

YEAR 2023 IN MIGRATION ASPECTS AND INDICATORS IN SLOVAKIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews migration trends with the ultimate goal of diagnosing these movements' impacts on the labour force, population structure, and cultural integration of Slovakia. In the light of the above, how do bi-directional migration flows, characterized by emigration to European neighbouring countries and the inflow of third-country nationals, predominantly Ukrainians, into the Slovak Republic affect its demographic, economic, and social structures. In particular, which policy measures are able to harness their potential positive effects and at the same time mitigate possible challenges?

The migration data discussed in this paper is gained from statistical sources with varying indicators included in those databases.

Key words

Economy, migration, Slovakia, indicators, 2023

I. Introduction

Migration in the Slovak Republic is a dynamic phenomenon caused by economic, social, and geopolitical factors. Historically, there have been high levels of emigration as Slovaks have looked for better economic prospects, education, and quality of life not only in the neighbouring countries of Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic. At the same time, the country has become an immigrant destination - most recently - immigrants are coming primarily from its neighbourhood regions like Ukraine, driven by their not only labour market demands and geographical closeness but also the current war situation in the Ukraine.

A bidirectional migration flow has several other effects associated with it, the most striking ones being the labour market dynamics and the socio-cultural landscape of Slovakia. Such channels should reflect both the patterns and driving factors of emigration as well as immigration to adequately assess the implications for economic development, public policies, and integration strategies of the country.

We try to explain how the two-way movements, marked by people leaving to other European nations and coming into the country, mostly from Ukraine, influence the population, economy, and social setup of the Slovak Republic, and what steps can work to use their pluses well while lowering related issues.

II. Methodology

To analyse the migration trends and impacts in the Slovak Republic in 2023, a descriptive research methodology was employed. This methodology provides a comprehensive and detailed depiction of migration patterns, drivers, and consequences based on a combination of quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights. The following steps outline the approach taken:

1. Data Collection

Primary Data Sources:

Slovak Statistical Office (ŠÚ SR): Official statistics on migration flows, demographic characteristics of migrants, employment rates, and other relevant metrics were obtained. This included annual reports and datasets on population movements, labour market statistics, and economic indicators.

Ministry of Interior: Data on immigration, emigration, and asylum applications were sourced from government records, providing detailed information on the legal status and numbers of migrants and refugees.

Border and Alien Police Office of the Presidium of the Police Force

International Organization for Migration (IOM): Reports and data on migration trends, including the impact of the Russo-Ukrainian War on refugee movements into Slovakia, were utilized.

Migration Office and the Border and Alien Police Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Secondary Data Sources:

Academic Literature: A comprehensive review of scholarly articles, research papers, and books on migration trends in Slovakia and Central Europe provided historical context and theoretical frameworks.

Government Reports: Publications from various government departments, including the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family, offered insights into labour market conditions and integration policies.

2. Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis:

Descriptive Statistics: Basic statistical techniques were used to summarize and describe the main features of the data. This included calculating totals, averages, percentages, and growth rates of migration flows, employment rates among migrants, and other key indicators.

Trend Analysis: Time series data were analysed to identify trends and patterns over time, such as changes in the number of immigrants and emigrants, shifts in the demographic composition of migrants, and variations in labour market participation.

3. Data Validation

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, cross-referencing was conducted between different sources.

Methods Summary:

Quantitative Methods: Descriptive statistics and trend analysis to summarize and understand migration data.

By employing this descriptive methodology, the study provides a detailed and nuanced understanding of migration trends and their impacts in the Slovak Republic in 2024. This approach ensures a comprehensive depiction of the multifaceted nature of migration, encompassing both quantitative trends and qualitative experiences.

III. Migration Movements

Emigration and Immigration

Data on migration flows according to the Slovak Statistical Office (based on the change of permanent residence) show an increase in total immigration - from about 5.5 thousand persons in 2022 to over 5.9 thousand of persons in 2023 and also an increase in emigration - from 4468 persons in 2022 to 4522 persons in 2023. The net migration inflow subsequently increased from 995 persons in 2022 to 1401 persons in 2023. In 2023 out of the total inflow of about 5.6 thousand migrants almost 5.1 thousand originated from Europe. Similarly, out of the total outflow of about 4.5 thousand persons, over 4 thousand persons were to Europe. Migration flows in Slovakia continue to be heavily dominated by Europeans.

