

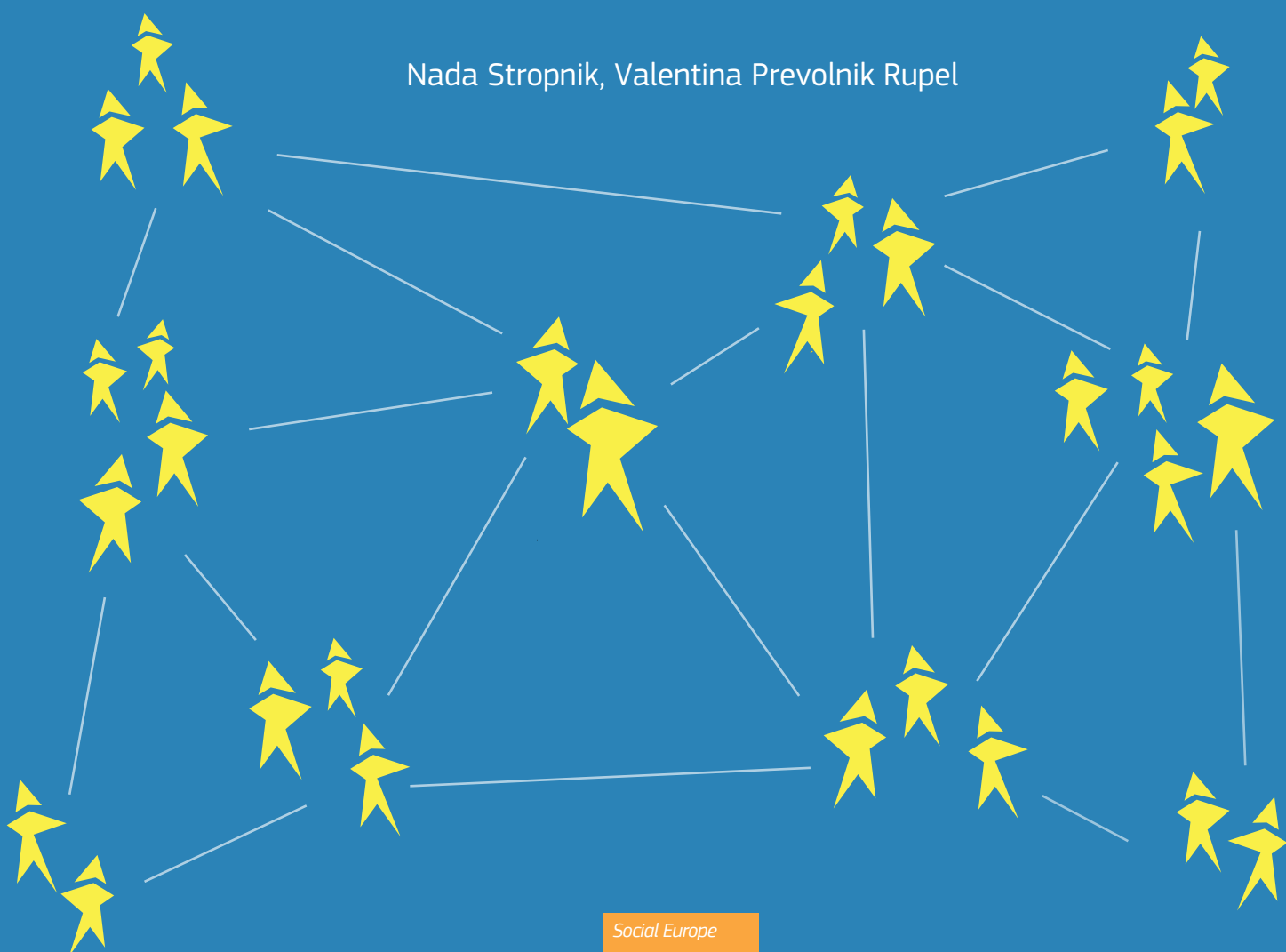


EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN)

Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis

Slovenia

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

**ESPN Thematic Report:
Social protection and inclusion
policy responses to the
COVID-19 crisis**

Slovenia

2021

Nada Stropnik and Valentina Prevolnik Rupel

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) was established in July 2014 on the initiative of the European Commission to provide high-quality and timely independent information, advice, analysis and expertise on social policy issues in the European Union and neighbouring countries.

The ESPN brings together into a single network the work that used to be carried out by the European Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion, the Network for the Analytical Support on the Socio-Economic Impact of Social Protection Reforms (ASISP) and the MISSOC (Mutual Information Systems on Social Protection) secretariat.

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Summary

Between Monday, 27 January 2020 and Sunday, 18 April 2021, the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people was 6,740 for the EU-27 as a whole; in Slovenia, it was 11,401. The total number of deaths per 100,000 people was 151 for the EU-27 versus 202 in Slovenia.

The social protection and inclusion policies already in place in Slovenia were not designed to respond to the kinds and extent of challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis in the labour market. Further (intervention) measures were necessary to prevent unemployment and protect jobs. The government's response was immediate and generally adequate.

Since mid-March 2020, Slovenia has approved eight anti-coronavirus legislative packages. The major measures to prevent/alleviate unemployment and maintain workers' income have been: 1) (partially) subsidised temporary suspension of work (employees on furlough); and 2) partially subsidised part-time work for employees on full-time contracts. The state has been reimbursing the salary compensation of employees absent from work due to a quarantine order or *force majeure* (a consequence of the childcare obligation, the cessation of public transport or the closure of borders), and employers have been exempt from paying (almost all) contributions. The state has paid employee and employer pension and disability insurance contributions in the case of private-sector employees who were working. In return, employers had to pay a crisis supplement to workers earning up to three (later lowered to two) times the minimum wage.

During spring 2020, the self-employed were temporarily exempt from paying social security contributions (which were paid by the state). During the epidemic, they have been eligible for extraordinary basic monthly income (exempt from all taxes and contributions) if, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, they have been unable to carry out their activities, or have only been able to perform them to a substantially reduced extent, and consequently foresaw a more than 10% (later increased to 20%) decrease in their income in 2020 compared with 2019. The self-employed are also eligible for partial reimbursement of forgone income for the duration of quarantine at home or inability to work due to childcare obligations.

People who lost their jobs after the first day of the COVID-19 epidemic (regardless of their eligibility for unemployment benefit) were entitled to a one-off allowance. Those whose employment was terminated for business reasons or because their contract expired during the COVID-19 epidemic, and who are not eligible for (regular) unemployment benefit, have been receiving temporary unemployment benefit.

In order to improve their social security during the COVID-19 epidemic, (one-off) solidarity allowances have been paid to permanent residents of Slovenia who belong to selected vulnerable population groups. Some family transfers have been temporarily increased. Parents have been excused from paying parent fees for childcare services provided as a public service during kindergarten closures, if their children were not attending. For the period of a user's absence from institutional care due to transfer to home care, the state has been paying the accommodation costs normally paid by the user.

All insured persons who fall sick with COVID-19 have had sickness benefit paid by the compulsory health insurance from the first day of their absence from work. A parent's right to be paid while staying with a child in hospital (or a healthcare institution more broadly) was extended to the parents of older children. It is most likely that this extension will become permanent.

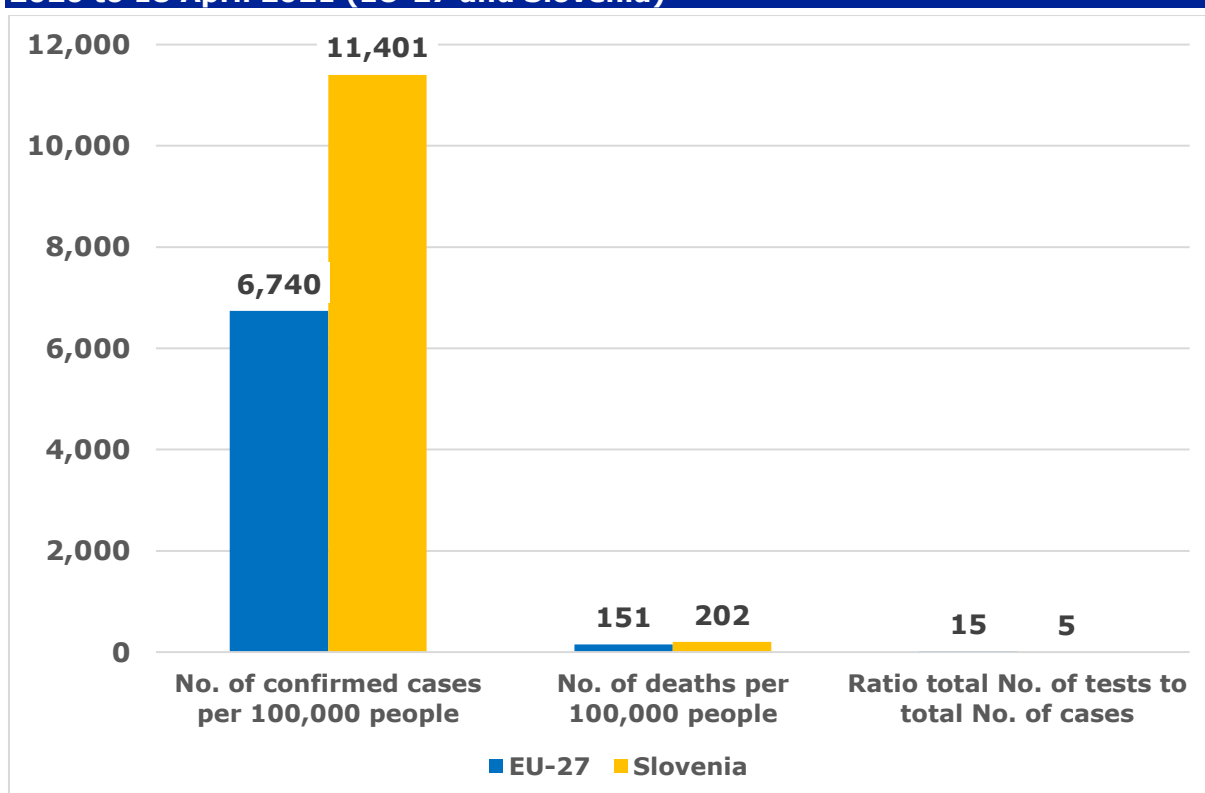
Anticipated costs have proved very different from actual costs, particularly for those measures related to job protection, and particularly during the spring wave of the epidemic. Payments made to eligible individuals and companies until 15 April 2021 amounted to EUR 1.853 billion, or 3.8% of 2019 GDP. However, this is not the final cost of the intervention measures for that period.

1 TRENDS OF THE PANDEMIC AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT¹

1.1 Epidemiological situation

During the 63 weeks considered for these three indicators (from Monday 3 February 2020 to Sunday 18 April 2021), the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people was 6,740 for the EU-27 as a whole; in Slovenia, it was 11,401. The total number of deaths per 100,000 people was 151 for the EU-27 versus 202 in Slovenia. The ratio of the total number of COVID-19 tests conducted to the total number of confirmed cases was 15.3 for the EU-27 and 4.9 for Slovenia.

Figure 1: Total number of COVID-19 cases and deaths per 100,000 people & ratio of total number of COVID-19 tests to total number of cases, 3 February 2020 to 18 April 2021 (EU-27 and Slovenia)

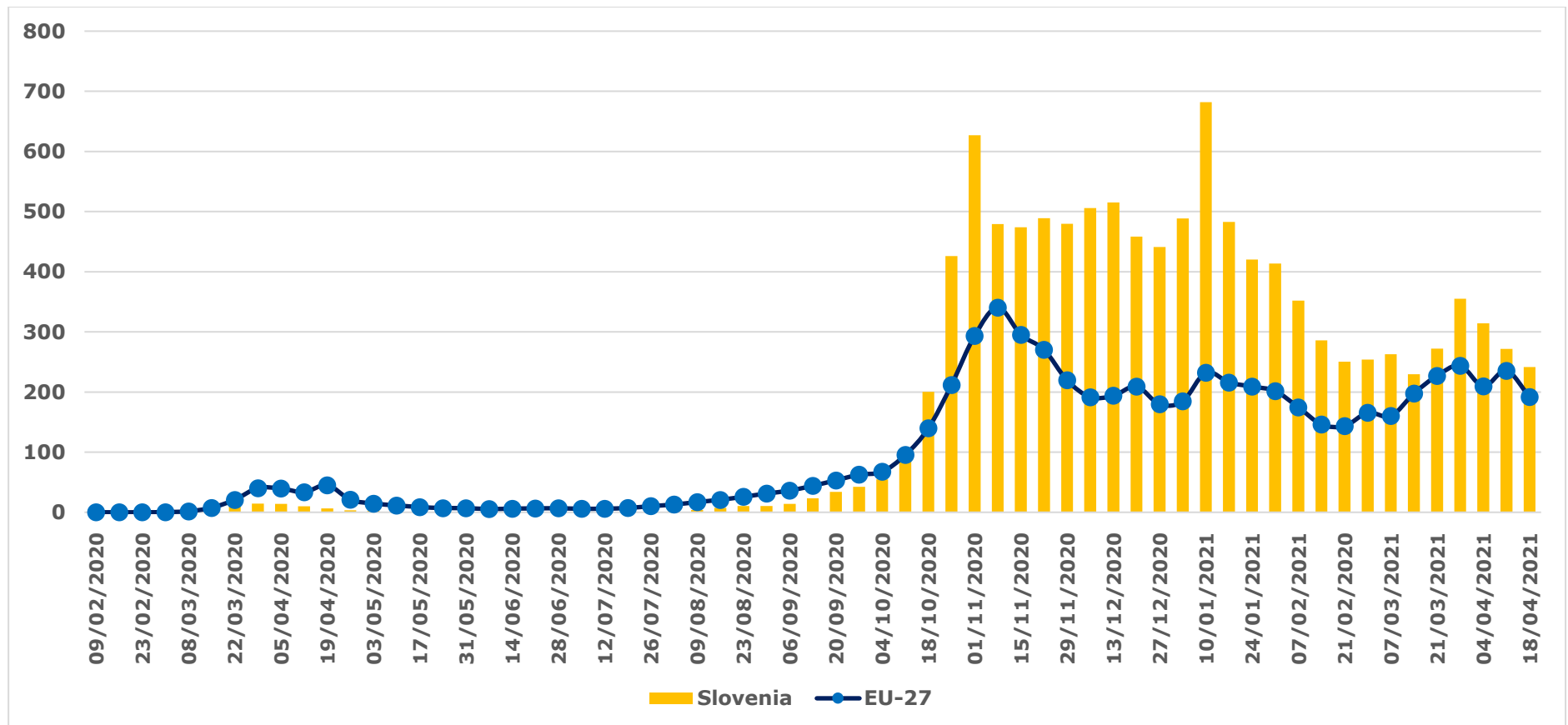


Source: Our World in Data (OWID) online database on COVID-19 - downloaded 26 April 2021

¹ Except if otherwise specified, the indicators presented in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 were calculated by the ESPN Network Core Team on the basis of data coming from two data sources: Our World in Data (OWID: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-source-data>) and the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>). These indicators were calculated for all the 35 ESPN countries for which data were available. All of them are presented in Annex B of the following report: Isabel Baptista, Eric Marlier, Slavina Spasova, Ramón Peña-Casas, Boris Fronteddu, Dalila Ghailani, Sebastiano Sabato and Pietro Regazzoni (2021), *Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis. An analysis of policies in 35 countries*, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. This report also provides additional explanations on the data sources used and the calculation of the indicators. In addition, Annex B of the report provides the country results related to all ESPN countries included in the two international data sources used (see Tables B1.1, B2.1 and B3.1 for Figure 1, Table B1.2 for Figure 2, Table B2.2 for Figure 3, Table B3.2 for Figure 4, Tables B4.1, B4.2 and B4.3 for Figure 5, Table B5 for Figure 6, Tables B6.1-3 for Figures 7a-c, and Tables B7.1-3 for Figures 8a-c). The full report and its various annexes can be downloaded [here](#).

