

MIGRATION IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract

Slovakia is not one of the traditional destination countries for migrants. It is a culturally homogeneous country that was not affected by the dramatic increase in migration during the 20th century. Until recently, the Slovak Republic was almost exclusively a country of origin for migrants, i.e. a country from which citizens migrated abroad for various reasons. More significant changes were brought about only after Slovakia joined the European Union and the Schengen area. Foreigners today make up 5.13 percent of the population in the Slovak Republic and their number is slowly but continuously growing. The aim of the paper is to analyze the number of migrants in the Slovak Republic in terms of nationality, age and gender. The results of the survey showed that most immigrants to Slovakia come from Europe, from neighboring countries, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Poland. From countries outside the EU, in addition to Ukraine, they come from Serbia, for example. In terms of age, the most migrating people are in the age structure between 35 - 40 years old. In terms of gender, the representation of men and women is approximately at the same level. In conclusion, it can be stated that the reasons for migration from/to Slovakia are primarily economic and social factors.

Keywords: migration, Slovakia, migration policy, factors of migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that affects both the individuals who migrate and the societies they leave behind or join. One of the key characteristics of migration is that it is driven by a variety of causes. These include *push factors*, like unemployment, poverty, conflict, or environmental disasters, which drive people to leave their homes. On the other hand, there are *pull factors*, such as better economic opportunities, improved living conditions, political freedom, or education, which attract people to new places. The interplay of these factors determines the patterns and destinations of migration.

Another significant characteristic of migration is the *distance* and *mobility* involved. People may migrate over *short distances*, often moving within the same country or region, seeking work or a better life. In other cases, migration can be over *long distances*, involving movement across countries or continents. Long-distance migration is often motivated by opportunities for work, safety, or improved living standards.

The duration of migration also varies. Some people may migrate temporarily, such as for seasonal work, education, or a specific project, while others may migrate permanently, settling in a new place and establishing a new home. This permanent migration can involve entire families, or it may start with one person moving, with others following later.

Migration is also influenced by *demographic factors*, such as *age*, *gender*, and *family status*. Young people, particularly those seeking employment or educational opportunities, are often the most mobile. However, older individuals may also migrate, usually for retirement, to be closer to family, or for medical reasons. Migration patterns can also differ between men and women due to social, economic, and safety considerations. In some cases, migration happens as a family unit, where all members move together, while in other instances, an individual may move first for work or safety, and their family may follow at a later time.

The *volition* of migration also plays a critical role. Some migrations are *voluntary*, where individuals or families choose to move to improve their lives or seek new opportunities. Others are *forced migrations*, driven by necessity due to factors like war, persecution, or natural disasters. These involuntary

movements can be traumatic and pose significant challenges for both the migrants and the receiving societies.

The *legal status* of migrants can vary greatly, with some individuals moving with the proper documentation, such as visas or work permits, while others migrate without legal permission, often due to the lack of opportunities in their home countries or the difficulties of navigating legal processes. *Undocumented migration* can lead to significant challenges for migrants, including the threat of deportation, exploitation, or limited access to services in the host country.

Migration also has significant *economic* impacts. *Labor migration* is one of the most common forms, as people move to fill gaps in labor markets, particularly in sectors like agriculture, healthcare, construction, and hospitality. This migration benefits the destination area by meeting labor demands, but it can also result in *remittances*, where migrants send money back to their families in their home countries. These remittances often play a crucial role in the economy of the origin region.

On a *social and cultural level*, migration can lead to the exchange and blending of cultures, languages, and traditions, which enriches the societies involved. However, it can also create challenges, such as the need for integration and overcoming cultural differences. The development of *social networks* plays a role in migration, as people often move to places where they have family or community ties, which can make the transition easier.

Finally, migration has varying *impacts* on both the *destination* and *origin*. For the destination, migration can bring economic growth, cultural diversity, and innovation, but it can also put pressure on public services, infrastructure, and social systems. For the origin, migration can result in the loss of skilled workers and young people, leading to a phenomenon known as "brain drain." However, the return of migrants and the remittances they send back can also provide economic benefits and contribute to the local development of their home communities.

