

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018



SLOVAKIA

SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 348 million euro has been allocated to such operations in Slovakia, with 101 780 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Slovakia.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



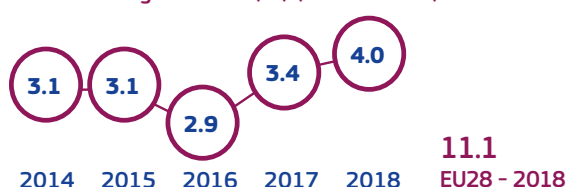
- Slovakia has maintained a relatively **low early school leaving (ESL) rate** at national level, achieving the EU target rate of 10% or lower. However, the rate has increased in recent years, which is contrary to the EU trend. Women are marginally more likely to drop out of education than men. Pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to leave education and training early, and Roma children are especially affected. There are also high regional disparities between the east and west of the country.

Tertiary educational attainment rate (%)
(30-34 year olds)



- OECD PISA results indicate that the **proportion of low achievers** in reading, mathematics and science is higher than the EU average (20.1% compared to 12.3% in 2015).
- The **tertiary educational attainment rate** has risen steadily in recent years and was just below the EU28 average in 2018. Women have a significantly higher attainment rate than men (44.6% compared to 31.1% in 2018). However, tertiary education institutions tend to be of poor quality and the level of internationalisation is low.

Participation rate in education and training by adults
aged 25-64 (%) (last 4 weeks)



- The education and training system does not correspond sufficiently to labour market requirements.** For example, the majority of students attending secondary and tertiary education institutions study social sciences and humanities, but the labour market requires more technical skills. There is a need for more relevant vocational education and training (VET) to meet the needs of the labour market.
- The qualification level of the labour force is affected by the limited **participation rate of the adult population in education and training** (4% in 2018), and the poor quality and content of available programmes.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

ESF European Social Fund

TO10 Thematic Objective 10

OP Operational Programme

IP Investment Priority

* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN SLOVAKIA

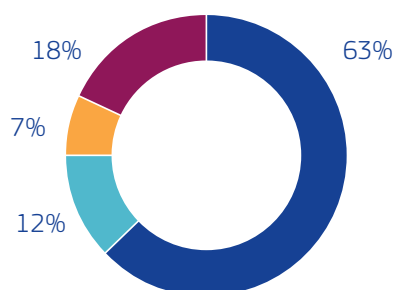
- ▶ The **Operational Programme Human Resources** has defined the following objectives and strategies relevant to Thematic Objective 10 (TO10):
 - ▶ Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems through **enhanced involvement of employers** in the design and innovation of educational curricula and partnerships between education providers and employers;
 - ▶ **Improving the quality of primary education** to reduce the ESL rate below 6% and to address the shortage of teachers' assistants and specialised staff working directly in schools;
- ▶ **Improving access to quality inclusive education** at all school levels and taking into consideration the needs of students by strengthening the co-operation between schools and parents;
- ▶ Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, **tertiary and equivalent education**.

16% of total ESF funding¹...

€348 741 004

...is allocated to the following TO10 investment priorities: **early school leaving (63%)**, **access to quality tertiary and equivalent education (12%)**, **enhancing access to lifelong learning (7%)**, and **improving the labour market relevance of education and training (18%)**.

Allocation of ESF TO10 funds



- Reducing and preventing early school leaving - IP10.i
- Improving quality and access to tertiary education - IP10.ii
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning - IP10.iii
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training - IP10.iv

STATE OF PLAY

31% of planned resources under TO10 had been allocated in 2018, with 6% spent.

Number of overall participations in TO10 operations by the end of 2018:

101 780

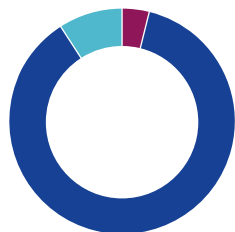
- ▶ **92 420** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ **1 265** participations in operations to improve the access to, and quality of, tertiary and equivalent education
- ▶ **3 174** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning
- ▶ **4 921** participations in operations to improve the labour market relevance of education and training

¹ This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

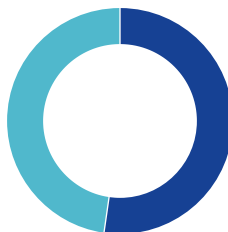
PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



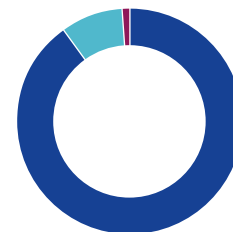
4% (4 007) Unemployed
88% (89 147) Inactive²
9% (8 626) Employed

