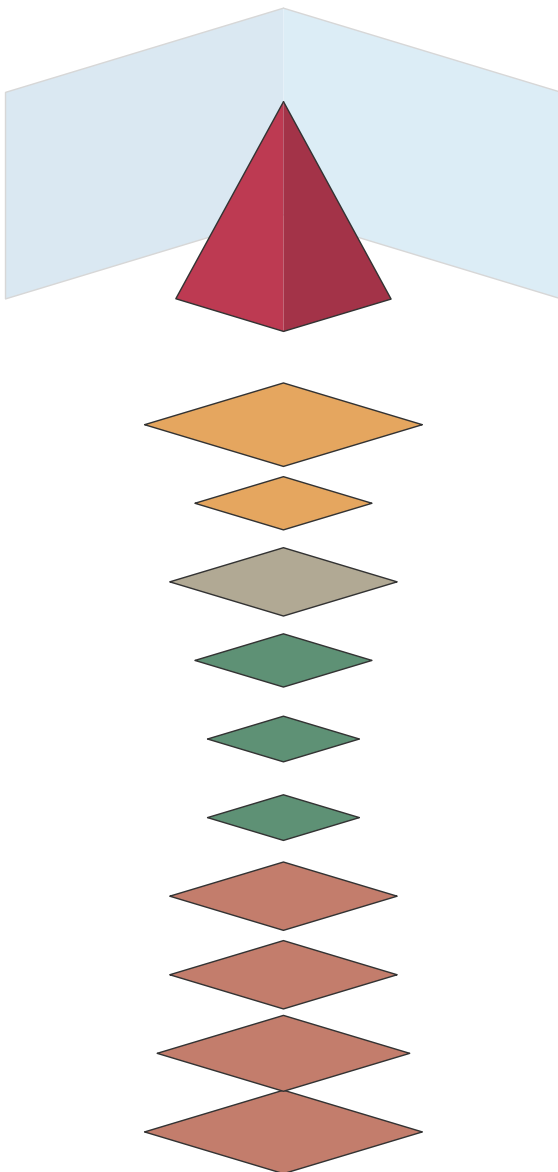




SLOVAKIA



4.69

CRIMINALITY SCORE

107th of 193 countries

18th of 44 European countries

11th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.25

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 5.50

HUMAN SMUGGLING 3.50

ARMS TRAFFICKING 4.50

FLORA CRIMES 3.50

FAUNA CRIMES 3.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 3.00

HEROIN TRADE 4.50

COCAINE TRADE 4.50

CANNABIS TRADE 5.00

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 5.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS

5.13

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 3.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 6.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 6.50

FOREIGN ACTORS 5.00



5.38

RESILIENCE SCORE

63rd of 193 countries

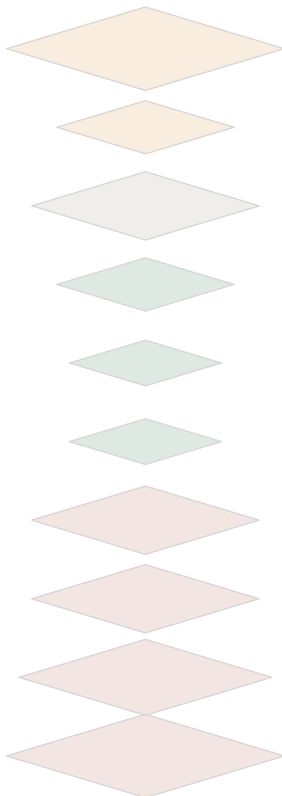
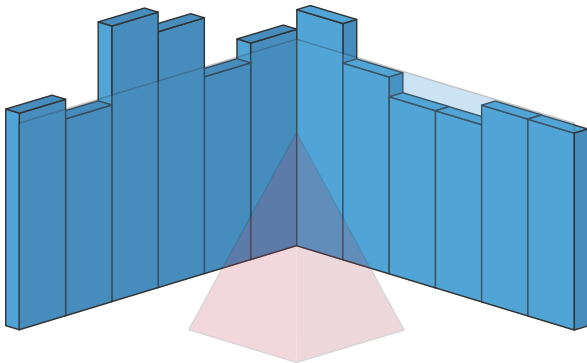
28th of 44 European countries

6th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries





SLOVAKIA



5.38

RESILIENCE SCORE

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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.50
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.00



4.69

CRIMINALITY SCORE

107th of 193 countries

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CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.25



