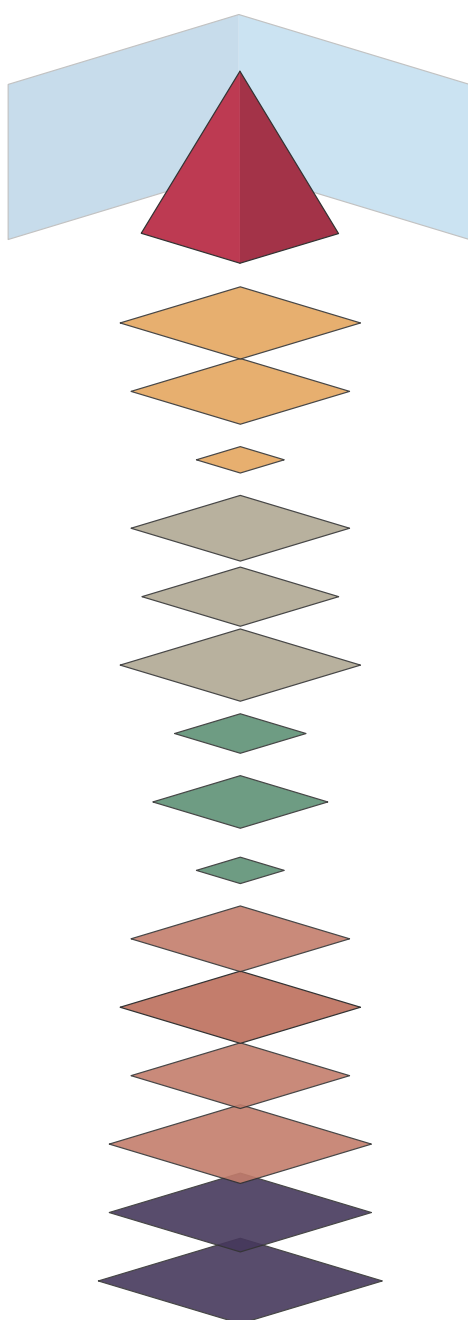




SLOVAKIA



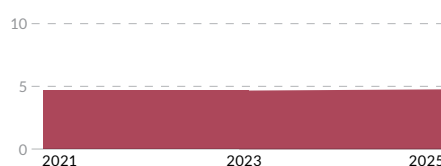
4.75 $\nearrow 0.03$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

117th of 193 countries -

24th of 44 European countries $\searrow 1$

13th of 17 Central and Eastern European countries $\searrow 1$



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.70 $\searrow 0.03$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50 $\nearrow 0.50$
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.00 $\nearrow 0.50$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00 $\searrow 1.00$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.00 0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	4.50 $\nearrow 0.50$
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.50 0.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.00 $\searrow 1.00$
FAUNA CRIMES	4.00 $\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00 $\searrow 1.00$
HEROIN TRADE	5.00 0.00
COCAINE TRADE	5.50 0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.00 0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.00 $\nearrow 0.50$
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	6.00 0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.50 0.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.80 $\nearrow 0.10$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00 0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50 $\searrow 0.50$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.00 $\nearrow 0.50$
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50 $\nearrow 0.50$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.00 0.00



This project was funded in part
by a grant from the United
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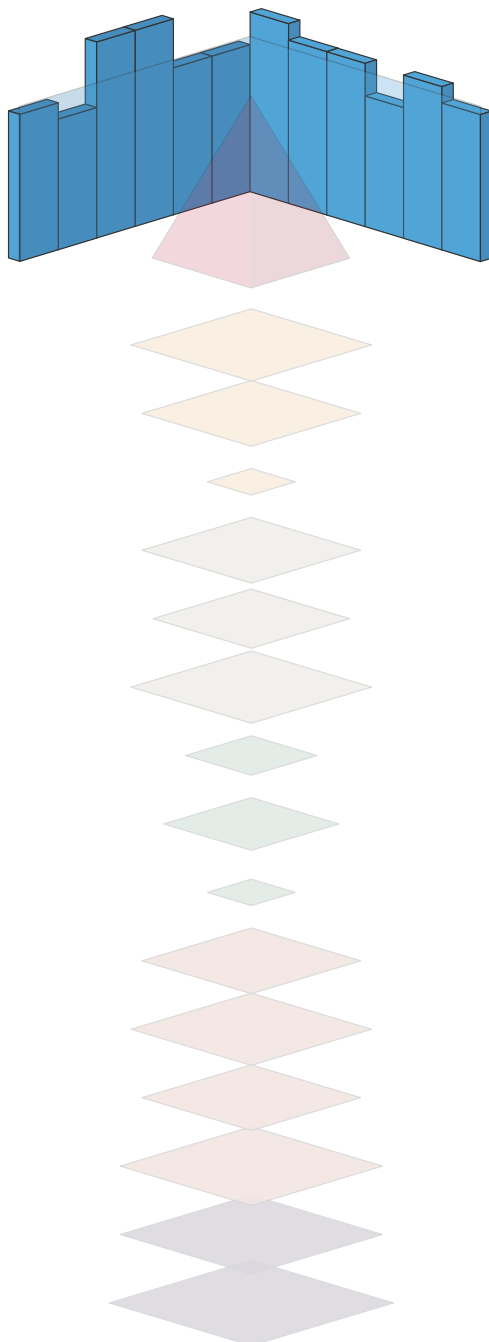


