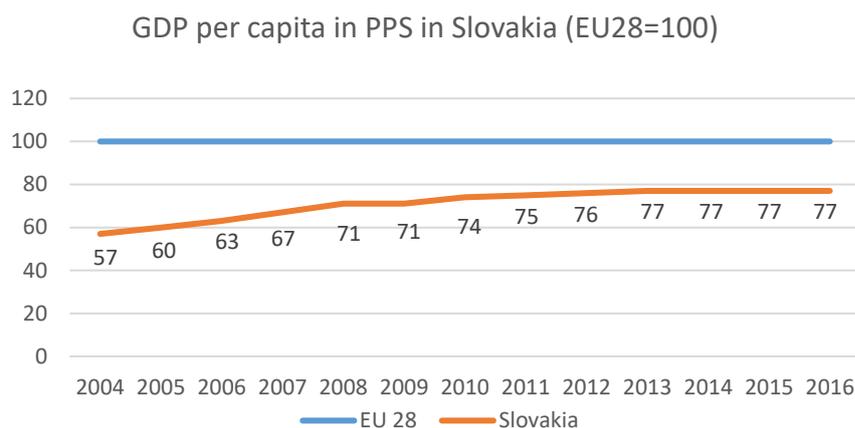


‘Outreach and guidance in upskilling policies in the European Union - Slovakia’

1. Socio-economic background and synopsis of relevant indicators

A solid growth of economy supported by political stability and fiscal responsibility makes Slovakia a success story in convergence with best dynamics among neighbouring Visegrád 4 countries (see Graph 1 and Annex 1).

Graph 1.



Source: Eurostat.

Graph 1 however also indicates slowing dynamics of convergence. It seems to be partly related to the limits of exploiting human resources. Indeed, Slovakia features the highest employment rate¹ and the lowest unemployment rate² since its establishment in 1993, and difficulties to find employees meeting employers' needs³ are pronounced by high voice. 59 926 jobs were available nation-wide for 236 934 registered job seekers in May 2017⁴. However, only 6 % of the interviewed unemployed enters employment, according to the labour ministry and public employment services internal data.⁵

Out of the aforementioned 236 934 people registered with labour offices in May 2017, 32 077 (13.5 %) are below 25 years of age and 60 130 (25.4 %) are below 29 years of age, and in contrast, 38 703 (16.3 %) unemployed are over 55 years of age. 77 197 (32.6 %) of the unemployed achieved ISCED 2 level of education or less. 116 022 (49 %) of the unemployed are registered over one year and 54 872 (23.2 %) over four years.

These national data thus indicate that a half of the registered unemployed are long-term unemployed, almost a third of the registered unemployed are low educated and over a quarter are young people below 29 years of age.

¹ 70.7 % in the 1st quarter 2017, according to LSF national data (Slovstat), with male employment rate 76.9 % and female rate 64.3 % in the age group 20-64, significantly below the Europe 2020 target (75 %) and national 2020 target (72 %), despite solid growth in recent years.

² 7.35 % registered unemployed in May 2017, and 8.5 % unemployed in 1st quarter 2017, latter according to LFS.

³ Nedostatok kvalifikovanej pracovnej sily na Slovensku [A lack of qualified workforce in Slovakia]. A document discussed at the meeting of the Solidarity and Development Council, a discussion platform of stakeholders presided by Prime Minister, on 29 June 2017.

⁴ Detailed data about the unemployed broken by age, level of education and length of unemployment are available in Annex 2.

⁵ Najnižšia evidovaná nezamestnanosť v histórii [Registered unemployment at lowest level in history]. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, press release of 20.06.2017.

Public employment services target eight disadvantaged groups specified by the Act on employment services (5/2004). 10 294 (4.3 %) school graduates and 157 326 (66.4 %) citizens with no paid employment were identified as disadvantaged registered unemployed in May 2017⁶. Apparently, practice is needed for people from both categories and adoption of specific skills closely linked to working positions should be supported.

Targeting young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) developed into agenda under the influence of the European discourse. Significantly, no specialised national data are available. Nevertheless, Eurostat data are sufficient for recognising importance of further interventions: Table 1 explains why Slovakia insisted on expanding the Youth Guarantee scheme to an older age cohort.

