

# Slovakia

## KEY FACTS

**Official name:** Slovenská Republika (Slovak Republic)

**Head of State:** President Ivan Gasparovic (formerly HZD) (from 2004, re-elected Apr 2009)

**Head of government:** Prime Minister Robert Fico (Smer-SD) (from 4 Apr 2012)

**Ruling party:** Strana Smer-Tretia Cesta-Sociálna Demokracia (Smer-SD) (Direction Party-Social Democrats) (from 10 Mar 2012)

**Area:** 49,035 square km

**Population:** 5.44 million (2012)

**Capital:** Bratislava

**Official language:** Slovak

**Currency:** Euro (€) = 100 cents (from 1 Jan 2009; previous currency Slovak koruna, locked at Sk30.126 per euro)

**Exchange rate:** €0.75 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

**GDP per capita:** US\$16,899 (2012)\*

**GDP real growth:** 2.03% (2012)\*

**GDP:** US\$91.92 billion (2012)\*

**Labour force:** 2.70 million (2012)

**Unemployment:** 14.00% (2012)\*

**Inflation:** 3.73% (2012)\*

**Balance of trade:** US\$4.65 billion (2012)\*

**Annual FDI:** US\$3.66 billion (2011)

\* estimated figure



If there's an autocrat at the political steering wheel when Slovakia's auto-driven economy hits the skids, nationalist race-baiting is chief among the tactics used to deflect criticism from the electorate over the tailspin. This has been something of a time honored tradition in Slovakia and one which Robert Fico appears determined to continue in his second stint as prime minister.

Like former coalition partner Vladimir Meciar before him, the Strana Smer-Tretia Cesta-Sociálna Demokracia (Smer-SD) (Direction Party-Social Democrats) leader didn't disappoint amid 2013's downward trend in gross domestic product (GDP) growth, refusing to consider revision of a controversial citizenship bill aimed at ethnic Hungarians passed during his previous administration. He also did little to prevent still more of the literal walling off of indigenous Roma minorities around the country.

To be fair, the economic situation in Slovakia, where per-capita GDP from car production is the world's highest, is not entirely of Fico's own making. Yet the

imposition of taxes on the wealthy and an initiative aimed at shoring up VAT collection have done little to offset the effects – including a halving of 2013 growth forecasts – resulting from declines in demand from the country's European Union (EU) trading partners.

While expectations among Western institutions for a revival in 2014 are uniform, their consensus is that the prime minister must embark on the sorts of structural changes that are necessary to reduce the impact of exports on the country's economic fortunes. Among them are encouraging the job-creation that ensures the popular frustration Fico has been able to tap doesn't turn on his government.

## A solid foundation

Elected in March 2012 and in the wake of a corruption scandal – the so-called Gorilla File – that brought down the reformist coalition led by Iveta Radicova, the Fico government rests on a firm parliamentary majority. Smer-SD captured 83 of the 150 seats in the Národná Rada (National Council), the Slovak parliament, in the

balloting that drew three-fifths of the electorate to the polls.

Yet, while he enjoys unprecedented support – no single party has controlled the Slovak parliament since dissolution of the former Czechoslovakia in 1993 – Fico has had little opportunity for a honeymoon since coming to power. While the economy finished 2012 up 2 per cent thanks to new-model introductions by several automakers with in-country production facilities, the final quarter saw the rate of growth slip to 0.7 per cent, according to the Slovak Statistical Office – a rate of just 0.2 per cent when adjusting for seasonal factors.

Spurred on by declines in demand from the European markets that consume four-fifths of Slovakia's exports, the slide continued into the new year. In June 2013, the Narodna Banka Slovenska (NBS) (National Bank of Slovakia) (central bank) cut its growth estimate for 2013 to 0.6 per cent, or half the forecast that had been used 10 months earlier in calculating the government budget for 2013 that aimed to bring deficit spending under the 3 per cent of GDP required by the Treaty of Maastricht (the treaty, signed by the 12 original members on 7 February 1992, that created the European Union, and which all new members have to abide by).

Aimed at pulling the deficit down from 4.3 per cent of GDP in 2012, cuts in spending that include a streamlining of public administration, failed to have fuller effect thanks to spending increases made to apply brakes to the downturn. Parliament in June 2013 approved a plan – called Effective, Reliable and Open State Administration (ESO) – that will see almost 300 regional and state offices rolled into 72 district centres.

However, its October implementation looks unlikely to put much of a dent in government spending that fell by around €785 million (US\$1.05 billion) year-on-year through August, in part due to a rise in social security contributions on temporary employment contracts. Citing a fall in revenues that pushed the deficit figure near to €2 billion (US\$2.67 billion) at mid-year, finance minister Peter Kazimir said at the time of the ESO's passage that the government was likely to miss its 2013 deficit target.

### Taking chances

The deficit is despite the 2013 budget, passed in October 2012, which saw the country's 19 per cent flat tax on corporate income raised by 4 points, to 23 per cent. And while the government left a 19 per

cent rate on individual income in place, it added a 25 per cent tax on annual earnings in excess of €34,400 (US\$45,900). That state revenues failed to keep pace with expectations, even though the Fico government has raised taxes on companies and individuals, is partly down to the sort of endemic corruption that lingers among post-Communist economies in the region.

To shore up receipts, the government in September launched a VAT lottery that encourages consumers to request receipts at cash tills and from service providers. Under the scheme – expected to cost €180,000 (US\$240,000) annually to operate – numbers will be printed twice monthly in local papers and holders of VAT receipts can reimburse them for cash prizes ranging from €1,000 (US\$1,330) to €10,000 (US\$13,330).

Although VAT evasion is reckoned to take place on a grand scale – the figure, judging by the discrepancies between tax collected and economic activity, was reckoned by the finance ministry to be around €2 billion (US\$2.67 billion) in 2012 – and mostly in business-to-business transactions. However, because requesting a receipt is not common practice, a further €150 million (US\$200 million) is reckoned to be unaccounted for in transactions at kiosks, convenience and retail shops and restaurants.

### Fiddling numbers

Of course, success of the VAT lottery is predicated on people having money to spend. And with unemployment hovering persistently around 14 per cent at mid-year 2013, the levels of disposable

income continue to fall. Consumer spending is expected to decline for the fourth year running in 2013, an observation – by accountants Ernst and Young – that is bolstered by the conservative views on job creation among respondents to a 2013 European Commission (EC) survey of businesses, which reported that the low-growth scenario is undercutting hiring plans.

