

# Raising teacher salaries

<b>POLICY DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE</b>	 SLOVAKIA
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## Timeline

2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation	2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation
2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation		

**ID number 28581**

## Background

Teacher and trainer salaries were among the lowest in the OECD and they were also not competitive, compared to the salaries of tertiary educated workers in the national economy. A gradually emerging lack of young teachers and anticipated problems replacing the rapidly ageing staff, and massive teacher strikes, particularly in 2012 and 2016, made discourse on the attractiveness of teaching professions a hot political issue.

## Objectives

Increasing salaries is a crucial factor in making the teaching profession more attractive and preventing brain drain to other sectors of the economy.

## Description

Pay rises were awarded in 2016 and 2017 (4% plus a further 6%). As the government claimed that highly qualified teachers were key to the delivery of its education and training agenda, it announced further increases – in its 2016 manifesto – averaging 6% per year from 2018. Yet, such a move was still considered insufficient by staff representatives as teacher salaries would remain lower than 70% of the average salary of professionals with higher education qualifications. The increase in salaries was also seen as non-competitive, inter alia in comparison with neighbouring Czech Republic. The 2018 National programme for the development of education (NPDE) indicates a 10% increase in January 2019 and in 2020 and the intention for teacher salaries to reach 85% of the salary of tertiary educated employees by 2027.

<b>2016 Implementation</b>
<b>2017 Implementation</b>
<b>2018 Implementation</b>

### **2019 Implementation**

A 10% wage increase was implemented in January 2019; however, it has been reported that in some schools, the increase was at the expense of bonuses of some individual teachers. This led to an official letter from trade unions to some school authorities (municipalities and self-governing regions) and to the speaker of the Parliament. It was not only teachers, but also all public workers, who enjoyed the 10% wage increase, making the increase in teacher salaries in 2019 less attractive. Also, personal bonuses for teacher wages are endangered by the expiration of credits gathered within in-service training and due to the new in-service training model.

In October 2019, the government approved a further 10% increase in salaries for all staff in the education sector, effective from 1 January 2020. Over the last four years, salaries have been increased cumulatively by 36%. Nevertheless, they are likely only to reach 70% of the earnings of university graduates in 2020, according to the education ministry estimate.

### **2020 Implementation**

Although, the new government coalition, elected on 21 March 2020, had envisaged a further increase in educators' salaries, the COVID-19 pandemic put this plan in doubt. According to the 2020 Government Manifesto, salary increases in the education sector are subject to budget availability.

A policy change is being promoted by the education ministry. Instead of a flat rate increase in wages, schools will be given additional means for bonuses to be paid based on specific criteria set by the ministry.

The economic slowdown caused by the pandemic stopped investment in wages in 2020. Nevertheless, the education ministry confirmed that 6% of the total wage bill will be offered for benefits, with no change in tariff wages. Further, an additional benefit is under discussion to compensate for the higher living costs of pedagogical staff across the country. EUR 100 million is earmarked for both measures to be implemented in 2021.

### **2021 Implementation**

Salary growth as a percentage of the tariff wages was not implemented in 2021. EUR 100 bonuses for pandemic-related challenges were paid in December 2021, and EUR 350 were paid in January 2022 for teachers and for all State administration employees as a component of December 2021 salaries, resulting from a collective bargaining agreement. However, all investments in bonuses were lower than the announced EUR 100 million. Valorisation of salaries by 3% is agreed from 1 July 2022: after 2 years of frozen tariff wages, this increase is considered insufficient. Therefore, the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science announced the threat of a strike.

The Declaration 2021 initiated by the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science, and supported by the major organisations operating in education from kindergarten to higher education, was signed on 3 November 2021. It also contains the requirement to return to a 10% annual increase, as offered in the past.

### **2022 Implementation**

From January 2022, the tariff wage of novice teachers is EUR 915 plus a mandatory bonus of EUR 55. The shortest time to reach the highest career level and a top basic tariff wage of EUR 1 251.50 is after eleven years of practice (and passing the second attestation examination). The basic tariff wage also increases after every year of practice. The maximum tariff wage of teachers after 40 years of practice is EUR 1 477, adding EUR 225 to the basic tariff salary of EUR 1 251. Additional bonuses depend on staff performance and the possibilities of the school budget.

The Declaration 2021 was not accepted. On 15 June 2022, teachers and other school

staff protested for higher salaries in Bratislava criticising the government and coalition parties for not fulfilling their commitments and the government manifesto to raise teachers' salaries and calling for a 10%, not 3%, increase in tariff salaries from 1 July 2022, as previously offered by the government. As a consequence of the threat of a strike in September 2022, improvement was agreed upon as follows:

- (a) valorisation by 3% from July 2022 and a one-time bonus of EUR 500 in 2022;
- (b) further valorisation by 10% and 12% from January and September 2023, respectively.