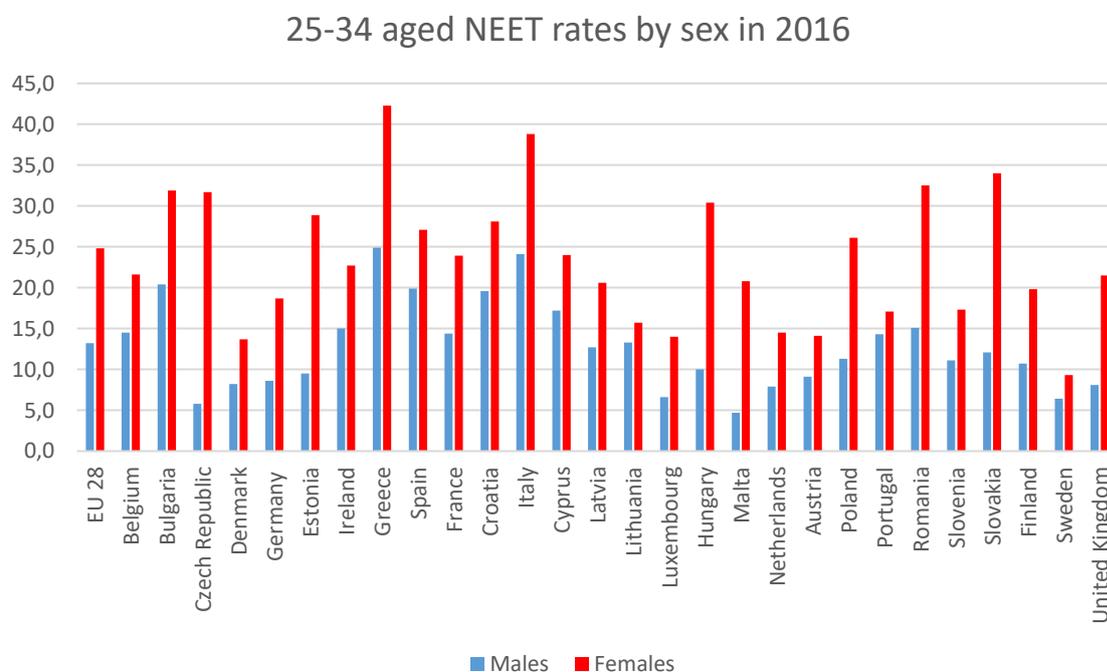
Table 1. NEET rates by age and sex

	15-24	15-29	15-34	25-29 total	25-29 male	25-29 female
EU 28	11.5	14.2	15.6	18.8	14.0	23.8
Slovakia	12.3	15.9	18.2	21.7	11.5	32.3

Source: Eurostat, [edat_lfse_20], last update: 25-04-2017.

Slovakia raised the Youth Guarantee age limit to 29 years, with a priority to the long-term unemployed in the 25-29 age group, as the share of NEETs and distance to EU 28 is significantly increasing with age. Interestingly, comparison with EU 28 in the age cohort after the higher education age (25-29) suggests the need for more urgent intervention for females than males. Undoubtedly, a difference between males and females is influenced by maternity and the length of maternity leave. EU second highest difference among males and females visible from Graph 2 indicates the risk of future smooth reintegration of females into the labour market and suggests the need to intervene in support of appropriate personalised training offered to females.

Graph 2.



Source: Eurostat, [edat_lfse_20], last update: 25-04-2017.

⁶ Detailed data about disadvantaged groups according to the Act on employment services (5/2004) are presented in Annex 3.

The data above fully justify European recommendations set within the European semester monitoring: the 2017 recommendations suggest improving ‘activation measures for disadvantaged groups, including by implementing the action plan for the long-term unemployed and by providing individualised services and targeted training. Enhance employment opportunities for women, ...’⁷, similarly to the previous years’ CSRs.

National policies are fully in line with the country specific recommendations, as visible from the identified disadvantaged groups addressed by national policies and the variety of tools developed to address young people and long-term unemployed in response to the ‘National employment strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2020’ (further ‘National employment strategy’).

2. Brief description of national strategies

This chapter concentrates on description of national strategies in support of two target groups: unemployed youth including NEETs and the long-term unemployed.

The ‘National employment strategy’ was adopted by the government on 17 December 2014 building also on the ‘National implementation plan of Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic’, approved by the government on 5 February 2014 that has identified three key reforms and initiatives on provision of early intervention and activation and 15 key reforms and initiatives in support of integration into the labour market⁸.

ESF not only contributed to the creation of the ‘National employment strategy’⁹, but also to funding ALMP concerning target groups discussed in this report. ESF and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) resources are crucial for funding ALMP. This is why Operational programme Human resources, in particular Priority axis 2 Youth employment initiative and Priority axis 3 Employment, related national projects and demand-driven projects need to be analysed in more detail.

Unemployed young people

Table 2. National ESF projects addressing young unemployed, in particular NEETs

Title	Activity	Results 2016
‘Through practice to employment’ (Praxou k zamestnaniu) National ESF project implemented since 1 August 2015	Half-time mentored jobs for registered NEETs (3 months in case of NEETs under 25 years of age and 6 months under 29 years of age) are created stimulated by subsidy for mentor and 95 % labour cost of young employee reimbursed for the period of maximum 9 months.	1 614 working places for NEETs were created by this instrument in 2016. This instrument is very attractive for microenterprises that represented 66 % of all involved enterprises.
‘Graduate practice starts employment’ (Absolventská prax štartuje zamestnanie)	A traditional instrument aimed at acquiring practical competences of unemployed graduates was modified to accept NEETs	5 336 people were offered practice opportunity in 2016. 4 160 completed practice, of which 2 416 found jobs.

