



LABOUR MARKET AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OVERCOMING GENDER STEREOTYPES

A TRANSNATIONAL ACTION PLAN
PROMOTED BY BUSINESS WOMEN AND
GENDER EQUALITY ORGANISATIONS

COUNTRY REPORT FOR SLOVAKIA



This project is co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment,
Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities





Labour Market and Entrepreneurship Overcoming Gender Stereotypes

A Transnational action plan promoted
by Business Women and Gender Equality Organisations

This project has been carried out by AFAEMME
Association of Organisations of Mediterranean
Businesswomen (Barcelona, Spain) in association with:

KARAT Coalition (Central and Eastern Europe)
WAD - Women's Alliance for Development (Bulgaria)
SEGE - Greek Association of Women Entrepreneurs
(Greece)

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Context

A key priority for the European Commission is to create equality for men and women throughout Europe. AFAEMME, Association of Organizations of Mediterranean Business Women (Barcelona) was awarded by the European Commission, in partnership with important organizations in Central and Eastern Europe - KARAT Coalition, WAD - Women's Alliance for Development (Bulgaria) and SEGE, Greek association of Women Entrepreneurs (Greece) to implement a unique project *"Labour Market And Entrepreneurship Overcoming Gender Stereotypes"*.

The main objectives of this project are:

- to improve the understanding of the issues underlying gender equality and equal opportunities in the fields of employment and entrepreneurship in this area of Europe
- to strengthen gender equality and businesswomen organizations and their active partnership in influencing decision makers on social and economic policy
- and to improve the general economic status of women.

The project includes the elaboration of 12 national reports from Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Which report the obstacles experienced by women in business and assess the impact of EU Employment Strategy on the situation of women in the new ten EU Members states and two candidate countries with case studies of a typical businesswoman in those countries relating to gender stereotypes in the labour market and entrepreneurship, with a final global report containing concrete policy recommendations addressed to European Commission and national governments. The publication is launched at a large scale European conference in Brussels in February 2006.

This report contains the national study from Slovenia



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Executive summary

With its recent accession into the European Union, Slovakia has harmonized most of its national laws with the *acquis communautaire*. There is still no specific gender equality law but provisions have been incorporated into the Labour Code, the Anti-discrimination Act and other existing laws.

Thanks to the new Labour Code, progress has been made in the field of equal treatment for women and men. It provides equal treatment in the access to employment, career, vocational training as well as for working conditions.

The Slovak Republic has adopted two main policy documents about gender equality. The first one is the National Action Plan for Women which is setting the basis for equal treatment policy. The second one is called the Concept of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women and it outlines the need for a systemic integration of women's and men's mutual interests and priorities in all government policies and recommendations for their implementation in practice. The two documents, however, are very weak and have no budget allocated to them nor any control system. The situation of women in the labour market deteriorated slightly since the beginning of the 1990s. Still, despite the small changes in the nineties the economic activity of women in Slovakia remains high. The unemployment, which is quite a recent phenomenon, has increased from 19.1% in 2000 to 19.4% in 2001, and the female unemployment rate is slightly lower than the male one. Unemployment in Slovakia does not show significant gender differences. This positive statistics can be explained mainly by the fact that women after losing work are prepared to take

any job as quickly as possible, often less paid, requiring less skill or even lower education. According to data from the Head Office of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family Slovakia is witnessing a continual fall in the rate of registered unemployment. The rate of registered unemployment fell from 16% (in the first half of 2003) to 15.5% (in the first half of 2004). The level of part-time employment in Slovakia is extremely low in comparison with the international standards. The difference is particularly great in the case of women, with part-time jobs accounting for approximately 3% of female employment in Slovakia, and for over 33% in the EU. Incomes, especially for part time jobs, are still not comparable with the western economies.

As regards to access to education, for several decades the Slovak women have been reaching similar, or in some categories slightly higher, levels of education than men. Equal pay for equal work is formally guaranteed under the Constitution and the Labour Code, but in practice, the situation is far from equal. Additionally, pay inequality between men and women is increasing in Slovakia. While in 1996 women's gross average monthly pay was 74.5% of that of men, by 2002 this had fallen below 72%. Approximately 30% of entrepreneurs are women. Mainly, they can be found in small companies, and predominantly in social services. As in many new EU's members, Slovakia has improved its legislation and institutional framework in the area of gender equality, however, it has still a lot of progress to make to advance the situation of women and ensure real equality between women and men. Especially, since at the moment there is NO institutional mechanisms for gender equality.

Legal framework

With the entry in the European Union, Slovakia has harmonized most of its national laws with the *acquis communautaire*. There is no specific gender equality law in Slovakia, but provisions have been incorporated into the Labour Code and the Anti-discrimination Act and in other existing laws. These legal provision have been adopted quite recently, and hence at this point it is quite difficult to make any conclusions about their application ¹.

Constitution

The Slovakian's Constitution includes a number of provisions which focus on non-discrimination, gender equality and protection of women in society and in the work place. These provisions include ²:

> Article 12(2) of the Slovak Constitution stipulates that basic rights and freedoms are guaranteed in the Slovak Republic to

1 - http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/equal_20050502/slovakia.pdf

2 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/leo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

all individuals without regard to sex, race, colour, language, faith and religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic group, property, birth or other status. Thus, no one can be advantaged or disadvantaged on these grounds.

