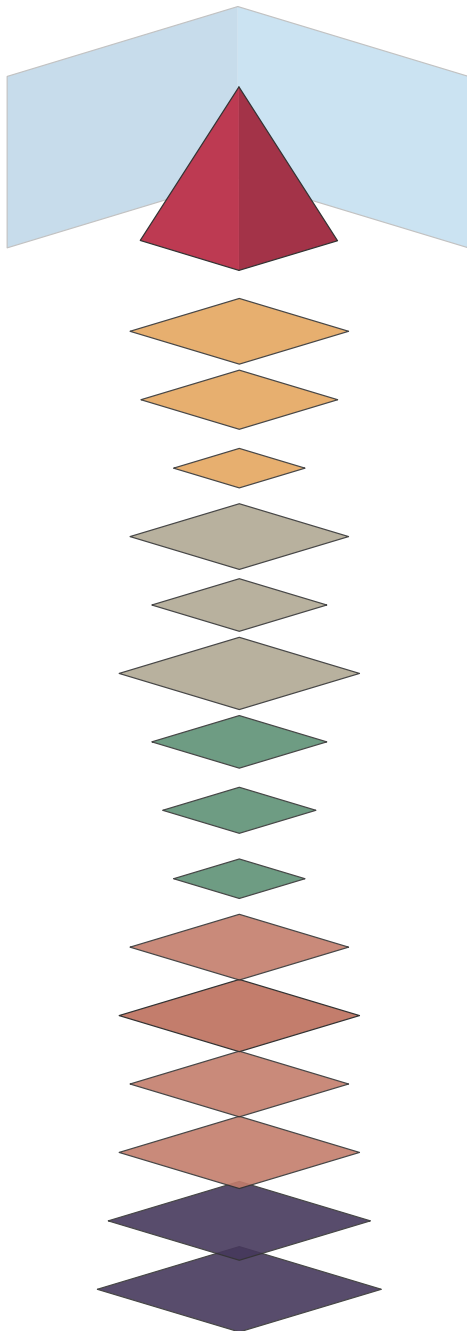




SLOVAKIA



4.72

CRIMINALITY SCORE

117th of 193 countries

23rd of 44 European countries

12th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.73

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| HUMAN TRAFFICKING | 5.00 |
| HUMAN SMUGGLING | 4.50 |
| EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING | 3.00 |
| ARMS TRAFFICKING | 5.00 |
| TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS | 4.00 |
| ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS | 5.50 |
| FLORA CRIMES | 4.00 |
| FAUNA CRIMES | 3.50 |
| NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES | 3.00 |
| HEROIN TRADE | 5.00 |
| COCAINE TRADE | 5.50 |
| CANNABIS TRADE | 5.00 |
| SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE | 5.50 |
| CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES | 6.00 |
| FINANCIAL CRIMES | 6.50 |



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.70

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS | 3.00 |
| CRIMINAL NETWORKS | 6.00 |
| STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS | 6.50 |
| FOREIGN ACTORS | 5.00 |
| PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS | 3.00 |