Evolution of Migration Flows by Main Categories of Entry and-or Permit Types

Here an alternative source of data about foreign residents in Slovakia - the registry of residence permits administered by the Ministry of Interior (Police Corps) is used.

Table 1 (Heriban, 2024) provides more detailed data on newly granted permits and stocks by type in 2018 - 2023.

Data on residence permits administered by the Ministry of Interior show that the dynamics of newly granted permits has been continuous increased over the past years. The number of newly granted permits that fluctuated around 10 thousand annually during 2010-12 reached almost 167 thousand in 2022 only to fall down to just over 100 thousand in 2023. Most of the number is due to third country nationals, whose inflow may have decreased to almost 97 thousand yet they still make the vast majority of the inflows. New permits for third country nationals have been concentrated mainly in the categories of temporary residence (over 61 thousand persons in 2023) and tolerated residence (30.4 thousand in 2023). End of year stocks of residence permits continue to grow, from 278595 persons in 2022 to 311406 persons in 2023. (17.8 per

cent) of them were EEA nationals. The number of third country citizens has been increasing and by the end of 2023 it reached 255.8 thousand persons - as compared to 50 thousand in 2017.

Table 2 (Heriban, 2024) provides information about the permit dynamics based on the flows during the first six months of each calendar year. The granting process has increasing dynamics underscored by the conflict in Ukraine: while in 2011 and 2012 some 4 thousand permits were granted during the first six months, the number rose to over 111 thousand in 2022, declined to 48.7 thousand by first half of 2023 and subsequently levelled at 50 thousand in first half of 2024.

Breakdown of newly granted permits for third-country nationals by nationality (Top 20) in 2023 and by mid-2024 is depicted in Table 3 (Heriban, 2024). Top four nationalities remain rather stable: they include Ukrainians, Serbians, Vietnamese, Russians and they are alternately followed by Moldovans and Indian people. In 2023 almost 60 thousand Ukrainians received the permits, with the latest figure of over 29 thousand in mid-2024.

Distribution of Migrants by Gender and Age

Gender composition of migration flows (permanent change of residence) in Slovakia became gradually more balanced over time. As can be seen from Table 4 (Heriban, 2024), inflows were in the past dominated by males, and outflows by females. This tendency was much more pronounced for exchange of migrants with countries other than the Czech Republic. For the latter, the gender composition of flows has been more balanced, in particular in terms of inflows. As regards the exchange of migrants with other countries, in 2023 there is also balance - out of 5923 immigrants (1542 from the Czech Republic and 4381 other countries) 2379 were men and 2002 women.

Main Countries of Birth and Nationalities

Research is based on the data by the Slovak Statistical Office. In 2023 out of the total inflow (Tables 5a – 5c) (Heriban, 2024) of about 5.9 thousand migrants 5 thousand (86%) originated from Europe. Similarly, out of the total outflow of about 4.5 thousand persons, 4.2 thousand persons (92.7%) were to the Europe. Migration flows in Slovakia are thus heavily dominated by persons of European origin. This has been a long-term trend, which is robust for both country of origin (permanent residency) and especially for country of citizenship of migrants.

Inflows (by country of origin, i.e. permanent residency) are traditionally dominated by arrivals from the near or neighbouring European countries: the Czech Republic, UK, Ukraine, Austria and Germany.

Asian and African migrants continue to represent a small share of the total inflow. Asia is the third most significant region in terms of immigration; however, the inflows are rather small (422 persons in and 53 persons out, which is an increase of 160% as compared with the year before. Similarly, the inflows from Americas accounted for 299 persons in 2023 (261 in 2022), but outflow decreased to 218 persons (268 in 2022). The migration balance with Australia and Africa may be small but grew by 3/4 as compared with 2021. Inflows from Australia and Africa accounted for 106 (93 in 2022) and outflow for 56 persons (48 in 2022).

Vast majority of flows comes from and to the OECD area (OECD aggregation is made over the 38 countries depicted in table 7c) – 75.5 per cent of inflow and 97 per cent of outflow in 2023 (88 per cent of inflow and 97 per cent of outflow in 2022) was from OECD countries. A separate category is represented by non-OECD countries (but SOPEMI group correspondents) that are EU Member States (Bulgaria and Romania) that cumulatively accounted for 82 immigrants in 2023. (121 immigrants in 2022).