At the end of 2012, the unemployment rate stood at 14.5 per cent and fell by around half a point through June, according to figures from the ministry of labour, social affairs and family. A deal struck in March 2013 to keep US Steel at a loss-making plant in the eastern city of Kosice – where the US giant employs 11,000 workers – over the next five years will stem further losses. Critics argue that the reduction in the unemployment rate is less a reflection of more people in work and more the result of manipulating figures.

According to press reports, MPs from the opposition Slovenská Demokratická a Kresťanská Únia-Demokratická Strana (SDKÚ-DS) (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party) charge that labour offices were being instructed to clear the records of some claimants. Among them, those on maternity leave and part-time workers who are entitled to supplementary benefit. Further, the EC survey surmises that job-creation is a non-starter as long as growth trends below 2 per cent of GDP. While recovery is expected above that level in 2014, forecasts both by the central bank and outside observers by mid-year already were being revised downward.

## KEY INDICATORS

## Slovakia

	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	5.41	*5.42	*5.43	*5.45	*5.44
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	95.20	88.20	87.50	96.10	*91.92
GDP per capita	US\$	16,282	16,282	16,104	17,644	*16,899
GDP real growth	%	5.8	-4.9	4.2	3.3	*2.0
Inflation	%	3.9	0.9	0.7	4.1	*3.7
Unemployment	%	7.7	11.4	12.5	13.6	*14.0
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	70,271.0	55,515.0	64,665.0	78,397.8	80,751.1
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	71,170.0	53,799.0	64,484.0	75,075.8	76,102.6
Balance of trade	US\$m	-899.0	1,715.0	182.0	3,322.0	4,648.5
Current account	US\$m	-6,185.0	-2,810.0	-3,009.0	-1,986.0	*2,097.0
Total reserves minust gold	US\$m	17,854.0	692.0	719.0	853.0	818.0
Foreign exchange	US\$m	17,805.0	50.0	52.0	60.0	17.0
Exchange rate	per US\$	21.36	0.78	0.76	0.75	0.75
* estimated figure						

## Blame game

Hence Fico's posturing for a loosening of austerity measures among governments in core Europe. And his antagonistic approach to minorities at home. In a campaign speech in the run-up to the March 2012 poll, he let slip that the country had been 'established for Slovaks, not for minorities', and then spent much of the rest of the year backtracking from the statement.

Unlike his first stint as prime minister, in a coalition with Meciár's *Ludová Strana-Hnutie Za Demokratické Slovensko (LS-HZDS)* (People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) and the *Slovenská Národná Strana (SNS)* (Slovak National Party) then headed by rightwing MP Jan Slota – which held power from 2006–10 – Fico's toned-down rhetoric when dealing with his country's main trading partners is a marked contrast. Swift passage of the country's €5.7 billion (US\$7.6 billion) contribution to the European Stability Mechanism, aimed at bailing out euro-zone governments in crisis, is evidence of what government officials say is a more pragmatic approach to policy.

This extends to soft-pedaling on relations with the Hungarian government, whose leader, Viktor Orbán, is cut from the same maverick cloth. But it has not prevented the Fico administration from drawing the ire of the country's Hungarian minority – comprising some 10 per cent of Slovakia's 5.5 million people – who demand that institutionalised electoral, educational and linguistic discrimination be addressed.

While the government has empowered councils on minorities, gender equality and gay rights, how much of these policy innovations appear as window dressing is evident in the prime minister's failure to intervene in the segregation of gypsy communities in Kosice. Counselors in the country's second-largest city erected a so-called Roma wall in July.

Although there were protests from Brussels, Fico deferred to city officials, who claim that the local council built the wall – the 14th such barrier nationwide – without its knowledge. And while a retroactive ballot on the issue among local officials had yet to be carried out in September 2013, the wall remained in place even as city officials vowed it would come down.

## Future growth

Despite the negative domestic economic and political developments, institutional

investors on the hunt for yield in a zero-interest-rate environment have taken up government-issued scrip with some alacrity. Issues in 2013 included a 10-year, €1.75 billion (US\$2.33 billion) in February priced at 146 basis points over corresponding German Bunds thanks to over-subscription. The country also issued a pair of benchmark bonds in both Japanese Yen and Swiss Francs, raising almost €700 million (US\$9.3 million).

Forecasters from the World Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reckon the government will need those funds if it is to smooth the structural changes that are necessary to diversify the Slovak economy from its narrow, export-focused industrial base. And to lay the foundation for less-sensitive sources of employment.

Drafted in August, the 2014 government budget looks likely to bring the deficit under the Maastricht threshold. Finance minister Kazimir said at a news conference that he estimated that doing so will require austerity measures worth some €700 million (US\$933 million), around half of which will come from the streamlining of public administration under the ESO. The spending plan is based on an assumption of the economy expanding by 2.2 percent, with increased tax revenues expected to help make up the shortfall. The government proposes cutting the deficit to 2.6 per cent of annual output in 2015 and 1.5 per cent in 2016.

Whether the Fico government is successful is largely down to the economic fortunes in core Europe. And while the prime minister's parliamentary majority appears safe, he will need to further curtail the nationalist rhetoric. As some observers cautioned in 2013, that can be a dangerous tack in a country where more than a third of those under 25 cannot find work.

## Risk assessment

Politics	Fair
Economy	Fair
Regional stability	Good

## COUNTRY PROFILE

### Historical profile

Slovakia, called *Oberungarn* (Upper Hungary) in some older maps, had politically been a part of the Hungarian kingdom for centuries, ever since the Moravian Kingdom had been destroyed in 902.

1536–1783 Bratislava, formerly Pressburg, was the capital of Hungary.

1867–1917 The Habsburg domains in central Europe were reconstituted as the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

Slovakia's struggle for independence suffered a setback when Hungary's parliament gained a large degree of political autonomy from the Austrian administration in Vienna. The policy of Magyarisation that the Hungarian administration strove to achieve – Hungarian was to be the exclusive language of administration, jurisdiction and education – was most disturbing to Slovakia.

1918 At the end of the First World War, Slovakia announced its independence from the Austro-Hungarian empire and incorporation into the new Republic of Czechoslovakia with Thomas Masaryk as the country's first president.

1938 Czechoslovakia ceded its German-speaking areas of Sudetenland to Germany.

1939–45 The country fell under German control until the end of the Second World War.

1946 The Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) formed a power-sharing government following national elections.

1948 After mass protests and strikes orchestrated by the Communists, a government crisis left the CPCz with a majority in government.

1949–67 Stalinist-style rule, complete with party purges.

1968 Alexander Dubcek, the CPCz leader, introduced the policy of 'socialism with a human face', which ended with the crushing of the reformist movement by the Soviet army.

