

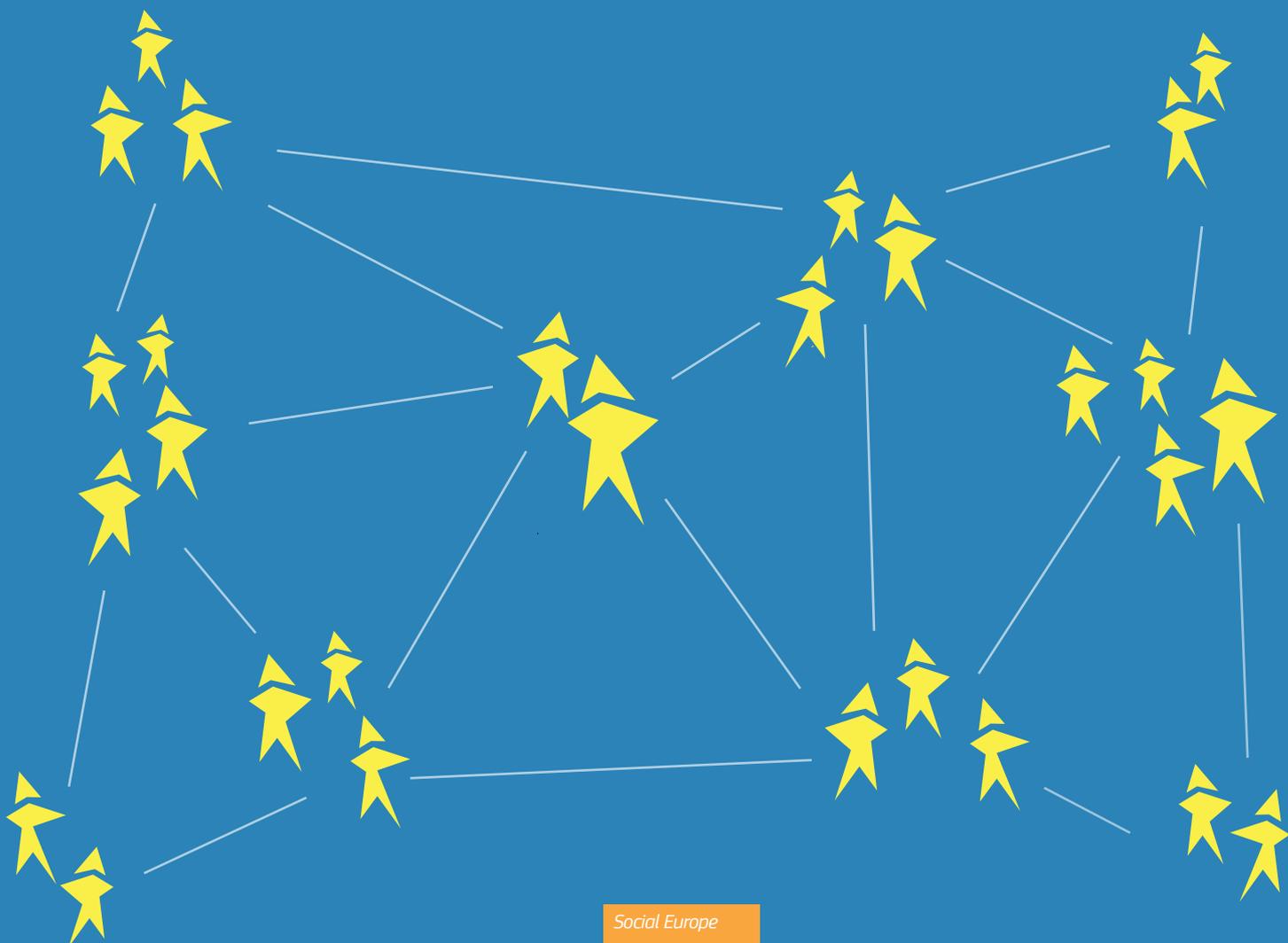


EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN)

Access to social protection for young people

Slovenia

Nada Stropnik and Valentina Prevolnik Rupel



Social Europe

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
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European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

**ESPN Thematic Report:
Access to social protection for
young people**

Slovenia

2021

Nada Stropnik and Valentina Prevolnik Rupel

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SUMMARY

Mandatory unemployment insurance applies to people with employment contracts and the self-employed. People with “copyright contracts” (contracts entered into by creative workers or authors with producers, publishers or other first exploiters of their works), and students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services, do not have access to unemployment insurance. The latter group is in education, just like apprentices and paid trainees. There is no age condition for availability or waiting period. The required period of insurance is shorter for people under 30, which is a good practice. (Young) people with less than six months of insurance are not eligible. For young people with at least 10 months of insurance, the duration of unemployment benefit is the same as for older groups (at least three months). If someone under 30 applies for the benefit with a lower insurance period than the general one, the duration is two months. Various reforms implemented since 2015 had different impacts on the position of young people.

People can have their own health insurance status after reaching the age of 15 or, if in education, at the end of the school or academic year in which they turn 26 at the latest. They are entitled to sickness benefits under the same conditions as everyone else. Trainees and apprentices are insured as students. Additionally, they have access to occupational insurance. Young people with any kind of employment contract and the unemployed have access to the sickness benefit scheme. No contributory history or waiting period is required. The calculation of the replacement rate (benefit level) and duration is not age-specific. No gaps or obstacles for young people in accessing the sickness benefits scheme have been identified. The practice of immediate and full access to the scheme, as soon as young people become insured, guarantees equal access to sickness benefits for all. A scheme without a waiting period or special qualifying criteria for young people is *per se* an example of good practice.

To have access to contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits, people must be covered by parental protection insurance (mandatory for everyone with an employment contract and the self-employed) on the day before the first day of the leave. People who are not insured when exercising the right to salary compensation, but were insured for at least 12 months in the previous three years, are also eligible. The conditions, calculation of salary compensation, and duration are the same for young and older groups. People with copyright contracts, and students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services, do not have access to parental protection insurance. There is a non-contributory parental cash benefit for non-insured parents. Fiscal consolidation measures in place from the end of 2018 temporarily worsened the position of beneficiaries (lowered the benefits), but other reforms have improved it by extending/introducing the leave and increasing the (minimum) cash benefit.

Adults (18 and over) may apply for cash social assistance. Young people are counted as family members as long as parents have to support them, but there are exceptions. The conditions are not age-specific. The benefit level is different for adults in education (up to age 26) who are considered to be dependent children. There are no gaps or obstacles in access for young people. Reforms implemented since 2015 have generally improved the position of beneficiaries. However, the basic amount of minimum income is below the minimum costs of living.

Adults (18 and over) are eligible for housing benefits. The conditions and the benefit level are not different for young people, and there is no distinction between different groups of young people. There are no gaps or obstacles in access for young people. There is a good practice: people who are entitled to non-profit housing but have to rent at market prices are eligible for a housing benefit and an additional subsidy covering the difference between the for-profit and non-profit rent. Students in upper secondary and higher education may apply for subsidised accommodation. The number of subsidised housing places for students in higher education is limited, and does not allow all students fulfilling the conditions to obtain them.