In the last week of observations (from Monday 12 April 2021 to Sunday 18 April 2021), the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people reached 191.8 for the EU-27. In Slovenia, it was 241.5.

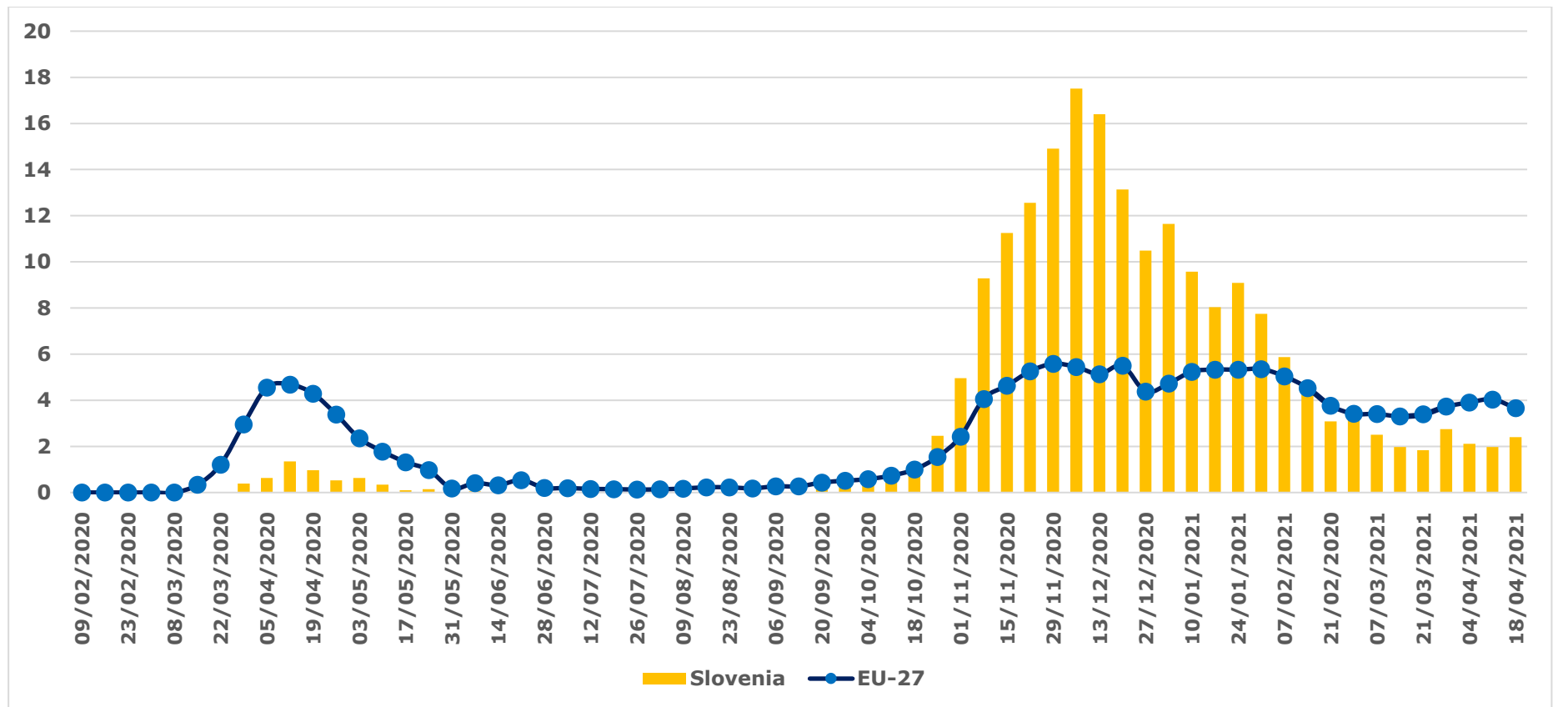
Figure 2: Weekly evolution - Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people from 3 February 2020 to 18 April 2021 (EU-27 and Slovenia)



Source: Our World in Data (OWID) online database on COVID-19 - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the last week of observations (from Monday 12 April 2021 to Sunday 18 April 2021), the number of COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 people reached 3.66 for the EU-27 as a whole. In Slovenia, it was 2.41.

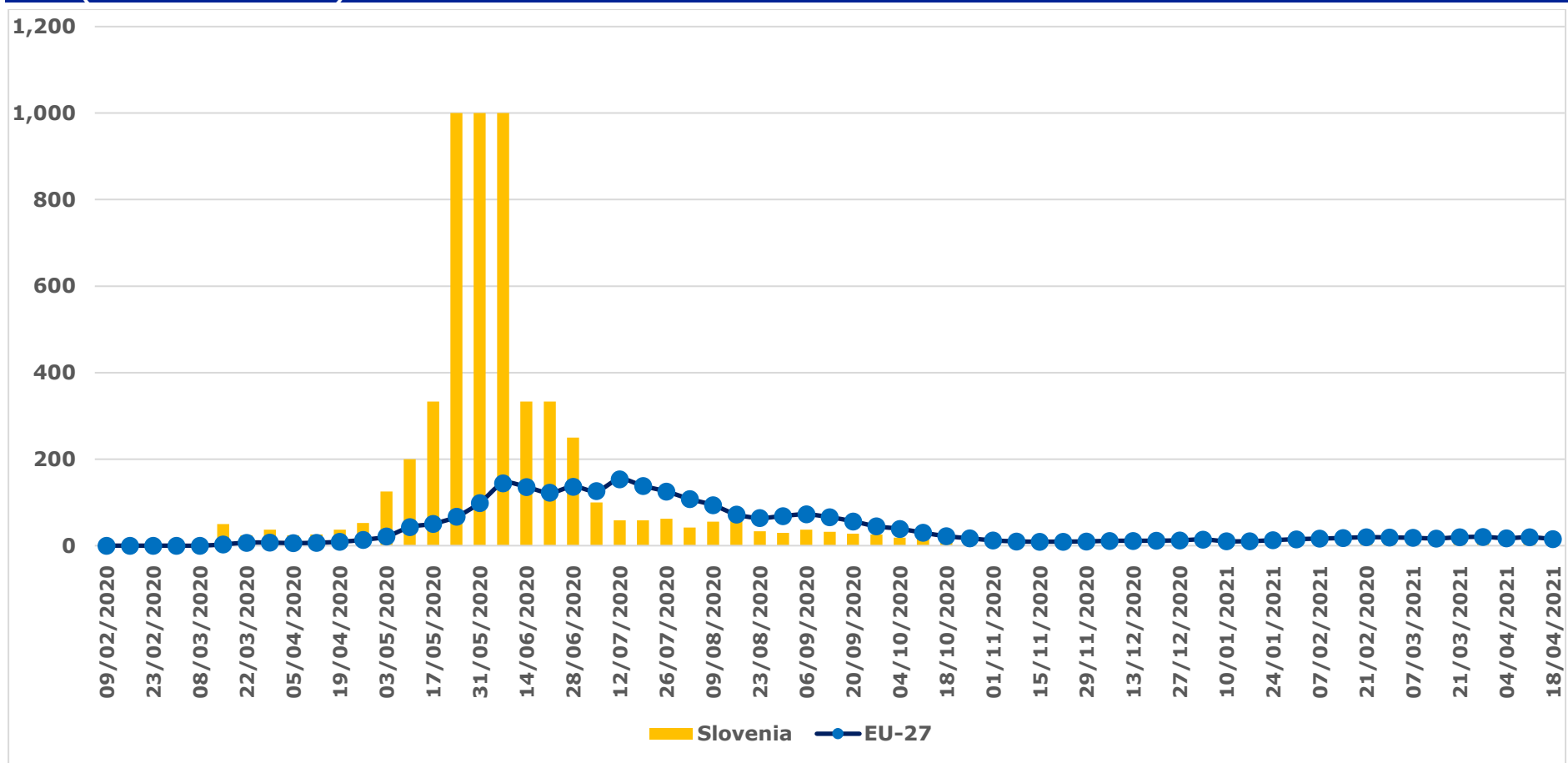
Figure 3: Weekly evolution - Number of COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 people, 3 February 2020 to 18 April 2021 (EU-27 and Slovenia)



Source: Our World in Data (OWID) online database on COVID-19 - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the last week of observations (from Monday 12 April 2021 to Sunday 18 April 2021), the number of COVID-19 tests per new confirmed COVID-19 cases was 15.2 for the EU-27. In Slovenia, it was 4.9.

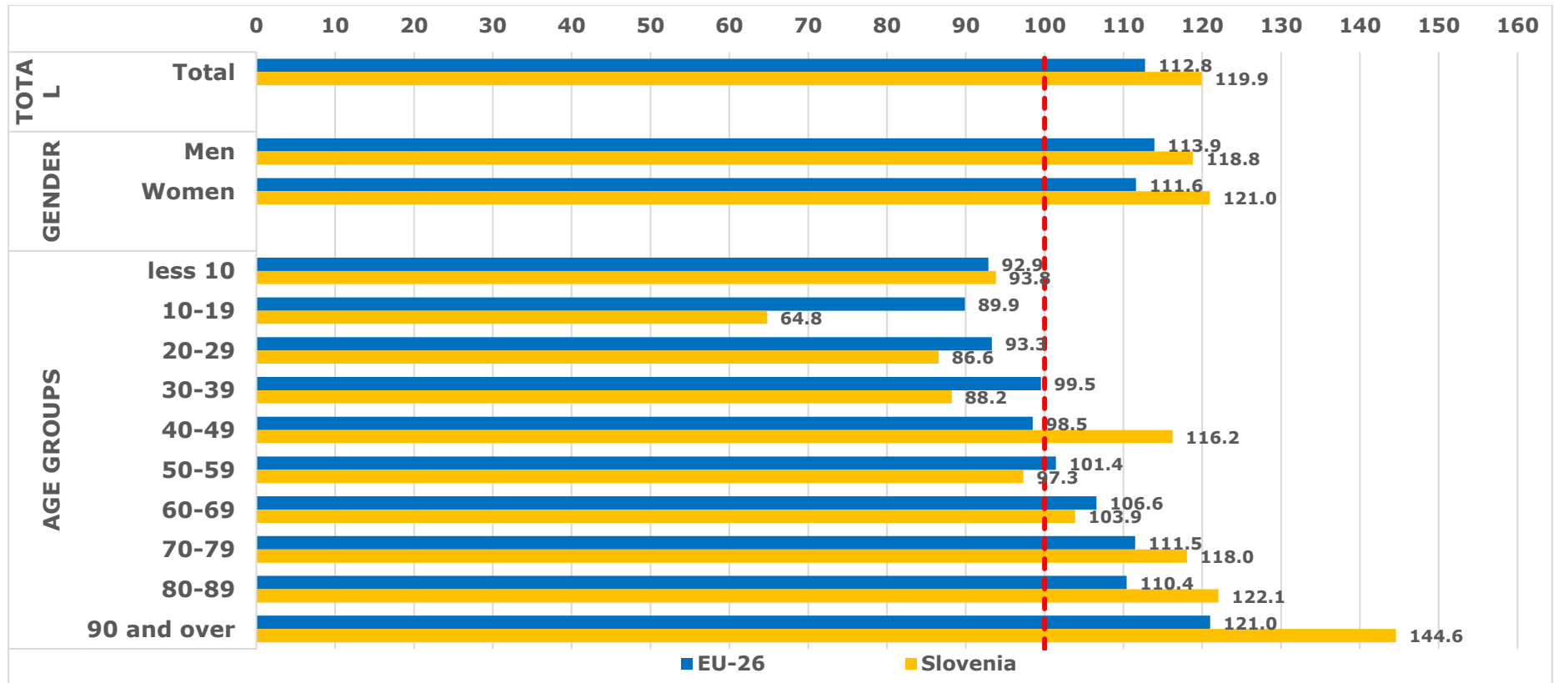
Figure 4: Weekly evolution - Number of COVID-19 tests per new confirmed COVID-19 case, 3 February 2020 to 18 April 2021 (EU-27 and Slovenia)



Source: Our World in Data (OWID) online database on COVID-19 - downloaded 26 April 2021. Full quote for these testing data: Hasell, J., Mathieu, E., Beltekian, D. et al. (2020). "A cross-country database of COVID-19 testing". *Sci Data* 7, 345 (2020) (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41597-020-00688-8>).

The excess mortality ratio for 2020 is the total number of deaths (without distinction of causes) in the year 2020 expressed as a percentage of the previous 4-year (2016-2019) annual average of the total number of deaths. For the EU-26 average (no data for Ireland), the ratio of the total population is 112.8% while it is 119.9% in Slovenia. For the EU-26, it is 113.9% for men and 111.6% for women. In Slovenia, these gendered ratios are 118.8% and 121.0% respectively. Excess mortality is higher among older age groups. For those aged 90 years and more it reaches 121.0% for EU-26 and 144.6% for Slovenia.

Figure 5: Excess mortality - Total number of all deaths in 2020 as percentage of the 2016-2019 annual average (including gender and age breakdowns (EU-26 and Slovenia))

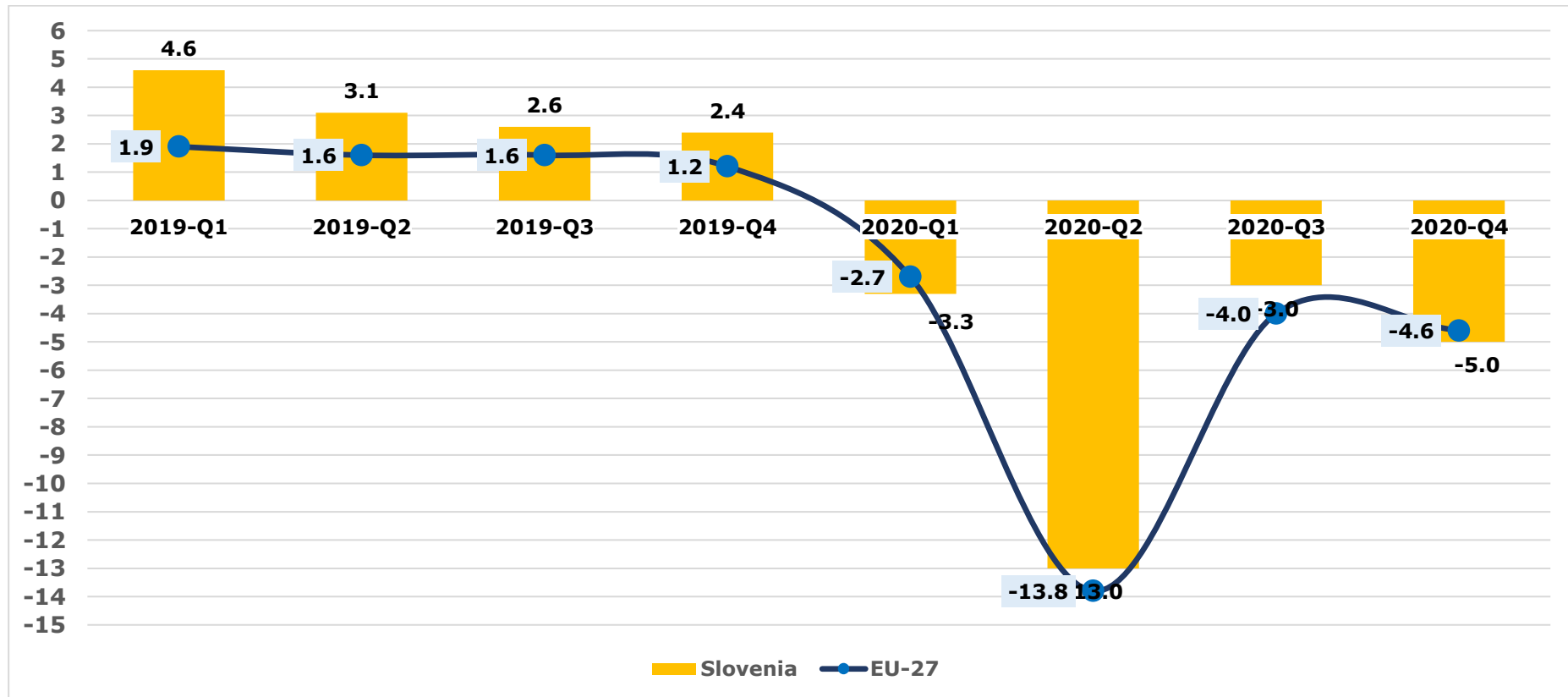


Source: Eurostat - indicator [DEMO_R_MWK_10__custom_560457] Deaths by week, sex and 10-year age groups - downloaded 26 April 2021. For Bosnia and Herzegovina: Agency for statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (data received upon request on 19 April 2021).