1969–88 There were on-going protests at occupation by the Soviet troops. Václav Havel and a group of dissidents called for the restoration of civil and political rights. Mass demonstrations in 1988 marked the anniversary of the 1968 invasion.

1989 The new spirit of *glasnost* was met with scepticism as the government initially resisted political and economic change. However, large public demonstrations in the major cities, the 'Velvet Revolution', led to the resignation of the Communist Party leadership. Václav Havel was elected president and a pluralistic political system and market economy were introduced.

1990 The country was renamed the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The first free elections since 1946 led to the establishment of a coalition government involving all major parties, with the exception of the CPCz, and Havel was re-elected president.

1991 The Soviet forces completed their withdrawal.

1992 In elections, the Czech voters backed the centre-right, while the Slovaks supported Slovak separatists and left-wing parties. Vladimír Meciár (a supporter of Slovak separatism) became Slovak prime minister. He opposed the rapid

privatisation of the public sector proposed by the Czech prime minister, Václav Klaus. Neither was prepared to compromise and so agreed to the separation of Slovakia, despite President Havel's objections.

1993 Czechoslovakia divided into two independent countries, the Czech Republic (comprising the regions of Bohemia and Moravia) and the Slovak Republic (Slovakia). Michal Kovac became president of the Slovak Republic, with Vladimir Meciar continuing as prime minister.

1994 Meciar was voted out of office and was replaced by Jozef Moravcik. But following National Council elections Meciar was returned to power.

1998 Kovac's presidential term expired and Prime Minister Meciar assumed some presidential powers. Mikuláš Dzurinda became prime minister as opposition parties refused to co-operate with Meciar, despite his party, Hnutie Za Demokratické Slovensko (HZDS) (Movement for Democratic Slovakia), gaining most seats in the general elections.

1999 Rudolf Schuster was elected president.

2000 The Slovenská Demokratická a Kresťanská Únia-Demokratická Strana (SDKÚ-DS) (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party) backed Mikuláš Dzurinda in the next elections.

2002 The parliamentary elections were won by the SDKÚ-DS, which formed a coalition with the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK), the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the New Citizen Alliance (ANO). Nato invited Slovakia to join its alliance.

2003 Referendum voters approved European Union (EU) membership.

2004 Ivan Gasparovic won the presidency. Slovakia became an EU member.

2005 Slovakia entered the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II).

2006 The left-leaning Smer-Sociálna Demokracia (Smer) (Direction party-Social Democracy) won the general elections.

Agreement between Smer, the Ludová Strana-Hnutie Za Demokratické Slovensko (LS-HZDS) (People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia), and the Slovenská Národná Strana (SNS) (Slovak National Party), created a coalition government. Robert Fico (Smer) became prime minister.

2007 Slovakia became a member of the EU Schengen area; all citizens may cross borders without a passport or visa.

2008 An agreement for visa-free visits of citizens to the US was signed.

2009 The national currency, the Koruna, was replaced by the euro. In presidential elections held in parliament, no candidate won over 50 per cent in the first round; in the runoff incumbent Ivan Gasparovic

(candidate of the ruling coalition) won 55.5 per cent of the vote, Iveta Radicová (joint candidate of opposition parties) won 44.5 per cent. A new language law was introduced, making the use of minority languages (mainly Hungarian) in official government business a finable offence.

The law was condemned by Hungary, which asked for EU support in condemning the law.

2010 In parliamentary elections the ruling Smer won 34.8 per cent of the vote (62 seats out of 150), the largest vote for a single party; a centre-right grouping won 79 seats. The president invited Prime Minister Fico (Smer) to form a new government. When Fico failed, the president asked Iveta Radicová to form a government. She became Slovakia's first woman prime minister, at the head of a centre-right, four-party coalition of SDKÚ-DS, SaS, KDH and Bridge.

2011 Slovakia voiced opposition to the second fiscal bailout of Greece by Euro-partners in July. As the second poorest nation (after Estonia) in the euro-zone it objected to its funds being used on a 'richer' country's debts. Along with Finland, Germany and The Netherlands it wanted more austerity and reforms from Greece as well as Greek state property used as collateral, plus private creditors to accept at least a US\$43 billion share as their own liability. In October Parliament voted against the government's motion to support the EU-EMU bailout of weaker economies. An agreement was reached with the opposition whereby the EU ratification bill would be passed in exchange for early general elections. On 25 October, the government was reinstated in a caretaker function, but with reduced powers. Vaclav Havel, the first post-Communist president of Czechoslovakia (1989-93; 1993-2003 Czech Republic only) died on 18 December. He oversaw the transition to democracy of Czechoslovakia and its division when the Czech Republic and Slovakia were created.

2012 Early general elections (by two years and only two years after the last) were held on 10 March. The opposition Smer-Sociálna Demokracia (Smer-SD) won a decisive victory and gained a majority of seats in parliament, enough to implement its plans for a reduced public deficit with higher taxes for the rich. Robert Fico (Smer-SD) took office as prime minister on 4 April. On 28 November a national strike by teachers, protesting at their low pay and status, was ended after three days.

2013 The authorities of the eastern city of Kosice said they would take legal action to remove a wall separating Roma (Gypsy) families from majority Slovaks. The wall had been put up two months

earlier. Kosice mayor Richard Rasi was responding to EU commissioner for culture Androulla Vassiliou who said the wall violated the EU's stand against racism.

## Political structure

### Constitution

The constitution was ratified in 1992. No new government can be formed until the president has accepted the resignation of the former one. Further amendments in January and February 2001 created an independent council, increasing the powers of the constitutional court, and paved the way for reform of the public administration.

With reference to accession to EU and NATO, an amendment to the constitution was approved on 1 July 2001, which reclassified the relationship between national and international law, introduced judicial regulations and allowed for the creation of a second tier of self-administrative government in the regions.

Electoral system: Universal direct suffrage for party lists. All electoral coalitions have to win 5 per cent of the vote for every party they contain.

### Independence date

1 January 1993

### Form of state

Parliamentary democratic republic

### The executive

Executive power lies with the prime minister and ministers, the former being appointed by the president.

The head of state is the president, elected by the National Council of the Slovak Republic by secret ballot for a period of five years. A majority of three-fifths of all deputies' votes is required for the president to be elected.

### National legislature

The unicameral Národná Rada (National Council) has 150 members, directly elected by proportional representation from party lists, to serve for four-year terms.

