the context of a particular proceeding, on the basis of their findings in the specific case.³¹¹</p> <p>If the court itself is hearing the child, the court takes into account the age of the child and intellectual maturity and according to the nature of the case, the hearing will be done without the presence of other persons.³¹² According to the Section 21 of the Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, when hearing the child's views, the child must be provided with the necessary assistance by the body of the social and legal protection and social custody and the interview must be carried out in an environment suitable or designed for this purpose.³¹³ If a child is placed in the facility and such facility has</p>

³⁰⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

³⁰⁹ Slovakia, [Internal Norm No. 014/2012 on Exercise of the function of collision guardian and related measures of social protection of children and social guardianship by the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family](#) (Interná norma č. 014/2012, *Vykonávanie funkcie kolízneho opatrovníka a súvisiacich opatrení sociálnoprávnej ochrany detí a sociálnej kurately úradmi práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*), 22 February 2012.

³¹⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. *Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov*), 21 May 2015.

³¹¹ Information provided by the Ministry of Justice upon request via email on 24 April 2023.

³¹² Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. *Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov*), 21 May 2015.

³¹³ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

			<p>established suitable conditions for the hearing the child, the process is carried out there.³¹⁴ However, the child does not have to use the right to express the opinion. The parents or personal carer must be informed about the hearing procedure of the child, but their consent is not required. An employee of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family shall make a sound recording of the child expressing the opinion.³¹⁵</p>
<p>4.3.9. Are there mental health support services available for affected children?</p> <p><i>If yes, how are services working together? How is it ensured that the child is informed and can make use of these services?</i></p>	x		<p>According to the Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children, the Office of Labour carries out counselling-psychological services and assistance for a child, an adult natural person and a family when families have specific problems and in crisis situations.³¹⁶ Moreover, the Law establishes that in case of divorce, it is necessary to provide psychological assistance also after the divorce. Also Centres for Children and Family provide psychological assistance to a child and the child can request the service by herself/himself.³¹⁷ There are also counselling and prevention centres established which provide psychological assistance for free to children when established by the local state administration in education.³¹⁸ Thus, formally the mental health services are available.</p> <p>However, according to information provided by the employee of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family the system of mental health support is very fragmented and a common health provider needs a legal consent from the legal representative of the child which can act as a</p>

³¹⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

³¹⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

³¹⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

³¹⁷ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

³¹⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní v znení neskorších predpisov), 22 May 2008.

		<p>barrier.³¹⁹ An employee of NGO Mládež ulice have mentioned another set of barriers relating to the low capacity of the Office of Labour to provide regular sessions for the child.³²⁰ Moreover, the health providers of psychological services are often paid and there is low number of clinical psychologists with contracts with insurance companies.³²¹ Thus, the access of children to systematic mental health support services is rather low.</p>
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4.3.10. What are the main challenges and gaps in the referral and investigation highlighted by relevant authorities, child protection, and civil society organisations? Briefly describe.

The employee of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has highlighted several issues which influence the procedures. Firstly, there are lacking capacities in the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as the number of cases per worker is too high.³²² Secondly, there is high fluctuation of the employees which can be connected to the low financial reward. Also, the Commissioner for Children emphasize in her report the need to increase the wage of the workers of the body of social and legal protection of children and social custody as the fluctuation influence the functioning of the body.³²³ The employee of Ministry of Labours, Social Affairs and Family has proposed that there needs to be set quotas on the personal, professional capacities which the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family should possess.³²⁴ The Commissioner for Children has concluded in her report that the activity of the collision guardians need to be improved and professionalized as they often fail in ensuring the protection of the rights and interests of the child.³²⁵

Moreover, the employee of NGO Mládež Ulice has pointed out that there is lacking mechanism for the collaboration with NGOs.³²⁶ Although the state and municipality authorities are lacking the capacities and flexibility and often are not available at given location and need to travel greater distance, the body of social and legal protection of children scarcely cooperate with the NGOs. The non-cooperation is viewed by the employee as barrier in ensuring the protection and interests of the child as NGOs possess the time capacities, are closer to the people and more flexible. The role of the NGOs is recognized in law only if they have accreditation for providing particular services as defined in the Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children.³²⁷ Moreover, NGOs can register their services

³¹⁹ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affair and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

³²⁰ Information provided by the NGO Mládež ulice via telephone on 10 March 2023.

³²¹ Information provided by the NGO Mládež ulice via telephone on 10 March 2023.

³²² Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affair and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

³²³ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2022), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2021](#) (Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2021).

³²⁴ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affair and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

³²⁵ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2022), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2021](#) (Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2021).

³²⁶ Information provided by the NGO Mládež ulice via telephone on 10 March 2023.

³²⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

but each year they need to apply for funds without the certainty of receiving the financial support.³²⁸ Hence, the lacking mechanism supporting closer collaboration with NGOs is limiting the effectiveness of the system ensuring social protection of the child.

The Commissioner for the Child as well as the employee of NGO Mládež Ulice has also pointed to the gap in the system in cases when the Office of Labour waits with requesting the court to install an interim measure and place the child in the Centre for Children and Families until it finds suitable facility, even though the Office has information on the endangerment of the child.³²⁹

4.4. Placement decisions – care orders

4.4.1. Following the investigation and assessment of the child’s situation, who is responsible to decide upon issuing a care order/decision and the placement of the child in alternative care?

Alternative care for children is defined in Slovakia as a set of various measures that replace the personal care of parents for a minor child in cases when the parents do not or cannot provide it. Alternative care takes several forms in Slovakia - in particular

- a) Entrusting the child to the personal care of another natural person (most often relatives)
- b) Foster care
- c) Institutional care (which takes the form of residential care or placement of the child in so-called professional families)

Alternative care **can only be established by a court decision** and its content consists of rights and obligations defined by law or by a court decision. In deciding which of the forms of substitute care to choose, the court shall always take into account the best interests of the minor child.³³⁰

The age at which a child should be heard is not precisely determined. The Family Law states that a minor child has the right to express his or her opinion independently and freely in all matters concerning him or her. In proceedings in which matters concerning a minor child are decided, the minor child has the right to be heard. The views of the minor child shall be given due weight appropriate to his age and maturity of mind. Thus, the law does not prescribe a precise age, but emphasises that the age and maturity of the child must be taken into account³³¹.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
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³²⁸ Information provided by the NGO Mládež ulice via telephone on 10 March 2023.

³²⁹ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2022), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2021](#) (Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2021).

³³⁰ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), § 44 11 February 2005.

³³¹ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov*), § 43, 11 February 2005.

<p>4.4.2. Are there legislative and or regulatory provisions clearly stating the criteria that should be taken into consideration in the assessment of the situation and in the decision-making process?</p> <p>Are there provisions specifying the criteria that should be considered when deciding to remove the child from its family? Are the principles of necessity and appropriateness considered?</p>	X	<p>The Family Law provides that the state may intervene in parental rights if the exercise of parental rights is obstructed by a serious obstacle and if it is in the child's best interests to do so if:</p> <p>A) They live a permanently disordered life</p> <p>B) They do not exercise their parental responsibilities at all</p> <p>(C) they fail to provide for the upbringing of the child</p> <p>If a parent abuses his or her parental rights and obligations, in particular by abusing, exploiting, neglecting or otherwise ill-treating a minor child, or seriously neglects the exercise of parental rights and obligations despite previous warnings, the court shall deprive the parent of his or her parental rights and obligations.³³²</p> <p>An important step in the assessment of the situation in families was the adoption of a decree in 2018³³³, which introduced the institute of the "child at risk rate", which is an important tool for assessing the situation of a child. On the basis of the determined degree of endangerment, procedures for working with the family and the child are further determined or decide on placement of the child in "alternative care".</p> <p>Four levels of risk have been established:</p> <p>a) No level of risk</p> <p>b) Low level of risk - the child's psychological, physical or social life is or may be at risk and it is necessary to monitor the situation in the family</p> <p>c) Medium level of risk - the child's physical, psychological or social development is more significantly at risk and the situation needs to be monitored more closely</p>
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³³² Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 38, 11 February 2005.

³³³ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), 20 March 2018.

			d) High level of risk - if the child is without any care or the child's life, health, favourable psychological development, physical development or social development are seriously endangered, and it is necessary to take action to provide an alternative family environment
4.4.3. Are there provisions requiring that the views of the child should be taken into consideration in the decision-making process? <u>If yes</u> , please specify if this is mandatory or left to the discretion of the responsible authorities, and if there are age-related requirements.	X		<p>According to the Family Act, the best interests of the minor child are the primary consideration in all matters concerning him or her. In determining and assessing the best interests of a minor child, various circumstances are taken into account, one of which is the child's opinion.³³⁴</p> <p>At the same time, paragraph 43 of the same Act states that a minor child has the right to express his or her opinion independently and freely in all matters concerning him or her. In proceedings in which matters concerning a minor child are decided, the minor child has the right to be heard. The views of the minor child shall be given due weight appropriate to his age and mental maturity.³³⁵</p> <p>The Civil Procedure Code provides that if a minor who is capable of expressing his or her own opinion is a party to the proceedings, the court shall take his or her opinion into account. The court shall ascertain the opinion of the minor in a manner appropriate to his age and maturity. According to the nature of the case, the court shall ascertain the opinion of the minor without the presence of other persons.³³⁶</p> <p>Where the child's opinion is being ascertained, the child's social protection and authority must provide the child with the necessary assistance to facilitate the process of ascertaining his or her opinion on the matter, in an environment suitable or formed for that purpose.³³⁷</p>

³³⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), Art.5, 11 February 2005.

³³⁵ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 43, 11 February 2005.

³³⁶ Slovakia, [Law No. 161/2015 Code on non – contentious civil procedures, as amended](#) (Zákon 161/2015 Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

³³⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §21, 25 May 2005.

		<p>Ascertaining the child's opinion is based on an individual approach, taking into account not only the age and mental maturity of the child, but also the nature of the situation concerning the child and the purpose of the child's opinion.</p> <p>The staff of the socio legal protection authority are continuously trained in the topic of ascertaining the child's opinion and conducting an interview with the child in a targeted way in specific training (theoretical and practical part focused on conducting an interview with the child in cases of a child in divorce/separation, with a child in a situation of foster family care, suspected ill-treatment, etc., with a focus on practical training in conducting an interview, model situations, mistakes in conducting an interview - conflict of loyalties, secondary victimisation ...).</p> <p>The child has the right to refuse the interview, to refuse to express his/her opinion - it is not his/her duty. If the child does not want the facts (all/some of them) about which he/she is talking to be known to the parent/parent, other person who cares for the child, the child's wishes are respected and, if this is not possible due to the seriousness of the information provided, it is explained and clarified to the child³³⁸.</p> <p>If, for the purposes of court proceedings, the court (if the court does not ascertain the opinion of the minor child itself) asks the authority for social-legal protection of children and social welfare to ascertain the opinion of the child, the court must specify a list of questions which are to be the subject of the ascertainment of the opinion of the minor child (Article 92(3) of Decree of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic No. 543/2005 Coll. In this case, the authority for the social protection of children and social welfare shall make an audio recording of the interview with the child. The child shall be informed of this fact - the recording itself, and if he/she does not</p>
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³³⁸ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via email interview on 17 April 2023.

			agree to the making of the sound recording, the recording shall not be made ³³⁹ .
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4.5. Types of care with focus on alternative care

Types of care existing in the country	Yes	No	Who is offering such services? (State, regional, local authorities, civil society, religious institutions)	Please make differences between the different types of care explicit
Foster care	X		<p>As described above, alternative care in Slovakia is divided into three components - substitute personal care (usually with relatives), foster care and institutional care, which takes the form of residential care and professional families.</p> <p>Foster care</p> <p>The court may entrust a child to foster care to a natural person, who must be a permanent resident of the Slovak Republic, who has full legal capacity, personal qualifications, especially health, personality and morals, is registered in the list of applicants for foster care, and by the manner of his/her life and the life of the persons living with him/her in his/her household, guarantees that he/she will carry out the foster care in the interest of the minor child.³⁴⁰</p>	
Residential – institutional care	X		<p>Residential childcare falls under the "institutional care" system. Before placing a child in residential care, the court must examine whether the child cannot be placed in substitute personal care or foster care. The court must specify in the decision ordering residential care the exact facility in which the child is to be placed.³⁴¹</p> <p>Residential care is carried out in so-called Centres for Children and Families. The child social protection authority establishes the centre as a state budget organisation. A centre may also be established by a municipality, a higher territorial unit, another legal entity or a natural person; a</p>	

³³⁹ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affair and Family via email interview on 17 April 2023.