Funded by
the European Union

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SLOVAKIA



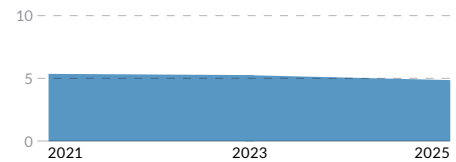
4.88 $\nearrow 0.42$

RESILIENCE SCORE

93rd of 193 countries $\nearrow 20$

36th of 44 European countries $\nearrow 6$

10th of 17 Central and Eastern European countries $\nearrow 3$



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
PREVENTION	5.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Slovakia remains a significant source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, with both Slovak nationals and foreign victims primarily exploited for sexual purposes and forced labour. Ukrainian refugees, especially women and children, as well as migrant workers from South East Asia and the Balkans, have become particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Women from South East Asia are often victims of sex trafficking and forced labour in domestic service, restaurants, massage parlours, spas or online. Trafficking networks are usually structured hierarchically, with some cases involving family members of the victims. The exploitation of Slovak men and women in agriculture, construction and manufacturing continues both domestically and across Western Europe. Despite initiatives to combat human trafficking, Slovakia's rates of victim identification and prosecution remain low, and irregular migration flows continue to fuel vulnerabilities to exploitation.

Human smuggling is an expanding criminal market in Slovakia, with migrants primarily arriving from Syria, Afghanistan and West Asia. Slovakia serves as a key transit point on migration routes to Western Europe, where organized crime groups operate sophisticated smuggling networks. The surge in migration has strained regional security and prompted neighbouring countries to tighten their border controls. Smuggling routes through Slovakia are linked to broader European criminal networks, and human smuggling is often intertwined with human trafficking, exposing migrants to exploitation. The release of detained smugglers in Hungary has further contributed to increased activity in the region. While Slovakia has increased security forces at its borders, smuggling operations remain highly organized and lucrative.

Extortion and protection racketeering remain limited in Slovakia, with no recent recorded cases in 2024. Historically, these activities have been sporadic, and organized crime groups have not been reported to exert significant influence over local businesses through extortion.

TRADE

While official arms registrations have increased significantly, the illicit arms trade remains a concern, particularly due to Slovakia's porous borders and its role in transnational trafficking networks. Organized crime groups are involved in arms smuggling, with weapons often flowing through Slovakia from Türkiye and the Western Balkans. Although the illegal arms trade is currently less extensive than other

criminal markets, experts caution that Slovakia may become a hub for the circulation of illicit weapons once the conflict in Ukraine subsides.

The trade in counterfeit goods experienced steady growth in Slovakia, marked by significant seizures of fake apparel, perfumes and electronic items. This market is largely driven by imports from China, Türkiye and Vietnam, with growing evidence of local production, particularly in the western regions of Slovakia. Although the trade in counterfeit goods remains secondary to other criminal markets, Slovakia continues to be a popular destination in Europe for counterfeit items, underscoring the scale of illicit trade within the country.