### Legal system

Slovakia's legal system is partly based on the Czechoslovakian system introduced before independence in 1993. The judiciary is independent of the government, although the president appoints judges to both the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court. The Constitutional Court is responsible for ensuring that legislation adheres to the constitution and 13 judges are appointed for a period of 12 years. Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed for an unlimited time period. As part of the process toward accession to the EU, Slovakia has been attempting to harmonise its existing and new legislation with that of the organisation.

### Last elections

21 March / 4 April 2009 (presidential and runoff); 10 March 2012 (parliamentary)

**Results:** Presidential: (first round) Ivan Gasparovic won 46.7 per cent, Iveta Radicová 38.1 per cent, Frantisek Miklosko 5.4 per cent, Zuzana Martináková 5.1 per cent; turnout was 43.6 per cent. (Runoff) Gasparovic won 55.5 per cent; Radicová 44.5 per cent. Turnout was 51.6 per cent. Parliamentary: Strana Smer-Tretia Cesta-Sociálna Demokracia (Smer-SD) (Direction Party-Social Democrats) won 44.41 per cent of the vote (83 seats, out of 150), Krestansko-Demokratické Hnutie (KDH) (Christian Democratic Movement) 8.82 per cent (16), Obyčajní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti (Obyčajní Ľudia) (Ordinary People and Independent Personalities) (Ordinary People) 8.55 per cent (16), Most-Híd (Bridge) 6.89 per cent (13), Slovenská Demokratická a Krestanská Únia (SDKÚ) (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union) 6.09 per cent (11), Sloboda a Solidarita (SaS) (Freedom and Solidarity Party) 5.88 per cent (11); 20 other political parties each won less than 5 per cent of the vote and failed to win any seats. Turnout was 59.11 per cent.

### Next elections

2014 (presidential); 2016 (parliamentary)

### Political parties

#### Ruling party

Strana Smer-Tretia Cesta- Sociálna Demokracia (Smer-SD) (Direction Party-Social Democrats) (from 10 Mar 2012)

#### Main opposition party

Krestansko-Demokratické Hnutie (KDH) (Christian D)

**Last census:** May 2001: 5,379,455

**Population density:** 110.4 inhabitants per square km. Urban population 55 per cent (2010 Unicef).

**Annual growth rate:** 0.2 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

#### Ethnic make-up

The chief non-Roma minorities are Hungarians (10.8 per cent of the population), Czechs (3 per cent), Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Germans and Poles. Roma, although making up only 1.5 per cent of the overall population, make up a significant minority in some areas, and are growing faster than the national average.

#### Religions

Roman Catholic (60.3 per cent), Protestant (8.4 per cent), Orthodox (4.1 per cent).

#### Education

Slovakia has universal literacy and offers free education to all. Enrolment at all levels is high and there is no noticeable

gender disparity. Languages of instruction are English and Slovak, although Hungarians may be taught in their own language. In June 2004 the government failed, in a vote in parliament, to introduce student loans for tertiary education.

**Literacy rate:** 100 per cent adult rate; 100 per cent youth rate (15–24) (Unesco 2005).

**Compulsory years:** 6 to 15

**Enrolment rate:** 102 per cent total primary enrolment, 94 per cent gross secondary enrolment; of the relevant age groups (including repeaters); (World Bank).

**Pupils per teacher:** 20 in primary schools

#### Health

There is a significant disparity between male and female life expectancy (9 years), partly due to the unbalanced diet and high cigarette and beer consumption by men, which the government is attempting to reduce.

#### HIV/Aids

**HIV prevalence:** 0.1 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

**Life expectancy:** 74 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

**Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate:** 1.3 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef)

**Birth rate/Death rate:** 10 births per and nine deaths per 1,000 population (2003).

**Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000):** 8 per 1,000 live births (World Bank)

**Head of population per physician:** 3.18 physicians per 1,000 people, 2003 (WHO 2006)

#### Welfare

Slovakia has a 42.5 hour working week with a minimum wage set by the government. It has a well-developed social security system, including health, unemployment and pension benefits. Employees contribute 12 per cent of their wages to social security schemes and employers an additional 38 per cent.

#### Main cities

Bratislava (capital, estimated population 421,218 in 2012), Košice (233,346), Prešov (90,597), Žilina (85,528), Nitra (82,752), Banská Bystrica (79,265), Trnava (67,190), Martin (58,430).

#### Languages spoken

The Czech and Slovak languages are mutually comprehensible. Hungarian is widely spoken, especially in the south and east.

A large proportion of the population, particularly those engaged in industry and foreign trade, speaks German. Russian is also spoken by some executives. English is increasing, especially among the younger generation.

#### Official language/s

Slovak

#### Media

##### Press

**Dailies:** There are national and regional dailies, most published in Slovakian, including *Pravda* ([www.pravda.sk](http://www.pravda.sk)), *Praca* ([www.praca.sk](http://www.praca.sk)), *Novy CAS* ([www.bleskovky.sk](http://www.bleskovky.sk)), *SME* ([www.sme.sk](http://www.sme.sk)). In Hungarian, *Új Szó* ([www.ujso.com](http://www.ujso.com)) and in English *Slovak Spectator* ([www.slovakspectator.sk](http://www.slovakspectator.sk)). Regional publications in Slovakian includes, *Korzar* ([www.cassovia.sk/korzar](http://www.cassovia.sk/korzar)) from Kosice, *Presovsky Vecernik* ([www.slovanet.sk/vecernik/pv](http://www.slovanet.sk/vecernik/pv)) from Presov and *Nitrianske Noviny* ([www.mynoviny.sk](http://www.mynoviny.sk)) from Nitra.

**Weeklies:** Magazines in Slovakian include *Plus 7 Dni* ([www.plus7dni.sk](http://www.plus7dni.sk)), *Tyzden* ([www.tyzden.sk](http://www.tyzden.sk)) and in Hungarian *Vasárnap* ([www.vasarnap.com](http://www.vasarnap.com)).

**Business:** Magazines, in Slovakian, include *Profit* (<http://profit.etrend.sk>) and in English *Trend* (<http://english.etrend.sk>). Newspapers in Slovakian *Hospodarske Noviny* ([www.hnonline.sk](http://www.hnonline.sk)) and *Profini* ([www.profini.sk](http://www.profini.sk)). Many dailies include sections on business news.

**Periodicals:** *Slovak Spectator*, an English-language newspaper, is published every second Wednesday.

##### Broadcasting

**Radio:** There are over 20 private, commercial radio stations. The public Slovensky Rozhlas (Slovak Radio) broadcasts nationwide as well as international programmes. Other major radio stations includes Radio Expres ([www.expres.sk](http://www.expres.sk)), Radio Viva ([www.radioviva.sk](http://www.radioviva.sk)), Radio Okey ([www.okey.sk](http://www.okey.sk)) and Fun Radio ([www.funradio.sk](http://www.funradio.sk)).