1 KEY FIGURES ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE¹

1.1 Distribution of young people (aged 15–29) by main activity status

Table 1a: Main activity status of people aged 15-29 and 30-64 (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, % 15-29 and 30-64)

	SLOVENIA											
	15-29						30-64					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EMPLOYMENT RATE*	45.9	45.6	51.1	51.8	51.1	46.6	71.3	72.1	74.8	76.9	78.0	78.0
<i>Paid employment**</i>	87.3	92.3	90.9	92.0	91.8	93.2	84.1	85.5	85.4	84.8	86.1	87.2
<i>Self-employment**</i>	5.1	3.7	4.2	4.7	5.8	4.4	12.4	12.1	12.1	12.9	12.4	11.3
<i>Contributing family work**</i>	7.6	4.0	4.8	3.3	2.4	2.4	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.3	1.6	1.5
UNEMPLOYMENT***	16.2	14.7	10.8	8.9	7.5	9.7	7.5	6.7	5.8	4.4	3.9	4.2
INACTIVITY****	45.2	46.6	42.7	43.0	44.7	48.4	22.9	22.7	20.7	19.5	18.8	18.6
	EU-27											
	15-29						30-64					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EMPLOYMENT RATE*	45.0	45.9	46.9	47.7	48.2	46.1	71.4	72.4	73.5	74.5	75.3	74.9
<i>Paid employment**</i>	91.8	92.2	92.4	92.6	92.8	92.5	83.0	83.3	83.7	84.0	84.1	84.2
<i>Self-employment**</i>	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.4	14.6	14.5	14.3	14.2	14.2	14.1
<i>Contributing family work **</i>	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7
UNEMPLOYMENT***	17.3	15.8	14.2	12.8	11.9	13.3	8.5	7.7	6.9	6.1	5.6	5.8
INACTIVITY****	45.6	45.4	45.3	45.3	45.3	46.8	22.0	21.6	21.0	20.6	20.2	20.5

Notes: (*) The employment rate is expressed as a share (%) of the total population in the age group. The 3 categories of employment (paid employment [i.e. employees], self-employment and contributing family work) are expressed as a share (%) of the population in employment in the age group. Contributing family work is a form of labour (generally unpaid, although compensation may come indirectly in the form of family income) that supports another member of the family to run an agricultural holding or another business. (**) The unemployment rate is expressed as a share (%) of the active population, i.e. the population that is either in employment or unemployed (not the total population), in the age group. (***) The inactivity rate is expressed as a share (%) of the total population in the age group.

Reading note: In 2020, in Slovenia, 46.6% of people aged between 15 and 29 were in employment, compared to 78.0% of those aged 30-64. In the EU-27 as a whole, these figures were 46.1% and 74.9%, respectively. The share of people unemployed in the active population in Slovenia was 9.7% of the 15-29 age group and 4.2% of the 30-64 age group (EU-27 average: 13.3% and 5.8%). The shares of people economically inactive in Slovenia in the 15-29 and 30-64 age groups were 48.4% and 18.6%, respectively (EU-27 average: 46.8% and 20.5%).

Source: Eurostat, ESPN Network Core Team calculations based on LFS indicators [*lfsa_eegais*], [*lfsa_egaps*], [*lfsa_pganws*] and [*lfsa_igan*]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

¹ Except where otherwise specified, the indicators presented in Section 1 of this report were computed by the ESPN Network Core Team on the basis of data coming from two data sources coordinated at the European level by the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>): European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) and European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). These indicators were computed for all the 35 ESPN countries for which the data needed were available. All these ESPN countries' estimates are presented in Annex B of the following Synthesis Report: Dalila Ghailani, Stéphanie Coster, Ramón Peña-Casas and Pietro Regazzoni (2021), "Access to social protection for young people. An analysis of policies in 35 countries", European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. This Synthesis Report can be downloaded [here](#).

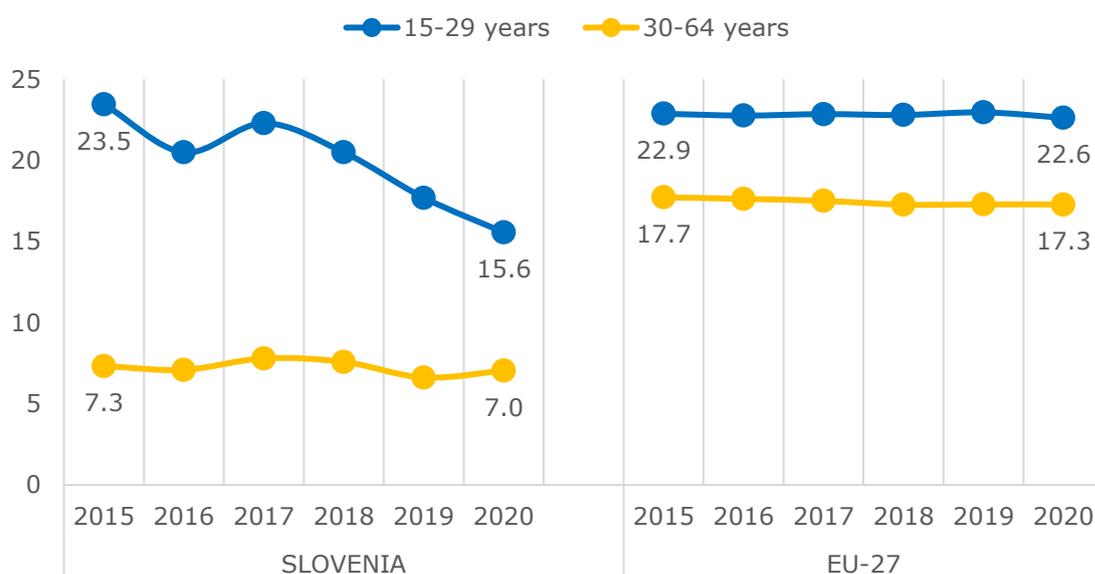
Table 1b: Main activity status of people aged 15-29 and 30-64 (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, ratios 15-29/30-64)

	SLOVENIA						EU-27					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EMPLOYMENT RATE*	0.64	0.63	0.68	0.67	0.66	0.60	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.62
Paid employment**	1.04	1.08	1.06	1.09	1.07	1.07	1.11	1.11	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
Self-employment**	0.41	0.31	0.35	0.36	0.47	0.39	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.38
Contributing family work**	2.18	1.63	1.91	1.42	1.50	1.57	1.21	1.20	1.21	1.24	1.24	1.20
UNEMPLOYMENT***	2.15	2.19	1.88	2.02	1.92	2.33	2.04	2.06	2.06	2.09	2.10	2.29
INACTIVITY****	1.98	2.05	2.07	2.20	2.38	2.61	2.07	2.11	2.16	2.20	2.24	2.29

Notes: To obtain the ratio of 15-29 to 30-64, the 15-29 percentage is divided by the 30-64 percentage: a value below (above) 1 in a given activity status therefore means that 15-29-year-olds are proportionally less (more) numerous in that activity status than 30-64-year-olds. See also Notes to Table 1a above.

Reading note: In 2020, in Slovenia, 46.6% of people aged between 15 and 29 were in employment compared to 78.0% of those aged 30-64 (see Table 1a) – i.e. a 15-29:30-64 ratio of 0.60. In the EU-27 as a whole (see table 1a), these figures were 46.1 and 74.9% respectively (ratio 0.62).