³⁴⁰ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 48, 11 February 2005.

³⁴¹ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 54, 11 February 2005.

			centre established by another legal entity or a natural person shall carry out measures on the basis of the accreditation granted. ³⁴²
Other forms of family-based or family-like care placements	X		<p>One of the forms of residential care that formally falls under residential care, but has the form of a family environment, is the institution of the so-called "professional family". This provides care for a set number of children and young adults in a family home or flat provided by the centre or in a family home or flat of which the professional parent is the owner, co-owner, tenant³⁴³. The professional parents are also the employees of the Centre for Children and Families. As this system formally falls under residential care, the providers are the same entities as in the case (residential care).</p> <p>However, it should be stressed that residential institutions (family centres) are also usually set up to resemble a family environment as closely as possible. Childcare is thus mainly provided in self-contained groups set up in a family home, flat or other centre building, with separate catering, management and budget, a set number of self-contained groups and a set number of children and young adults in a self-contained group.³⁴⁴</p>
Supervised independent living arrangements for children		X	
Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.1. Is there data available on the number of children in care (disaggregated by type of care,	X		In 2021, 14 020 children (1.3% of the total number of children) lived outside their own family in Slovakia. There were 1,118 children in foster care and 7,042 children in alternative personal care. There were 665 children in the care of guardian. There were 5195 children in institutional care, of which 1404 were placed in professional families.

³⁴² Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §45, 25 May 2005.

³⁴³ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §45, 25 May 2005.

³⁴⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §51, 25 May 2005.

gender/age, length of placement, etc)?			More detailed data on age, sex and length of care are not available ³⁴⁵ .
4.5.2. Is there data available on the number of children placed in alternative care that disappeared and/or went missing from residential care institutions?		X	
4.5.3. Is there a <u>national registry of foster care families</u> ? How many children can be fostered in one family?	X		The social protection authority maintains a so-called "list of applicants for foster care". The law sets out the exact documents that an applicant for foster care must submit. In addition to fulfilling the conditions, applicants for foster care must undergo training for foster care. This training is carried out by social protection authorities and accredited bodies. Once they have fulfilled all the conditions, they will be included in the list of applicants for foster care. ³⁴⁶
4.5.4. How and by whom foster families are <u>recruited, vetted, and trained</u> ? Provide information on the legal framework and responsible authorities, recruitment requirements, selection criteria, reimbursement of costs, etc.			
<p>In order to become a foster parent, an individual or spouse must apply to be included on the list of applicants. Only a natural person with permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic, who has full legal capacity, personal qualifications, especially health, personality and moral qualities, and who is registered in the list of applicants for foster care, may become a foster parent. At the same time, he or she must have undergone training for foster care.³⁴⁷</p> <p>A file is kept on candidates for fostering, which includes evidence of their integrity, medical fitness, financial circumstances, etc. At the same time, this documentation shall also include a report on the specific financial and social circumstances of potential foster parents.³⁴⁸</p>			

³⁴⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

³⁴⁶ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §35-38, 25 May 2005.

³⁴⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 48, 11 February 2005.

³⁴⁸ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §35, 25 May 2005.

Prospective foster parents must undergo preparation and training. A support team is set up to prepare foster parents. At least one member of the team must have a second degree in psychology. The training for foster family care of a natural person interested in becoming a foster parent shall be carried out for at least 26 hours and may be in individual or group form. The entity carrying out the training for foster family care shall draw up a final report on the training after the training has been completed, which shall be communicated to the person concerned. The final report includes, in particular, a description of the personality of the natural person, a statement on the natural person's aptitude to bring up a child, the motivation of the natural person's interest in becoming a foster parent.³⁴⁹

The number of children per foster family is not set.

4.5.5. Are any types of care (foster homes, residential care, other form of care arrangements) monitored once children are placed therein? If so, provide information on the applicable legislative provisions on monitoring procedures. Please specify the difference between the monitoring of different types of care. How frequently are they monitored, how and by whom?

The legislation does not precisely define the control mechanisms for each type of facility. The Law on Social Protection of Children stipulates that the control of the implementation of various measures of social protection of children is mainly carried out by the social protection bodies (central office of labour, social affairs and family). Control in this area is carried out on the basis of the Act on Control in State Administration.³⁵⁰

In practice, the social welfare authorities have designated staff to monitor the progress of court-ordered measures. At the same time, the court is obliged to check the implementation of foster care once every six months. The social welfare authorities must provide the court with a report on the implementation of these measures on a regular basis every 6 months. Foster families have social workers assigned to them who meet with the foster parents on a regular basis and check on them. However, the exact mechanisms are not laid down.³⁵¹

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.6. Are children placed in foster care homes geographically <u>close to their biological families</u> , school,	X		Child protection authorities primarily look for a foster family in the region where the child lives, based on a list of applicants for foster care. Usually such a family is found - if not, applications are sent out to other regions. ³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §35, 25 May 2005.

³⁵⁰ Slovakia, [Law No 10/1996 on control in state administration](#) as amended (Zákon 10/1996 o kontrole v štátnej správe v znení neskorších predpisov), 1 January 2020.

³⁵¹ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 1 March 2023.

³⁵² Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 1 March 2023.

friends, and/or community?			
4.5.7. Is there a <u>national registry</u> of residential institutions for children? <u>If yes</u> , please provide information regarding the existent number of residential institutions and their capacity (beds).	X		In January 2023, there were 68 Centres for Children and Families in Slovakia established by the State through the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Offices and 42 such centres established by municipalities and accredited entities. Of these, 9 provide only ambulatory services. Information on the capacity of these facilities is not publicly available ³⁵³ .
4.5.8. Are there <u>accreditation and licensing procedures</u> for residential institutions in place? <u>If yes</u> , please provide information on the legislative framework, the responsible authority and procedure.	X		<p>In general, the Law on Social Protection provides for an accreditation process for all entities that carry out any measures in the protection of children's rights. This includes residential facilities. The law stipulates that a number of conditions must be met for accreditation to be granted - the integrity and professional competence of the applicant as well as of the professional staff, the developed programmes of the facilities and methods of work, the technical equipment of the facility, confirmation of appropriate hygienic conditions, written supervision programmes.³⁵⁴</p> <p>The application for accreditation is sent to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which decides on it on the basis of a prior opinion of the accreditation commission. The Accreditation Commission is established by the Minister as an advisory body to assess application for accreditation, for the extension of accreditation and for the assessment of the revocation of accreditation.</p> <p>The Accreditation Commission verifies - the truthfulness of the information provided in the application, the competence of the staff, various types of knowledge on the basis of a personal interview, etc. Accreditation is valid for a maximum of five years.³⁵⁵</p>
4.5.9. Are there <u>national applicable standards</u>	X		A decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which was adopted in 2018, very precisely defined the

³⁵³ Information on national registry of institutions is publicly available at the [website](#) of Office of Labour, Social Affairs and family.

³⁵⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §79, 25 May 2005.

³⁵⁵ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §83, 25 May 2005.

<p>relating to the operational framework of such institutions (requirements or quality standards related to the personnel, the infrastructures, the living conditions, and daily care of children)?</p>		<p>conditions and requirements for the functioning of these institutions.</p> <p>In particular, the decree defines:</p> <p>(a) Number of employees and professional structure in the professional team of the centre. The professional team of the centre consists mainly of - a social worker, a psychologist and, according to the purpose of the centre, other professional employees, in particular a special educator, a therapeutic educator, a social pedagogue, a social work assistant, a health worker.</p> <p>The decree also specifies the exact number of children per individual worker according to precisely defined conditions.</p> <p>(b) Professional activities carried out by the establishment - in particular social work, psychological support, developmental activities, preparation for education and other</p> <p>(c) Arrangement and composition of autonomous groups in the establishments</p> <p>(d) Conditions for drawing up plans for work with children</p> <p>e) Conditions for meals in the centre - financial limits according to the age of the children, frequency of meals, etc.³⁵⁶</p>
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4.5.10. How is the residential care staff recruited, vetted, and trained?

Decree 103/2018 regulates the professional profile of the staff of centres for children and families (see above). The professional competence of the staff is demonstrated in the accreditation process. The exact recruitment process is not precisely defined by law. Depending on the specific work that the staff performs, their professional competence is also assessed, which is always regulated by the relevant laws. This means that if an establishment recruits a social worker, the social worker must

³⁵⁶ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), 20 March 2018.

meet the qualifications laid down in the Social Work Act³⁵⁷, if it is a teaching staff, the conditions are laid down in the pedagogical employees act³⁵⁸, and so on.

However, there is one condition that all employees must meet, and which is also specified in the Social Protection Act - that of psychological competence. An employee of the centre who comes into personal contact with children must meet the psychological competence requirement. For this purpose, he or she must have undergone a psychological examination that is no more than one year old. The psychologist shall draw up a psychological assessment on the basis of the psychological examination. The Centre must keep a list of the psychological examinations carried out on its staff.³⁵⁹

Staff training is regulated by Decree 103/2018, which provides for training for the professional practice of alternative care in the centre. This training includes various aspects of child care - legal regulations, theory on the psychological and physical development of children, the needs of children, their rights, etc. At the same time, it is also practical training in skills for working with children, which makes up 50% of the training. The scope of this training is not specified in the decree.³⁶⁰

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.11. Are children placed in alternative care allowed to <u>lodge complaints</u> against the personnel /foster parents and care workers and report abuse or violations of their rights? Are these procedures child-friendly and	X		Decree 103/2018 stipulates that each facility must adopt a centre programme, which includes, among other things, a description of how children can, even without the centre's knowledge, apply to the child social protection and social guardianship authority, the public defender of rights, the commissioner for children, the commissioner for persons with disabilities, the court or the public prosecutor's office. ³⁶¹ In the case of foster care, we did not identify such a mechanism.

³⁵⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 219/2014 Coll. on social work and on conditions for the performance of certain professional activities in the field of social affairs and family and on amendments and supplements to certain acts](#) (Zákon č. 219/2014 Z. z. o sociálnej práci a o podmienkach na výkon niektorých odborných činností v oblasti sociálnych vecí a rodiny a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 5 August 2014.

³⁵⁸ Slovakia, [Law No. 138/2019 Coll. on pedagogical and professional staff and on amending and supplementing certain acts](#) (Zákon č. 138/2019 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), 29 May 2019.

³⁵⁹ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §58, 25 May 2005.

³⁶⁰ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), §16, 20 March 2018.

³⁶¹ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), §1, 20 March 2018.