Other European radio stations are available.

**Television:** There are several networks available including, TV Markiza ([www.markiza.sk](http://www.markiza.sk)) which has the largest audience, Slovenská televízia (Slovak TV) ([www.stv.sk](http://www.stv.sk)) is the public channel, Jaj TV ([www.jaj.sk](http://www.jaj.sk)) and the news channel TA3 ([www.ta3.com](http://www.ta3.com)), which broadcasts regional programmes via cable. Reception of broadcasts from neighbouring countries allows greater variety. TASR, Pribinova 23, 81928 Bratislava 111 (tel: 5921-0152; fax: 5296-3405; email: [export@tasr.sk](mailto:export@tasr.sk); internet: [www.tasr.sk](http://www.tasr.sk)).

Sita (Slovak news agency) ([www.sita.sk](http://www.sita.sk)).

#### Economy

Since joining the European Union (EU) in 2004 Slovenia's economy has experienced a period of rapid growth, based on a vibrant export sector. GDP growth averaged 7.4 per cent over 2004–08, while

the unemployment rate fell from around 19 per cent in 2001 to 12.5 per cent in 2009 before rising to 14.4 per cent in 2010; the rate levelled off at 13.5 per cent in 2011 and is expected to remain until 2013. Heavy industries include steel, aluminium and petroleum production and vehicle manufacturing; Slovakia had the highest global per capita car production in 2009. Lighter industries include electronic component manufacturing, paper and household machines goods. There are rich farmlands in the south and wine is an important export commodity, along with grains, live animals and fruits and vegetables.

GDP growth in 2007 was a record 10.5 per cent, which fell to 5.8 per cent in 2008 as energy and food prices soared and the global economic crisis weakened exports. The government introduced stimulus packages in late 2008 and early 2009, including tax reductions and subsidies and measures to increase liquidity in the corporate sector and incentives to speed up the use of EU funds. Despite this, in 2009 the economy fell into recession with a GDP growth rate of -4.9 per cent. However, a recovery was achieved in 2010 with growth of 4.2 per cent, although this weakened to 3.3 per cent in 2011, in the face of the European currency crisis. The trade balance that had been -US\$2.55 billion as imports outstripped exports in 2006 was reversed by 2009 and was US\$1.72 billion as imports were cut by over 11 per cent.

In 2012 the World Bank ranked Slovakia at 48 (out of 183 countries) in the World Bank's annual *Ease of doing business*, a fall of 5 places on the 2011 ranking. Slovakia has a skilled workforce, flat rate corporate and personal tax of 19 per cent and a generally liberal labour code, all of which encouraged much of the foreign direct investment (FDI) of US\$553.1 million in 2010. Other EU member states account for the largest proportion of FDI. The economy in early 2012 became one of the strongest in the euro-zone.

#### External trade

As a member of the European Union, Slovakia operates within a community-wide free trade area, with tariffs set as a whole. Internationally, the EU has free trade agreements with a number of nations and trading blocs worldwide. Foreign trade represents over 160 per cent of GDP, of which the greater part is automobile assembly – in 2006 Slovakia produced more cars per head than any other country worldwide. Traditional heavy industry is being replaced in importance by manufacturing of consumer goods, electronics and engineering and the petrochemical industry.

Natural resources, geared to exports, include mineral extraction (high-grade iron ore, copper, lead, and zinc) and forestry products.

#### Imports

Principal imports include capital machinery and transport equipment (over 40 per cent), electrical equipment, intermediate and other manufactured goods, fuels and chemicals.

**Main sources:** Germany (18.2 per cent of total in 2012), Czech Republic (17.5 per cent), Russia (9.7 per cent).

#### Exports

Principal exports include vehicles (around 30 per cent), machinery and energy and electrical equipment, base metals, minerals, chemicals, plastics and timber.

**Main destinations:** Germany (21.1 per cent of total in 2012), Czech Republic (14 per cent), Poland (8.3 per cent).

#### Agriculture

The agricultural sector suffered from under-investment during the communist era. In an attempt to increase productivity, a land restitution act was adopted in 1990, under which all agricultural land taken by the state between 1948–55 was returned to its original owners.

Agriculture contributes around 3.5 per cent to GDP. Wheat, maize and barley are exported. Only 10 per cent of potato requirements are imported and about 20 per cent of raw sugar requirements.

Slovakia is a net importer of oil crops, although the margin is very small, with equal amounts of rape and mustard seed imported and exported. Slovakia is mostly self sufficient in meat, eggs and milk.

The agricultural sector is subject to the reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), whereby subsidies are no longer paid on farm output, which tended to benefit large farms and encourage over-production, but rather on single farm payments not conditional on production.

The fishing sector, based on inland fisheries and imported sea-fish, is not significant, producing around 2,500 tonnes a year.

Forest and other wooded land accounts for over two-fifths of the land area, with forest cover estimated at 2.1 million hectares (ha). More than 80 per cent of the forest is available for wood supply and the rest is preserved. The ownership structure of forest areas has changed considerably since 1990 as a result of privatisation and restitution. Half of the forested area is state-owned.

Consumption of forest products per capita is below the European average. Nearly all of the roundwood is processed in the country, using much of the hardwood and softwood species. Slovakia is a net exporter of forestry products and although

the industry is in need of modernisation, it is a significant earner of foreign exchange. Over three-quarters of sawnwood produced is exported, mostly to Hungary. The pulp industry utilises half of the hardwood production, recovered paper and some non-wood fibre pulp. The bulk of exports also constitute paper and pulpboard.

#### Industry and manufacturing

Industry accounts for around 30 per cent of GDP and 30 per cent of employment. Industrial production fell by approximately 20 per cent after the end of the Communist regime and privatisation has been unable to inject the necessary cash required for investment. Compared to neighbouring Hungary and Czech Republic, Slovak industry is marked by inefficiency, hidden bankruptcies and government subsidies. The principal industries are the manufacture of machinery, chemicals and rubber, food and beverages, and iron metallurgy. Slovakian industry remains more vulnerable to the instability of Eastern European markets than its Czech neighbour. The long-term prospects for the sector depend on how successfully the country can recover from the dislocation of its traditional markets and find new ones for such key industries as steel. Half of all foreign direct investment (FDI) in Slovakia goes to the manufacturing sector.