In sum, migration is not just about moving from one place to another—it's a deeply transformative process that involves personal decisions, demographic trends, legal frameworks, and broader social, economic, and cultural factors. It shapes the lives of individuals, communities, and entire nations in both immediate and long-term ways.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Materials

Migration theories help explain the complex processes behind why people move and how migration patterns form. Several theoretical frameworks have been developed over the years, each offering a different perspective on the causes, processes, and consequences of migration. Migration theories seek to understand the reasoning behind and motivations for the decisions of individuals and households to move from one location to another – domestically or internationally – as well as the factors that explain the maintenance of migration flows over time. Different theories employ different concepts, assumptions, and frames of reference depending on their discipline of origin and the time in which they were formulated.

From the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, we can find the forefathers of migration studies. Important antecedents such as 'The Laws of Migration' by Ravenstein (1885-1889) or the 'The Polish peasant in Europe and America' (1918-1920) by Thomas and Znaniecki set the foundations for later developments in this body of literature. Complementing Ravenstein's Laws, Lee's (1966) work points to life-cycle stages as one of the enduring generalizations of migration. However, these precursors did not strictly propose migration theories (Arango, 2000).

The *Push-Pull Theory* is one of the most widely discussed and simple frameworks for understanding migration. It suggests that migration occurs because of a combination of *push factors* and *pull factors*. *Push factors* refer to the conditions or circumstances that make people want to leave their home country or region. These can include economic hardship, lack of opportunities, political instability, conflict, or environmental disasters. On the other hand, pull factors are the positive aspects of the destination that

attract migrants. These include better job opportunities, safety, political stability, improved quality of life, and access to better education or healthcare. This theory has been useful for explaining migration from underdeveloped or conflict-ridden regions to more developed areas. However, critics argue that it oversimplifies migration and doesn't fully account for the role of individual choices, social networks, or historical context (Lee, 1966).

The *Neoclassical Economic Theory* focuses on the idea that migration is primarily driven by economic factors. It posits that people move in search of better economic opportunities, typically to areas where wages and employment prospects are higher. According to this theory, migration occurs when there is an imbalance in labor supply and demand between regions, often between countries with differing levels of economic development. This theory assumes that individuals make rational decisions based on economic cost-benefit analyses. It suggests that people will migrate from regions with low wages and high unemployment to regions with high wages and better job opportunities. While this theory has been influential in explaining labor migration, it is criticized for being overly simplistic and not taking into account non-economic factors, such as social networks, political conditions, and cultural influences (Massey et al., 1993).

The *Migration Systems Theory* suggests that migration is not just a one-way process but a system of interrelated movements between countries or regions. According to this theory, historical, political, economic, and social ties between countries shape migration patterns. Migrant networks play a key role, as individuals are often influenced by family members, friends, and community connections who have already migrated to a particular destination. In this theory, migration is seen as a dynamic process that is not just driven by the economic conditions of the origin and destination countries, but also by past migration flows, colonial history, and existing social and cultural links. Migration systems theory emphasizes that migration patterns tend to be sustained and reinforced by these networks, creating a "path dependency" where certain areas attract more migrants due to existing migration flows (De Haas, 2010).

The *World-Systems Theory*, developed by sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, views migration as part of a larger global system of economic and political inequalities. According to this theory, migration is a consequence of the unequal development between the "core" (wealthy, industrialized nations) and the "periphery" (poorer, less-developed regions). People in peripheral regions are often pushed to migrate to core countries in search of better living standards and economic opportunities. This theory highlights the global structure of capitalism and its role in creating migration flows. The World-Systems Theory argues that migration from poorer countries to wealthier ones is not just an individual choice, but a result of historical exploitation and the global division of labor. It emphasizes that migration is a symptom of global inequalities and cannot be understood without considering the broader global economic system (Portes and Walton 1981; Sassen 1988).

The *Social Network Theory* emphasizes the importance of social connections in migration. It argues that migrants often choose destinations based on the presence of family, friends, or community members who have already migrated. These social networks reduce the costs and risks associated with migration by providing emotional, financial, and logistical support. Migrants are more likely to move to places where they have pre-existing ties because these networks make it easier to integrate and find employment or housing. According to this theory, migration is not just an individual decision but a social process that is shaped by relationships and networks. Over time, these social networks grow, leading to migration chains where each new migrant helps bring others from the same origin community, reinforcing migration patterns to certain regions (Arango, 2000).