⁷ See the 2017 country specific recommendations for Slovakia at https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_-_slovakia.pdf.

⁸ Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 in Annex 1 of ‘National implementation plan of Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic’ available in Slovak, see at www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=23248.

⁹ The national project ‘National employment strategy of the Slovak Republic’, Operational programme Employment and social inclusion.

National ESF project implemented since 1 August 2015	under 26 year of age and to support mentoring and a new working place for trainees.	With 58 % success rate the Graduate practice is considered a very efficient tool.
'Succesfully at the labour market' (Úspešne na trhu práce) National ESF project implemented since 18 December 2015	Jobs for young people under 29 years of age or self-employment is subsidised for the period of 6 to 12 months.	2 058 working places were newly created offering first employment for young people, out of which 40 were registered with labour offices more than one year. Places were predominantly created by microenterprises (71 %). Out of 529 registered unemployed who received contribution to their self-employment, 381 (72 %) were not employed for the period of 12 months before registration.
'Be active – get employed!' (Buď aktívny – zamestnaj sa!) A special 'pilot' internal project of labour offices launched on 1 October 2015.	A variety of ALMP tools are made available to young unemployed with the assistance of a specialist from a labour office – 'Young people guide', and making use of the portal Information guide through the labour market (ISTP; www.istp.sk) able to generate personal profiles of job seekers and match a respective personal profile with the requirements of employers for qualified work force for the purposes of placement into the labour market.	73 885 registered young unemployed under 29 years of age (70.8 %) were affected until 31 December.

In addition to the aforementioned national projects, there are other national projects in the pipeline addressing young unemployed, in particular NEETs. Three projects affecting NEETs were announced in June 2017, with planned duration until December 2018.

The national project 'Training of young registered unemployed' (Vzdelávanie mladých uchádzačov o zamestnanie) focuses on NEETs under 29 years of age in line with the Youth Guarantee scheme embedded in specific goal 2.1.1 of the Operational programme Human resources. The project supports two types of retraining: one focused on professional competences required by the labour market and the other one focused on specific key competences (ICT, languages and soft skills). NEETs are reimbursed personal costs (travel costs and meals). Reaching hard-to-activate young people is stressed within this project. Contribution to reduce their personal costs related to retraining is considered an important stimulus to participate in retraining.

Within the national project 'Restart for young registered unemployed' (Reštart pre mladých uchádzačov o zamestnanie), participation in counselling services for NEETs under 29 years

of age prior to their employment is facilitated by partial reimbursement of personal costs (travel costs and meals). Former vulnerable NEETs under 29 years of age (registered with labour offices for one month prior current employment) are eligible for financial contribution for the period up to 12 months during employment to facilitate their full reintegration into the labour market.

Within the national project 'A chance for young registered unemployed' (Šanca pre mladých uchádzačov o zamestnanie), jobs for long-term unemployed (registered with labour offices for over one year) NEETs under 29 years of age are subsidised for the period of 3 to 9 months. Employers can individually find a future employee, but their selection must be consulted with a labour office, or employers can accept individuals selected by a labour office.

Additional specialised interventions for NEETs can be found among the so-called demand-driven projects.

A call launched in June 2017 'Activating and supporting young NEETs' (Aktivizácia a podpora mladých NEET) invites municipalities, employers and NGOs to identify individuals among NEETs under 25 years of age registered with labour offices for at least 3 months, NEETs under 29 years of age registered with labour offices for at least 6 months, NEETs under 29 years of age not registered with labour offices and graduates without prior employment, and suggest activities to increase their employability or persuade them to register with labour offices in order to qualify for additional assistance. This call clearly opens the door for genuine outreach activities and it is hoped that predominantly NGOs and municipalities will make use of this opportunity. The first round of submitted projects will be evaluated after the deadline 13 September 2017 and the second round after the deadline 31 October 2017.

A call launched in December 2016 'New or innovative programmes to support self-employment of young people' (Nové alebo inovatívne programy na zlepšenie samozamestnania mladých ľudí) is aimed at assistance in self-employment of NEETs under 25 years of age registered with labour offices for at least 3 months and NEETs under 29 years of age registered with labour offices for at least 6 months. Municipalities, self-governing regions, NGOs, civic associations and other organisations focusing on public beneficial services including non-formal action youth groups are invited to identify NEETs in order to offer them a variety of services (individual and group counselling, assistance in developing business plans or another support for starting own business, co-working opportunities, etc.) and provision of 100-hour training with theoretical component (legislation, financing, marketing, etc.) and practical component.

A call launched in December 2016 'Support for entering labour market of selected groups of young people' (Podpora vstupu vybraných skupín mladých ľudí na trh práce) is aimed to assist employment of NEETs under 25 years of age registered with labour offices for at least 3 months and NEETs under 29 years of age registered with labour offices for at least 6 months. State managed organisations in addition to municipalities, self-governing regions, NGOs, civic associations and other organisations focusing on public beneficial services including non-formal action youth groups are invited to identify NEETs in order to facilitate their placement in the labour market. Provision of personal audit resulting in creation of 'Individual career plan' (ICP), offering retraining complying with ICP, identifying working positions corresponding to ICP, assisting in overcoming difficulties in initial phases of employment (commuting, housing, adapting to working conditions, etc.) are eligible activities.