#### Tourism

Despite being a country of forests and mountains that feature rare animals and skiing in the winter, the capital, Bratislava is the single most visited place in Slovakia. In 2011 there were 1.5 million foreign visitors, of which around one-third (477,159) were from the Czech Republic; Poland (172,001) and Germany (133,431) were the next largest groups of visitors.

Travel and tourism contributed 6.5 per cent to GDP over 2007–11 and provided employment for an average 6.3 per cent of the workforce (150,220 jobs) in the same period. The industry has suffered since the global economic crisis cut visitor numbers from 1.8 million in 2008 to 1.3 million in 2009 and its contribution to GDP has suffered negative growth averaging -6.3 per cent (2009–11), the trend is predicted to remain with a growth of -0.6 per cent in 2012. Domestic spending has also fallen as more Slovaks choose to spend their leisure time elsewhere. Košice (the second largest city in Slovakia) will become the European Capital of Culture in 2013 and is expected to draw in large numbers of visitors to a year-long programme of cultural events.

### Mining

Slovakia has workable deposits of antimony ore, mercury, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, precious metals, limestone, dolomite, gravel, brick loam, ceramic materials and stone salt. In each case, except iron ores, only small quantities are actually mined.

### Hydrocarbons

Oil reserves have been virtually exhausted and Slovakia must rely on imports to meet its consumption level of 83,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil. Oil imports come from Russia through two pipelines to the Slovnaft refinery in Bratislava and the rest to the Czech Republic.

Natural gas reserves of 15 billion cubic metres are almost exhausted and Slovakia relies on the imports to meet its demands for 6.5 billion per annum. Almost all natural gas is imported from Russia. Slovakia is also an important transit route for Russian gas exports, as around 25 per cent of gas consumed in Western Europe travels across its territory.

Coal is mined on a large scale. Reserves could last more than 40 years. Most is low quality brown coal (lignite) and looks likely to diminish as a key energy source due to the amount of pollution it causes.

### Energy

Total installed electricity generating capacity was 7.36GW. Slovakia had five Chernobyl-style nuclear reactors in operation but an agreement with the EU saw the closure of three in 2008 and an upgrade in two. Before their shutdown nuclear energy supplied 57 per cent of electricity. The state-owned Slovenske Elektrarne (Slovak Electric) was partially sold off with 66 per cent purchased by the Italian Enel energy company. As a condition of the sale Enel agreed to invest €1.8 billion (US\$2 billion) to increase generating capacity. Slovak Electric also operates thermal and hydroelectric plants.

### Financial markets

#### Stock exchange

Burza Cennych Papierov v Bratislave (BSSE) (Bratislava Stock Exchange)

#### Banking and insurance

Slovakia's banking system has been reformed, although the sector has been plagued by bad debts coupled with massive losses affecting a third of banks. As a result, economic structuring has been essential to both macroeconomic stability and the integrity of the banking sector. Many of the country's larger banks have been privatised. In early 2002, a 66.7 stake in Slovenska Poistovna (Slovak Insurance Bank) was sold to Germany's Allianz AG for US\$142 million. Smaller banks have closed as the central bank has imposed a tough regulatory framework on

commerce, with greater power given to creditors.

#### Central bank

Narodna Banka Slovenska (NBS) (National Bank of Slovakia)

#### Main financial centre

Bratislava

#### Time

GMT plus one hour (daylight saving, late March to late October, GMT plus two hours)

#### Geography

Slovakia is a landlocked, hilly country in the heart of Europe. Around 80 per cent of the country has an altitude of over 750 metres above sea level. The High Tatra Mountains in the north give way to large lowlands, broad valleys and meadows in the south.

Slovakia is bordered by the Czech Republic to the west (the border is 215km long), by Poland to the north (444km), Ukraine to the east (90km), Hungary to the south (515km) and Austria to the south-west (the border with Austria is only 15km from the capital, Bratislava).

The High Tatra Mountains are on the northern Polish border and the Low Tatras are in the centre and east of the country. The highest peak is Gerlach in the High Tatras (2,655 metres), with the lowest point the Bodrog river near Streda and Bodrogom (95 metres).

There are numerous rivers flowing south to the lowland areas, including the Váh, Nitra, Hron and Hornád. The River Danube marks part of the southern border. The lowland areas are in the south-west and south-east of the country.

#### Hemisphere

Northern

#### Climate

Slovakia has a continental climate (warm summers and cold winters). Summer maximum temperatures are 32 degrees Celsius to 35 degrees C; July is the hottest month (average 30 degrees C). Minimum temperatures are minus 12 degrees C to minus 20 degrees C. January is the coldest month (average minus 8 degrees C). Long-term average rainfall is approximately 490mm.

#### Dress codes

Most people dress in standard casual wear. For winter, mediumweight clothing is required with a heavy coat. For summer, lightweight clothing is suitable. For business meetings, men should wear a suit and tie.

#### Entry requirements

##### Passports

Required by all. Passport must be valid for eight months from the date of issue of the visa.

#### Visa

Required by all, except nationals of EU and Schengen area signatory countries, North America, Australasia and Japan. For further exceptions contact the nearest embassy or see [www.foreign.gov.sk](http://www.foreign.gov.sk) (or [www.slovakia.org](http://www.slovakia.org) and follow link through tourism to visa information). A Schengen visa application (offered in several languages) can be downloaded from <http://europa.eu/abc/travel/> see 'documents you will need'.

Visitors are required to have onward/return passage.

#### Currency advice/regulations

Import of local currency is prohibited. There are no restrictions on import of foreign currency, but it must be declared on arrival.

Local currency up to Sk100 can be exported, and foreign currency up to the amount declared on entry.

#### Customs

Personal items are duty-free. There are no duties levied on alcohol and tobacco between EU member states, providing amounts imported are for personal consumption.

Items of value, such as cameras, should be declared.

#### Health (for visitors)

Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and Switzerland can access reduced cost and sometimes free medical treatment using a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) while visiting the EEA. Exceptions include nationals of the 10 countries, which joined the EU in 2004, whose EHIC is not valid in Switzerland. Applications for the EHIC should be made before travelling.

#### Mandatory precautions

Full medical insurance, covering the whole territory of the Slovak Republic, is required. Random checks at Slovak points of entry are carried out and entry can be refused if no medical insurance for the whole country can be produced.

#### Credit cards

Credit cards are generally accepted by major hotels and restaurants.

#### Public holidays (national)

##### Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day/Independence Day), 6 Jan (Epiphany), 1 May (Labour Day), 8 May (Liberation of the Republic), 5 Jul (Ss Cyril and Methodius Day), 29 Aug (Slovak National Uprising Day), 1 Sep (Constitution Day), 15 Sep (Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows Day), 1 Nov (All Saints' Day), 17 Nov (Freedom and Democracy Day), 24–26 Dec (Christmas).