1.2 Economic and (un)employment situation

In the EU-27, GDP in the fourth quarter (2020-Q4) of 2020 fell by 4.6% compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 (2019-Q4). In Slovenia, the decrease was 5.0% for the same period.

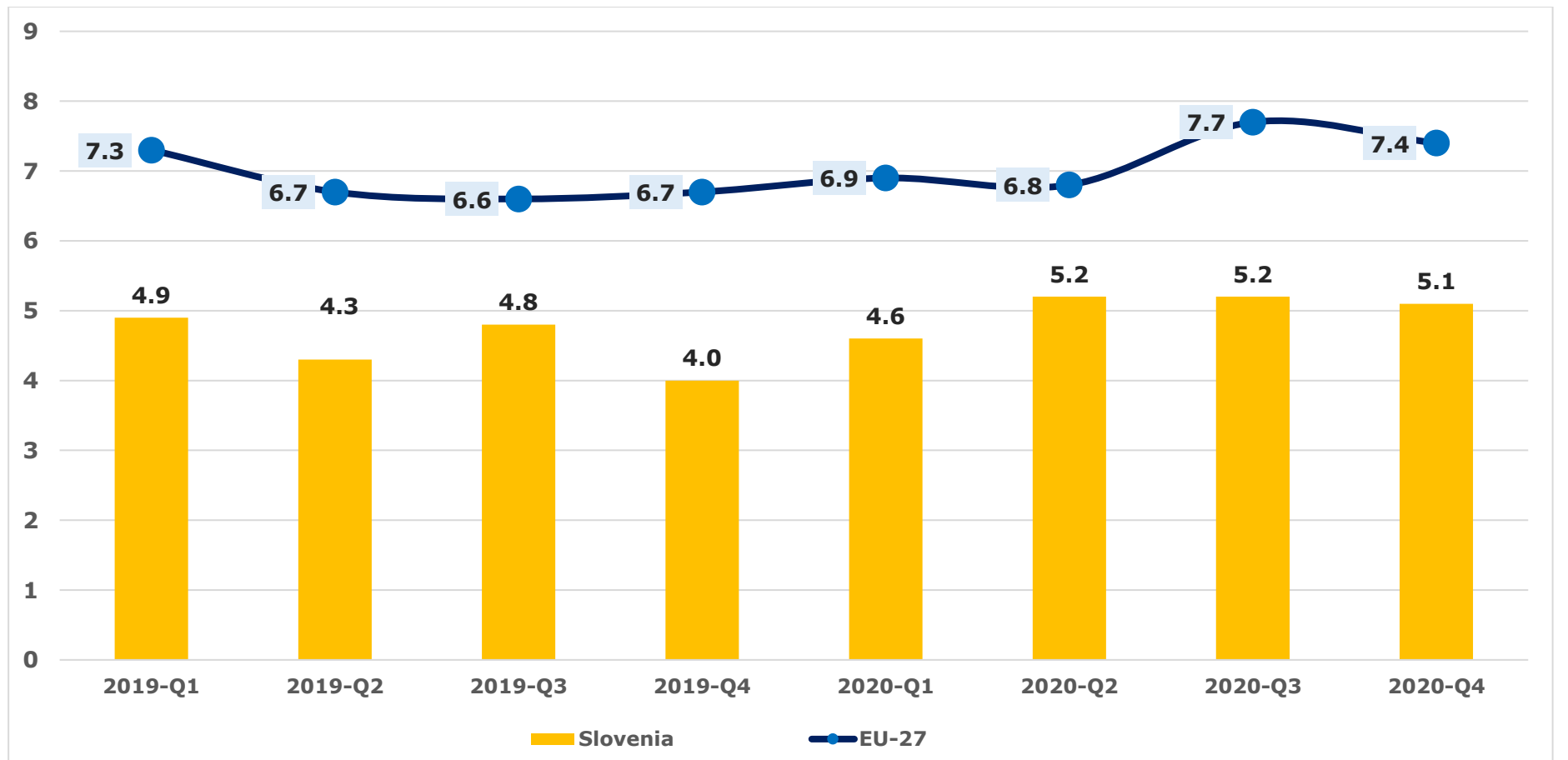
Figure 6: Gross domestic product at market prices, chain-linked volumes prices adjusted, percentage changes in quarter compared with same quarter in previous year (2019-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat -GDP and main components (output, expenditure and income) - indicator [NAMQ_10_GDP__custom_507806] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 (2020-Q4), the unemployment rate in the EU-27 for people aged 15-64 years is 7.4%. In Slovenia, it is 5.1%.

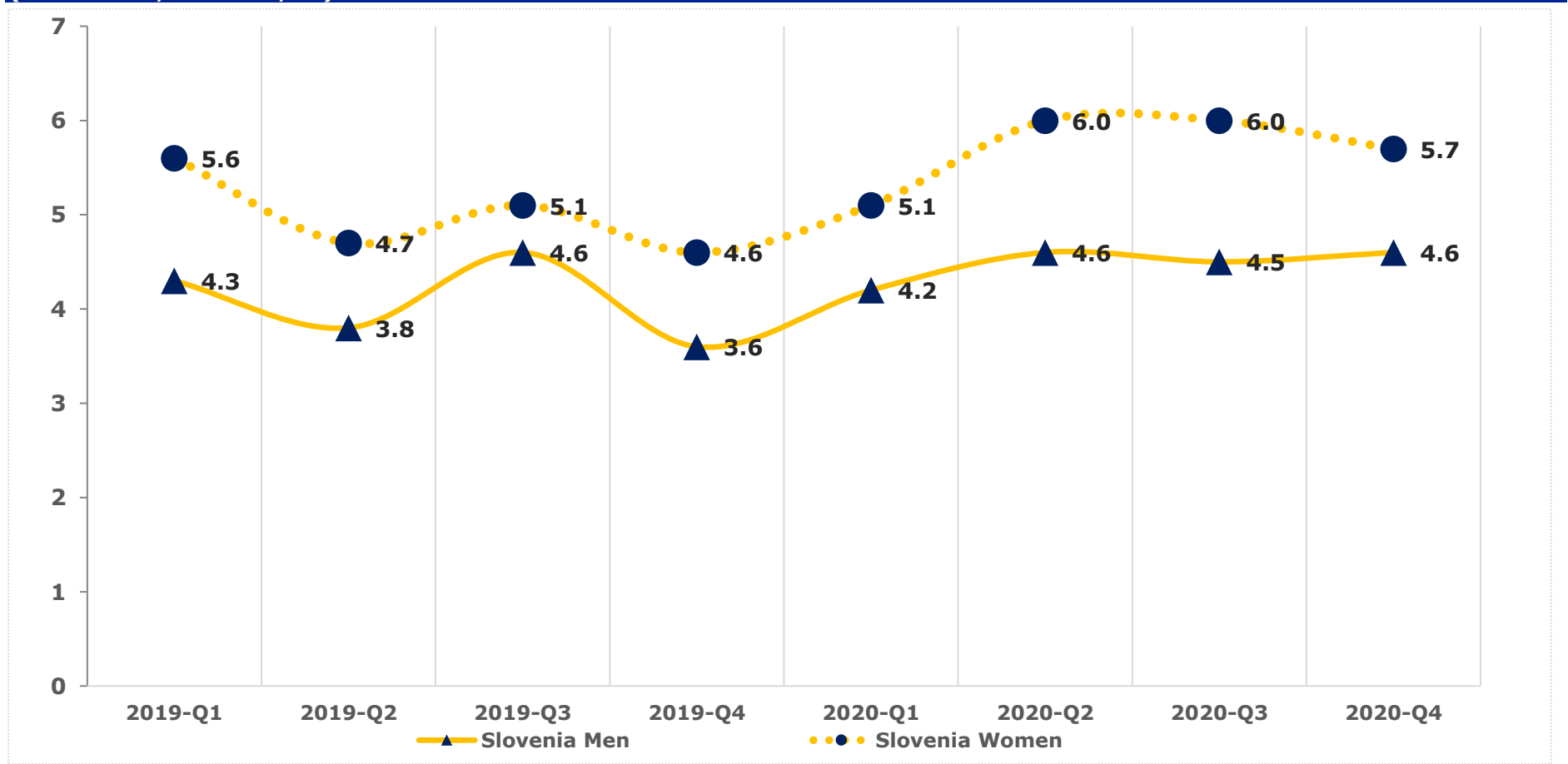
Figure 7a: Seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate, quarterly data, total population aged 15-64 (2019-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat LFS - indicator [lfsq_urgan] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 (2020-Q4), the unemployment rate in the EU-27 for people aged 15-64 years is 7.1% for men and 7.7% for women. In Slovenia, these figures are 4.6% and 5.7% respectively.

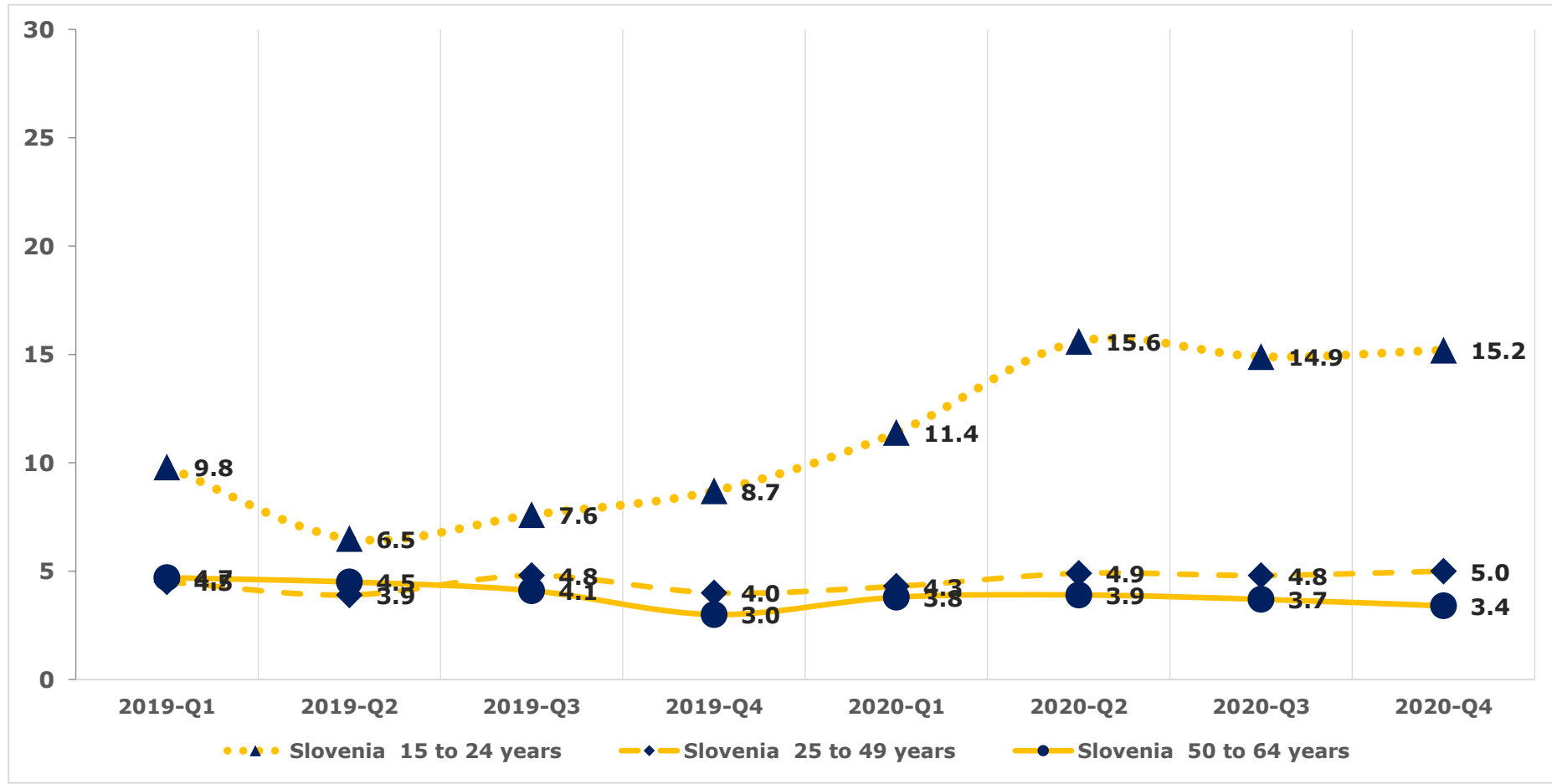
Figure 7b: Seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate, quarterly data, total population aged 15-64 – by gender (2019-2020, Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat LFS - indicator [lfsq_urgan] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 (2020-Q4), the unemployment rate in the EU-27 is 16.9% for the 15-24 age group. In Slovenia, it is 15.2%.

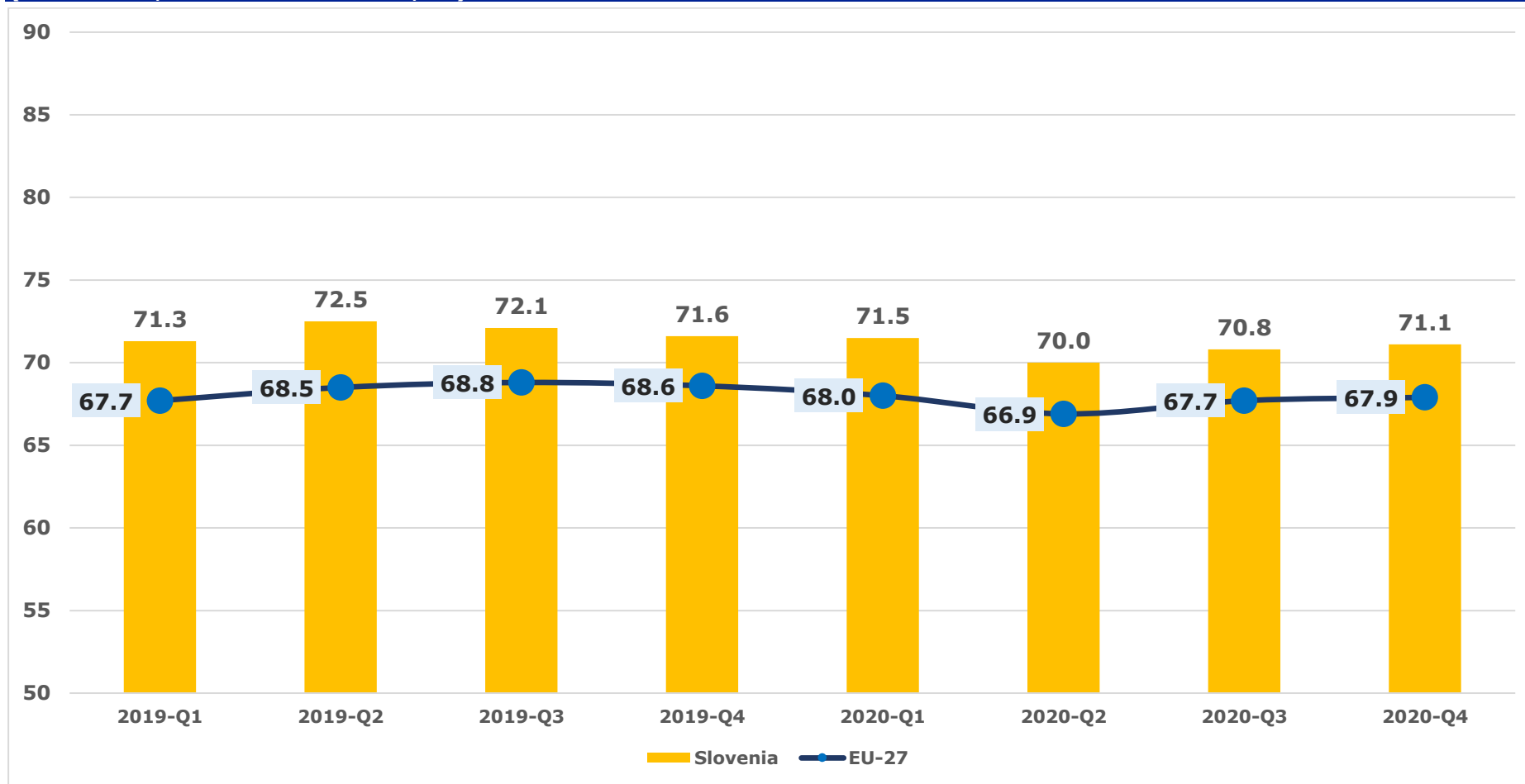
Figure 7c: Seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate, quarterly data, total population aged 15-64 – by age group (2019-2020, Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat LFS - indicator [lfsq_urgan] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 (2020-Q4), the employment rate for people aged 15-64 in the EU-27 is 67.9%. In Slovenia, it is 71.1%.

