



NATIONAL REPORT

The Slovak Republic

HABITAT III

September, 2016



MINISTRY
OF TRANSPORT
AND CONSTRUCTION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC





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This document is a national contribution in the process of preparation of the New Urban Agenda to result from the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development Habitat III. It will be held in Quito, Ecuador, on 17 – 20 October 2016.

The report was prepared by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of SR on the basis of documents provided by the Ministry of Environment of SR. It worked up the report with the assistance of members of the Working Group on the Preparation of the Conference Habitat III, namely: the Ministry of Justice of SR, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of SR, the Ministry of Finance of SR, the Ministry of Interior of SR, the Ministry of Health of SR, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of SR, the Ministry of Economy of SR, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR, the Office of the Government of SR, Banská Bystrica self-governing region, Bratislava self-governing region, Košice self-governing region, Nitra self-governing region, Trenčín self-governing region, Trnava self-governing region, Žilina self-governing region, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic. At a later stage, the document was supplemented by a lot of other available relevant information, as well as personal contributions of relevant professionals in the respective areas.

The individual chapters were elaborated under the auspices of renowned Slovak experts: Ing. Eva Balážová, PhD., doc. RNDr. Branislav Bleha, PhD., prof. Ing. arch. Maroš Finka, PhD., Ing. Zuzana Hudeková, PhD., doc. Ing. Štefan Rehák PhD. and prof. Ing. arch. Robert Špaček, CSc.

The Ministry of Environment of SR and the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of SR hereby express their sincere gratitude to all participants who contributed to this report.

Introduction

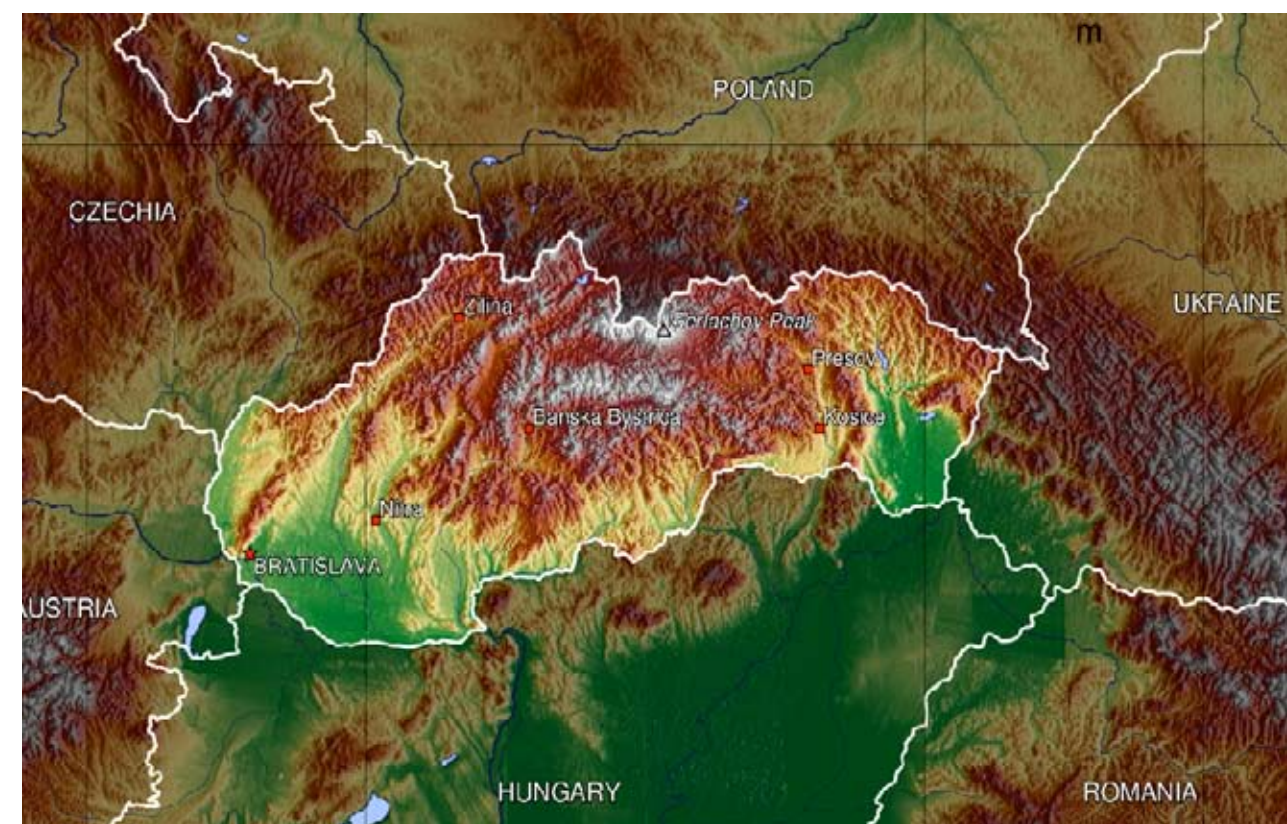
The National Report of the Slovak Republic is based on challenges of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) for the Member States to prepare their national reports providing suggestions for the preparation of the global draft “New Urban Agenda”. This should become an outcome of the Habitat III - UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to be held in October 2016.

The Slovak Republic uses this occasion to make a contribution to the conference Habitat III, during which it will hold presidency of the Council of EU, as well as to evaluate the development of Slovak cities since the previous world conference Habitat II held in Istanbul in 1996. The report also offers the opportunity to describe the role played by Slovak cities in the overall socio-economic development of the country. Slovakia is a small country and it may seem to have nothing to contribute to the worldwide discussion on urban agenda. However, there are many reasons why the position of Slovak cities should be compared with other countries of the world. Perhaps the most important reason is that cities, no matter what country they are in or however small, are and will always be drivers of the economy and social development. They represent territories with the highest concentration of activities, both positive (economy, innovation, financial and human capital) and negative (pollution, crime, transport problems, individualism and

pathogenic social phenomena). Answering the global questions asked during the preparation of the conference Habitat III allows us not only to understand the position of our cities in a broader international context, but also to examine how globally adopted postulates and solutions are adaptable and applicable in our internal policies and procedures. Moreover, Slovakia has much to offer to the world, because over the last 20 years it has undergone an extremely fast political and economic transformation and knows its impact very well.

The development of the settlement of the Slovak Republic with regard to the urban development in the last decades cannot be described in individual chapters separately, because most processes of political, demographic, social and economic development and their effects on the environment and quality of life of population are closely related to each other. For example, the effects of the reform of public administration are referred to in several chapters. This has been running continuously since the change of the political regime in the country in 1989, but it achieved the highest scope and had decisive importance for the strengthening of the self-government of the society and thus for urban management and governance in the period of 2002 - 2005.

Although the whole national report should be preferably devoted to the cities, **in several chapters it was impossible**



Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/aa/Slovakia_topo.jpg

to objectively describe the specific situation of the cities due to the lack of relevant statistical information. This limitation results from the fact that censuses with a ten-year periodicity have not resulted into data sets with rural-urban classification. Sample statistical surveys are implemented on a nationwide sample. Consequently, the report **refers to general empiric observations, where necessary.**

The content of the report fulfils the requirement of UN-Habitat, though some subchapters are regrouped to other chapters, where their interconnection is more obvious in the conditions of Slovakia.

The Slovak Republic spreads over an area of 49,035 km². It borders with the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and Poland. Its population is approximately 5.41 million and its biggest and capital city is Bratislava with a population of 423,000¹. Besides the capital city, 7 regional cities with a population of 56,000 to 240,000 fulfil the function of administrative centres of regional self-government.

The Slovak Republic is a parliamentary democracy. The national language is Slovak. Following an integration process which took many years accompanied by numer-

¹ State as of 31.12.2015: 422 932. Source: Statistical Office of SR



Urban demography

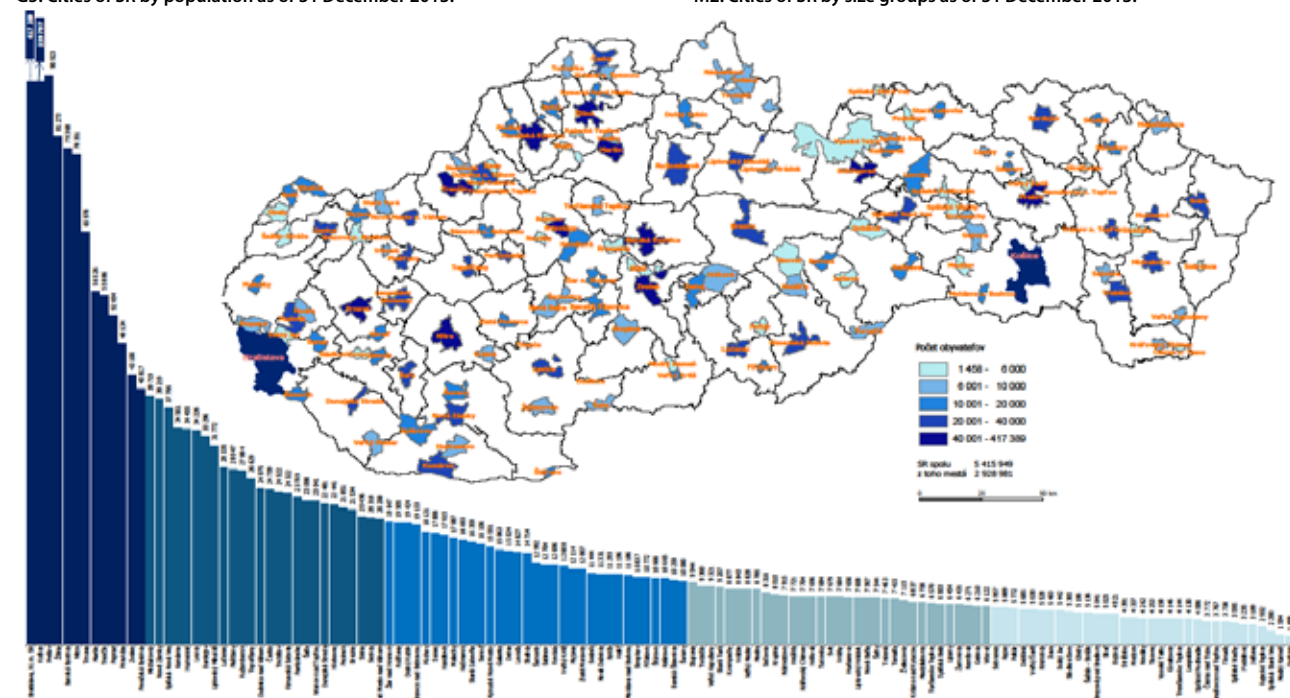
Demographic processes are one of the most important factors for the development of Slovakia and related urban development. **Individual decisions of citizens – their life strategies and preferences** have the largest influence on the general political and economic development, as well as on the development of the whole country. For this reason, a major part of the national report is devoted to demography.

For the needs of the national report, a city means a municipality with a city status, although many experts agree that such a simplified dual rural-urban classification is not adequate for the purposes of the examination of complicated processes in the development of urban and rural areas. It must be noted that incorrect

historical development of the settlement, i.e. if the municipality had city status in the past. Slovakia has 2,890 municipalities, of which 140 have city status and 20 cities have a population below 5,000. On the other hand, 8 out of 10 of the biggest Slovak cities with a population over 50,000, including the capital city, are also self-governing regional cities and hence fulfil the function of centres of 8 self-governing administrative regions.

In line with the common harmonised definition adopted by the European Commission and OECD in 2011, cities mean agglomerations where the urbanized core has a minimum population of 50,000 and fulfil further criteria.² According to this definition Slovakia has 10 cities, taking into account only basic population over 50,000 and not verifying the other at-

G5. Cities of SR by population as of 31 December 2013.



G means 'graph', M means 'map'. According to Act No 221/1996 Coll. on the Territorial and Administrative Organisation of the Slovak Republic valid from 21 July 1996 administrative units of the Slovak Republic are regions subdivided into districts. The territory of the Slovak Republic is divided into 8 regions and 79 districts. As of 31 December 2012, the Slovak Republic had 2,890 municipalities (including 3 military districts), of which 138 were cities. By Regulation of the Government of SR No. 455/2010 Coll. the military district Javorina was cancelled and its area was allocated to cadastral territories of other municipalities with effect from 1 January 2011.

Municipalities are declared cities by the National Council of SR at the proposal of the Government according to Article 22(1) of Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Establishment, as amended. Other municipalities are all municipalities that are not cities. Data on the area are taken from the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography in Bratislava. Population density means the number of inhabitants as of 31 December of the reference year per unit of area (km²). The data take into account the results of the Population and housing census 2011.

Source: Statistical Office of SR

information is often indicated that a city in SR is defined on the basis of size criterion and should have at least 5 thousand inhabitants. In reality, according to valid legislation, a municipality not fulfilling the size criterion can be declared a city providing it fulfils other qualitative criteria - it is an economic, administrative, cultural or tourism centre or a spa resort; it provides services also for inhabitants of neighbouring municipalities; it has a transport connection to the neighbouring municipalities; at least a part of its territory has an urban character of development. These criteria entered into force before municipalities were declared cities without fulfilment of the strict criteria, e.g. on the basis of the

tributes in the framework of the common OECD-EC definition. From the perspective of such a statistical approach, Slovakia ranks among the least urbanized EU countries.³ As many of the largest rural municipalities in the Slovak Republic achieve the size of the smallest Slovak Cities and the character of municipalities may not correspond to the administrative classification, this definition seems too strict for this country.

2 The definition of a city consists of four parts: When we cover the city plan with an orthogonal matrix, all cells in the matrix have a density above 1,500 inhabitants/ km². Coherent cells with high density are clustered and the gaps are filled up to achieve the minimum "urban" population of 50,000. All municipalities (administrative units at the level LAU2) with at least 50% of the population living in the urban centre become part of the "city". The "city" is defined if: 1) there are connections at the political level, 2) at least one half of the population lives in the urban centre and 3) at least 75% of population of the urban centre live in the "city".
3 DIJKSTRA, L., POELMAN, H. Cities in Europe. The new OECD-EC definition. In: EC, Regional focus, 2012

1. MANAGING RAPID URBANIZATION

For a better understanding of the conditions of urban development in Slovakia over the previous decades, it is necessary to mention the processes from the more remote past, including settlement development of the country since the arrival of the communist ideology. Many aspects have survived to the present day.

The settlement structure of Slovakia, which is generally characterized as polycentric with a concentration of settlements in valleys and basins, was influenced not only by geomorphologic conditions and historical circumstances, but also by political decisions made in the socialist era. In particular, it is related to the state-controlled post-war industrialisation that brought a concentration of jobs and infrastructure into selected urban settlements or the implementation of the concept of so-called "central villages" in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s to 1990s. The outcome was the migration of rural population to the cities, the integration of rural settlements into urban agglomerations, the change of their economic basis supported by the collectivisation of agriculture and the need of daily commutation of most inhabitants for work from rural settlements to the cities. In many cities, the population increased more than five times as a result of these changes.

Slovak cities with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 achieved the highest increments and became the most important centres of job opportunities in 1980s. The set-

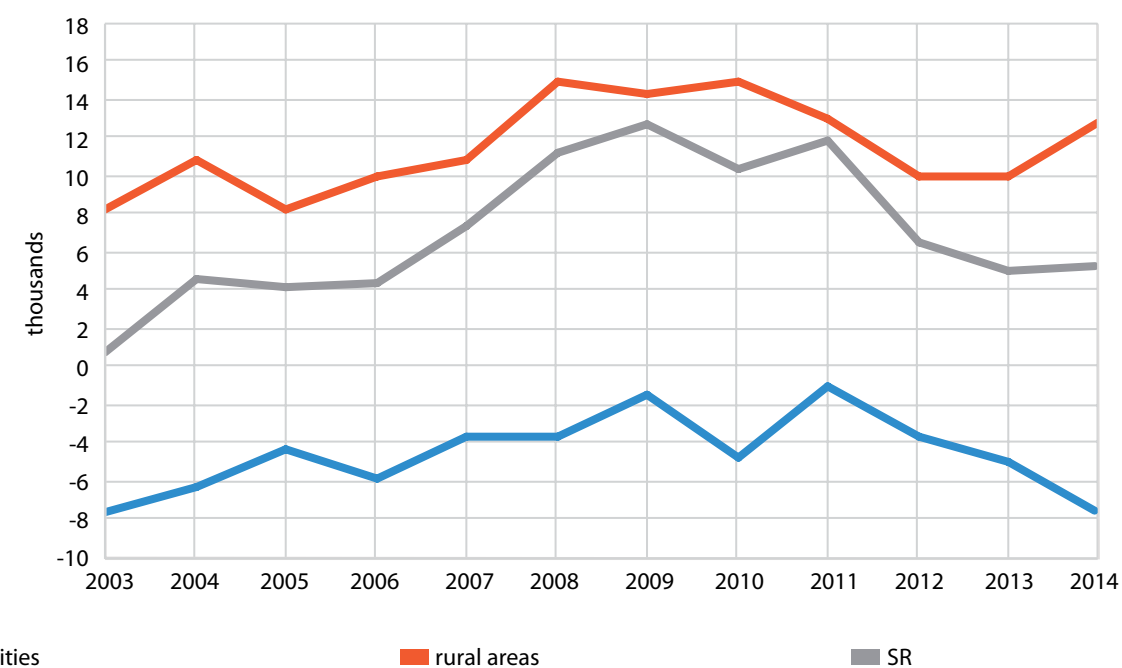
tlement system of the country was completed by cities with a population of 20,000 to 50,000, spread over the whole national territory, which fulfilled the function of administrative, service and educational centres. The share of the urban population, consisting of citizens with permanent urban residence status increased from 29.7% to 50.2% in the period of 1960s – 1980s.

This dynamic urbanization from the second half of the twentieth century caused a huge increase of urban population as well as serious problems in the settlement structure such as a monofunctional use of territory, uncompleted infrastructure in the framework of the comprehensive housing construction programme or the dilapidation of the city centres and public areas.

The change of the political and economic regime after 1989 and the start of the transformation process significantly influenced urban development. Some cities went through the change of administrative boundaries; ownership of immovable property and its price changed significantly; many industrial enterprises disappeared and housing construction nearly stopped. The process of residential and commercial suburbanization, nourished by growing prices of property in built-up areas of the cities, was activated in the same period.

The reproduction behaviour of the population also changed dramatically. The basic trajectory characterised

Total population growth (person)



Source: Statistical Office of SR

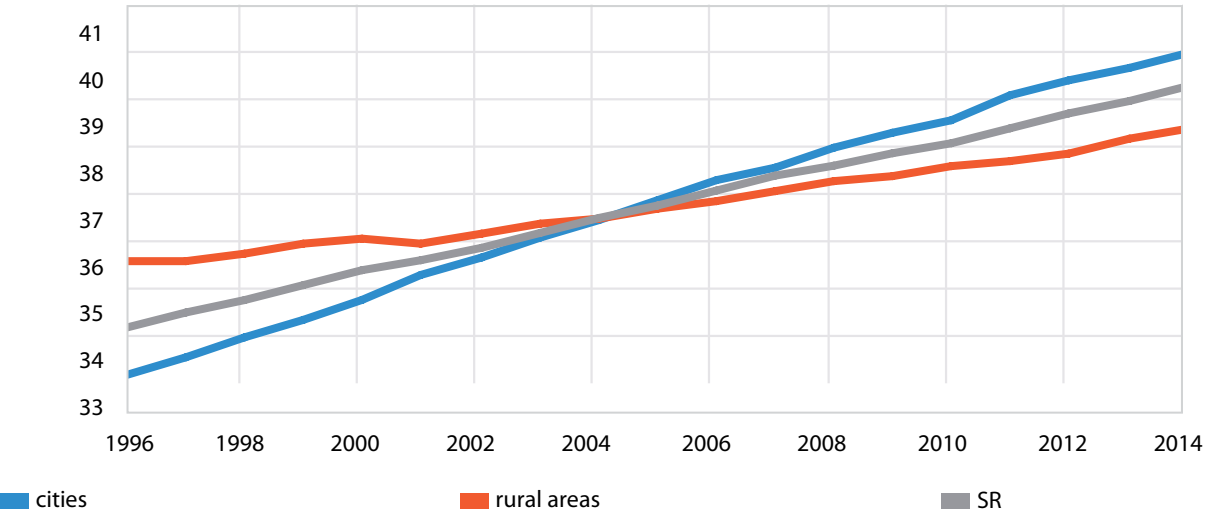
by a drop in birth intensity, a decline in the mortality rate and the related ageing of population is very well known.⁴

In the outcome, these processes brought a moderate decline in the total number of inhabitants who have registered permanent residence in the cities of the SR. This tendency is not equally intensive in all of the biggest cities and the decline is often related to an increase of inhabitants in their wider hinterlands, including smaller cities.