> Under Article 20 (1), everyone has the right to own property; that property rights of all owners are uniformly construed and equally protected by law; and that the right of inheritance is guaranteed.

> Article 30(3) provides that the right to vote shall be exercised through equal, universal and direct suffrage; and paragraph 4 of the same article provides that all citizens have equal access to elected or public offices.

> Article 35 (1) states every person has the right to choose freely his or her profession and to receive appropriate training, as well as the right to earn his or her living through entrepreneurial activities.

> While Article 36 guarantees all employees security from arbitrary dismissal and discrimination at work, as well as the protection of health and safety at work, article 38(1) specifies further that women (minors and disabled persons) are entitled to more extensive health protection and special working conditions.

> Article 41(2) states that pregnant women have the right to special treatment, terms of employment, and working conditions".

Legislation and constitutional principles are vital to securing women's equal position in society. Even though, they are not a sufficient guarantee against the real male advantage in many areas like employment, politics or public life ³.

Labour Code

On 1 April 2002, a new version of the Labour Code (Act No.311/2001) entered into force in the Slovak Republic. The new Labour Code replaced the previous Labour Code of January 1965. It was heavily influenced by Slovakia's efforts to harmonise her labour standards with the EU legislation ⁴. Thanks to the new Code, progress in the field of equal treatment for women and men has also been achieved. It provides equal treatment in the access to employment, career, vocational training as well as for working conditions. Moreover, the

new Act on Social Insurance approved in May 2002 aims at finalising transposition of the Directive on equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security ⁵.

Relevant provisions may be summarised as follows ⁶:

> "Article I of the Fundamental Principles of the 2002 Labour Code Act allows for all natural persons have the right to work and the free choice of employment.

> Article VI of the Fundamental Principles states that women are entitled to equal treatment with regard to access to employment, pay, promotion, vocational training, as well as to adequate working conditions in view of their "physiological capacities and the social role of motherhood". In addition, working conditions should reflect the respect family obligations of women and men in the upbringing and care of children.

> Under Articles 13 (1-6) of the General Principles (GP) of the 2002 Labour Code it is forbidden to use any form of direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of "sex, marital status or family status, race, colour, trade union involvement [...]" in the workplace. This applies for all persons entering into labour relations, as well as co-workers".

> Article 12 of the GP prohibits a labour relation arising between spouses.

> Under Article 41(6) of the GP, in pre-contractual relations an employer is not allowed to request from a natural person the following information:

- on pregnancy, except for work prohibited to pregnant women;
- on family relationships;
- on integrity, except for work requiring integrity as laid down by a special regulation, or if the integrity requirement is demanded by the nature of work which the natural person is to perform
- on political persuasion, trade union membership and religious persuasion; and,
- that which would be detrimental to the applicant's personality

3 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/lihf2000.htm>

4 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

5 - http://www.fifoost.org/slovakia/EU_Slovakia_2002/node48.php

6 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

> Article 41(8) of the GP stipulates that an employer must not violate the principle of equal treatment where concerning access to employment.

> According to Article 119 (3) wage conditions must be equal both for women and men without any discrimination based on sex. Thus, women and men are entitled to equal wages for work of an equal level of complexity, responsibility and difficulty performed under the same work conditions and upon achieving same work efficiency.

> Article 160 through Article 170 of the Code generally outline the employer's obligations in securing appropriate working conditions, or change in working conditions (if inappropriate) for women, especially for pregnant women, for women who are nursing and/or taking care of child or children less than nine months old".

The Slovak Republic has adopted two policy documents addressing gender equality: The National Action Plan for Women and the Concept of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. - although effectiveness of those two documents continued to be questioned particularly by women's NGOs.

The National Action Plan for Women

The National Action Plan for Women was drawn up by the Co-ordination Committee for Problems of Women (CCPW) which was based only on the level of ministry. This plan was adopted in 1997 on the basis of the Beijing Platform. The document sets the basis for equal treatment policy. Critics have argued that from the very beginning it has only been a pro-forma material only, never taken seriously by anyone.

Eight priority areas have been identified 7:

> the implementation of equal position of the women in the family, employment and society, which is enshrined in the legal system;

> the creation of scope for personal choice in development life strategies of women in the family, employment and the society;

> to create conditions in order to eliminate economic disadvantages which may lead to material distress of women;

> to shape public opinion to increase/strengthen respect equality of women and men;

> to create conditions for the protection and promotion of women's health;

> to create conditions for the elimination of violence against women;

> to create conditions for personal development and work satisfaction of women with lesser development chances (such as, women living in the countryside, women of Roma ethnic group unemployed women, women insufficiently prepared for their mother's role, women with disabilities);

> to promote activities of the organisations involved in providing support and developing women at national and international levels.

The National Action Plan for Women was planned for 10 years (thus it will be in force until 2007) but with the accession to the European Union, it was shortened and replaced by a new complex gender mainstreaming policy (that should substitute also the Concept of Equal Opportunities) 8. Again it is argued above that the document is only a vision of the ministry with no practical implications. Further, it is argued that the Slovak government does not understand the basis of gender equality, gender issues or mainstreaming policy. As a consequence Slovakia has no comprehensive gender equality strategy.

