Actions preventing intolerance

POLICY DEVELOPMENT | PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE | SLOVAKIA

Timeline

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

ID number 28576

Background

The increased intolerance visible on social networks and media portals, as well as in teaching staff reports, demands measures aimed at fighting intolerance.

Objectives

Annual regulations for directors of schools and school establishments, and a special grant scheme of the education ministry, are targeting prevention of intolerance.

Description

In 2016/17, in response to signs of increasing intolerance in the European Union, secondary education national curricula were supplemented by a document for teachers and counselling staff on how to prevent racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and extremism.

A review of national curricula and textbooks concerning human rights and democratic citizenship education was initiated by the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for human rights, national minorities and gender equity as of 2016. The State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) analysed all textbooks in secondary VET and, although it found adequate reflection on the topic, competence development may need more attention. The State School Inspectorate findings indicated the need for further intervention. 19 recommendations address school directors, including the need to assign a coordinator for human rights in schools, strengthening critical thinking development related to democratic citizenship and human rights in school curricula, and supporting non-formal and informal learning opportunities for developing relevant competences and value. The inspectorate also issued one recommendation to the education ministry: to promote more strongly respect for human rights and democratic values.

In December 2018, the first meeting of the committee for children and youth of the Government Council for human rights, national minorities and gender equity was held to discuss preparation of the national action plan for children that should replace that for 2013-17.

12 projects (two prepared by VET schools) with a total allocation of EUR 20 790 were supported by the education ministry in 2017 within the grant scheme Regional and multicultural education of minority learners, aiming to develop specific social and civic competences. 10 projects (of which four prepared by VET schools) with a total allocation of EUR 15 250 were supported in 2018.

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

According to the education ministry annual regulations (presented in Pedagogical-organisational instructions 2019/20), schools are obliged to incorporate into the school curriculum cross-cutting issues related to multicultural education, humanism education and human rights education, the rights of the child, the rights of persons with disabilities, equality between men and women, prevention of all forms of discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance, extremism, and hate speech. For anti-discrimination measures, schools are advised to spread the idea of tolerance, acceptance of differences and improve attitudes towards disadvantaged groups of the population, eliminate intolerance and hate speech. The inspectorate found signs that schools do not always cooperate smoothly with specialists while elaborating the desegregation plan and incorporating it into school curricula.

Within the grant scheme Regional and multicultural education of minority learners, 16 projects (one prepared by a VET school) with a total allocation of EUR 28 000 were supported in 2019.

In 2019, the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information published the results of the 2018 research performed among lower and upper secondary students focused on their perception, awareness of and personal experience with extremism, as well as their views concerning terrorism. It was a follow-up to the 2010 and 2016 research activities addressing intolerance, violence, and extremism. The results confirmed extremism to be a serious social-pathological phenomenon in the school environment. Recommendations include 'to pay attention to the effective and efficient prevention of extremism and radicalism, significantly increase young people's awareness on these negative phenomena, and to try to eliminate the factors causing them'. In the context of multicultural education, the research recommends 'to provide students with knowledge about democracy, tolerance, respect for other cultures and to teach them to respect human rights'.

Also, in 2019, the National strategy for the protection of children against violence was updated.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, in line with the National strategy for the protection of children against violence, the National concept paper and action plan for the protection of children in the digital space for 2020-21 were approved by the Government. The action plan has three horizontal priorities (institutionalisation, training specialists and research, and privacy and data protection) and three types of measure (prevention, intervention, remedy). As part of the concept paper, a campaign on protection of children and the young in the digital space took place, developing five videos. Since 31 March 2020, the fulfilment of government tasks for the protection of children is monitored annually by the National coordination centre for child violence.

2021 Implementation

In June 2021, the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children at the labour ministry, in cooperation with the Catholic University of Ružomberok, conducted the Research on experiences and behaviour of children and

young people in Slovakia during the pandemic (1 423 respondent 9-17-year-olds). The research indicated that the digital space is a dangerous environment for children, if a parent does not control the Internet and the use of technology. The EU Kids online survey data showed that, during the pandemic the incidence of bullying increased from 6% to 26%, and encountering harmful sexual content increased from 30.1% to 61% compared to 2018 survey data (969 respondent 9-17-year-olds).

The prevention of intolerance is reflected in the annual regulations of the education ministry published in the school year guide for 2021/22 (formerly known as pedagogical-organisational instructions) in the chapters Children's rights and Security and prevention, with links to helplines and methodological materials.

Within the framework of the education ministry's grant scheme focusing on multicultural education of minority learners, 29 projects (one project prepared by a VET school) were supported in 2021 for a total amount of EUR 45 000.

Improvement is also expected from 40 new regional centres that are in the process of establishment, co-funded by the National recovery and resilience plan to support curriculum reform. Mentors from these centres should support the translation child protection and intolerance prevention principles (in particular in the digital space) into classroom practice.

On 19 November 2021 - the World day for prevention of child abuse - the 8th annual event *Bubnovacka* (Drumming) was held in Slovakia to 'hear the kids better' and to break the silence often covering violence against children. In November, the National Coordination Centre organised online discussions on 'Do you know what your children are fed in the online space?' and 'You do not have to bear the burden of the violence you have experienced yourself'.