<p>respective of confidentiality?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, briefly describe to whom and how children can lodge complaints.</p>			
<p>4.5.12. What is the <u>assistance available to adolescents that leave alternative care</u> to live independently?</p> <p>(e.g. financial, housing, vocational, educational, employment, life skills, mental health services, social or emotional)?</p> <p>Briefly describe who is responsible for such assistance?</p>	X		<p>According to a representative of the Child Protection Section of the Ministry of Labour, an important aspect is that in Slovakia young people can stay in institutions until the age of 25.³⁶²</p> <p>At the same time, there is also a financial allowance to help young people become independent. This is a one-off grant of 15 times the minimum subsistence level and is used to provide housing, housing-related items and vocational training for the young adult.³⁶³</p> <p>At the same time, the social protection authority is obliged to draw up a plan for social work with a young adult, which includes the objectives of the work, measures, defines cooperation with various other stakeholders, specific tasks and the timeframe.³⁶⁴</p> <p>According to the Family Act, the Centre for Children and Families maintains contact with the young adult on the basis of his/her consent even after his/her departure from the centre and provides him/her with the necessary counselling.³⁶⁵</p>
<p>4.5.13. What assistance is provided to families - while the child is placed to alternative care - to support the return of the child in the family? By whom? Who coordinates the assistance? Please briefly describe.</p>			
<p>Centres for children and families, in cooperation with other accredited entities and social protection bodies, are also obliged to work on the adjustment of family circumstances. To this end, they draw up a plan for social work with the family, which includes monitoring the child's psychological development, physical development and social development. At the same time, the Centre carries</p>			

³⁶² Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 1 March 2023.

³⁶³ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §68, 25 May 2005.

³⁶⁴ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act No 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), §30, 20 March 2018.

³⁶⁵ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 55, 11 February 2005.

out social work in the family on the basis of the family work plan. This work is usually carried out by a social worker who carries out 'case work' with the family. The municipality submits a report on the social situation of the child's parents to the social protection and social welfare authority at least once every six months. The report should include an assessment of the conditions for the child's return to the family environment.³⁶⁶

At the same time, two types of funds can be provided for the adjustment of family circumstances. Municipalities provide a transport allowance for the parents of children to maintain contact during their stay in the facility. Centres, in turn, provide an allowance for food during the child's stay with his or her parents in their home environment.³⁶⁷

<p>4.5.14. Is any <u>assistance provided to children and families upon return of the child in the family</u>? Briefly describe. Who is responsible for such assistance?</p> <p>Is there any monitoring and follow-up of such cases?</p> <p>Who is coordinating assistance and support?</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>4.5.15. Are decisions of placement in alternative care reviewed?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide the applicable legislative provisions. How frequently is this done? By whom?</p> <p>Are the children's views taken into consideration?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>All decisions of placement of a child in alternative care are set by a court's judgment. The court has a duty to continuously monitor the placement of the child in residential care and evaluates the findings at least twice a year.³⁶⁸</p> <p>At least once every six months, the authority for the social protection of children shall submit a report to the court on the effects of the measures taken to eliminate the reasons for which institutional care was ordered and shall inform the court of the possibilities of revoking institutional care or</p>

³⁶⁶ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §32, 25 May 2005.

³⁶⁷ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §64, 25 May 2005.

³⁶⁸ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 9 11 February 2005.

		<p>placing the child in substitute personal care, foster care or adoption.³⁶⁹</p> <p>The municipality shall submit a report on the social situation of the child's parents to the authority for social protection of children at least once every six months. The report shall include an assessment of the conditions for the child's return to the family environment.³⁷⁰</p> <p>According to the Family Act, the best interests of the minor child are the primary consideration in all matters concerning him or her. In determining and assessing the best interests of a minor child, various circumstances are taken into account, one of which is the child's opinion.³⁷¹</p> <p>Accordingly, paragraph 43 of the same Act states that a minor child has the right to express his or her opinion independently and freely in all matters concerning him or her. In proceedings in which matters concerning a minor child are decided, the minor child has the right to be heard. The views of the minor child shall be given due weight appropriate to his age and mental maturity.³⁷²</p>
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4.5.16. Is there a legal framework regarding adoption? Briefly describe the core elements and responsible authorities, also considering differences between within-country and between-country adoptions. Is private adoption permitted in the country?

The Family Law³⁷³ defines adoption in detail.

Adoption creates the same relationship between adopter and adoptee as between parents and children. Adoptive parents have the same responsibilities and the same rights and obligations as parents in raising children. Adoption is decided by the court. There must be a reasonable age difference between the adopter and the adoptee.

The law sets out the conditions for who can become an adoptive parent. The consent of the child's parents is also required for adoption (unless the law provides otherwise). If the minor child is capable of assessing the impact of the adoption, his or her consent is also required.

³⁶⁹ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §2, 25 May 2005.

³⁷⁰ Slovakia, [Law No. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane a sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §32, 25 May 2005.

³⁷¹ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), Art 5., 11 February 2005.

³⁷² Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 43, 11 February 2005.

³⁷³ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 97-103, 11 February 2005.

The consent of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic or a state administration body designated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic is required for the adoption of a minor child abroad.

Before the court decides on the adoption, the minor child must be in the care of the prospective adoptive parent for at least nine months. The costs associated with the pre-adoptive care shall be borne by the prospective adoptive parent.

The court is obliged to determine, on the basis of a medical examination, whether the state of health of the adoptee and the adoptive parents is not incompatible with the purpose of the adoption. It shall inform the adopter and the adoptee's guardian of the results of the examination and shall inform them of the purpose, content and consequences of the adoption. If it is in the child's interest, the adoptive parents may give the child access to information about his/her parents or provide information in their possession, unless a special regulation provides otherwise.

Private adoptions are not allowed in Slovakia. According to the Family Act, a court must decide on each adopted child. As far as homosexual couples are concerned, they cannot adopt a child together because, according to the Family Act, only married couples can do so, and same-sex marriage is not allowed.³⁷⁴

4.5.17. What are the main challenges encountered and gaps at the policy and legislative level in relation to alternative care? *Please consider available studies reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.*

In 2020, an evaluation of the process of deinstitutionalisation of social services and foster care was published, in which it was stated that despite many adopted strategies, documents and implemented projects aimed at this area, there are still many problems with the transition to community care, including alternative care. The report notes that there is still low interest among social protection providers in the process of deinstitutionalisation, there is still a failure to train professionals in this field, social protection workers have very low financial remuneration, there are no methodologies and practical guidelines for providing new forms of care, etc.³⁷⁵

The National Action Plan of the European Child Guarantee focuses, among other topics, on taking into account the best interests of the child when placing children in alternative care. In this context, it identifies a number of challenges that need to be addressed. In the future, according to the document, there is a need to systematically reduce the number of children in institutional care and to improve the process of transition from institutional to family care. In order to achieve this goal, the

³⁷⁴ Slovakia, [Law No. 36/2005 Coll. on family, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 36/2005 o rodine, a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), § 100, 11 February 2005.

³⁷⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo investícií, regionálneho rozvoja a informatizácie Slovenskej republiky) (2020), Interim [evaluation](#) of the process of deinstitutionalisation of the system of social services and foster care, (Priebežné hodnotenie procesu deinštitucionalizácie systému sociálnych služieb a náhradnej starostlivosti), November 2020.

Action Plan proposes to create an accessible and functional network of professional support for children, parents and (foster) families, to provide systematic methodological support for the development of transition plans in the process of deinstitutionalisation, to improve the quality of work with families and children, and others. At the same time, the processes of adoption and the provision of foster care need to be simplified and more strongly supported³⁷⁶. This plan is not yet officially approved by the Government.

The annual reports of the Public Defender of Rights for the past years have noted a number of misconducts of social protection bodies. Although the principle of listening to the child's opinion is in most cases highly respected and strongly emphasised, there are cases where it is not implemented in a sensitive manner and, in particular, conflicts of loyalty arise. Another observation is that meetings between parents and children subject to institutional care are in many cases held in inappropriate conditions and premises.³⁷⁷ The Ombudsperson also notes that the capacity of social protection offices is significantly understaffed, as they do not have sufficient staff to provide adequate and effective childcare services.³⁷⁸

In its 2021 report, the Office of the Children's Commissioner highlighted a number of areas of concern in the fulfilment of children's rights in family centres that also provide health care. Based on their findings, effective care is not provided to standard in all facilities, psychological support is significantly understaffed and under-resourced, many facilities are not barrier-free.³⁷⁹

According to a representative of the NGO *Návrat*, which has been working in the field of alternative care for a long time, the long-term development in this area is rather positive, especially in the area of deinstitutionalisation of alternative care. However, the placement of certain groups of children in family-type care (especially foster care) - in particular multiple sibling groups, children with disabilities, children with trauma, etc. - is still problematic. The second important issue is that local self-government should play a key role in preventing children from being removed from their families, but currently it does not, mainly for financial and capacity reasons. At the same time, there is a lack of coordination at local level of other actors who could be involved in prevention and the overall care of children³⁸⁰

4.6. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection care system in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

³⁷⁶ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

³⁷⁷ Slovakia, Public Defender of Rights (*Verejný ochranca práv*) (2021), [Report on the activities of the Public defender of rights for 2020](#) (Správa o činnosti verejného ochrancu práv za rok 2020).

³⁷⁸ Slovakia, Public Defender of Rights (*Verejný ochranca práv*) (2019), [Report on the activities of the Public defender of rights for 2019](#) (Správa o činnosti verejného ochrancu práv za rok 2019).

³⁷⁹ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komísár pre deti*) (2022), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2021](#) (Správa o činnosti komisárky pre deti za rok 2021).

³⁸⁰ Information provided by the NGO *Návrat* via telephone on 14 March 2023.

Since 2014, there have been quite a number of significant legislative and policy changes that have affected the child protection care system, in particular changes to the Family Act and the Social Protection Act.

A very important change was the amendment of the Family Act in 2015, which introduced a number of key principles since 2016:

(a) The principle of the primary role of the family in the care of children was introduced into the Act - "Society recognizes that a stable family environment consisting of the father and mother of the child is the most suitable for harmonious development of the child". In this context, it appears problematic that it is explicitly stated that the family consists of a father and a mother, which may be discriminatory for other types of families

(b) It has been introduced into the law that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in deciding all matters concerning them, defining what the criteria for the best interests of the child are (care, safety, protection of dignity and identity, the child's opinion and the creation of conditions for bonding with both parents)

(c) the priority of foster care over institutional care

(d) the obligation on the court to review periodically, every 6 months, the effectiveness of care measures and alternative care, and to revoke those measures if they have served their purpose.³⁸¹

Since 2016, an amendment to the Act on Social Protection of Children has also been in force, which, among other things, has brought possibilities for better support for foster families, clarification of the conditions for monitoring foster care, modification of the conditions for hearing the child's opinion, etc.³⁸²

Another fundamental change was the adoption of an amendment to the Social Protection Act in 2018³⁸³, which transformed the former children's homes into so-called "centres for children and families", which, according to the amendment, can also begin to provide more intensive ambulatory and terrain social services. In addition to this amendment, Decree 103/2018³⁸⁴ was also adopted, which sets out in great detail the performance of measures in institutions, while also introducing a system for assessing the so-called "child in a risk rate". The level of risk is re-evaluated on the basis of an assessment of the

³⁸¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 175/2015 amending Act No 36/2005 Coll. on the Family and amending and supplementing certain Acts, as amended and supplementing certain Acts](#) (Zákon 175/2015, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 36/2005 Z. z. o rodine a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony), 26 June 2015.

³⁸² Slovakia, [Law no. 175/2015 amending Act No 36/2005 Coll. on the Family and amending and supplementing certain Acts, as amended and supplementing certain Acts](#) (Zákon 175/2015, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 36/2005 Z. z. o rodine a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony), 26 June 2015.

³⁸³ Slovakia, [Law no. 61/2018 Coll. amending Law No 305/2005 Coll. and amending certain acts](#) (Zákon č. 61/2018 Z. z. ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa z. č. 305/2005 Z. z. a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony), 6 February 2018.

³⁸⁴ Slovakia, [Decree of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic implementing certain provisions of Act no. 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection](#) (Vyhláška Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane), 20 March 2018.

situation of the child, his/her family and the possibilities of the family, relatives and other persons to deal with the child's situation.