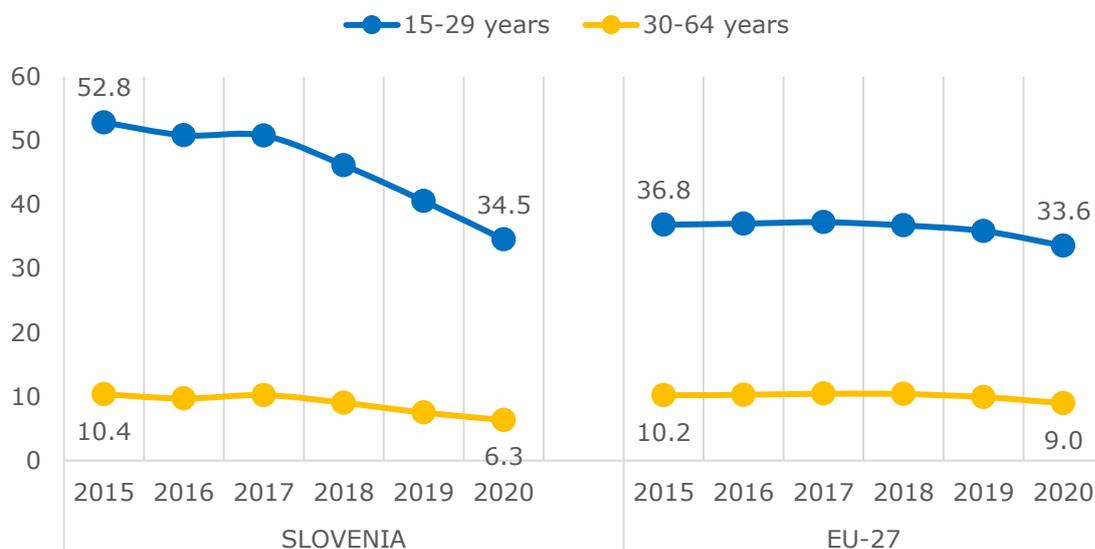
Source: See Table 1a.

Figure 1: Part-time employment as a share of the population in employment - comparison of the 15-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)

Reading note: In 2020, in Slovenia, the share of part-time employment in total employment was 15.6% for the 15-29 age group and 7.0% for the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these shares were 22.6% and 17.3%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, ESPN Network Core Team calculations based on Eurostat LFS indicator [lfsa_epgn62]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

Figure 2: Temporary employment as a share of population in paid employment - comparison of the 15-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)

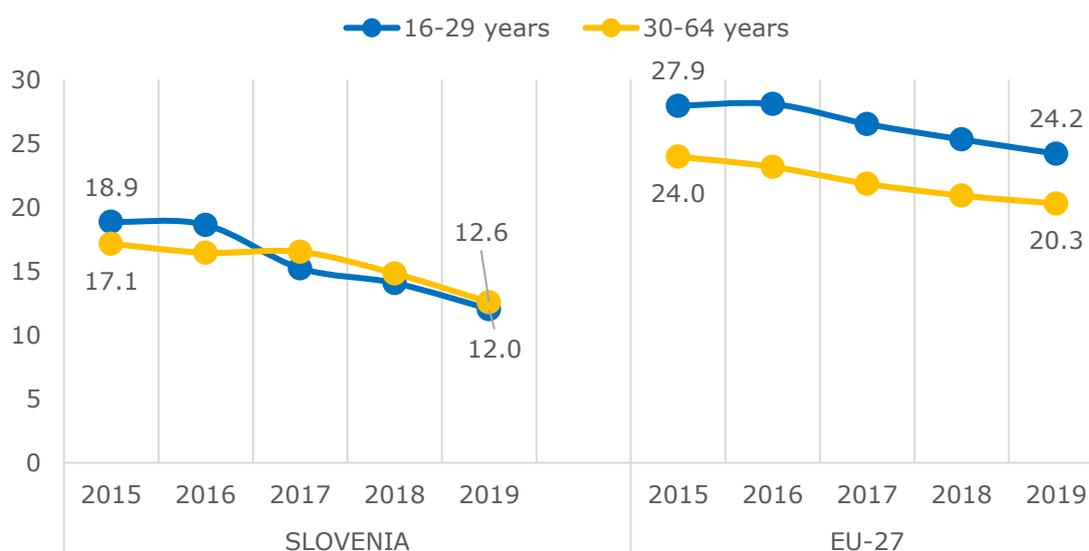


Reading note: In 2020, in Slovenia, the share of temporary workers among employees was 34.5% for the 15-29 age group and 6.3% for the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these shares were 33.6% and 9.0%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, ESPN Network Core Team calculations based on Eurostat LFS indicators [lfsa_epgn62] and [lfsa_egaps]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

1.2 Young people (aged 15–29) at risk of poverty or social exclusion

Figure 3: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion - comparison of the 16-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)

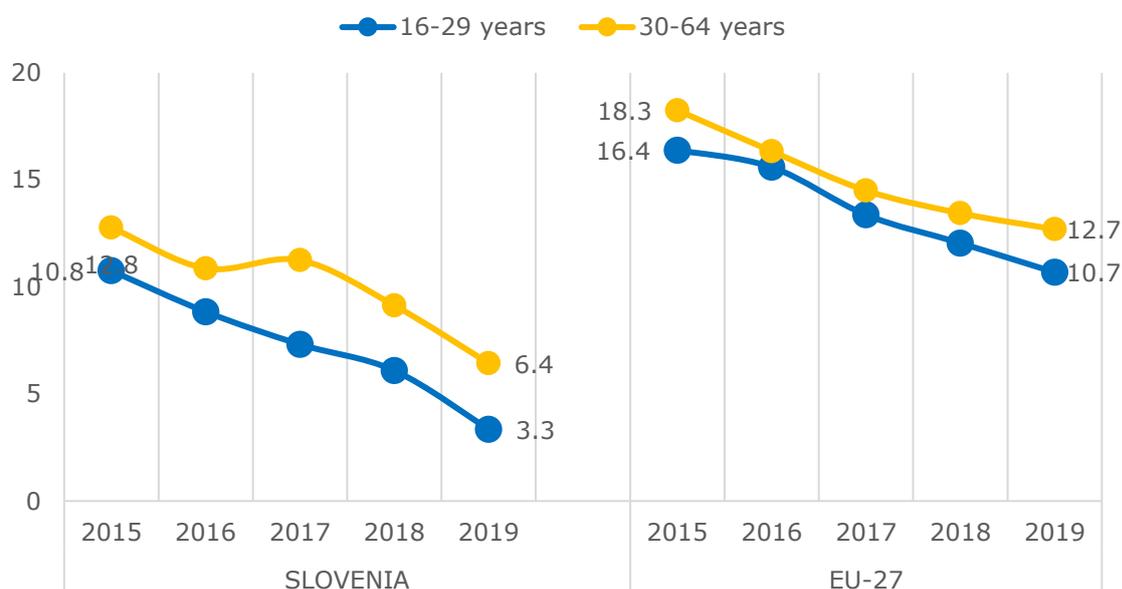


Reading note: In 2019, in Slovenia, 12.0% of the 16-29 age group were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (i.e. they were living in a household that was at risk of poverty and/or severely materially and socially deprived and/or (quasi-)jobless according to the EU definition of these indicators) compared to 12.6% of the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these figures were 24.2% and 20.3%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad hoc extraction - indicator [ilc_peps02]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

1.3 Young people (aged 15–29) materially and socially deprived

Figure 4: People materially and socially deprived - comparison of the 16-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)