The *Dual Labor Market Theory* suggests that migration is driven by the demand for labor in certain sectors of the economy, particularly low-wage, low-skill jobs in industrialized countries. According to this theory, advanced economies have two distinct labor markets: a primary sector (high-skill, high-wage jobs) and a secondary sector (low-skill, low-wage jobs). While native workers tend to avoid the secondary labor market, immigrants are often willing to take these jobs, creating a demand for migrant labor. This theory focuses on the role of labor market segmentation and how migrants are often drawn to the lower-wage, less desirable jobs that native workers are unwilling to fill. It is particularly useful

for understanding migration to developed countries, where many immigrants take jobs in agriculture, construction, service industries, and other low-wage sectors (Warnes and Williams, 2006).

The *Cumulative Causation Theory*, proposed by sociologist Douglas Massey, suggests that migration patterns tend to become self-reinforcing over time. As more people from a particular area migrate to a new destination, they create social, economic, and cultural conditions that make it easier for subsequent migrants to follow. These conditions include established migrant networks, lower migration costs, and an increased demand for labor in the destination area. This theory suggests that migration does not stop once a certain number of people have moved; instead, it creates a cycle that leads to even more migration. As more people migrate, the flow becomes more organized and entrenched, with new migrants relying on established networks to ease their transition into the destination (Massey, 1990).

The *Feminist Theory of Migration* focuses on the gendered dimensions of migration, emphasizing that migration is not just a neutral, individual decision but one that is shaped by gender roles, expectations, and inequalities. Women and men often experience migration in very different ways due to societal expectations and the roles they play in both the home and destination countries. This theory examines how women migrants may face additional barriers, such as discrimination, exploitation, and limited economic opportunities, while also considering how migration can empower women by offering more freedom and autonomy. The feminist perspective also highlights the impact of gender on the types of work that migrants do, with women often taking on jobs in domestic work, care work, and the service industry (Altamirano, 1997).

These migration theories offer different perspectives and explanations for why migration occurs and how it affects both migrants and the societies they move to. Each theory provides valuable insights into different aspects of migration, but they also complement each other in understanding the complexities of migration flows in a globalized world.

2.2. Methods

We used several scientific methods in the creation of the paper. We used in theoretic basic available literature domestic and foreign sources. The most used methods were analysis and selection, which we used in the theoretical and practical part of the processed data. Information was drawn mainly from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Eurostat and IOM.

The methods used in migration - whether legal channels, irregular routes, or forced displacement - deeply influence the outcomes migrants experience in terms of integration, legal protection, social status, and long-term well-being. In Slovakia, as in other European countries, the migration method determines not only who can enter and stay, but also what rights they have once there, and how successfully they integrate into society.

When migrants arrive through regular and legal channels, such as employment visas, study permits, or family reunification, they tend to have better long-term results. These legal routes usually involve planning, official documentation, and alignment with Slovakia's immigration policies. Migrants using these methods often benefit from access to healthcare, education, work rights, and in some cases, pathways to permanent residence or citizenship.

In contrast, migrants arriving through irregular or undocumented routes—such as overstaying a visa or entering without authorization—face major disadvantages. They are often excluded from legal employment and are more vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and deportation. Their legal status is uncertain, which affects their access to housing, healthcare, or social support. Even when migrants in this category find work, it is typically informal, insecure, and underpaid. These challenges can lead to marginalization and poor integration outcomes, both socially and economically.

Additionally, migration method influences public perception and policy response. Migrants who arrive legally and visibly contribute to the economy tend to be more accepted socially. On the other hand, those perceived as irregular or "uninvited" may be met with suspicion or hostility, regardless of their personal circumstances.