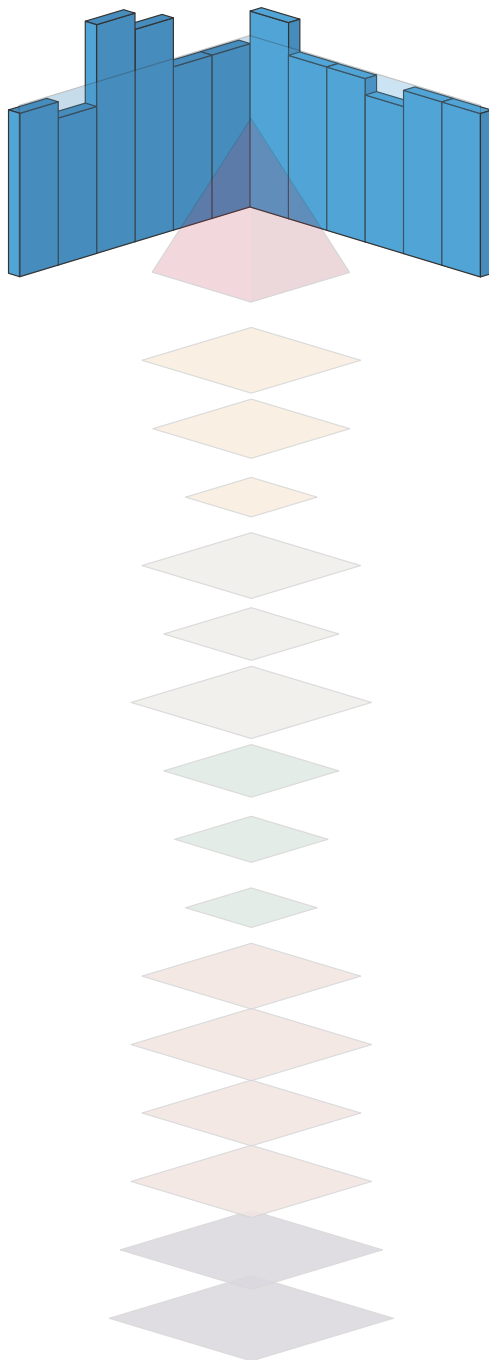
5.29

RESILIENCE SCORE





SLOVAKIA



5.29

RESILIENCE SCORE

73rd of 193 countries

30th of 44 European countries

7th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries

| | |
|--|------|
| POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE | 5.00 |
| GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY | 4.50 |
| INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION | 7.00 |
| NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS | 6.50 |
| JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION | 5.00 |
| LAW ENFORCEMENT | 5.00 |
| TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY | 6.00 |
| ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING | 5.00 |
| ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY | 5.00 |
| VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT | 4.50 |
| PREVENTION | 5.00 |
| NON-STATE ACTORS | 5.00 |



4.72

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.73



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.70



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Slovakia is a source and, to a lesser extent, destination country for human trafficking. Traffickers usually exploit Slovak men and women for forced labour in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction in Western Europe. Many foreign victims, mainly from the Balkans and South East Asia, are vulnerable to forced labour in Slovakia and may be unable or afraid to seek assistance from authorities. Slovak women, as well as foreign women victims, usually from South East Asia, are also exploited for sex trafficking. Ukrainian refugees, predominantly women and children, who have fled Russia's war against Ukraine and crossed the Slovak border seeking protection, are also vulnerable to trafficking.

Slovakia is a long-established transit country for human smuggling. The most frequently smuggled nationalities include people from Serbia, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. This criminal market has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. It has been reported that smugglers and traffickers were waiting at the Slovak-Ukrainian border for Ukrainians leaving their country during the first stages of the war. In the second half of 2022, the situation began to deteriorate on the Slovak-Hungarian border as well, with many irregular migrants crossing Slovakia to the west. A tenfold increase in the use of false travel, residence, and other documents for the purpose of human smuggling has been documented. Both local and transnational criminal networks are heavily involved in human smuggling in Slovakia. Extortion and protection racketeering activities involving organized crime groups are not commonplace in Slovakia, with only historic and sporadic incidents being reported.

TRADE

Slovakia continues to serve as a source country for illegal firearms, especially those deemed easy to reactivate or convert, for trafficking to other EU states. The war in Ukraine brought about new problems connected to the export of arms from and through Slovakia, and Slovakian arms traffickers have reportedly been exploiting these new opportunities. Regarding the types of arms trafficked, reports indicate that in recent years Flobert conversions and acoustic expansion weapons have been favoured over alarm weapons by criminal groups, and have been used for robberies, attacks on rivals, and protection. This market may be an important source of income for those in the lower ranks of organized crime. Additionally, transnational

groups, from Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans particularly, have increased their presence in the country.