The decline in population does not occur evenly throughout the territory of the cities. The number of inhabitants usually grows in the hinterlands of the biggest cities and decreases in their core. Moreover, the general ageing

trend increasingly becomes obvious in the Slovak cities. The ageing of the population is caused among other things by the improvement of health care and the prolongation of the life of individuals, which has been long proven by the increase of average life expectancy at birth and by the transfer of populous generations of the former city migrants who become seniors. The ageing is also affected by emigration from the biggest cities; the population in younger age categories is most active in terms of migration, but the main cause is the model of the new reproduction behaviour. The aspects described by the second demographic transition theory are increasingly becoming apparent. This trend is characterised by the growth of individualism, the placement of emphasis on career and fre-

Average age of the population



Source: Statistical Office of SR

Population development in the cities with an actual number above 50,000 inhabitants

City	Population (as of 31.12.2014)	Population (as of 31.12.1996)	Relative change (%)
Bratislava	419 678	452 288	-7,21
Košice	239 464	241 606	-0,89
Prešov	90 187	93 147	-3,18
Žilina	81 155	86 811	-6,52
Nitra	78 033	87 569	-10,89
Banská Bystrica	79 027	85 052	-7,08
Trnava	65 713	70 202	-6,39
Martin	56 053	60 917	-7,98
Trenčín	55 857	59 039	-5,39
Poprad	52 316	55 303	-5,40
Prievidza	47 574	57 395	-17,11
SR	5 421 349	5 378 932	0,79

Source: Statistical Office of SR

4 BLEHA, B. Local demographic development in Slovakia: Perception, social implications and interdisciplinary challenges. In: Sociológia, issue 43, 2011, No. 4, pp. 362 – 390.

Percentage of urban and rural population with permanent residence in SR, census 1991 – 2011

Municipalities	2011		2001		1991	
	Number of municipalities	Population (%)	Number of municipalities	Population (%)	Number of municipalities	Population (%)
Urban areas	138	54,4	136	56,2	136	56,8
Rural areas	2 752	45,6	2 747	43,8	2 689	43,2

Source: Statistical Office of SR: Population in the Slovak Republic and regions of SR. Some results of the Population and housing census 2011, SO SR 2012, ISBN 978-80-8121-203-1

quent informal cohabitation.⁵ In addition to the changes in representation of inhabitants by family status, the changes in family and reproduction behaviour brought changes in the structure and in the number of census households.⁶

All these facts support the statement that urban development in Slovakia over the last decades cannot be designated as “rapid urbanization” but, on the contrary, is manifested by phenomena attributable to urban shrinkage. “Urban shrinkage” is frequently associated with population decline in the cities and other related phenomena such as the gradual ageing of the population, emigration of young and qualified individuals, unemployment growth, change in the age and social structure of the population, the stoppage of immigration, the stoppage and decrease of prices of immovable property. As the Slovak cities “only” lose population which becomes old at the same time, we cannot talk about “shrinkage” in the fullest meaning of this term.

Although urban population continuously declines, in terms of the number of job opportunities and the number of daily commuters for work and services, the position of the cities is becoming increasingly stronger. The quantitative development of urbanization was replaced by the qualitative one, where the rural environment and the way of life in the wider hinterlands of the cities intensively changes, which leads to the transformation of rural settlement municipalities into urban municipalities.

Urbanization can be simply regarded as an increase in the representation of the urban population (also through migration to the cities), it can be also perceived as the process of the “citification” of the rural population.

2. MANAGING RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES

In Slovakia, the quantitative share of the rural and urban population is relatively balanced. However, statistical re-

5 ĎURČEK, P., RICHTER, M. Development of some indicators in the context of “urban shrinkage” observed in urban areas of SR. In: GEOGRAPHIA CASSOVIENSIS, issue 8, 2014, No. 2, pp. 127 – 139.

6 Demographic Atlas of the Slovak Republic [online]. Available on http://www.humannageografia.sk/demografickyatlas/stiahnutie/demograficky_atlas_2014.pdf

ports on inhabitants with a registered residence in individual urban or rural municipalities do not say anything about their way of life. Moreover, the differences are blurring thanks to many socio-economic processes, including globalisation. On the other hand, there are serious problems with the registration of inhabitants who do not notify the change of residence after moving to a new home, as well as discrepancies between the permanent and usual abode.

One of the factors influencing the change of the rural environment in Slovakia is the transformation of the economic basis. It is proven, among other things, by the fact that although less than 50% of the population today lives in rural settlements, only 3% of the population works in agriculture. The change of the economic basis is only one of the transformation factors. The process of urbanization of rural areas brings the transformation of the quality of the environment in rural settlements, in particular rapid and far-reaching transformation of the way of life of the rural population. These transformation processes influence the quality of rural areas, i.e. specific municipality life in close linkage to the natural environment. Many municipalities, especially those with good access to the cities, got, not only through the process of generation exchange, but also through the transformation of rural settlements, to residential satellites. Others change into recreational settlements and in the worst case they are subject to social degradation due to migration, ageing of population and the change of social structure. The morphology of territory, the polycentric settlement structure as compared to the rest of the world, as well as relatively short commutation distances between rural and urban settlements enable the country to provide adequate residential opportunities for a population preferring both the rural and urban environment. The government guarantees the accessibility of services, job opportunities and education in accordance with the Constitution of SR, but an important factor of their real provision is the overall effectiveness of public administration. The lowest effectiveness of public administration is observed in smaller municipalities below 500 inhabitants, which represent one third of the total number of 2,890 municipalities. The well-developed polycentric settlement structure is a solid basis for the provision of even public

services within the territory, but it is weakened by insufficient institutional and financial cooperative frameworks, a dominance of competitive relations over the cooperative ones and low public awareness of the importance of cooperation as the factor of competitiveness. Another obstacle to more effective public administration is the noncompliance of administrative territorial classification with natural functional relations within the territory. However, the municipalities feel the need for cooperation, as proven by the fact that 65% of municipalities are engaged in groupings of territorial cooperation at both the micro-regional and regional level and within the cross-border cooperation structure, supported by the European Union. The European Union also stimulates cooperation of urban centres and their hinterlands by making the drawdown of funds for sustainable urban development conditional upon the application of an integrated approach to the development in wider urban territories. We witness and with high probability will further witness a “spilling over” of the rural population into the urban population, not in the migration sense, but in the sense of social, cultural and reproduction transformation. Of course, the process of suburbanization contributes to this phenomenon as well.⁷

3. ADDRESSING URBAN YOUTH NEEDS

Like in many other areas of interest for the national report for the purposes of Habitat III, we are unable to make reference to statistical data collected specifically for youth living in the cities. This chapter therefore relies on nationwide data.

Children and young people have specific needs that must be taken into account in the process of their preparation for social and working life. They belong to the most vul-

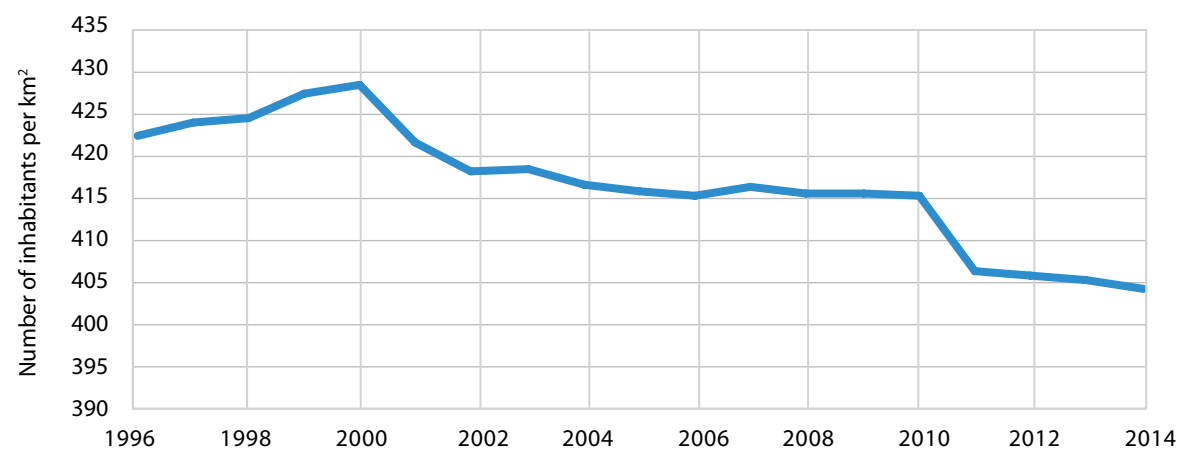
nerable groups of society, but are also a precious source of its development.

The period of youth is a period of transition from childhood to adult age. This transition usually comprises a traditional transition from economic dependence to economic independence that is normally connected with a transition from school to work, a transition from the parental household to one's own household, a transition from the child's role to the spouse's and parental role. The timing of these transitions, as well as their forms and patterns have gone through significant changes in the recent period and change in relation to both place and time. Multiple research inquiries and reports on youth state that the transition from childhood to adult age has prolonged and occurred in multiple phases. The standard way from school desks to employment and founding a family is increasingly complicated, indirect, unpredictable and vulnerable. The transition from childhood to adult age in rural and urban areas is different due to social background, ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex and socio-economic conditions.⁸

Young people today have more possibilities how to build up their career, a broader range of educational activities, including foreign study, possibilities of qualification through informal education and for combining their work with study or leisure-time activities. Empirically, it can be concluded that these opportunities are more accessible for young people living in the cities than for rural youth.

In this context one of the discussed topics is the autonomy of young people. Autonomy should allow young people to master the process of transition to adult age; to reduce their

Development of population density (cities)

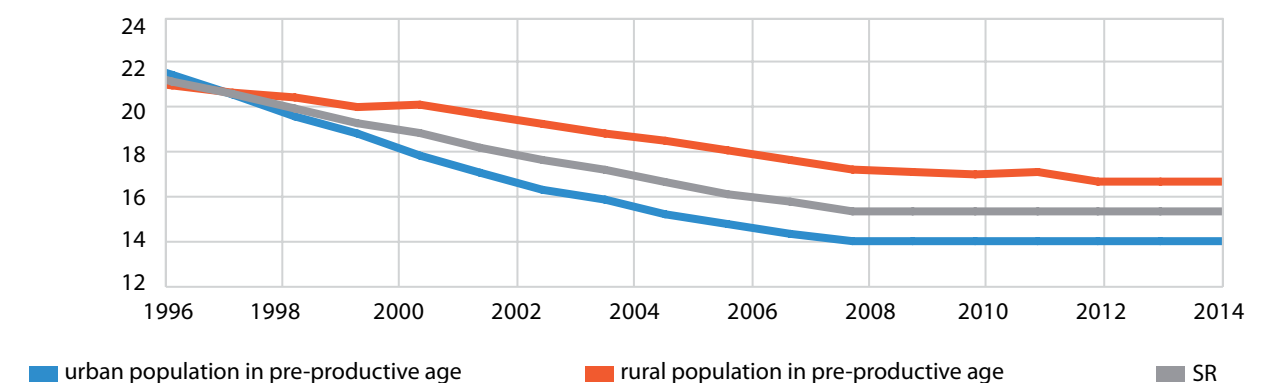


Source: Statistical Office of SR

7 BLEHA, B., HURBÁNEK, P., VAŇO, B. Demografická projekcia mestskej a vidieckej populácie Slovenska do roku 2030. In: Demografie, yr. 3/2012, p. 233 – 249.

8 BROZMANOVÁ-GREGOROVÁ, A., NEMCOVÁ, L., ZOLYOMIOVÁ, P. What do we know about the autonomy of young people in Slovakia? Iuventa, Bratislava, 2012 [online] Available on na https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/7_vyskummladeze/vyskum/2012/popul_verzia%20auton%C3%B3mia%20ml%C3%A1de%C5%BEE.pdf

Population in pre-productive age (%)



Source: Statistical Office of SR

dependence on their families, if they are students or unemployed; to develop their psycho-social maturity, which protects them from all kinds of risk; to encourage them to contribute to projects with an influence on humanitarian issues, issues of solidarity, art and the environment and to engage themselves in their implementation.⁹

The average length of the educational process in Slovakia is 17 years. Only 5% of young people do not complete the mandatory school attendance. Nevertheless, the self-realization of young people on the labour market is complicated. Young people below 29 years of age represent the largest group of all unemployed. The relevancy of achieved education does not correspond to the required skills on the labour market and the process of transition from school to work is slow. Many try to gain the missing skills through study mobility abroad that they usually pay themselves.

Young people in SR in general become autonomous and leave home later than in other countries. The serious obstacle to their autonomy is late entry into the labour market, but in particular the lack of affordable housing. Only one third of young people have procured their own housing.

Twenty-seven per cent of young people in Slovakia have experience with foreign work. More than 70% of young people in Slovakia would prefer living abroad.¹⁰

In spite of the absence of relevant data, we can assume that urban youth in the Slovak Republic has, thanks to the ongoing trend of the concentration of economic activities

9 BROZMANOVÁ-GREGOROVÁ, A., NEMCOVÁ, L., ZOLYOMIOVÁ, P. What do we know about the autonomy of young people in Slovakia? Iuventa, Bratislava, 2012 [online] Available on https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/7_vyskummladeze/vyskum/2012/popul_verzia%20auton%C3%B3mia%20ml%C3%A1de%C5%BEE.pdf

10 Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020. [online] Available on http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/3889_strategia_pre_mladez.pdf

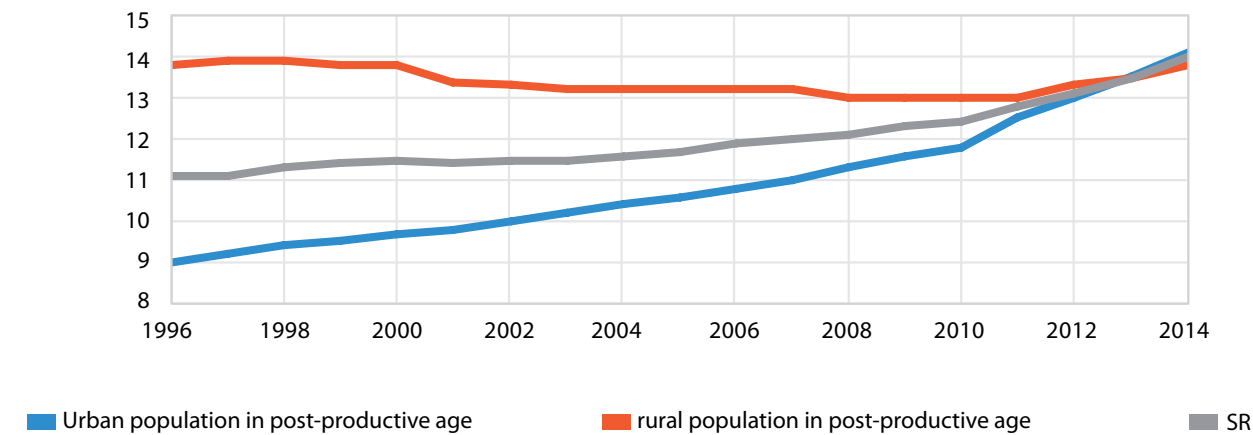
in the cities, better access to job opportunities and hence to financial resources than youth living in rural areas.

Besides the envisaged advantages for self-realisation on the labour market, youth in the cities are exposed to multiple risks such as health risks and socio-pathogenic phenomena, e.g. violence and crime, abuse of drugs and alcohol, or nonsubstance dependences.

The polycentric system of cities in SR is the basis of equal access to education, jobs, services and leisure activities for the population, including youth, throughout the country and its strengthening should be understood as the prerequisite for effective interventions of the public sector towards the overcoming of regional disparities.

All levels of state administration and self-government address the needs of youth. Territorial planning through normative approaches determine the location of establishments for children and youth as part of the comprehensive equipment of a territory starting from residential groups through the zones to city districts and the city. The government appears as a guarantor of equipment standards, which is projected in the reallocation of the taxes to municipalities in order to satisfy the needs of youth living in the respective municipalities and regions. Self-governing regions, in view of their competences in the area of secondary education and physical education, develop and implement concepts and strategies in these areas. Municipalities develop and implement their own strategies in relation to youth at the local level in cooperation with schools, educational facilities, non-governmental organisations, employers and other entities working with children and youth and implementing youth policy in the municipality. However, none of the institutional spheres systematically deals with the creation of conditions for meaningful spending of free time by youth and the cultivation of public areas for the purposes of the performance of informal activities.

Population in post-productive age (%)



Source: Statistical Office of SR

Participation is one of the key concepts of active citizenship. For young people, it brings, among other things, the possibility of self-realisation, the gaining of life experiences and the elimination of potential frustration from an insufficient influence on the life of the society which they are a part of. In spite of the sufficient number of theoretical documents, this topic receives both attention and financial support. The positive effects and contribution of real participation of young people are well known; politicians, teachers, social workers and representatives of non-governmental sector and self-government call for more active participation. However, municipalities in regions face a low engagement of young people, a lack of interest, incapacity and ignorance of how to act, mobilise oneself and make oneself heard, as well as low enthusiasm to get one's own way.¹¹

In the recent period, some Slovak cities apply the concept of Urban Youth Parliament. It means the representation of young people in institutions and the establishment of a mechanism of co-decision on issues and problems affecting young people and the creation of the feeling of joint responsibility for life in the city. The purpose of the Urban Youth Parliament is to present the interests of children and young people and, in a suitable manner, to highlight problems and offer solutions. It offers an opportunity to make comments on topical issues of society.

4. RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF URBAN SENIORS

According to the law of the Slovak Republic and international treaties for the protection of human rights, by which

it is bound, seniors have the same right to the respect and dignity as the other categories of the population.

The average age achieved 41.1 years for women and 38.2 years for men in SR in 2014; as compared to 38.3 years for women and 35.2 years for men in 2003 and 35.1 years for women and 32.2 years for men in 1991.

Since the early 1990s, the average age of women and men increased by 6 years. As many as 88 seniors fall to 100 children.

Population ageing represents a challenge for Slovakia that will irreversibly affect all areas of functioning of society. At the national level, this issue is addressed by the *National Active Ageing Programme 2014 – 2020*. By this programme, the Slovak Republic supports the issue of active ageing as well as the political priority in all its complexity, with defined measures for an independent, safe and good life of seniors. The objective of this National Programme is to create through public support policies and implementation of specific measures better opportunities and working conditions for older workers and their self-realisation on the labour market, to combat the social exclusion of old people by strengthening their active integration into society, to support healthy ageing and to change the negative attitude to ageing. A further objective of the National Programme is to adapt goods, products and services to the growing number of seniors and to their needs, limitations and preferences, to pay increased attention to the creation of conditions for the sustainable quality of life of seniors, including the long-term sustainability of social security, accessibility and the quality of public transport, housing, lifelong education, satisfaction of cultural needs, accessibility and the quality of health care and social services.

The government has also defined national priorities of development of social services – these serve as the basis for the preparation of local plans of social services by the municipalities and concepts of development of social services by the self-governing regions. In addition to the government and self-government, many non-state organisations provide services to seniors.

The trend of senior care in the family environment persists in the Slovak Republic, which is a good basis for one of the main priorities of senior social care – the promotion of keeping of the client in his or her natural environment through the development of field social services, outpatient social services and weekly residential social services provided in different facilities.

The placement of a senior into residential social care is mostly used only when family is unable to provide the required care by its own means. One of the priorities of the social policy is the enhancement of the quality and humanisation of provided social services through reconstruction, extension, modernisation and the building of establishments providing social services.

In spite of the absence of specific information about the different situation of seniors in the cities and rural areas, seniors in the cities probably have better access to different services; on the other hand, they have higher living costs, in particular housing expenses.

From the health aspect, the urban population in SR differs from the population in rural areas on account of longer life-spans and better health condition. This phenomenon is probably caused by the higher education of the urban population, which is projected in the lifestyle and prevention of health risks as well as better access to and the higher quality of health care. The specific needs of seniors are taken into account in the implementation of the *National Health Support Programme*.

The ageing of the urban population is reflected in land-use planning and building order by attention paid to categories of population with specific needs.

5. INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Women accounted for 51.3% of the total population of SR in 2014. From this number, 46.1% of women lived in the cities.

Slovakia carries out activities in the area of the equality of men and women in accordance with international conventions and commitments. Its important partner is the European Union, because the rules of drawdowns from the Eu-

ropean Structural and Investment Funds explicitly require the application of the principle of gender equality.

The gender equality issue was institutionally strengthened by the adoption of basic strategic documents *National Gender Equality Strategy* and *Action Plan of Gender Equality 2014 – 2019*. The adoption of documents was sometimes accompanied by controversial public discussion on the gender equality agenda, its philosophical basis and the provision of institutional and financial resources for addressing this issue.

As for the institutional capacity, SR came closer to the EU average in 2012. However, differences can be seen in the evaluation of the actual application of the gender aspect in practice. The evaluation took into account the existing practices and procedures for appreciation and the evaluation of gender impacts, gender-sensitive budgeting and the overall mechanism of the assessment of the gender aspect in government and public administration policies.

As regards the achieved degree of education, Slovak women still have a higher level of education than men. Women terminated their education by primary school more frequently than men; on the other hand, women more frequently continued secondary education with a leaving examination or university education than men. Most men implemented their vocational training through apprentice schools and technical colleges without a leaving examination. In addition, the percentage of women among persons with a university education is higher than for men, but their self-realisation during the academic career is lower than among men.

In a comparison of the individual types of economic activities, gender differences can be seen in all categories, mostly among the unemployed, pensioners and inactive persons; in the case of workers, the difference between women and men is minimal. **The dominant share of women in child raising and care and their higher burden of unpaid work in the household in comparison with men (weekly on the average of 4-times the number of hours worked in the household by employed men) also contributes to the average lower number of worked years and the lower achieved earnings of women during their professional career** (the gap between the remuneration for work between men and women increases with each child birth), which reflects itself in lower wages and later in lower pension benefits. After retirement, women are more exposed to the risk of income poverty than men. The trend of the feminisation of poverty at a higher age prevails; women aged 65+ are exposed to the risk of income poverty 2-times more often than men in the same age category.