Illicit trade in excisable goods, particularly tobacco and alcohol, continues to be a concern, as evidenced by the recent rise in seizures of smuggled cigarettes, despite the overall quantities being low. Cross-border operations conducted with Czech and Polish authorities have resulted in substantial interdictions of contraband tobacco, highlighting the ongoing presence of smuggling networks. Additionally, Slovakia has experienced a notable increase in illegal alcohol smuggling, with the number of cases surging in recent years.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Slovakia continue to represent a relatively low-risk criminal market. However, concerns regarding illegal logging persist, particularly due to the increased demand for firewood following disruptions in Russian gas supplies. Although reports indicate excessive logging in the Tatra Mountains, there is limited evidence of large-scale organized criminal involvement in the forestry sector.

Fauna crimes, including poaching and illegal wildlife trade, remain pressing issues in Slovakia. The country has been identified as a European hub for wildlife trafficking, with organized criminal networks engaged in smuggling protected species. Reports of poaching incidents involving bears and birds have surfaced, and recent structural changes in law enforcement have raised concerns over Slovakia's capacity to combat wildlife crimes effectively. The rising demand for hunting permits and the relaxation of restrictions on bear hunting have further exacerbated risks in this sector.

Non-renewable resource crimes remain sporadic, with Slovakia's exposure to illegal mining and resource extraction appearing limited. Recent government interventions aimed at mine closures have led to a decrease in related illicit activities; however, ongoing assessments indicate that illegal mining remains a concern in international law enforcement discussions.

DRUGS

Slovakia continues to function as a transit point for heroin shipments originating from Afghanistan and trafficked through the Western Balkans. Despite relatively low domestic consumption, Slovakia's role as a logistical hub for heroin distribution has persisted. In 2024, authorities uncovered one of Central Europe's largest heroin production facilities, marking a notable escalation in local processing activities.

The cocaine market in Slovakia has expanded, reflecting broader trends across Europe. Cocaine is primarily trafficked from Latin America through northern European ports before arriving in Slovakia, with both Latin American and local criminal groups participating in the trade. While overall consumption remains lower than in neighbouring Austria and the Czech Republic, significant seizures indicate that Slovakia is playing an increasingly important role in regional cocaine distribution.

Cannabis remains the most widely used illicit substance in Slovakia, with local production supplemented by imports from the Czech Republic and Western Europe. The market is dominated by both local and foreign criminal networks, including Vietnamese groups involved in wider narcotics trafficking. While Slovakia has introduced reduced penalties for cannabis possession, large-scale illicit production continues to supply the domestic market.

Synthetic drug use in Slovakia is on the rise, with methamphetamine and MDMA being the primary substances of concern. Local criminal networks operate across Slovakia as well as neighbouring countries, focusing primarily on synthetic drugs. These criminal groups have substantial expertise in both production and distribution, sourcing methamphetamine precursors from Romanian companies. While synthetic drug consumption remains below the European average, wastewater analysis indicates an increase in usage, particularly in Bratislava. The production and distribution of methamphetamine involve both local and international criminal networks, prompting Slovak security forces to conduct joint operations with neighbouring countries to disrupt trafficking activities. However, the availability of new psychoactive substances, particularly synthetic cannabinoids, poses an emerging threat.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes in Slovakia have escalated, marked by a significant increase in ransomware attacks and cyber threats targeting government institutions and private entities. Pro-Russian hacker groups have been implicated in cyberattacks targeting Slovakia's financial and transportation sectors, posing a national security risk. The prevalence of banking Trojans and advanced hacking schemes has also surged. However, official statistics on cybercrime remain low, likely due to underreporting and challenges in enforcement.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes in Slovakia continue to pose an issue, with ongoing cases of VAT fraud, subsidy misappropriation and corruption involving high-level officials. Several high-profile fraud schemes targeting EU funds have been uncovered, highlighting systemic weaknesses in oversight and enforcement. Tax fraud and illicit financial transactions continue to affect the Slovak economy, with evidence of political interference in investigations and legal proceedings. Despite ongoing efforts, the country continues to face challenges in financial transparency and accountability, which fosters an environment where illicit financial activities can flourish.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Slovakia has a history of mafia-style groups, mainly family-based, operating in Bratislava and other regions, such as Dunajská Streda. Historically, these groups engaged in economic crimes, including VAT fraud, and were implicated in violent activities, such as murders. However, their influence has significantly waned over the years, with most key members either imprisoned or eliminated, often by rival factions. While some remnants of these groups persist, their operational impact has diminished. Despite their decline, legislative changes in 2024, which lowered prison sentences for various crimes, have raised concerns that former members may seek to regroup. If these individuals are released, there is a potential risk of a resurgence of mafia-style groups, although their capacity to regain former influence remains uncertain.