In summary, the method by which migrants arrive in Slovakia strongly affects their experience and outcomes. Legal migration paths usually lead to more stable, integrated, and successful lives, while irregular or forced methods often result in insecurity, limited rights, and greater obstacles to inclusion. These differences highlight the importance of accessible, fair, and humane migration policies to ensure positive results for both migrants and host societies.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Facts about Slovakia

Slovakia's central location in Central Europe makes it an ideal destination for migrants, especially from neighboring countries. It shares borders with Poland, Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, and Ukraine. This geographical positioning makes it easier for people from these countries to migrate. Many migrants from neighboring countries, like Czech Republic and Poland, have historically moved to Slovakia in search of better job opportunities. These countries share historical, cultural, and linguistic ties with Slovakia, making the migration process smoother for individuals looking for work or educational opportunities. Due to its proximity to Ukraine and the ongoing political turmoil there, Slovakia has become a key destination for Ukrainian migrants. Ukraine's proximity and the shared Slavic culture, along with the visa-free access to Slovakia within the EU framework, make it a natural destination for both temporary and permanent migration.

Slovakia's membership in the European Union since 2004 has been a significant factor in its increasing attractiveness as a destination for migrants, particularly from other EU countries. The *Schengen Area* agreement, which allows for border-free travel between most EU states, also makes Slovakia a key destination for EU citizens seeking better job opportunities or quality of life. Citizens of EU countries can easily move to Slovakia for work or study without needing a visa, and Slovakia benefits from the free movement of labor within the EU. For instance, people from Poland and Hungary migrate to Slovakia to work in various sectors, including construction, manufacturing, and services. EU migrants benefit from the ability to access Slovakia's social services, including healthcare and education, often with fewer bureaucratic hurdles compared to non-EU migrants. This ease of access makes Slovakia an attractive destination for citizens of other EU countries seeking a better standard of living.

3.2. Migration in Slovakia

As of the latest estimates, Slovakia has seen a steady rise in the number of migrants over recent years, although it remains relatively homogenous compared to other European nations. The foreign-born population in Slovakia is estimated to be about 5% of the total population, which is around 300,000 people out of the country's 5.4 million residents. The influx of migrants has been influenced by a variety of factors, including economic opportunities and Slovakia's position within the European Union.

A significant portion of these migrants come from neighboring countries, particularly from within the European Union. Citizens from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ukraine, and Poland make up a large proportion of the migrant population in Slovakia. The number of Ukrainian migrants has notably increased in recent years, partly due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, leading to an uptick in refugee and asylum-seeking populations in Slovakia.

While Slovakia is part of the European Union's broader migration framework, it has one of the lowest numbers of refugees and asylum seekers compared to other EU countries. The country has faced challenges in integrating migrants, particularly those from the Middle East or Africa, who often seek refuge in other EU states with more established support systems for refugees.

The country's economic landscape plays a large role in attracting foreign workers, particularly in the manufacturing and service sectors. The automotive and electronics industries, for instance, have drawn migrants from neighboring countries looking for job opportunities. Moreover, the lower cost of living in Slovakia compared to Western Europe makes it an attractive destination for individuals seeking work or a more affordable lifestyle.

Despite being less diverse than some other European nations, Slovakia has gradually become a more prominent destination for people from both EU and non-EU countries, and migration patterns in the country continue to evolve. The integration of these migrants into Slovak society remains an ongoing challenge, but it's also an opportunity to diversify the country's labor force and cultural landscape.

Reason for Migration	Explanation
Economic Opportunities	- Availability of jobs, particularly in manufacturing, automotive, and electronics industries. - Higher wages compared to some neighboring countries like Ukraine and Bulgaria.
Political Stability & Safety	- Slovakia's stable political environment and high safety levels. - Attracts refugees and asylum seekers from conflict zones, like Ukraine and Syria.
Geographical Proximity	- Central location in Central Europe and close to countries like Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, and Austria. - Easy access for migrants from neighboring regions.
EU Membership & Free Movement	- As EU member, Slovakia allows free movement for EU citizens to live and work without restrictions. - Access to EU benefits such as social services and healthcare.
Educational Opportunities	- Affordable, high-quality education. - Attracts students from neighboring countries, like Ukraine and Serbia, and other regions for higher education opportunities.
Cultural & Historical Ties	- Shared cultural and historical connections, especially with Czech Republic, Poland, Serbia, and Ukraine. - Migrants from these regions have linguistic and cultural similarities.
Quality of Life	- Affordable living costs compared to Western Europe. - High standard of living, good healthcare, and beautiful natural landscapes.
Family Reunification	- Migrants often come to join family members already residing in Slovakia. - Slovak immigration laws support family reunification, especially for EU citizens.