¹¹ Participation of young people in the cities of Žilina and Martin with an impetus on urban settlements [online] Available at https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/7_vyskummladeze/prieskumy/z%C3%A1vere%C4%8Dn%C3%A1%20spr%C3%A1va%20particip%C3%A1cia%20ml%C3%A1de%C5%BEE%20iuventa.pdf

According to many different indicators, the **female population in Slovakia is older than the male population** and the process of the feminisation of the population increases with age. Although the medium life expectancy of women is 7 years longer than for men, they usually live many years in worse health condition than men. The average life expectancy at birth in good health condition for men and women is just above 53 years.

The cross-sectional character and complexity of the issue of violence against women, including its long-term tabooing in previous decades caused an accumulation of problems. In order to change this unfavourable situation, the Government of SR adopted several measures in the last period - most recently the *National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women 2014 - 2019*. Its aim is to develop, implement and coordinate a comprehensive state policy for prevention and the elimination of violence against women. In previous years, SR adopted a set of amendments to laws relating to the sanctioning of different forms of violence against women. The registered crime rate proves that more men than women become victims of violent crimes; however, women become victims of the abuse of a close and entrusted person more often than men. Victims of sexual offences are most frequently girls and young women below 18 years.

The updating of the important strategic document for the area of combating trafficking in persons, *National Programme of Combating Trafficking in Persons 2015 – 2018*, was prepared in 2014. The Programme is aimed at combating trafficking in persons, i.e. the reduction of the exposure of potential victims of trafficking in persons, as well as the provision of direct help to the victims in line with international and European standards and commitments of the SR in this area.

The representation of women in decision-making positions in Slovakia fluctuates from full absence to very symbolic, up to dominant representation. Most legislative and executive managing authorities and institutions do not achieve even a one-third representation of women, which the expert public considers as the critical minimum limit for the real capacity to influence decision-making. It means that, as compared to men, women have a minority representation in most supreme and central bodies of state administration.

6. EXPERIENCES AND PROBLEMS

The changes in family, reproduction and migration behaviour throughout Slovakia are exhibited at different times. In many processes, the population of the capital city changes first, followed by the population of bigger cities. The population prognosis until 2035 is marked by a con-

tinuation of trends, in particular as regards the natural decline and ageing of the population. These negative trends will continue in spite of the expected moderate growth of the birth rate and profits from foreign migration.¹²

SR has rich experiences from rapid urbanization in the second half of the twentieth century. At present the cities are confronted with the task of counterbalancing the decline in quantitative development with qualitative development. Urbanization in SR entered a phase characterised by the transformation of rural settlement, especially in suburban areas, and changes in the physical and functional structure and in particular the way of living of the population. In this sense, the urban population is stagnating or decreasing, but the urban lifestyle is expanding and the number of inhabitants who live it is growing. Together with the growth of mobility, it brings challenges for cities and their hinterlands, but also for peripheries facing regressive development.

It is not possible to draw a clear line between the urban and rural population, differences between their lifestyles are blurring and the population is becoming increasingly mobile. It affects the daily operation of cities and municipalities. Statistical data show a slow, but clear decline in the population with a registered residence in the cities; on the basis of predictable demographic development, the change of this trend cannot be expected. The decline together with the ageing of the urban population is a phenomenon typical for the trend of so-called “shrinking cities”. Unfortunately, social discussion about the meaning of this phenomenon and an appropriate reaction to it has not taken place.

The question is how far public administration, and in particular urban self-governments are aware of this phenomenon and able to prepare themselves for its impacts. Problems generated by the demographic development are usually associated with a national or regional context and less discussed in terms of their impact on the local (urban) environment. Local self-governments are literally dependent on the number of inhabitants, because proportionate taxes and other income are determined on its basis. Although municipalities do not address the economic aspect of the growing pension burden, they are directly affected by the social aspects of ageing, because demographic development is linked to social or school policies where many competences were delegated to the local level.¹³

¹² Demographic Atlas of the Slovak Republic [online]. Available at http://www.humannageografia.sk/demograpickyatlas/stiahnutie/demograficky_atlas_2014.pdf

¹³ BLEHA, B. Local demographic development in Slovakia: Perception, social implications and interdisciplinary challenges. In: Sociológia, issue No. 43, 2011, No. 4, pp. 362 – 390.

Specifically, in the area of services for seniors, the number of which is growing, the situation is clearly mismanaged, as proved by the long waiting periods for adoption in establishments providing social services. However, as regards the provision of social services, the existing conditions for the keeping of the social service beneficiary in a natural (domestic) social environment are inadequate. The problems consist in the discontinuity of social and health care of long-term reliant persons, insufficiency and regional disproportion of the social service establishment network and field social services covering the eligible demand of citizens for the development of different types of social services and their physical accessibility and an insufficient variability and flexibility of social services and inadequate multi-source financing of social services for reliant persons in need of self-service.¹⁴

From the professional, financial and strategic-approach aspects, cities are even less prepared to master the impact of population ageing on the social climate or income from economic activities. It is proven by many development programmes of cities and municipalities as well as municipality plans of social service development. Most of them only address acute problems in the short-term horizon. Development programmes aimed at a longer period usually extrapolate in a simplified manner the development of the population structure on the basis of the present state without taking into account other demographic factors that enter the calculation of the future structure. Moreover, planning is very paralysed by fragmentation into isolated administrative units of cities and municipalities without the assessment of a wider background and the possibility of cooperation between individual municipalities or providers.

The present settlement structure of Slovakia is going through a transformation of material substance and social structures. In the development processes of the internal structure of Slovak cities, we observe phenomena that are comparable to the events occurring in West European cities. Therefore, we can expect changes in the area of the population and its structure, in the structure of the economy, in the application of new technologies, as well as in the social and environmental areas. The Slovak cities will be increasingly confronted with comprehensive demographic changes to which they will have to learn to react and adapt more intensively than they do now.

Moreover, it is difficult to predict how the growing social inequalities will show in the urban area and whether they will lead to spatial segregation and the separation of social

¹⁴ REPKOVÁ, K. et al. Long-term care of seniors in Slovakia and Europe (3). Administration, management, financing. IVPR, Bratislava, 2011, [online]. Available on <http://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/Interlinks/DS3.pdf>

groups like in West European cities. Many foreign examples also show that the support of a sound social mix, the consideration of the needs of different participants of life in the city, the application of universal design principles,¹⁵ urban regeneration and the participation of the civil society are the prevention of social segregation and socio-pathogenic phenomena in urban municipalities.

7. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY A NEW URBAN AGENDA

Demographic challenges and their manifestations in urban development have critical importance for Slovakia, which will have to react to them immediately as well as in the long term. The collection, evaluation and sharing of international experiences in the area of the **adaptation of the cities to comprehensive demographic changes** may provide a precious information source for the decision-making of the public sector.

In particular, Slovakia wishes to discuss solutions in the situation of **shrinking cities**, concerning an optimisation of the settlement environment, infrastructure and public services.

As regards the development of society, Slovakia wishes to enter the international discourse on **social and intergenerational cohesion** and instruments for its strengthening. For a better integration of different categories and their claims for the urban space and services, it may be useful to implement an international exchange of information about solutions in the area of so-called **universal design**, i.e. architectural solutions that will best serve people without additional adaptations regardless of their age, health condition and physical capacity.

A special, and in view of the ongoing development, a significant part of life in the cities may be a new population inflow triggered by foreign migration. Even the short experience of massive **flows of foreign migrants and refugees** from war areas to the European Union has already activated germs of racial and cultural intolerance. On the other hand, there are examples of manifested solidarity.¹⁶ Moreover, the foreign migration flow stimulates a social discussion on existing cultural values of Slovak society. All these impulses will require a considerate reaction and an international exchange of experiences could be very helpful in its formulation.

¹⁵ The objective of universal design in architecture is to achieve a state where all objects and premises will serve people as much as possible, irrespective of their age, health condition and physical capacities.

¹⁶ The International Women of Courage Award was granted to Zuzana Števelová, director of the Human Rights League, in 2016; the League worked up a *Communication Strategy on Contributions and Positive Effects of Migration and Integration of Foreigners in Slovakia*. Available at http://www.hrl.sk/sites/default/files/publications/hrl_komunikacna_strategia_skratena_verzia_web.pdf



Urban development planning

Slovakia has successfully gone through a **political and economic transformation, including departure from a centrally planned economy** since 1989. The care of universal development of its territory is the basic function of local self-governments, including cities. The Municipal Government Act defines the competences of municipalities in the area of the guidance of social, cultural and economic development, the protection and creation of the environment within their territories through planning and managing interventions, their own economic activity, as well as the collection of taxes and fees by the issue of generally binding regulations. The basic planning instruments of local self-governments are programmes of economic and social development and territorial plans. The physical development of territory without legal regulation and permits occurs only to a limited extent and is regarded as unlawful.

8. ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL AND SPATIAL PLANNING

The most important instrument of influencing the territorial development in Slovakia is territorial planning.¹⁷ It creates conditions for the organic consistency of all activities in a territory with special regard to the care for the environment, the achievement of environmental balance and sustainable development, the environmentally friendly use of natural sources and the conservation of natural, civilisation and cultural values. Territorial planning thus provides both a practical and institutional platform for the harmonisation of the three pillars of sustainability – environmental, economic and social ones.

The spatial arrangement and the functional use of a territory are very generally addressed in the document *Slovak Spatial Development Perspective*. It provides the framework of social, economic, environmental and cultural requirements of the government for territorial development, care for the environment and landscaping. This document is then projected into the territorial plan of a region. This elaborates the objectives and tasks of the national document, but also satisfies the needs of the region. It determines the spatial arrangement and the functional use of a territory, the structure and directions of the development of settlement, production, agriculture and forestry, requirements for an expedient and effective use of the regional territory. It specifies areas and corridors of regional importance and defines requirements for their use. The territorial plan of

a region in particular identifies areas and corridors of public technical equipment of the territory, development priorities of the region determined on the basis of the optimal structure of the economic development of the region. It identifies the organisation and territorial reserves for investments and development areas of national and regional importance as well as recommendations of priorities for a long-term development. An important component that contributes to the sustainable development is requirements for the protection of nature and the environment, the principle of the use of natural sources as well as the requirement for the development and protection of the cultural-historical heritage relevant at the regional level.

The territory administered by local self-government is addressed by the territorial plan of a municipality. The legal obligation to have a territorial plan in place is imposed on municipalities with a population above 2,000. With the exception of the two smallest cities, this obligation is imposed on all Slovak cities. The territorial plan of a municipality must contain **regulations on the functional use of the territory and the principle of spatial arrangement, the boundaries of the built-up areas, the principle and regulations on the protection and development of natural and cultural heritage, as well as a layout plan of public transport and technical equipment of the territory. The territorial plan of a city is binding for territorial decision-making and the authorisation of buildings and is the prerequisite for the provision of resources from public budgets for the implementation of changes in the territory.**

Besides their regulatory function, territorial plans are important for potential investors, because investments in a territory with clearly defined rules, which can only be guaranteed by a territorial plan, are linked to a much lower risk.

The regulatory character of territorial plans is dominant; the plans do not address the actual enforceability, they do not try to determine a schedule for their implementation and therefore they usually fail in the aspect due to their unfeasibility.

Environmental assessment processes are an important instrument for sustainable planning and design. Strategic documents as well as particular proposed interventions are subject to environmental impact assessment by an expert and the public before a decision on their placement and authorisation is made. These assessment processes allow preventing activities the implementation of which may significantly influence the sustainability of the development of regions and settlements.

9. IMPROVING TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO PLAN AND MANAGE CITIES

In the process of the integration and approximation of the law, Slovakia has become fully compatible with the institutional environment of the European Union and is further developing as its integral part. The basis is territorial sovereignty and subsidiarity, which was projected in the decision-making powers in the area of the planning and management of urban development. The creation of standard institutional conditions for strategic development planning was, among other things, the prerequisite for access to financial support for local and regional development from the European Structural Funds.

In general Slovak cities have sufficient powers, competences and responsibilities for the sustainable development of their territories and for the improvement of the quality of life of their population. They are able to successfully fulfil standard operating functions and make decisions on their territory, but they still lag behind in the implementation of development policies, in particular those requiring a high degree of coordination and cooperation with other actors. Cross-sectional activities based on the cooperation of the state, self-governing, private and civil sectors are implemented only exceptionally. In general, these “cross-sectional” activities are declared as very useful and effective for territorial development.

The key role in the guidance of the settlement development is played by state and local development policies that are projected in the general conditions of investment activity, but also the capacity of self-government that is primarily responsible for the management of its territory. Slovakia achieved a high degree of professionalization of activities in construction, but the area of territorial development management affecting the territorial sovereignty of municipalities is not covered by sufficient capacity. It concerns in particular the decision-making sphere and the execution of territorial administration. Elected representatives in Slovak cities – deputies and mayors – are not subject to the requirement for professional qualification. Professional workers of local authorities are often absorbed by the performance of operational activities and have little space for their professional growth. The institutional and technical capacity should be further developed in reflection of new challenges for cities, resulting from the transformation of the society to a civil society, as well as global challenges such as climate change, globalisation, increasing development dynamics and the exposure of cities to external shocks – economic crises, climate extremes, the individualisation of decision-making and others. It means **new challenges for the building of the professional apparatus as well as for the training of professionals as guarantors of professionalism in the**

planning activities and execution of decision-making processes. Afterwards, it will be necessary to strengthen the institutional background.

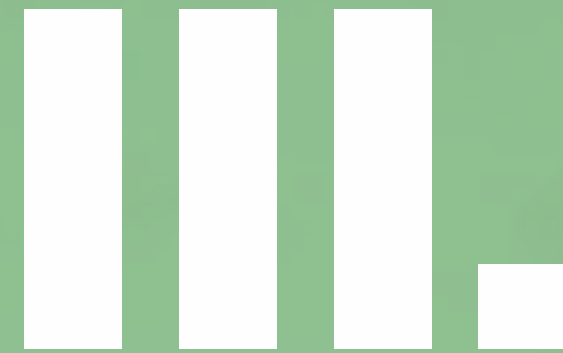
Following the introduction of a democratic system and the division of competences between state administration and self-government, the central bodies of state administration essentially resigned to an active, targeted and systematic support of urban development and cooperation beyond the narrow scope of their sectoral activities. Among other things, it was reflected in the data base insufficiently disaggregated into the details of the settlement, allowing the analysis of a particular city and its comparison with other cities at the national, European or global level. Moreover, information about the needs of cities, their development plans, capacity and successful implementation of development documents such as territorial plans and programmes of economic and social development are not systematically collected and evaluated.

Slovak cities work together through multiple associations, of which most important are the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia and the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia, but this cooperation still has reserves in terms of an effective exchange of experiences and the solution of common problems in the area of urban development.

The strengthening of the technical capacity of the cities to plan and manage their development in cooperation with other actors, including the private sector and civil society, is one of the tasks included in the prepared Concept of Urban Development of SR. This document is prepared in wide cooperation with different ministries and with the participation of cities, the academic municipality and private and civil sectors.

The main objective of the prepared concept is to create a better environment for sustainable urban development, the result of which will be productive cities providing a healthy settlement environment.

¹⁷ Act No. 50/1975 Coll. on Land-use Planning and Building Order, as amended.



Use of land and extension of built-up areas in cities

The problem of effective land use and the extensive growth of built-up areas is one of the key problems linked to the development after 1990. An important event directly related to land management was the abolition of the privileged and central position of the State in the issues of decision-making on the use of territory. A major part of these competences were delegated to territorial self-governments.

Moreover, **the ownership structure of immovable property significantly changed** in favour of private ownership. On the one hand, it was the basic condition for the development of the property market, on the other hand, it brought a type of enterprise characterised by investments in immovable property and prevention of its further development. Another obstacle to the optimal spatial development was and still is the fragmented and often unclear ownership structure, pending privatisation proceedings and other disputes over property ownership. **Unused, abandoned and neglected territories in the city organism** are a serious problem. Another problem is unknown and diversified owners in combination with the frequent burden of the contamination of former industrial parks, which discourages from their revitalisation and leads investors to investments in undeveloped areas outside the urban zone of the city.

Residential property was transferred to the almost exclusive ownership of their owners, which also does not help the implementation of system measures for the improvement of the buildings, especially in relation to the wider neighbourhood. Suburbanization was also accelerated by the satisfaction of the needs of the population related to the increasing quality of life, requirements for infrastructure, mobility, services and preferred types of housing, as well as the absence of effective interventions of the public sector into the functioning of the property market.

The problem of suburbanization is only one of the external manifestations of these factors. In particular, the building of infrastructure and spatial requirements generated by the change of the lifestyle caused an enormous growth of built-up areas in SR: during the relatively stabilised population development over more or less one decade (1994 – 2007) **the total area of built-up areas in SR increased from 128,463 ha to 227,931 ha, which represents an increase of 77.4%; over two decades it nearly doubled, in spite of the impacts of the global economic crisis.**

The State significantly supports the improvement of land management through investments in the collection, processing and publication of land data. The Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Re-

public as the central body of the state administration in the area of cadastre, geodesy and cartography ensures the digitalisation of the cadastre and the free publication of data from the cadastre via the cadastre portal. It contributes to the improvement of the transparency of ownership relations, the improvement of the provision of services to the general public, the establishment of a functioning property market and the enhancement of the attractiveness of the business environment for domestic and foreign investors.

However, the condition of robust land management is not only the availability of data, but also the quality of their interpretation and their use for decision-making. Therefore, it is necessary to build personnel capacity and to institutionalise the system of professional support for state administration bodies, in particular local self-governments. It is the more important because of the fact that the privatisation of immovable property of the cities after 1990 actually deprived the cities of the possibility to intervene in the property market. Following the change of political and social conditions the ownership of many buildings of every kind was transferred from the State to local self-governments. However, the local level did not have usable experience from the use of this property, so local self-governments often sold it in order to settle budget deficits. Consequently, the possibilities of active intervention on the property market in the public interest were reduced to territorial-planning interventions, approval processes and local tax policy. However, the effective use of these instruments also requires a high degree of professionalism of the political apparatus and political skills that the cities often lack.

10. ENHANCING URBAN AND SUBURBAN FOOD PRODUCTION

The framework for food production in Slovakia as an EU Member State is determined by the legislative and financial support in the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP – Common Agricultural Policy) of the EU countries. After 1990 Slovak agriculture went through an extensive process of restructuring supported by the transition to an open market economy and the fulfilment of the EU pre-accession conditions. It concerned in particular urban and suburban food production, where general economic conditions significantly changed due to the land price development and a change of the way of life of the urban population. Many land plots used for agricultural purposes fell victim to the processes of extensive urban development and suburbanization, often with financial support from EU and the State aimed at the creation of new job opportunities in industry and related sectors.

Some of the activities supported by the European Union in SR are the identification and classification of land used for agricultural purposes within selected reference territories and settlements. The historical continuity can be used, because land used for gardening within the territory of settlements and their contact zones have a long tradition in SR. In the conditions of Slovakia (according to data from the Slovak Union of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners published in 2010) 108,000 garden owners are registered, of which 78,000 hectares are gardens belonging to private houses and 5,000 ha are situated in about 1,000 colonies in Slovakia.

A recent trend in the largest Slovak cities is the foundation of neighbourhood municipality gardens, often as the temporary use of brownfields. Municipality gardens combine food production with leisure and municipality activities.

The categories of agriculture are extensively represented in the internal structure of urban or rural settlements, usually as **small forms with a relatively high share of human work**, but often with the use of small mechanisms, especially for soil loosening, grass cutting, irrigation, protection against diseases and pests. The dominant crops are fruits, vegetables, herbs used in homeopathy and cooking, and tea growing. The eminent effort of the growers in experiments and the dissemination of experiences and knowledge among members of the municipality with the same interests, which can be regarded as an active process of municipality learning, is apparent. It can be seen in the growing of new, non-traditional fruit species with a high utility value, as well as in the return to old artificial crops. These approaches are supported by an increasingly extended comprehensive concept of urban ecosystem services, supported by the European Union. These services reflect not only the need of the promotion of food production, but also an adequate response to climate change, related risks and the need for adaptation.

11. ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN THE AREA OF URBAN MOBILITY

The mobility of the population in SR dramatically increased after 1990, which is reflected in the requirements for transport infrastructure. **The growth of mobility results from the improved social situation of the population and the resulting better affordability of transport vehicles and services, but in particular from the change of the lifestyle of the population.** Accessibility, dominantly determined by mobility, has become the main factor of the attractiveness of urban centres.

The key problem is the method of satisfaction of the needs of the population, which develops to the detriment of public transport. The conduct of inhabitants – the choice of transport vehicle and the resulting share of different transport modes (modal split) – significantly changes. For this reason, planning and organisational measures of cities and the public sector for the support of alternative transport modes and UMT had and still have a paramount importance. Apart from investments in the modernisation of vehicles used for public transport, the development of transport infrastructure was one of the priorities of urban development in the preceding period, but emphasis was placed on the building of road infrastructure. In this area, financing from the European Union and the State is dominantly used, because self-governments have limited sources for the financing of these interventions.

Besides the support of infrastructure projects in urban and regional public passenger transport, multiple “soft measures” for the support of public passenger transport were implemented. The concentration of train transport services on prospective lines brought improvement of the transport service in urban agglomerations.