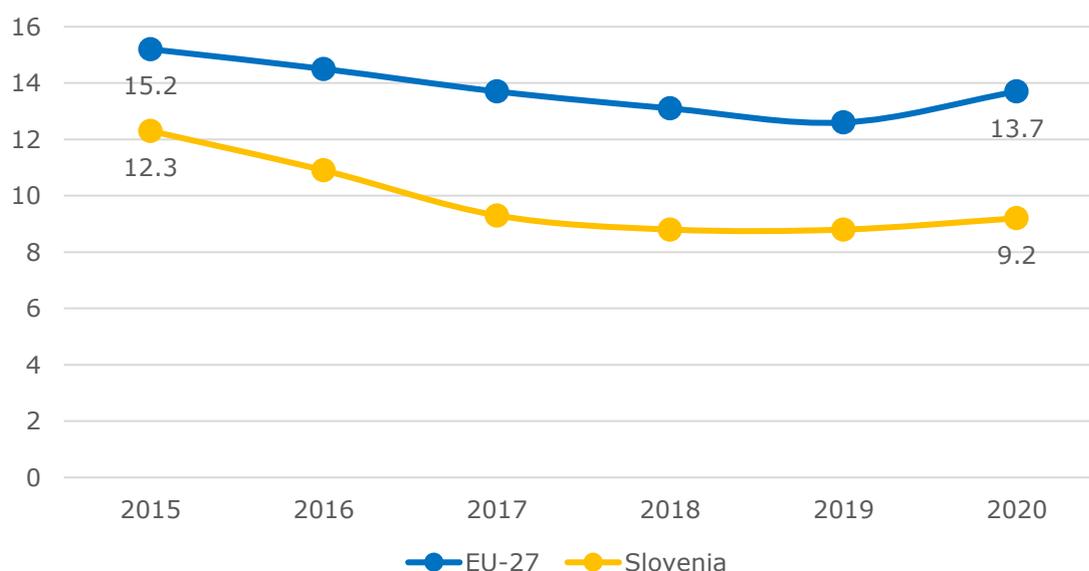


Reading note: In 2019, in Slovenia, 3.3% of the 16-29 age group were materially and socially deprived (according to the EU definition of this indicator) compared to 6.4% of the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these figures were 10.7% and 12.7%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad hoc extraction - indicator [ilc_mdsc]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

1.4 Young people (aged 15–29) neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs)

Figure 5: People aged 15-29 neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)

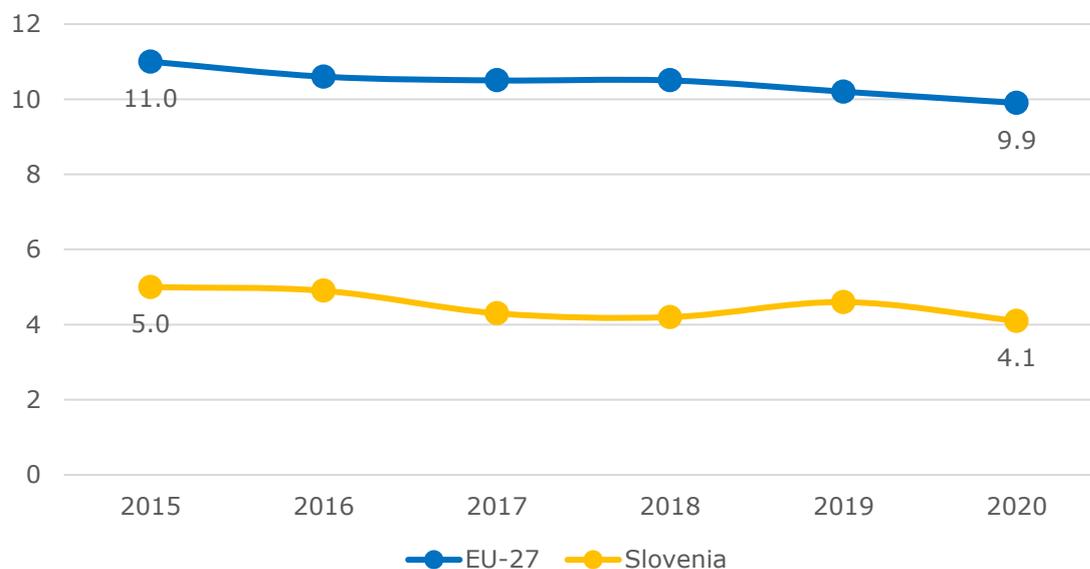


Reading note: In 2020, in Slovenia, 9.2% of the 15-29 age group were neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) compared to 13.7 for the EU-27 as a whole.

Source: Eurostat, LFS - indicator [lfse_20]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

1.5 Early leavers (aged 18–24) from education and training

Figure 6: Early leavers from education and training for the 18-24 age group (2015-2020, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)

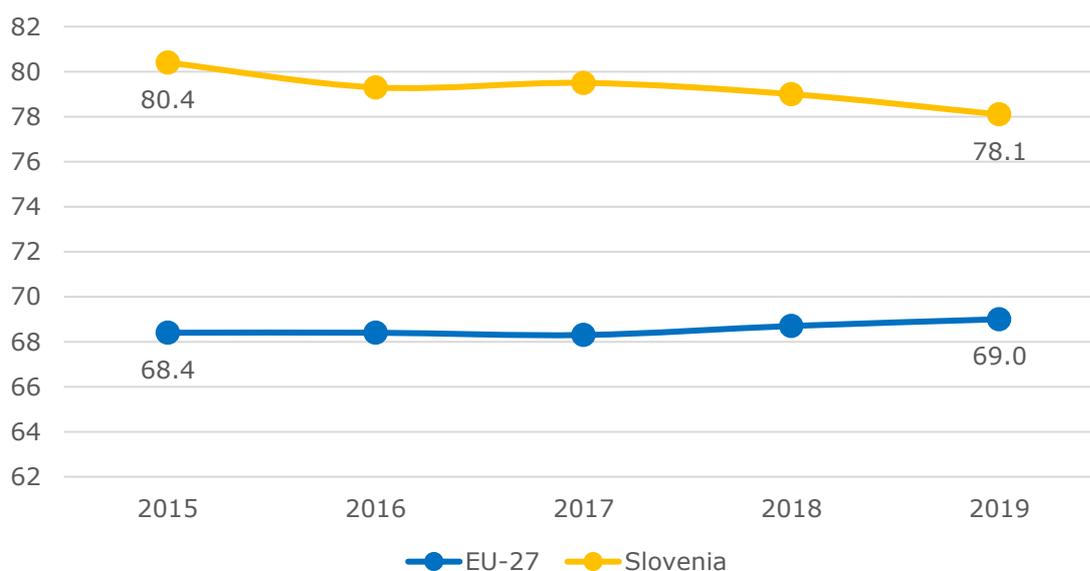


Reading note: In 2020, in Slovenia, 4.1% of the 18-24 age group were early leavers from education and training – i.e. they had completed, at most, lower secondary education and were not in further education or training. For the EU-27 as a whole, this figure was 9.9%.

Source: Eurostat, LFS - indicator [edat_ifse_14]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

1.6 Young people (aged 16–29) living with their parents

Figure 7: Young people aged 16-29 living with their parents (2015-2019, EU-27 and Slovenia, %)



Reading note: In 2019, in Slovenia, 78.1% of the 16-29 age group were living with their parents, compared to 69.0% for the EU-27 as a whole.

Source: EU-SILC - indicator [ilc_lvps08]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

2 ACCESS TO UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The scheme is contributory. The compensation rate is 80% for the first three months, 60% for the following nine months, and 50% afterwards. The gross amount of unemployment benefit received by those who had been employed full time ranges between €530.19 (minimum) and €892.50 (maximum) per month. The duration is 3-12 months (depending on the contribution period),² but is shorter (two months) for people under 30 with six to nine months of insurance in the previous 24 months. It is 19 (25) months for people with more than 25 (28) months of contributions and aged over 53 (58), respectively.

2.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Slovenia as far as young people are concerned are the following.

a) Age

There is no age condition for availability.