Long-term unemployed

Stubbornly high long-term unemployment signalled the need to complement the 'National employment strategy' by an additional policy paper. Criticism of insufficient progress translated into the 2016 country-specific recommendation and the 2016 Government manifesto requirement to better fight long-term unemployment. In response to this, the 'Action plan to strengthen the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market in the Slovak Republic' was adopted by the labour ministry in November 2016. The following main

objectives to strengthen the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market are worth highlighting as most relevant to outreach activities¹⁰:

- 'to take an integrated comprehensive approach of active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, which is a combination of adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services, with the aim to facilitate integration into the sustainable quality employment (preferentially the primary labour market) of persons who are able to work and provide them with resources sufficient to live in dignity';
- 'promote creation of local partnerships in the regions with highest concentration of LTU (ESIF funded projects)';
- 'to support creation of social enterprises including functioning environment for starting up and running the social enterprises which can be key source of employment for the LTU, notably in the regions low job opportunities and high concentration of MRC';
- 'to support people who are distant from the labour market and are not registered as job seekers in their integration into the labour market through field social work'.¹¹

An act on social economy and social entrepreneurship is under preparation by a working group composed of all relevant stakeholders including NGOs. It should be finalised by the labour ministry and submitted to the government and subsequently to the parliament in September 2017. It should come into force from 1 February 2018. The law will define precisely the conditions that a legal or natural person must meet in order to be granted the statute of social enterprise. Registered social economy enterprises will be able to apply for support from state. The main precondition of support will be a clear concept of sustainability and non-distortion of competition in the market. The main goal of social enterprises is contributing to development of social cohesion in the municipality and prevention of exclusion of disadvantaged people rather than achieving economic profit. Legislation is expected to 'set strict conditions to prevent abusing and damaging the good name of the social economy'¹².

The introduction to the 'Action plan to strengthen the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market in the Slovak Republic' also highlights importance of ESF for 'fighting long-term unemployment as one of its main priorities in the country'. The following table contains the most relevant national ESF projects.

Table 3. National ESF projects addressing long-term unemployed

Title	Activity	Results 2016
'A chance for employment' (Šanca na zamestnanie) National ESF project implemented since 25 September 2015	Jobs in public sector, predominantly for long-term unemployed are subsidised for the period of 3 to 9 months.	5 522 jobs were created, predominantly by municipalities (70 %) for in total 6 301 unemployed, out of which 43 % were over 50 years of age and 35 % low qualified (early school leavers with education level below ISCED 3). 3 804 (60.4 %) of involved unemployed had no paid job

¹⁰ Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (2016). Action plan to strengthen the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market in the Slovak Republic. In Slovak available at www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/apdn_06122016_sk_final.pdf.

¹¹ LTU – long-term unemployed, ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds, MRC – marginalised Roma communities.

¹² Nedostatok kvalifikovanej pracovnej sily na Slovensku [A lack of qualified workforce in Slovakia]. A document discussed at the meeting of Solidarity and Development Council, a discussion platform of stakeholders presided by Prime Minister, on 29 June 2017. This quotation from the labour ministry's document relates to the earlier failure to introduce social enterprises and efforts to escape from bad reputation of previous 8 social enterprises piloted by the labour ministry.

		prior to registration with labour offices.
'A way out of the unemployment circle' (Cesta z kruhu nezamestnanosti) National ESF project implemented since 18 December 2015	Jobs for long-term unemployed (registered with labour offices for over one year) are subsidised for the period of 12 or 15 months.	6 381 jobs were created for 6 764 long-term unemployed, out of which almost 69 % were registered with labour offices for over two years.
'Placement of long-term unemployed citizens into the labour market by using non-state employment services' (Umiestňovanie dlhodobo nezamestnaných občanov na trhu práce s využitím neštátnych služieb zamestnanosti) Launched from January 2017	More intensive cooperation with agencies for temporary employment is envisaged aimed at provision of specific services for long-term unemployed registered for over 24 months to increase their employability and to assist in their placement into the labour market.	The project is in its starting phase, no data have been summarised yet.
'A way to the labour market' (Cesta na trh práce) Launched from March 2017	This project is interlinked with the governmental activity targeting least developed districts, initiated by the act No. 336/2015 and materialising in action plans for development of least developed districts (already adopted by the government for 12 districts). Among 6 activities Activity 2 is worth highlighting here: 'Support for creating jobs for the unemployed with a special focus on the long-term unemployed in social enterprises ...'	The project is in its starting phase.