The integrated transport system has been introduced in the Bratislava region since 2013. It allows passengers to use a single prepaid ticket for travels by trains, regional buses and urban mass transport within the territory of Bratislava and its suburbs. In general, urban self-governments strive to improve public transport services in order to encourage their inhabitants to make the change from individual automobile transport to mass public transport.

The interest in environmentally friendly transport modes increased also thanks to the support of the Ministry of Transport of SR. It supports these transport modes, because they play an important role in the improvement of the transport situation in cities. The outcome is new fundamental strategic documents comprehensively covering the issue of urban and regional public passenger transport and non-motor transport, including cycling. *The Strategy of Development of Public Passenger and Non-Motor Transport of SR until 2020* was prepared in cooperation with higher territorial units, cities with a population of 70,000+ and other entities. This strategic document defines the basic medium-term orientation of environmentally friendly transport modes. It determined the objectives in the area of the organisation, operation and transport infrastructure to comprehensively cover activities in the following period, among others the preparation of robust legislation, technical standards and strategic documents for the support of public passenger transport and non-motor transport, the provision of adequate

budget resources for the operation and infrastructure of public passenger transport and non-motor transport, effective organisation and integration of public passenger transport to prevent the competition of individual transport modes and allow their complementarity.

The State's ambition is to increase or maintain the number of passengers in public passenger transport. In the area of infrastructure, it aims to increase environmental friendliness, energy effectiveness and the accessibility of vehicles used for public passenger transport, but also the provision of robust and available transport information. The successful implementation of the Strategy requires more intensive cooperation with territorial self-governments in the area of the support of environmentally friendly transport modes.

The development of public and non-motor transport has an important influence on sustainable urban development. One of the possibilities of how to increase the share of non-motor transport is through the support of cycling. Moreover, this environmentally friendly transport mode can provide another impulse for the development of tourism. The basic strategic objective is to ensure the equal position of cycling and its integration with other transport modes. The plan is to create conditions that will allow achieving a 10% share of cycling on the total division of transport work until 2020. A significant strengthening is also planned in the area of cycle tourism as an important segment of tourism. The key task is to improve the perception of the cyclists, who are regular road users.

The development of the automotive industry and motor-ing in the last two decades was enormous – the number of cars increased on average by 34% (389 automobiles per 1,000 inhabitants in 2010). However, the construction of roads (see Chapter III. 16) and parking areas did not correspond to this boom. It is also why most cities are increasingly having problems with the parking of motor vehicles. The occupation of undeveloped and green areas in favour of parking lots is often the source of conflict.

12. EXPERIENCES AND PROBLEMS

In the last two decades, the planning of development of Slovak cities had to cope with new circumstances that can be divided into three main areas: 1) the reproduction behaviour of the population significantly changed and affected the demographic development; 2) democratisation processes caused the fundamental transfer of decision-making on spatial development to the level of self-government; 3) a massive change of the ownership structure of property took place; the new owners use this property according to their ownership rights

and their preferences and procedures are often unpredictable. All these factors caused notable changes in the physical structure of cities. When we add technological changes to these processes, including the growth of mobility, information and telecommunications development, it is logical that cities not prepared for the new situations sometimes did not react correctly, in particular with a long-term perspective of the protection of the public interest. The decision-making processes often led to unsatisfactory decisions or even the pursuit of individual interests to the detriment of the city. Although these problems have not been sufficiently discussed at the national level and no lessons or even sanctions have been drawn from them, Slovakia can offer experience gained in the transformation processes to other countries facing similar changes.

As described above, the legislative environment of the Slovak Republic offers adequate possibilities to the cities in the area of the active management and development of their assets. Slovakia adapted its legislation to the European standards, where legislative changes highlight the environmental area and help sustainable development. The open issue, both on the side of the State as the initiator of decentralisation and on the side of urban self-governments as the beneficiaries of tax transfers, is the consistent evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of cash-flows.

Although the legislation provides a framework for **territorial planning**, some of its parts are regarded as obsolete and the government is preparing its updating, it still serves as the **basic instrument of territorial development regulation**. The development management and inter-linking of the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects are disputable. One of the causes is the separation of the socio-economic development plans from territorial planning.¹⁸ In the period of a centrally managed economy the territorial plan was in particular a technocratic instrument for the implementation of the state-controlled policy. An autonomous development policy at the local level did not exist and urban self-governments now have problems with the overcoming of this deficit of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The cities are expected to effectively coordinate many, sometimes conflicting interests of individual local actors in the area of local territorial planning. In the area of socio-economic planning, they should come up with initiatives for the overall improvement of the functioning of the city and urban life. These expectations are very difficult to meet.

¹⁸ Act No. 539/2008 Coll. on support of regional development (as amended by the Act No. 309/2014 Coll.)

The implementation of development plans, monitoring and the revision of adopted strategies fail throughout the urban management cycle. In particular, projects requiring the application of a cross-sectional approach, so that the synergic effect highly exceeds the sectoral approach, are regarded by self-governments as too complicated and unfeasible. Cooperation with other entities – neighbouring settlements or regional self-governments, the business sector and entities from the non-governmental sector – is often regarded as a risk. This situation is caused by multiple factors that are unevenly represented in each individual city, e.g. overall undercapitalisation, insufficient personnel and technical capacity in the managing sphere of cities, or inadequate methodological and professional support from the State.

In spite of sectoral policies that the State adopts within the scope of its competences, the **cross-sectional urban development policy** is still missing. Being aware of this deficiency, the government set up a working group for the preparation of the Urban Development Concept of SR in 2014. Its objective will be the system improvement of conditions for the functioning of urban self-governments. The policy has the ambition to effectively link different sectoral plans and objectives with an impact on the urban environment. The state policy should also bring experiences and applicable methods for problem solution. The main principle of the prepared urban development policy is an integrated and strategic approach to spatial development with regard to a strengthening of the links in the functional urban areas and wider regional development concepts.

13. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY A NEW URBAN AGENDA

One of the important messages to be brought by the New Urban Agenda is the **general recognition of the importance of national urban development policies**. In view of the roles that are and will be played by the cities in the future, the search for possibilities of the harmonisation of global, national, regional and local interests and their projection in urban development is justified.

Experts remind that the competition of cities and urban regions will grow, both in relation to own economic activities, as well as in the struggle for foreign investments. These processes may accelerate the polarisation of the settlement system – the extension of economically successful players, on the one hand, and a deepening of the failure of deprived areas, on the other hand. Although Slovakia is a small country with nearly zero influence on

global processes, it would be appropriate for the New Urban Agenda to remind about the generally recognised conclusion that **each country will be as successful as its urban agglomerations**.

It is obvious that while the national policies will strive for a rational degree of "division of work", it must not be achieved to the detriment of the territorial sovereignty of self-government. The balance should be found in the permanent communication of all stakeholders. International experiences and example sharing may be very helpful in this process. Joint communication platforms, requiring time and energy investments, will probably be sceptically viewed by the States and cities. Therefore, it will be important to objectively evaluate advantages resulting from such exchange and optimise the outputs.

The New Urban Agenda will **certainly name global tasks** to be fulfilled by cities, such as the elimination of urban poverty, the provision of equal access to services and values, the support of polycentric settlement development, including rural development with a strengthening of the relation of the city and its hinterlands, or cooperation of urban and rural areas. In this context, it would be useful **for Slovakia to find and name its comparative advantage**.

The urban centres in some regions will naturally overgrow into larger morphological functional urban systems, where the spatial decision and the mobility of most actors (companies, households etc.) will take into account a wider context and spatial dimensions than merely individual cities. It is becoming clear that policies targeted at the strengthening of economic competitiveness at the local level of individual cities will increasingly lose their sense, especially if these centres become part of larger functional settlement units. The New Urban Agenda should reflect these processes.

IV.

Environment and urbanization

The urban population in Slovakia slightly prevails over the population with a registered permanent residence in rural areas. This topic is covered in detail in Chapter I.

Urbanized settlements in general have a high percentage of developed areas, a high concentration of buildings, paved areas and a human population, multi-storey buildings, industrial-production and an energy basis as well as extensive social infrastructure. Moreover, urbanized settlements have a higher occurrence of transport and communication systems, and larger settlements are transport hubs and nodes of other different networks.

The urban environment conditions significantly differ from the adjacent areas in many aspects (temperature, humidity and air pollution etc.). Urban settlements have a high concentration of strongly overheated surfaces with high heat capacity, which causes significant heat accumulation. Moreover, the temperature rises due to the heat released from industrial processes, combustion engines used for transport and the heating or cooling of residential buildings. The combined effect of these factors gives rise to a so-called “heat island” over the city.

Further environmental problems linked to urbanization include air, soil and water pollution, dust formation, a high noise level, solid waste and waste water production, but also the loss of biodiversity. The quality of life of the urban population is directly affected by the state of the urban environment. For example, the combined effect of air pollution and higher summer temperatures, when the urban population is also exposed to a high concentration of dust particles PM₁₀,¹⁹ and ground level ozone, is the cause of many early deaths, in particular among vulnerable categories of population. It has been observed in literature²⁰ that due to the problems with air pollution (especially dust formation) and the urban environment, the life expectancy of the urban population is on average 2 years shorter than for the rural population in the conditions of SR. This information cannot be verified, especially because the largest rural and the smallest urban municipalities may overlap in the size and spatial structure. Statistical classification thus would not give the answer to the question about the quality of the environment and its impacts on the population. A better indicator is mortality due to air pollution. According to the updated OECD report²¹ Slovakia has a very high rate of air pollution deaths per number of inhabitants, although this number has decreased by 16% since 2005. Improvement of the environment would also influence the economic area,

because EU would achieve annual savings of EUR 31.5 billion on health expenditures.²² In its study, OECD also quantified costs linked to deaths. These are further growing in Slovakia thanks to inflation and other factors, in spite of the decline in the number of deaths mentioned above.

14. ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

In Slovakia, like elsewhere, the expected negative climate change will most affect urban settlements. The impacts will differ, depending on the geographic position in the respective Slovak region and the size or type of settlement.

In assessment of the climate change impact on the settlement environment, it is necessary to analyse the key areas or functional components of the settlement environment, in particular: the residential environment (buildings, networks, public areas); the natural component of the settlement environment (biodiversity, natural elements and verdure in the settlement environment); water management (water management in the settlement environment, drinking water supply); agriculture, forestry and the use of the landscape in the settlement environment; energy, energy infrastructure; transport, transport infrastructure; population health and social area; trade, industry, services, tourism etc.

The individual functional components in the settlement environment are influenced by climate changes such as: **the rise of the average temperature, an increase in the number of extremely hot days; unevenness, changes in the time distribution of precipitation and its intensity as well as a decrease of the water source capacity**, especially in South Slovakia, a higher occurrence of dry periods, more frequent and more intensive storms; increased frequency of the occurrence of extreme phenomena, in particular **windstorms and snow calamities**.

Climate change impacts in the urbanized environment will manifest themselves in the functioning of energy infrastructure through increased power consumption by cooling systems or more frequent failures of distribution systems and energy production technologies.

In the area of transport, a worsening of road safety and traffic flow is expected. In the area of water management, we anticipate problems with the drinking water supply, but also higher requirements for the sewer system due to the need of flash storm water runoff. Climate change will also affect buildings due to their overheating.

Climate change will have negative effects on population health. The health condition of people suffering from

cardiovascular, infectious or respiratory diseases and allergies will deteriorate due to floods. Requirements for recreation will also increase due to a higher demand for accessible green areas, recreation near water etc.

Today it is clear that climate change impacts cannot be fully prevented. Negative changes will manifest themselves for decades or even centuries, therefore it is necessary to adapt at all levels. One of the basic documents is the *Strategy for the Adaptation of the Slovak Republic to Negative Climate Change Impacts*, adopted in March 2014. This strategy contains recommended measures for the improvement of preparedness to the changing conditions of the environment. Adaptation measures may consist in building of so-called grey infrastructure (interventions requiring high investments or technically demanding measures) and the use of green (vegetation) and blue (water elements) infrastructure. So-called “soft” non-infrastructure measures such as information-educational activity, planning, decision-making, subsidy policy and others must be added to them.

Hot waves should be mitigated by a higher share of vegetation and water elements in the urban settlement structure. It will be necessary to thoroughly consider the quantity of green areas as well as the selection of plant species and to use alternative plant species and vegetation roofs.

Due to intensive precipitation, it will be necessary to pay special attention to storm water management, in particular to apply an approach allowing the increase of the infiltration and retention capacity of urban territory and adjacent landscape by minimising the share of impermeable surfaces, collected water discharge to seepage pits and accumulation lagoons, building of polders, rain gardens, etc. Given the long periods of draught it will be necessary to support the recycling of storm water and waste water, to minimise water losses in distribution networks and to monitor the development of water source supplies.

15. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Slovakia was only hit by sporadic destructive earthquakes in the historically remote past and it has no active volcanoes. Slovakia as a land-locked country is not affected by rising sea levels. Natural risks other than draught include landslides caused by soil erosion, as well as floods. Settlements in Slovakia were usually founded near water streams. In case of changes in precipitations, when dry periods are followed by extreme precipitations and higher precipitations in winter, we observe recurring floods and the resulting flood risk. This issue is covered by the Act on Flood Protection²³ transposing the European Directive on the as-

essment and management of flood risks. It imposes on EU Member States the obligation to permanently revise and, based on the objective needs, to update the flood risks with the aim of determining areas with a potentially high flood risk or probability of its occurrence. For areas where the existence of a high flood risk was identified, it is necessary to draw up and every 6 years to revise or update the flood risk maps showing the areas affected by floods with different periodicity. These flood risk maps will show the probable consequences of floods and flood risks for the population, economic activities, cultural heritage and the environment. The said act also imposes the obligation to prepare flood risk management plans. The flood protection is ensured by the flood authorities at multiple levels (the Ministry of Interior of SR, regional environmental authorities, district environmental authorities and municipalities²⁴). At the national level, the risk prevention is addressed by the document *Risk prevention and risk management: existence of national or regional risk assessments for the purposes of risk management with regard to adaptation to climate change*.

The total amount of damages caused by floods in the last ten years exceeded EUR 707 million. However, relevant information distinguishing the disaster risk in the cities from rural areas as well as their financial impacts is not available. It is worth mentioning the ongoing project financed from EU sources, the ambition of which is to increase the flood preparedness of the country and to mitigate consequences of floods by increasing the effectiveness of the work of the rescue services and improvement of their technical equipment. The project *Active flood control measures* will support the efficient protection of life and the health of citizens and their property, the protection of social and economic infrastructure, as well as the protection of the environment at the time of floods. The project will also contribute to the enhanced protection of members of the intervening units and to more effective and faster performance of rescue operations during and after a flood.²⁵

16. REDUCING TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The increased degree of motoring (see Chapter II.12) affects the traffic flow and contributes to traffic congestions. Their reduction can be achieved through the implementation of organisational, operating and infrastructure measures. One of the state policies is aimed at the motivation of passengers to use railway transport, which is able to serve strong traffic flows. In this area, regional transport around large agglomerations was strengthened. A further strengthening of railway transport depends on the optimisation of the operated railway lines and the in-

19 Dust represents the sum of different-sized particles present in ambient air. Particles PM₁₀ mean particles, 50% of which have an aerodynamic parameter below 10 µm.

20 Source: study of Aphekom, 2013

21 OECD (2014), The Cost of Air Pollution: Health Impacts of Road Transport, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264210448-en>

22 Source: The Independent 2013

23 Act No. 7/2010 Coll. on flood protection transposing Directive 2007/60/EC into the law of SR. Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks

24 <http://ochranapredpovodnami.webnode.sk/manazment-ochrany-pred-povodnami-a-povodnove-organy/>

25 <http://www.minv.sk/?aktivne-protipovodnove-opatrenia>

roduction of integrated transport systems that will bring the transport integration of individual transport modes. In the last two decades, we observed a massive construction of motorways, express ways and first-class roads, which in many Slovak cities helped to decrease the volume of transit traffic and thus significantly reduce traffic congestions. However, the building of this infrastructure raises the question of how to effectively use the existing urban roads. The example of Bratislava as the capital city shows that the completion of the urban semicircle D1 – D2 helped to reduce traffic congestions on existing roads only temporarily. Moreover, this case proves the need for the effective monitoring of the road burden and flexible reaction in the area of traffic flow organisation.

The building of effective public mass transport should also contribute to the reduction of traffic congestions. Measures recommended in the *Strategy for the Development of Public Passenger and Non-Motor Transport of SR until 2020* and the *National Strategy for the Development of Cycling and Cycling Tourism in the Slovak Republic until 2020*, will also contribute to improvement of the situation in this area. For further details see Chapter II.12.

The increasing traffic intensity in urbanized areas, characterised by a growing share of environmentally unfavourable individual motor transport, combined with the deteriorating level of related infrastructure, causes many environmental-health problems to both large and small cities. From the perspective of public health, the main problem is noise from traffic of all kinds, in particular road traffic, which became one of the most important factors affecting the public health of the population in the recent period. It significantly contributes to cardiovascular diseases, mental diseases, dyssomnia and the reduction of the overall performance of the human organism.

Another transport-linked factor is the deteriorating quality of the air in the urban environment (the impact of transport on the concentration of dust particles, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic substances etc.). Although industrial and energy production also contribute to the air pollution of urbanized areas, traffic pollution has the most harmful effects, because it causes the concentration of harmful substances directly in the breathing zone of a human. It directly contributes to the occurrence of chronic allergic and respiratory diseases among the population, in particular in the sensitive categories such as children, seniors etc.

The Ministry of Interior SR is the guarantor of road safety in SR and, in the creation of the transport environment, it must ensure the protection of the public interests of society, which could be affected, in particular the protection of life, health and property of citizens in the area of road safety and traffic flow.

17. AIR POLLUTION

The Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute monitors the quality of the atmosphere in 38 chosen locations throughout Slovakia. The levels of O₃, SO₂, NO₂, NO_x, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO and benzene are continuously measured. Arsine, cadmium, nickel, lead, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and mercury concentrations in the air are also monitored. The monitoring is implemented in the two largest Slovak urban agglomerations (Bratislava and Košice) and in 8 zones. The air pollution is annually processed and evaluated on the basis of limit values and limit values increased by the tolerance limit for the protection of human health. These are evaluated for individual monitoring stations and pollutants.

The high values of dust particles PM₁₀ are a serious health risk. According to the report of the European Environmental Agency from 2014, Slovakia achieved the third worst ranking from all countries of the European Union.

In some regions, the industry remains an important source of pollution (e.g. in the Prievidza district the limits of dust particles and sulphur dioxide are exceeded due to the existence of heavy industry). In the industry, large backlogs still exist and it should invest in modern technologies in order to reduce the amount of air pollutants. Nitrogen oxide and dust pollution shows that in big cities (e.g. Bratislava, Košice, but also Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Prešov, Trenčín and Martin) exhaust gases are a major source of pollutants. Fine particles from exhaust gases penetrate into the airways where they may cause health problems in the cardiopulmonary system. Based on estimates of the Aphekom study, 15 to 30% of cases of asthma among children who live along frequented roads may be attributed to exhaust gases from motor transport.

The introduction of electric vehicles and hybrid engines may improve the air quality situation in cities, but only in the long term. Even if reliable and cheap electric vehicles were widely accessible, the renewal of the fleet would take decades. Therefore, a feasible solution is the introduction of a set of measures based on transport regulation, increasing of the share of UMT and its improvement (including the development of transport modes based on electric traction) and the reduction of power plants using fossil fuels. The example is cities introducing so-called low-emission zones.

In connection with the issue of the worsened quality of the internal air of the buildings selected, public health authorities have monitored the quality of the environment inside schools, i.e. buildings where the most vulnerable category of population – children, spend most of the day, since 2006. Thanks to the participation in two international studies²⁶ in the period of 2006 – 2013, the workers of the Public Health Au-

²⁶ http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/org/ohzp/search_II.pdf

thority of SR and the Regional Public Health Authority with its seat in Banská Bystrica gained experience from the methodology of measurement and the evaluation of the quality of air in schools using methods that are also recognised in other European countries. Besides gaining precious knowledge of the quality of the internal air of schools through the monitoring of selected parameters (temperature, humidity, concentration of harmful substances – CO₂, NO₂, volatile organic substances, formaldehyde etc.), the implemented activities contributed to the building of the personnel and technical capacity in this area and enabled a comparison with other countries. The challenge for the following period will be to use existing capacity for monitoring the quality of the environment in other regions of Slovakia. The gained knowledge can be used for the drafting of recommendations for the improvement of the environment inside schools, the enhancement of the awareness of students, school personnel and the general public of important aspects of the care of the internal environment of buildings and their location in the urban environment. Special attention should be paid to the impact of materials used inside the buildings, the ventilation regime, cleaning, classroom overcrowding or the location of the building with regard to the source of pollution in the urbanized environment.

18. EXPERIENCES AND PROBLEMS

According to the experts, public administration in Slovakia, especially at the local level, **does not (properly) take into account climate change impacts** on the economic, social and environmental development of its territory. Effective measures based on the climatologic analysis of estimated impacts on the territory, including risk assessment, on the most vulnerable parts of the territory or sectors in Slovak cities, do not exist. Little care is taken that individual programmes aimed at the elimination of climate change impacts should be mutually balanced, that the implementation of one programme should not deteriorate the situation in another area. The quality of the environment in the settlement environment, as described in the introduction of this chapter, has undeniable bearing on the quality of life of the urban population in general. New problems have been added to old ones and to challenges in the area of the quality of the urban environment in the recent period, whereby climate change and its negative impacts have been regarded as one of the most serious risks to the stability and prosperity of the European Union.