Table 1. Reasons for migration to Slovakia

Source: own processing

3.3. Factors of migration in Slovak Republic

Migration to Slovakia has been influenced by a variety of *economic, social, political, and geopolitical* factors. The country's transition from a post-communist state to a modern, EU-integrated economy has created a dynamic environment that attracts a diverse range of migrants.

One of the primary driving forces for migration to Slovakia is the *economic opportunities* available, particularly in sectors where there is a demand for labor. Over the past few decades, Slovakia has seen significant economic growth, and its integration into the European Union has further bolstered this

development. Slovakia's economy has undergone rapid industrialization, especially in *manufacturing*, *automotive*, and *electronics* sectors. Major international companies like *Volkswagen*, *Peugeot*, and *Kia Motors* have set up plants in Slovakia, creating a demand for labor, particularly in low- and medium-skill jobs. Migrants, particularly from neighboring countries like *Ukraine*, *Hungary*, and *Poland*, come to fill these labor gaps. Although wages in Slovakia are still lower compared to Western Europe, they are often higher than those in neighboring countries, especially for lower-skilled work. For instance, people from Ukraine and Bulgaria are often attracted to Slovakia for its relatively better wage opportunities, especially in industries like construction, agriculture, and manufacturing. Slovakia's favorable business environment, especially after it became an EU member, has made it an attractive place for entrepreneurs and investors. The country offers low taxes and incentives for businesses, particularly in the IT and high-tech sectors, drawing both foreign nationals and return migrants seeking to start new ventures.

Slovakia is considered a politically stable country with a relatively high level of security compared to other regions. Since the Velvet Revolution of 1989 and the subsequent peaceful split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, Slovakia has remained free from internal conflict and has made significant strides in democratization and human rights protections. This stability is a major pull factor for people from regions that are experiencing political unrest, war, or poor governance. Slovakia, like other EU nations, has provided asylum to refugees, particularly in times of regional conflict. For example, with the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, Slovakia has seen a significant influx of refugees fleeing from conflict zones. Similarly, people from the Middle East, such as *Syrians* and *Afghans*, have sought asylum in Slovakia, attracted by the country's safety and the EU's asylum system. Being part of the European Union gives Slovakia not only political stability but also access to the EU's open borders policy. This allows citizens from EU member states to freely move, work, and reside in Slovakia, making it an attractive destination for people from other EU countries seeking better opportunities.

Year	2000	2022
Migration volume	3 085	9 931
Immigrants	2 274	5 463
Emigrants	811	4 468
Migration balance	1 463	995

Table 2. Comparison of International migration in Slovakia (in persons)

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2023

3.3.1 Migration in terms of nationality and gender

Slovakia is home to a number of reputable universities and educational institutions that attract international students. The country offers affordable tuition fees and a high-quality education system, making it an appealing destination for students from neighboring countries, as well as from countries further afield. Compared to Western European countries, Slovakia offers relatively low-cost higher education, which is especially attractive for students from neighboring countries like Ukraine, Serbia, and Vietnam. Slovak universities have partnerships with other European institutions, providing students with opportunities for exchange programs and higher education mobility. Many students come to Slovakia as part of the EU's Erasmus program or other international initiatives, attracted by the cultural exchange and academic opportunities.

Slovakia's shared history with countries like Czech Republic, Hungary, and Ukraine has facilitated migration, particularly among people with ethnic Slovak backgrounds or shared Slavic roots. Over the years, Slovaks have migrated to different countries, and in some cases, the flow of migrants is reciprocal. Many Slovak emigrants who moved to the West after the country's separation from Czechoslovakia are

now returning to Slovakia. Many people from Ukraine, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Poland have similar cultural and linguistic traits with Slovaks, which can make integration easier and migration more appealing. One of the most notable non-European migrant groups in Slovakia are the Vietnamese, who have a long history of migration to Slovakia dating back to the time of Czechoslovakia. Vietnamese people in Slovakia are mainly involved in small businesses, and their community has been an important part of the country's economic and social life. The table shows from which territories the migrants come to Slovakia, and which countries are also interesting for Slovaks.