A number of framework documents have been adopted in the area of strategies and policies, which also address the situation of children and their care.

In 2021, the National Strategy for the deinstitutionalisation of the social services and foster care system was adopted, which is based on a number of domestic and international human rights documents and sets out the objectives of the transition from institutionalised to community-based forms of service provision and foster care. The long-term goals are: the availability of services at the community level, synergy of provision of different types of services, and the termination of the operation of large-capacity facilities. Other objectives are to improve the quality of the work of professionals working with children, to reduce the number of children in institutional care, to introduce a system for monitoring the quality of foster care provision.³⁸⁵

Accordingly, the Concept for Ensuring the Execution of Court Decisions - Deinstitutionalisation Plan was adopted in 2020. The aim of the concept is to reduce the number of children in residential institutions on the basis of a court decision on institutional care - this aim is to be met by several tasks, such as providing quality services and support to families in their natural environment, improving the quality of the assessment of the situation of families and determining the level of risk to the child, support for foster care, training of staff and improvement of staffing, or cooperation between different actors in the field of institutional care.³⁸⁶

In the area of protection of children from violence, two strategic documents have been adopted in recent years - the Update of the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence , which builds on previous approaches and goes on to propose the implementation of a number of measures - for example, the creation of a coordinating framework for the protection of children from violence, the provision of a monitoring system, the prevention of institutional violations of children's rights, and awareness-raising.³⁸⁷

Another document is the National Concept for the Protection of Children in the Digital Space , which sets out comprehensive objectives in the areas of prevention (systemic and coordinated prevention at different levels), intervention (setting up a system for responding to dangers in the digital space) and aftercare (support for victims).³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2021), [National Strategy of deinstitutionalisation of social services and alternative care](#) (Národná stratégia deinštitucionalizácie sociálnych služieb a náhradnej starostlivosti).

³⁸⁶ Slovakia, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2020) [The Concept of Ensuring the Implementation of Measures in Facilities of Social Protection and Social Guardianship for the Years 2021 - 2025 - Plan of Deinstitutionalisation](#), ([Konceptia zabezpečovania vykonávania opatrení v zariadeniach sociálnoprávnej ochrany a sociálnej kurately na roky 2021 – 2025 - Plán deinštitucionalizácie](#)).

³⁸⁷ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, social affair and family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2019) [Update of the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence](#) (Aktualizácia národnej stratégie ochrany detí pred násilím).

³⁸⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, social affair and family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2020) [National concept for the protection of children in digital space](#) (Národná koncepcia ochrany detí v digitálnom priestore)

4.7. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in the child protection care system that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Since 2018, the national project Supporting the deinstitutionalisation of alternative care has been implemented within the framework of the European Structural Funds. Within the framework of this project, several activities are implemented to support child protection and work with the family. The aim of the national project is to support the deinstitutionalisation of alternative care, specifically to increase the availability of professional assistance and to improve the implementation of measures of institutions designed to protect children. Compared to the past, much more social work directly with the family is promoted and outreach services are provided. At the same time, projects have focused on providing quality training for staff working with children. This has also increased the performance of professional support in the field - through field workers and assistants, help and support is provided to children, but also to young adults.³⁸⁹

One of the concrete ways to improve the processes of assessment and reassessment of the situation of the child and his/her family is the implementation of the conference model of work with the family in the form of case and family conferences (family circle meetings). In 2021, a pilot testing of the family circle meetings method was carried out in nine regions of Slovakia by trained coordinators.³⁹⁰

For a long time, very successful projects have been implemented in Slovakia by the NGO Návrat, which is engaged in alternative care. Since 2018, they have been implementing the project "Strengthening Families with Community Resources", in which they provide a comprehensive set of services to support families and children and thus promote the prevention of removal from families, while also supporting the contact and relationships with families after placement in alternative care and after returning to the family. At the same time, Return also realises projects aimed at supporting work with foster families - they provide expert advice and training. They also pay attention to support for the provision of care for vulnerable children - survivors of trauma, children with disabilities or larger sibling groups.³⁹¹

The Slniečko organisation has long provided assistance to families threatened by violence or other crises. For a long time, it has been running the Intervention Centre for Families, which also provides protection for children at risk of CAN syndrome. At the same time, they implement a number of measures to work with families in which children may be in crisis - they provide field social work, legal and psychological counselling and implement comprehensive support for families and children, including various types of therapy for these children.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti do roku 2030).

³⁹⁰ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti do roku 2030).

³⁹¹ Návrat (2018) '[Podpora rodín naprieč Slovenskom](#)', information provided on the website of the organisation.

³⁹² Center Slniečko (*Centrum slniečko*)(2022) '[Výročná správa za rok 2021](#)'.

5. Accountability, data collection, and monitoring mechanisms

5.1. Accountability mechanisms

5.1.1. Are there accountability mechanisms in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system? Is there any independent monitoring or reporting mechanisms on the performance of the child protection system? What is the role of child's ombudspersons, child commissioners or other independent national human rights institutions in monitoring child protection?

There is no one accountability mechanism in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system. Partly, such mechanism is established in the framework of the implementation of various strategies and action plans for child protection, where, through monitoring and evaluation set out in each strategy/action plan/programming document, central government bodies report the completion of tasks.³⁹³ Each strategy has a lead institution responsible for its comprehensive monitoring. For example, in the case of the National strategy on the protection of children against violence, this is the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children. In the case of the Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth, it is the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. For each priority, objective and indicator, the institutions responsible for its implementation are also listed. When drawing up monitoring reports, the lead institution requests data and information from the individual government bodies on the implementation of the task assigned to them. On the basis of this data, the lead institution shall then draw up a monitoring report.

The implementation of the strategic objectives of the Slovak Republic in the field of protection of children from violence is coordinated by the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children. It coordinates state policy in the field of protection of children from violence and fulfilment of tasks and obligations in this area. To systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies to protect children from violence, the National Coordination Centre coordinates designated representatives of the ministries responsible for policies to protect the life and health of children.³⁹⁴

The Office of Child's Commissioner monitors compliance with the rights of the child, in particular by conducting independent research on the fulfilment of obligations arising from international treaties to which the Slovak Republic is bound, and by conducting research and surveys to monitor the situation and developments in the field of children's rights.³⁹⁵ The Child's Commissioner can also request information and data for the purpose of assessing compliance with the rights of the child and for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the rights of the child, and request from public

³⁹³ Information provided by the Office of Child's Commissioner upon request via email on 28 February 2023.

³⁹⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2023), [Organisational Regulations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic](#) (Organizačný poriadok Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR), Art. 35, 5/2023, 19 January 2023.

³⁹⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov*), §4(1b), 25 June 2015.

authorities reports on their performance.³⁹⁶ The Child's Commissioner is an independent body for children's rights protection. He/she acts directly towards children, but also monitors the situation and developments in the implementation of children's rights in general (e.g. adequacy and effectiveness of policies, legislation, etc.).³⁹⁷ In 2016, for example, the Commissioner carried out monitoring of children's rights in re-socialisation institutions and children's homes. In 2017, she monitored the observance of children's rights in children's homes, re-socialisation institutions and in social service facilities.³⁹⁸

The Ombudsperson is an independent body involved in the protection of children's fundamental rights and freedoms in actions, decisions, or inactions of public authorities where their actions, decisions or inactions are contrary to the rule of law or to the principles of a democratic state governed by the rule of law.³⁹⁹ That may include rights of the child as well.

5.1.2. How is the implementation of national action plans and strategies or other policy actions on child protection monitored? Briefly describe the established procedures and mention the actors involved and their roles.

The process of monitoring of implementation of national action plans and other policy documents takes place especially on the level of individual ministries (or other central state administration organs) that are responsible for their implementation.

The National action plan of the European child guarantee with a view to 2030 is to be evaluated every two years. Representatives of local governments and a wide range of non-governmental and non-profit sectors are to be involved in its monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation will be a combination of statistical and qualitative surveys. The National Coordinator (National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children) will prepare and submit a Monitoring and Evaluation Report for the duration of the Action plan (i.e., in a two-year cycle) to the Government of the Slovak Republic and the European Commission for approval.⁴⁰⁰

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute, was the central body of the state administration, which had a coordinating role in the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2014-2020. For this purpose, the Ministry set up an Interministerial Working Group on State Youth Policy, which was consulted on the objectives and measures of the State within

³⁹⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities as amended](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), §4(2), 25 June 2015.

³⁹⁷ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2017), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2016](#) (Správa o činnosti komisára pre deti za obdobie roka 2016).

³⁹⁸ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2017), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2016](#) (Správa o činnosti komisára pre deti za obdobie roka 2016). Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*) (2018), [Report on the activities of the Commissioner for children for 2017](#) (Správa o činnosti komisára pre deti za obdobie roka 2017).

³⁹⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 564/2001 Coll. on public defender of rights as amended](#) (Zákon č. 564/2001 Z.z. o verejnom ochrancovi práv v znení neskorších predpisov), §1(a), 4 December 2001.

⁴⁰⁰ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti do roku 2030).

the framework of youth policy, and which was also involved in the actual implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. The implementation of the objectives was monitored and evaluated on an annual basis.⁴⁰¹

The evaluation mechanism for the new Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2021-2028 is the same, but it will be evaluated in two-year cycles.⁴⁰²

The body responsible for monitoring and evaluating the National strategy on the protection of children against violence is the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children. However, the Strategy itself does not contain a description of the evaluation mechanism.⁴⁰³ The same applies to the National concept for the protection of children in the digital space.⁴⁰⁴

Question	YES	NO	Comments
5.1.3. Is there a child rights assessment existing or foreseen? Please note that child rights' assessment stands for the measurement of the impact of proposed or adopted legislation on children as a group. It is usually done at the parliamentary or ministerial level.		x	One of the main priorities of the Child's Commissioner is to participate in the system of impact assessment of documents adopted, including laws, on children's rights. The Commissioner's initiative is directed towards implementation of an evaluation called CRIA (child rights impact assessment) which is recognised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as universal implementing measures for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ⁴⁰⁵ However, at the moment no such system is in place. The National action plan for children for the years 2013-2017 foresaw updating of the Unified Methodology for the Assessment of Selected Impacts and analysing of the possibilities to extend the impact clause's social effects to include

⁴⁰¹ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2014), [Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2014-2020](#) (Stratégia SR pre mládež na roky 2014-2020).

⁴⁰² Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2021), [Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2021-2028](#) (Stratégia SR pre mládež na roky 2021-2028)..

⁴⁰³ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*)(2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

⁴⁰⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), [National concept for the protection of children in digital space](#) (Národná koncepcia ochrany detí v digitálnom priestore), approved by the Government on 12 February 2020.

⁴⁰⁵ Information provided by the Office of Child's Commissioner upon request via email on 28 February 2023.

		<p>effects on children.⁴⁰⁶ In 2015, the Unified Methodology for Impact Assessment was approved.⁴⁰⁷ In 2021, the assessment of impacts on marriage, parenthood and family, not specifically on the child, was added to the methodology.⁴⁰⁸ The assessment focuses on impacts of the proposed legislation on the following: changes in the family environment, family ties and family conflicts, child rearing, parents' rights towards their children, contracting marriage and family income.</p> <p>Apart from this, the Government Committee for Children and Youth prepares draft opinions and resolutions for the Board on legislative plans, draft laws, generally binding legislation, and internal regulations, as well as governmental, departmental, and other non-legislative measures that may have an impact on the protection or observance of children's rights and on the level of support for young people.⁴⁰⁹</p>
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5.1.4. Are there quality standards for child protection services set in the legislation (including prevention programmes)? (e.g. number of cases per case workers, requirements regarding infrastructures of residential care and number of personnel, performance, and fiscal accountability mechanisms) Please describe.