Weather extremes in the form of summer heat waves, long periods of draught or the increased occurrence of flash rainfalls, windstorms and other extreme phenomena are starting to manifest themselves and will multiply in the near future. Other problems that often have a synergic effect are the reduction of green or unpaved areas in the cities, the loss of biodiversity etc.

On the other hand, **Slovakia achieved great progress in the improvement of the environment**, thanks to the termination of operations of many environmentally burdensome industrial enterprises, the liquidation of which had, of course, a negative impact on employment, as well as thanks to its obligations toward the European Union in the area of waste water disposal.

19. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY A NEW URBAN AGENDA

Urbanization and related environmental impacts go far beyond the borders of individual countries. In March 2014, the Government of SR approved the *National Adaptation Strategy*, comprehensively reflecting the needs of adaptation measures in all sectors. In the following phases, it will be necessary to propose implementation plans of adaptation measures also in the urban environment and to ensure the required quantitative and qualitative monitoring. It is clear that Slovakia will not feel the climate change as much as coastal countries, on which the rising sea levels have an almost existential impact. Doubts that extreme weather in our territory is not directly attributable to the activities of human population, are sometimes raised. However, the fact remains that climate change is manifesting itself with increasingly higher intensity and periodicity. Therefore, we believe that it would be useful to hold a general **discussion on different manifestations of climate change and an approach to adaptation to them**, also in the case of land-locked countries.

In this context, Slovakia expects the New Urban Agenda to address the topic of resilient cities and to describe the principles of climate neutral cities. The guidance for the development of these strategies should describe a set of required measures to be applied in urban development and governance for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors and the enhancement of the resiliency of cities. However, besides the preparedness for negative climate change impacts, there are further challenges to the development of society such as peak oil, the ageing of the population and other socio-economic problems.

In addition to adaptation measures, the mitigation of climate change includes activities reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Such measures can include e.g. a transition to the use of renewable energy sources, changes in the use of landscape and in the transport system, improvement of the energy performance of buildings, sustainable waste management solutions etc. Vegetation that apart from absorption of CO₂ fulfils other functions (micro-climate, environmental, recreational, social, and aesthetic, etc.) has special importance.



V.

Urban governance

Slovakia, like other European countries, inherited rural settlement from feudalism, when land was the basic production factor. Like almost everywhere in Europe, this period left behind a large number of small settlements. In view of the whole transformation of the public administration system and the changed requirements for administrative, economic, personnel and the technical capacity of local administration, such a fragmented settlement structure was unsuitable and required some improvements. Following the fundamental changes of the social system in 1989, the process of economic transformation and democratisation started in Slovakia, which considerably strengthened the need for changes in the local administration structure.

20. BASIC LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The first steps of public administration reforms were implemented in the period of the common Czecho-Slovak State. As regards changes in the municipal structure, the restoration of self-government at the local, and a few years later also at the regional level, had paramount importance. The objective of the reforms was to get the performance of public administration as close as possible to the population. By the adoption of the Act on Municipal Establishment²⁷ and of the Act on the Organization of Local State Administration²⁸ the dual model of public administration, consisting of two separate but complementary systems of local bodies – self-governments and local government – was established.

The Act on Municipal Establishment was based on the principle of the equal position of all municipalities, which caused serious problems, in particular to small municipalities with a population below 1,000 (most represented in Slovakia). These problems consist in the fact that all municipalities, irrespective of their size (the smallest Slovak municipality has 11 inhabitants and the biggest – Bratislava – has a population of 423,000), fulfil the same functions, but have a different capacity for their performance. Their position in the Act hardly gave the cities any different powers. In fact, it meant only the introduction of different names for their bodies. Certain differences concerned only Bratislava as the capital city and all cities with a population of 200,000+. However, it is the only exception in the whole system of local self-government, which applied merely to the city of Košice.²⁹

However, by the constitution of territorial self-government, a new period in life of cities and municipalities started, which brought a system change in land management. An important part of this change leading to the perception of municipalities as self-governing entities, was the legal regulation of their property and new rules for its financing. At the same time, the legal regulation of relations between bodies of the municipality, internal control or a strengthening of external control was improving.³⁰

21. DECENTRALISATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The decentralisation of public administration had paramount **importance for the strengthening of the self-governing management of society** and was the most important condition for urban management and governance. The process was implemented in the period of 2002 - 2005 and brought the strengthening of the competence and financial autonomy of local self-governments. The scope of transferred competences brought the position of the cities close to the European model of local self-government. The transfer of competences was implemented on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity. The model of financing³¹ is based on a **criteria-based distribution of a single tax** (individual income tax) determined by the State and on the structure of 8 local taxes in case of the autonomous tax policy of the cities. The basic criteria³² are population and the size coefficient of the municipality; it makes this mechanism of financing in general more advantageous for bigger cities, resp. large municipalities.

The process of decentralisation brought new situations and problems. **The time discrepancy of the transfer of competences and finance caused the financial insufficiency of many cities and the volume of competences and the actual need of finance have not been verified yet**, which conserves the financial tensions. The transfer of competences concerned own (original) as well as transferred (delegated) outputs. However, small municipalities were and are not able to execute a large number of competences. The institute of a common local authority was created, where the municipalities agreed on the common execution of competences under the contract terms and determined the seat of the authority

30 The Supreme Audit Authority of SR controls the management of property, property rights, financial resources, payables and receivables of municipalities. It also controls the method of the assessment and collection of taxes, charges and fines that are the income of budgets of self-governing regions and municipalities, as well as the execution and the exercise of rights and the fulfilment of obligations resulting from financial and economic relations established in management.

31 Valid from 1 January 2005

32 Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 668/2004 Coll. on the Distribution of the Tax Revenue from Local Government Income, as amended.

Comparison of the increase of income after the transfer of competences and the change of the method of financing of territorial self-government (000s €)

Indicator	2004 Municipalities + HTU	2005 Municipalities + HTU	2005/2004 (abs. increase)	2005/2003 %
Income of territorial self-government	3 267 178	3 650 116	+ 382 938	+ 12
In it: tax income (municipalities + HTU)*	655 148	1 598 257	+ 943 109	+ 144

* HTU (Higher Territorial Units) did not have non-tax income in 2004

and individual competences. The common local authorities should only have been temporary institutes without legal personality, whereby their existence depends on the solution of settlement fragmentation by the selected form of consolidation. Almost all cities are the seats of common authorities, which strengthens the position of local leaders.

Not only the competence and financial aspects, but also the political and market dimensions of decentralisation are important for urban development. These bring the participation of all urban actors, including citizens, new forms and instruments of participation, as well as new methods and instruments of urban development. An important advantage of (public) access to functioning and the development of cities is the possibility of the execution of delegated competences with the involvement of the private and non-profit sectors.

Decentralisation in relation to urban development **does not address problems of small cities with a population below 5,000 that have a low financial, personnel, infrastructure and social potential required for their development.**

22. FINANCING OF URBAN SELF-GOVERNMENTS

After decentralisation, the economic power of Slovak cities significantly increased. Besides the transfer of competences to territorial self-government, accompanied by the transfer of property, the delegation of several public services from administration bodies to territorial self-government was linked to fiscal decentralisation.

The objective of financial decentralisation as the new system of the financing of territorial self-governments was **strengthening the tax income of municipalities, the determination of the own tax revenue** of higher territorial units and the introduction of a new method to balance daily income and expenditures of territorial self-government.

Revenues of self-governments are comprised of local **taxes and fees**.³³ In the conditions of Slovakia, this source of financing of self-governments represents approximately 10% of their costs.

Further revenues of self-governments are **shared individual income taxes**. At the beginning of the process of fiscal decentralisation in 2005, the sum of revenues from individual income tax collected by the tax authorities in the respective budget year was distributed as follows: 70.3% for municipalities, 23.5% for higher territorial units and 6.2% for the State (the municipalities thus received more than EUR 883 mil. and higher territorial units more than EUR 295 mil.). This ratio was used without change until 2012, when it was necessary to implement consolidation measures also in relation to the budgets of self-governments in reaction to the consequences of the global economic crisis. Although the share of taxes for self-governments increased in 2014, they still do not achieve the initially adjusted level. In 2014, revenues from the individual income taxes were divided as follows: 67% for municipalities, 21.9% for higher territorial units and 11.1% for the State. It meant EUR 1.3 billion for municipalities and EUR 426 million for higher territorial units.

The transparency of the process of financing of self-governments is ensured by the objectiveness and the generality of input parameters and, in municipalities with a population above 2,000, by the obligation to prepare multi-annual budgets in the programme structure.

However, in the current model of financing, the **municipalities do not have a sufficient volume of funds required for their spatial development. Therefore, in the recent period, as much as 80% of expenditures on development are reimbursed from the European Structural and Investment Funds**, although it is clear that they will not have a long life. **The common practice**, even though short-sighted in terms of future development, is the lease or sale of urban immovable property,

33 Amended by the Act No. 582/2004 Coll. on local taxes and local charges for municipal and minor construction waste, as amended.

27 Act of Slovak National Council of SR No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Establishment, as amended

28 Act of Slovak National Council of SR No. 472/1990 Coll. on the Organization of Local State Administration

29 FINALÝ, Stanislav: Dual and common models of public administration (and the position of municipal social policy in these models). In: Models of modern public administration. Proceedings of conference. Prague, University of Finance and Administration, 2009, pp. 1 – 63. ISBN 978-80-7408-024-1

which does not take into account its future profitability or unprofitability. The warning signal came from the examination of the programmes of economic and social development, which clearly showed that cities had not prepared long-term investment strategies or programmes defining the priorities of the required reproduction of property such as roads owned or administered by the cities or buildings used for the execution of original competences of municipalities. Financing is only one factor of success of the cities; task management is a more important factor, but without financing it is equally condemned to failure.

In view of the aforesaid, it is necessary to launch a discussion on identified problems and in mutual (at least methodological) cooperation of the government and cities and with the contribution of international URBACT-type³⁴ programmes to find verified solutions that could be used even in an unfavourable financial situation.

23. IMPROVING PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

After the fall of communism, the citizens ceased to be merely bearers of social rights and the emphasis shifted to political and civil rights. This shift resulted in the institutionalisation of civil participation in the political, social and economic areas.

The sustainable development of settlements, which is an integral part of the sustainable development of society, cannot be achieved without the active participation of citizens in all its phases and positions – from development planning processes to processes of everyday activities in the settlement. The public participation plays a special role in planning processes because they create conditions for the active support of the strategy for sustainable settlement development by the public. The endogenous spatial development model combines the ideas of globalisation and specific characteristics of the local economic development of urban and rural areas that the local leaders know best. Thanks to the establishment of local managing structures interested in the settlement development, it is possible to better use the local development potential and to react to the changing needs of the population. It supposes cooperation and coordination in self-governing municipalities, agreement on strategic objectives and in the formulation of spatial development programmes, the involvement of decisive interest groups of inhabitants, including the local business sphere, and the linkage of social networks within

settlements. A positive attitude to the settlement, the feeling of settlement solidarity and the active participation in local life provide a strong motivating factor for the mobilization of settlement municipalities and for the use of the local social capital.

Legislation enables participation through the Act on Land-Use Planning and Building Order³⁵ and the Act on Free Access to Information³⁶; in recent years environmental law³⁷ has been significantly entering processes that ensure public participation in the processes of settlement development planning. The Slovak Republic has recently joined the project *“Promoting municipality and public participation in the EIA process”* aimed at the promotion of new forms of public participation in the EIA process at the level of local territorial self-governments.

For the improvement of participation, the European Charter on Participatory Democracy in Spatial Planning Processes³⁸ was adopted. This Charter highlights the importance of the participation of individuals and municipalities in the process of defining their life space for the implementation of real participative democracy. The participation of individuals and municipalities in public life at all levels is part of the fundamental values of democracy. In Slovakia, there are two large organisations addressing the interests of self-governments that also participate in the preparation of legislation and planning documents. The Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia (ZMOS) was founded to defend the common interests of all associated settlements. It also means that it should not enter the process of the solution of the individual problems of individual member cities and municipalities. All activities of the Association since 1990 have been directed at the reform of public administration, the financing of municipalities and cities, the adoption of new or the maintenance of existing key acts on territorial self-government in unchanged form and at the conservation of existing electoral system. Among other important issues, ZMOS addresses those with a negative impact on its member municipalities and cities. ZMOS works on a voluntary basis.

The Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia of Slovakia (ÚMS) is a voluntary interest association of the cities of SR. The mission of the Union is to present the issue of territorial self-government, to protect the rights and interests of its members in relation to the legislative and executive power of the State and to other organisations, unions and associations, to provide its members with advisory and

35 Act No. 50/76 Coll. on Land-use Planning and Building Order, as amended
36 Act No. 211/2000 Coll. on Free Access to Information and on the Amendment of Certain Acts, as amended

37 Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on Environmental Impact Assessment, as amended

38 European Charter on Participatory Democracy in Spatial Planning Processes - <http://goo.gl/i8NR8k>

information services, to further personnel, financial, institutional and tax sovereignty and to create conditions for the exchange of experience.

24. ENHANCING URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY

According to the Competence Act, the Ministry of Justice of SR is also the central body of state administration for courts and penitentiaries. The judicial system consists of the Supreme Court of SR and other general courts (54 district courts, 8 regional courts and the Specialised Criminal Court) that guarantee the legal protection of rights without discrimination on any grounds and access to justice for everybody. The Constitutional Court of SR, the supreme judicial body protecting the constitutionality and legality in the territory of SR, has a special position and special competences.

The feeling of safety is one of the main human needs. Therefore, the basic function of the police is the strengthening of local and urban safety and its provision for citizens. The citizens can contribute to this effort as well. They can participate in the protection of the city, persons and property and prevent offences and crime by proposing preventive measures and highlighting the risk factors. The police implement preventive projects and activities aimed at the enhancement of the legal awareness of citizens, crime prevention, and the improvement of road safety. It also executes crime prevention and the popularisation of police work among the civil public. According to Act No. 564/1991 Coll.³⁹ each municipality in the Slovak Republic may establish local police; this control unit maintains public order, protects the environment and fulfils tasks resulting from generally binding regulations and resolutions as well as from decisions of the elected local government officials. The total number of 167 local police units were active in Slovakia in 2014.⁴⁰

The presence of firefighting crews also contributes to safety in the cities. The government of SR by its resolution of 6 November 2013 specified the plan of *“Nationwide deployment of forces and means of firefighting units”* to ensure better coverage of the territory of cities and municipalities by firefighting units and to increase the effectiveness of the cooperation of the Fire and Rescue Corps and local firefighting crews. The nationwide deployment of forces and means pursues an adequate and well-balanced deployment of firefighting units according to the level of risk to which the individual municipalities are exposed. It also enables the voluntary participation of local firefighting crews, depending on their professional, material and technical level, in the strengthening of urban (local) safety in cooperation with the Fire and Rescue Corps.

The cities apply a fragmented approach to satisfaction

39 Act No. 564/1991 Coll. on the Local Police, as amended

40 Report on the work of the local police in the Slovak Republic 2014

of the need for urban safety. The creation of public areas follows valid standards that comprise elements increasing safety. However, a comprehensive approach to the creation and revitalisation of urban structures is missing. The city of Trenčín was the first city to join the project *Safety as the Quality of Space*, which brings a comprehensive and unique view of the safety of settlement areas. A comprehensive methodology of the evaluation of urban areas in terms of safety was elaborated as part of the project. Methodological instruments for the identification of problem areas in urban settlements were defined and suitable interventions for the elimination of safety problems were recommended. The proposed methodology was tested in the safety study of the city of Trenčín, which provided the real picture of the present situation in the city and contained proposals for practical processes and solutions. The project covers all basic elements of the urban space.

25. EXPERIENCE AND PROBLEMS

The Slovak Republic has experience from the extensive reform of public administration that has been implemented since 1989. The **reform of public administration** was based on its consistent division into central government and local self-government. This reform started a new period for cities and municipalities, which brought a change in land management and in the perception of municipalities as self-governing entities. Amendments of law adopted since 1996 increased the importance of self-governments by the decentralisation and deconcentration of competences from state administration to self-governing regions and municipalities. A number of acts reacting to practical needs were adopted in this period. In the period of 2004 – 2006, **the delegation of competences from state administration bodies to municipalities** and self-governing regions was implemented on the basis of law. Competences that were not exclusive functions of the State were delegated. After the delegation of competences, the system of financing was changed in the process of fiscal decentralisation. It pursued the strengthening of the tax income of municipalities and the introduction of a new system of financing of self-governments. On the basis of these facts, the Slovak Republic can share its experiences and knowledge with other countries implementing public administration reform. The process of decentralisation still cannot be regarded as terminated; the chosen model shows many weaknesses such as excessive fragmentation to a large number of municipalities or the insufficient professional and technical capacity required for effective land management and the provision of services to citizens. An issue requiring special attention is the creation of a suitable mix of sources and services of municipalities to allow them to provide their citizens with all required services in an adequate quality.

Although the regulation of public administration obligations in the area of **civil participation** in Slovak law may go beyond the standard foreign practice, the legislative treatment of this issue proves not to be sufficient for its effectiveness. In particular, the awareness is not sufficiently targeted and public information channels are not reliable. The process of participation often ends with the formal fulfilment of legal obligations. The results of participation are often not taken into account in the decision-making of the competent authorities which discourages citizens from active participation in this process. On the other hand, our citizens still have not fully become aware of their importance as members of the participating public. This is a logical consequence of the previous period, where our citizens were in the position of passive recipients of decisions on the development of their cities, made without feedback on the actual needs of the population. The strengthening of the principles and mechanisms of civil participation was one of the main objectives of the decentralisation of public administration – to strengthen the direct relationship between the settlement municipality and local self-governments.

A specific problem of Slovakia is working with the Roma population. Apart from many projects aimed at the improvement of the living conditions and development of this municipality, the repressive units try to adapt their approach. The Police Presidium is the sponsor of this project and of the routine operation “Roma specialists” in the police. In the framework of this project, a number of Roma municipality specialists were trained and put into routine operation, in particular in towns and villages with the highest concentration of the Roma population. In the police, this project has long been successfully working as a routine operation; the interest shown in this project by the foreign police proves its success.

26. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY A NEW URBAN AGENDA

During the process of decentralisation, new problems were identified. As the decentralisation of public administration preceded fiscal decentralisation, many cities and municipalities got into financial insufficiency and the volume of competences and the actual need of finance have not been analysed yet. In real terms, self-governments receive more money than before, but it is not clear whether this volume of funds is sufficient for the execution of all competences. Moreover, the process of decentralisation did not solve the problems of small cities (below 5,000 inhabitants) with a low potential to develop their territory and provide all services required from them by law. A competence and financial audit of public adminis-

tration should therefore be conducted to analyse the capacity of cities and municipalities to execute all delegated competences with adequate financial resources. It is necessary to continue the modernisation of territorial self-government with the aim of ensuring the good and effective execution of competences. **Slovakia can contribute to the international discussion on experience from the delegation of competences** at lower levels of government and seek inspiration for improvement of the process of decentralisation. Slovakia also expects that the principles discussed and validated at the global level **will highlight the need of territorial cooperation** beyond the administrative boundaries of cities.

The possibilities of the participation of citizens in the decision-making processes has much improved in the recent years. However, it is important to further engage the citizens and different groups in decision-making processes, also through different interest groups and the amendment of laws. It is necessary to improve the level of public awareness and information channels and to find an adequate degree of civil participation so that the decision-making of self-governments is effective and beneficial for all stakeholders. International **validation of the need of participation**, but also discussion on its forms and effectiveness, taking into account specific conditions – is one of Slovakia’s expectations from the New Urban Agenda. One of the functions of cities is to protect their inhabitants in the process of coping with the effects of emergencies as well as in everyday situations. The Presidium of the Police prepares the accreditation and later test operation of the project “anti-conflict teams”. This project is aimed at public sport, cultural and other meetings with the potential occurrence of incidents that could be solved through communication, without the use of coercive means. This project will help to increase the number of qualified workers providing police services to maintain public order.

One of the factors contributing to safety is the comprehensive creation of public space. Slovak cities still have not come to believe that they should develop methodology for evaluation of public space from the safety aspect and define instruments for the identification of problem solution and the recommendation of interventions in the problem areas. Urban safety is being addressed by a single regional city - Trenčín. International experience in this area could inspire Slovak cities.