Territory	Immigrant men	Evicted men	Immigrant women	Evicted women
Europe	89,18	91,44	88,54	91,42
Africa	0,77	0,26	0,65	0,12
America	4,27	5,95	5,33	6,04
Asia	4,59	1,69	4,72	1,35
Australia and Oceania	1,19	0,67	0,77	1,07

Table 3. Foreign migration to/from the Slovak Republic in 2024 (%)

Source: own processing by data from Statistical Office of the SR, DATAcube

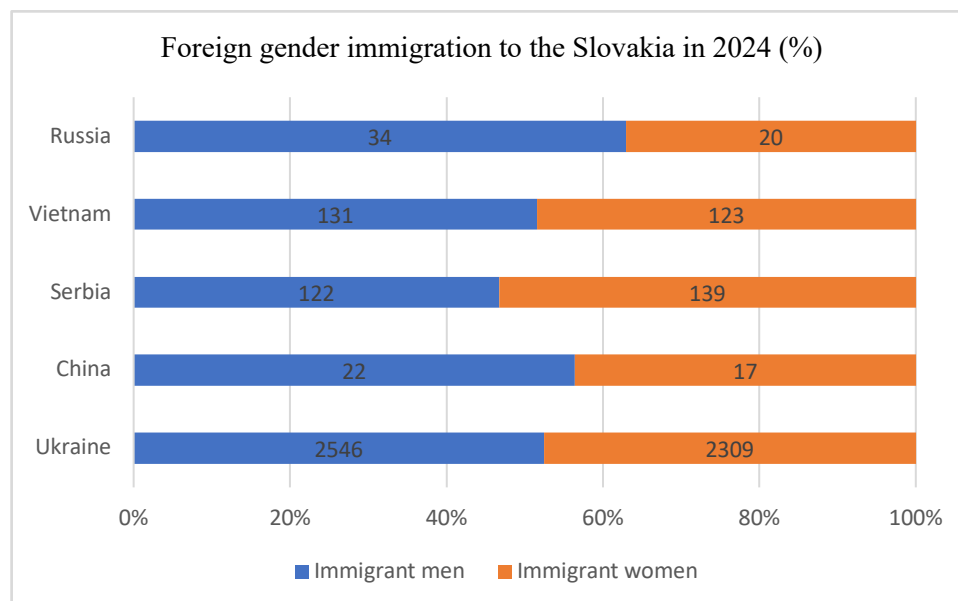


Fig. 1. Foreign gender immigration to the Slovakiac in 2024 (%)

Source: own processing from data Štatistický úrad SR, 2024.

3.3.2 Migration in terms of age

Migrants in Slovakia are generally younger than the native population, with age patterns varying depending on their country of origin. Those arriving from non-EU countries—referred to as third-country nationals—tend to be in the 20 to 34-year-old range. These individuals often migrate for work or education, and their presence has grown, especially since Slovakia became part of the European Union and more recently with migration flows from Ukraine.

In contrast, migrants from within the EU, such as those from the Czech Republic, Hungary, or Romania, are typically older. Their age range commonly falls between 35 and 64. These individuals often come for professional or family-related reasons and are more likely to settle long-term.

Overall, the migrant population in Slovakia remains relatively small—around 4% of the total population—but it is increasing gradually. As Slovakia faces the challenge of an aging native population, with a median age above 40 and low birth rates, younger migrants play an increasingly important role in addressing workforce shortages and supporting demographic balance.

There is limited detailed data on all age categories of migrants—such as children or seniors—but the general trend shows that migration to Slovakia is youth-driven, particularly from non-EU countries.

The age structure of immigrants in Slovakia is not comprehensively detailed in most official publications, but several sources allow us to draw a general picture. In Slovakia, immigrants tend to be younger than the general population, with a large portion falling into the young adult category. Specifically, migrants from outside the European Union—commonly referred to as third-country nationals—are most often between 20 and 34 years of age. This reflects common migration motivations such as employment, study, or short-term labor opportunities.