A comparison of migration inflows by country of origin and country of citizenship in general and for top 10 countries in terms of inflows and outflow (Tables 5) reveals differences between the two categories for all major countries, implying changes of citizenship by migrants. The largest difference was in the case of the Czech Republic, i.e. in 2023 there was an inflow of 1542 persons from the Czech Republic out of which 251 were citizens of Czech Republic (In 2022 of 1467 persons moved from Czech Republic were 347 citizens of the Czech Republic). The memo item also shows an inflow of 3783 in 2023 (3671 in 2022) Slovak citizens i.e. 64% of overall inflows to Slovakia. The top 3 countries in terms of origin of immigrants in 2023, apart from the Czech Republic, were the United Kingdom (represented by 579 immigrants in 2023, down from 600 immigrants in 2022) and Ukraine (523 immigrants in 2023) while top countries in terms of citizenship of immigrants were traditionally the Czech Republic (251 persons in 2023, 347 in 2022), but this time Ukraine (457 persons in) and Hungary (289 persons in) preceded them.

Irregular Migration, Including Regularisation and Expulsion

Table 6 (Heriban, 2024) provides overview of the long-term development of irregular migration flows in Slovakia. The dynamics of illegal movements has recently increased substantially, owing to the Ukrainian crisis: numbers of illegal crossings in 2023 reached 47610. The number of apprehensions at the border reached 678 in 2023, of these only 9 were captured leaving Slovakia. The number of detected cases of illegal stay in Slovakia increased to 46932 in 2023. Almost all of these were detected inland.

Before joining the Schengen area, vast majority of apprehended illegal movements were across the Ukrainian border (mainly into Slovakia) while only a few cases were through the Czech border and through airports. After joining the Schengen area, the Slovak-Ukrainian border became the only external Schengen border. Therefore, the figures on border passages since 2012 refer to this segment of the border only.

IV. Conclusion

The Russo-Ukrainian war marked year 2022 significantly. To the number of usual migrant flows to Slovakia (mainly from southern Balkan states) flows across Ukrainian border were added. Slovakia has so far had experience only with substantial transit migrant flows that moved out of the country. Owing to the conflict we are experiencing increased numbers of migrants who chose to stay on Slovak territory rather than move farther away to other countries. The Slovak Republic experienced a surge in refugees, adding complexity to the existing migration dynamics. It is rather difficult a task to provide exact numbers on how many Ukrainians actually are on the Slovak territory. Since the start of Russo-Ukrainian conflict large groups of migrants started to cross borders and many of them were simply let thru with neither some ID shown nor being registered as a person crossing the border. The best fit is the data there we have on the numbers of registered people from Ukraine. Furthermore, there is a number of Ukrainians who stayed in the country even before the war and registered themselves only after the war started. To underscore these numbers there is also data on the number of border crossings in both directions for any given period of time. The available data for 2024 shows an increasing trend in the numbers of especially third country nationals (the majority from Ukraine) granted all types of residence permits (temporary, permanent or tolerated) with the number of tolerated residence permits (both newly granted and stocks) at many times the level of the previous year. Therefore, it is vitally important to keep continually analysing the migration data in order to give the decision sphere solid background to act effectively in creating a framework of appropriate measures.

Humanitarian Response and Integration: Slovak government, international organizations and civil society mobilized resources to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees. That meant shelter and food, medical and legal support. This forced rapid adaptation of public services and integration efforts.

Economies and Social Impacts of the Refugee Influx: The arrival of Ukrainian refugees brought with it economic and social consequences -

Labour Market: Many Ukrainian refugees contributed to the labour market, especially in sectors of acute labour shortages. But they needed additional support in getting into work - language training and job placement.

Public Services: The rising demand for public services including healthcare, education and housing strains existing infrastructure. The government had to provide more money for refugees while still meeting local needs.

Social Cohesion: Sudden refugee influx also tested social cohesion. There was a strong initial wave of solidarity and support for Ukrainian refugees but long-term integration needed sustained efforts for mutual understanding and social inclusion.

Policy Implications - 2022 experiences demonstrated that migration and integration policies are needed in the Slovak Republic. Our recommendations on key policies therefore are

- **Strengthening Integration Programs:** Integrating language education or skills development & employment support programmes for migrants / refugees.
- **Enhancing Public Services:** Fund and also provide public services to meet migration - driven demand.