Slovakia expects that the New Global Agenda will highlight the need of **addressing the issue of urban safety, not only in repressive units, but also in terms of urban space design and management.**





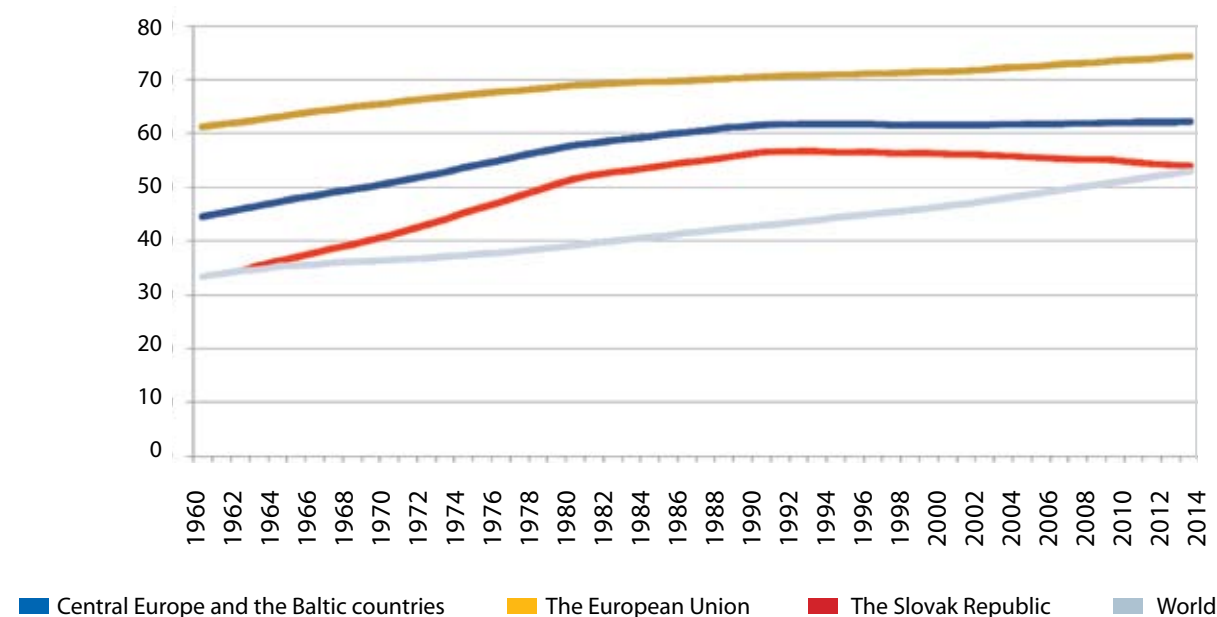
VI.

Economic
urban
development

Slovakia is a less urbanized country as compared to developed economies. Based on UN data, the rate of urbanization achieved the level of 54.8% in 2010, which is below the European average (72.7%), and even below the East European average (68.9%). Moreover, the rate of urbanization has shown a downward trend since 1991 (for details on the objectiveness of such an evaluation see Chapter I.). The size structure of cities is very different from that of developed economies – smaller cities prevail. The biggest and capital city of SR Bratislava has a population of approximately 450,000 (1,234th biggest city of the world). The population of Bratislava accounts for 13.83% of the total urban population, which is below the global, EU and Central European averages (WB, 2014).⁴¹ The total rate of agglomeration of the economy is therefore much below that of developed countries, which affects lower agglomeration savings in the economy.

In spite of the downward trend of the urban population, Slovak cities became centres of business, employment and human capital after 1990. By transition to a market economy, the business sector developed and big cities became a driver of business dynamics. The position of the capital city Bratislava strengthened. In particular, the development of small and medium enterprises, which now represent 99% of all enterprises, contributed to the growth of business. The number of companies (active and profit-making companies) founded in the cities in 2010 achieved 123,061, which represents 83% of the total number of economically active companies in SR in the respective year.⁴² Cities report 79% of the total number of workers and 56% of the total economically active population in SR. Cities also have a high concentration of human capital – 72% of the population with a university education had permanent residence in a city in 2011.

Development of urbanization



Source data: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects. Catalogue Sources World Development Indicators.

Rural urban comparison in SR (2011)

	Percentage of economically active population	Percentage of population with a university education	Percentage of workers	Percentage of companies
Cities	56 %	72 %	79 %	83 %
Rural areas	44 %	18 %	21 %	17 %

Source: SOBD, RES

41 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.URB.LCTY.UR.ZS/countries>

42 Data from the Register of Economic Operators of SR.

27. SUPPORT OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the early 1990s, with the transition to a market economy, the process of the decentralisation of public administration and transformation, resp. the building of a new institutional system of the economy, started. An important step was the establishment of local self-government. The following steps were the change of the territorial-administrative organisation of SR and the increase of the number of local and regional administrative units (8 regions and 79 districts). In early 2000, regional self-government was enacted and in connection with this process more than 400 competences of state administration were transferred to regional and local self-government. This process was accompanied by fiscal decentralisation (for details see Chapter VI.). Municipalities and cities have important competences in the area of own development, territorial planning, transport, education, health care, culture and sport, protection of nature and social assistance. The cities can influence their own development, but it is problematic, especially in terms of the financing of activities and horizontal and vertical coordination. The reform of public administration give rise to multiple levels of government (local, regional and national) and a number of development areas are now divided between different levels of government (vertical coordination of different sectors). The sectoral approach is very dominant, which is reflected in the everyday operation of cities. An example is education, which is subject to several forms of management (e.g. the operation of elementary schools is the competence of a city, but the curricula are prepared by the Ministry of Education). Many state administration authorities at the national level have established a network of local organisations that implement sectoral policies. The most important local institutions are regional development agencies, regional advisory and information centres, business innovation centres, first contact centres, business incubators and clusters. Several national agencies have established a network of local centres or workplaces.

Until 2000, cities based their development policies on investments in transport and civil infrastructure. In the area of economic development, they tried to attract foreign industrial companies, for example by building industrial parks. So-called exogenous economic strategies prevailed. Initiatives of urban development policy-makers aimed at the support of enterprise, the development of new industries and the linkage of the interests of companies, educational and research institutions (triple helix model) occurred sporadically. Endogenous models of urban development strategies were used in a small extent. An important milestone was the accession of SR to the European Union in 2004. In this context, the strategic coordination of urban development was highlighted and the

obligation to prepare the programme of economic and social development of the city was imposed by law. This programme has become the basic strategic document. Unfortunately, due to the lack of experience from strategic planning, it usually remains a formal document, without the establishment of organisational structures for its implementation, financing and the evaluation of its implementation.

In the recent period, we can observe a growing number of urban activities aimed at the transformation of the urban economy, the development of innovative enterprise, sport, cultural and creative activities etc. The second biggest city of SR, Košice, implemented the project European capital city of culture in 2013. It focused on investments in cultural infrastructure, cultural activities and enterprise in so-called cultural and creative sectors.

28. JOB CREATION

The process of the economic transformation of SR brought important changes on the labour market that were linked to sectoral restructuring of the economy. Jobs in agriculture and industry were disappearing (especially in the 1990s) whereas the service sector was growing. The drivers of changes in the sectoral structure of employment in SR were foreign investments in automobile, electro technical and related industries, and the development of the commercial service sector.

Although the urban population is relatively low, cities are the centre of employment. From the population employed in SR, 79% work in the cities and the remaining 21% work in rural areas. Employment is concentrated in bigger cities. Nearly 50% of all workers are employed in ten cities with a population over 50,000.

After 1990, we observed a massive growth of enterprise, which strengthened in the period of accession of SR to the EU and culminated just before the economic crisis in 2008. In the cities, the service sector developed most dynamically – in the period of 2007 – 2008 nearly ten-times more companies were founded every year than in the early 1990s. As compared to rural areas, cities offer the urban population better jobs, especially in the area of knowledge-intensive services. As for the sectoral structure of businesses, Slovak cities are dominated by companies in the service sector, which account for 87% of the total number of companies (2010). On the other hand, rural areas are dominated by agricultural companies (69%). Cities are usually sought by companies providing knowledge-intensive financial services (94% of the total number of companies) and industry is dominated by high-tech companies (85%).

One of the important economic problems of SR is the relatively high rate of unemployment – one of the highest in the EU. According to the population census, the unemployment rate in SR achieved 4.10% in 1991 and significantly increased in the following 20 years. In 2001, it amounted to 20.4% and in 2011 it achieved the level of 16.9%. In the early 1990s, cities had a slightly higher unemployment rate, but in 2001, the unemployment rate in the cities was much lower (17.8%) than in rural areas (24.1%); this difference remained unchanged in 2011. The unemployment rate in the cities was lower in smaller cities in 1991, but in the following period the situation changed and bigger cities above 50,000 inhabitants now have a much lower unemployment rate than smaller cities. The unemployment rate of smaller cities is even higher than the unemployment rate of SR.

Competences in the area of employment policy and social affairs are usually at the national level. However, a network of local institutions (Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) was established; these institutions implement the employment policy at the local level (e.g. monitoring of vacancies, the provision of information, advice, education, financial support etc.). Special stress is placed on the employment of disadvantaged job applicants (young people, marginalised groups) e.g. through the provision of information, advice, financial support, the possibilities of short-term employment, the foundation of social enterprises etc.

29. INTEGRATION OF THE URBAN ECONOMY INTO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

Although each measure of the government has a local dimension, the sectoral approach to the solution of development problems prevails in Slovakia. The objective to increase the low rate of urbanization or support the urban development has not been included in any of the existing governmental development policies. A special document defining the role of cities in the economic development of SR or addressing specific problems of urban development has not been adopted yet. Interventions of sectoral policies are usually so-called *space blind*, which means that they do not take into account potential influences of the measures on the development of urban economies. However, a number of associations and platforms were founded that discuss and influence the creation of national development policy in favour of local self-governments, such as the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia and the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia.

The process of the economic transformation of SR caused an important increase of regional disparities between

West Slovakia and the other regions of the country. The western regions of Slovakia observed more significant growth of jobs, enterprise, foreign investments and the migration of workers than the eastern regions of Slovakia. The Bratislava region observed rapid economic growth and with GDP per inhabitant at the level of 176% (2013), it became the sixth most developed region of EU.

The accession to EU in 2004 considerably changed the ability to finance the development activities of backward regions from the EU Cohesion Fund. Key strategic documents for the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in SR⁴³ created conditions for the participation of local actors in the development of national economy. The volume of financial resources from the Structural Funds amounted to EUR 2 billion in the period 2004 – 2006, EUR 11 billion in the period 2007 – 2011 and the sum of EUR 14 billion is allocated for the period 2014 – 2020. The support from the Structural Funds in SR was usually provided for sectoral priorities (the development of education, industry, infrastructure, agriculture etc.). Urban self-governments were or still are eligible applicants and many cities implemented projects aimed specifically at the reconstruction of local infrastructure and civic amenities. In the EU programme period 2007 – 2013, the Slovak government decided to concentrate the support from the Cohesion Fund in the so-called “innovation (regional and district cities) and Cohesion growth poles” (smaller cities and larger municipalities), i.e. in selected centres, and to strengthen the polycentric concept of settlement development of SR. However, the use of this system of the concentration of support was limited. The cities in the Bratislava region, including the capital city of Bratislava, had very limited access to the development support, because this region exceeds the limit value for support in the framework of the Convergence objective (convergence of European regions). In the new programme period, on the basis of the EU initiatives in the area of the role of cities in the economic development, 8 regional cities and their functional hinterlands were defined. These will invest 5% of ERDF funds in SR through so-called integrated territorial investments in sustainable urban development for the solution of economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social problems of their urban areas.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Urban Development Concept of SR is prepared, which has the ambition to become a basic document for the integration of the urban agenda into the development policy of SR.

43 National Development Plan (2004 – 2006), National Strategic Reference Framework (2007 – 2013) and Partnership Agreement (2014 – 2020)

Employment in city size categories

Size category	Number of workers	Number of EAP	% of workers	% of EAP
0-4999	30 193	34 204	2,4 %	2,3 %
5000-9999	104 742	159 831	8,3 %	10,9 %
10000-19999	174 454	233 184	13,8 %	16,0 %
20000-49999	333 667	422 683	26,4 %	28,9 %
50000-99999	275 174	280 058	21,8 %	19,2 %
100000+	344 345	331 702	27,3 %	22,7 %
Total	1 262 575	1 461 662	100,0 %	100,0 %

Source: Data processed by the University of Economics in Bratislava

Development of urban and rural unemployment rates in SR

	Number of unemployed			Unemployment rate		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
Cities	64 060	285 618	197 238	4,15 %	17,82 %	13,49 %
Rural areas	43 356	275 596	245 847	4,04 %	24,06 %	21,04 %
SR	107 416	561 214	443 085	4,10 %	20,42 %	16,85 %

Source: Data processed by the University of Economics in Bratislava

Unemployment rate in city size categories

Size category	1991	2001	2011
0-4999	3,7 %	21,5 %	19,4 %
5000-9999	3,7 %	21,4 %	17,2 %
10000-19999	3,6 %	20,7 %	15,3 %
20000-49999	4,1 %	19,9 %	14,7 %
50000-99999	4,5 %	16,3 %	11,3 %
100000+	4,5 %	12,4 %	10,2 %
Cities total	4,1 %	17,8 %	13,5 %

Zdroj údajov: Údaje spracované Ekonomickou univerzitou v Bratislave

30. EXPERIENCE AND PROBLEMS

The territorial and economic development concepts of Slovakia in general put emphasis on the development of bigger cities or regional centres as basic development poles. It is explained by the fact that economic activities, in particular of the tertiary and quaternary sector, will remain concentrated in big cities. Moreover, globalisation

trends prefer the economic role of selected agglomerations, as proven by the channelling of foreign investment flows. These cities should concentrate activities and investors and could become a mobilizing pole of development of a wider region. Cities in less developed regions of South, North-East and East Slovakia, the development potential of which is weakened by missing transport in-

frastructure, the peripheral position within the SR and the close proximity of underdeveloped regions of neighbouring countries, represent a problem.

Although only 54.4% of the population have registered permanent residence in Slovak cities, cities employ as much as 79% of workers. Moreover, these statistical data prove that cities provide services to a wider spectre of people than their own inhabitants. However, expenditures required for the provision of services to the people present daily are not reflected in the amount of tax transfers for cities.

The Slovak cities are not fully aware of the possibility to actively participate in the economic development. They made progress in the planning of their economic and social development, but they insufficiently monitor and evaluate their plans. The highest risks are financial and legislative limits (a lack of resources, ineffective public procurement), but also the passivity and waiting for the initiative of the government and the European Union. Another limiting factor is excessive fragmentation of the local self-government system. Only bigger cities are able to implement more ambitious activities, which in the conditions of Slovakia means cities maintaining solid cooperation with municipalities in their functional areas.

A serious problem is the lack of economic development experts in the structure of local institutions and the lack of relevant information about development. Development planning and management are usually only two of many functions performed by concrete workers. Moreover, they usually do not have higher competences or influence on the allocation of resources.

31. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY A NEW URBAN AGENDA

The cities are a typical part of the economy. We can observe their expansion or decline, whereby they differently react to the situation in the national and global economy. Besides the investments and growing employment, their contribution to the municipality economic development is important.

The development cannot be achieved merely by offering advantages and attractive stimuli from the pre-industrial period such as natural sources, a good transport connection, and a lack of a labour force. The cities may decline due to an insufficient restructuring of the economy and the resulting closing of low-competitive enterprises, accompanied by a loss of jobs. However, insufficient state

support, an unattractive labour force with an unsuitable structure of skills and vocational training, or bad social or environmental conditions may also cause problems. A decline of the local economy is usually transferred to other areas of local life and leads to a departure of a portion of the productive population from the city, which makes the restarting of the local economy difficult.

The New Urban Agenda should contribute **to the support of the local economic development and to the role of urban economies in the creation of adequate jobs** as the basic condition of the dignified life of the urban population. It should also encourage the cities not to rely on the government, but to accept their role in the development of their own economy.



VII.

Housing
and basic
services

Housing and the quality of housing services are part of the basic human needs. They should be satisfied at a level corresponding to the overall degree of the socio-economic development of a society, whereby the quality and affordability of housing are often perceived as evaluation indicators of the living standard of a society.

32. CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSING IN SLOVAKIA

The present situation of housing is the result of a long-term development. The decisive factor that influenced the housing sector was socio-economic and political changes after 1989. The termination of state support of comprehensive housing construction and the transformation of ownership of the housing stock in the form of its transfer from the cities, municipalities and housing cooperatives to its actual users significantly influenced the accessibility of housing in Slovakia. Last but not least, price deregulation of housing services as well as prices of flats became important factors influencing access to housing.

A factor which influenced the overall accessibility of housing was a significant reduction of housing construction. As compared to the 33,437 flats built in 1989, only 6,709 flats were built in 1994 and 6,157 flats in 1995. After the adoption of respective laws and the introduction of new economic instruments, the number of completed flats started to grow. In the present period, approximately 16,500 flats are completed every year.

The transformation of ownership of housing stock caused an important change in the ownership structure of housing stock in Slovakia. Private ownership of flats became a dominant form of housing; at present, it represents more than 90% of housing stock (compared to 73.8% in 2001 and 55.4% in 1991). Another side effect is the significant decline of the public rental sector, which now accounts for 3% of the total housing stock (a decrease from 27.7% in 1991). One of the consequences of this massive change in the form of ownership of flats was the transfer of responsibility for the acquisition of one's own home to the citizen, as well as the transfer of responsibility for the operation and maintenance of housing stock to the flat owners.

Housing stock in the cities is characterised by the dominance of privately owned housing, while rented housing represents approximately 5% of housing stock (1.7% public and 3.3% private rented homes). Furthermore, this situation is the result of the changes mentioned above and it is a paradox that privately owned housing is a dominant form of housing in the cities, where supply and demand for rental homes should be much higher with regard to the satisfaction of urban needs, the increased mobility of the labour force, the higher accessibility of transitional and temporary forms of housing etc. An additional 5.3% of flats in the cities are owned by housing cooperatives. However, it must be noted that the transformation of the form of ownership in these housing segments has not been completed.

The condition of housing stock in the cities is largely the result of construction activities before 1990 (more than 80%). A major part of apartment houses show deficien-

cies and faults caused by the nearing end of life and wear. Nevertheless, the quality of housing in the cities is high, because more than 75% of housing stock there are flats of the highest category.

Housing construction in the cities has shown regression in recent years in spite of the fact that the overall level of housing construction measured by the number of flats completed every year remains more or less stable. The total number of 87,840 flats were built in Slovak cities in the period 2003 – 2013. Housing construction achieved its maximum in 2009, when 10,725 flats were completed. However, housing construction in the cities has returned to the level from the previous ten years and the core of housing construction shifts to smaller settlements or municipalities.

In terms of city size category, construction in big cities prevails. More than a third of flats (37.3%) were built in the metropolitan areas of Slovakia (Bratislava, Košice). In recent years a slight decrease of housing construction has been observed in the category of cities with a population of 20,000 to 49,999. In terms of home type, the construction of flats in apartment houses prevails.

One of the indicators of the development of the country in the housing segment is the number of flats per thousand inhabitants. Based on the data from the Population and housing census (SOBD), 370 flats or 329 occupied flats were accounted for per a thousand inhabitants of SR in 2011.

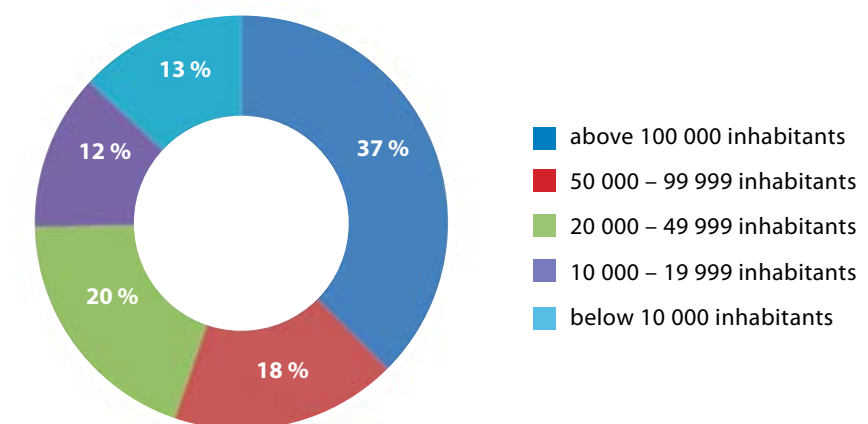
In the decade of 2003 – 2013, the largest number of flats per 1,000 inhabitants were built in the capital city and

Housing stock in cities by the period of construction



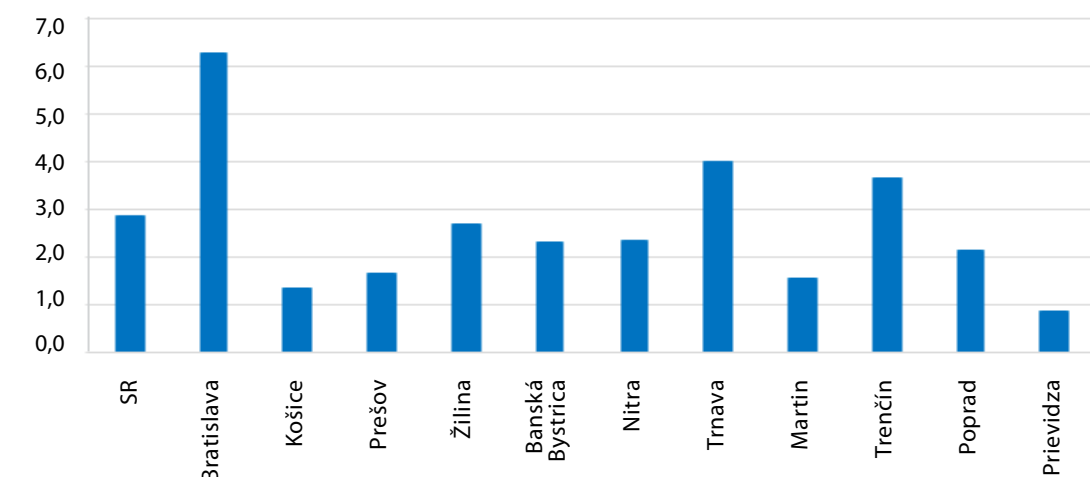
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Percentage of completed flats in cities of SR by city size category



Source: Statistical Office of SR

Percentage of completed flats per 1,000 inhabitants in the period 2003 – 2013



Source: Statistical Office of SR

other cities of West Slovakia (Trnava, Trenčín). On the other hand, Košice, the second biggest city of SR, fell behind in this indicator although this city ranked 2nd behind Bratislava in the total number of completed flats in the period under review.