Standards of social and legal protection of children are regulated by the Law on socio-legal protection.⁴¹⁰ In §46(5) it defines what a centre for children and families (formerly a children's home) is to provide. A centre for children and families that provides residential care secures housing, meals, services, personal facilities for children, health care and education. It also creates conditions for professional work with children, the standards of which are laid down in Decree No. 103/2018 of the

⁴⁰⁶ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2013), [National action plan for children for the years 2013-2017](#) (Národný akčný plán pre deti na roky 2013 – 2017), approved by the Government on 5 June 2013.

⁴⁰⁷ Slovakia, The Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2015), [Unified methodology for the assessment of selected impacts](#) (Jednotná metodika na posudzovanie vybraných vplyvov), approved by the Government on 14 January 2015.

⁴⁰⁸ Slovakia, The Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2015), [Unified methodology for the assessment of selected impacts](#) (Jednotná metodika na posudzovanie vybraných vplyvov), approved by the Government on 5 May 2021; Slovakia, The Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), [Annex 8 to the Unified methodology for the assessment of selected impacts](#) (Príloha č. 8 k Jednotnej metodike na posudzovanie vybraných vplyvov).

⁴⁰⁹ Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2022), [Statute of the Committee for Children and Youth](#) (Štatút Výboru pre deti a mládež), 27 May 2022.

⁴¹⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.⁴¹¹ The professional team consists of a social worker, a psychologist and, depending on the purpose of the Centre for Children and Families, other professional staff: a special educator, a therapeutic educator, a social educator, a social work assistant, an andragogist, a nurse, and a physiotherapist. §5 of the Decree regulates the working time ratio of the professional staff: the professional team shall consist of at least one full-time social worker and one part-time psychologist.

The Law on socio-legal protection⁴¹² further regulates in §48 the organisation of the implementation of measures for children in a residential care in centres for children and family: in groups established in a family house, flat or in another building of the centre, with a specified number of groups and with a specified number of children in the group. The centre may also carry out residential measures for the child in a professional foster family and in a separate group. The number of children in these groups is regulated by Decree No. 103/2018. According to §5(4) of the Decree, if the Centre for Children and Family carries out measures in a residential form, the maximum number of children per social worker is 25, per part-time psychologist 15 and per full-time psychologist 30. The maximum number of children per other professional staff member is 40. If the centre carries out measures in specialised groups, the number of children per staff member is lower (maximum of 10 children per social worker, maximum of 25 children per full-time therapeutic/special educator and maximum of 30 children per other professional staff member). In the case where the centre carries out measures in the framework of a resocialisation programme, the maximum number of children per social worker is 10, per full-time psychologist 20 (10 per part-time psychologist) and per other professional staff member a maximum of 30.⁴¹³

The Decree further regulates the number of employees in separate groups. The total number of employees in a separate group is 5-6, in a specialised group it is 5-8, at least three of whom must have a master's degree in special/therapeutic pedagogy. Other specialist staff are added according to the needs of the children. For example, if nursing care is needed, such care is provided by a nurse. If the centre carries out measures within the framework of a re-socialisation programme, at least two of the staff must have a master's degree in social work, psychology, education, general medicine or public health (§6 of the Decree).⁴¹⁴

⁴¹¹ Slovakia, [Decree no. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (*Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov*).

⁴¹² Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov*), 25 May 2005.

⁴¹³ Slovakia, [Decree no. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on Socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (*Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov*), §5(4).

⁴¹⁴ Slovakia, [Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on Socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (*Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce,*

The implementation of the court's residential measure in a professional foster family takes precedence over its implementation in a group. Sibling ties and parental ties shall be respected when placing a child in a professional foster family or a group. A child under the age of six shall be placed with a professional foster family no later than four weeks after admission to the centre.⁴¹⁵

The number of groups in centres for children and family is regulated by Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. in §13. There can be a maximum of 2 groups in one building of the centre, which is not a family house. There may be a maximum of one group in an apartment. In §14, the Decree regulates the number of children in groups: in groups in a family house/apartment and in specialised groups there may be a maximum of 10 children, in groups carrying out a re-socialisation programme there may be a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 children. §17 regulates the number of children in professional foster families – at least one child and no more than three children if one employee of the Centre for Children and Families provides care; at least two and no more than six children if two employees of the Centre who are married provide care; no more than two children if one employee of the Centre provides care in a specialised programme; at least two and no more than four children if two employees of the Centre provide care in a specialised programme. §18 regulates the amounts of reimbursement for childcare expenses in a professional foster family, based on the age of the child.

§57 of the Law on socio-legal protection⁴¹⁶ specifies the conditions for the execution of a re-socialisation measure in a centre for children and family for children who have previously received psychiatric care – it defines the provision of appropriate medical care.

§58 of the Law on socio-legal protection⁴¹⁷ also regulates the standards for employees of centres for children and family, namely psychological competence documented by a psychological assessment. The directors of the centres for children and family must be mentally fit, have no criminal record and have a master's degree. Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. in §22 specifies the content of the psychological assessment of an employee who comes into contact with children and a list of contraindications.⁴¹⁸

sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov).

⁴¹⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §51(4), 25 May 2005.

⁴¹⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §57, 25 May 2005.

⁴¹⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §58, 25 May 2005.

⁴¹⁸ Slovakia, [Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), §22.

The Law on socio-legal protection regulates the standards to be met by persons applying for accreditation to carry out measures under the Law on socio-legal protection.⁴¹⁹ It further defines qualification standards for employees of socio-legal protection of children in the field of foster care, psychological care and psychotherapy, therapeutic-educational care, pedagogy and social work.⁴²⁰

The provision of meals in centres for children and families and the specification of the cost of a food unit based on age (e.g., for children under 3 years of age it is from 2.2% to 3.4% of the minimum subsistence amount) is regulated by Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. It also determines the increase of the food unit by 25% in case the child needs a special diet.⁴²¹

Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. in §15 regulates the scope of training for the performance of foster care - 60 to 80 hours depending on the level of education achieved, half of which is spent on practical skills training. §16 further regulates the content of the training: basic information on legal regulations in the field of social and legal protection of children, on the psychological, social, and physical development of children, on the specifics of care for children who have been victims of violence, etc.⁴²²

In §27 Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. determines the total number of places for the implementation of measures of socio-legal protection residentially (0.55% of the total population of the Slovak Republic under the age of 18 as of 31 December of the previous year).

In §28, the Decree defines the method of determining the amount of the financial contribution provided by the socio-legal protection body to the accredited entity for the performance of socio-legal protection measures for children.⁴²³

⁴¹⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §79, 25 May 2005.

⁴²⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §93, 25 May 2005.

⁴²¹ Slovakia, [Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), §8.

⁴²² Slovakia, [Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), §15 and 16.

⁴²³ Slovakia, [Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), §28.

The Decree defines in §29 how the child's situation is assessed and the criteria for assessing the degree of endangerment (from none to high) and in §30 defines the content of the social work plan with the child and the child's individual personality development plan.⁴²⁴

In 2021, the Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic issued an updated version of the Quality Standards for Low Threshold Services for Children and Families.⁴²⁵ Low-threshold services are crisis intervention services provided in an adverse social situation. The document sets standards in the area of procedural conditions (e.g., in the area of definition of the purpose and content of the social service, in the area of professional orientation of the provision of the social service, in the area of prevention of crisis situations), in the area of personnel conditions and in the area of operational conditions. In each area, indicators are defined which can be used to assess the fulfilment of the standard.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>5.1.5. Is consultation with children and families foreseen and/or taking place in the process of the evaluation of services and measures and in the development of child protection policies and legislation?</p> <p>If yes, at what level is this done? Please provide indicative examples.</p>	x		<p>According to the Law on Child's Commissioner, the Commissioner consults with children on matters that concern them.⁴²⁶</p> <p>The Slovak Republic reports application of participatory principle in the preparation of legislative and non-legislative materials in the framework of working groups, which also include representatives of non-governmental organisations representing children.⁴²⁷ Such NGOs are also involved in the Committee on Children and Youth, where they are systematically involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes related to children's rights. The Committee has set up a working group to develop a mechanism for the participation of children</p>

⁴²⁴ Slovakia, [Decree No. 103/2018 Coll. of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic of 20 March 2018](#), on the execution of certain provisions of the Law. No 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended (*Vyhláška č. 103/2018 Z.z. Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny z 12. marca 2018, ktorou sa vykonávajú niektoré ustanovenia zákona č. 305/2005 Z.z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov*), §29 and 30.

⁴²⁵ Bartoš, R., Cangár, M., Kulifaj, P., Lulei, M., Sušinka, M. (2021), [Quality Standards for Low Threshold Services for Children and Families](#) (Štandardy kvality nízkoprahových služieb pre deti a rodinu), Bratislava, Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

⁴²⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities as amended](#) (*Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov*), §4(1c), 25 June 2015.

⁴²⁷ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), [Sixth periodic report of the Slovak Republic on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (Šiesta periodická správa Slovenskej republiky o implementácii Dohovoru o právach dieťaťa), Government Resolution No. 537/2020 of 2 September 2020.

		<p>and young people in public policymaking and monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The mandate of this working group has been extended in 2019 without time limit.⁴²⁸</p> <p>In 2016, the Committee on Children and Youth set up a working group to develop a participatory mechanism to enable children and young people to participate in the development of policies and measures that affect them. The aim of this working group was to implement Action 1.2 of the National action plan for children for the years 2013-2017: Enabling children and young people to have an active say in policies that affect them and creating and developing mechanisms to take their views into account.⁴²⁹ At its meeting in June 2016, the Committee also noted that the establishment of a mechanism for children's participation in public policymaking is one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of the National action plan for children.⁴³⁰ At its June 2017 meeting, the Committee noted that the working group was dysfunctional and had not produced the desired results.⁴³¹</p> <p>However, this is a rather indirect form of consultation as children are only represented by NGOs. Children are directly consulted as part of the preparation of some strategic documents. However, there is no mechanism to make this process standard.</p> <p>For instance, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Offence against Children has consulted children in the process of designing the</p>
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⁴²⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), [Sixth periodic report of the Slovak Republic on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (Šiesta periodická správa Slovenskej republiky o implementácii Dohovoru o právach dieťaťa), Government Resolution No. 537/2020 of 2 September 2020.

⁴²⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2017), [Report on the implementation of the tasks arising from the National action plan for Children for the years 2013-2017 for 2016 and proposal for its update](#) (Správa o plnení úloh vyplývajúcich z Národného akčného plánu pre deti na roky 2013 - 2017 za rok 2016 a návrh na jeho aktualizáciu), Government Resolution No. 340 of 24 July 2017.

⁴³⁰ Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2016), Minutes from the meeting of the Committee for Children and Youth on 17 June 2016 (Záznam zo zasadnutia Výboru pre deti a mládež 17. júna 2016).

⁴³¹ Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2017), [Minutes from the meeting of the Committee for Children and Youth on 5 June 2017](#) (Záznam zo zasadnutia Výboru pre deti a mládež 5. júna 2017).

		<p>new national strategy on protection of children from violence. The National Coordination Centre held facilitated discussions with children in three localities of Slovakia in October 2022 (Stará Ľubovňa, Žiar and Hronom, Bratislava). Overall, 66 children (from primary and secondary schools) and 27 adults (representing bodies of protection of children from violence) took part in the meetings.⁴³²</p> <p>As to the evaluation of services, The National action plan of the European child guarantee notes that areas to be strengthened include the involvement of children in data collection and analysis of children's access to health care.⁴³³</p> <p>The Strategy of Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2021-2028 aims to promote youth participation in policymaking at regional and local level. In measure 2.1.4, it plans to support the establishment of municipal youth councils, youth parliaments, youth commissions or other participatory and youth voice representing bodies and mechanisms at the level of local governments. This measure is managed by the Ministry of Informatisation, Regional Development and Investment of the Slovak Republic. The target should be met in the course of 2023.⁴³⁴</p>
<p>5.1.6. Is the responsibility for data collection on child protection determined in the legislative framework?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The Law no. 305/2005 Coll. stipulates an obligation for all subjects operating in the field of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship (i.e., accredited subjects, municipal and regional self-governments) to provide necessary statistical data to state administration organs of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship (i.e., offices of labour, social affairs and family).⁴³⁵</p> <p>The Law no. 305/2005 Coll. also determines the tasks of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and</p>

⁴³² Information provided by the representative of the National Coordination Centre for Addressing Violence against Children via phone on 2 March 2023 and via email upon request on 6 March 2023.