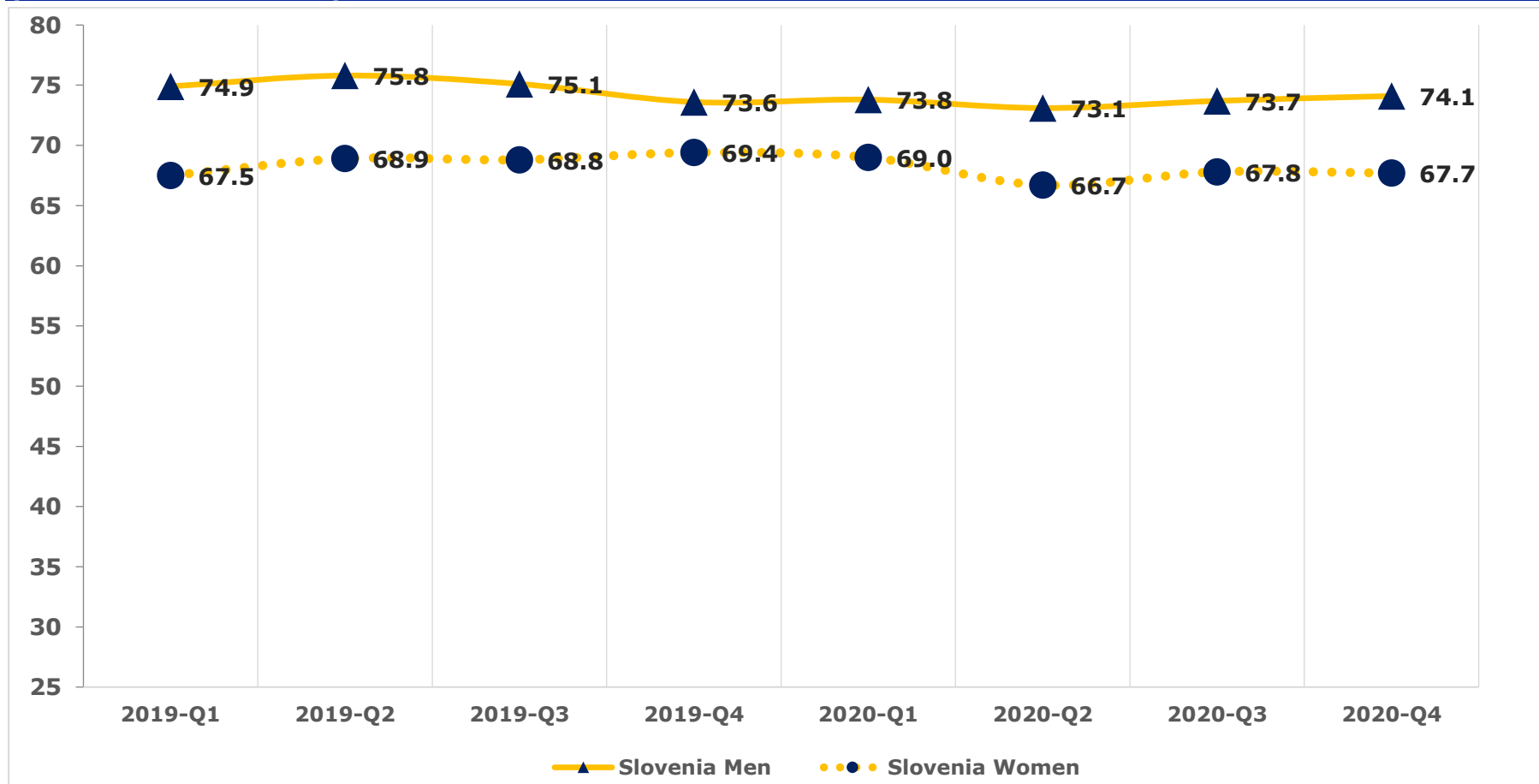
Figure 8a: Seasonally-adjusted employment rate, quarterly data, total population aged 15-64 (2019-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat LFS - indicator [lfsq_ergan] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 (2020-Q4), the employment rate in the EU-27 is 73.0% for men and 62.8% for women. In Slovenia, these figures are 74.1% and 67.7% respectively.

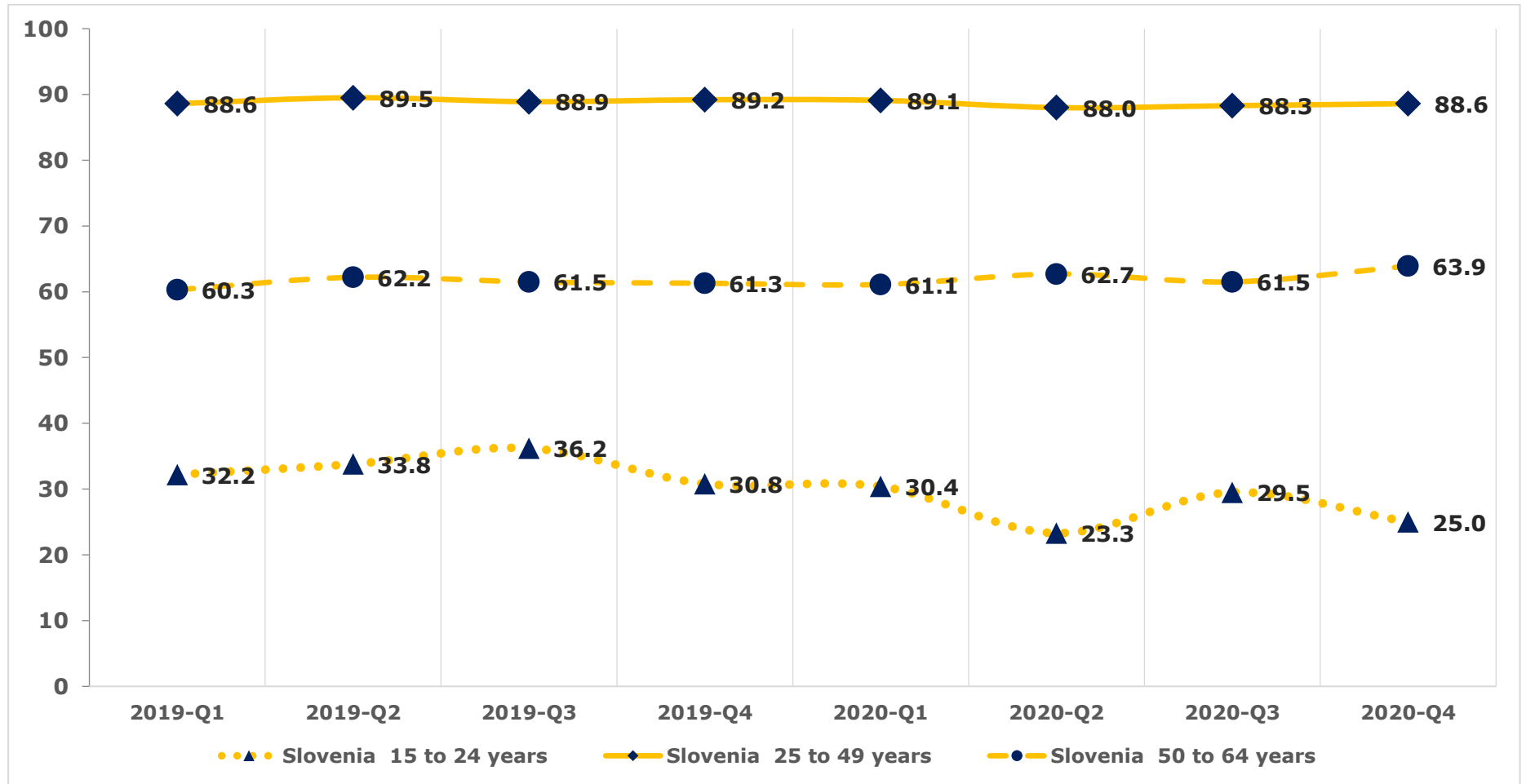
Figure 8b: Seasonally-adjusted employment rate, quarterly data, total population aged 15-64 – by gender (2019-2020, Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat LFS - indicator [lfsq_ergan] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 (2020-Q4), the employment rate in the EU-27 is 31.1% for the 15-24 age group. In Slovenia, it is 25.0%.

Figure 8c: Seasonally-adjusted employment rate, quarterly data, total population aged 15-64 – by age group (2019-2020, Slovenia, %)



Source: Eurostat LFS - indicator [lfsq_ergan] - downloaded 26 April 2021.

1.3 Poverty, inequality and social exclusion situation

Poverty, inequality and social inclusion indicators for Slovenia are based on the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and are thus not available for 2020. The impact of the COVID-19-related measures in force during the spring 2020 wave (13 March 2020 to 31 May 2020) was simulated for the Slovenian EUROMOD country report² (Kump et al., 2020) (Table 1).

Table 1: Impact of COVID-19 measures in force from 13 March to 31 May 2020 on 2020 indicators (simulation, %, Slovenia)

Indicator	Baseline model	Baseline model including COVID-19 measures
Gini coefficient	23.27	22.89
At-risk-of-poverty rate (60% median income)	12.24	12.03

Note: The validity of simulation results that include the COVID-19 measures is limited due to unavailability of final data on the number of recipients and aggregate amounts at the time of drafting the report, and no adjustments having been made to the employment situation.

Source: Kump et al. (2020, Table A12).

In 2020, the Ljubljana Centre for Social Work recorded an increase (of around 10%) in the number of people applying for cash social assistance, extraordinary cash social assistance, a housing subsidy and assistance provided from the municipal budget. The number of first applicants (i.e. persons who were experiencing material distress for the first time) increased in particular.³ Compared to January 2020, the number of cash social assistance beneficiaries was 12% higher in May 2020 and 16% higher in January 2021; the figure decreased in June–October 2020 (MLFSAEO, 2021a), i.e. following the announced end of the first wave on 15 May 2020.

² Salary compensation for workers on furlough, crisis supplement for private-sector employees performing work, basic monthly income for the self-employed, temporary unemployment benefit and one-off solidarity allowance for vulnerable groups were simulated (Kump et al., 2020, p. 69).

³ According to rough estimates provided to the media by the Ljubljana Centre for Social Work (Zabukovec, 2020).

2 Social protection and inclusion measures in response to the pandemic⁴

This section provides a brief description of the main measures related to social protection and social inclusion that have been put in place to help mitigate the financial and social distress produced by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. It is based on readily available data and evidence. For each measure, it provides the following:

- a) Short description of the measure.
- b) Category: Is it a flat benefit, a conditional benefit, both a flat and a conditional benefit, or neither a flat nor a conditional benefit?
- c) Timing: When did the measure start/end? Has it been extended?
- d) Depending on the category:
 - Amount and duration (for flat measures);
 - Range (minimum-maximum), duration and conditionality (thresholds) (for conditional measures).

If the measure is neither flat nor conditional, this is 'Not applicable'.

- e) Targeted population: What is/are the target(s), i.e. the parts of the population/labour force/sectors targeted by the measure? If data and evidence are readily available, estimated number of people targeted and/or applicants.
- f) Beneficiaries: How many recipients of the measure are there (if relevant and available)?
- g) Novelty: Was the measure new or an already existing one that was adapted?

2.1 Measures related to unemployment benefits

See Section 2.5.2 and Section 2.5.4.

2.2 Measures of job protection provided through support to the employers, employees and the self-employed

See also Section 2.8.5.

2.2.1 *Povračilo nadomestila plače delavcem na začasnem čakanju na delo (in zaradi odsotnosti iz razloga višje sile ter oprostitev plačila prispevkov)* (Reimbursement of salary compensation for workers on furlough (and for employees absent from work due to *force majeure*, and exemption from payment of contributions))

- a) Short description of the measure: Salary compensation paid to employees⁵ put on furlough (because their employer could not provide them with work, due to the COVID-19 epidemic) is reimbursed to employers by the state (ZIUZEOP, 2020; ZIUOOPE, 2020; ZIUPDV, 2020). Employees on furlough are protected against dismissal.

(Between 13 March and 31 May 2020, the measure also included employees not performing work due to *force majeure* (childcare, non-operation of public transport, or country borders closure) (ZIUZEOP, 2020). (See Sections 2.8.1 and 2.7.1.)

Employers who anticipate a fall in their 2020 revenue of at least 10% compared to 2019 (or of 20% since October 2020; ZZUOOP, 2020) – or, since February 2021, in their 2021 revenues compared to 2019 or 2020 – and who keep the jobs of their

⁴ The temporary measures mentioned in this report refer to the situation as of 15 April 2021. Their duration may have been extended since then.

⁵ In this report, the term 'employee' includes all work contracts.

employees on furlough, are eligible for a refund from the state. If the drop in revenue is less, the employer has to return the amount received. The condition regarding the fall in revenue does not apply to humanitarian or disability organisations.

- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2020). It was extended until 30 June 2020 (ZIUOOPE, 2020), 31 July 2020 (ZIUPDV, 2020), 31 August 2020 (Sklep o podaljšanju ukrepa delnega povračila..., 2020a), 30 September 2020 (Sklep o podaljšanju ukrepa delnega povračila..., 2020b), 31 December 2020 (ZZUOOP, 2020), 31 January 2021 (ZIUOPDVE, 2020), 30 April 2021 (ZDUOP, 2021), 31 May 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju ukrepa delnega povračila..., 2021a) and 30 June 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju ukrepa delnega povračila..., 2021b).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: While on furlough, employees receive 80% of their salary (i.e. 80% of their previous 3-month average), but not less than the minimum wage (EUR 700 net of social contributions and taxes in 2020, and EUR 736 in 2021) (ZIUZEOP, 2020; ZIUOOPE, 2020; ZIUOPDVE, 2020). The state refunds the employer:
- For employees put on furlough between 13 March and 31 May 2020: the amount of salary compensation paid, up to the national 2019 average salary (EUR 1,133.50 per month), without associated employee's social security contributions); the employer was exempt from paying contributions for all social security insurances on the salary compensation up to the amount of contributions on the 2019 national average salary; these were paid by the state (ZIUZEOP, 2020).
 - For employees put on furlough between 31 May 2020 and 30 October 2020: 80% of salary compensation paid (including social security contributions), but not more than the maximum amount of unemployment benefit (EUR 892.50 gross per month) (ZIUOOPE, 2020; ZIUPDV, 2020). Employers with less than 70% of their 2019 revenues coming from public sources were entitled to a refund in proportion to the share of their 2019 revenue from non-public sources in their total revenue.
 - For employees put on furlough between 1 November 2020 and 31 January 2021: a) 80% of the salary compensation paid (including social security contributions), but not more than the 2019 national average salary; b) 100% of the salary compensation paid (including social security contributions), but not more than the 2019 national average salary, if the total amount of public funds that the employer/company receives in relation to COVID-19 did not exceed EUR 800,000 (ZIUOPDVE, 2020).⁶
 - For employees put on furlough from 1 February 2021: a) 80% of the salary compensation paid (including social security contributions), but not more than the October 2020 national average salary (EUR 1,821.44); b) 100% of the salary compensation paid (including social security contributions), but not more than the October 2020 national average salary, if the total amount of public funds that the employer/company receives in relation to COVID-19 does not exceed EUR 1,800,000 (less for companies in the fishery and aquaculture sector and primary agricultural production); c) in both cases, companies that could not carry out their activities because of the COVID-19 epidemic, or could only carry them out to a substantially reduced extent, are also refunded the employer's social security contributions (up to those paid on the October 2020 national average salary).
- e) Targeted population: All employers and their employees – excluding employers with more than 70% of their 2019 revenues (2020 revenues for workers on furlough since 1 February 2021) coming from public sources, employers performing financial or

⁶ The maximum amount also includes the aid that the company will receive until the end of eligibility under ZIUOPDVE (2020).

insurance activities with more than 10 employees, and foreign diplomatic representations and consulates, international organisations, representations of international organisations and institutions, and associations and agencies of the European Union.

- f) Beneficiaries: In 2020: 114,485 in March, 176,532 (around 22% of employees) in April, 149,927 (around 18% of employees) in May, 49,470 in June, 22,106 in July, 18,573 in August, 13,759 in September, 32,404 in October and 45,038 (around 7% of employees) in November (based on payments (refunds) until 12 January 2021; Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4). Information after November 2020 is largely missing. In April 2021: 3,772 employees (around 0.5% of employees) (Fiscal Council, 2021b). In the period up to (and including) 18 March 2021, the salary compensation of 212,164 workers on furlough was reimbursed (MLFSAEO, 2021b).
- g) Novelty: An already existing measure that was adjusted to the situation of the COVID-19 epidemic. Temporary inability to provide work for business reasons is regulated by the Employment Relationships Act (2013). The maximum amount of reimbursement was adjusted twice.

2.2.2 *Delno subvencioniranje skrajšanja polnega delovnega časa (Partially subsidised shortened full-time working hours)*

- a) Short description of the measure: Shortened working hours for employees on full-time contracts are partially subsidised by the state if the employer cannot provide at least 10% of employees with at least 90% of work, and thus allocates employees on full-time contracts to part-time work. These employees are considered to be on furlough for the remaining working hours (ZIUOOPE, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: In force from 1 June 2020 to 31 December 2020 (ZIUOOPE, 2020); extended to 30 June 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju ukrepa delnega subvencioniranja..., 2020; ZIUPOPDVE, 2020).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: For the non-worked hours up to the full-time hours, the employee receives 80% salary compensation (based on the previous 3-month average). The partial refund of salary compensation (for the time on furlough) by the state is flat rate (per employee per month) and depends on the duration of the part-time work: EUR 448 for an employee working 20–24 hours per week, EUR 336 for 25–29 hours, EUR 224 for 30–34 hours and EUR 112 for an employee working 35 hours per week.
- e) Targeted population: All employers (legal and physical persons),⁷ except those whose 2019 revenue included more than 50% from public sources.
- f) Beneficiaries: In 2020: 19,210 in June, 18,140 in July, 16,227 in August, 14,600 in September, 14,716 in October and 1,624 in November (based on payments until 12 January 2021; Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4).
- g) Novelty: This is an entirely new measure.

2.2.3 *Delna oprostitve prispevkov za zaposlene v zasebnem sektorju, ki delajo, in krizni dodatek (Partial relief on social security contributions for private-sector employees performing work, and the crisis supplement)*

- a) Short description of the measure: For the period from 13 March to 31 May 2020, the state paid the employee and employer pension and disability insurance contributions for employees who were working. In return, employers had to pay a crisis

⁷ Also farmers since 1 February 2021 (ZDUOP, 2021).

supplement with the salaries for the same period to those workers whose latest salary was no more than three times the minimum wage (EUR 2,821.74) (ZIUZEOP, 2020).

Employers had to pay a crisis supplement again with the December 2020 or January 2021 salary to any workers whose latest salary (November 2020, for payment of the supplement in January 2021) was no more than twice the minimum wage (EUR 1,881 gross). The amount of these crisis supplements was reimbursed by the state. (ZIUPOPVE, 2020; ZDUOP, 2021)

- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020. Part of the measure was implemented once again: the crisis supplement was paid along with the December 2020 or January 2021 salary.
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: The crisis supplement was EUR 200 per month (for full-time work, proportionally for days worked), exempt from all taxes and contributions (ZIUZEOP, 2020).
- e) Targeted population:
 - 13 March to 31 May 2020: all private employers and their employees – excluded are employers with revenue that came directly or indirectly from public sources, employers performing financial or insurance activities and with more than 10 employees, and foreign diplomatic representations and consulates, international organisations, representations of international organisations and institutions, and associations and agencies of the European Union;
 - for the payment together with the December 2020 or January 2021 salary: all private employers and their employees – excluded are employers with revenue that came directly or indirectly from public sources, foreign diplomatic representations and consulates, international organisations, representations of international organisations and institutions, and associations and agencies of the European Union.
- f) Beneficiaries: Number of crisis supplement recipients: 495,561 employees (i.e. with an employment contract) – or around 60% – in March; 458,104 (around 56%) in April; and 486,738 (around 60%) in May 2020. Around 378,000 employees (47%) received the crisis allowance because their December 2020 salaries did not exceed twice the minimum wage (Fiscal Council, 2021b).
- g) Novelty: This was an entirely new measure. It was adjusted for payments of the crisis supplement made together with the December 2020 or January 2021 salary. Employers were not given relief on the social security contributions of employees who were working, but they were entitled to reimbursement by the state of the crisis supplements paid. The definition of those employers excluded from this measure was also partially adjusted.

2.2.4 Mesečni krizni dodatek v invalidskih podjetjih in zaposlitvenih centrih (Monthly crisis supplement in companies and special centres employing people with disabilities)

- a) Short description of the measure: Everybody with a disability who worked at a company that employed people with disabilities or at an employment centre was paid a crisis supplement, in addition to their salary. The companies were reimbursed for the amount paid to persons with disabilities (ZIUZEOP, 2020).
- b) Category: Both flat and conditional benefit. Flat benefit for persons with disabilities. Conditional benefit for other employees of companies and special centres employing people with disabilities (whose last monthly salary was no more than three times the minimum wage).
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020.

d.1) Amount and duration of the flat element: EUR 200 per month for persons with a disability, regardless of the hours worked (full time or part time), exempt from all taxes and contributions.

d.2) Range, duration and conditionality of the conditional element: For other employees of companies and special centres employing people with disabilities (whose last monthly salary was no more than three times the minimum wage) the amount was proportional to the hours worked.

e) Targeted population: Persons with disabilities working in companies and special centres employing people with disabilities; other employees of companies and special centres employing people with disabilities whose last monthly salary was no more than three times the minimum wage.

f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.

g) Novelty: This was an entirely new measure.

2.2.5 *Plačilo prispevkov za poklicno zavarovanje (Payment of contributions for occupational insurance (i.e. additional contributions for persons employed in arduous or hazardous occupations))*

a) Short description of the measure: Contributions for occupational insurance (i.e. additional contributions paid for persons employed in arduous or hazardous occupations) were paid by the state for employees who were working, those on furlough and those absent from work due to *force majeure* (childcare, non-operation of public transport, or country border closures) (ZIUZEOP, 2020).

b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.

c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020.

d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.

e) Targeted population: All employers – excluding those employers who had more than 70% of 2019 revenue coming from public sources, employers performing financial or insurance activities and with more than 10 employees, and foreign diplomatic representations and consulates, international organisations, representations of international organisations and institutions, and associations and agencies of the European Union.

f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.

g) Novelty: An already existing measure that was adjusted: the state temporarily took over its financing.

2.2.6 *Oprostitev plačila prispevkov za samozaposlene, verske uslužbence, družbenike in kmete (Exemption from payment of social security contributions for the self-employed, employees of religious organisations, partners in firms and farmers)*

a) Short description of the measure: Temporary exemption from payment of social security contributions. These contributions were paid by the state (ZIUZEOP, 2020).

b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.

c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020.

d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.

e) Targeted population: Self-employed persons, partners in firms who are managers (insured as shareholders), farmers and employees of religious organisations who, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, could not carry out their activities or could only carry them out to a substantially reduced extent, and who anticipated a decline of more

than 10% in their 2020 income (compared to 2019) due to the epidemic. If the condition was not met, the individual had to return the contributions received.

- f) Beneficiaries: 50,618 in March 2020, 53,319 in April, 47,377 in May, 37,381 in October, 37,593 in November and 37,065 in December 2020 (Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4). Information on the total number of the self-employed, employees of religious organisations, persons insured as shareholders, and farmers is not available.
- g) Novelty: This was an entirely new measure.

2.3 Measures related to sickness benefits and sick pay

2.3.1 *Nadomestilo v breme obveznega zdravstvenega zavarovanja (Sickness benefits in case of isolation)*

- a) Short description of the measure: All insured persons infected with COVID-19⁸ had sickness benefit paid by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (HIIS; i.e. the compulsory health insurance) from the first day of their absence from work (ZIUZEOP, 2020).⁹
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 11 April 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020.
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: While in isolation, 90% of a person's average monthly gross salary in the previous year was paid for the first 90 days. If the person contracted COVID-19 at work, this was treated as an accident at work for all employees in all sectors. For the first 30 days, the worker received 100% of his/her average full-time monthly gross salary over the 3 months prior to the infection.
- e) Targeted population: All employed and self-employed persons (in all sectors), except public-sector employees. Some 648,000 (non-public employees and the self-employed); around 73% of all persons in employment.¹⁰
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not available.
- g) Novelty: Isolation was added to the list of reasons for which sickness benefit is paid from the first day of absence from work (previously the list included: transplantation of living tissue and organs for the benefit of another person, consequences of blood donation, care of a close family member, and injuries caused in certain circumstances). The sickness benefit was paid by the HIIS and reimbursed from the central government budget for all COVID-19 patients also for the first 30 days of absence from work.

2.3.2 *Kratkotrajna odsotnost zaradi bolezni (Short-term sickness benefits)*

- a) Short description of the measure: A person may be absent from work due to sickness and receive sickness benefit without a medical certificate for up to 3 consecutive days a year (ZZUOOP, 2020). The aim of the measure is to lessen the workload of family physicians and medical teams at the primary care level, by reducing the number of patient visits to health centres.
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.

⁸ The insured person is considered infected with COVID-19 if he/she tested positive for COVID-19, or if he/she has symptoms and signs of COVID-19 and has not been tested, but there is a high probability of infection transmission.

⁹ Normally, sickness benefit for the first 30 days is paid by the employer; in some sectors (healthcare and social care providers) 20% of sickness benefits are covered by the compulsory health insurance.

¹⁰ See: <https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/en/Data/-/0775345S.px/>

- c) Timing: The measure started on 24 October 2020 and was extended until 31 December 2021 (ZDUOP, 2021).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: 80% of a person's salary in the previous month. Maximum of 3 days once a year; 24 October–31 December 2021.
- e) Targeted population: All employed and self-employed persons: 889,000; 100% of all persons in employment.¹¹
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not yet available.
- g) Novelty: This is an entirely new measure. Normally, no absence from work is possible without a medical certificate.

2.4 Measures related to health insurance

Vaccination is free of charge and is provided to everybody with permanent or temporary residence in the Republic of Slovenia – not only citizens of the Republic of Slovenia – regardless of whether they are insured under statutory health insurance. Funds for the purchase of vaccines and the costs of vaccination are provided from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

2.4.1 *Sobivanje enega od staršev v zdravstvenem zavodu z bolnim otrokom* (Extension of the right of a parent to stay with their child in hospital)

- a) Short description of the measure: A parent's right to paid leave for staying with their child in hospital (or, more broadly, any healthcare institution) has been extended to the parents of older children (ZIUOPDVE, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 28 November 2020 and will be in force until 31 December 2021.
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: 80% of the contribution base from the first day of absence from work, and payment of the hospital stay for as long as the child remains in hospital.
- e) Targeted population: One parent of any child aged up to and including 14, and one parent of any child with special needs up to and including 18, who requires 24-hour care.
- f) Beneficiaries: The estimate is in hospital days – approximately 6,000 hospital days.
- g) Novelty: An already existing measure was adjusted to raise the age of the children affected. Previously, a hospital stay was paid for the parent of a child up to and including the age of 5 years. Sickness benefit (from the first day of the parent's absence from work) is paid by the compulsory health insurance (HIIS) for the whole period of the hospital stay.

2.4.2 *Financiranje COVID-19 telemedicine* (Financing of the COVID-19 telemedicine services)

- a) Short description of the measure: When specialist hospital services for patients with COVID-19 can be provided remotely, the cost of the telemedicine service is reimbursed to the HIIS by the state and from funds received from the budget of the European Union (ZIUPOPDVE, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.

¹¹ See: <https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/en/Data/-/0775345S.px/>

- c) Timing: The measure started on 28 November 2020 and will be in force until 31 December 2021.
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: The costs of the telemedicine services are defined by the HIIS (HIIS, 2020). As long as necessary, according to the patient's state of health.
- e) Targeted population: Outpatients or patients who have not yet fully recovered from COVID-19 after discharge from hospital, patients who do not require hospitalisation and patients with specific risk factors (such as associated chronic disease, immune deficiency, age or certain other indicators that may lead to a deterioration in health).
- f) Beneficiaries: 422 COVID-19 patients (March 2020 to January 2021) (Hacler, 2021).
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure. Normally, telemedicine services are not reimbursed to the HIIS by the state.

2.5 Measures related to minimum income schemes and other forms of social assistance

See also in-kind services/support in Section 2.8.3, Section 2.8.4 and Section 2.8.5.

2.5.1 *Izredna pomoč v obliki mesečnega temeljnega dohodka (Extraordinary assistance in the form of basic monthly income)*

- a) Short description of the measure: Extraordinary basic monthly income was introduced for selected beneficiaries who, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, could not carry out their activities (or who could carry them out only to a substantially reduced extent), and consequently anticipated a decline of more than 10% in their income in 2020, compared to 2019 (ZIUZEOP, 2020). The ZZUOOP (2020) changed the condition to a decline of more than 20% in income. If the condition regarding a fall in income is not met, the individual must return the amount received.
- b) Category: Flat benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March and ended on 31 May 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2020). It was reintroduced on 1 October 2020 (ZZUOOP, 2020; ZIUPOPDVE, 2020), and extended until 31 March 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2020; Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti ukrepa izredne..., 2021), and then until 30 June 2021 (Sklep o spremembah Sklepa o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2021; Sklep o spremembi Sklepa o podaljšanju veljavnosti ukrepa izredne..., 2021).
- d) Amount and duration: EUR 350 for March 2020, EUR 700 for April 2020 and EUR 700 for May 2020; exempt from all taxes and contributions.

Amounts for the period between October 2020 and March 2021 (ZZUOOP, 2020; ZIUPOPDVE, 2020), exempt from all taxes and contributions:

- EUR 700 per month for self-employed cultural workers and employees of religious organisations (their social security contributions are paid by the state);
- EUR 940 per month for farmers who are exempt from payment of the employer's obligatory pension and disability insurance contributions;
- EUR 1,100 per month for other targeted population (i.e. those who are paying social security contributions).