Unlike hierarchical mafia-style groups, Slovakia's criminal networks operate with flexibility and are heavily involved in human smuggling and drug trafficking. These networks play a significant role in facilitating the smuggling of individuals through Slovakia, particularly as part of broader migration flows to Western Europe. These groups have also facilitated illegal crossings for Ukrainian conscripts, demonstrating their adaptability in exploiting regional crises. Criminal networks are also deeply entrenched in the narcotics trade, with a strong presence in methamphetamine production and cocaine smuggling. Joint law enforcement operations have successfully disrupted networks that coordinate drug trafficking across Slovakia and its neighbouring countries. Furthermore, criminal groups in western Slovakia have been linked to heroin production, further expanding the country's role in European drug supply chains. While these networks primarily engage in illicit trade, their reported use of violence remains relatively low compared to other forms of organized crime.

State-embedded actors play a crucial role in financial crimes, particularly through fraud involving state and EU funds, bribery and corruption. Slovakia has witnessed numerous high-profile cases involving public officials, including members of the Ministry of Agriculture and financial authorities, who

have been implicated in the misappropriation of millions of euros from European funds. Several senior figures, including the former head of the Special Prosecutor's Office, have been convicted in corruption trials, underscoring the scale of institutional misconduct.

Foreign criminal groups maintain a strong presence in Slovakia, particularly in the realm of drug trafficking. Balkan-based groups dominate the smuggling and distribution of narcotics, including cocaine and methamphetamine. Additionally, foreign actors have been linked to large-scale theft operations, with organized groups from Hungary, Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic identified in various criminal activities. Geopolitical factors also influence transnational organized crime in Slovakia. Reports indicate that Russian entities have collaborated with Italian mafia groups, including the 'Ndrangheta, to facilitate illicit operations within Slovakia. While the exact nature of their activities remains unclear, there are indications of new drug trafficking routes between Slovakia and Ukraine, involving individuals linked to Italian mafia organizations. Recent amendments to Slovakia's criminal laws have made

the country more attractive to foreign criminals, leading to an increase in foreign nationals residing in Slovakia to evade justice. Notably, in April 2024, Slovak authorities arrested an Italian, a Ukrainian and a German national involved in a €600 million EU funds fraud scheme. There have also been reports of foreign actors engaging in sanctions evasion, although no formal investigations have been initiated in Slovakia.

The private sector in Slovakia is involved in various financial crimes, particularly tax fraud and the misappropriation of subsidies. Private companies have collaborated with public officials to misuse EU funds, with cases involving the allocation of state resources for fraudulent business innovation. Tax evasion remains a persistent issue, with corporate entities engaging in bribery schemes, including those associated with the Slovak Central Bank. Some private security companies in Slovakia have faced allegations of corruption and involvement in politics. However, despite these cases, the private sector's participation in organized crime remains limited.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Slovakia has a mixed record in governance and political leadership. While the country performs well in terms of stability and democratic systems, challenges persist, including political corruption, concerns about transparency and the weakening of anti-corruption measures. The government coalition has enacted controversial legislative changes, including the abolition of the Special Prosecutor's Office and reductions in penalties for financial crimes. These actions have ignited widespread protests and garnered criticism from the EU, raising concerns about Slovakia's adherence to democratic principles and the rule of law.

Political leadership is increasingly influenced by external factors, with reports indicating that Russian and Italian organized crime groups may exert a degree of political leverage. Public trust in institutions has declined due to allegations of corruption involving high-ranking officials. Slovakia's relations with the EU remain under scrutiny, particularly regarding judicial independence and anti-corruption policies. Recent political and legal developments have further complicated Slovakia's efforts to combat corruption. The abolition of the Special Prosecutor's Office in 2024 has weakened the country's anti-corruption framework, raising concerns about diminished accountability for financial crimes. Additionally, the government's controversial reforms have resulted in criminal charges against former anti-corruption investigators, which critics perceive as

an attempt to undermine investigations into previous administrations. The government's actions have raised concerns about Slovakia's ability to maintain access to EU recovery funds, which require adherence to the principles of the rule of law.