⁴³³ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee](#) in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti do roku 2030).

⁴³⁴ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), [Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2021-2028](#) (Stratégia SR pre mládež na roky 2021-2028), approved by the Government on 14 December 2021.

⁴³⁵ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 May 2005.

			<p>Family which is as follows: it processes statistical surveys and administrative sources in the field of social protection of children and social guardianship, operates and develops a unified interconnected system for collecting, processing, and transferring information, as well as monitoring processes in the field of foster family care.⁴³⁶</p> <p>One of the tasks of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children is data collection and analysis. However, this task is not specified in the legislation, but in the Organisational regulations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. These Regulations state that for the purpose of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of policies for the protection of children from violence, the National Coordination Centre shall coordinate the designated representatives of the ministries responsible for policies for the protection of the life and health of children and, in cooperation with them, shall ensure the development of a system for the collection, analysis and evaluation of data.⁴³⁷</p>
<p>5.1.7. Is there a single authority responsible for monitoring data collection and centralised coordination and data sharing at national level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, Is there a national database (a joint database for monitoring and tracking children) for collecting data in</p>	x		<p>The National strategy for the protection of children against violence includes Task 2.2., the aim of which was to create a system of data collection, analysis and evaluation and its subsequent implementation by 2022.⁴³⁸ However, a unified system has not been established and data continues to be collected within individual departments.⁴³⁹ In 2020, for example, the Ministry of Labour reported that statistical data on child protection is collected by 399 entities at different levels of public administration. In 2020, the Ministry of the Interior implemented a project</p>

⁴³⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 305/2005 Coll. on socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship as amended](#) (Zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele v znení neskorších predpisov), §73, 25 May 2005.

⁴³⁷ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2023), [Organisational Regulations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic](#) (Organizačný poriadok Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR), Art. 35, 5/2023, 19 January 2023.

⁴³⁸ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), [National strategy on protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

⁴³⁹ Information provided by the representative of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via phone on 2 March 2023.

<p>the child protection area at the national, regional, or local level?</p>		<p>entitled "Improving access to services for victims of crime and establishment of contact points for victims", under which it is collecting and analysing data on child victims of crime. In 2019, for the first time, the Centre for Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic collected data on the prevalence of bullying in schools. The Ministry of Health collects data on persons with suspected neglect, abuse and persons who have been subjected to violence.⁴⁴⁰</p> <p>The National action plan for children for the years 2013-2017 also included strategic objective 2.7 - strengthening the system of aggregate data collection as a basis for assessing progress in the realization of children's rights. The departmental data collection system was to be aligned with the requirements of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The reports on the implementation of the National action plan for children stated that the target was being met on an ongoing basis, but only separate departmental databases were cited as implementation.⁴⁴¹ The implementation of this objective of the National action plan for children was considered very problematic by the Committee on Children and Youth. At both its 2015 and 2016 meetings⁴⁴², it noted that this objective was quite complex due to the amount of information that needed to be integrated in order to create a comprehensive system.</p>
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⁴⁴⁰ Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Addressing Violence against Children of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Národné koordinačné stredisko pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2021), Information on the implementation of the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence and on the activities of the National Coordination Centre for addressing violence against children (Informácia o naplňaní strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch).

⁴⁴¹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2017), Report on the implementation of the tasks arising from the National Action Plan for Children 2013-2017 for 2016 and proposal for its update ([Správa o plnení úloh vyplývajúcich z Národného akčného plánu pre deti na roky 2013 - 2017 za rok 2016 a návrh na jeho aktualizáciu](#)), approved by the Government on 24 July 2017.

⁴⁴² Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2015), [Minutes from the meeting of the Committee for Children and Youth on 9 June 2015](#) (Záznam zo zasadnutia Výboru pre deti a mládež z 9. júna 2015); Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2016), [Minutes from the meeting of the Committee for Children and Youth on 17 June 2016](#) (Záznam zo zasadnutia Výboru pre deti a mládež zo 17. júna 2016).

			The National Coordination Centre will therefore concentrate instead on supporting research in the field of child protection. At the same time, data from school establishments and labour, social and family offices are collected by the regional offices of the National Coordination Centre. ⁴⁴³
5.1.8. Are there common indicators in place to monitor the performance of the child protection system?		X	There are no common indicators in place to monitor the performance of the child protection system. ⁴⁴⁴ Each strategic document/policy has its own set of indicators that are monitored and evaluated. Each strategy is concerned with a different area and therefore the indicators generally do not overlap. There might be a very marginal overlap between strategies when it comes to particular indicators. For instance, National strategy of the protection of children against violence ⁴⁴⁵ is focused on measures setting up institutional framework of protection children against violence, data collection etc. The National action plan for European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030 ⁴⁴⁶ also sets out one indicator focused on raising awareness on prevention of violence against children. Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth ⁴⁴⁷ , on the other hand, focuses on youth participation, equality and non-discrimination, youth work, volunteering, employment, digital transformation, sustainability and healthy lifestyle and mental health. The National action plan for European child guarantee also contains some indicators focused on children's mental health but these do not overlap with the ones in the Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth. It can be said that a certain overlap can be identified in case of

⁴⁴³ Information provided by the representative of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via phone on 2 March 2023.

⁴⁴⁴ Information provided by the representative of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via phone on 2 March 2023.

⁴⁴⁵ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

⁴⁴⁶ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

⁴⁴⁷ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2021), [Strategy of Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2021 - 2028](#) (Stratégia SR pre mládež na roky 2021 - 2028).

			individual indicators, generally indicators are differentiated.
5.1.9. Are there data protection protocols in place and adhered to?	X		Regarding the protection of children's data, Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of natural persons regarding the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) and Act No. 18/2018 Coll. on the protection of personal data and on the amendment and supplementation of certain laws are relied upon. ⁴⁴⁸
5.1.10. Are there any gaps in the data collection system related to child protection in the country, which have been identified by relevant child protection authorities/institutions, civil society organisations or other institutions active in the child protection field? Is there a systematic and consistent collection of data related to child protection at national, regional, or local level? Please mention if efforts are made to address these gaps.			
<p>There is no unified system of data collection related to child protection in Slovakia. Each ministry collects data on their own and data sets are incompatible and not comparable.⁴⁴⁹ The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues ofence against Children tried to negotiate with individual ministries to create a unified system of data collection, as it was one of the objectives of the National strategy on the protection of children against Violence⁴⁵⁰ but to no avail. The National Coordination Centre will therefore concentrate instead on supporting research in the field of child protection. At the same time, data from school establishments and labour, social and family offices are collected by the regional offices of the National Coordination Centre.⁴⁵¹ Creation of unified data collection system is a challenging task also according to the Committee for Children and Youth. It noted that this objective was quite complex due to the amount of information that needed to be integrated in order to create a comprehensive system.⁴⁵²</p>			

⁴⁴⁸ Information provided by the Office of Child's Commissioner upon request via email on 28 February 2023.

⁴⁴⁹ Information provided by the Office of Child's Commissioner upon request via email on 28 February 2023.

⁴⁵⁰ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), [National strategy on the protection of children against violence](#) (Národná stratégia na ochranu detí pred násilím), approved by the Government on 15 January 2014.

⁴⁵¹ Information provided by the representative of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via phone on 2 March 2023.

⁴⁵² Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2015), [Minutes from the meeting of the Committee for Children and Youth on 9 June 2015](#) (Záznam zo zasadnutia Výboru pre deti a mládež z 9. júna 2015); Slovakia, Committee for Children and Youth (*Výbor pre deti a mládež*) (2016), [Minutes from the meeting of the Committee for Children and Youth on 17 June 2016](#) (Záznam zo zasadnutia Výboru pre deti a mládež zo 17. júna 2016).

5.2. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of child protection accountability in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

In 2014, the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children was established.⁴⁵³ To systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies to protect children from violence, the National Centre coordinates the designated representatives of the ministries responsible for policies to protect the life and health of children and, in cooperation with them, ensures the development of a system for the collection, analysis and evaluation of data. The Centre shall also coordinate, in cooperation with the designated representatives of the ministries responsible for policies to protect children's lives and health, the development of a methodology for assessing progress and evaluating measures to protect children from violence.⁴⁵⁴ However, in carrying out these tasks, the National Coordination Centre faces the challenge of inadequate interconnection of databases of different ministries, which contain data from different areas of child protection. The Centre is trying to compensate for this by intensifying its support for research on child protection from violence and collecting data from government authorities (e.g. police and child protection authorities) at regional level through its regional offices.⁴⁵⁵

In 2015, the Office of the Commissioner for Children was established to monitor compliance with the rights of the child, in particular by conducting independent research on the fulfilment of obligations under international treaties to which the Slovak Republic is bound and by conducting research and surveys to monitor the situation and developments in the field of children's rights.⁴⁵⁶ However, the election of commissioners has been met with criticism from civil society organisations on both occasions. In 2015, the first Commissioner for Children was a member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, who only resigned her seat when she was elected Commissioner. The Coalition for Children criticized this and stressed that the post of Commissioner should be held by a civil society candidate who would meet the requirements of independence, professional preparedness and the ability to bring together different actors.⁴⁵⁷ Also in 2022, the election was accompanied by criticism from civil society organisations, with active MPs and members of political parties running again for the post of Child's Commissioner.⁴⁵⁸ In the end, a representative of civil society became Child's Commissioner.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵³ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (*Vláda SR*) (2014), [Government Resolution no. 24/2014 on National Strategy on Protection of Children from Violence](#) (Uznesenie vlády č. 24/2014 o Národnej stratégii ochrany detí pred násilím), 15 January 2014.

⁴⁵⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2023), [Organisational Regulations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic](#) (Organizačný poriadok Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR), Art. 35, 5/2023, 19 January 2023.

⁴⁵⁵ Information provided by the representative of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children via phone on 2 March 2023.

⁴⁵⁶ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities as amended](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 June 2015.

⁴⁵⁷ Pravda.sk (2015), '[Novou komisárkou pre deti sa stala Viera Tomanová](#)', *Pravda Daily*, 2 December 2015.

⁴⁵⁸ SITA (2022), '[Mimovládne organizácie vyzývajú poslancov na zastavenie voľby komisára pre deti, priestor by mali dostať odborníci](#)', *SITA*, 17 March 2022; Stop Corruption Foundation (2022), '[Vyzývame poslancov: Dajte STOP zlej voľbe komisára pre deti](#)', press release, 16 March 2022.

⁴⁵⁹ Slovakia, National Council of the Slovak Republic (*Národná rada SR*) (2022), '[NRSR: Novým komisárom pre deti bude Jozef Mikloško](#)', press release, 25 May 2022.

Significant gaps persist in data collection. There is no unified system of data collection related to child protection in Slovakia. Each ministry collects data on their own and data sets are incompatible and not comparable.⁴⁶⁰ Despite the efforts of The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children to create a unified system of data collection, there is still a certain level of resistance among state institutions to participate in the creation of the data collection system. According to the Committee for Children and Youth it is a challenging task due to the amount of information that needed to be integrated (see above in Section 5.1.10.)

Gaps also persist in child rights assessment which is lacking in Slovakia (see above Section 5.1.3.)