A special internal project of labour offices 'Through increased activity to employment' (Zvýšenou aktivitou k zamestnaniu) launched in February 2017 is aimed at profiling long-term unemployed, offering them individualised services and finally monitoring and facilitating their transition to the labour market based on an 'Agreement on reintegration into the labour market' (to be prepared no later than 18 months after registration).

There are also three other national projects focused on long-term unemployed envisaged: Within the national project 'Restart – an opportunity for long-term unemployed to return to the labour market' (Restart – príležitosť pre dlhodobo nezamestnaných vrátiť sa na trh práce), two financial benefits are offered. The so-called active long-term unemployed who are deregistered due to entering employment are offered contribution equivalent to the social assistance in material need benefit for the period of employment up to 6 months and a reduced amount for additional 6 months. The long-term unemployed offered the opportunity to acquire competences required for an available working position directly in a respective workplace receive a contribution equivalent to subsistence minimum for a period up to 6 months. Two

other projects, 'Support for individualised guidance for long-term registered unemployed' (Podpora individualizovaného poradenstva pre dlhodobu nezamestnaných uchádzačov o zamestnanie) focusing on applying the 'Bilan de compétences'¹³ methodology for personal audit of the unemployed, and 'Training of registered unemployed' (Vzdelávanie uchádzačov o zamestnanie), are signalled by authorities with no details unveiled yet.

Two additional calls are indicated in the 2017 ESF calls plan, both focusing on the least developed districts identified according to the act No. 336/2015. One is aimed at the development of sectoral skills and the second one is aimed at support of development of regional/local employment by means of social economy. The latter call is particularly important for outreach activities of municipalities and NGOs.

A synergy effect is expected from adoption of an act on social economy and social entrepreneurship, governmental action plans for development of least developed districts and this kind of ESF funded projects with specific impact on long-term unemployed and other hard to reach unemployed individuals.

In addition to the national projects explicitly targeting NEETs and long-term unemployed, there are activities within which these groups can be tackled as well. Worth mentioning is the national project 'Support for employment of registered unemployed via selected active labour market measures' (Podpora zamestnávania uchádzačov o zamestnanie prostredníctvom vybraných aktívnych opatrení trhu práce) with two rounds already launched and a published call for the third round. This is a representative of projects encompassing a variety of tool and diverse target groups: young people and long-term unemployed are of course not excluded, as these groups are permanently prioritised within employment services as a consequence of the Act on employment services (5/2004) explicitly identifying them as the disadvantaged groups.

A rich variety of initiatives briefly described earlier indicate solid coverage of NEETs and long-term unemployed registered with labour offices. Nevertheless, insufficient attention is paid to young people and long-term unemployed not registered with labour offices.

A very welcomed impulse came with the Youth Guarantee scheme pointing out the need to reach all young people, not only those already registered with labour offices. This European initiative paves the way for systemic support of outreach activities that was almost overlooked by national policies and that was only partly covered by NGOs and volunteer activities. Successful intervention in support of assertion into the labour market of youth at risk is indeed the best way to reduce the need of later, more complicated and costly labour market policies. Value for money analysis of public employment services¹⁴ indicated that the regular unemployed costs about EUR 2 300 for the 2.6-year support compared to EUR 7 600 for the 5.2-year support of people with the longest duration of unemployment. This analysis also found that national policies prefer subsidies for job creation over genuine labour market policies aimed education and training adjusted to personal needs. This is why allocation of more resources for counselling and personal audit is recommended. Worth mentioning is also the recommendation of Institute of Financial Policy contained in this document suggesting to improve collecting data on marginalised Roma communities backed by changes in legislation that currently hampers a more detailed analyses of the impact of employment services.

Indeed, young ethnic Roma are in a high risk of exclusion and in an extreme need of outreach activities, in particular in the least developed districts featuring low job creation and high unemployment in total. Very low employment of ethnic Roma and coincidence of Roma

¹³ Labour offices apply the methodology derived from the French experience and recognised by the European Federation of Centres of Career Guidance and Bilan de Compétences (FECBOP, www.fecbop.eu).

¹⁴ Institute of Financial Policy (2016). Veľa práce na úradoch práce: Efektivita a účinnosť služieb zamestnanosti [A lot of work at labour offices: efficiency and effectiveness of employment services], www.finance.gov.sk/Components/CategoryDocuments/s_LoadDocument.aspx?categoryId=11228&documentId=15073.

ethnicity with low qualifications and long-term unemployment or even social exclusion make legislation in support of social economy extremely important. Similarly to the Youth Guarantee initiative, action plans for development of least developed districts brought important impulse to go beyond traditional public employment practice focusing on registered unemployed. The social economy initiative paves the way for systemic support of local needs-driven outreach activities.

It can be summarised that activities of employment services targeting registered young unemployed people need a complementary action aimed also at not registered unemployed young people. This is why selected example of practice No. 1 presented below addresses young unemployed people in a concerted way encompassing all regional/local stakeholders. Difficulties to fight long-term unemployment, in particular unemployment of ethnic Roma from marginalised communities, via retraining indicated the need to promote learning by working. Good practice of examples of municipalities¹⁵ running enterprises focusing on simple works combining informal learning with partial reintegration into the labour market confirms potential of social economy in reintegration of long-term unemployed, and in particular Roma, into the labour market. Example of practice No. 2 presents efforts to transform current municipality-led working activities into social enterprises.