To promote Social Cohesion: Introducing initiatives for social inclusion & antidiscrimination - producing a resilient society.

Future Research: Future research topics might consist of long-term impacts of migration and efficacy concerning integration methods. Additionally the socio economic results of Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia may well be lessons learned about dealing with long refugee flows.

Conclusion - migration in the Slovak Republic in 2023 was determined by both existing economic prospects and by the unprecedented reach of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Migration had good effects on economy and demographics but also called for coherent integration policies. Through holistic migration management, the Slovak Republic can benefit from migration while maintaining social stability and cohesion.

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Appendix

Table 1

Number of residence permits granted to foreigners in 2017-2023

By type	Newly granted						Stocks 31. 12.						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Temporary	29 474	40 728	36 476	49 777	52 892	61 110	34 570	48 316	66 964	69 978	85 286	98 281	109 043
Third-country nationals	29 474	40 728	36 476	49 777	52 892	61 110	34 570	48 316	66 964	69 978	85 286	98 281	109 043
Permanent residence	9 174	10 075	10 586	8 770	8 673	9 281	69 645	72 933	76 060	79 981	82 158	84 864	88 140
Third-country nationals	2 541	2 837	3 285	4 024	4 144	5 254	15 589	17 050	18 812	20 775	26 066	28 794	32 632
EU nationals	6 633	7 238	7 301	4 746	4 529	4 027	54 056	55 883	57 248	59 206	56 092	56 070	55 508
Tolerated residence	33	71	71	130	105 387	30 451	236	15	51	53	75	95 450	114 223
Third-country nationals	33	71	71	130	105 387	30 451	236	15	51	53	75	95 450	114 223
Total	38 681	50 874	47 133	58 677	166 952	100 842	104 451	121 264	143 075	150 012	167 519	278 595	311 406
Third-country nationals	32 048	43 636	39 832	53 931	162 423	96 815	50 395	65 381	85 827	90 806	111 427	222 525	255 898
EU nationals	6 633	7 238	7 301	4 746	452 9	4 027	54 056	55 883	57 248	59 206	56 092	56 070	55 508

Source: Presidium of the Police Corps, Bureau of Border and Alien Police.

Table 2

Number of residence permits granted to foreigners in 1st half years 2018-2024

By type	Newly granted 1.1.-30.6.						Stocks 30. 6.						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Temporary	17 123	16 119	18 616	23 134	284 21	297 45	38 039	55 953	68 676	72 356	91 481	103 848	112 771

Third-country nationals	17 123	16 119	18 616	23 134	284 21	297 45	38 039	55 953	68 676	72 356	91 481	103 848	112 771
Permanent residence	5 089	4 276	4 033	4 012	466 5	629 4	71 177	74 441	77 243	80 485	83 157	863 30	917 15
Third-country nationals	1 360	1 399	1 912	1 806	257 7	415 2	16 237	17 893	19 548	24 603	27 211	306 64	360 35
EU nationals	3 729	2 877	2 121	2 206	208 8	214 2	54 940	56 548	57 695	55 882	55 946	556 66	556 80
Tolerated residence	22	20	59	84 129	156 60	139 64	17	24	21	61	80 472	103 889	122 886
Third-country nationals	22	20	59	84 129	156 60	139 64	17	24	21	61	80 472	103 889	122 886
Total	22 234	20 415	22 708	111 275	487 46	500 03	109 233	130 418	145 940	152 902	255 110	294 067	327 372
Third-country nationals	18 505	17 538	20 587	109 069	466 58	478 61	54 293	73 870	88 245	97 020	199 164	238 401	271 692
EU nationals	3 729	2 877	2 1 21	2 206	208 8	214 2	54 940	56 548	57 695	55 882	559 46	556 66	556 80

Source: Presidium of the Police Corps, Bureau of Border and Alien Police.