Slovakia's international alignment has also shifted, as the new government has reduced military aid to Ukraine and is engaging in diplomatic talks with Russian officials. This shift in foreign policy has further strained relations with key EU and NATO allies. Intelligence reports suggest that foreign actors may be exploiting political divisions to influence policy decisions, adding another layer of complexity to Slovakia's governance resilience. Despite these recent changes, Slovakia remains actively engaged in international cooperation on various security issues, participating in multiple joint initiatives aimed at dismantling criminal groups involved in drug trafficking, illegal firearms sales and human trafficking.

Slovakia's legal framework encompasses several laws designed to combat organized crime, corruption and financial misconduct. While laws exist to combat human trafficking, financial crime and organized crime, implementation remains a challenge, with European judicial bodies taking an increasingly active oversight role. Recent legal reforms have also sparked controversy and affected certain crime categories, including an anticipated increase in petty crimes.

Slovakia's legislative environment is further complicated by inconsistent enforcement. Additionally, experts note that many legislative proposals are adopted through a rushed process, with limited interdepartmental coordination and insufficient parliamentary debate.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Recent changes to Slovakia's judiciary have weakened its effectiveness, independence and transparency. The abolition of the Special Prosecutor's Office in 2024 has been widely criticized as a move that undermines anti-corruption efforts. Judicial independence is further threatened by government interference, evident in the recent dismissals of judicial officials and pressure exerted on the Constitutional Court. Recent governmental interventions have eroded institutional credibility.

Law enforcement efforts to combat organized crime have been inconsistent. The dismantling of the National Crime Agency has created gaps in investigative capacity, particularly in addressing corruption cases. Additionally, the reorganization of the police force and the abolition of specialized prosecutorial units have compromised Slovakia's ability to combat financial crimes effectively. The reorganization has also resulted in the transfer of serious cases to regional police forces, which often lack the necessary resources to manage complex investigations. Furthermore, the police force is experiencing substantial personnel shortages due to changes in pension policies, which have been leading to a decline in operational effectiveness. Political influence over law enforcement has also been a recurring issue. Reports have indicated that intelligence agencies have been used to destabilize democratic institutions, while some political figures have faced allegations of connections to organized crime.

Slovakia's territorial integrity is threatened by porous borders, particularly along migration routes from Hungary and Ukraine. Despite increased security measures, human smuggling and cross-border drug trafficking continue to be significant concerns. The country is also vulnerable to increased cyber threats, particularly from pro-Russian groups targeting Slovak institutions. In recent years, the agencies responsible for countering hybrid threats and securing cyberspace have undergone restructuring, raising concerns about the effectiveness of these new entities and their approach to addressing such threats.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Slovakia has established a robust framework for anti-money laundering efforts, with institutions such as the Financial Intelligence Unit and the National Bank of Slovakia playing a central role. However, gaps persist in enforcement, particularly in tracing illicit financial flows. Recent legal changes have raised concerns that penalties for financial crimes are being weakened, potentially making Slovakia a

more attractive destination for illicit funds. Reports indicate that corruption networks exploit real estate, offshore accounts and cryptocurrency markets to launder money.

Slovakia's economic regulatory environment remains relatively strong; however, recent reforms have raised concerns about the potential weakening of oversight mechanisms. The new criminal code reduces penalties for tax fraud and financial crimes, drawing criticism from international organizations. Additionally, the enforcement of economic regulations is inconsistent, with high-profile figures facing minimal consequences for corruption-related offences. While Slovakia upholds strong property rights and business freedoms, the growing influence of politically connected businesses poses a threat to market transparency.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support mechanisms in Slovakia are in place but encounter significant challenges in their implementation. Victims of human trafficking often struggle to obtain adequate assistance, and the mechanisms for identification remain weak. Legal reforms have made it more difficult for victims to seek justice, particularly due to the reduction of statutes of limitations for financial and violent crimes. Witness protection remains a critical issue, as political interference undermines the credibility of cooperating witnesses in corruption cases.

Crime prevention strategies are limited, with few comprehensive programs specifically targeting organized crime. While awareness campaigns for human trafficking and drug prevention exist, they are not integrated into a broader strategic framework. Efforts to combat corruption have been undermined by government actions that weaken investigative agencies.

Non-state actors, including civil society organizations and independent media, play a crucial role in holding the government accountable. However, press freedom has significantly declined during the reporting period, with journalists facing harassment and restrictions on access to information. Government control over public broadcasting has raised concerns about censorship, and political pressure on private media outlets has intensified. Civil society organizations remain active but face rising legal and financial pressures, especially from proposed laws that might restrict their activities.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.