The Concept of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women

The concept of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women is a more recent document, adopted in 2001. It was drawn up by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. "The paper outlined the need for a systemic integration of women's and men's mutual interests and priorities in all government policies and recommendations for their implementation in practice.9": So far, however, no implementation activities were implemented. This may be related to the fact that the document does not include tasks with deadlines, nor it has any budget.

Key issue covered by the report are:

> the definition of the equal opportunities concept;

> the insufficient participation of employers' and trade union organizations in resolving equal opportunities problems;

> the need for legal adjustments to equal opportunities in employment and other areas of society and public life;

7 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

8 - http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/equal_20050502/a_equal_20050502.pdf

9 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

> the insufficient institutional support for equal opportunities at all levels of the state administration (i.e. monitoring, control and regulation to eliminate discrimination);

> the low level of interest in equal opportunities issues on the part of the media, educational institutions and other organisations which influence public understanding of gender equity.

Some of the recommendations for the adoption of measures proposed ¹⁰:

a. elaborating and updating (taking a systematic approach) the current list of jobs and workplaces which may not be filled by women, pregnant women, juvenile workers and mothers in the nine months after childbirth;

b. strengthening the opportunities for women to take on leading positions, and assessing the results regularly;

c. supporting the inclusion of measures to implement gender equal opportunities in employment in the national tripartite general agreement and in collective agreements. This will be done in cooperation with the Federation of Employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic (AZZZ SR) and the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR);

d. in cooperation with AZZZ SR and KOZ SR, creating special employment conditions for women and men who take care of children and dependent family members, and facilitating their return to work through upgrading their qualifications, and counselling on a possible transition to self-employment. Incentives are to be provided for employers to create a range of possibilities for part-time employment, home working, temporary work and other kinds of flexible working patterns;

e. in collaboration with AZZZ SR and KOZ SR, ensuring the implementation of equal pay for women and men for equal work and work of equal value;

f. in collaboration with KOZ SR, ensuring the monitoring of compliance with the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value;

g. supporting projects aimed at enhancing the position of women and men in rural areas and women and men with reduced chances to enter the labour market;

h. supporting life-long education programs which involve gender and equal opportunities;

i. pursuing consistent observance of equal opportunities for women and men in the preparation of new legislation on pensions insurance; and,

j. promoting the creation of an Ombudsman position in charge of the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Slovakia's policies on gender equality are not based on a wide approach, do not take into consideration all areas of life, and are not supported by appropriate institutional mechanisms. Moreover, policy documents have been drafted without corresponding financial resources to achieve its objectives. So far, no campaigns have taken place on gender equality or the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, on the gender pay gap, or sexual harassment (or harassment in general) ¹¹.

Overall, the concept of gender mainstreaming is not well developed in Slovakia, and it struggles with several obstacles, such as ¹²:

> Low awareness of gender equality, gender issues and gender mainstreaming at all levels of governance;

> Absence of a national extra-ministerial government institution dealing with equal opportunities (e.g. Ombudsperson or Ministry for equal opportunities);

> Absence of internal gender equality strategies and policies at all governmental levels (Government, Ministries, Parliament);

> Lack of independent monitoring and control mechanisms;

> No responsibility of Ministries (Ministers) for gender equality;

> No legislative power of existing gender equality bodies;

> Lack of lobbying at the government/ parliament level;

> Lack of human and financial resources;

> Absolute absence of any institutional mechanism

> A decreasing interest, on the part of the Slovak Government,

10 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

11 - http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/equal_20050502/a_equal_20050502.pdf

12 - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/egg/Summaries/Slovakia-WP6summ.doc>

in gender equality issues after the EU enlargement and after the 2002 elections.

In 2002 the Slovak government through the department of EU Integration, Human Rights and Minorities approved the second annual Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of

Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Expressions of Intolerance. Ministries of Justice, of the Interior, of Defence, of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, of Health and of Education are all subject to implement directives issued by this initiative. Unfortunately the document does not mention gender at all!

Institutional framework

Until March 2005, the only institutional mechanism responsible for gender equality policies was the Department of Equality and Anti-Discrimination under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry decided to restructure itself, and the department was merged into a new section: the Department of Family and Gender Policies.

The main priority of this new section is the reconciliation of work and family life. The previous department had a much wider scope and greater human resources. It is the only institutional mechanism for gender equality in Slovakia ¹³. It is quite unacceptable that the main gender equality institution in Slovakia has not been established as an independent body standing above ministries, but has been incorporated into the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family ¹⁴.

The Co-ordination Committee for Problems of Women (CCPW) was established in 1996. In theory it is an advisory, initiative and co-ordinating body of the Government meant to set forth the interests and needs of women in society. The members of the CCPW are representatives of the Government, the National Council of the Republic, women's NGOs, trade unions, local self-government bodies, selected central bodies of state administration, research institutions, churches and experts dealing with issues related to women, families, children and youth ¹⁵. The Committee however, has not worked for last 3 years. It is only an advisory group for the

Minister of Social Affairs and he has not called a meeting since he started his period in 2002. Like most of the countries, Slovakia decided to create an Ombudsperson on equal opportunities. It was done in February 2001, through an amendment to the Slovak Constitution (Law No.564/2001 CoL). This person's aim is to reduce discrimination and to promote the equal opportunities principle through extra-judicial channels ¹⁶.