It is slightly more compared to other public employees including non-pedagogical staff in schools with a 7% and 10% increase, respectively. The newly achieved collective agreement is valid until 31 August 2024. It is more favourable compared to the original proposals of the government of 3.5% and 5% for the same period. Despite substantial improvement, real wages of teachers and other school staff declined as a consequence of high inflation of 12.8% in 2022, according to the Statistical Office.

### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, the newly elected government confirmed its commitment to increasing teachers' remuneration but did not specify the exact amount. Instead of a tariff-based increase applicable to all equally, a so-called 'regional contribution', proposed by the Education Policy Institute, was discussed to compensate teachers for differing living costs across regions. Although trade unions welcomed the increase in remuneration, they criticised the very concept of 'regional contributions' as unfair, arguing that it does not reflect all factors affecting living costs and only applies to part of the school staff. Finally, the education ministry decided to pay all pedagogical and professional staff the contribution, allocating a total of EUR 60 million in 2024. The amount of contributions is determined based on a comparison of the salaries of pedagogical and professional staff with the average salaries of tertiary-educated employees in respective regions. It aims to mitigate this difference and ranges from EUR 30 to EUR 145 monthly, paid in three instalments.

### **2024 Implementation**

'Regional contributions' were paid in 2024 in three instalments via municipalities and self-governing regions that received from the State budget about EUR 20 million in total per instalment. During the collective bargaining, trade unions requested a salary increase of 10% from September 2024, followed by an additional 10% in 2025. The government confirmed its commitment to annual wage growth for teachers and other school employees, but, even after the fourth round of negotiations, its offer fell short of trade unions' expectations. The government proposed a one-time contribution of EUR 800 for 2025 and a 5% wage increase from January 2026. Trade unions therefore decided not to sign the collective agreement of a higher level and are considering a strike. The education ministry announced its readiness to negotiate alternative proposals to improve salaries, however, limited by consolidation measures applied for the 2025 State budget.

### **2025 Implementation**

In June 2025, teachers and trainers received EUR 800 as a single payment valid for all public employees. Furthermore, a 7% increase in statutory (tariff) salary from September 2025 has been agreed, followed by an additional 5% plus 2% increase from January 2026. It means 7% in 2026, but thereafter, 2% will be bound to teacher performance assessment by the school director. Five assessment categories are envisaged, with the two best levels entitling staff to a mandatory bonus, while the third one will entitle them only in exceptional and well-justified cases. As a consequence of the finance ministry's pressure to cofinance salary increases from the education ministry's institutional budget, the regional salary contribution system, introduced two years ago, has been abolished.

In 2025, some contributions to mitigate non-competitive salaries of pedagogical and

professional staff compared to the salaries of tertiary-educated employees are available only for staff in districts of the Bratislava region, the Trnava district, and the Košice city. Compared to regional contributions, the support is district-based, and only few districts qualify for support. They were identified as the most critical from the point of view of the highest share of vacant jobs, the highest share of teachers leaving the profession, and an average salary lower than 80% of the average of tertiary educated employees. The contribution varies from EUR 60 to EUR 130.

Since September, the starting statutory (tariff) salary of a teacher has been EUR 1 240. Thus, even after the 7% increase from January 2026, it will remain uncompetitive. Education at a glance 2025 data indicate a warning decrease in the share of teachers below 30 years of age from 16.1% in 2008 to 7.2% in 2024. In VET, non-competitive salaries and a shortage of teachers are compensated by efforts to attract practitioners as part-time teachers.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

## Target group

### Education professionals

Teachers  
Trainers  
School leaders

## Thematic categories

### Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic 2016 \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Act No 553/2003 on remuneration of certain employees in the work of public interest](#)

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[Education Policy Institute \(2019\). Analysis of data from the Slovak Chamber of Teachers report on the social and economic status of educators \(in Slovak\) \[Analyza udajov zo Spravy SKU o spoločenskom a ekonomickom postavení pedagógov v regionálnom s](#)

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[Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic 2020-24 \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Declaration 2021 \(published in Slovak in the trade union's magazine News from Union, December 2021, pp. 7-8\)](#)

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[Government manifesto 2023-27 \(in Slovak\)](#)

## Related policy developments

## National programme for the development of education

On 27 June 2018, the government approved the National programme for the development of education (NPDE). The NPDE was adopted, with 106 measures to be fulfilled until 2027. Some measures related to regional schooling and higher education are relevant also to VET.

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### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

### “ ... ” Cite as

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