##### Variable dates

Good Friday, Easter Monday.

**Working hours****Banking**

Mon–Fri: 0800–1700. There are also exchange offices in the main city centres, which operate seven days a week until 1900.

**Business**

Mon–Fri: 0800–1600.

**Government**

Mon–Fri: 0900–1700.

**Shops**

Mon–Fri: 0900–1800; Sat: 0900–1200; some shops remain open late on Thursday evenings.

**Electricity supply**

220V, 50 cycles AC

**Weights and measures**

Metric system. In addition, the following measures are used: quintal or metric hundredweight = 100 kg. Food is usually purchased by the decagramme and kilogram.

**Social customs/useful tips**

Appointments should be made in advance and punctuality is important. Shaking hands is customary when meeting people and on parting. Business is conducted in Slovak; many executives speak a second language – German, Russian or English. When drinks are served, it is considered polite to wait for everyone to be served and then wish each person *Nazdravi* ('to your health'). At meals it is usual to wait for everyone to be served before starting and to wish everyone *bon appetit* or *dobrou chut* just before eating. The terms *Pan* (Mr), *Pani* (Mrs) and *Slecna* (Miss) are used. *Slecna* is used for single women under 30 only; single women over 30 will usually be addressed as *Pani*. Gratuities are between 5 and 10 per cent. The minimum drinking age is 18 years. When visiting private homes it is customary to take flowers for the hosts. Visitors also generally leave their shoes in the hallway, partly as a mark of respect and partly because of pollution in the streets. Men always take off their hats indoors. Illegally parked cars tend to be towed away by the police and it is advisable to park at attended car parks where the cost is relatively low.

**Security**

Street crime, especially in the towns, has become a problem since the 1989 revolution because the police tend to keep a low profile. Although the situation has improved, it is still advisable to carry as little in the way of valuables and cash as possible. Car vandalism and theft are also problems.

**Getting there****Air**

**National airline:** Slovak Airlines

**International airport/s:** MR Stefanik Airport (BTS), 9km from Bratislava; post office, bank, bureau de change, restaurants, duty free shop, car hire.

**Airport tax:** None

**Surface**

Slovakia is included in the Pan-European Corridor 5 scheme. The project has some 3,270km of railways, linking Kiev in the Ukraine with western Europe via Italy, and 2,850 of new and upgraded roads.

**Road:** There is ample road access from Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary and Austria. There is a motorway from Bratislava to Prague.

**Rail:** Slovakia has rail connections with Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest, Moscow and St Petersburg.

**Water:** Ships provide regular passenger service and cruises on the Danube, from Passau and Regensburg (Germany) via Vienna (Austria). There are also links with the Rhine and Main rivers and the Black Sea.

**Getting about****National transport**

**Air:** There are internal connections provided by Slovak Airlines, SkyEurope Airlines and Air Slovakia.

**Road:** The road network is extensive and in good condition. The major route is from Bratislava to Presov and Kosice.

**Buses:** There is an extensive coach network.

**Rail:** Slovakia has a rail network of 3,665km, of which around 1,590km are electrified. There are frequent express services between Bratislava and the main centres and tourist destinations.

**Water:** The principal navigable waterway is the Danube, on which cruises are available.

**City transport**

**Taxis:** Taxis are available in all main towns and are relatively cheap. They are metered, but passengers should ensure that the driver switches them on before starting off.

**Buses, trams & metro:** Bratislava and other cities are well served by trams, trolley-buses and buses. Tickets can be purchased at news-stands or from dispensers at the queues.

**Car hire**

Car hire is available in major towns. Traffic drives on the right. There is an extensive network of roadside restaurants and petrol stations. Emergency telephones are located at half mile intervals on motorways and the emergency system is generally quick and reliable.

**BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that

changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

**Telephone area codes**

The international direct dialling code (IDD) for Slovakia is +421, followed by area code and subscriber's number:

Banska Bystrica	48	Nitra	37
Bratislava	2	Presov	51
Kosice	55	Zilina	41
Liptoský Mikuláš	44		

**Useful telephone numbers**

Police: 158

Ambulance: 155

Fire: 150

Directory enquiries: 154

**Chambers of Commerce**

American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, Hotel Danube, 1 Rybné namestie, 81338 Bratislava (tel: 5934-0508; fax: 5934-0556; e-mail: director@amcham.sk).

Banska Bystrica Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 4 namestie S Moysesova, 97401 Banska Bystrica (tel: 412-5643; fax: 412-5636; e-mail: sopkrkbb@sopk.sk).

Bratislava Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 6 Jasikova, 82673 Bratislava (tel: 4829-1257; fax: 4829-1260; e-mail: sopkrkbl@scci.sk).

British Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, 14 Cukrova, 81339 Bratislava (tel/fax: 5292-0371; e-mail: director@britcham.sk).

Kosice Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 48/A Trieda SNP, 04011 Kosice (tel: 641-9477; fax: 641-9470; e-mail: sopkrkke@scci.sk).

Lucenec Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2 Vajanskeho, 98401 Lucenec (tel: 433-3939; fax: 433-3937; e-mail: sopkrklc@scci.sk).

Nitra Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 4 Akademicka, 94901 Nitra (tel: 653-5466; fax: 733-6739; e-mail: sopkrknr@scci.sk).

Presov Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 22 Masarykova, 08001 Presov (tel: 773-2818; fax: 773-2413; e-mail: sopkrkpo@scci.sk).

Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 9 Gorkeho, 81603 Bratislava (tel: 5443-3291; fax: 5413-1159; e-mail: sopkurad@sopk.sk).

Trencin Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2 Jilemnickeho, 91101 Trencin (tel: 652-3834; fax: 652-1023; e-mail: sopkrktn@scci.sk).

Trnava Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2 Trhova, 91701 Trnava

(tel: 551-2588; fax: 551-2603; e-mail: sopkrkt@sopk.sk).

Zilina Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 31 Halkova, 01001 Zilina (tel: 723-5101; fax: 723-5102; e-mail: sekrza@za.scci.sk).

### Banking

Citibank (Slovakia), Mlynské nivy 43, 82501 Bratislava (tel: 5823-0224; fax: 5823-0211).

Consolidation Bank SFI, Cintorisika 21, 81499 Bratislava (tel: 368-011; fax: 321-353).

Crédit Lyonnais Bank Slovakia, Medena 22, 811 02 Bratislava (tel: 325-320).