The contributory history required to access the scheme is different for people under 30.

b) Activity status requirement

Mandatory unemployment insurance applies to people with employment contracts (full-time, part-time or temporary – fixed-term employees, temporary agency workers, and casual and seasonal workers) and the self-employed (Labour Market Regulation Act, 2010, Article 54).³ People with copyright contracts,⁴ as well as students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services, do not have access to unemployment insurance (the latter group is in education). Under Slovenian legislation, there are no categories such as zero-hour workers or on-call workers. Apprentices and paid trainees are considered inactive (in education).⁵

c) Contributory history required to access the scheme

For people aged 30 and over, the minimum is 10 months of insurance in the previous 24 months.⁶ The required period of insurance is shorter for people under 30: six months in the previous 24.

d) Waiting period

No waiting period is required.

e) Replacement rate / benefit level

The calculation is the same for young people and older groups.

f) Duration

For people under 30 with six to nine months of insurance in the previous 24 months, the duration is two months. For young people with at least 10 months of insurance, the duration is the same as for older groups (at least three months).

² For young people, two durations are relevant: (i) three months for a contribution period between 10 months and five years; and (ii) six months for a contribution period of 5-15 years.

³ Voluntary unemployment insurance is available to: Slovenian citizens who had an employment contract with an employer in a foreign country and who after returning to Slovenia cannot exercise their rights related to unemployment on another basis; people suspended from their employment contract; and certain other small groups (Labour Market Regulation Act, 2010, Article 57).

⁴ Copyright contracts are those entered into by creative workers or authors with producers, publishers or other first exploiters of their works.

⁵ Also see: Stropnik, Majcen and Prevolnik Rupel (2017).

⁶ The following periods do not count: periods already taken into account for unemployment benefit eligibility, and periods of being insured as an unemployed person or a parental allowance beneficiary (the parent not eligible for maternity/parental leave salary compensation).

2.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

Young people with less than six months of insurance are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

Apprentices, paid trainees⁷ and students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services are considered inactive (in education) and thus do not have access to unemployment insurance.

Regardless of age, people with copyright contracts do not have access to unemployment insurance either.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

No obstacles to access for young people have been identified.

3 ACCESS TO SICKNESS AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

3.1 Sickness benefits

3.1.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the sickness benefits scheme in Slovenia as far as young people are concerned are the following.

a) Age

People can have their own insurance status (e.g. employed, unemployed, self-employed, farmer) after reaching the age of 15 or, if in education, at the end of the school or academic year in which they turn 26 at the latest. They become an insured person with one of the available insurance statuses (Health Care and Health Insurance Act, 1992, Article 15) and are entitled to sickness benefits under the same conditions as everyone else.

If someone opts for voluntary professional practice upon completing schooling, they have access to occupational insurance for injuries at work.

b) Activity status requirement

Young people with any kind of employment contract (including the self-employed and workers on non-standard contracts) and the unemployed have access to the sickness benefits scheme. Trainees and apprentices, for whom compulsory practice is part of the education process, are insured as students. Additionally, they have access to occupational insurance. Students who have completed schooling and are not yet employed, but decide to do open market training, can do so in two forms: (i) voluntary activity, where they do not have full access to sickness benefits, but only to occupational insurance; and (ii) paid work, where the employer pays their full health insurance (as for regular employees). The insurance contributions for both categories of trainees and apprentices are paid from the central government budget (Health Care and Health Insurance Act, 1992, Article 48).

c) Contributory history required to access the scheme

No contributory history is required.

⁷ Paid trainees doing an internship have an employment contract and are thus covered by mandatory unemployment insurance.

d) Waiting period

No waiting period is required.

e) Replacement rate / benefit level

The calculation of the replacement rate / benefit level is not age-specific.

f) Duration

The duration is not age-specific.

3.1.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

There are no gaps faced by young people in accessing the sickness benefits scheme.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

There are no obstacles to access for young people.

3.2 Healthcare benefits

This section outlines the general rules on the reimbursement of healthcare costs that apply to young people. The Slovenian health system is based on the principles of universality, solidarity, equal access and freedom of choice. A basic benefits package is covered by a combination of compulsory and complementary health insurance. Nearly all permanent residents of Slovenia are entitled to the health benefits covered by the compulsory insurance scheme, either as contributing members or their dependants. Complementary health insurance covers co-payments.⁸

3.2.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

Health services are mainly provided by public providers and private providers with a concession. In primary care, services are paid for by a combination of fees-for-service and capitation fees. In out-patient care, fee-for-service payments are predominant, while in in-patient care, a mechanism of diagnosis-related groups is used for fund allocation. The reimbursement for services provided depends on the type of service.

a) Age

There are no age requirements.

b) Activity status requirements

There are no activity status requirements.

c) Contributory history required to access the scheme

There is no requirement related to the period of insurance. However, people have to join the health insurance scheme and pay contributions.⁹

d) Waiting period

No waiting period is required.

⁸ Co-payments can be high, ranging from 10% to 90% of the price of services.

⁹ On 31 December 2020, there were 3,345 uninsured people and 15,892 whose rights to healthcare were suspended due to unpaid contributions (HIIS, 2021).

e) Replacement rate / benefit level

The compulsory health insurance scheme provides full coverage for some health services and population groups. All other healthcare services involve cost-sharing through co-payments. Compulsory health insurance covers 10-90% of the cost, depending on the specific type of treatment or activity. Co-payments are covered by complementary health insurance. Since 2009, the central government budget has covered the co-insured part of services for people eligible for cash social assistance.

f) Duration

There is no limit to the reimbursement period.

3.2.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

Open market trainees who decide to volunteer only have access to occupational insurance, and not to sickness benefits. This arrangement is a consequence of the fact that sickness benefits replace salaries during absence from work due to sickness. As voluntary trainees do not receive any payment for their work, they are not included in the sickness benefits scheme.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

There are no obstacles to access for young people.

4 ACCESS TO MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND PARENTAL CASH BENEFITS**4.1 Contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits**

There are 105 days of maternity leave, 30 days of paternity leave and 260 days of parental leave, all with 100% compensation of people's average monthly salaries during the 12 months before the leave. The minimum compensation is set at the (hypothetical gross) basic amount of minimum income (€543.29) and the maximum (in case of paternity and parental leave) at 2.5 times the national average salary. To be eligible, people must be covered by mandatory parental protection insurance (part of social security) on the day before the first day of the leave, or for at least 12 months in the three years before the start of leave.

4.1.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Slovenia as far as young people are concerned are the following.

a) Age

There is no age condition for availability.

If a mother who gives birth to a child is under 18 and has the status of an apprentice, a pupil or a student, the father or one of the grandparents may take maternity and/or parental leave with the mother's (and father's) consent. In that case, the maternity leave lasts 77 (and not 105) days minus the child's age (in days) when the father or the grandparent commences maternity leave.

b) Activity status requirement

Beneficiaries must be covered by parental protection insurance, which is mandatory for everyone with an employment contract¹⁰ and the self-employed. People with copyright contracts, as well as students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services, do not have access to parental protection insurance (the latter group is in education). Under Slovenian legislation there are no categories such as zero-hour workers or on-call workers. Apprentices and paid trainees are considered to be inactive (in education).¹¹

c) Contributory history required to access the scheme

Beneficiaries must be covered by parental protection insurance on the day before the first day of the individual part of the leave (maternity, paternity or parental). Also eligible are people who are not insured when exercising the right to salary compensation but were insured for at least 12 months in the previous three years. In this way, eligibility is extended to unemployed people fulfilling this condition. Other people are eligible for a non-contributory parental cash benefit (see Section 4.2). The conditions are the same for young people and older groups.

d) Waiting period

No waiting period is required.

e) Replacement rate / benefit level

The calculation is the same for young people and older groups.

f) Duration

The duration is the same for young people and older groups. Please also see the particular case in Section 4.1.1.a.

4.1.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

The contributory scheme provides salary compensation to people covered by parental protection insurance (i.e. those with an employment contract, the self-employed and unemployed people fulfilling the insurance condition in Section 4.1.1.c). People with copyright contracts do not have access to parental protection insurance. The same applies to students performing temporary and occasional agency work through student brokerage services, apprentices and paid trainees,¹² who are considered to be in education (inactive). The non-contributory scheme covers parents who are not eligible for salary compensation.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

There are no obstacles to access for young people.