In both cases, efforts to reach disengaged people at a high risk of social exclusion by specific interventions are present. It is significant for Slovakia that similarly to both examples chosen outreach activities are nation-wide in process of development.

¹⁵ A nation-wide known example of successful reintegration into the labour market via municipality enterprise is Spišský Hrhov. The mayor of this municipality is a legendary front runner in reintegration of low-skilled and long-term unemployed into the labour market. Many other municipalities learn from his experience. See e.g. Obradovič, F. (2017). Celý systém je nastavený na majoritu, preto nefunguje na Rómov [The whole system is set for the majority, that is why it is not functional with regard to Roma]. Trend, 13 April 2017, p. 15-17.

Example of practice No. 1

Erasmus+ project: Young people reintegration into education and training

Political context:

Following the Council recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee¹⁶ the Slovak government discussed an information on adoption of the Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic and approved the 'National implementation plan of Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic' on 5 February 2014. Within part 2.2.1 of this document changes in legislation and modification of regular ALMP tools were envisaged. An explicit notice on the need of reaching young people, in particular NEETs not registered with labour offices, as a precondition of further action is worth mentioning. It is important, as the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and its network of labour offices focus on serving registered unemployed, and registered unemployment data are among the most important indicators in a political discourse. Therefore, deregistered young people (e.g. as a consequence of insufficient cooperation with labour offices) can improve statistical data of respective labour offices, despite their reintegration into the labour market remaining unsolved.

While a variety of tools for reintegration of registered NEETs into the labour market have been available for years, insufficient attention was paid to outreach. Thus, the Youth Guarantee is extremely important with its overarching approach and a potential to complement current practice with strengthening services to young people outside registers of labour offices. Indeed, the national plan indicates a specific measure (No. 17 in Table 2.4 enlisting in total 19 measures) aimed at supporting community centres working with young unemployed people not registered with labour offices and endangered by social exclusion. This measure envisages cooperation of labour offices with municipalities, as municipalities are instrumental to identification of young people not cooperating with labour offices. This is also why the role of youth work is pronounced and Erasmus+ projects in the field of youth considered a good opportunity to complement public and private employment services.

An Erasmus+ project identified as an interesting example of practice exactly fits

- the 2016 Erasmus+ priority to 'foster the inclusion and employability of young people with fewer opportunities (including NEETs)¹⁷;
- the challenges identified by the European commission 'to strengthen outreach to non-registered NEETs ... and to develop local partnerships between PES, schools and employers'¹⁸;

and builds on the Finnish experience – a success story made visible by the 2014 peer review¹⁹ that is also highlighted among the country 'flagship measures and reforms' in a European Commission document reviewing the Youth Guarantee three-year experience²⁰.

Goals of identified initiative:

Four central European countries are interested in studying and implementing the experience of the Finnish municipality of Turku aimed at supporting 'localisation' of the Youth Guarantee service by activating local stakeholders and complementing provision of regular services by outreach relevant youth work within a three-year Erasmus+ project 'Youth Guarantees

¹⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

¹⁷ Erasmus+ programme guide 2016, version 2 (2016): 07/01/2016, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/files/resources/2016-erasmus-plus-programme-guide-v-ii_en.pdf.

¹⁸ Youth Guarantee country by country: Slovakia (March 2017), <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=13659&langId=en>. PES – public employment services.

¹⁹ The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Key policy messages from the Peer Review on the 'Youth Guarantee' Helsinki (Finland) 18-19 September 2014 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=12908&langId=en>.

²⁰ Box one-stop guidance centre for youth, Finland, p. 38, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73591c12-8afc-11e6-b955-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_2&format=PDF.

Application on the Local Level (2016-2-SK02-KA205-001012)²¹ coordinated by the NGO EPIC.

In Slovakia, the target group covers

- 80 young people aged below 25 years of age (predominantly NEETs) from the municipality of Zvolen (Central Slovakia);
- 20 – 30 members of a task force representing stakeholders from the municipality of Zvolen;
- 10 observers and future followers from neighbourhood expected to learn from this project and to make use of the experience.

Visiting Turku and provision of initial training to stakeholders should result in the creation of a local Youth Guarantee strategy translated into adoption of a Zvolen Municipality Youth Guarantee Action Plan.

Implementation of the action plan will be supported by consultations with counterparts in Turku and by additional training in Slovakia. Assisting local stakeholders in elaboration of an ESF project in support of further progress in implementation of services adjusted to local needs and a dissemination and mainstreaming seminar and a final conference are envisaged.