DejIn Banka as, Frantiskánske nám 8, 81310 Bratislava (tel: 333-376; fax: 330-376).

General Credit Bank, Námestie SNP 19, 81856 Bratislava (tel: 531-7283; fax: 531-7020/05).

ING Bank, Kolarska 6, 811 06 Bratislava PO Box 123 (tel: 5346-111).

Investment and Development Bank, Štúrova 5, 81855 Bratislava (tel: 326-121; fax: 321-433).

Istrobanka as, Laurinská 1, 81101 Bratislava (tel: 539-7524; fax: 533-1744).

Konsolidacna Banka Bratislava, Cintorisika 21, 814 99 Bratislava (tel: 321-387; fax: 321-353).

Polnobanka as, Vajnorská 21, 83265 Bratislava (tel: 273-964; fax: 259-024).

Post Bank, PO Box 149, Gorkého 3, 81499 Bratislava (tel: 329-253; fax: 211-204).

Slovak Savings Bank, Námestie SNP 18, 81607 Bratislava (tel: 560-6580; fax: 560-6220).

TATRA Bank, Vajanského nábrežie 5, 81006 Bratislava (tel: 210-3519; fax: 324-760).

Volksbank, Námestie SNP 15, 81000 Bratislava (tel: 381-1140; fax: 364-847).

### Central bank

Narodna banka Slovenska (National Bank of Slovakia), Imricha Karvasa 1, 81325 Bratislava (tel: 5787-1111; fax: 5787-1100; e-mail: webmaster@nbs.sk).

### Stock exchange

Burza Cennych Papierov v Bratislave (BSSE) (Bratislava Stock Exchange), www.bsse.sk

### Travel information

Air Slovakia BWJ, Pestovatelská ul c 2, 821 04 Bratislava (tel: 4342 2744; fax: 4342 2742; e-mail:

Slovak Airlines, Ivanka Airport, Bratislava (tel: 4857-5170/1).

Slovak Association of Travel Agents, Bajkalská 2, 821 01 Bratislava 2, (tel: 5823-3385; fax: 5341-9058; email: sacka@ba.sknet.sk).

Slovak Republik Automobile Association (Autoklub SR), Údernicka 14, 85101 Bratislava (tel: 6383-4567; fax: 6383-4678; e-mail: autoklub@autoklubsr.sk).

### Ministry of tourism

Ministry of Economy, Tourism Department, Mierova 19, 82715 Bratislava (tel: 4854-2315; fax: 4854-3321; e-mail: info@economy.gov.sk).

### National tourist organisation offices

Slovak Tourist Board, Námestie L Štúra 1, PO Box 35, 974 05 Banská Bystrica, (tel: 413-6146-8; fax: 413-6149; email: sacr@sacr.sk).

### Ministries

Ministry of Administration and Privatisation of National Property, Drienova 24, 82009 Bratislava (tel: 230-678; fax: 233-335).

Ministry of Agriculture, Dobrovicova 12, 81266 Bratislava (tel: 368-561, 456-111; fax: 3066-294).

Ministry of Construction and Public Works, Spitalska 8, 81644 Bratislava (tel: 536-1111; fax: 536-1203).

Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, Dobrovicova 12, 81331 Bratislava (tel: 323-295; fax: 368-140).

Ministry of Defence, Kutuzovova 7, 83247 Bratislava (tel: 250-320; fax: 258-907).

Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, Mierová 19, 82715 Bratislava (tel: 574-1407; fax: 237-827).

Ministry of Education and Sciences, Stromova 1, 81330 Bratislava (tel: 370-4111; fax: 370-4333).

Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, Namestie L Stura 1,, 81235 Bratislava (tel: 516-2458; fax: 516-2457).

Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, Stefanovicova 5, 81308 Bratislava (tel: 518-2562; fax: 396-146).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hlboka Cesta 3, 83336 Bratislava (tel: 438-1111; fax: 438-2005; internet: <http://www.foreign.gov.sk>).

Ministry of Health, Limbova 2, 83105 Bratislava (tel: 377-940; fax: 377-659).

Ministry of the Interior, Pribinova 2, 81272 Bratislava (tel: 546-1111; fax: 368-835).

Ministry of Justice, Zupné námestie 13, 81311 Bratislava (tel: 535-3111; fax: 531-5952).

Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Family of the Slovak Republic, Spitalska 4, 81643 Bratislava (tel: 338-2414; fax: 362-150).

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nam Slobody 6, 81005 Bratislava (tel: 395-251; fax: 256-414).

Office of the Government, Nam Slobody 1, 84218 Bratislava (tel: 359-5111; fax: 397-595).

Office of the President, Stefanikova ul 1, 81104 Bratislava (tel: 531-7567; fax: 531-7065). sesCommodity Exchange, Ruzinovská 1, 82102 Bratislava (tel: 522-6311; fax: 522-6318).

### Other useful addresses

Bratislava Stock Exchange, Vysoká 17, 81499 Bratislava (tel: 386-121; fax: 386-103).

British Embassy, Panska 16, 81101 Bratislava (tel: 5441-9632; fax: 5441-0002; e-mail: bebra@internet.sk).

Federation of Employers' Unions and Associations of Slovak Republic, Information and Consulting Centre, Drienová 24, 82603 Bratislava (tel: 235-024; fax: 233-542).

National Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, Nevädzová 5, 82101 Bratislava (tel: 237-472/563, 231-873; fax: 522-2434); External Advisors (tel: 237-472; fax: 522-2434); BIC (Business Innovation Centre) (tel: 290-7417; fax: 522-2434, 290-7217).

National Property Fund PARP PMU, Drienova 27, 82656 Bratislava (tel: 561-1258, 561-1230, 561-1447, 235-280, 231-300, 231-531; fax: 561-1446, 235-280); external department (tel: 250-248; fax: 259-208).

Slovak National Agency for Foreign Investment and Development (SNAFID), Sládkovicova 7, 81106 Bratislava (tel: 533-5175; fax: 533-5022); Slovenska polnohospodarska a potravinarska komora, Krizna 52, 82108 Bratislava (tel: 566-2657, 526-1778; fax: 526-7336, 211-251).

Slovak Republic Embassy (USA), 3523 International Court, NW, Washington DC 20008 (tel: (+1-202) 237-1054; fax: (+1-202) 237-6438; e-mail: info@slovakembassy-us.org).

Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Mileticova 3, 82467 Bratislava (tel: 215-802; fax: 214-587).

Transport Department, Dept of European Integration, Namestie Slobody 6, 81370 Bratislava (tel: 499-766, 498-156 Ext. 331, 498-841, 495-251; fax: 499-761).