The current market for counterfeit goods in Slovakia seems to be limited, and primarily involves counterfeit toys, medicine, consumer goods, and clothes. However, there has been a recent shift to online shopping and an increase in consumers intentionally purchasing counterfeit items. Illicit trade in excise goods, specifically tobacco products, is also present on the Slovak market. Recent interventions have uncovered illegal cigarette production facilities in eastern Slovakia run by organized crime groups with elements from Ukraine and Belarus. Despite the presence of a black market, the country still has one of the lowest rates of intentional counterfeit purchases in Europe. However, with rising inflation and the expected increase in tobacco prices, manufacturers and distributors of tobacco products warn that a switch to illegal alternatives, such as smuggled or illegally produced cigarettes, could rapidly occur.

ENVIRONMENT

Although flora crimes are not particularly pervasive in the country, Slovakia has historically served as a destination and transit country for the illegal trade of ornamental plants. Illegal logging is also an ongoing issue, and is increasingly being carried out under the guise of sanitary felling or by illegal overharvesting. In some cases, bribery and corruption are used by individual criminals and companies to facilitate these illegal practices. There is a general lack of adequate statistics and monitoring on the problem.

Slovakia is a destination, source, and transit country for wildlife trafficking. Bird poaching and the illegal killing of bears and wolves are of concern in this market. There are numerous farms containing tigers, lions, and other endangered species, and despite existing laws investigations show that there could be ongoing illegal trade in endangered species and the body parts of endangered animals. There have also been instances of the illicit trade and smuggling of poison dart frogs by Slovak nationals.

Non-renewable resource crime is not an overly pervasive criminal market in Slovakia. Coal and lignite are the main non-renewable resources mined in the country, accompanied by lesser amounts of gold, iron, copper, and manganese. However, no new significant cases of non-renewable resource crime appear to have been reported since 2020, including in the fuel, coal, and amber markets. Owing to the infrequency of these crimes, it can be estimated that this criminal market is manageable. Although the perception of corruption in Slovakia is relatively high, the shadow economy is limited.

DRUGS

Slovakia serves as a transit and destination country for heroin, originating primarily from Afghanistan and arriving in the country via Hungary along the Balkan route. Several gangs, especially from Balkan countries such as North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia, operate in the trade. Drug smuggling is generally considered one of the most important sources of income for organized crime groups in Slovakia, many of which are involved in the smuggling of heroin shipments from Asia. Slovakia is also a transit and destination country for cocaine. The cocaine trade in Slovakia is a major activity of organized groups as well as opportunistic smaller groups of individuals that use the drug. Most of the cocaine comes from the Netherlands or Belgium. Organized crime groups involved in the cocaine trade and the transfer of the drug through Slovakia include those of Balkan and Italian origins. Cocaine use is increasing in Slovakia, especially among the affluent and influential. Cocaine is most popular among the younger population, and many people are chronically addicted to the drug. The supply of drugs through social media, instant messaging, and other secure communication channels is increasing, as they seem to be more convenient and accessible for both users and sellers.

Slovakia is both a source and destination country for cannabis trafficking. Herbal cannabis is produced domestically and also imported from the Czech Republic. Cannabis produced for local consumption is largely circulated without the involvement of organized crime groups, although Vietnamese criminal groups are known to have been involved in production. Cannabis is the most sought after drug in Slovakia, and a growing number of addicts are reported to be seeking treatment. With regard to synthetic drugs, Slovakia is a source, destination, and transit country. In recent years, synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine have largely been domestically produced in Slovakia. Criminal groups are known to be involved in large-scale precursor procurement and methamphetamine production. Ecstasy and methamphetamine are the most common synthetic drugs consumed in Slovakia. Additionally, an emerging issue in Slovakia is that novel psychoactive substances are being sold to consumers under the general name 'ecstasy', or as legal alternatives to cocaine and methamphetamine. These have become very popular, as have synthetic cannabinoids that mimic the effects of marijuana but with a significantly stronger effect.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Various cyber-dependent crimes, especially ransomware attacks, have been recorded in Slovakia in recent years. A significant number of these attacks, affecting organizations spanning the IT, energy, public administration, and telecommunications sectors, involved requests for money in return for the restoration of system functions. Foreign actors, especially those from Russia, are known to be involved in this illicit market. A Russian cyber espionage group carried