4.2 Non-contributory parental cash benefit

Parents who are not eligible for contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits are entitled to a flat-rate parental benefit. Both the parent and the child must have permanent or temporary residency status in Slovenia.

¹⁰ Full-time, part-time and temporary (fixed-term employees, temporary agency workers, and casual and seasonal workers) contracts.

¹¹ Also see: Stropnik, Majcen and Prevolnik Rupel (2017).

¹² Paid trainees doing an internship have an employment contract and are thus covered by mandatory parental protection insurance.

4.2.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Slovenia (*starševski dodatek*) as far as young people are concerned are the following.

a) Age

There is no age condition for availability.

b) Activity status requirement

There is no activity status requirement.

c) Contributory history required to access the scheme

Not applicable.

d) Waiting period

No waiting period is required.

e) Replacement rate / benefit level

The benefit is the same for young people and older groups. It amounts to €547.32 for children born on or after 1 January 2021, which is the minimum amount of the contributory parental cash benefit.

f) Duration

The duration is the same for young people and older groups (365 days from the birth of a child).

4.2.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

There are no gaps in access for young people.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

There are no obstacles to access for young people.

4.3 Overall gaps/obstacles in access for young people

These schemes cannot be combined (it is impossible for one parent to receive a non-contributory parental cash benefit while the other parent receives salary compensation).

5 GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME SCHEMES

5.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Slovenia (*denarna socialna pomoč*) as far as young people are concerned are the following.

a) Age

Adults (18 and over).

Young people are counted as family members as long as their parents have to support them (until age 18, or age 26 if in education). In this case, they do not apply for cash social assistance.

An exception is adult children whose parents have to support them but who are no longer living with the parents due to family violence for which proceedings have been initiated

or are ongoing. Another exception is minors without parents, either because the latter are dead or they are no longer living with them owing to family violence for which proceedings have been initiated or are ongoing. Such young people may apply for cash social assistance.

b) Activity status requirement

There is no activity status requirement.

c) Other eligibility conditions

There are also conditions relating to: citizenship and residence; income; property value; a combination of property value and frequency of receiving cash social assistance; and an agreement on a restraint on alienation and encumbrance of real estate. However, these conditions are not different for young people (Social Assistance Payments Act, 2010; Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act, 2010).

Conditions listed as the fault-based grounds¹³ for denying the right to cash social assistance apply to adults (18 and over) and include registration as a job-seeker (conditioned by active job-seeking, participation in activation programmes, signing an employment plan, etc.).

d) Benefit level

When young people (under 18, or 26 if in education) are maintained children living in a family, the equivalence scale applies. The weight is 0.59 (times the basic amount of minimum income, that is, the minimum income for the first adult). For a child living in a single-parent family, the weight is 0.77.

For young adults who are not considered to be maintained children, the weight depends on being either the first or the other adult in a family and the hours worked, as in the case of older age groups.

e) Distinctions between different groups of young people

For distinctions according to age, education, and family violence, see Section 5.1.a.

There is also a distinction according to work records. An activity supplement as part of the minimum income is available to the beneficiaries of cash social assistance who work for at least 60 hours per month or participate in active labour market policy measures, or who are included in psycho-social rehabilitation programmes, and in other cases specified in the Social Assistance Payments Act (2010, Article 26). Additional weights amount to 0.26 for 60-128 hours of work per month and 0.51 for more than 128 hours of work per month for the first adult in the family, and to 0.13 and 0.26, respectively, for each other adult in the family.

5.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

There are no gaps in access for young people.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

There are no obstacles to access for young people.

¹³ People not attaining the minimum income: (i) for reasons they could or can control; or (ii) because of rejecting, avoiding or abandoning activities which (could) lead to employment or another way of improving the social situation for themselves or their family members without any reasonable and probable ground (Social Assistance Payments Act, 2010, Article 28).

6 HOUSING BENEFITS

Housing benefit is an income-tested transfer to individuals or families renting non-profit housing and those placed on municipal priority lists for the allocation of non-profit rental housing. There is also a kind of the housing benefit granted to individuals or families renting at market prices (it covers the difference between the estimated recognised market and non-profit rents) (Housing Act, 2003). Students in upper secondary and higher education in Slovenia may apply for subsidised student accommodation (in upper secondary school halls of residence, higher education halls of residence and private accommodation)¹⁴ (Rules on accommodation in residential facilities, 2018; Rules on subsidised student accommodation, 2001).¹⁵

6.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Slovenia as far as young people are concerned are the following.

a) Age

For housing benefits: Adults (18 and over).

For subsidised student accommodation: There is no age condition.

b) Activity status requirement

For housing benefits: There is no activity status requirement.

For subsidised student accommodation: Students in upper secondary or higher education must not be in employment, registered as an unemployed person, self-employed, receiving a pension (except the family pension), or be under international protection.

c) Other eligibility conditions

For housing benefits: Housing benefits are granted to individuals or families renting non-profit housing, whose total income does not exceed the sum of their respective minimum income (without activity supplements), 30% of their own income¹⁶ and the non-profit rent (Housing Act, 2003, Article 121; Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act, 2010, Article 28).

The housing benefit is also available to those who pay market rents if they: (i) meet the income condition for the acquisition of a non-profit rental apartment; (ii) have been placed on the priority list in the latest public tender for the allocation of non-profit rental housing in their municipality of permanent residence; and (iii) meet the income condition for a housing subsidy (Housing Act, 2003, Articles 121a and 121b). An additional condition is that the tenant's permanent or temporary residence must be registered at the address of the for-profit housing unit (Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act, 2010, Article 28).

These conditions are not different for young people.

For subsidised upper secondary school halls of residence: In the case of insufficient vacancies, the priority list takes into account the distance from home to school, distance

¹⁴ This does not prevent them from applying for a general housing benefit in the same way as any other adult (except if they are members of another – e.g. their parents' – household).

¹⁵ Students are also entitled to subsidised accommodation for their partners and for children below school age. Partners must be Slovenian citizens, students in high education, and not in employment, registered as an unemployed person, self-employed, or receiving a pension (except the family pension). Students with disabilities are also entitled to subsidised accommodation for an accompanying person if assigned one according to special regulations. The accompanying person must fulfil the same conditions as a partner.

¹⁶ Determined according to the Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act (2010).

from the hall of residence to school, concurrent residence of siblings in the same hall of residence, and enrolment in the only school offering a certain educational programme.¹⁷

For subsidised halls of residence (for students in higher education): A public tender is published for the allocation of subsidised accommodation to students. The conditions include Slovenian citizenship, *per capita* family income not exceeding 1.5 times the national average salary, and a permanent residence at least 25 km away from the place of study (there are exceptions). The number of subsidies is limited.

d) Benefit level

Housing benefits: The estimated non-profit rent depends on the actual size of the apartment, up to the appropriate size.¹⁸ The housing benefit is equal to the difference between the estimated non-profit rent and the individual's or family's own income reduced by the respective minimum income (without activity supplements) and 30% of own income. It must not exceed 80% of the estimated non-profit rent (Housing Act, 2003, Article 121).

For beneficiaries renting at market prices and placed on municipal priority lists for the allocation of non-profit rental housing, the housing benefit consists of a housing subsidy (subsidised estimated non-profit rent) and the difference between estimated (recognised) market and non-profit rents (Housing Act, 2003, Article 121b).

The benefit level is not different for young people.