CRIMINAL ACTORS

5.13



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Slovakia is mainly a source country for human trafficking. Many victims of forced labour, sexual exploitation and forced marriages are recruited in the country and then trafficked to the UK and Northern Ireland. Austria, Germany and Italy are also becoming important destinations, especially for victims of forced begging and sexual exploitation. Criminal actors from the South-Asian community in the UK are reportedly involved in the recruitment of victims in Slovakia via employment agencies, but Slovak nationals are the dominant criminal actors in most cases. Human-trafficking victims come predominantly from the eastern part of Slovakia, where people are vulnerable targets due to a number of risk factors such as unemployment, homelessness and a lack of education. Human trafficking appears to be on the rise in Slovakia – evident, in particular, in the rising number of male victims.

At the height of the European migrant crisis of 2015–2016, a significant number of people were smuggled from Syria into Slovakia through the Balkan route, but human smuggling has decreased since then. The people-smuggling market in Slovakia is linked largely to criminal networks and foreign actors. There are unverified reports of state-embedded actors being involved in document forging.

TRADE

Slovakia has a long history of firearms production and involvement in the illegal-weapons trade. It is a source country for arms trafficked to other EU states. The detection of illegal shipments of weapons out of the country is difficult as certain exports are legal (although deemed contrary to Slovakia's international obligation not to supply weapons that may end up in the hands of militants). Since Slovakia adopted new regulations in 2015, the most popular arms sold in the country are firearms that have been modified to Flobert gun calibres – which can then easily be converted into more powerful, live-ammo weapons. The illegal conversion of these firearms generally takes place in other countries, such as Poland or Ukraine, before they are resold illegally on the European market. This low-level arms trafficking makes an important contribution to the income of those in the lower ranks of organized crime.

ENVIRONMENT

Slovakia is a destination and transit country for illegal trade in ornamental plants. Illegal logging is a growing problem, but for the most part it is not related to organized crime.

Slovakia is a destination, source and transit country for illicit wildlife trafficking. It is also a source country for the smuggling of dogs. Poaching – especially of birds, bears and wolves – is a concern.

There is not a significant criminal market for non-renewable resources in Slovakia. Nevertheless, criminal groups have been known to be involved in the illicit fuel trade. Coal has become an important resource on the illegal market, and there are cases of criminal groups importing coal from Ukraine without the proper documentation. There are also reports of amber being smuggled into the country from Ukraine.

DRUGS

The smuggling of drugs is considered to be an important source of income for organized-crime groups in Slovakia, which is a transit and destination country for heroin coming from Afghanistan via the Balkan route. There are several gangs, especially from the Balkan countries, operating in the heroin market. Heroin use in Slovakia appears to be on the decline. Slovakia is a transit and destination country for cocaine. The cocaine trade involves organized groups (both local and foreign), as well as smaller groups of individuals who use cocaine. The majority of cocaine comes from the Netherlands or Belgium via contacts in South American countries. Cocaine use in Slovakia is increasing, especially among the young and wealthy.

Cannabis is the most prevalent drug in Slovakia. Although its use for medical purposes as well as the use of low-THC cannabidiol (CBD) is legal in the country, cannabis possession is illegal and can carry a jail sentence. Cannabis is produced mostly for local consumption and is circulated largely without the involvement of organized-crime groups – although Vietnamese criminal groups have been known to be involved in production, while other groups have established special indoor-cultivation facilities.

Slovakia is a destination and transit country for large shipments of synthetic drugs. There is a trend in the country for traditional illicit drugs to be replaced by cheaper synthetic drugs. However, the value of synthetic drugs is increasing due to their growing popularity as well as their reduced availability – a consequence of the law catching up and prohibiting newly invented substances. Most synthetic drugs come from the Netherlands and Poland. They are imported by drug smugglers or bought online and shipped via post. However, MDMA/Ecstasy and methamphetamine are also produced domestically. Methamphetamine is the most common drug to be seized after cannabis and is the primary drug of concern for the Slovak authorities. Another emerging issue is the sale of new psychoactive substances

under the general name of ecstasy or as a legal alternative to cocaine and methamphetamine.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups dominated Slovakia's criminal landscape in the past, but most of the groups from the mid-1990s are no longer functional. While their power has declined over the years, the heroin trade, in particular, still appears to be overshadowed by mafia-style groups, whereas human trafficking is operated by a mix of mafia-style groups and other criminal networks. There are also reports of corrupt officials inside the Slovak security and customs sectors with links to mafia-style groups. New criminal networks have emerged and gained power in recent years. They are involved in various forms of white-collar crime, economic crimes, corruption and the exploitation of state funds. Their activities include violent crimes and involve contact

with high-level politicians, law-enforcement agencies and the courts. Apart from these criminal networks, there are also looser, less structured networks made up mostly of Slovak nationals who operate in the human-trafficking, arms-trafficking, synthetic-drugs and cannabis markets.