out a campaign targeting Slovakian government officials with delivering malware via email. Since the start of the war in Ukraine the number of cyber-security incidents has risen significantly.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The most common forms of financial crime encountered in the country include tax evasion and VAT fraud, as well as the misuse and embezzlement of funds, including COVID-19 recovery and EU funds. There has been an increase in investigations pertaining to financial crime, which reveals the failures of the financial crimes unit of the police and the financial authority in effectively investigating such crimes during the previous administration. Furthermore, cyber-enabled financial crime, especially phishing attacks, is increasingly pervasive in the country.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The involvement or complicity of state-embedded actors in criminal markets remains an issue of concern in Slovakia. For years, there have been reports of widespread corruption at various levels of the state apparatus. In recent years, allegations of bribery continue to emerge. Criminal networks and groups in Slovakia are involved in various forms of crime and their actions include violence and corruption. Many have sustained contacts in high-level political and law enforcement agencies. Loose domestic criminal networks continue to be implicated in human trafficking and smuggling, and to a lesser degree arms and drug trafficking.

Additionally, foreign actors are heavily involved in organized crime in the country. Some of the foreign diasporas that have been accused of organized crime activity, predominantly drug trafficking, include Hungarian, Vietnamese, Italian, and Balkan groups. Most have ties to illicit markets in their countries of origin. A common method foreign criminal actors use is to establish a base in Slovakia, setting up a company with foreign capital and fictitiously employing foreign nationals. Slovakia has a history of several mafia-style groups operating in the capital of Bratislava as well as elsewhere in the country, most of which are family-based. However, it is unclear in which illicit markets these mafia-style groups act. It is believed their activities involve minimal to moderate interaction with each other. The heroin trade, in particular, appears to be dominated by mafia-style groups, while it is possible human trafficking is facilitated by a network of mafia-style and other criminal groups. There have been reports of corrupt officials and links to mafia contacts in the Slovak security and customs sectors. However, mafia-style groups in Slovakia are in decline, and the mafia-style groups that had ruled over the organized crime scene since the mid-1990s are no longer in operation. Although private sector actors do not appear to be as prevalent as other criminal groups in

Slovakia, they are known to be involved in financial crime, including corruption and tax fraud.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Slovakia boasts strong institutions and ample resources in the fight against organized crime. No areas of the state service are believed to be captured by organized crime groups. However, the execution of government policies is seen as being poor, without clear management and vision. For these reasons, the country's political leadership is facing deteriorating public trust. While the legal framework guiding access to information allows for transparency, in practice this access is poor. Corruption remains a major problem within the state apparatus, especially in the procurement system, with a lack of prosecutions and inadequate sanctions.

The cooperation of Slovak law enforcement agencies with international bodies in cases of organized crime has been continual, without any significant problems reported. However, some cases have remained uninvestigated despite international partners providing information on organized crime groups to Slovak law enforcement agencies. Slovakia works closely with neighbouring countries, as well as Europol and other international institutions, to combat and prevent a variety of illegal activities, with a particular focus on tackling human and drug trafficking and corruption. The country is committed to bilateral agreements with partner states. On a domestic level, Slovakia's laws and national policies relating to organized crime are up to date and respond adequately to probable threats. However, there are still gaps in the country's legislation, which are exploited by criminal groups.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Slovak judiciary is perceived as lacking integrity and independence. In recent years, a number of high-profile cases resulted in acquittals. Moreover, since the new prosecutor general took office in 2020, there have been cases of misuse of law and dismissals of charges. The current government's judicial reforms have altered the Judiciary Council's composition and power, adding public oversight. Additionally, a new Supreme Administrative Court was created in 2021 to reform judicial structure and increase district court specialization. Regarding the prison system, while Slovak prisons are not overcrowded, a public debate on detention conditions is ongoing.