The following activities have been carried out so far:

- the first meeting with project partner from Finland (22 – 24 November 2016, Turku);
- the first meeting of the local working group in the municipality of Zvolen (25 January 2017, Zvolen);
- the second meeting of the local working group in the municipality of Zvolen (8 March 2017, Zvolen);
- a study visit in the municipality of Turku (19 – 25 March 2017, Turku).

The ambition of the project is to create a platform for stable functional cooperation of stakeholders to set a long-term vision for the work with young people at risk and pilot the first locally defined measures linked to the Youth Guarantee based on local needs. The working group of stakeholders include representatives of self-government of the municipality of Zvolen, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, local employers, three secondary VET schools, a grammar school, a basic school, a higher education institution, Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling and Prevention Centre, police, community and social workers from the third sector (e.g. Civic Association 'Návrat', Civic Association 'Úsmev', an orphanage in the municipality of Trnava) professionally engaged in the work with young people at risk and with marginalised groups. The working group should prepare a Zvolen Municipality Youth Guarantee Action Plan until March 2018. It will be piloted with the group of about 80 young people from September 2019.

²¹ See the standardised project information at the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform at <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/4c918d22-8772-4695-9afe-13faee7defb0>.

Example of practice No. 2

Social enterprises revitalisation: Municipality of Fil'akovo case

Political context:

Twelve districts in Eastern and Central Slovakia were identified as lagging behind in the development, in particular featuring extremely high unemployment rates (over 20 %) based on the Act on the support to the least developed districts (336/2015). Subsequently, five-year action plans were prepared and approved by the government for respective districts²². All action plans also contain an important training component – establishment of regional centres in already existing secondary VET schools aimed at provision of labour market needs-driven formal learning and establishment of social enterprises focusing on simple works suitable for low qualified people and acquiring qualifications through combining working and learning. Training centres should be created affiliated to social enterprises to support acquiring competences via non-formal learning.

Earlier efforts to reach unemployed people, in particular long-term unemployed, by establishing social enterprises failed as a consequence of an insufficient preparatory phase as well as a lack of monitoring and actions to prevent ineffectiveness.

In contrast to an earlier initiative not backed by legislation, concerted efforts are now visible coordinated by Plenipotentiary of the government for support to the least developed districts, Anton Marcinič²³. Although action plans offered a solid intervention framework, however an act on social economy and social entrepreneurship is needed to offer full backing.

Goals of the identified initiative:

The following is an example of relevant parts of the 'Action plan for the development of district Lučenec' adopted by the government on 23 June 2016²⁴: Measure B.4.2 is aimed at establishing training centres linked to social enterprises. This training centres will focus on people with ISCED 2 education level and less to provide them with skills required by social enterprises working positions. In addition, specific key competences related to financial literacy will be addressed to prepare them for entering not sheltered labour market in future. EUR 550 million are allocated for developing these training centres, out of which EUR 200 million from the government budget and the rest from other sources, predominantly ESIF. Fil'akovo is one of five municipalities identified by the aforementioned action plan for reaching long-term unemployed via 'social economy'.

Interestingly, Fil'akovo also understands the importance to learn from the European practice: This municipality initiated establishment of the network of municipalities, NGOs, educational and research bodies from 10 countries (Croatia; Czech Republic; Hungary; Italy; Latvia, Portugal, Romania; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia).

The municipality of Fil'akovo is interested in sharing experience related to 'social economy' and successfully applied for funding from the Europe for Citizens programme. The respective project²⁵ with a maximum grant EUR 150 000 is one of 17 European projects approved in Selection year 2017 – Round 1 and one of 10 projects submitted by Slovak subjects.

The project declared the following objectives:

- promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups;
- eliminate social inequalities;
- reduce unemployment;

²² Action plans for all 12 districts are available from www.nro.vlada.gov.sk.

²³ See www.vlada.gov.sk/splnomocnenci-vlady-slovenskej-republiky. A short description of this initiative in English is available at www.nro.vlada.gov.sk/support-of-lagging-regions-in-slovakia.

²⁴ See the full wording in Slovak at www.nro.vlada.gov.sk/data/files/6178_ap-lucenec.pdf.

²⁵ Europe for Citizens programme, Strand 2 Measure 2.2 – Networks of towns, project No. 588997 'European network for social integration entrepreneurship: social inclusion and development of rural regions for a better European future'.

- improve the quality of services for local communities; and
- contextualise social integration enterprises within EU policies.

Expected outcomes of the project are as follows:

- a strategy for long-term sustainability in establishing and running social integration enterprises;
- publication of a manual for establishing of social enterprises;
- involvement of civic society in the process of social integration; and
- raising awareness of societal and civic benefits from social integration enterprises.

Indeed, sharing experience is needed, as the specialised legislation on social economy is still pending and all social enterprises already in work are at risk of criticism and even accusation of unfair competition.

The mayor of Fil'akovo is persuaded that the social enterprise aimed at manufacturing basalt cubes is a good opportunity for both

- reaching low skilled long-term unemployed preferring simple qualification over entering long-term education; and
- filling the gap in the market, as these product can be attractive for construction sector.