33. SUPPORTING AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO FINANCING OF HOUSING

The housing policy in Slovakia went through significant changes over the last two decades. The State reacted to the new conditions of the market economy in 1994 by the adoption of the first *Concept of the State Housing Policy*, which determined the basic objectives of the housing policy in the conditions of SR. One of them is the overall increase of the housing standard and the creation of legislative, technical and economic conditions to make housing accessible for the population and to provide each household access to housing adequate to its income and needs. This concept was regularly revised and updated with five-year periodicity. The *Concept of State Housing Policy until 2020*, approved by the government at the beginning of 2015 and containing the objectives and tasks for the following period, is still valid.

A factor that considerably influences the housing policies of individual cities is the division of competences among the State (government), higher territorial units (VÚC), municipalities (including cities) and the citizen. In a market economy, the citizen bears the primary responsibility for the acquisition of his own home. The competences of the State are determined by the creation of stable economic and legislative conditions for individual entities in the area of housing. The competences of higher territorial units consist in the conceptual, legislative and executive activities that result from their obligation to take care of the general development of its territory and the needs of their population. Within the meaning of the valid legislative framework, municipalities are responsible for the concept of the development of individual areas of life of the municipality, participate in the creation of suitable conditions for housing in the municipality and procure and approve housing development programmes of the municipality. These competences of municipalities comprise the coordination and provision of land and technical equipment for housing construction and the improvement of local housing stock management.

The creation of favourable conditions for housing is an important aspect that can positively influence the demographic structure of the city in terms of the age of its inhabitants, and favourably adjust migration trends, especially productive categories of the population.

In this context, the supporting instruments of the State aimed to the support of new housing construction as well as the reconstruction and modernisation of housing stock have paramount importance. Reforms implemented in the area of housing policy allowed the introduction of a set of economic instruments supporting housing development (in the area of the loan and subsidy policy). The State Housing Development Fund (SHDF) and the Housing Development Programme are most important for the cities. SHDF was founded in 1996 as the dedicated fund for the financing of state support for the extension and improvement of housing stock, in particular through the provision of advantageous long-term loans. A municipality can be granted an advantageous loan⁴⁴ for construction and the purchase of a rental flat, the modernisation, insulation or removal of system fault of the apartment house, construction and the reconstruction of establishments providing social services. The Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of SR (MTCRD SR) through the Housing Development Programme provides subsidies for the acquisition of rental flats for social housing, the purchase of technical equipment and the removal of system faults of residential buildings.⁴⁵

In practice, the acquisition of public rental flats for social housing is financed by a combination of subsidies of MTCRD SR and an advantageous loan from SHDF. The acquisition of 37,608 public rental flats was thus supported throughout Slovakia in the period 2000 - 2014.

Further instruments that play an irreplaceable role in the procurement of housing in the cities and instruments intended for further categories of the population, are the state bonus to building saving and a discount on the interest rate of mortgage loan (mortgage loan bonus). Both these instruments serve for the acquisition of new flats and for the improvement of existing flats through their reconstruction and refurbishment.

34. IMPROVING ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Urban housing policy is influenced by the economic development, the demographic and sociological structure

⁴⁴ The conditions of granting a loan are regulated by the Act 150/2013 Coll. on State Housing Development Fund.

⁴⁵ According to the Act No. 443/2010 Coll. on subsidies for housing development and on social housing, as amended by the Act No. 134/2013 Coll., subsidies for the acquisition of rental flats are provided to municipalities, cities, higher territorial units and non-profit organisations for the construction of standard and low-standard rental flats reserved for low income categories of the population, including members of socially excluded Roma municipalities. The floor area of a standard flat must not exceed 80 m² and the floor area of a low-standard flat 60 m². Subsidies are provided up to 40% or 75% of acquisition costs for standard and low-standard flats, respectively, if the other conditions are fulfilled, but in particular the maximum amount of eligible costs per m² (up to EUR 900 per m² of a standard flat or up to EUR 605 per m² of a low-standard flat), from which the amount of rent develops. The amount of the rent may be determined up to a maximum of 5% of annual acquisition costs.

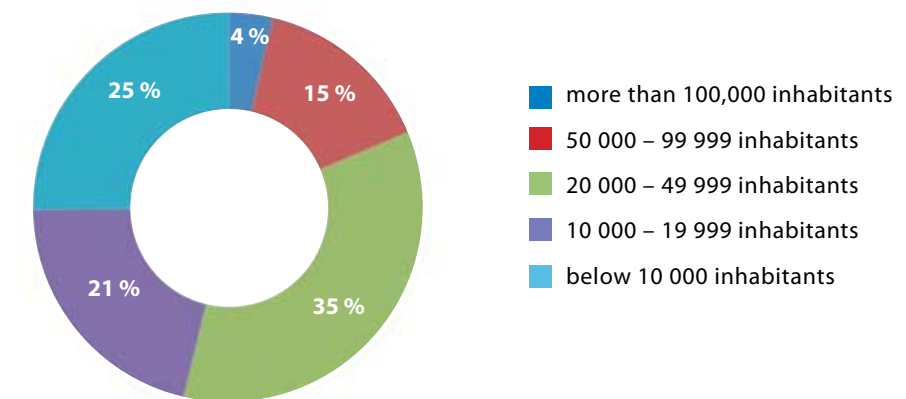
of the population, as well as by the overall social and political stability. The differentiated housing needs of inhabitants are manifested in particular at the local level. In Slovak conditions, it is municipalities that have direct instruments and capacities required for the implementation of the active housing policy.

The housing policy is one of the areas that were negatively affected by the process of the decentralisation and transformation of municipal or state property. The sale of housing stock and land suitable for housing construction was and still is implemented without a concept and prior in-depth financial, social and demographic analyses. The result is inadequate revenue from these sales and a lack of rental flats in the public sector.

As regards new construction in the area of public rental housing, it can be stated that it is cities that lag behind in the development of this housing segment. Only 46% of the total number of supported rental flats in the public sector are situated in the cities.

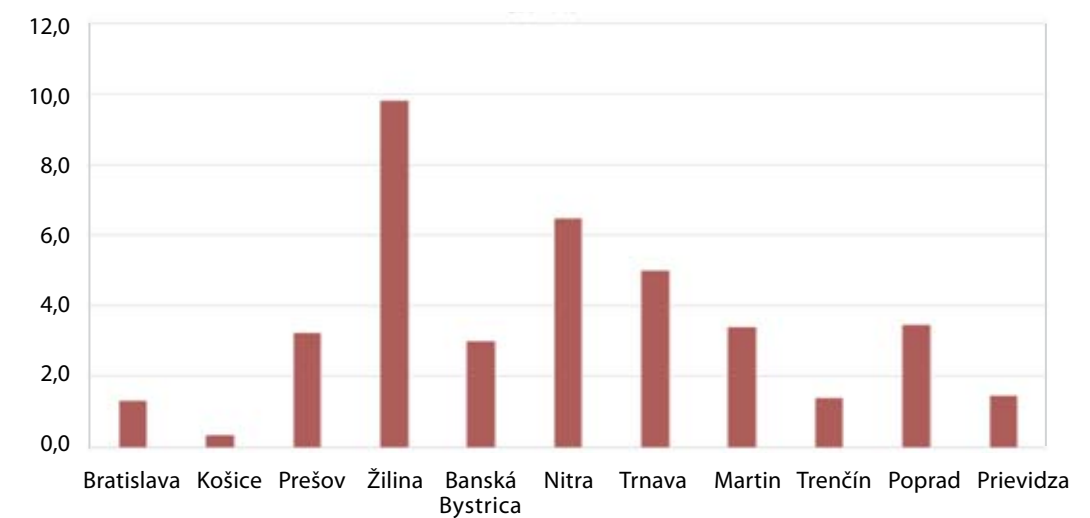
In terms of city size categories, the highest level of rental housing construction in the public sector is observed in smaller and medium cities (up to 49,999 inhabitants). As for the number of rental flats per a thousand inhabitants, the highest level is achieved by smaller cities (up to 19,999 inhabitants) with more than 20 rental flats per 1,000 inhabitants. The most negative development of this segment is observed in the metropolitan areas of Slovakia (Bratislava, Košice).

The number of completed public rental flats in cities of SR by city size category (2000 – 2014)



Source: MTCRD SR

Number of completed public rental flats per 1 000 inhabitants in the 10 biggest cities of SR (2000 – 2014, %)



Source: MTCRD SR

Households that fulfil the conditions of material need⁴⁶ receive assistance in material need consisting of benefits in material need and different allowances to the benefits in material need such as a protection allowance, an activation allowance, an allowance for dependent child and a housing allowance.

35. SLUM UPGRADING AND PREVENTION

In view of their characteristics and definition, we cannot talk about the existence of slums in the present conditions of SR. The process of transformation brought an increase of socio-pathological phenomena. With regard to their character and the character of Slovak cities, it is difficult to locate them in the structure of Slovak cities. One of the most serious problems of Slovakia in the area of poverty and exclusion is the process of segregation that very often affects the Roma population living in segregated or otherwise excluded settlements. The problem of Roma segregation is identifiable in many Slovak cities, but it mostly concerns the rural environment.

In the urban structure, we most frequently encounter satellite settlements on the periphery of bigger cities, where a larger number of Roma families were artificially moved (Košice, Rimavská Sobota), dispersed dilapidated dwellings, most frequently situated in an old urban development in city centres (Dobšiná, Gelnica), and Roma settlements on the periphery of cities (Humenné, Lučenec etc.). Roma settlements are usually characterised by flat overcrowding, high unemployment rate, the devastation of the residential environment, poor hygiene and, last but not least, the increased crime rate. It represents a challenge for cities, which must address it within the scope of their competences and search for adequate solutions. Experiences show that a long-term active approach of self-governments to the solution of these problems may bring the improvement of the situation, not only of this category of the population, but of the whole city or neighbourhood. Some cities try to solve this problem by moving these categories of the population to other settlements. It must be said that in this way, the problem will be displaced instead of being solved and such an approach can often lead to a substantial deterioration of feasible solutions. Long-term active municipality work with the affected category of the population is much more effective.

The State adopted a number of measures in the area of welfare, housing, education or public health for the improvement of the living conditions of this category of the

46 Act No. 599/2003 Coll. assistance in material need and on amendment of some acts

population in order to help the affected cities to solve this problem. The cities thus have at their disposal instruments for the elimination or prevention of such segregated settlements.

36. BASIC SERVICES

The termination of the support of comprehensive housing construction after 1989 affected not only the situation of housing stock, but also the development of technical and civic amenities that had been directly linked to housing construction. At present, it is mostly the private sector that determines the development of civic amenities (shops, services).

Municipalities in SR create, among other things, conditions for drinking water supply, waste water discharge⁴⁷ and the disposal of municipal waste produced in the municipality.⁴⁸

37. WASTE MANAGEMENT

In the area of waste management, SR ranks among the EU member countries with the lowest annual municipal waste production per inhabitant. However, the dark side of waste management is the high share of waste disposal by dumping. In spite of the downward trend of municipal waste storage, the dynamics of this decline is insufficient. Municipalities in SR are obliged to introduce and implement municipal waste collection - separately paper, plastics, metals, glass and biologically degradable municipal waste. The objective is to achieve a 50% level of municipal waste recycling by 2020.⁴⁹

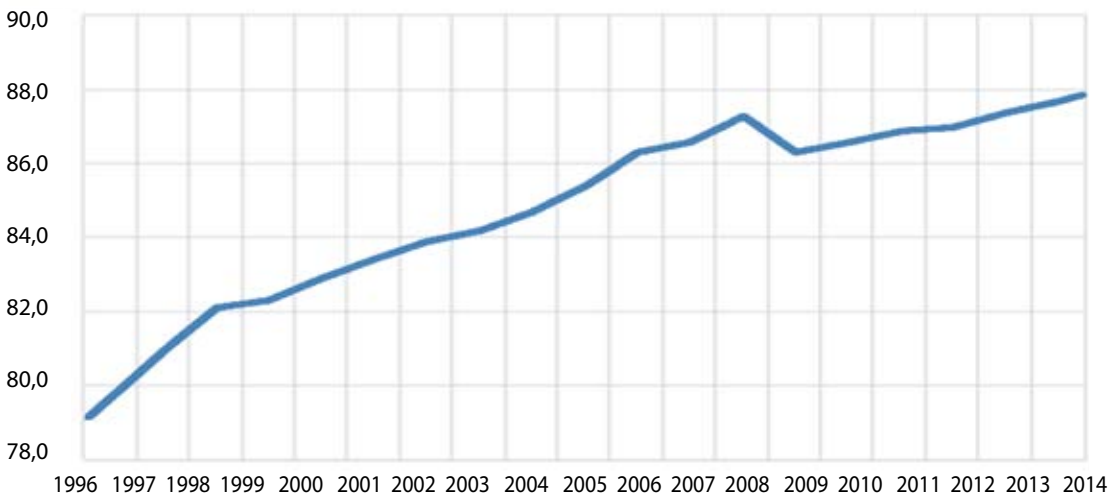
38. DRINKING WATER

The drinking water sources in Slovakia are groundwater (82.2%) or surface water (17.8%). The largest natural groundwater reservoir in SR and in Central Europe is Žitný ostrov. In three from eight regions of SR, underground water sources are used for water supply; in the other regions underground and surface drinking water sources are used for this purpose.⁵⁰

The issue of drinking water in SR is regulated by a number of laws and regulations.⁵¹ The basic concept for the imple-

47 Act No. 442/2002 Coll. on public water distribution systems and public water sewerage systems, and on the amendment and supplementing of Act No. 276/2001 Coll. on regulation in network industries, as amended.
48 Act No. 79/2015 Coll. on waste and on the amendment of some acts
49 Source: Waste Management Programme of SR 2016 - 2020
50 Source: http://www.vuvh.sk/download/VaV/Vystupy/Letak-SK_web.pdf
51 Act No. 442/2002 Coll. on public water distribution systems and public water sewerage systems, and on amendment and supplement of the Act No. 276/2001 Coll. on regulation in network industries, as amended; Decree of the Ministry of Environment of SR No. 636/2004 Coll. Decree of the Ministry of Environment of SR No. 605/2005 Coll. Decree of the Ministry of Environment of SR No. 684/2006 Coll.

Population supplied with water from the public water supply systems (%)



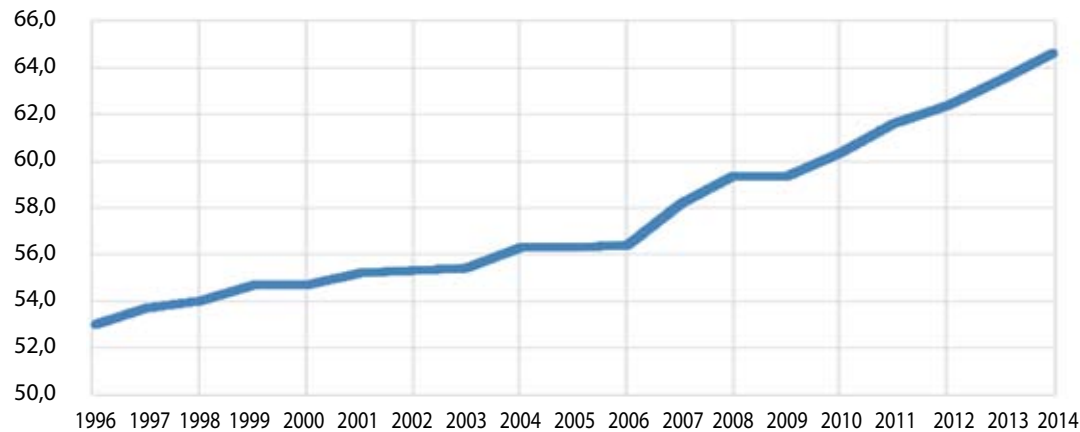
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Water supply to flats in 2011 (Population and housing census 2011)

Urban/ rural areas	Water supply (%)					Total
	Unknown source	Water supply from a common source	Water supply in a flat from own source	Water supply outside the flat	Without water supply	
Urban areas	13,7	83,6	2,0	0,5	0,2	1 149 993
Rural areas	21,0	55,7	20,1	0,6	2,6	844 904
Total	16,8	71,6	9,7	0,6	1,3	1 994 897

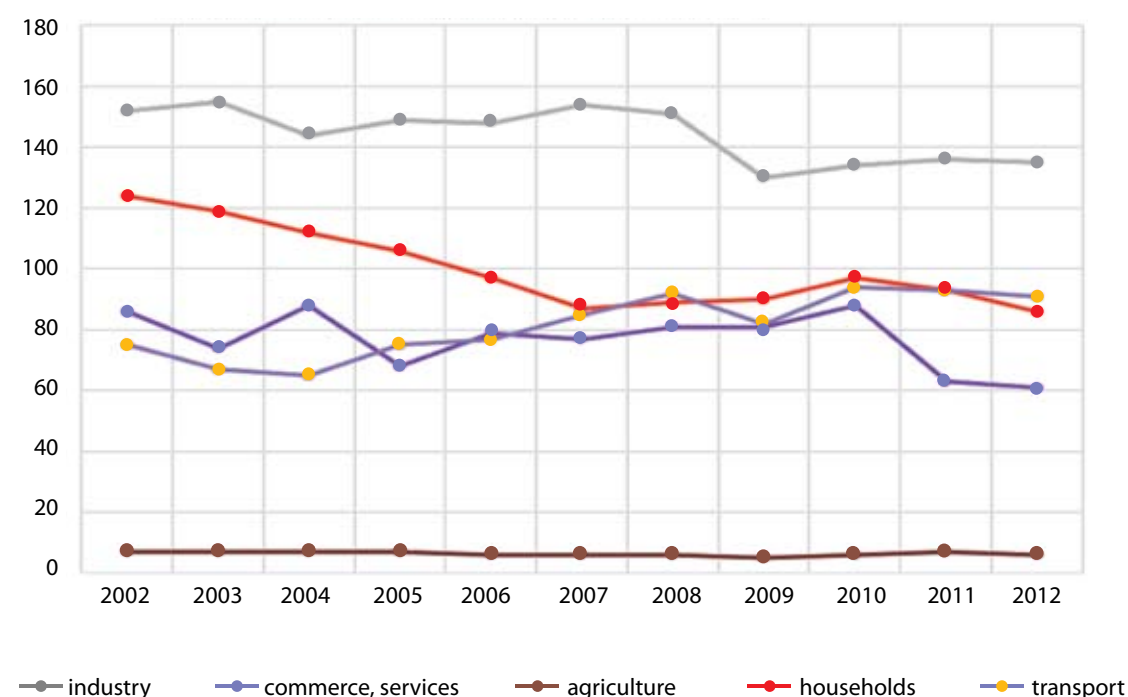
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Population connected to the public sewer network (%)



Source: Statistical Office of SR

Final energy consumption by individual sectors



Source: Statistical Office of SR

mentation of the water management policy of SR is the *Concept of Water Management Policy of the Slovak Republic until 2015*.

The drinking water supply of the population of SR is implemented in two manners: collective supply⁵² and individual supply.⁵³ While the number of inhabitants supplied by drinking water from the public water supply system accounted for 79.7% of the total population of SR in 2005, in 2006 it was 86.3% and in 2011, when the population and housing census was conducted, 86.9%. In 2014 87.7% of the population of SR was supplied by water from the public water supply system. The other inhabitants have access to drinking water in the form of individual supply from domestic wells. The quality of water at the consumer is monitored by the regional public health authorities. The quality control of raw water in sources and the quality control of water in the distribution network is executed by the owners or operators of the public water

municipalities or other legal and physical persons holding the licence for the operation of public water supply system. Building of new engineering networks is financed from several sources. In the last decade, the European Structural and Investment Funds⁵⁴ became an important source of financing. In spite of the high accessibility of drinking water from the public water supply system, its consumption is declining in SR. Increasingly, more inhabitants prefer water from their own wells or the purchase of packaged water. They build and use their own wells in order to save money.