Not subject to payment of social security contributions and taxes (ZIUZEOP, 2020).

Extraordinary assistance in the form of a monthly basic income for beneficiaries who have applied for the payment of partially reimbursed forgone income (see Section 2.8.2) is reduced by the amount of partially reimbursed forgone income they received for an individual month (from October 2020).

- e) Targeted population: Self-employed persons, partners in firms who are managers (insured as shareholders), farmers and employees of religious organisations. In the

Roman Catholic Church (by far the largest religious organisation in Slovenia), there are around 1,000 employees (Gole and Grgič, 2020).

- f) Beneficiaries: 50,618 in March 2020, 53,319 in April, 47,377 in May, 37,381 in October, 37,593 in November and 37,065 in December 2020 (Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4). In the absence of a relevant denominator, these figures cannot be expressed as proportions. The basic income for January 2021 was received by 31,500 of all self-employed (around 40%), while in spring 2020 the share was around 65% (Fiscal Council, 2021b). Together with partners in firms who are managers (insured as shareholders), farmers and employees of religious organisations, there were around 36,000 beneficiaries in both January and February 2021.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure. The condition for eligibility became stricter on 1 October 2020. The amounts were adjusted as well.

2.5.2 (*Enkratni*) *solidarnostni dodatek* (A (one-off) solidarity allowance)

- a) Short description of the measure: In order to improve social protection during the COVID-19 epidemic, a solidarity allowance was paid to permanent residents of Slovenia who belonged to selected vulnerable population groups (ZIUZEOP, 2020). An individual could receive a solidarity allowance on only one basis.¹² These were originally intended to be one-off allowances, but the exercise was repeated once more. The solidarity allowance is not subject to payment of social security contributions or personal income tax. It is not counted as income in the means test for transfers from public sources (except for extraordinary cash social assistance).
- b) Category: Both flat and conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: This (one-off) measure was adopted in April 2020 (for payment in spring and summer 2020) and again in December 2020 (for payment in early 2021). A one-off solidarity allowance for new-born children is to be paid for each child born from 1 January 2020 until a year after the COVID-19 epidemic. A one-off solidarity allowance for childcare allowance beneficiaries was replaced by higher amounts of the benefit (see Section 2.5.3).
- d)
- Amount and duration of the flat element:
 - EUR 150 to:
 - beneficiaries of cash social assistance or income supplement (only in spring 2020);
 - persons aged 65 and over and farmers (or their family members) who were not pensioners and fulfilled the conditions for income supplement (*varstveni dodatek*) (i.e. whose monthly income did not exceed EUR 591.20) – twice;
 - tertiary students – to most of them twice;
 - family carers, parental allowance (*starševski dodatek*) beneficiaries, childcare allowance beneficiaries, beneficiaries of the maternity/parental leave salary compensation, beneficiaries of partial compensation for forgone income, and children below the age of 18 in foster care – in spring 2020;
 - persons with disabilities who are beneficiaries of disability allowance or family pensions, war veterans, war invalids – twice; and
 - registered unemployed persons (only in early 2021).
 - EUR 50 to all children below the age of 18 (also those in foster care) and upper secondary school students in early 2021 (ZIUPOPVDVE, 2020).

¹² This means that the same person cannot receive two solidarity allowances in the same month (for instance, as a cash social assistance beneficiary and as a student in tertiary education).

- EUR 30 per child below the age of 18 if the parent was entitled to child allowance in income bracket 1–6¹³, and if not eligible for a large family allowance in spring/summer 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2020).
 - EUR 500 (one-off) for a new-born child (ZIUPOPVDVE, 2020) – paid from 1 January 2020 up until a year after the end of the COVID-19 epidemic, on top of the regular birth grant (EUR 286.72 up to the end of 2020 and EUR 350 since 1 January 2021).
 - Range, duration and conditionality of the conditional element: Income brackets and amounts for pensioners (including beneficiaries of occupational pensions), unemployed disability insurance beneficiaries (only in spring 2020), as well as disability insurance beneficiaries working part time and on furlough or absent from work due to *force majeure* (childcare, non-operation of public transport or country border closures) (in proportion to the full-time hours for which they received the wage compensation for workers with disabilities):
 - In spring 2020: pension not exceeding EUR 700 per month in the month of payment. The amounts varied by three pension brackets: EUR 300 for pensioners with pensions of up to EUR 500; EUR 230 for pensioners with pensions of between EUR 500.01 and EUR 600; and EUR 130 for pensioners with pensions of between EUR 600.01 and EUR 700 (ZIUZEOP, 2020).
 - In December 2020: pension not exceeding EUR 714 in December 2020. EUR 300 for pensioners with pensions of up to EUR 510; EUR 230 for pensioners with pensions of between EUR 510.01 and EUR 612; and EUR 130 for pensioners with pensions of between EUR 612.01 and EUR 714 (ZIUPOPVDVE, 2020).
- e) Targeted population:
- In March and April 2020: permanent residents of Slovenia who were:
 - pensioners, including beneficiaries of occupational pensions; unemployed disability insurance beneficiaries; disability insurance beneficiaries working part time and on furlough or absent from work due to *force majeure*;
 - cash social assistance and income supplement beneficiaries (if not eligible for solidarity allowance for pensioners); persons aged 65 or more, and farmers (or their family members) who were not pensioners and fulfilled the conditions for income supplement (*varstveni dodatek*); students in tertiary education (including non-employed part-time students); family carers; parental allowance (*starševski dodatek*) beneficiaries; childcare allowance (*dodatek za nego otroka, ki potrebuje posebno nego in varstvo*) beneficiaries; beneficiaries of the maternity/parental leave salary compensation not exceeding the minimum wage; beneficiaries of partial compensation for forgone income; persons with disabilities who were beneficiaries of disability allowance or family pensions; war veterans whose only income source was a veteran allowance; war invalids whose only income source was family allowance; and foster carers for each child below the age of 18;
 - child allowance beneficiaries in income brackets 1–6 (if not eligible for an increased large family allowance).
 - In December 2020 and early 2021 (ZIUPOPVDVE, 2020; ZDUOP, 2021): Permanent residents of Slovenia who were:
 - pensioners, including beneficiaries of occupational pensions; disability insurance beneficiaries working part time and on furlough or absent from work due to *force majeure*;

¹³ Per capita monthly net family income up to EUR 680.56.

- persons with disabilities who were beneficiaries of disability allowance or family pensions; war veterans whose only income source was a veteran allowance; war invalids whose only income source was family allowance;
 - registered unemployed persons who had lost their jobs from 12 March 2020 on (regardless of eligibility for unemployment benefit; foreigners with citizenship of a third country¹⁴ were only eligible if they did not fulfil the conditions for unemployment benefit);
 - all children below the age of 18 living in Slovenia (including those with temporary residence in Slovenia);
 - upper secondary school students who were not employed (including those with temporary residence in Slovenia);
 - students in tertiary education who were not employed (including those studying abroad);
 - persons aged 65 or over, and farmers (or their family members), who did not receive a solidarity allowance for pensioners and whose 2019 taxable income did not exceed EUR 591.20 per month; and
 - new-born children (i.e. one of their parents or an adoptive parent) eligible for a birth grant.
 - In spring 2020, around 1.19 million people were targeted (Eržen, 2020) – around 57% of the total population of Slovenia in the second quarter of 2020.
 - From 1 January 2020 up until a year after the COVID-19 epidemic, a one-off solidarity allowance will be paid to around 36,000 new-borns (19,328 children were born in 2019, and the trend is decreasing).
- f) Beneficiaries:
- Until the end of January 2021 (Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4):¹⁵
 - pensioners: 302,224 + 299,895 (around a half of all pensioners; Fiscal Council, 2021a, p. 10);
 - beneficiaries of occupational pensions: 51 + 53;
 - tertiary students: 52,180 + 54,249;
 - beneficiaries of cash social assistance or income supplement: 49,817 (April 2020);
 - other vulnerable groups: 21,707 (April 2020);
 - children below the age of 18: 190,779 (child allowance beneficiaries from income brackets 1–6) + 329,116 (all child allowance beneficiaries);¹⁶ and
 - foster children below the age of 18: 805 (April 2020).¹⁷
 - Beneficiaries in April 2021:
 - registered unemployed persons who lost their jobs from 12 March 2020 on: 9,270 (ESS, 2021).
- g) Novelty: A one-off solidarity allowance was a new measure. The targeted population was somewhat changed in December 2020. Income brackets were updated for

¹⁴ Other than a member of the European Union, European Economic Area or Swiss Confederation.

¹⁵ Two figures mean payments in April 2020 and January 2021.

¹⁶ Parents had to apply for a one-off solidarity allowance for children who did not receive the child allowance, to be paid later.

¹⁷ If they are child allowance beneficiaries, they are included in the January 2021 figure for children below the age of 18; if not, foster parents had to apply for a one-off solidarity allowance, to be paid later.

pensioners and disability insurance beneficiaries. The amount of benefit was adjusted for children.

2.5.3 Higher amounts of existing allowances

- a) Short description of the measure: Due to COVID-19, the large family allowance (an annual benefit) and childcare allowance (a monthly benefit paid to the parents of children in need of special care and protection) were temporarily increased (ZIUZEOP, 2020; ZIUPOPDVE, 2020).
- b) Category: Flat benefit.
- c) Timing: Higher amounts of the large family allowance were adopted in April 2020 (for 2020) and December 2020 (for 2021). ZIUPOPDVE (2020) keeps the higher amounts until the end of the epidemic. Higher childcare allowances were adopted in December 2020 and are paid for each month of the epidemic, backdated to 18 October 2020.
- d) Amount and duration: The large family allowance (received once a year) was increased by EUR 100 (from EUR 404.48 to EUR 504.48) for families with three children, and by EUR 200 (from EUR 491.52 to EUR 691.52) for families with four or more children in 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2020). The same increases applied to the 2021 large family allowance (and will apply until the end of the epidemic). A EUR 100 increase in the childcare allowance¹⁸ has been paid since October 2020 for each month of the epidemic.
- e) Targeted population: Around 30,000 large family allowance beneficiaries and around 24,000 childcare allowance beneficiaries.
- f) Beneficiaries: until the end of January 2021 (Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4):
 - large family allowance beneficiaries: 29,150 + 31,587; and
 - childcare allowance beneficiaries: 23,949 (January 2021).
- g) Novelty: A temporary increase in the amount of already existing benefits.

2.5.4 *Začasno denarno nadomestilo* (Temporary unemployment benefit)

- a) Short description of the measure: Temporary salary compensation is granted for loss of employment if the employment contract is terminated for business reasons or if it expired between 13 March¹⁹ and 31 May 2020 or between 18 October 2020 and the end of the epidemic, and if the person concerned is not eligible for (regular) unemployment benefit (ZIUZEOP, 2020; ZIUPOPDVE, 2020).
- b) Category: Flat benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020. It was reintroduced on 18 October 2020 and will remain in force until the end of the epidemic.
- d) Amount and duration: EUR 513.64 per month of unemployment. The same social security contributions are also paid as for the beneficiaries of regular unemployment benefit.
- e) Targeted population: Persons who became unemployed during the two waves of epidemic in Slovenia and were covered by compulsory social security insurance²⁰ in

¹⁸ Normally, the childcare allowance amounts to EUR 102.40 per month, or EUR 204.80 per month for children with a severe mental disability or severe mobility impairment or certain illnesses from a list of serious conditions.

¹⁹ The COVID-19 epidemic was declared on 12 March 2020.

²⁰ Only workers on civil contracts and students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services are not covered by unemployment insurance.

Slovenia (on the basis of a work contract) before 13 March 2020 (in the first wave of the epidemic) and 18 October 2020 (in the second wave of the epidemic).²¹

- f) Beneficiaries: 919 persons (two payments for each until 3 July 2020) (Fiscal Council, 2020); 1,414 persons in April 2021 (Fiscal Council, 2021b).
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

2.5.5 *Ukrepi na področju uveljavljanja pravic iz javnih sredstev (Measures regarding the exercise of rights from public funds)*

Izjeme na področju uveljavljanja pravic iz javnih sredstev (Exceptions to the exercise of rights from public funds)

- a) Short description of the measure: The rights to transfers from public funds that expired during the epidemic were automatically extended by 1 month (ZIUZEOP, 2000).
- b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2000). It was reintroduced on 28 November 2020 and will last until the end of the epidemic (ZIUOPDVE, 2020).
- d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.
- e) Targeted population: Beneficiaries of transfers from public funds (i.e. child allowance, cash social assistance, income supplement, national educational grant, pre-school day-care subsidy, school meals subsidy and other subsidies and payments from the public purse).²²
- f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

Izjeme na področju uveljavljanja pravic po zakonu o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih (Exceptions in the field of exercising rights under the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act)

- a) Short description of the measure: The deadline for submitting applications for recognition of rights under the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (2014) was extended from 13 March 2020 to the month following the month in which the extraordinary measures due to the epidemic were suspended, i.e. to June 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2000).
- b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020.
- d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.
- e) Targeted population: Beneficiaries of maternity/paternity/parental salary compensation, parental allowance, birth grant, child allowance, large family allowance, childcare allowance and partial compensation for forgone income (Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act, 2014).
- f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

Izjeme na področju socialno varstvenih prejemkov (Exceptions in the field of social assistance benefits)

²¹ The citizen of a country that is not a member of the European Union, the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation is granted temporary unemployment benefit if he/she is considered to be unemployed under the law governing the labour market and does not meet the conditions for unemployment benefit.

²² See Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act (2010).

- a) Short description of the measure: In the **assessment of entitlement to cash social assistance** (including income supplement and rent subsidy), assets other than savings and securities (which the person can quickly dispose of) were not taken into account during the epidemic (ZIUZEOP, 2000; ZIUOPDVE, 2020).
- b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020. It has been in force again since 28 November 2020.
- d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.
- e) Targeted population: Cash social assistance beneficiaries.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

2.5.6 Pomoč humanitarnim organizacijam (Support for humanitarian organisations)

- a) Short description of the measure: The central government budget allocates funds to the Slovenian Red Cross and Caritas Slovenia to help eliminate, alleviate and prevent the social consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic by providing additional assistance to food recipients under the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) scheme.
- b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 1 January 2021 and will end on 30 June 2021.
- d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.
- e) Targeted population: Food recipients under the FEAD scheme.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.
- g) Novelty: An already existing measure was adjusted. Additional funds were allocated to the existing scheme.

2.6 Measures related to housing support

2.6.1 Odlog plačila obveznosti kreditojemalcev (Deferred repayments for borrowers)

- a) Short description of the measure: At the borrower's request, the bank is obliged to defer all payment obligations and correspondingly to extend the repayment schedule (including the final maturity date). The borrower has to pay interest (at the normal rate agreed when the loan was taken out) for the deferral period (ZIUOPOK, 2000). The measure also applies to loan agreements concluded while the law is in force.
- b) Category: Flat benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 29 March 2020 (to last until 18 months after the government's Decision that the reasons for the measure have ceased to exist). ZIUOPDVE (2020) set the duration until 31 January 2021 and ZIUOPDVE (2020) until 31 December 2021.
- d) Amount: Not applicable. Duration: 12-month deferral (for requests approved between 29 March and 30 December 2020); 9-month deferral (for requests approved between 31 December 2020 and 31 March 2021).
- e) Targeted population: Legal and natural persons.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.

- g) Novelty: This is a new measure. ZIUPOPVE (2020) shortened the deferral period to 9 months; this period may start on 31 March 2021 at the latest.