The Equal Opportunities Department was included in the structure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family within the Section of Family Policy, on 1 February 1999. The priority tasks of this department at that time were the following ¹⁷:

- a. harmonise the Slovak legislation with the EU legislation (Chapter 13) in the area of equal opportunities;
- b. to review the anti-discriminatory nature of proposed legislative amendments;
- c. to work out the 'Concept of Equal Opportunities' (see below);
- d. to participate in submitting relevant proposals and conceptions to this field and others connected to it; and,
- e. to participate in the elimination of violence against women

13 - http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/equal_20050502/slovakia.pdf

14 - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/egg/Summaries/Slovakia-WP6summ.doc>

15 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

16 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

17 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

Labour market institutions

The main executive body for the implementation of labour market policies and active programmes is the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. It was established by legislation in 1997 as National Labour Office. It was reorganised in the end of 2004. New system of labour offices is functioning from January 2005 under the name of Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. It has branches in every region.

Workers' and Employers' Organisations

Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR): <http://www.kozsr.sk/> KOZ SR is a voluntary association of trade union federations and other associations. Its basic mission is to affiliate trade union federations and associations to defend trade union rights and to forward their economic, social, cultural and other interests and needs arising from or relating to their employment or career.

The KOZ SR fundamental objective is to contribute to development of freedom, social justice and solidarity so as any employee may conduct a meaningful life, developing fully the personality and capacity of every man

and woman, and guaranteeing human and civil rights within democratic society acknowledging principles of social based market economy.

Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration

SLOVES represents employees of: central state organs and departments; section of geology and cartography; the Statistics Office; township and municipal authorities; state inspectorates and state audit bodies; the Labour Office; Social Insurance Agency; section of the State Attorney; section of services; section of border and duties administration; and section of fiscal regional organs. Although the Union does not have specific programs or focal points for women, 38% of its current General Committee representatives are women and 39% are represented in its Chairing Committee¹⁸. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that this high percentage of women leads to women's issues as such being talked by SLOVES.

Trade Union Association of Employees in Education of Science

As a part of its mission statement OZPSAV is committed to unite employees and citizens without regard to differences in profession, sex, race, nationality, religion and political association. The Union is an independent and autonomous legal person with the mission to protect, promote and lobby on the interests of its members; to provide its members with free legal and advisory services; and through collective bargaining to participate in public policy formation relevant to its members¹⁹.

Women's organizations

Women's NGOs are the main actors that keep the gender equality agenda alive. However, only a very few of them have equal opportunities or gender equality as one of their main objectives. Instead, most NGOs deal with particular problems of women (women in decision-making; women in enterprise; women's rights; violence; etc.). A few women's NGOs cooperate closely with gender equality bodies, especially when new legislation or amendments to laws concerning women's rights are being prepared. However, there has not been a wide gender mainstreaming campaign (that would address issues of representation of women at all levels of governance) organised either by NGOs or by the Government²⁰.

18- <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeol/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

19 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeol/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

20 - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/egg/Summaries/Slovakia-WP6summ.doc>

Issues for women employees

In 2000, women represented 45.9% of the total workforce (a decrease compared with 1990), and their rate of economic activity was lower than men's. The situation in the labour market deteriorated slightly since the beginning of the 1990s ²¹.

In the following table some of the basic labour market indicators are shown. The economic activity of women in Slovakia remains high with small changes in the nineties ²². Part time work, although constituting small part of employment is more often performed by women than men.

As we can see, the unemployment rate increased from 19.1% in 2000 to 19.4% in 2001 and then slightly decreased. The male unemployment rate was 20.1%; female unemployment was slightly lower at 18.6%. In 2002 more than half of those unemployed were long-term unemployed and the regular report on EU accession indicated concern for this situation ²³. By 2003, this proportion was around 64% according to Eurostat data. The rate of longterm unemployed was 12 for both men and women (as shown in the tables above)²⁴ in 2003.

Unemployment is a relatively new phenomenon as far as labour market of Slovakia (as well as in other countries of the region) are concerned. While Slovakia boasted full employment in the initial transformation stage in 1989 (even though hidden unemployment or over-employment known as labour-hoarding certainly existed). During the past 15 years the unemployment rate has increased rapidly and currently is over 20% according to national statistical figures. As shown in the table above, the share of women in overall unemployment is lower than that of men, but women are more frequently registered as long-term unemployed. Moreover, the majority of unemployed people received only a basic education. The proportion of unemployed persons with university education is the same for both genders (2.1%) ²⁵. What is interesting is the marked difference between Slovakia and other Eastern European new member states, with regard to activity rates. In other countries, while unemployment is similar between women and men, at the same time there is a rather large drop

of activity rate of women. In the case of Slovakia, the overall activity rates are actually increasing for women. As a consequence of increasing educational level, however, younger women (15-24) and also younger men, are showing a drop in activity rates. Even older workers (55-64) are increasing their rates, which can be explained also by the recent changes in the retirement ages. "Women's employment has been influenced by several new phenomena of the transition country. Unemployment is one of them. For the last decade it has remained high (19% in 2002). The first to lose jobs are women as many of them hold less qualified and less paid positions, and they are also considered more 'problematic' (due to the family duties and childcare). Unemployed women represent less than half of the total number of unemployed, but the number has been declining since 2000, which demonstrates that unemployment in Slovakia does not show significant gender differences. This positive statistics can be explained mainly by the fact that women after losing work are prepared to take any job as quickly as possible, often with worse wages, requiring less skill or even lower education" ²⁶.