39. BASIC SANITATION AND SEWAGE

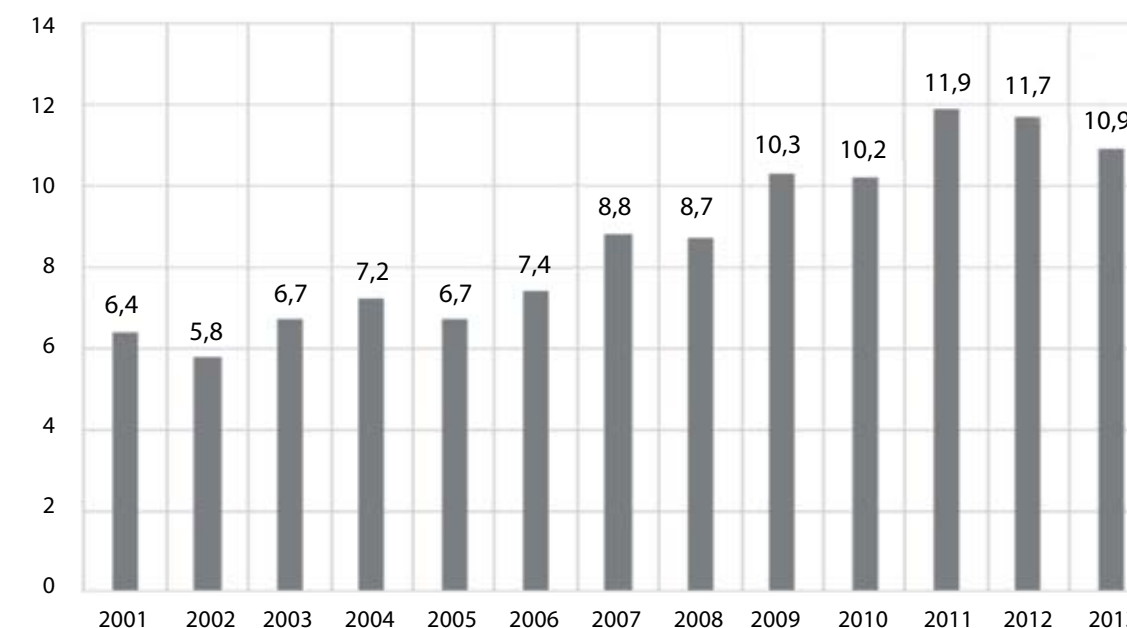
Basic infrastructure and services at the local level are comprised of sanitary facilities and the sewer system. In the last 10 years SR has made progress in municipal waste-water discharge and treatment, in particular thanks to public finan-

54 A number of projects for the building of public water supply systems were implemented under the Operational Programme Environment managed by the Ministry of Environment of SR (www.opzp.sk) and Rural Development Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR in the period 2007–2013.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR through the Integrated Regional Operational Programme in the programme period 2014–2020 creates conditions for the development of the smooth supplying of the population with quality drinking water through the construction or reconstruction of water supply networks in urban areas. Another financial instrument for the support of the gradual completion of public water supply systems is the Environmental Fund (www.envirofond.sk), which annually supports approximately 50 public water supply systems. Conditions for the support of the building of public water supply systems are also created in the framework of eligible activities of the Operational Programme Quality of the Environment 2014 – 2020.

Act No. 364/2004 Coll. on water and on amendment of the Act of SNC No. 372/1990 Coll. on offences, as amended;
Regulation of Government of SR No. 354/2006 Coll., establishing the requirements for water intended for human consumption and quality control of water intended for human consumption;
Act No. 355/2007 Coll. on protection, support and development of public health and on amendments and supplements to certain acts;
Decree of the Ministry of Health of SR No. 550/2007 Coll. establishing the requirements for products intended for contact with drinking water;
52 Drinking water supply from public water supply system or water source serving at least 50 persons.
53 Drinking water supply from one source with daily water production below 10 m³ or from a source serving less than 50 persons.

Share of energy from RES on gross final energy consumption (%)



Source: Statistical Office of SR

cial resources of the European Union.⁵⁵ At present, attention is paid in particular to the construction of new waste water treatment plants (WWTP) and sewer networks.

In 2014, 64.7%⁵⁶ of the total population lived in houses connected to the public sewer network. The gradual connection of the waste water producers to new-built public sewer networks is expected to improve the quality of water in SR. Municipal waste water collection, discharge and treatment is one of the fundamental instruments of the water ecosystem protection and the improvement of the water status. Each implemented construction project in this area will contribute to the fulfilment of obligations of SR toward the European Union and to the gradual attainment of the environmental target of the *Framework Directive on Water* – achievement of good water status.⁵⁷

40. IMPROVING ACCESS TO CLEAN DOMESTIC ENERGY

In connection to the Energy Policy of SR and the orientation of the EU energy policy a number of measures for the

55 The municipalities could draw funds for the construction of sewer systems in particular from the Operational Programme Environment, where the total allocation represents EUR 85,950,545 (for EU source – Cohesion Fund) plus EUR 15,167,743 (national sources).

56 Source: Statistical Office of SR

57 According to the requirements of the EU Directive, Slovakia has undertaken the building of a public sewer network in agglomerations with a population equivalent over 10,000 by 2010 and in agglomerations with a population equivalent greater than 2,000 by 2015.

improvement of access to clean energy is implemented. *“National Action Plan for Energy from Renewable Sources”*, adopted in 2010, determines the increase of the share of renewable energy sources on gross final energy consumption. The target value of the RES share in 2020 is 14.0%.

Final energy consumption per inhabitant in SR is 32% below the EU average and final energy consumption in households has had a downward trend since 2010.⁵⁸

In 2011, the consumption of energy from renewable sources accounted for 11.9% of total energy consumption (electricity production 19.9%, heat and cold production 10.7%, and transport 5.6%).

The fast development of some types of RES required corrections in the support of green electricity. The basic characteristic of this change is orientation to decentralised electricity production on the site of consumption. This change also supports energy production by households. *“The Concept of the Development of Electricity Production from Small Renewable Energy Sources in SR”* is expected to facilitate the access of households to their own electric-

58 Projects financed from the State Housing Development Fund, the Housing Development Programme – subsidies for the removal of system faults, Governmental Building Insulation Programme, Programme SLOVSEFF, Norwegian Financial Mechanism and other international support programmes significantly contributed to the reduction of energy consumption in households, buildings and the public sector. Private sources include, among other things, own investments, financial mechanisms of commercial financial institutions and a non-investment fund established by SPP-EkoFond, n. f.

Connection of flats to heating energy sources in 2011

Urban /rural areas	Heating energy sources (%)								Total
	Unknown source	Gas	Electricity	Liquid fuel	Solid fuel	Solar energy	Other	Without heating	
Urban areas	245 569	688 418	31 478	21 182	87 260	415	54 816	20 855	1 149 993
Rural areas	177 219	425 441	28 296	716	201 317	220	5 602	6 093	844 904
Total	422 788	1 113 859	59 774	21 898	288 577	635	60 418	26 948	1 994 897

Source: Statistical Office of SR

ity and heat production from renewable energy sources. The Concept proposed the legislative and financial support for the development of small energy sources intended for the coverage of the own consumption of households. The objective is to support the calibration of small sources so that they preferably cover the own consumption of the supply point.

In the sector of heat production from RES, biomass is the dominant domestic local source. Its technical potential predestines it to massively contribute to the achievement of 14% of the target value. The challenge is the increase of the share of RES in the central heat supply system; biomass and geothermal energy have good potential to come through. The priority is given to facilities with lower output that use the potential of the available biomass in the region, while fulfilling the condition of its sustainable use.

A suitable document for RES development at the local level is the *Concept of Municipal Development in Heat Energy*. The document is a sectoral concept of a municipality used for the preparation of its planning documentation. Not all cities sufficiently use this instrument, as proven by the illogical disconnection of heat consumers from the central supply system and the non-coordinated construction of new technically and environmentally unjustified heat sources in the proximity of existing central heat supply systems.⁵⁹

41. EXPERIENCE AND PROBLEMS

In previous years, Slovak cities went through a development that resulted from significant political changes after 1989. It is obvious that their transformation continues. From the spatial aspect, municipalities face the challenge to prevent the expansion of the cities beyond the built-up

59 According to Act No. 657/2004 Coll. on heat energy, a city with a population greater than 2,500 and with a supplier or customer operating in its territory, who calculates the amount of supplied heat to the final consumer, is obliged to prepare the concept of municipal development in heat energy.

areas. Non-systematic expansion leads to a reduction of development intensity and hence to higher costs of the construction and operation of new infrastructure and the occupation of agricultural soil. The issue of suburbanization is covered in detail by the previous chapters.

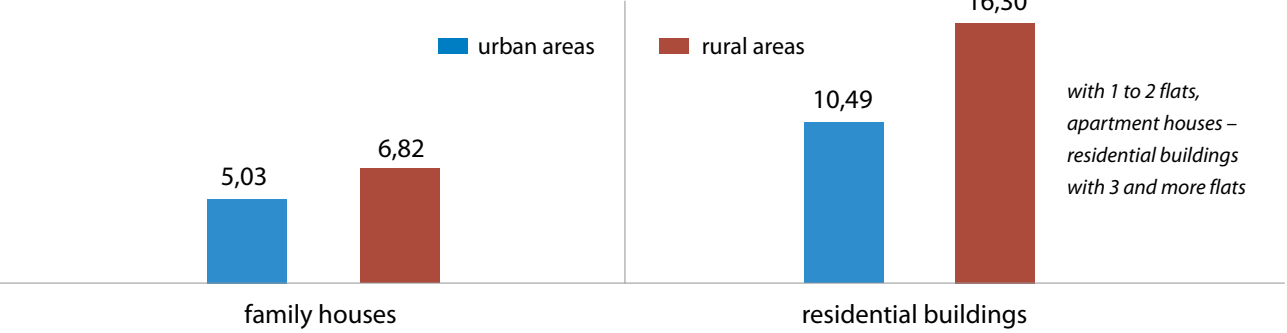
Housing

The transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society and from a centrally planned to a market economy led to the transformation of the housing policy. The termination of comprehensive housing construction by the State and the **transformation of ownership of housing stock**, the development of the immovable property market and a rise in property prices considerably influenced **the accessibility and affordability of housing** for the population. Another important change was **decentralisation**, which strengthened the function of self-governments and thus transferred the direct instruments for the execution of housing policy to them. The result was a **reduction of housing construction** in 1990s and a significant shift to privately owned housing which does not support the mobility of the labour force. A **combination of an advantageous loan** (State Housing Development Fund – SHDF) and **subsidies** (Housing Development Programme of MTCRD SR) proved to be a positive solution for the restart of housing construction in the public rental sector in municipalities. SHDF provides loans under advantageous conditions also to categories of the population that have long been disadvantaged on the market. The share of the public sector on new construction has stabilised at the level of 10 – 15%.

Services

Progress in municipal waste water discharge and treatment is a condition of sustainable development and environmental protection. Through the completion of the sewer and public water supply systems in SR, suitable conditions for provision of sustainable access of population to drinking water and sanitary facilities were created. In spite of good access to drinking water from the public water

Unoccupied flats in 2011 (%)



Source: Statistical Office of SR

supply system in SR, its consumption follows a downward trend. Increasingly more inhabitants prefer water from their own wells or the purchase of packaged water. They build and use their own wells in order to save money and believe packaged water to be better than that from the water supply network. However, packages from packaged water increases the environmental burden (waste production and treatment). SR has low municipal waste production per inhabitant as compared to other EU countries. However, the problem is waste management – the storage and low percentage of separated municipal waste collection.

The introduction of measures for the improvement of access to clean energy is a long-term process, the results of which will be quantifiable in the following years. But it is already clear that the use of domestic RES increases the energy security of SR,⁶⁰ because it decreases the country’s dependence on import.⁶¹ In the area of heat energy, cities insufficiently use the instrument *Concept of Municipal Development in Heat Energy*, as proven by the illogical disconnection of heat consumers from the central supply system and the non-coordinated construction of new technically and environmentally unjustified heat sources in the proximity of existing central heat supply systems.

42. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY A NEW URBAN AGENDA

The ambition of SR is to gradually **increase the overall housing standard** within the national territory. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain the system of introduced

60 The implementation of measures imposed in the *Energy Safety Strategy of SR* resulted in a substantial strengthening of the energy security of SR
61 Draft Energy Policy of SR from October 2014, available at: http://www.rokovania.sk/File.aspx/ViewDocumentHtml/Mater-Dokum-168597?prefixFile=m_

legislative and economic support instruments and to provide adequate financial resources for optimal support.

It is necessary to implement measures that will allow the cities and municipalities, but also other entities operating on the housing market **to increase the intensity and quality of housing construction** as well as the **supply of affordable housing** for the population, with emphasis placed on the **development of rental housing** (both public and private).

In the framework of existing housing stock, it is necessary to continue the effective **comprehensive renewal of housing stock**, the gradual **reduction of energy consumption** and, last but not least, to support **the increasing of the share of renewable energy sources** in the housing sector.

The challenge for the government and self-governments is to find ways how to **increase the share of flats in existing housing stock** and thus prevent the expansion of cities beyond their built-up areas, which causes the increase of costs of construction and the operation of new technical infrastructure.

Another area that requires special attention is the **reduction and removal of segregation**. It is necessary to apply an integrated approach to social inclusion and to the reduction of segregation by the interconnection of measures in the areas of education, employment, housing and health care. The existing experience supports the idea of **active field social and municipality work**, which contributes to the creation and strengthening of basic social habits and skills. Cities and municipalities play an irreplaceable role in this process. The improvement of the living standard of different marginalised categories of population brings positive effects to the whole settlement and society in general. The cities will have to be very active and create conditions for the integration of vulner-

able groups into the urban life and thus improve conditions for sustainable development in their territories.

The future of cities and the whole society is determined by a number of changes that they will have to cope with, in particular changes resulting from climate change, ongoing globalisation with **changes in demographic trends** and the age structure of the population, as well as changes resulting from the economic development of society. The present situation also suggests that the future development of cities and society should not take into account only internal demographic changes and changes in the preferences of the urban population, but also the current **migration trends** and resulting needs that may become a serious challenge. These changes will also influence the individual local housing policies that have the potential to mitigate the negative trends and contribute to improvement of the quality of urban life. The cities will thus have to more effectively **use available sources**. One of the basic instruments should be **effective urban planning** and the **use of the comprehensive potential of city** or territory. A well formulated land policy plays an important role in this context. A decisive factor influencing the future development will be the search for and use of available solutions and resources not only in the cities, but also in their hinterlands and immediate environs. It is necessary for a city to develop and expand as an **organic part of a wider territory**; such an approach has a high potential to positively influence the city as well as its environs.

It will be necessary to **strengthen the professional capacity of cities** that will be responsible for the comprehensive development of the city and its surrounding areas, as well as for housing development. Such an integrated and comprehensive approach to the use of available resources, taking into account the regional, economic and demographic specifics of individual cities, will play an irreplaceable role in the future sustainable and general urban development.

In terms of the priorities of the state housing policy it will be necessary to implement measures (especially in legislative and economic areas) that will **increase the intensity** as well as the **quality** of housing construction and extend the **supply** of available flats (in terms of their affordability, but with an emphasis on universal design). In the area of the legislative environment, the objective is to further use the introduced economic instruments and target them to the **development of rental housing (both social and private) and to the effective renewal of housing stock** with regard to the **reduction of energy consumption and an increase of the share of renewable sources in housing**.

The stabilisation of the volume of funds for the support of housing development is one of the biggest challenges for the following period.

It is necessary to introduce new motivating, legislative and economic instruments for the support of housing for the broadest possible groups of the population. The **non-profit sector** could become an important element of the segment of rental housing providers. It should take up the role that is currently played by cities and municipalities – the provision of **social housing** or **adequate housing** for an adequate price.

The development of the income structure of households shows that it is necessary to further provide public support for the **increase of access to housing**, both on the side of supply (support of rental housing construction) and consumption (support in the form of a housing allowance). The housing allowance as part of the state social policy (the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of SR) plays an important role in the maintenance of access to housing. In connection with the maintenance of affordability of housing it is necessary to draw up a draft legal framework for the provision of a housing allowance so that the conditions for the provision of the allowance can be determined on the basis of the size of the household, type, housing standard and actual expenditures on housing.

In the area of the provision of civic amenities and basic services, the cities should establish **cooperation with the private sector**, which has become a key player in this area in the past 20 years. In the area of basic services in connection with the objective “to achieve municipal waste recycling of 50% by 2020” it is necessary to establish an **efficient separate collection system**.⁶² The increase of the rate of separate collection will require a more effective collection of all separable elements of municipal waste.⁶³ SR should gradually proceed with a transition from a linear economy to a **circular economy**.

The concept of a circular economy is based on material and energy savings and on the effective use of limited natural sources. It will be necessary to create a suitable environment for the adoption of this concept in the cities and households.⁶⁴ The sustainability of basic services will depend, among other things, on their **adaptability** to climate change, especially in the area of drinking

water supply and waste water discharge (the mastering of flash rainfalls, periods of draught and high temperatures, especially in city centres.).

In the area of the **energy performance of buildings**, the challenge is to achieve the common European objectives,⁶⁵ according to which all new public buildings constructed since 2019 and all buildings constructed since 2021 should fulfil the requirements for nearly-zero energy buildings, in line with the national plan of increasing the number of nearly-zero energy buildings. Zero energy consumption of buildings means that buildings will partially cover their energy consumption from RES.

In the area of heat production, a targeted financial support for prospective technologies using RES is missing. The support of the construction of low-output plants for electricity and heat production in households represents a sustainable and innovative approach. The innovative approach is based on the principle that in the proposed adjustment of conditions of small source construction and the criteria of financial support, the beneficiaries are encouraged to consume the largest possible amount of electricity and to the minimisation of the power supply to the system.

⁶² In 2013, an inhabitant of SR separated 48 kg of municipal waste. For the attainment of the recycling objective, the quantity of separated waste must fluctuate around a minimum of 150 – 170 kg of separated elements per inhabitant, which will be very difficult to achieve by 2020.

⁶³ Source: Waste Management Programme of SR 2016 - 2020

⁶⁴ <http://euractiv.sk/clanky/zivotne-prostredie/obehove-hospodarstvo-v-praxi-co-si-mozeme-prestavit-024084/> Published on: 17.08.2015

⁶⁵ Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings

PUBLIC
RENEWABLE
TRANSPORT
WATER
ENERGY
CLEAN
TARNSPORT
COLLECTION
RESOURCES
WASTE
RENEWABLE
DECENTRALIZATION
WATER
SEPARATION
DISPOSAL
ADEQUATE
ENERGY
PUBLIC
DRINKING
SEWERAGE
CLEAN
RESOURCES
SAFE
HOUSING
WASTE
DISPOSAL

VIII.

Indicators

For the following urban indicators, we do not have available statistical surveys with rural-urban classification and classification by sex. The data apply to the whole Slovak Republic.

I. Percentage of the population living in slums

Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Establishment, as amended, defines the municipality as an autonomous territorial self-governing and administrative unit of the Slovak Republic; it associates persons with permanent residence in its territory. The municipality is a legal person which, under the conditions laid down by the law, independently uses its own property and its own income. The Slovak Republic has no slums.

II. Percentage of urban population with access to adequate housing

Most inhabitants of urbanized areas have access to adequate housing; it is supported by the adopted Concept of State Housing Policy until 2015.

III. The percentage of the population living in urban areas with access to safe drinking water

- 1996 – 79,7 % of population of SR are supplied from the public water supply system
- 2006 – 86,3 % of the population of SR are supplied from the public water supply system
- 2013 – 87,4 % of the population of SR are supplied from the public water supply system

IV. The percentage of the population living in urban areas with access to adequate sanitation

- 1996 – 53,0 % of the population of SR are connected to the public sewer network
- 2006 – 56,4 % of the population of SR are connected to the public sewer network
- 2013 – 63,5 % of the population of SR are connected to the public sewer network

V. The percentage of the population living in urban areas with access to regular waste collection

- 1996 – 100 % of the population of SR has access to regular waste collection
- 2006 – 100% of the population of SR has access to regular waste collection
- 2013 – 100% of the population of SR has access to regular waste collection

VI. The percentage of the population living in urban areas with access to clean domestic energy

Approximately 100%. In 2013 20.8% of gross electricity consumption in SR was covered from renewable sources.

VII. The percentage of the population living in urban areas with access to public transport

- 1996 – 100 % of the population of SR have access to public transport
- 2006 – 100% of the population of SR have access to public transport
- 2013 – 100% of the population of SR have access to public transport

VIII. The level of effective decentralisation for sustainable urban development measured by:

- a) Number (%) of policies and legal regulations addressing the issue of cities that were developed with the participation of local and regional self-governments, since 1996 until now;

Data are not available.

- b) Amount (%) of the income and expenditures allocated to local and regional self-governments from the state budget;

The portion of 100% revenue from the corporate income tax:

- 1996 – Data is not available
- 2003 – 70,3% for municipalities ⁶⁶
- 2013 – 65,4% for municipalities

- c) Amount (%) of expenditure of local authorities financed from local income

Data are not available.

IX. Percentage of local, regional and national authorities that have implemented urban policies supporting the local economic development and creation of decent jobs and livelihoods.

Approximately 100%. In connection with the accession of Slovakia to EU in 2004, the emphasis put on the strategic guidance of urban develop-

ment increased; the obligation to prepare the programme of economic and social development of the city was laid down by law.

X. The percentage of local and regional authorities that adopted or implemented urban safety and security policies or strategies

Data are not available.

XI. The percentage of local and regional authorities that have implemented plans and proposals for sustainable and flexible cities that are inclusive and adequately react to the growth of the urban population

Approximately 100%. All municipalities with a population greater than 2,000 have elaborated their territorial plans according to Article 11 of Act No. 50/1976 Coll. Most municipalities have a valid territorial plan, because it is the condition of the provision of financial support for development processes and provides certain guarantees for investment activities.

XII. Percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) generated in urban areas

Data are not available in this structure (classification).

⁶⁶ The data are valid for all municipalities in the territory of SR without distinction of municipalities with the city status