5.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection accountability that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

N/A

⁴⁶⁰ Information provided by the Office of Child's Commissioner upon request via email on 28 February 2023.

6. General education, promotion, and awareness raising

6.1. Education on child rights

6.1.1. Does education on child rights form part of the (national) formal school curricula? If yes, please provide details such as in which types of school and targeting which grade(s) (age group), as part of which school subject and for how many periods in a pupil's school career.

The first mention of child rights occurs in primary schools in an elective course on ethics (unless the child chose religious studies). This subject is taught once a week for the whole length of study. Child rights take part in the curriculum in the 4th grade. Overall, students start discussing child rights, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the 8th grade in the subject civics, which takes place once a week from 6th until 9th grade. All types of secondary schools have the subject of child rights included in their civics course⁴⁶¹. According to the official statistics from 2021, 77.0% of primary school pupils and 75.6% of secondary school pupils had child rights explained as part of their curriculum. Education on human rights, in general, is more represented in the curricula of gymnasiums where 78.5% of the respondents discussed the topic, and 74.4% of vocational school students. In total, pupils should come in contact with the topic of children's rights three times over their studies⁴⁶².

6.1.2. Please provide an overview of the most important national and/or sub-national **implemented** programmes and activities aiming at **educating** children, parents, teachers, and/or society at large about child rights and/or child protection at national or sub-national level. By which actors were those commissioned, funded, and implemented?

The Slovak National Human Rights Centre is an independent national institute that was founded by an international agreement between the Slovak Government and the United Nations, providing educational events and activities for employees of various institutions, the general public, and the first and second levels of primary and secondary schools, as well as at special schools⁴⁶³.

Next, Centre Slniečko's project EduCan (Centre for Prevention and Education) provides education in an available and interactive way, focused on child rights, child protection and child victims. Ongoing project for children called Kozmo and his adventures aims to prevent bullying. Slniečko hosts educational events for schools, clubs, parents, pedagogists, social workers, psychologists, doctors,

⁴⁶¹ Slovakia, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2015) [Všeobecné vzdelávanie - vzdelávacie štandardy a normatívy MTaPZ VVP](#).

⁴⁶² Slovakia, Centre of Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic (*Centrum vedecko-technických informácií SR*) (2021) [Vzdelávanie a rešpektovanie ľudských práv v škole a v rodine](#), p.16.

⁴⁶³ Slovakia, The Slovak National Human Rights Centre (Slovenské národné stredisko pre ľudské práva) (2023) Vzdelávanie, available at: <https://www.snslp.sk/nasa-cinnost/vzdelavanie/deti-a-mladez/>

police officers, prosecutors, courts, and volunteers. Slniečko works with the national budget under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and other public and private grants⁴⁶⁴.

UNICEF in Slovakia operates through its national committee based in Bratislava. It tries to pool available funds, popularise the topic of child rights, provide help to minors and cover the project Child-Friendly School. After compulsory registration, schools receive tasks to organise educational sessions and fundraising activity as a part of the project. After completion, the school may claim the title of Child-Friendly School. Activities can be held in nursery schools, primary and secondary schools. UNICEF provides schools with educational videos, materials, games and simulations covering child rights, child protection, child rights convention, humanitarian help, or mental health. UNICEF is financed by OSN, public collections, the national budget and other grants⁴⁶⁵.

Human Rights Olympics is a national competition of secondary school students in the area of the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy. The competition is announced every year by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, and guaranteed by the expert panel of the National Human Rights Olympics Commission in cooperation with other partner organizations. The competition is focused on knowledge, skills and attitudes of students in the area of human rights, principles of democracy and the rule of law. Each year, a leading theme of the competition is announced. In recent years, the themes involved topics like the 30th anniversary of the Velvet revolution, challenges for democracy and human right in the 21st century, etc⁴⁶⁶.

6.2. Promotion and awareness raising

6.2.1. Please provide information on awareness raising and/or promotion campaigns or relevant activities on child rights (possibly including on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights) and/or protection issues targeting the general public or children in general at national or sub-national level. Please provide information on the most recent and representative awareness raising campaigns, including information on the target groups, the thematic areas covered, the actors involved, funding, the method of dissemination chosen and the impact of the campaign, if assessed.

The nationwide campaign Bubnovačka organised by NGO Centrum Slniečko takes place every year since 2014 on the 18th of November. The main aim is to "drum so children are heard more" as the motto says. This event intends to symbolically draw attention to the importance of protecting children from violence and to promote the theme of early prevention in society. The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children, which falls under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, is a co-organizer of Bubnovačka and is organised with their help in some cities across Slovakia. All institutions, schools, artists, companies, families or the

⁴⁶⁴ Centre Slniečko (2023), EduCan - [Centrum prevencie a vzdelávania](#).

⁴⁶⁵ Slovakia, UNICEF (2021), [školy](#), information provided on the website.

⁴⁶⁶ Information provided on the website of the [Human Rights Olympics](#).

general public are via social media invited to drum and independently plan any supporting activities accompanying the campaign which they can post to social media and share⁴⁶⁷.

The nationwide campaign Stalo sa TO (IT Happened), aims to highlight the phenomenon of grooming, sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people in the online space. The campaign provides educational materials for parents, a phone and chat helpline, distributes leaflets with a help link and a procedure for the solution, focusing on specific areas of the topic for children, parents and professionals and videos from youtubers and influencers commenting on the topic. Its partners are Férová nadácie O2 and SK-NIC. Stalo sa TO is an ongoing project from 2020 landed by IPčko (Internet counselling centre for young people) NGO organisation⁴⁶⁸.

Both campaigns were conducted in Slovak language and did not provide information in minority languages.

No campaign or other awareness raising activity on children's rights mentioned the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights.

6.2.2. Are there any awareness raising activities regarding complaint mechanisms at national or sub-national level, e.g. for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on a communications procedure⁴⁶⁹? Please briefly describe.

Humanrightsguide.sk explains how and where to enforce human rights. Complaints can be directed to public institutions that include Public Defender of Rights, Slovak National Human Rights Centre, Commissioner for Children and Commissioner for People with Disabilities, or professional inspection and supervisory bodies like for instance the State School Inspection⁴⁷⁰.

The mentioned institutions inform the general public on their websites about their role, responsibilities and about possible ways of submitting a complaint. Among the mentioned institutions mainly the website of the Commissioner for Children informs their visitors about the complaint mechanism in a most child-friendly manner. The complaint or message for Commissioner can be submitted through the website, personally during a meeting with an official of the Commissioner's office, or in writing via a letter that can be sent by mail free of charge with only the name and function of the Commissioner (the full address is not needed). The Commissioner's website also informs that everyone has a right to communicate in his/her mother tongue in a form that is most accessible for him/her⁴⁷¹. However, the website is only in Slovak language and has no version in minority languages.

⁴⁶⁷ Centre Slniečko (2022) `[Bubnovačka 2022](#)`, press release, 18 October 2022.

⁴⁶⁸ Stalosato.sk (2023), [IT Stalosato.sk](#), information provided on the website.

⁴⁶⁹ URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol-convention-rights-child-communications> [12/12/2022]

⁴⁷⁰ Human Rights Guide ([Príručka ľudských práv](#)) (2021), information available on website.

⁴⁷¹ Slovakia, Commissioner for Children (*Komisár pre deti*), [Information published on the website](#).

The other institutions do not use the other languages on their website or do not inform in a child-friendly manner or both.

6.2.3. Are there any awareness raising or training activities at national or sub-national level on digital literacy, privacy and online safety for children, parents, teachers, and other relevant professionals?

The National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children which falls under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family authorised two nationwide awareness campaigns regarding online safety for children, using online awareness-raising tools through Google, Youtube, Instagram and Facebook. First, in November 2018 - and continuously since November 2019 - launched a campaign "It concerns me". Its aim was to raise awareness of the importance of listening to children's voices, sensitise the public to the issue of violence against children, detabooing of the topics of violence against children, and notice and listen to children who are trying to tell us something. During November and December 2019, a thematic TV spot was aired on state television. From February until November 2020, a second campaign was launched to protect children in the digital environment. It involved five 30-second videos, each with a different topic focusing on a different form of violence perpetrated through social media or online. The main objectives were to support the promotion of media literacy, the development of critical thinking and the development of the skills needed to analyse complex media facts, which are necessary to recognise the difference between objective facts and subjective opinions. Both campaigns attracted a significant number of new visitors to the webpage and social media where educational and awareness content on children's rights protection is regularly published⁴⁷². The campaigns were conducted in Slovak language.

6.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child rights and/or child protection outreach activities/measure targeting relevant groups of society or society at large that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Promising practices are included in the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee for the period 2022-2030, executed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. It binds SR to implement education on child rights on a national level. It prioritises educating all relevant actors and at all levels

⁴⁷² Slovakia, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children (*Národné koordinačné stredisko pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch*) (2020), '[Childhood Without Violence](#)'.

on human rights, children's rights and discrimination; with the emphasis on sensitivity to children from different backgrounds and with different needs⁴⁷³.

Next is the Action Plan for the National Concept for the Protection of Children in the Digital Space 2020-2021, binding Slovak Republic to ensure consistency in the protection of children in the digital space, promote training and education of staff working with children, conduct research on child protection online, raise awareness of right to privacy and the protection of personal data, promote effective prevention in formal and non-formal education, increase the effectiveness and success of addressing child vulnerability online; particularly in the legislative, executive and jurisdictional spheres, provide effective assistance and support, ensure effective and efficient follow-up for victims and affected parties, ensure adequate re-education for perpetrators of crimes against the abuse of children online⁴⁷⁴.

Action Plan for Addressing Bullying in Schools and School Establishments for 2022-2023 binds schools to increase the expertise of pedagogists in the approach of addressing bullying, strengthen cooperation with state administration authorities for ensuring mutual information and effective cooperation, develop measures to eliminate future risks, and monitoring, informing and awareness raising on bullying⁴⁷⁵.

⁴⁷³ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2022), [`Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030`](#).

⁴⁷⁴ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2019), [`Akčný plán k Národnej koncepcii ochrany detí v digitálnom priestore na roky 2020-2021`](#).

⁴⁷⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2021), [`Akčný plán riešenia šikanovania v školách a školských zariadeniach na roky 2022-2023`](#).

7. Child participation and community engagement

7.1. Complaint procedures

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.1.1. Are there independent child complaints procedures (e.g. an ombuds institution) that are fully compliant with the Paris Principles ⁴⁷⁶ in place, with an ability to hear, review and enforce individual complaints from children?	x		Yes, Commissioner for children, Commissioner for persons with disabilities and Public Defender of Right can hear review and enforce individual complaint from child. The institutions are established through the Law No. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts ⁴⁷⁷ and Law No. 564/2001 Coll. on the Public Defender of Rights ⁴⁷⁸ . The agenda of the Commissioner for children relates to the protection of children's rights by promoting and enforcing the rights granted to the child by international treaties to which the Slovak Republic is bound. Everyone can turn to the Commissioner for children in the matter of endangerment of the child and its rights. A child can turn to the Commission for children directly or through another person also without the consent of the parent or personal carer. ⁴⁷⁹ The Commissioner for persons with disabilities contributes to the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and enforces rights granted by international treaties. A person who lacks full legal capacity or who has been deprived of legal capacity can contact the Commissioner directly or through another person also without the knowledge of the legal representative. ⁴⁸⁰ The

⁴⁷⁶ URL: [https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20\(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness](https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness) [12/12/2022]

⁴⁷⁷ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 June 2015.

⁴⁷⁸ Slovakia, [Law no. 564/2001 Coll. on the public defender of rights, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 564/2001 Z.z. o verejnom ochrancovi práv v znení neskorších predpisov), 4 December 2001.

⁴⁷⁹ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 June 2015.