Table 3

Residence permits for third-country nationals by nationality in 2023-2024 1st half (Top 20)

2023	Inflows (new permits)				2024 half	Inflows (new permits)			
	Total	Temp	Perm	Toler		Total	Temp	Perm	Toler
Ukraine	60 416	28 387	1 835	30 194	Ukraine	29 113	13 240	1 988	13 885
Serbia	7 938	7 304	634		Serbia	3 807	3 341	466	
Vietnam	4 250	3 745	504	1	Vietnam	2 455	2 119	336	
Georgia	3 654	3 624	27	3	Georgia	1 556	1 513	41	2
Russia	3 434	2 951	399	84	Russia	1 212	943	219	50
Others	17 123	15 099	1 855	224	Others	9 718	8 589	1 102	27
Total	96 815	61 110	5 254	30 451	Total	47 861	29 745	4 152	13 964

Source: Presidium of the Police Corps, Bureau of Border and Alien Police

Table 4

Immigration to and emigration from the Slovak Republic by year and gender 1970-2023

Immigration						
Year	From/to abroad (a)			From/to the Czech Republic		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
2020	4 943	2 700	2 243	1 832	932	900
2021	4 213	2 223	1 990	1 520	773	747
2022	3 996	2 104	1 892	1 467	751	716
2023	4 381	2 379	2 002	1 542	783	759
Emigration						
2020	1 524	560	964	904	436	468
2021	2 164	797	1 367	1 231	535	696
2022	2 837	1 163	1 674	1 631	788	843
2023	2 646	1 120	1 526	1 876	880	996

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Table 5a

Inflows and outflows of migrants by country of origin and citizenship – OECD countries, 2020-2023

Origin	2020		2021		2022		2023		Citizen ship	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out		In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Total	67 75	24 28	57 33	33 95	54 63	44 68	59 23	45 22	Total	677 5	242 8	573 3	339 5	546 3	446 8	59 23	45 22
Europe	62 40	23 35	52 65	31 94	48 55	40 85	50 96	41 95	Europe	660 4	242 6	562 6	339 4	526 6	446 7	54 87	45 20
EU	53 76	22 20	38 94	27 90	35 83	34 13	34 04	36 10	EU without SR		7	152 6	1	158 5	6	93 4	17
OECD 36	56 92	23 74	x	x	x	x			OECD 36	602 9	242 5	x	x	x	x		
OECD 37	56 94	23 74	x	x	x	x			OECD 37	603 0	242 5	x	x	x	x		

Origin	2020		2021		2022		2023		Citizen ship	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out		In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
OECD 38			49 36	32 24	45 28	43 24	44 77	43 97	OECD3 8without SR			1 462	1	110 7	6	94 8	18
Non- OECD									Non- OECD								

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Table 5b
Gross flows of migrants by year and country of citizenship, 2013-2023

Continent	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Total	677 5	242 8	573 3	339 5	546 3	446 8	592 3	452 2
Europe	660 4	242 6	562 6	339 4	526 6	446 7	548 7	452 0
Asia	127	1	77		171		350	1
America	32	1	20		11		48	1
Africa	9		10		15	1	33	
Australia and Oceania	3			1			5	

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Table 5c
Top 10 countries for migration *outflows* in 2023 – comparison of countries of origin and countries of citizenship

Country of origin				Country of citizenship			
Country	Inflow	Outflow	Rank	Country	Inflow	Outflow	Rank
Czech Republic	1542	1876	1	Czech Republic	251	10	1
Austria	516	781	2	Germany	44	2	2
United Kingdom	579	376	3	Ukraine	457	2	3
Germany	368	372	4	Ireland	6	1	4
Switzerland	178	159	5	Spain	23	1	5
Hungary	326	129	6	Croatia	15	1	6

Italy	89	119	7	Poland	82	1	7
United States	180	109	8	Sweden	18	1	8
Canada	81	69	9	United Kingdom	16	1	9
Spain	64	58	10	Georgia	8	1	10
				Slovakia	3783	4500	
Total	5923	4522		Total	5923	4522	
Europe	5096	4195		Europe	5487	4520	
EU 27	3404	3610		EU without SK	934	17	

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Table 6
Pressure at the state border - illegal migrants, 2019-2023

(in persons)	2023			2024– half year		
	Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out
Total	47 610			1 212		
Illegal State border crossing:	678	669	9	874	869	5
External land border between BCPs	669	659	9	9	9	
External land border at BCPs	6	6		2	1	1
Internal land border*						
External air border ((non-Schengen flights)	4	4		2	1	1
Illegal stay	46			338		
	932					
Inland – legal entry	234					
Inland – illegal entry	46			320		
	427					
Inland – unknown entry	22					
At BCPs at the exit from SR	4			7		
At BCPs at the exit from SR - airports						
After return from other Member States	245			11		

Source: Presidium of the Police Corps, Bureau of Border and Alien Police.