Parents are eligible for subsidised accommodation and board in upper secondary school halls of residence for their second and following child concurrently residing in any of the upper secondary school halls of residence in Slovenia. The Minister responsible for upper secondary education determines the subsidy for each school year.

The monthly subsidy for (higher education) student accommodation is determined by the Minister responsible for higher education on the basis of the average annual price of accommodation in the student dormitories at Ljubljana, Maribor and Primorska universities for the previous academic year (Rules on subsidised student accommodation, 2001).

e) Distinctions between different groups of young people

In the case of housing benefits and the subsidy for (higher education) student accommodation, there is no distinction between different groups of young people.

The subsidy for accommodation and board in upper secondary school halls of residence is available only for second and following children from the same family residing in such halls. Siblings also have priority in access to vacancies. Enrolment in the only school offering a certain educational programme also gives priority if there are insufficient vacancies.

6.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Slovenia are the following.

a) Main gaps in access for young people

Housing benefits: There are no gaps in access for young people. Understandably, minors are not eligible.

¹⁷ See: https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/Dokumenti/Srednja-sola/Dijaski_domovi/Sklep-o-stevilu-tock-za-posamezna-merila-v-postopku-izbire-kandidatov-ob-omejitvi-vpisa-v-vzgojni-program-za-dijaske-domove.pdf (accessed 30 June 2021).

¹⁸ An appropriate size depends on the number of family members and is higher in the case of people with disabilities that hinder or prevent their normal movement (Pravilnik o dodeljevanju..., 2003, Article 14).

Subsidised accommodation and board in upper secondary school halls of residence: The subsidy is available only for the second and following children from the same family residing in such halls.

Subsidised accommodation in halls of residence (for students in higher education): The number of vacancies in student halls of residence is insufficient. The prices are higher in private accommodation, resulting in a higher cost in spite of a higher subsidy.¹⁹ There is an income test for eligibility for a subsidy.

b) Main obstacles in access for young people

The number of subsidised accommodation places for students in high education is limited.²⁰

7 REFORMS, NATIONAL DEBATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Reforms implemented since 2015

Unemployment benefits

The Act Amending the Labour Market Regulation Act (2017) brought about the following changes, which have improved or worsened the access of young people (and older groups) to unemployment benefit.

- An incentive was introduced for the full-time employment of low- and medium-educated unemployment benefit beneficiaries during their entitlement to this benefit. Such people continue receiving 20% of the latest unemployment benefit amount until the end of the period for which the benefit was initially awarded, but not longer than 12 months after the start of employment, under the condition that full-time employment continues for the whole period of entitlement to this incentive. The reason behind this amendment was that the salaries that low- and medium-educated people may expect are not much higher than unemployment benefit, so they do not take up employment (even if it was available) before the expiration of the benefit. This has improved the position of unemployment benefit beneficiaries regardless of their age.
- An obligation (effective from 21 January 2018) to register with the unemployed persons register (UPR) within three days following the service of termination of the employment contract was introduced. If people failed to do that, their unemployment benefit amounted to 60% (rather than 80%) of the basis in the first three months of unemployment, but not less than €350. This obligation was cancelled by the Act Amending the Labour Market Regulation Act (2019) because it did not have the expected effect in practice.
- Since 21 January 2018 the entitlement to unemployment benefit has ceased if beneficiaries refuse to sign an employment plan.
- From 21 January 2018, if unemployed people did not accept an adequate/suitable job offer or refused to join an active labour market policies programme, or did not actively seek a job, the entitlement to unemployment benefit ceased after only the second infraction. The first infraction resulted in a permanent 30% reduction in unemployment benefit, which could not be less than €350. This improved the position of (young) unemployed people because they still received 70% of their unemployment benefits (at least €350), whereas previously they lost the right to

¹⁹ See: <https://www.gov.si/novice/2020-07-16-objavljen-je-razpis-za-subvencionirano-bivanje-visokosolskih-studentov-za-studijsko-letu-20202021/> (accessed 30 June 2021).

²⁰ See: <https://www.gov.si/novice/2020-07-16-objavljen-je-razpis-za-subvencionirano-bivanje-visokosolskih-studentov-za-studijsko-letu-20202021/> (accessed 30 June 2021).

benefit after the first infraction. The 2019 Act Amending the Labour Market Regulation Act kept the unemployment benefit following the first unjustifiable breach only for those who violated the obligation to actively seek a job (effective from 27 December 2019). This worsened the position of (young) unemployed people whose first infraction was a violation of other obligations (they did not accept an adequate/suitable job offer, or refused to join an active labour market policies programme) because they lost the right to unemployment benefit. A permanent 30% reduction at the first infraction was changed to a two-month 30% reduction, albeit without a guaranteed minimum unemployment benefit (effective from 27 June 2020 for those whose first infraction was the violation of the obligation to actively seek the job). This was an improvement for (young) beneficiaries with unemployment benefits exceeding the former minimum level (€350), since a permanent reduction was replaced by a two-month reduction. For the remaining (young) beneficiaries, the effect depends on the level of their unemployment benefit and the duration of entitlement.

The Act Amending the Labour Market Regulation Act (2019) also introduced several other changes.

- The general condition for unemployment benefit was changed from nine to 10 months of insurance in the previous 24 months.
- The minimum amount of unemployment benefit was raised from €350 to €530.19 gross per month from 27 December 2019, resulting in €392.75 net of social security contributions and taxes (it was €275 before). The argument was that the right based on mandatory insurance of employed people must not be lower than the social assistance entitlement (Stropnik, 2020). This has improved the position of unemployment benefit beneficiaries regardless of their age.
- From 27 April 2020, unemployed people who are nationals of third countries (all countries except EU and European Economic Area countries or Switzerland) need to obtain (within 12 months of registering with the UPR) a publicly valid certificate showing that they have passed the Slovenian language proficiency examination at the entry level (A1 level of difficulty). If this condition is not met, they are not allowed to register with the UPR and are thus not eligible for unemployment benefit. This provision has worsened access to unemployment benefit (regardless of people's age) but is expected to improve the activation and integration of third-country nationals into the Slovenian labour market.

The Act Amending the Labour Market Regulation Act (2021), effective on 24 May 2021, improved the position of the unemployment benefit beneficiaries (regardless of their age) with permanent residence in Slovenia who had commuted to another EU Member State, European Economic Area country or Switzerland at least once a week, and who had acquired there the entire insurance period that entitles them to unemployment benefit. For these people, a higher unemployment benefit ceiling (€1,785) applies for the first three or five months (depending on the insurance period).

A **temporary unemployment benefit** was/is granted due to loss of employment in cases of someone's employment agreement being terminated due to business reasons or the expiration of the work contract between 13 March and 31 May 2020, and on 18 October 2020 or later during the COVID-19 epidemic, if the person was covered by compulsory unemployment insurance²¹ in Slovenia (on the basis of a work contract) but was/is not eligible for a (regular) unemployment benefit (ZIUZEOP, 2020; ZIUPOPVDVE, 2020). This flat-rate benefit amounts to €513.64 per month of unemployment. The same social security contributions were/are also paid as for the beneficiaries of regular unemployment benefit. This temporary elimination of the qualifying working period has improved access to unemployment benefit for young people in particular because they

²¹ Before 13 March 2020 (in the first wave of the epidemic) and before 18 October 2020 (in the second wave).

were/are most likely to have less than six months of insurance (10 months for people aged 30 and over).

Maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits

a) Contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits

Normally a 100% salary compensation rate applies. The salary compensation cannot be less than 55% of the national minimum wage, and paternity and parental salary compensation cannot exceed 2.5 times the national average salary. Due to fiscal consolidation measures,²² till the end of 2018, the paternity and parental salary compensation rates were lowered to 90% for beneficiaries whose earnings exceeded the actual minimum wage. The ceiling of two times the national average salary applied to maternity, paternity and parental salary compensation.