In contrast, migrants who arrive from other EU countries, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania, are generally older. These individuals are more frequently between the ages of 35 and 64 and often move for professional reasons, family unification, or longer-term settlement. While Slovakia does not publish a full age pyramid for immigrants, migration patterns suggest that these EU migrants are more likely to settle with families and pursue medium to long-term residency, unlike many younger, single third-country nationals.

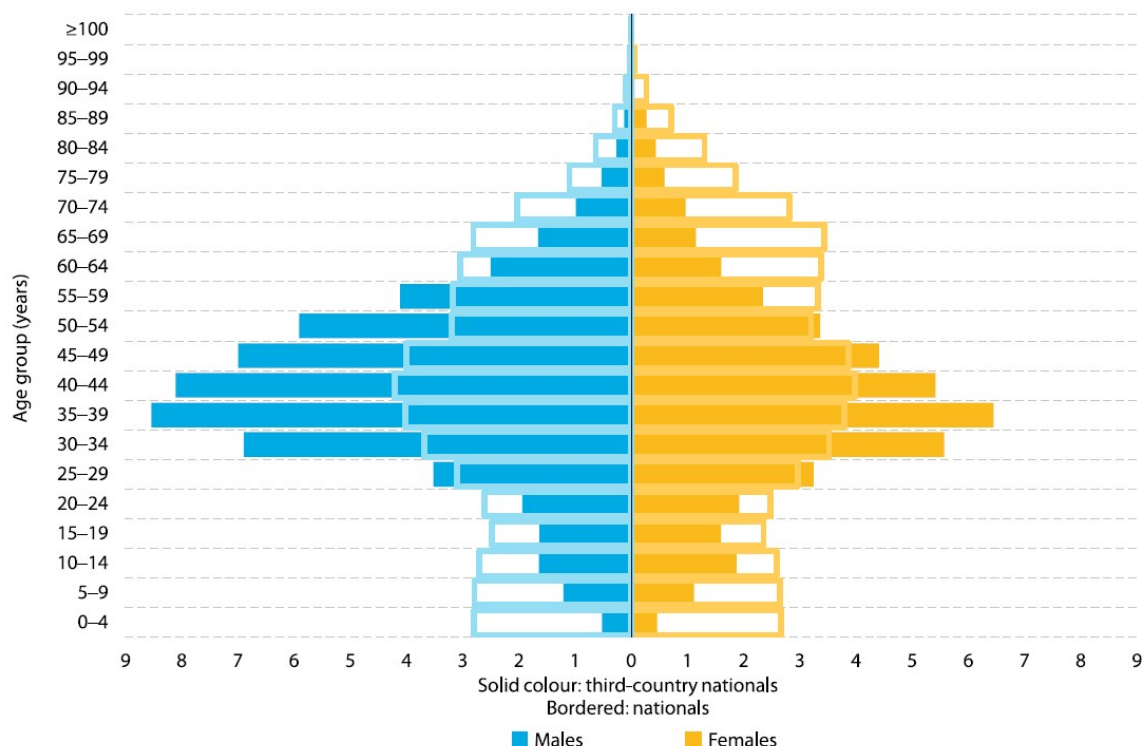


Fig. 2. Age structure of nationals and third-country nationals

Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Return migration data from the International Organization for Migration's voluntary return program offers a rare insight into migrant age demographics. Between 2004 and the end of 2024, nearly half of

all returnees from Slovakia were aged 18 to 30, while about 39% were aged 31 to 50. Only a small portion, around 7%, were minors under 18, and even fewer—just over 5%—were aged over 50. Though this focuses on those returning home rather than staying permanently, it supports the broader pattern of younger age groups dominating Slovakia's migrant profile.

The demographic structure of Slovakia as a whole is aging, with the median age now in the mid-40s and a shrinking proportion of young people. Against this backdrop, the comparatively young age of immigrants helps offset some of the country's demographic pressures, particularly in the labor market. This is especially evident in urban areas like Bratislava, where working-age migrants are helping to meet demand in services, construction, and manufacturing.

In summary, while precise age breakdowns for the entire immigrant population in Slovakia are not systematically published, available data and migration trends point to a predominantly young adult migrant population, especially among those from outside the EU. Older migrants are present, particularly from EU countries, but they represent a smaller share of the overall foreign-born population.