Sex

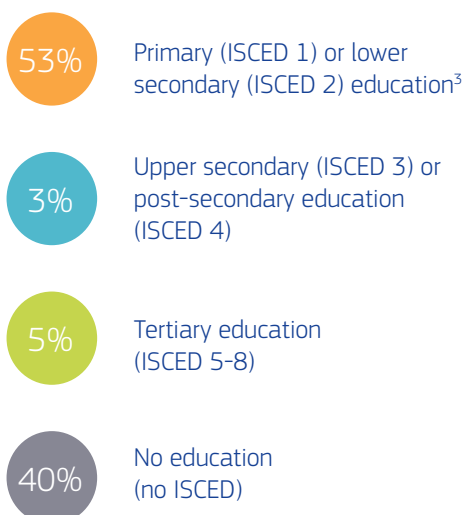
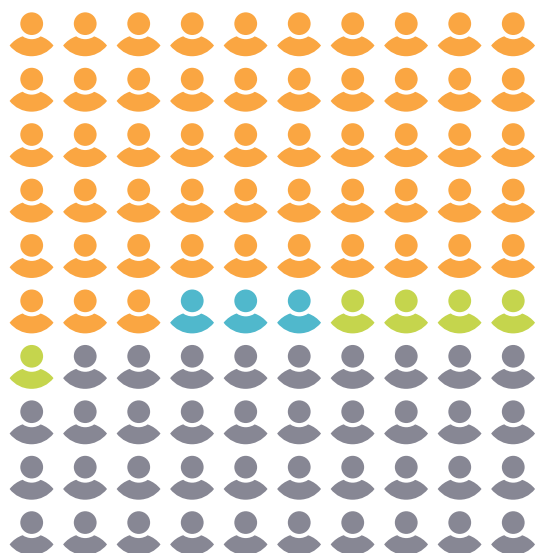


48% Women
52% Men

Age



90% (91 469) <25 years
9% (9 335) 25-54 years
1% (976) >54 years



10 518
Migrants

8 303
Other disadvantaged

3 862
Participants with disabilities

83
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Slovakia include⁴:

► **3 564** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:

► **17** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching

► **552** participants went into education or training

► **1** participants gained a qualification

► **2 994** participants moved into employment upon leaving

► The rate of spending on T010 projects is very low at 6%. The majority of results indicators do not hit their target values. However, some targets have been achieved:

► 32 partnerships between employers and lifelong education providers were agreed, greatly exceeding the target of 14 (229% of target). This should help to improve the participation rate in lifelong learning in the future.

► 614 schools have been involved in activities promoting inclusive education, exceeding the target of 500.

► 25 655 pupils with special educational needs have been involved in activities aimed at promoting an inclusive education model, exceeding the target of 22 000.

► The share of participants without education (no ISCED) is very high at 40%. This shows a good degree of reach to a key target population in the country.

² The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

³ ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

⁴ Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

► Monitoring and evaluation challenges

The lack of up-to-date information in the central government's operation and data management system, ITMS2014+ has hindered the effective monitoring and evaluation of ESF operations.

► Insufficient targeting of regional disparities

There are clear differences in educational performance in different regions of Slovakia, which are not sufficiently reflected in ESF funding allocations. The capital Bratislava and its surrounding region has the best performing schools and students, while regions in the east of the country perform less well.

► Flexibility and communication

The government has responded to the low absorption of ESF funds in education-related operations by intensifying its communication with stakeholders to explain application processes for ESF funding, and the aims of the calls for proposals. The ESF Managing Authority has also shown flexibility in its administrative processes to support beneficiaries in running ESF operations.

► Support for the Roma population

Roma people in Slovakia often live in isolated and marginalised settlements with a substantial lack of basic infrastructure. They face a lack of stimulation at a formative age which leads to low performance in education and later to unemployment. The ESF has funded many operations in recent years to address the problems facing the Roma community, but educational statistics show an ongoing need for such operations.

► Teacher training

ESF operations aim to improve the content, scope and methodology used in teacher training in Slovakia and to better equip teachers for the real world classroom environment. ESF funding is used in particular to provide improved continuous professional development.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

► School open to everyone

Teachers and educators in less developed regions of Slovakia have the opportunity to participate in training on issues that children from Roma or disadvantaged backgrounds could encounter when joining pre-school and primary school. The project aims to certify more than 2 500 participants and draft a set of recommendations for the improvement of educational system.

► Dual learning

The National Institute of Voluntary Education organised a 'dual education' system, which allows students to undertake apprenticeships in a professional environment. Employers of many vocational backgrounds are involved in the operation, which is based on a similar model used in Austria and Germany. The operation aims to support 12 000 students with 700 trained instructors by 2020.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

European Commission, Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

The ESF in Slovakia: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=397&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Slovakia: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/esf/programove-obdobie-2014-2020/>