2.6.2 Exemption from payment for distribution services to households and other small consumers of electricity

- a) Short description of the measure: Households and other small consumers of electricity were made exempt from payment for distribution services (GRS, 2020).
- b) Category: Flat benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 1 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020.
- d) Amount and duration: The charge for the distribution services. Monthly electricity bills for March, April and May 2020 were, on average, 25% lower for households and other small consumers of electricity (GRS, 2020).
- e) Targeted population: Households and other small consumers of electricity.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information not available.
- g) Novelty: This was an entirely new measure.

2.7 Leave for parents whose children are unable to attend a school or a pre-school service because of COVID-19

2.7.1 *Nadomestilo plače delavcem zaradi odrejene karantene ali nezmožnosti opravljanja dela zaradi višje sile zaradi obveznosti varstva, ustavitve javnega prevoza ali zaprtja mej (Salary compensation for workers due to quarantine or inability to perform their work because of force majeure that is a consequence of a childcare obligation, the cessation of public transport or the closure of borders)*

This was part of the measure outlined below in Section 2.8.1. For the period 13 March–30 June 2020, also see Section 2.2.1.

For the self-employed and persons insured as shareholders, see Section 2.7.2.

- a) Short description of the measure: An employed parent/guardian who had to care for a child at home because of *force majeure* (the enforced quarantine of a child or the closure of kindergartens, schools and social care institutions) and thus could not work (even from home) was entitled to salary compensation (ZZUOOP, 2020). The employer was entitled to reimbursement of the salary compensation paid. For the conditions for reimbursement of salary compensation from 13 March to 31 May 2020, see Section 2.2.1. The state reimburses the employer in full for the salary compensation paid to a worker during absences from 1 September 2020.
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 30 June 2020.²³ It was reintroduced on 1 September 2020 (ZZUOOP, 2020) and extended until 31 March 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2020) and then until 30 June 2021 (Sklep o spremembah Sklepa o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2021).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: 80% salary compensation (based on average salary over the last 3 months), but not less than the minimum wage that was in

²³ On 11 May 2020, kindergartens and elementary schools (for the first three grades) started operating again, making most cases of *force majeure* absences unjustifiable even before 31 May (end of the epidemic) (Baškovič and Pipan Nahtigal, 2020). Between 1 June 2020 and 31 August 2020, parental need to care for a child aged up to (around) 12 (i.e. including children attending the 5th grade of elementary school) who had to quarantine was considered a regular case of *force majeure* (Employment Relationships Act, 2013).

effect between 13 March and 31 May 2020 (ZIUZEOP, 2020) and from 1 December 2020 (ZIUPOPĐVE, 2020). Duration: as required while kindergartens were closed (though some children attended) and remote schooling was in place in elementary schools.²⁴

- e) Targeted population: Employees caring for children up to and including the 5th grade of elementary school (i.e. around the age of 12), children with disabilities in adapted/special programmes or children with special needs who require continuous care – and their employers.
- f) Beneficiaries: Included in the number of recipients of the measure outlined in Section 2.8.1.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

2.7.2 Delno povrnjen izgubljeni dohodek za samozaposlene in družbenike za čas (...) nezmožnosti opravljanja dela zaradi višje sile zaradi obveznosti varstva otroka (Partial reimbursement of forgone income for the self-employed and partners in firms for the duration of (...) inability to work due to force majeure caused by childcare obligations)

This forms part of the measure outlined in Section 2.8.2.

- a) Short description of the measure: Partial reimbursement of income forgone while unable to work due to the need to care for a child because of quarantine or severely restricted access to kindergarten or school (or kindergarten or school closure) (ZZUOOP, 2020). The person cannot receive basic monthly income and partial reimbursement of income forgone in the same period.
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 1 September 2020 (ZZUOOP, 2020). It was extended until 31 March 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2020) and then until 30 June 2021 (Sklep o spremembah Sklepa o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2021).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: EUR 250 for each period of childcare, but not more than EUR 250 for 10 days, EUR 500 for 20 days and EUR 750 for a month (exempt from all taxes and contributions) (ZZUOOP, 2020). Duration: as required while kindergartens were closed (though some children attended) and remote schooling was in place in elementary schools (see Section 2.7.1).
- e) Targeted population: Self-employed persons, partners in firms who are managers (insured as shareholders) and farmers, provided they have to care for a child up to and including the 5th grade of elementary school, a child with disabilities in an adapted/special programme or a child with special needs who requires continuous care, and provided they are not in receipt of basic monthly income.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not available.
- g) Novelty: This is an entirely new measure.

²⁴ Kindergartens were completely closed from 16 March to 15 May 2020. They provided only emergency care from 26 October 2020 to 25 January 2021 and reopened for all children in some regions on 26 January 2021 and in the whole country on 9 February 2021. Kindergartens provided only emergency care also from 1 April to 11 April 2021. Elementary schools were closed from 16 March 2020. Grades 1 to 3 of the 9-year elementary school (that includes primary and lower secondary education, i.e. ISCED 1–2, and starts at the age of 6) returned to school on 18 May 2020. The 4th and 5th grades returned on 1 June 2020. Elementary schools (grades 1–5) were closed again from 2 November 2020. Grades 1–3 returned to school in some regions on 26 January 2021 and in the whole country on 9 February 2021, while higher grades returned on 15 February 2021. Elementary schools (except for adapted and special education programmes) were closed again from 1 April to 11 April 2021. Emergency care was provided to pupils in grades 1–3.

2.8 Other important temporary social protection/inclusion measures adopted in the context of the pandemic, which do not fall in any of the categories listed in the previous sections

2.8.1 *Povračilo nadomestila plače zaradi odsotnosti zaradi odrejene karantene in iz razloga višje sile (Reimbursement of salary compensation due to a quarantine order or force majeure)*

For the period 13 March–31 May 2020, see also Section 2.2.1. See also Section 2.7.1.

a) Short description of the measure: Salary compensation for employees who could not work for various reasons of *force majeure* (including quarantine, care obligations, non-operation of public transport and the closure of the country's borders), and state reimbursement for the employer.

For the refund by the state of salary compensation for absences from 13 March to 31 May 2020 and the conditions, see Section 2.2.1. Salary compensation for absences since 11 July 2021 is refunded in full by the state (ZIUPDV, 2020).

b) Category: Conditional benefit.

c) Timing:

- The measure that started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 31 May 2020 included all relevant absences from work due to *force majeure* (childcare, non-operation of public transport, country border closure – and implicitly also quarantine) (ZIUZEOP, 2020).
- On 11 July 2020, a measure exclusively covering quarantine started (ZIUPDV, 2020). This was first extended until 31 December 2020 (ZZUOOP, 2020), then until 31 March 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2020) and then until 30 June 2021 (Sklep o spremembah Sklepa o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2021).
- On 1 September 2020, a measure covering childcare, the non-operation of public transport and country border closure started (ZIUOPDVE, 2020). It was extended until 31 March 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2020), with an option for the government to extend it further, until 30 June 2021.

d) Range, duration and conditionality: During the period of compulsory quarantine, 80% salary compensation (based on average salary over the last 3 months), but not less than the minimum wage (from 13 March to 31 May 2020, and from 1 December 2020), exempt from all taxes and contributions (ZIUZEOP, 2020; ZIUOPDVE, 2020). Since 11 July 2020, salary compensation has depended on the reason for a quarantine order (ZIUPDV, 2020; ZZUOOP, 2020):

- 100% of the salary: if the employee came into contact with an infected person while performing work for the employer; or, in the case of a civil servant, has been quarantined due to performance of his employment duties abroad, or due to a posting or transfer to work abroad;
- 80% of salary (average of the previous 3 months): if the employee has travelled to a country on the green or amber list and has been quarantined on crossing the border into Slovenia; or if the employee was (or is suspected of having been) in contact with an infected person while he/she was not working for his/her employer;
- 50% of salary, but not less than 70% of the minimum wage: if the employee was obliged by *force majeure* to travel to a country on the red list and has been quarantined on crossing the border into Slovenia;
- no salary compensation: if the employee has travelled to a country on the red list without good reason and has been quarantined on crossing the border into Slovenia.

- e) Targeted population: Employees who cannot work due to a quarantine order, non-operation of public transport and country border closure – and their employers. Up to 18 January 2021, the Employment Service of Slovenia had received applications for around 120,000 employees (Fiscal Council, 2021a, p. 9).
- f) Beneficiaries: Until 12 January 2021, salary compensation paid out by employers was refunded for 3,340 employees (21 in March 2020, 471 in April, 256 in May, 97 in July, 355 in August, 678 in September, 967 in October and 495 in November) (Fiscal Council, 2021a, Table 4).²⁵ According to data from April 2021, the figure had risen to 4,291 (or around 0.5% of employees) (Fiscal Council, 2021b).
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure. On 11 July 2021, the reimbursed amount was increased to cover salary compensation in full.

2.8.2 Delno povrnjen izgubljeni dohodek za samozaposlene in družbenike za čas trajanja karantene na domu ali nezmožnosti opravljanja dela zaradi višje sile zaradi obveznosti varstva otroka (Partial reimbursement of forgone income for the self-employed and partners in firms for the duration of quarantine at home or inability to work due to force majeure caused by childcare obligations)

See also Section 2.7.2.

- a) Short description of the measure: Partial reimbursement of income forgone as a consequence of quarantine at home (or inability to work due to *force majeure* caused by childcare obligations) (ZZUOOP, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 1 September 2020 and was extended until 31 March 2021 (Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2020) and then until 30 June 2021 (Sklep o spremembah Sklepa o podaljšanju veljavnosti določenih ukrepov..., 2021).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: EUR 250 for each episode of quarantine at home (or period of childcare), but not more than EUR 250 for 10 days, EUR 500 for 20 days and EUR 750 for a month; exempt from all taxes and contributions.
- e) Targeted population: Self-employed persons, partners in firms who are managers (insured as shareholders) and farmers, provided they are not in receipt of basic monthly income.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not available.²⁶
- g) Novelty: This is an entirely new measure.

2.8.3 Reimbursement of the costs of non-provided childcare and social care services

Kindergarten fees

- a) Short description of the measure: Parents were excused from paying parent fees for childcare services provided as a public service during the closure of kindergartens, provided their children did not attend (ZIUZEOP, 2000; ZIUOPDVE, 2020).²⁷ The lost revenue was reimbursed to local community and private kindergartens (and from 26 October 2020, also to those without a concession) from the central government budget.

²⁵ Included are also recipients of the measure outlined in Section 2.7.1.

²⁶ Recipients of this measure are included in the number of recipients of the measure outlined in Section 2.8.1.

²⁷ Emergency care was organised for children if both of their parents (or one parent if they came from a single-parent family) were employed in critical infrastructure sectors, and in educational institutions, social security institutions, the Slovenian armed forces, the police, or professional fire-fighting units.

- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 16 March 2020. Kindergartens were completely closed from 16 March to 15 May 2020. The measure was extended until 30 June 2020. From 26 October 2020 to 25 January 2021, kindergartens provided only emergency care; they reopened for all children in some regions on 26 January 2021 and in the whole country on 9 February 2021. Kindergartens also provided only emergency care from 1 April to 11 April 2021. From 1 October 2020, parents have not had to pay fees for the period of the child's non-attendance due to enforced quarantine (ZZUOOP, 2020).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: The amounts concerned cannot be reported, because they depend on the cost of the programmes for different age groups in individual municipalities and on the share of the costs paid by parents (0–77%). Parents did not have to pay for the days when their children did not attend due to closure of the kindergarten. They also did not have to pay if their children did not attend between 18 May and 30 June 2020, in order to allow a gradual return of the children to kindergartens.
- e) Targeted population: Parents of pre-school children aged 1 year and over and attending childcare provided as a public service.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not available.
- g) Novelty: This was a new measure.

Pomoč izvajalcem socialno varstvene storitve pomoč družini na domu (Support for family home helps)

- a) Short description of the measure: Financial support from the state to partially compensate for the loss of income caused by the inability of family home helps to offer their services due to COVID-19 (ZIUOOPE, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and ended on 1 May 2020.
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: 80% of the loss of earnings due to the inability of a family home help to offer their services.
- e) Targeted population: Formal providers of family home help who suffered at least a 20% fall in average revenue from that activity in March–May 2020, compared to the average for January–February 2020, if not entitled to the reimbursement of salary compensation under ZIUZEOP (2020).²⁸ In all, 81 providers (100%) of family help at home and their users.
- f) Beneficiaries: No data available yet.
- g) Novelty: This was an entirely new measure.

Izvajanje socialno varstvene storitve institucionalno varstvo (Institutional social care provision)

- a) Short description of the measure: While a residential care user is absent from the care institution (due to the shift to home care), the state reimburses the accommodation costs normally paid by the resident, less the cost of meals (until 31 May 2020; after that date, the cost of meals is not subtracted) (ZIUOOPE, 2020; ZZUOOP, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 13 March 2020 and was extended until 31 December 2021.

²⁸ The ZIUZEOP refers to the reimbursement of paid salary compensation to workers with employers who are temporarily unable to provide them with work due to the epidemic's consequences.

- d) Range, duration and conditionality: No information on the amount of reimbursement is available. Coverage includes any period of absence of a resident from institutional care between 13 March 2020 and 31 December 2021.
- e) Targeted population: 102 providers (100%) of institutional long-term care and their users.
- f) Beneficiaries: No data available yet.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

Zagotavljanje sredstev zaradi izpada programa zaradi zagotavljanja prostorov in kadra (Financing fixed costs in secondary and tertiary healthcare institutions)

- a) Short description of the measure: Those healthcare providers affected are partially reimbursed by the state for the difference between the full value of a monthly agreed contractual programme and the reported value of the programme as a consequence of the COVID-19 epidemic (ZZUOOP, 2020).
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: Fixed costs are covered from 1 June 2020 to 31 October 2021.
- d) Range, duration and conditionality:
- e) The state pays 80% of the difference between the full value of a monthly agreed contractual programme and the reported value of the programme in the period for which the claim is submitted. This measure has been amended (ZDUOP, 2021): 80% of the cost of services provided to patients with COVID-19 is deducted from the amount calculated according to the previous formula.²⁹ Eligible are only those providers that provide healthcare to COVID-19 patients. The amendment refers to the entire period (from 1 June 2020 to 31 October 2021).
- f) Targeted population: 14 (58.3%) public health institutions performing healthcare activities at the secondary and tertiary levels that have had to adapt their facilities in order to treat COVID-19 patients, and have therefore been temporarily prevented from fulfilling their contractual obligations to the HIIS.
- g) Beneficiaries: 14 secondary and tertiary healthcare institutions.
- h) Novelty: This is a new measure. The amount was adjusted (effective from 1 June 2020).

2.8.4 Topel obrok za učence in dijake (Hot meal for primary and secondary school pupils)

- a) Short description of the measure: Municipalities organise a free hot meal for certain primary and secondary school pupils on those days when remote schooling is in operation (ZIUOPDVE, 2020). The cost of the free meals is covered by the state.
- b) Category: Conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The measure started on 28 November 2020 and was in effect until the end of remote schooling (12 February 2021). Thereafter, it has been implemented as and when required (e.g. remote schooling due to a quarantine order; schools closure from 1 April to 11 April 2021).
- d) Range, duration and conditionality: The price of a hot meal varies across schools, but is roughly between EUR 2.50 and EUR 3.50. Duration: Days of remote schooling between 28 November 2020 and 12 February 2021.

²⁹ Regular (contractual) programme could not be realised because of the COVID-19 patients.

- e) Targeted population: Primary and secondary school pupils from families with per capita income not exceeding EUR 382.82 per month and those living in foster families.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not available.
- g) Novelty: This is an entirely new measure.