Slovakia has special law enforcement units for combating organized crime. However, these agencies' investigations have been highly inadequate in recent years, especially in terms of white-collar crime, corruption, and high-level political crime. The lack of skilled financial investigators in the special police force, the investigative unit of the financial authority, and the Special Prosecutor's Office hinders any efforts to tackle financial crime. Additionally, some high-ranking police officers are known to be in close contact with alleged criminals, who have been able to manipulate investigations to their benefit. That said, Slovakian law enforcement is continuing to combat human trafficking, arms trafficking, and fauna and flora crimes.

Slovakia is vulnerable to transnational organized crime; being landlocked between EU states, the Schengen Area and Ukraine, its location makes it an ideal transit country. The war in Ukraine has resulted in increased territorial vulnerabilities on Slovakia's eastern border, and NATO troops and Czech police have been deployed to assist.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Slovakia is at low to medium risk of money laundering and terrorist financing, and has complex anti-money laundering legislature in place. The country's Financial Intelligence Unit, the National Bank of Slovakia, the Financial Directorate, as well as tax and customs offices oversee its anti-money laundering efforts. However, aside from prosecutors, actors such as law enforcement and private sector individuals do not have a sufficient understanding of money laundering, and are dependent on national risk assessment findings. For instance, shortcomings in the use of financial information to detect evidence of criminal assets have hindered investigations. Additionally, financial analyses are hampered by the absence of a central bank account register and relevant beneficial ownership information. There have also been instances of corruption in financial institutions and police branches responsible for investigating financial crimes. The latter have even been known to be under criminal control.

The Slovak government generally does not arbitrarily interfere with rights related to property ownership or citizens' rights to establish private businesses. Slovakia's economic environment has improved in various sectors, but there are still certain areas in which organized crime may be involved in gaining assets. VAT fraud is pervasive

in Slovakia, with both national and international organized crime groups involved. While mafia-style groups cannot be said to dominate the business sector, groups such as the 'Ndrangheta have been known to invest in areas such as agriculture, restaurants, green energy, finance, education, and consulting. This may be to divert suspicion and as a front for illegal activity.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

A legal framework for victim and witness support exists in Slovakia, although its implementation is weak. A systemic approach towards victim and witness protection is non-existent, and there is limited cooperation with non-state actors. There is a general lack of specialists trained in the psychosocial support of victims. Moreover, it is not guaranteed that victims will have access to justice by being granted legal assistance. It is also reported that victims are often treated as perpetrators, especially in cases of human smuggling and trafficking. Nevertheless, the government has created a special centre for victims of human trafficking and continues to launch new projects to assist in this regard. As for witness protection, there are laws in place that ensure that the identities of witnesses are protected, although their implementation is weak. The only individuals who qualify for witness protection are those who testify in criminal procedures, with different considerations for trial and investigation phases.

Slovakia does not have a systematic approach to prevent organized crime. Isolated campaigns, especially concerning drug abuse, human trafficking, and human smuggling, have been run by various state and non-state actors that work with the community. The police's preventive units have organized discussions with students on these topics, but these activities do not appear to have any

significant effect. Government anti-trafficking measures include extensive prevention and awareness campaigns to engage the public, though these sometimes portray trafficking in a sensationalized manner. Additionally, the government and government-funded NGOs have specifically targeted vulnerable groups, such as Romani women and children vulnerable to domestic servitude through forced marriage, in awareness campaigns, and there is continued coordination with the government office responsible for Romani communities. Following the murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018, a new government entity for the protection of whistle-blowers was established.

Non-state actors play an extremely important role in exposing crime in Slovakia. NGOs are responsible for providing individualized plans for victims of human trafficking and for identifying victims during interviews and consultations with vulnerable people. They are free to operate and to criticize state authorities and, along with other organisations, are also involved in drug prevention, executing certain prevention interventions, and providing various forms of counselling. These organizations often focus on high-risk groups, such as children and young people in disadvantaged and Romani communities, marginalized families, and young offenders. The media landscape is influenced by large financial groups and local oligarchs that control a significant slice of the most influential media outlets. Legislation aimed at enhancing journalist protection and the financial independence of broadcasters has been delayed.

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