There have been allegations of widespread corruption on various levels of the state apparatus, including at the highest level. Despite the current government proclaiming anti-corruption a central point on its agenda and campaigning on the issue, allegations of bribery continue to emerge. Many foreign criminal diasporas, including Hungarian, Vietnamese, Italian and Balkan groups operate in organized-crime markets within Slovakia, predominantly drug trafficking. Most of these groups have ties to illicit markets in their countries of origin. A common way for foreign criminal actors to establish a base in Slovakia is to set up a company with foreign capital and fictitiously employ foreign nationals.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Prior to 2020, the involvement of state-embedded actors in organized crime was ubiquitous. As a result, the government that took office in 2020 has been vocal in its opposition to grand corruption. There have been calls for reform in the justice system, law enforcement and other areas, as well as proposals for new anti-corruption and money-laundering legislation. While in practice access to information in Slovakia is poor, the legal framework guiding it allows for transparency. However, even though Slovakia publishes budget forecasts and has a public-procurement system, corruption is still reported as a major problem in the system.

Slovak law-enforcement agencies cooperate well with international bodies on matters related to countering organized crime. Slovakia is a signatory to international and regional conventions on organized crime and cooperates closely with the other three Visegrád 4 countries as well as with Europol. On a domestic level, Slovakia has up-to-date laws and national policies that adequately respond to threats of organized crime. However, there are still gaps in its legislation that are exploited by criminal groups – and these policies need to be applied in a more systematic, unbiased and professional manner by the country's law-enforcement agencies.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Slovakia's judicial system is perceived to be one of its most problematic institutions, due mainly to corruption and how long it takes for cases to be tried, but the government apparently plans to adopt constitutional changes to improve the system. The justice ministry is responsible for the country's prison system – which, under the law, has operational independence, aimed at decreasing corrupt practices among prison security personnel. In spite of this, there have been some reports of abuse of inmates. Special law-enforcement units for combating organized crime exist, but they are considered relatively weak in investigating white-collar crime, corruption and high-level political crimes. Some high-ranking police officers are allegedly in close contact with criminal groups, who are able to manipulate investigations.

Slovakia is vulnerable to transnational organized crime – being landlocked between EU states, the Schengen zone and Ukraine, its location makes it an ideal transit country for multiple forms of organized crime. The system of Slovakia issuing Schengen visas is currently under review.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Slovakia's economic environment has improved in general, but certain sectors have remained vulnerable to organized crime. For example, the country is considered to be one of the worst in the region in terms of VAT fraud. Slovakia has a complex system of anti-money-laundering legislation in

place. Nevertheless, there have been reported problems related to anti-money-laundering processes in banks and law-enforcement agencies, which were found in some instances not to investigate suspicious transactions.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Witness protection in Slovakia is provided by the police to those who testify in criminal proceedings. There are also protection mechanisms against secondary victimization. Since the passing of a victim-protection act in 2017, the victims of crime are given much more information on their basic rights. However, while the legal framework for victim and witness support exists, its implementation is weak. There are also gaps in guaranteeing victims' access to justice. To improve the support services available to trafficking victims, the government has published an action plan spanning the period 2019–2023. While the interior ministry is the main player in providing victim support, many of its services appear to be outsourced to NGOs. Slovakia does not have a systematic approach to the prevention of crime, especially organized crime. However, there have been isolated campaigns run by various state and non-state actors working with communities, advocating against drug abuse, human trafficking and human smuggling. The interior ministry also cooperates with civil-society organizations to disseminate information to the public to try and prevent human trafficking. On the whole, civil-society organizations and other non-state actors play an important role in uncovering crime in Slovakia.

Media freedom is influenced predominantly by large financial groups and local oligarchs. Some media outlets have been criticized for taking a non-objective approach to specific political parties. The media landscape has worsened since 2015, a situation that was exacerbated by the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018. Two of the defendants in the murder trial were found guilty in 2020, with the prosecution establishing links between the mastermind behind the murder and key judicial and political figures.

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