



20 together

SLOVAKIA



Twenty years ago, Slovakia joined the European Union. Since 2004, Slovakia and its people have benefitted enormously from opportunities, economic growth and the social development that EU membership brought about. Thanks to European funds and open borders, its economy has grown, making it an indispensable part of the Single Market today. At the same time, Slovakia has contributed to a stronger Union with its talent, strong industries and innovative start-ups. Slovaks know what it means to stand in solidarity with people in need. Our Union is stronger because of Slovakia. And Slovakia is better off thanks to the European Union.

Creating opportunities and growth since 2004



Slovakia has witnessed positive economic growth since it became a member of the EU, with the country's Gross National Income **increasing by 7%** per year on average.



The Slovak economy has been converging to the average of the EU-27 since 2004. The country's Gross Domestic Product per capita grew from 59% of the EU-27 in 2004 to 71% in 2022.



As part of the Single Market, **Slovakia has benefitted from the free movement of goods across the European Union. Today, the EU is the main export destination for Slovak goods and produce**, taking over 77%. The value of these has increased in the past two decades, climbing from almost €19 billion in 2004 to nearly €84 billion in 2023.



In 2009, Slovakia started to use the euro as its currency, allowing Slovak businesses and citizens to enjoy the full benefits of the EU Single Market.



People in Slovakia have enjoyed greater job opportunities over the past 20 years, with the **country's employment rate increasing** from 64% in 2004 to 77% in 2022.



With the support of EU funds, **the percentage of households in Slovakia with internet access has increased**, rising from 23% in 2004 to 91% in 2023.

Supporting Slovakia's economy and society

Over the past 20 years, the EU's Cohesion Policy has strengthened the economic, social and territorial cohesion of Slovakia. Since 2004, over **€25 billion in Cohesion Policy funding** has been invested in Slovakia, benefitting citizens living in the country.

Driven by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Slovakia has experienced significant progress in agriculture and rural development. Since 2004, **an investment of €10.1 billion in CAP funding has been directed towards the country, nurturing sustainable growth and prosperity in rural regions.**

With the support of up to **€6.4 billion in grants from the EU's NextGenerationEU**, Europe is helping Slovakia transform its economy and society, by investing in:



Climate
48%



Digital
21%



Social
40%

Supporting the Slovak car industry

Over the past 20 years, the Slovak car industry has benefitted from greater access to the Single Market, including lower trade barriers to markets in all EU Member States. EU membership has allowed the Slovak car sector to grow. In 2023 alone, almost 1 million cars were produced in Slovakia. Today, Slovakia's automobile industry represents an important sector of the Slovak economy, directly employing more than 170 000 people.



Ensuring Europe's energy security

With the support of the EU's Connecting Europe Facility, Slovakia has been able to reduce its dependence on Russian fossil fuels. Almost €100 million, for example, has been invested in the development of the Poland-Slovakia gas interconnector. The interconnector has opened access to new supply sources for several Member States in Central and South-Eastern Europe, facilitating market development between Northern and Southern Europe.



Benefitting from smooth and secure travel in Europe

Since December 2007, Slovakia has been a member of the Schengen area, the world's largest free travel area. As part of Schengen, millions of EU citizens, including citizens living in Slovakia, are able to move freely without being subject to border checks in Europe. They also benefit from common EU approaches to shared security challenges.



Standing in solidarity

Since 2004, Slovakia has worked with other EU Member States to mobilise emergency relief for countries following disasters and emergencies. Throughout the last two decades, the Slovak authorities have assisted wildfire responses across Europe, with Slovakia providing firefighting aircraft to help put out wildfires in Czechia in 2022 and on the Greek island of Rhodes in 2023. A Slovak rescue mission also helped emergency operations after the devastating earthquake in Türkiye in 2023.

Protecting Europe's nature and biodiversity

Thanks to EU support since 2004, Slovakia has been able to preserve and protect its rich nature and biodiversity through Natura 2000, a network of protected areas safeguarding habitats and endangered species. Slovakia has designated 41 protected bird areas and 644 sites of European significance, further protecting Europe's natural habitats, freely living rare or endangered animals, and plants. In the future, with Trenčín taking the title in 2026.





Enriching our cultural heritage

Slovak culture is a proud part of the EU's rich heritage. Since 2004, EU funding has helped Slovakia to preserve many of the country's cultural treasures, including landmark sites such as Bojnický Castle, the Cathedral of St. Elizabeth in Košice, and Orava Castle. Over the past 20 years, the EU has also helped promote Slovakia's cultural heritage to citizens across the EU: In 2014, the Slovak city of Košice was given the European Capital of Culture title. The Capital of Culture will once again belong to a Slovak city in the near future, with Trenčín taking the title in 2026.

Creating study opportunities

Over the past 20 years, young Slovak citizens have gained more opportunities to study in the European Union. Since 2004, nearly 53 000 higher education students from Slovakia have participated in the Erasmus+ programme. Through Erasmus+, almost 36 000 EU citizens have also enjoyed the opportunity to attend universities in Slovakia.



Enjoying Slovakia's quality food

Over the past 20 years, EU citizens have been able to enjoy more high-quality foods, drinks and agricultural produce of Slovak origin. Today, 25 products from Slovakia, including Stupavské zelé (fermented cabbage from Stupava), are featured on the EU's list of products with protected designations of origin.

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