Indeed, the employment rate of women shown in the table above is discouraging as it has dropped from 53.5% in 1998 to 51.4% in 2002. The largest drop, coinciding with lower activity and much higher unemployment, is for the youngest women (15-24).

21 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

22 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

23 - http://www.fifoost.org/slovakieil/EU_Slovakia_2002/node48.php

24 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

25 - http://www.penelopes.org/Anglais/xarticle.php3?id_article=246

26 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

KEY EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS IN SLOVAKIA, TOTAL POPULATION					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total population					
Total population (000)	5358	5369	5377	5379	5384
Population aged 15-64	3619	3657	3692	3723	3728
Total employment (000)	2228	2157	2102	2121	2123
Population in employment aged 15-64	2191	2125	2096	2115	2118
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	60.6	58.1	56.8	56.8	56.8
Employment rate (% population aged 15-24)	35	31	29	27.7	27
Employment rate (% population aged 25-54)	78.5	76.1	74.7	74.8	75
Employment rate (% population aged 55-64)	22.8	22.3	21.3	22.4	22.8
FTE employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	60.6	58	56.4	55.7	55.8
Self-employment (% total population)	6.6	7.6	8	8.4	8.6
Part-time employment (% total employment)	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.3	1.9
Fixed term contracts (% total employment)	4.2	3.9	4.8	4.9	4.9
Employment in Services (% total employment)	52.9	54.2	60.3	60.5	59.6
Employment in Industry (% total employment)	39.5	38.5	32.8	33.1	33.9
Employment in Agriculture (% total employment)	7.5	7.4	6.9	6.4	6.4
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	69.3	69.5	69.9	70.4	69.9
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	46.8	46.8	46	45.5	43.4
Activity rate (% population aged 25-54)	87.4	87.6	88.4	88.9	88.6
Activity rate (% population aged 55-64)	24.6	24.6	24.3	25.5	26.9
Total unemployment (000)	330	427	481	508	483
Unemployment rate (% labour force 15+)		16.7	18.7	19.4	18.6
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)		34.2	37.1	39	37.3
Long term unemployment rate (% labour force)		7.8	10.1	11.4	12.1
Youth unemployment ratio (% population aged 15-24)	12.3	15.9	16.6	17.6	15.9

Source: Eurostat

KEY EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS IN SLOVAKIA: WOMEN					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total population					
Total population (000)	2766	2770	2773	2776	2776
Population aged 15-64	1839	1855	1871	1886	1886
Total employment (000)	1001	979	964	978	970
Population in employment aged 15-64	985	966	963	976	969
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	53.5	52.1	51.5	51.8	51.4
Employment rate (% population aged 15-24)	32.1	29	28.2	26.5	25.3
Employment rate (% population aged 25-54)	72.1	70.6	69.8	70.7	70.6
Employment rate (% population aged 55-64)	9.4	10.3	9.8	9.8	9.5
FTE employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	52.4	51	50.3	50.1	50
Self-employment (% total population)	3.9	4.4	4.6	4.9	4.7
Part-time employment (% total employment)	3.8	3.2	3.1	3.5	2.7
Fixed term contracts (% total employment)	4.4	3.6	4.5	4.7	4.5
Employment in Services (% total employment)	67.9	69.2	74.1	74.3	73.3
Employment in Industry (% total employment)	27	26.1	21.9	22	22.6
Employment in Agriculture (% total employment)	5.2	4.7	4	3.8	4.1
Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)	61.7	62.3	63.2	63.7	63.2
Activity rate (% population aged 15-24)	41.9	42.7	42.6	41.3	39.2
Activity rate (% population aged 25-54)	81.1	81.5	82.9	83.9	83.9
Activity rate (% population aged 55-64)	10.3	11.1	10.7	11	11.1
Total unemployment (000)	165	197	219	227	224
Unemployment rate (% labour force 15+)		16.9	18.5	18.9	18.8
Youth unemployment rate (% labour force 15-24)		33.1	33.9	35.4	36.1
Long term unemployment rate (% labour force)		8.4	10.1	11.4	12.3
Youth unemployment ratio (% population aged 15-24)	11.6	14.3	14.5	14.1	14..1

Source: Eurostat

Conditions of work/quality of employment

Women in Slovakia represented the majority in the public sector. The private sector remains the domain of men, with women constituting only 30%. The structure of employment of women and men according to the branches of national economy in which they work is quite different. "Female" branches represent: light industry, social services, food services, but mainly the educational sector, health care and social sector ²⁷.