On 14 December 2021, the government approved a report on fulfilling objectives and measures of the National concept paper for the protection of children in the digital space and the Action plan for 2020-21. It contains detailed information on relevant actions organised by a broad range of key actors, including activities for learners and pedagogues.

2022 Implementation

On 8 June 2022, the Government approved the Action plan for the protection of children in the digital space for 2022-23 structured as the previous action plan to address three horizontal priorities (institutionalisation; training specialists and research; and privacy and data protection) and three types of measures (prevention, intervention, remedy). No timelines and costs are specified. The action plan dominantly focuses on strengthening institutionalisation and governance. In the digital space the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children is the coordination unit in the field of child protection. Slovakia re-enters the INHOPE and Insafe networks to draw from the European experience, inter alia with the creation and functioning of a Safe Internet Centre.

In response to the National recovery and resilience plan, the definition of school segregation was embedded in a draft amendment to the Education act (245/2008) submitted for discussion in August 2022, which also has a crucial impact on the prevention of intolerance, fuelled by a biased social environment. Opponents suggest embedding the definition of segregation in the anti-discrimination act as lex generalis rather than the education act to achieve a stronger and overarching effect.

Chapter 5 of the 2022/23 school year guide summarises regulations and recommendations for school directors concerning human rights and intolerance prevention.

Within the framework of the education ministry's grant scheme focusing on multicultural education of minority learners, 30 projects (three projects prepared by VET schools and two by conservatories) were supported in 2022 with a total of EUR 53 000.

> ### 2023 Implementation
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> Chapter 7 of the 2023/24 school year guide summarises regulations and recommendations for school directors concerning human rights and intolerance prevention. The education ministry approved a catalogue of 21 support measures, effective from 1 September 2023, among which the prevention of risky behaviour was explicitly named. An accompanying document to this preventive measure was elaborated to inform schools about strategic documents, relevant projects, initiatives and resources. This document offered broader guidance than the previous school year guide.

> ### 2024 Implementation
>
> In 2024, the education ministry incorporated feedback from practitioners into a revised catalogue of support measures. The updated version was approved and took effect on 1 September 2024. The accompanying document from 2023, titled 'Prevention to support physical health, mental health and prevention of risky behaviour' remained valid. It replaced and expanded information previously included in the school year guide.
>
> The rise in risky behaviour in cyberspace has become a serious concern. While safeguarding critical digital infrastructure remains a long-term concern, protecting children and youth from harmful online incidents has emerged as a critical issue. Computer Security Incident Response Team Slovakia (CSIRT.SK), a government unit under the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation (MIRRI), launched a large-scale information campaign about threats by cyber crimes to raise awareness among schools and young people, particularly targeting girls in upper secondary education.
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> In November, VET schools received detailed updates on statistics showing an increasing number of cyber incidents, types of cyber security threats and available preventive measures. These updates included information on education opportunities offered by CSIRT.SK and on benefits of registration for the free Achilles vulnerability management system. Registered schools gain access to information about vulnerabilities identified from the perspective of a simulated internet attacker. The system's Domino module also monitors publicly available web services, serving as an early detection system for distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks. Educational activities aim to prevent not only technological risks but also behavioural crimes that pose a very serious threat to the healthy development of young people.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equity
- State School Inspectorate
- Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Acquiring key competences

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

Pedagogical-organisational instructions 2019/20 (in Slovak)

National concept paper for the protection of children in the digital space and the Action plan for this National concept paper for 2020-21 (in Slovak)

Fulfilment of government tasks for the protection of children (in Slovak)

Pétiová, M. (2019). Results of the research among lower and upper secondary students [Názory žiakov základných a stredných škôl na prejavy extrémizmu a ich pohlad na terorizmus]

Research on the experience and behaviour of children and youth in Slovakia during a pandemic (in Slovak)

EU kids online IV in Slovakia research report (in Slovak)

Report on fulfilling objectives and measures of the National concept paper for the protection of children in the digital space and the Action plan for 2020-21 (in Slovak)

School year guide 2021/22 (in Slovak)

Proposal for a Council implementing decision on the approval of the assessment of the National recovery and resilience plan of the Slovak Republic

The National recovery and resilience plan of the Slovak Republic summary of reforms and investments

Action plan for the protection of children in the digital space for 2022-23 (in Slovak)

School year guide 2022/23 (in Slovak)

[School year guide 2023/24 (in Slovak)](#)

[Prevention to support physical health, mental health and prevention of risky behaviour in school: an accompanying document to the preventive measure (in Slovak)](#)

[A catalogue of support measures 2024 (in Slovak)](#)

[Computer Security Incident Response Team Slovakia website](#)

Related policy developments

2024 **Implementation**

National recovery and resilience plan

The National recovery and resilience plan sets out a package of reforms and public investments to be implemented by 2026.

SLOVAKIA

Type of development
Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem
IVET CVET

2024 **Implementation**

Supporting teachers in their work with disadvantaged learners

For a long time ESF projects have been crucial in promoting teachers' in-service training regarding assisting disadvantaged learners, including Roma. In 2017, the implementation of the ESF 'Open school for all' project gave a new impulse to this effort.

SLOVAKIA

Type of development
Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem
IVET CVET

❝ ••• ❞ **Cite as**

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https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-

europe/search/28576