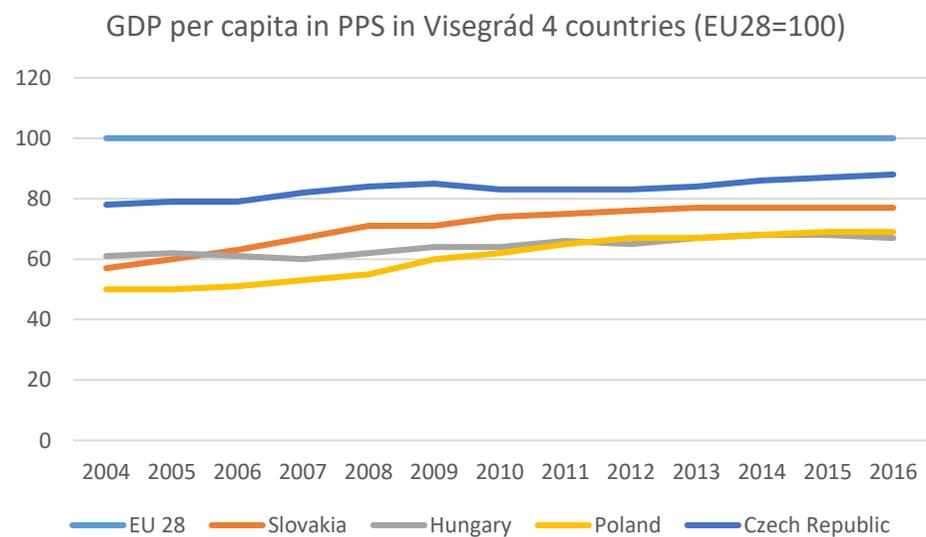
The municipality is already experienced in reintegration of the unemployed into the labour market within public beneficial activities in the construction sector. People are used to work with basalt cubes, thus, production of basalt cubes is a natural next step. It is expected that an act on social economy and social entrepreneurship will offer better and stabile space for sheltered production, services for low-skilled and long-term unemployed and provision of qualification via work-based learning for people disadvantaged at the labour market and hard to reach.

Annex 1

Gross Domestic Product per capita in PPS in Visegrád 4 countries compared to EU 28

GEO/TIME	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU 28	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Czech Republic	78	79	79	82	84	85	83	83	83	84	86	87	88
Hungary	61	62	61	60	62	64	64	66	65	67	68	68	67
Poland	50	50	51	53	55	60	62	65	67	67	68	69	69
Slovakia	57	60	63	67	71	71	74	75	76	77	77	77	77

Source: Eurostat.



Source: Eurostat.

Annex 2

Registered unemployed by age, in May 2017

	Total	below 25 years			25-54 years							55 years +		
		Together	of which		Together	of which						Together	of which	
			below 20	20-24		25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54		55-59	60+
Slovakia	236934	32077	6068	26009	166154	28053	28053	28927	28654	24914	27553	38703	30781	7922
Slovakia (%)	100	13.5	2.6	11.0	70.1	11.8	11.8	12.2	12.1	10.5	11.6	16.3	13.0	3.3

Source: Slovstat, May 2017.

Registered unemployed by length of registration, in May 2017

	Total	Less than 7 months			7-12 months			12 month +							
		Together	of which		Together	of which		Together	of which						
			0-3	4-6		7-9	10-12		13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	48+
Slovakia	236934	82102	45559	36543	38810	23569	15241	116022	18168	14651	9612	7361	6198	5160	54872
Slovakia (%)	100	34.65	19.23	15.42	16.38	9.95	6.43	48.97	7.67	6.18	4.06	3.11	2.62	2.18	23.2

Source: Slovstat, May 2017.

Registered unemployed by level of education, in May 2017

	Total	below ISCED 2	ISCED 2 (GEN)	ISCED 253, 352 (VET)	ISCED 353 (VET)	ISCED 354, 454 (VET)	ISCED 3 (GEN)	ISCED 554	ISCED 6	ISCED 7	ISCED 8	Not identified
Slovakia	236934	13854	62081	1262	65412	56527	9411	1079	4695	21193	643	777
Slovakia (%)	100	5.85	26.20	0.53	27.61	23.86	3.97	0.46	1.98	8.94	0.27	0.33

Source: Slovstat, May 2017.

Annex 3

Registered unemployed by type of disadvantaged groups, in May 2017

	Total	Disadvantaged according to § 8 of the Act on employment services (5/2004)							
		a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)
Slovakia	205602	10294	66149	117203	76932	157326	8	1163	8507
Slovakia (%)	-	5.0	32.2	57.0	37.4	76.5	0.0	0.6	4.1

Source: Slovstat, May 2017.

N.B.: a) School graduate, b) Individual over 50 years of age, c) Individual with education level below ISCED 3, d) Individual without paid employment for 12 calendar months, e) third country citizen (asylum seekers/ subsidiary protection), f) single caring for a child.