2.8.5 *Bon za izboljšanje gospodarskega položaja na področju potrošnje turizma* (A voucher for the improvement of the economic situation in the field of tourism consumption)

- a) Short description of the measure: In order to save 20,000 jobs in tourism (Hočevar, 2020), each Slovenian citizen was given a voucher to spend on accommodation and breakfast in tourist facilities in Slovenia (ZIUOOPE, 2020).
- b) Category: Flat benefit.
- c) Timing: The voucher's validity ran from 19 June 2020 to 31 December 2020, but was extended to 31 December 2021 (*Sklep o podaljšanju veljavnosti ukrepa za izboljšanje gospodarskega položaja na področju potrošnje turizma*, 2020).
- d) Amount and duration: The tourist voucher is worth EUR 200 for an adult and EUR 50 for a child. It is not subject to personal income tax and is not counted as income in the means test for transfers from public funds. The voucher's validity runs from 19 June 2020 to 31 December 2021.
- e) Targeted population: 1,940,000 people (100% of the population with Slovene citizenship; 92.5% of the total population of Slovenia in the second quarter of 2020).
- f) Beneficiaries: By the end of November 2020, over 800,000 people had used a voucher (Gole, 2020).
- g) Novelty: This is an entirely new measure.

2.8.6 *Odlog plačila prispevkov* (Deferral of contributions payments)

- a) Short description of the measure: The self-employed without employees were allowed to defer their social security contribution payments due in April–June 2020 (ZIUPPP, 2020).
- b) Category: Neither flat nor conditional benefit.
- c) Timing: The deferral started with contributions due in April 2020; the final date for the payment of deferred contributions is 31 March 2022.
- d) Amount and duration/Range, duration and conditionality: Not applicable.
- e) Targeted population: Self-employed persons without employees.
- f) Beneficiaries: Information is not available.
- g) Novelty: This is a new measure.

3 Social protection and inclusion responses to the crisis: overall assessment and possible gaps

This third section briefly considers three aspects: the expected cost of the social protection and inclusion measures put in place by the country (Section 3.1), the impact of these measures on the social protection system and on social inclusion policies (Section 3.2), and the possible remaining gaps in the social protection system and in social inclusion policies (Section 3.3). It concludes with a section (3.4) on debates and recommendations.

3.1 Expected cost of social protection and inclusion measures

The expected costs have proved to be very different from the actual costs, particularly for those measures related to job protection, and particularly during the spring wave. The Fiscal Council provided estimates for the costs of the spring 2020 measures that were very different (lower or higher) from the government's estimates. Accordingly, the actual (or close to actual) costs of the measures are presented in Table A1 in the Annex. Table A2 provides the relative costs, i.e. the costs as a percentage of 2019 GDP.

Up to 15 April 2021, spending on those measures included in Table A1 amounted to EUR 1.853 billion, or 3.8% of 2019 GDP. But that is not the total (final) cost for that period. Some population groups will have received payments after 15 April 2021 (for various reasons, such as the need to apply for them); not all company applications for the period up to 15 April 2021 had been both submitted to and verified by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS); and many applications for that period had not yet been submitted to the ESS.

Most of the expenditure (EUR 1.167 billion, or 2.4% of 2019 GDP) related to the job protection measures provided through support for employers, employees and the self-employed. Of that, almost half (EUR 581.7 million, or 1.2% of 2019 GDP) went on reimbursing the gross salary compensation for workers on furlough; then came relief on social security contributions for private-sector employees performing work and the crisis supplement paid to private employers (EUR 495.8 million, or 1.0% of 2019 GDP). As already noted, these are not the final amounts relating to the period ending on 15 April 2021.

By 15 April 2021, EUR 507.1 million (1.0% of 2019 GDP) had been spent on measures related to minimum income schemes and other forms of social assistance (also not the final amount). A considerable amount (EUR 128.2 million, or 0.3% of 2019 GDP) was spent on the tourist vouchers, aimed at improving the economic situation in the field of tourism consumption; however, only 42% of vouchers were used by the end of November 2020 (Gole, 2020) and tourist facilities were closed from late October 2020.

3.2 Impact on the social protection system and on social inclusion policies

The social protection and inclusion policies already in place in Slovenia were not designed to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis in the labour market – particularly given the severity of the crisis during the spring 2020 and winter 2020/2021 waves. Further (intervention) measures were necessary to prevent unemployment and maintain jobs. It was extremely important to keep people who were trained and qualified for particular jobs attached to their employers. The alternative would have been to have massive unemployment and financial collapse of the economy, which would have triggered a considerable drop in the income of a large proportion of the population. The government's response was immediate and generally adequate. Aimed at mitigating the economic and social hardship caused by the sharp decline in economic activity and the restrictions on people's lives, it had a positive financial and psychological effect on employers, employees, the self-employed and the (vulnerable) population (Stropnik, 2020). The existing social and family policies protected the population against many risks, and their extension and adaptation to COVID-19 has prevented (or at least

mitigated) a decline in the standard of living of the vulnerable population, the elderly and families with children. Most measures implemented were of a temporary nature, but the extension of the right of a child's parent to stay with a child in a hospital and be paid (see Section 2.4.1) has been made permanent (ZZVZZ-O, 2021).

3.3 Remaining gaps in the social protection system and social inclusion policies

It is important that in Slovenia the self-employed have been insured against all risks during the COVID-19 crisis, and that most non-standard work contracts are covered by social security insurance (Stropanik et al., 2017). The measure outlined in Section 2.3.1 that was in force between 11 April and 31 May 2020 was particularly helpful to the self-employed, who normally have their sickness benefit covered by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (HIIS) only after the first 30 days of illness (like all employers whose employees fall ill). In that period, all insured persons infected with COVID-19 had sickness benefit paid by the HIIS (i.e. the compulsory health insurance) from the first day of their absence from work.

The least protected non-standard workers (those working on civil/copyright contracts or performing student work) benefited from measures related to minimum income schemes and other forms of social assistance (see Section 2.5). There was a gap in protection during the COVID-19 crisis as regards students in tertiary education: the one-off solidarity allowance (EUR 150, paid twice) did not solve the problem faced by many students, who previously earned money by undertaking temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services (Eržen, 2020). Loss of income because of COVID-19 threatens their economic independence. According to the Student Association of Slovenia, before the epidemic around 20,000 tertiary students undertook such work to cover the cost of their accommodation and studies (Črnko, 2020). A recent Eurostudent survey found that there were 43,500 students in Slovene tertiary education, of whom 30,000 would be unable to afford their studies without taking temporary and occasional agency work. Accordingly, the Student Association of Slovenia proposed the introduction of a temporary monthly crisis allowance of EUR 150 for tertiary students who previously used to work through student brokerage services (Pušnik and Hočevar, 2020).

3.4 Debates and recommendations

During the spring 2020 wave of the epidemic and the resulting closure of schools, school canteens also remained closed. This led to a deterioration in the social situation of children from low-income families who are eligible for free or subsidised school meals. In October 2020, a group of MPs submitted a proposal to revise the School Meals Act (2013). The idea was to enshrine the right of primary and secondary pupils from low-income families to a hot school lunch, even during remote schooling; if a local community opted to deliver these, the costs of delivery were to be covered by the state. The government reacted by inserting a temporary measure into the ZIUOPDVE (2020) (see Section 2.8.4).

The Fiscal Council (2021a) called on the government to move from one-off transfers to the population to addressing the structural problems of individual population groups systemically.

In spring 2021, the issue arose of those employers and self-employed who had not experienced the requisite anticipated fall in revenue having to return the financial support they had received. The Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia suggested that no recipient should have to repay the aid; but that did not seem fair on those who had correctly assessed that the fall in their revenue would not make them eligible (STA, 2021). Finally, a compromise was reached that helps those who were employing workers and investing in 2020. According to the amended rules (Rules amending the Rules on proportionality criteria ..., 2021), effective from 15 May 2021, a fall in revenue *per* average number of employees or a fall in revenues *per* fixed assets (excluding land) value may also be used as a criterion regarding a fall in revenue. Up to the end of May

2021, a total of EUR 39 million that had been received in financial support had been returned (or a decision issued). The largest part (EUR 32 million) related to the reimbursement of salary compensation for workers on furlough and the related exemption from payment of social security contributions (Fiscal Council, 2021c).

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Annex

Table A1: Public costs of COVID-19 measures (EUR million)

Measure		2020	January-15 April 2021	Total
1	Measures related to unemployment benefits			
2.1	Reimbursement of salary compensation for workers on furlough (and for employees absent from work due to <i>force majeure</i> , and exemption from payment of contributions)	451.3 ^(h)	130.4 ^{(h)(i)}	581.7
	• Reimbursement of salary compensation	327.6 ^(h)	130.4 ^{(h)(i)}	458.0
	• Social security contributions	123.7 ^(h)	0 ^(h)	123.7
2.2	Partially subsidised shortened full-time working hours	35.6 ^(h)	5.9 ^(h)	41.5
2.3	Partial relief on social security contributions for private-sector employees performing work, and the crisis supplement	435.0 ^(h)	60.8 ^(h)	495.8
	• Relief on social security contributions for private-sector employees performing work	435.0 ^(h)	0.8 ^(h)	435.8
	• Crisis supplement		60.0 ^(h)	60.0
2.4	Monthly crisis supplement in companies employing people with disabilities and employment centres			
2.5	Payment of contributions for occupational insurance			
2.6	Exemption from payment of social security contributions for the self-employed, employees of religious organisations, partners in firms and farmers	48 ^(b)		48
3.1	Sickness benefits in case of isolation	18.6 ^(h)	0.5 ^(h)	19.1
3.2	Short-term sickness benefits			
4.1	Extension of the right of a parent to stay with their child in hospital			
4.2	Financing of the COVID-19 telemedicine services			
5.1	Extraordinary assistance in the form of basic monthly income (including social security contributions)	196.3 ^(h)	103.5 ^(h)	299.8 ^(h)
	• employees of religious organisations (Roman Catholic Church only)		4.2 ^(b)	4.2
5.2 and 5.3	A (one-off) solidarity allowance and Higher amounts of existing allowances	163.4 ^(h)	42.1 ^{(h)(i)}	205.5
	• pensioners and unemployed disability insurance beneficiaries	67 ^{(b)(c)}	68 ^(a)	135
	• tertiary students	8 ^(b)	8 ^(j)	16
	• farmers (or their family members)	0.1 ^(g)	0.1 ^(j)	0.2

	• beneficiaries of cash social assistance or income supplement	7.5 ^(f)		7.5
	• vulnerable population groups	17 ^(b)		17
	• registered unemployed persons		1.4 ⁽ⁱ⁾	1.4
	• childcare allowance beneficiaries		6.0 ^(j)	6.0
	• children		18 ^{(e)(3)}	18
	• new-born children		18 ^(e)	18
	• increase in a large family allowance	3.5 ^(a)	3.5 ^(j)	7.0
5.4	Temporary unemployment benefit	0.9 ^{(b)(d)(4)}	0.9 ⁽ⁱ⁾	1.8
5.5	Measures regarding exercising the rights from public sources			
5.6	Support for humanitarian organisations			
6.1	Deferred repayments for borrowers			
6.2	Exemption from payment for distribution services for households and other small consumers of electricity			
7.1	Salary compensation for workers due to quarantine or inability to perform work because of <i>force majeure</i> that is a consequence of a childcare obligation, the cessation of public transport or the closure of borders			
7.2	Partial reimbursement of forgone income for the self-employed and partners in firms for the duration of (...) inability to work due to <i>force majeure</i> caused by childcare obligations			
8.1	Reimbursement of salary compensation due to a quarantine order or <i>force majeure</i>	0.5 ^{(b)(1)}	2.0 ⁽ⁱ⁾	2.5
8.2	Partial reimbursement of forgone income for the self-employed and partners in firms for the duration of quarantine at home or inability to work due to <i>force majeure</i> caused by childcare obligations			
8.3	Reimbursement of the costs of non-provided childcare and social care services			
	• public and private kindergartens	2.8 ⁽²⁾		2.8
8.4	Hot meal for primary and secondary school pupils			
8.5	A voucher for the improvement of the economic situation in the field of tourism consumption	128.0 ^(h)	0.2 ^(h)	128.2
8.6	Deferral of contributions payments	27.1 ^(b)		27.1

Notes: (1) Quarantine; (2) until 28 May 2020 (more recent information includes education as a whole, sport and culture); (3) in January 2021 paid only to child allowance beneficiaries; others had to apply; (4) only two payments per person until 3 July 2020 (Fiscal Council, 2020). Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up precisely to the totals provided. Missing information is not available.

Sources: (a) Fiscal Council (2021a) (actual payments); (b) Gole and Grgič (2020) (from 13 March 2020 to around the beginning of December 2020, except for 5.1); (c) MLFSAEO (2020a); (d) Fiscal Council (2020); (e) Hočevar (2021a); (f) MLFSAEO (2020b); (g) Hočevar (2021b); (h) Fiscal Council (2021b) (actual payments); (i) ESS (2021); (j) own estimation.

Table A2: Public costs of COVID-19 measures (% of 2019 GDP)

Measure		2020	January -15 April 2021	Total
1	Measures related to unemployment benefits			
2.1	Reimbursement of salary compensation for workers on furlough (and for employees absent from work due to <i>force majeure</i> , and exemption from payment of contributions)	0.93	0.27	1.20
	• Reimbursement of salary compensation	0.68	0.27	0.95
	• Social security contributions	0.26		0.26
2.2	Partially subsidised shortened full-time working hours	0.07	0.01	0.09
2.3	Partial relief on social security contributions for private-sector employees performing work, and the crisis supplement	0.90	0.13	1.02
	• Relief on social security contributions for private-sector employees performing work	0.90	0.00	0.90
	• Crisis supplement		0.12	0.12
2.4	Monthly crisis supplement in companies employing people with disabilities and employment centres			
2.5	Payment of contributions for occupational insurance			
2.6	Exemption from payment of social security contributions for the self-employed, employees of religious organisations, partners in firms and farmers	0.10		0.10
3.1	Sickness benefits in case of isolation	0.04	0.00	0.04
3.2	Short-term sickness benefits			
4.1	Extension of the right of a parent to stay with their child in hospital			
4.2	Financing of the COVID-19 telemedicine services			
5.1	Extraordinary assistance in the form of basic monthly income (including social security contributions)	0.41	0.21	0.62
	• employees of religious organisations (Roman Catholic Church only)		0.01	0.01
5.2 and 5.3	A (one-off) solidarity allowance and Higher amounts of existing allowances	0.34	0.09	0.42
	• pensioners and unemployed disability insurance beneficiaries	0.14	0.14	0.28

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tertiary students 	0.02	0.02	0.03
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> farmers (or their family members) 	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beneficiaries of cash social assistance or income supplement 	0.15		0.15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vulnerable population groups 	0.04		0.04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> registered unemployed persons 		0.00	0.00
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> childcare allowance beneficiaries 		0.01	0.01
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> children 		0.04	0.04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new-born children 		0.04	0.04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase in a large family allowance 	0.01	0.01	0.01
5.4	Temporary unemployment benefit	0.00	0.00	0.00
5.5	Measures regarding exercising the rights from public sources			
5.6	Support for humanitarian organisations			
6.1	Deferred repayments for borrowers			
6.2	Exemption from payment for distribution services for households and other small consumers of electricity			
7.1	Salary compensation for workers due to quarantine or inability to perform work because of <i>force majeure</i> that is a consequence of a childcare obligation, the cessation of public transport or the closure of borders			
7.2	Partial reimbursement of forgone income to the self-employed and partners in firms for the duration of (...) inability to work due to <i>force majeure</i> caused by childcare obligations			
8.1	Reimbursement of salary compensation due to a quarantine order or <i>force majeure</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00
8.2	Partial reimbursement of forgone income for the self-employed and partners in firms, for the duration of quarantine at home or inability to work due to <i>force majeure</i> caused by childcare obligations			
8.3	Reimbursement of the costs of non-provided childcare and social care services			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public and private kindergartens 	0.01	0.00	0.01
8.4	Hot meal for primary and secondary school pupils			
8.5	A voucher for the improvement of the economic situation in the field of tourism consumption	0.26	0.00	0.26
8.6	Deferral of contributions payments	0.06		0.06

Notes: See Table A1.

Sources: See Table A1; own calculations.

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