⁴⁸⁰ Slovakia, [Law no. 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and commissioner for persons with disabilities, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 176/2015 Z.z. o komisárovi pre deti a komisárovi pre osoby so zdravotným postihnutím v znení neskorších predpisov), 25 June 2015.

		Public Defender of Rights is also participating in the protection of rights of natural persons and legal entities when in contact with the public administration bodies that engaged in conduct, decision-making or inaction contrary to the rule of law or the principles of a democratic and legal state. ⁴⁸¹
7.1.2. Are there specialised Courts and compliant procedures with international standards in place for children in contact with the law and for children to access justice and seek redress and remedies for violations of the child protection rights?	x	<p>A specialisation of courts on family agenda among other specializations (criminal, civil, and business) supporting effectiveness and quality of court decision will come into force in June 2023 through the Law No. 150/2022 Coll. on amending and supplementing certain acts in relation to the new headquarters and districts of courts and amending and supplementing certain acts.⁴⁸² Moreover, new procedure is in place grounded in Code of civil non-contentious procedure which assigns the minor, or his or her siblings the same judge as in previous court proceedings.⁴⁸³</p> <p>Furthermore, The Law No. 274/2017 Coll. on Victims of Crimes establishes child as a particularly vulnerable victim of a criminal offence.⁴⁸⁴ The Presidium of the Police Force leads a project setting up the Special Interrogation rooms for the child victims of crimes which present several technically interconnected rooms, where the audio-visual recording is transferred from one room to another.⁴⁸⁵ However, according to the monitoring of the Commissioner for Children in 2019, the interrogation rooms satisfying the condition of interconnected rooms are lacking mainly due to financially reasons and instead the regular offices are often used as the interrogation room.⁴⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the spokeswoman of the Presidium</p>

⁴⁸¹ Slovakia, [Law no. 564/2001 Coll. on the public defender of rights, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 564/2001 Z.z. o verejnom ochrancovi práv v znení neskorších predpisov), 4 December 2001.

⁴⁸² Slovakia, Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (Ministertvo spravodlivosti SR) (2022), 'Posun účinnosti reformy súdnej mapy na 1. júna 2023 schválený', 11. November 2022.

⁴⁸³ Slovakia, [Law no. 161/2015 Coll. Code of civil non-contentious procedure, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 161/2015 Z.z. Civilný mimosporový poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 21 May 2015.

⁴⁸⁴ Slovakia, [Law no. 274/2017 Coll. on victims of crime, as amended](#) (Zákon č. 274/2017 Z.z. o obetiach trestných činov v znení neskorších predpisov), 12 October 2017.

⁴⁸⁵ Slovakia, (2020) 'Informácia o naplnení strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch'.

⁴⁸⁶ Slovakia, (2020) 'Informácia o naplnení strategických cieľov Národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti národnej stratégie na ochranu detí pred násilím a o činnosti národného koordinačného strediska pre riešenie problematiky násilia na deťoch'.

		<p>of the Police Force has confirmed that in year 2023, 14 special interrogation rooms should be established.⁴⁸⁷ Also, for protection of children who are accused in criminal proceedings, the questioning is carried out using technical equipment designed to record sound and images, if it is appropriate in the circumstances of the case, in particular when there is doubt on the child's capability of understanding the content of the questioning⁴⁸⁸. In the case, child is being heard as a witness and the questioning is about crime against human dignity or a matter in which recollection of memory could adversely affect mental and moral development or expose the child to the risk of secondary victimization due to child's age, relationship to the perpetrator, or the nature of the commission of the crime, the interrogation must be conducted with particular care and in such a way that it does not have to be repeated in subsequent proceedings. A psychologist or an expert in the subject matter of the questioning and the degree of mental development of the person being questioned, will contribute to the proper conduct of the questioning.⁴⁸⁹</p> <p>Moreover, multiple training of judges were carried out within the framework of the project Improving the efficiency of the judiciary through the protection/empowerment of victims and vulnerable groups. A training about special approach to minors in court proceedings was aiming to deepen knowledge of the position of children in parental conflicts, to practice skills in talking to the child and to strengthen the practical aspect of multidisciplinary cooperation of courts, mediators and other entities and professions in this field. Another training designed for judges and prosecutors who come into contact with the juvenile and criminal justice system was focusing on improving skills in dealing with victims, with an emphasis on particularly vulnerable victims and the exercise of their rights throughout the judicial process.⁴⁹⁰</p>
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⁴⁸⁷ TASR (2023) 'Dve výsluchové miestnosti pre obeť obchodovania s ľuďmi majú vzniknúť v Bratislave a Humennom. Financované budú z eurofondov', 12 February 2023.

⁴⁸⁸ Slovakia, Law no. 161/2018 Coll. that amends Law no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code (Zákon č. 161/2018, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 300/2005 Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov), 15 May 2018.

⁴⁸⁹ Slovakia, Law no. 301/2015 Coll. Criminal Procedure Code, as amended (Zákon č. 301/2015 Z.z. Trestný poriadok v znení neskorších predpisov), 24 May 2005.

⁴⁹⁰ Information provided by the Ministry of Justice upon request via email on 30 September 2022.

7.2. Feedback mechanisms

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>7.2.1. Are there government support fora such as children’s groups established at local/community level, and is a formal mechanism in place through which national/sub-national/local government receive and respond to the feedback and ideas from children and children’s groups who have received child protection services?</p>		x	<p><u>No</u>, there are no government support fora where children with the experience of child protection services can systematically express their opinion and provide feedback.⁴⁹¹ There is an initiative by NGO Úsmev ako dar which is organizing youth/facility parliament for current or former children living in the Centres for children and family to support their participation in decision making.⁴⁹²</p> <p>The National Action Plan of European Child Guarantee plans to support representative democracy for young people through implementing community, low-threshold services, youth drop-in centre programs working with unorganized youth. In general, the National Action Plan of European Child Guarantee concludes that currently there is lacking community cooperation and children's participation in decision-making processes.⁴⁹³</p> <p>Current participation mechanism where children can express their opinions at the municipality level are almost exclusively developed by non-governmental organizations, or it is created as an initiative of young people themselves.⁴⁹⁴ The NGO Children's Foundation of Slovakia have spent several years training and consulting national action plans of local governments for the participation of children and youth through the program Communities Friendly to Children and Young People.⁴⁹⁵ In the Law No. 282/2008 Coll. on</p>

⁴⁹¹ Information provided by the representative of department of Social Protection of children – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family via personal interview on 6 March 2023.

⁴⁹² Úsmev ako dar (2022) ‘[FB post from 25 March 2022](#)’.

⁴⁹³ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2022), [National action plan of the European child guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030](#) (Národný akčný plán Európskej záruky pre deti v Slovenskej republike s výhľadom do roku 2030).

⁴⁹⁴ Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁵ Nadácia pre deti Slovenska, ‘[Komunita priateľská deťom a mladým ľuďom](#)’.

			<p>the support of work with youth⁴⁹⁶ and Law No. 360/2019 amending Law No 282/2008 Coll. on the promotion of youth work⁴⁹⁷ is grounded the participation of children and youth and opportunity of establishment of youth parliaments at the local level, but it is not legally enforceable. Some municipalities in coordination with NGOs or youth establish local youth parliaments which should support youth participation in shaping local life and policies. More widely functioning are school parliaments which is due to the Law No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government.⁴⁹⁸ At the level of the School Committee of the National Assembly of the Slovak Republic, its chairman has also set up a consultative body with youth organisations and University Student Council.⁴⁹⁹</p>
7.2.2. Are community-based mechanisms functional across the country where necessary and per applicability and per protocols and procedures? Is their effectiveness monitored by independent accountability mechanisms?	x		<p>Some community-based mechanisms exist but are limited to selected parts of the country, mainly in larger cities and in contrast are lacking in smaller towns and East region of Slovakia.⁵⁰⁰ Although there can be existing small informal groups on the local level, their occurrence is rather ad hoc. Mostly, the existing community based mechanisms are functioning through the local NGOs. The monitoring of the effectiveness depends on the extent to which an NGO is formalized and its contact with the state, local bodies or other donors. While, NGOs accredited by the state as entities to carry out certain services or NGOs financed by municipal or state funding are subject to monitoring, NGOs</p>

⁴⁹⁶ Slovakia, Law No. 282/2008 Coll. on the support of work with youth and on the Amendment and Supplementation of Law No 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education and on the Amendment and Supplementation of Certain Acts (Zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou a o zmene a doplnení zákona č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 2 July 2008.

⁴⁹⁷ Slovakia, Law No 360/2019 Coll. amending Act No. 282/2008 Coll. on the support of youth work and on amending and supplementing Law No. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education and on amending and supplementing certain acts, as amended (Zákon č. 360/2019 Z. z. ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou a o zmene a doplnení zákona č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov), 16 October 2019.

⁴⁹⁸ Slovakia, Law No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government, as amended (Zákon č. 596/2003 Z. z. o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve), 5 November 2003.

⁴⁹⁹ Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

⁵⁰⁰ Information provided by the NGO Mládež ulice via telephone on 10 March 2023.

			functioning on personal financial gifts with little contact with the state or municipality or funding scheme, will not be monitored. ⁵⁰¹
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7.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child participation and community engagement that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

One of the main challenges regarding the child participation is that child and youth participation is not legally enforceable, although there exists supporting legal instruments.⁵⁰² Thus, it is an individual decision of each municipality and institution whether they will create such mechanism. Overall, there is lacking political will on the national level as well as on the local level to deal with this topic. Hence, the built structures of participation are often created based on the initiative of an NGO or youth themselves. The weak support of the participation mechanisms by the state results in low financial capacities of the municipalities and they do not have will to allocate or search for further financial resources on these activities.⁵⁰³

Furthermore, the quality of the established participation mechanism such as youth parliaments can be questionable as it can act on the formal level as mechanism for involving children in formation of policies, while in reality it acts more as a cultural- sports committee without impact on the decision making in general. There is also lacking broader discussion about what constitutes meaningful participation as the framing of participation is often reduced to organising of cultural, social and sporting activities. Within the project Creation of mechanisms for participation led by the NGO Open Society Foundation multiple documents have been produced regarding the mechanisms of participation of children, yet they were not further used or implemented on the state level.⁵⁰⁴

The established youth parliaments with functioning involvement with municipalities and formation of policies can be perceived as promising practices of the child participation and community engagement.⁵⁰⁵ Youth Parliament of Nové Zámky, Petržalka Youth Parliament in Bratislava⁵⁰⁶ or Youth Council of Žilina Region⁵⁰⁷ can be presented as examples of the functioning participation. The Youth Council of Žilina Region works with multiple municipalities to develop youth councils across the Žilina region.⁵⁰⁸ Moreover, under the Erasmus+ project Europe goes local, which mapped the needs of the youth and promoted the work with youth on the local level, participatory structures were created

⁵⁰¹ Information provided by the NGO Mládež ulice via telephone on 10 March 2023.

⁵⁰² Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

⁵⁰³ Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

⁵⁰⁴ Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

⁵⁰⁵ Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

⁵⁰⁶ Petržalka (2023) 'Petržalský mládežnícky parlament | PETRŽALKA'.

⁵⁰⁷ Rada mládeže Žilinského kraja (2023) 'PARTICIPÁCIA, AKTÍVNE OBČIANSTVO, TVORBA MLÁDEŽNÍCKEJ POLITIKY A ŠTRUKTÚROVANÝ DIALÓG'.

⁵⁰⁸ Information provided by the NGO Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti via email on 9 March 2023.

enabling youth and representatives of municipalities to come together and discuss local matters together. Within the pilot phase 10 municipalities were involved in the project.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁹ Slovakia, Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR*) (2019) 'Europe Goes Local – podpora práce s mládežou na úrovni samospráv', 19 November 2019.