4. DISCUSSION

Slovakia offers a high quality of life at a relatively low cost compared to Western Europe, making it attractive to people seeking an improved standard of living without the high living expenses often found in countries like Germany or Austria. The cost of living in Slovakia, including housing, food, and transportation, is significantly lower than in many Western European countries. This makes it an appealing option for people seeking an affordable yet comfortable lifestyle. Slovakia is known for its beautiful landscapes, including the Carpathian Mountains and numerous national parks. For some, the opportunity to live in a country with such natural beauty, coupled with its small-town charm, is an additional reason for migration.

In many cases, migrants come to Slovakia to join family members who have already established themselves there. Family reunification is a common reason for migration, especially within the EU framework, where policies facilitate the reunification of spouses, children, and other close relatives. Migrants often move to Slovakia when they have family members who have previously settled there, either for work or other reasons. These family networks help to reduce the risks and uncertainties associated with migration, as migrants can rely on family support during their settlement process.

Slovakia's combination of economic growth, political stability, geographical proximity to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and its position within the EU makes it an attractive destination for a diverse range of migrants. Whether it's for better job opportunities, educational pursuits, safety, or family reunification, Slovakia continues to see a steady flow of migrants contributing to its social, cultural, and economic life.

EU Migrants	<i>Labor Migrants:</i> people from countries like the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Romania move to Slovakia to fill job vacancies, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and services.	<i>Students:</i> The relatively affordable cost of education and good academic programs also attract students from neighboring EU countries.	<i>Retirees:</i> Some retirees from wealthier EU countries may choose to settle in Slovakia due to its lower cost of living and good healthcare system.
Non-EU Migrants	<i>Labor Migrants:</i> These migrants often come from countries like <i>Ukraine, Vietnam, Serbia,</i> and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many non-EU workers are employed in manual labor, agriculture, and construction sectors.	<i>Students:</i> Many students from countries outside the EU, such as <i>Ukraine, Serbia,</i> and Vietnam, come to Slovakia to pursue higher education at affordable tuition fees. The educational opportunities offered by Slovak universities attract international students seeking quality education in a cost-effective environment.	<i>Refugees and Asylum Seekers:</i> Slovakia, like other EU countries, has a responsibility to accept refugees and asylum seekers under international law. The number of Syrian, Afghan, and African refugees arriving in Slovakia has been modest compared to other European countries, but the country has received a notable number of Ukrainian refugees due to the ongoing war.

Table 4. Selected types of migrants in Slovakia

Source: own processing

5. CONCLUSION

Until recently, the Slovak Republic was almost exclusively a country of origin for migrants, i.e. a country from which citizens migrated abroad for various reasons. The aim of the paper was to analyze the number of migrants in the Slovak Republic in terms of nationality, age and gender. The results of the survey showed that most immigrants to Slovakia come from neighboring countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Poland. From countries outside the EU, in addition to Ukraine, they come from Serbia, for example. In terms of age, the most migrating people are in the age structure between 35 - 40 years old. In terms of gender, the representation of men and women is approximately at the same level. In conclusion, it can be stated that the reasons for migration from/to Slovakia are primarily economic and social factors.

Migration is objectively a part of our everyday life. Even without our efforts its importance continuously increases and if we work on it purposefully, it may bring benefits for the society. If we underestimate or ignore it, it may cause problems in the political, economic, and social life of our country. The existence of migration must be accented by all political entities and it must become an integral part of activities performed by individual departments. Therefore the migration policy, as a tool for migration regulation, is to be elaborated within action plans that will be adopted by all involved entities to the extent of their competencies and these entities shall continuously update them in coordination with the Steering Committee and its expert work groups and in close cooperation with the vice chairman of the Slovak Government for Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities, competent plenipotentiaries of the Government of the Slovak Republic, and relevant committees of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, Ethnic Minorities, and Gender Equality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contribution is the output of the research grants VEGA No. 1/0679/23 entitled "Indebtedness of Economic Entities and Countries in the European Union" and 1/0156/24 entitled „Circular migration of highly skilled workers in EU countries: a challenge for migration policies”.

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