By economic activity, women in Slovakia as elsewhere are concentrated in the service sector (73% of all women), while the indicator for men reaches only 48.9% in 2002. The industry concentration of men (45%) also contrast with the much lower presence of women (22%). Such industries as textiles, however, are still very much dominated by women. More details are given below on sector of activity.

It is important to point out that the situation for Roma women in Slovakia is particularly bad and that according to UNDP ²⁸, the low age at marriage and the high number of children that Roma women continue to have is sufficient to prevent them from joining the formal workforce. There is also a very high proportion who are single mothers. Unemployment for all the Roma community has been estimated between 64% and 80% and employment opportunities seem to be restricted to informal market. This fact keeps them out of the social security system as most benefits are based on formal employment relations.

Part-time employment

The level of part-time employment in Slovakia is extremely low in comparison with the international standards. Moreover, the share of part-time in total employment has fallen slightly in recent years. In early 2000, less than 2% of all those in employment were working part-time, as compared with almost 18% in the EU-15. The difference is particularly significant in the case of women, with part-time jobs accounting for approximately 3% of female employment in Slovakia, and for over 33% in the EU ²⁹. The main reason for it could be the fact that incomes from part-time jobs are not sufficient to cover basic living expenses. The lack of infrastructure also has an important

impact on women's employment. With the collapse or increasing prices of social services (nurseries, kindergartens, cleaning, ironing etc.), a lot of women are forced to leave their jobs and look after the children and families. And after the children grow up and women could devote their time to their professional careers, then they are needed by their old and often sick parents ³⁰.

Occupational and sectorial segregation

The employment structure for women and men differs significantly by sectors. Women dominate in light industry, trade and catering services, health care and social security, education, banking and insurance. All of them have become "female" sectors. In particular, education, healthcare and social security can be characterised as feminised and proportion of women in these spheres is twice as high as in the other sectors of economy overall ³¹. Speaking about public-private sectors, it is clear that the presence of women is stronger in the public sector. The private sector remains a male domain. The most significant decline in number of women in the private sector occurred in 1994, related to changes in legislation on trade licence holders ³².

Access to training

There are no specific legal provisions that avoid discrimination between men and women in the field of education, but the Constitution guarantee all citizens access to education at all levels. There are no quotas based on sex in any educational institution. "Education between 6 and 15 years of age is compulsory. However, poverty and parents' unemployment prevent equal access to education in practice, especially in secondary schools and colleges/universities, which entail further high costs related to distance and travel. The state social benefits do not adequately compensate these costs. There are no statistics available on the number of dropouts, but pupils and students (both girls and boys) living in rural areas or out of the city centres are generally disadvantaged with regard to access to education, training, culture, etc" ³³.

According to The Initial Report of the Slovak Republic to CEDAW of 1995, girls comprise 49% in primary schools, 62% in secondary special schools, 36.9% in secondary apprentice schools, and 60% in secondary grammar schools. Among

27 - http://www.penelopes.org/Anglais/xarticle.php3?id_article=246

28 - <http://roma.undp.sk>

29 - http://www.employment.gov.sk/en/international_relations/joint_assessment.html

30 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

31 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

32 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

33 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

college and university graduates, women comprise the following: 52% in natural sciences, 64% in medicine and pharmacy, 31% in technical colleges, 34% in agriculture and forestry, 64% in social sciences, and 54% in culture and arts ³⁴.

As we have just seen, gender differences and inequalities start already at the secondary schools and universities. Women and men dominate in totally different faculties. Women prevail among pedagogical, medicine, pharmacy, social sciences and humanity students; men dominate at the technical faculties, mathematics and computer sciences ³⁵. As regards access to education, the Slovak women have been reaching similar or in some categories slightly higher levels of education than men for several decades. The ratio of university graduates is almost the same for men and women. According to opinion polls, both women and men do not see any gender inequality in the field of access to education. The situation then changes in labour market. Although women prevail among scientists and white-collar professionals as well as among medical and technical staff, they are less likely to get higher positions at the universities or in companies' top management ³⁶.

Pay gap

Equal pay for equal work is formally guaranteed under the Constitution and Article IV of the Labour Code states that

"Employees have the right to be paid for their work according to amount, quality and social significance. They are also entitled to security and health protection at work, and relaxation and convalescence after work. ..." ³⁷. However, in practice, the situation is far from equal. More than that, pay inequality between men and women is increasing in Slovakia. While in 1996 women's gross average monthly pay was 74.5% of that of men, by 2002 this had fallen below 72% ³⁸. The pay gap exists in all categories of age and education.

Among persons with higher education, the gender pay gap has a tendency to increase: women with a university degree earned 35 percent less than men. Moreover, wage differentials are greater at higher income levels ³⁹.

The Statistical Office's sample survey on the wage structure in 2002

The main data source for gender wage differentials is the wage survey carried out by the Slovak Statistical Office in 2002⁴⁰.

They have organised a sample survey on wage structure, following up on a similar survey carried out in 1996-2001. The survey shows that men's gross average monthly wage was SKK 16,899 (for an average of 160.54 hours) and that of women was SKK 12,125 (for an average of 158.42 hours). Women's wages were therefore only 71.7% of those of men.

DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES AS A PROPORTION OF MEN'S, 1997-2002

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
74.5	78.5	77	75	75	74.1	71.7

Source: Slovak Statistical Office

34 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

35 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

36 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

37 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

38 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

39 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

40 - http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/equal_20050502/slovakia.pdf

Focusing on particular categories, the lowest figures for women's wages as a proportion of men's were as follows:

- > by level of education - 57.9% among employees with a bachelor's degree;
- > by occupational group - 62.1% among legislators, senior officials and managers;
- > by sector - 63.1% in the wholesale and retail trade and in financial intermediation;
- > by age - 65.5% among employees 60 years of age or above;
- > by form of ownership - 66.2% in foreign-owned companies.

In cash terms, the most significant monthly wage differentials between women and men in 2002 were:

- > by level of education - SKK 10,386 among employees with postgraduate degrees;
- > by occupational group - SKK 14,857 among legislators, senior officials and managers;
- > by sector - SKK 12,587 in financial intermediation;
- > by age - SKK 6,093 among employees between 35 and 39 years of age; and
- > by form of ownership - SKK 7,703 among employees of multinational affiliates.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family is making an effort to address the long-standing negative wage differentials between men and women. The National Action Plan for Women, the Equal Opportunities Concept for Men and Women and the 2003 NAP contain measures aimed at eliminating the causes of unequal pay for equal work or for work of equal value. This, however, is not yet having any visible income on the existing gender pay gap.

Impact of tax and benefit system on women employees

Article 40 of the Constitution guarantees the right to medical care for everyone without discrimination. Obligatory health

insurance provides everyone with free access to basic health care, and insurance for the economically non-active (i.e. unemployed persons, children, students and other groups of citizens) is paid for by the state. There are some differences, however, between urban and rural areas' access to healthcare from the point of view of transport and distance.

The right to social security is guaranteed by the Constitution and according to Article 39 citizens are entitled to adequate material provision when elderly or unable to work, or in case of the loss of a bread-winner. Everyone in (material) need is entitled to that assistance necessary to provide basic living conditions. According to Article 41 of the Constitution, parents caring for children are entitled to assistance from the State. The social security system encompasses: sickness insurance; pensions; additional pension insurance of employees; social care and state social benefits ⁴¹.

Social contributions are payable by both the employer and the employee. The employer has to give 35.2% of the salary; the employee's contribution is 13.4%. The insurance covers pension, unemployment and care insurance ⁴².

In September 2003, a new Act on Social Insurance was approved by the Parliament, with the objective to implement the acquis on equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security. The new social security system consists of three independent pillars, in particular ⁴³:

The first pillar - The pay-as-you-go pillar, is the mandatory public pillar, which will be operated by the state Social Insurance Company responsible for providing individuals, who fulfil the conditions set out by the Act, with pensions that will guarantee the minimum standard of social security;

The second pillar - The capitalization pillar, is the fully-funded mandatory pillar, which will be operated by new pension asset management companies entitled to accumulate additional capital from individuals during their working years, to collect and deposit the funds in the so-called "individual retirement accounts," and to pay additional pensions to individuals who fulfil the conditions set out by the Act;

The third pillar - The voluntary private pillar shall be operated by the existing supplementary insurance companies, banks, and asset management companies. It will provide individuals with non-limited benefits, depending, however, on the volume of savings accumulated by an individual during the working

41 - <http://moznostvolby.szm.sk/ihf2000.htm>

42 - http://www.worldwide-tax.com/slovakia/slovakia_tax.asp

43 - http://www.us.kpmg.com/microsite/tax/ies/2003_Flash_Alerts/fa03-206.pdf

years and the return of the investment. As we have just mentioned, this Act establishes the first pillar of pension reform and sets pensions according to the premium paid by an individual employee. The pension reform that entered into force in January 2004 increased the retirement age gradually to 62 for both men and women. The new retirement age was not, however, applied immediately in January 2004 for all, but will increase gradually by adding nine months of extra work each year for all employees. The reform should be completed in 2020. The pension reform introduces supplementary pension insurance (savings) in addition to state-guaranteed pension ⁴⁴.

Pension benefit

The minimum pension (with a full career) is 550 SK a month, plus an adjustment according to the year of the pension's award and the relevant increase ⁴⁵.

Reconciliation of work and family life

Maternity Leave ⁴⁶

A woman has the right to begin maternity leave six to eight weeks prior to the expected day of childbirth. With Slovakia's ratification of the ILO Convention NO.183/2000 concerning the Revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952, according to the Article 4(2) of the Convention, the Slovak Republic fixed the length of the maternity leave of 28 weeks; if the woman gave birth to 2 or more children at the same time or if she is a single mother, the length of the maternity leave is 37 weeks. The above provisions were also embedded in the new 2002 Labour Code Act and are equally applicable to men when caring for a newborn.

In addition to the above requirements, an employer is obliged to provide women and men (on their request) with additional parental leave up until their child reaches three years of age. In the case of a long-term disabled child requiring exceptional care, the parental leave can be extended until the child is 6 years of age.