As enacted by the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (2014), a revised paternity leave regulation started to be implemented in 2016. Until and including 2015, there were 15 days of paternity leave with salary compensation and 75 days of leave with only social security contributions paid from the central government budget (unpaid leave). Paid paternity leave was extended by five days, while unpaid leave was shortened by 25 days a year in 2016-2018. From 2018, there have been (only) 30 paid days of paternity leave. From 1 January 2020, paternity leave was extended by an additional 10 days for each second and further child in the case of: (i) multiple live births; or (ii) adoption of multiple children born on or after 1 January 2020, if the children have not yet completed the first grade of primary school. These revisions have improved the position of (young) fathers.

On 17 March 2018, foster parents became eligible for 30 days of parental leave for foster children for which they cannot take regular parental leave any more but who have not yet completed the first grade of primary school.

The minimum maternity, paternity and parental salary compensation was raised to the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€547.32 in 2001) for leave taken for children born on or after 1 January 2021.

Starting from 1 January 2021, if contributions for parental insurance were paid for less than 12 months, the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€547.32 in 2001) is factored in for the missing period (previously, it was 55% of the minimum wage, or around €331 in 2020).

Since 1 January 2021, people who were not insured at the time when the leave started, but had been insured for at least 12 months in the three years before the start of the leave, receive the benefit equal to the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€547.32 in 2021), increased by €20 (gross) per each month of insurance, but by no more than €340 (gross).²³

b) Non-contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits

The non-contributory parental benefit (previously amounting to €258.09) was raised to the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€547.32 in 2021) for children born on or after 1 January 2021.

Guaranteed minimum income schemes

The Act Amending the Social Assistance Payments Act (2015) increased six out of 10 weights in the equivalent scale (including the weights for children) by 0.06 or 0.07 from 1 January 2016.

²² Fiscal Balance Act (2012) and Intervention Measures for the Labour Market and Parental Protection Act (2013).

²³ Before this revision, such people received 55-105% of the minimum wage (approximately €331.30 to €632.49) per month, depending on the period they had been insured for in the previous three years.

At the end of 2016, the Act Amending the Social Assistance Payments Act (2016; applied from 1 February 2017) was adopted, further reducing the disincentive to take up cash social assistance (Stropnik, 2017). The amount of cash social assistance received by people who own and live in a flat/house worth less than €120,000 no longer has to be reimbursed to the state after their death.

From 1 June 2018, the basic amount of minimum income was increased from €297.53 to €385.05 (Act Amending the Social Assistance Payments Act, 2018a and 2018b). Due to concurrent changes in weights (Act Amending the Social Assistance Payments Act, 2018a, Article 2), the minimum income increased for single people and couples without children, whereas other types of individuals and families did not benefit. The weights for children were reduced the most, namely from 0.76 for the first child and 0.66 for each other child to 0.59 for each child. The additional weight for each child living in a single-parent family was reduced from 0.2 to 0.18. The argument for lowering the weights for children was that child-related transfers (almost all means-tested) cause an inactivity trap.

The weights for activity supplements for the first adult were reduced from 0.28 to 0.26 for 60-128 hours of work per month and from 0.56 to 0.51 for more than 128 hours of work per month²⁴ (Act Amending the Social Assistance Payments Act, 2018a, Article 2).

The income and property conditions for cash social assistance, defined by the Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act (2010), have been slightly revised (mostly relaxed) since 2015, which has somewhat improved the position of (young) beneficiaries.

Housing benefits

The Act Amending the Housing Act (2017) has tightened the conditions for housing benefit for people renting at market prices. It is no longer sufficient to apply for the subsidy in the latest public tender for the allocation of non-profit rental housing, but tenants have to be placed on the priority list. As a result, it is less likely that (young) applicants for social housing will be awarded housing benefit while social housing is in short supply. They are only entitled to a means-tested subsidy covering the difference between the market and non-profit rent.

7.2 National debates

Guaranteed minimum income schemes

At €402.18 from August 2019, the basic amount of minimum income (that is, the minimum income for an inactive single person) remains well below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (€703 per month for a single person in 2019 – that is, based on the 2018 income; SiStat Database, 2021), at 57% of its value.²⁵ However, if someone (the first adult in the family) works more than 128 hours/month (the weight 1.51 applies), the minimum income is 86% of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. As the activity supplement increases an inactivity trap, the government proposed its abolition in 2019, which was approved by parliament. However, considering that the revision would negatively affect people with incomes close to the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (including those working), the National Council requested that parliament vote on the Act again. Since the competent parliamentary body had not supported the amendments in the second round, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities decided to withdraw its draft Act.

²⁴ The weights for activity supplements for other adults amount to half those for the first adult.

²⁵ The percentage has been falling since the at-risk-of-poverty threshold increases each year, while the basic amount of minimum income has not been updated in almost three years.

Housing benefits

The central and local authorities in Slovenia have no interest in constructing non-profit housing because non-profit rents are fixed by administrative procedure, have been falling in real terms (they have not changed since 2003) and do not cover maintenance costs.²⁶ The average non-profit rent in Ljubljana was €3.11 per m² in 2020 (Pušnik, 2020). Local communities are even selling worn-out non-profit housing units to be able to maintain the rest of them. Solving this problem is linked to the adoption of the amendments to the Housing Act (expected to be soon after adopting the resolution on the national housing programme for 2015-2025, currently in the parliamentary procedure).

7.3 Good practice and recommendations

Good practice

Unemployment benefit: The minimum period of insurance required is shorter for young people (under 30). Six to nine months of insurance in the previous 24 months entitle them to two months of unemployment benefit.

Sickness and healthcare benefits: The practice of immediate and full access to the sickness benefits scheme as soon as (young) people become insured guarantees equal access to sickness benefits for all. A scheme without a waiting period or special qualifying criteria for young people is *per se* an example of good practice.

Contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits: People are eligible if they are covered by parental protection insurance just before the first day of the individual part (maternity, paternity or parental) of the leave. Also eligible are those who were not insured when exercising the right to a cash benefit, but were insured for at least 12 months in the previous three years. This, to a great extent, prevents the negative impact on eligibility of unemployment or spells of inactivity.

Non-contributory maternity, paternity and parental cash benefits: The non-contributory scheme covers parents who are not eligible for salary compensation. The benefit received for 12 months following the birth of the child is equal to the minimum amount of contributory parental cash benefit.

Housing benefits: There is a good provision in Slovenia, which compensates for the shortage of non-profit housing. Housing benefits are also available to those who are entitled to non-profit housing but have to rent at market prices (for details, see Section 5.1). Additionally, they are entitled to a subsidy covering the difference between the recognised market (for-profit) rent and the recognised non-profit rent. This subsidy is financed from the central government budget (Housing Act, 2003, Article 121b).

The number of vacancies in student halls of residence should be increased in order to meet the demand since it is cheaper than private accommodation (also if both are subsidised). The number of subsidised places should be increased to cover all students fulfilling the conditions.

Recommendations

Sickness and healthcare benefits: During the COVID-19 epidemic, an absence of up to three consecutive days a year without a medical certificate was possible. Research should be carried out to see whether such an option should also apply in normal (non-epidemic) circumstances. It might lessen the burden on family doctors and increase the flexibility and convenience for workers during short sicknesses.

Guaranteed minimum income schemes: The minimum income should be increased to better reflect the minimum costs of living. The basic amount of minimum income was set at 75% of the minimum costs of living.

²⁶ The study quoted by Križnik (2015) had shown that non-profit rents should be increased by 47% in order to cover the costs.

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