Under article 157 an employer is obliged to assign an employee returning from maternity or parental leave to their original work and work position. To be able to receive Maternity

benefit, a woman must have been employed by her employer in the 15th week before the baby was born. Everyone can choose when to start getting their maternity benefit. The earliest that the benefit can start is from the 11th week before the week the baby is due and the latest from the day following the birth. The maternity benefit will usually start from the Sunday following the day you last worked ⁴⁷. The mother gets 90% of her salary. The maximum benefit is 350 SK a day. The Labour Code introduces the term "parental leave" in addition to "maternity leave" (see above) and parental benefit instead of maternal benefit.

Women and men are entitled to maternity or parental leave for duration of 28 weeks. An employer is obliged to provide a woman or man by their request with parental leave up to three years (162 weeks) with a guaranteed workplace, in case of a parent whose child needs a special care it is 6 years. That makes parental or maternity leave in Slovakia one of the longest in Europe ⁴⁸. Apart from the Maternity Benefit, the Slovak legislation also allows Family Allowance Benefits. Those benefits are calculated depending on family income and on age of the child. Up to age 5, 680 SK a month; from age 6 up to age 14, up to 830 SK a month; 15 years of age and over, up to 890 SK a month.

44 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

45 - <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2002-2003/europe/slovakrepublic.html>

46 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eeo/guide/slovakia/dep1.htm>

47 - http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/statutory_maternity_pay.asp#what

48 - <http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/pdfs/Social/Slovakia%20report.pdf>

Issues for women entrepreneurs

To the date very little research focusing on women entrepreneurs have been undertaken. Consequently it was difficult for this report to gather reliable data allowing for thorough analysis of the situation of women entrepreneurs. Below short section is based on the existing information. Out of the total number of entrepreneurs approximately 30% are women. Mainly, they can be found in small compa-

nies, and predominantly in social services. Most of women entrepreneurs are around 35 to 45 years old ⁴⁹. In the following table the evolution of self-employment since 1998 (not distinguishing between those with employees and those without) is shown. Men have shown a faster growth and continue to constitute double of the rate of self-employed women.

SELF-EMPLOYED AS A PROPORTION OF ALL EMPLOYED, SLOVAKIA

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total	7.1	8	8.3	8.9	9.1	10.2
Men	9.5	10.8	11.3	11.9	12.5	13.5
Women	4.2	4.6	4.8	5.1	5	6.2

Source: EUROSTAT, *Employment in Europe, 2004*

It is very revealing that in the main statistical web-page for the Slovak Republic, there is no possibility to obtain detailed information by sex of the branches or sectors of the economy where entrepreneurs have their businesses although this information is available for all entrepreneurs.

Examples of promotion of Slovak women entrepreneurs:

> Prospecta - CEBWA Club: Prospecta was founded in 1999 by business women.

Prospecta has three main aims and objectives:

- to promote economic equality for women
- to support personal and professional development of women
- to promote development of women entrepreneurship
- to facilitate cooperation among women through creation of networks at local, regional, national, and international level

> Acentre of the Top Women-Entrepreneurs

This women's organization has various objectives:

- to increase the participation of women entrepreneurs in the economic and public life of Slovakia
- to create public conditions, which ensure that family enterprises, industrial, commercial, and agricultural societies and art agencies contribute to build a framework for common activities
- to inform and support women about their chances and opportunities regarding positions in national and public fields
- to collect and distribute documentation and articles concerning women
- to raise public awareness regarding all kinds of discrimination and to initiate legal modification.

Case studies

Case study 1: Being a single working parent

Maria is a high school educated women, a divorced 48 years old woman with one 15 year old son. The father is obliged to pay child maintenance of 3000 SK (approximately 79 EUR) per month. He is paying it irregularly. She is working as a civil servant. Her after tax income together with family benefits is app. 11 500 SK (approximately 302 EUR) per month.

Maria is now paying app. 113 EUR rental of her apartment plus 50 EUR other expenses (for example electricity, phone, collection). Maria is also paying a loan of 92 EUR per month (apartment). Her other expenses covers food, cloth for both of them which is app. 132 EUR. Her monthly expenses are together app. 387 EUR. Maria had income app. 350 EUR plus remuneration in 1993. She was working in private sector (in a bank). Because of the divorce and a small child she had to make decision and to change the employer and to go to work in public sector. *Source: interview conducted by the Alliance of Women in Slovakia in 2005.*

Differences between wages of men and women on the same position

Zuzana is a 55 years old women, high educated, married, without children. She is working in private sector in a bank. She is working as a financial adviser. Her after tax income is app. 1052 EUR per month plus years remuneration. Her colleague who is a man (34 years old) without an university degree works on the same position. He joined the firm 2 years later than she. Incomes are taboo to talk between colleagues in the bank. Once they were talking and Zuzana mentioned her income to him. He started to laugh.

He said that his income is at least 10 % per month more than hers. *Source: interview conducted by the Alliance of Women in Slovakia in 2005*

49 - http://www.penelopes.org/Anglais/xarticle.php3?id_article=246
50 - <http://www.unece.org/iel/enterp/documents/slovak.pdf>

