

Sustainable Development That Leaves No One Behind



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

NGO REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2020

The following NGOs contributed to the report: 3MUHE Institute; Association Cultural, Informational and Counseling Center Legebitra; Ekvilib Institute; Focus Association for Sustainable Development; Forum for Equitable Development (FER); Humanitas – Centre for Global Learning and Cooperation; Institute for African Studies; Institute for Electronic Participation – InePA/Network of NGOs for an Inclusive Information Society in Slovenia; Institute for Gender Equality Studies (IPES); Legal and Information Centre for NGOs – PIC; National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS); OVCA – Association for Protection and Raising Awareness – Antidiscrimination Centre; Peace Institute; POVOD Institute; SLOGA – NGO Platform for Development, Global Education and Humanitarian Aid; Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (ZPMS); Slovenian Beekeepers' Association; Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS; Slovenian Philanthropy; Transparency International Slovenia; TRI Institute; and UNICEF Slovenia.

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The content reflects the views of the organisations who authored their individual contributions and is not an official position of the co-funders.

SUMMARY

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the member states of the United Nations, Slovenia among them, committed themselves to inclusive and balanced development by 2030. Slovenia ranks 12th on the Sustainable Development Index for 2020. According to the Index, Slovenia is successful in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (No Poverty) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), while the greatest challenges remain in the implementation of SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action) and 14 (Life Below Water). Based on the results from the online survey, half of the participating non-governmental organisation (NGOs) are of the opinion that Slovenia does not put enough effort into sustainable development, while more than 70% believe sustainable development to be extremely important for Slovenia. A large majority of the NGOs are convinced that the COVID-19 health crisis will jeopardise the implementation of the SDGs.

When the second government report on the implementation of the SDGs in 2020 was drafted, the NGOs prepared civil society's report. Apart from the situation overview and the drafting of **recommendations**, the contributions also contain the implementation **assessment** of individual SDGs or of cross-cutting issues, an overview of **civil society's role** in the implementation of SDGs and the **potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis** on the implementation of SDGs. The contributions, drafted by **22 NGOs**, address **gender equality, anti-discrimination and human rights, the wellbeing of children, the situation of youth, the rights of the elderly, the rights of migrants, the rights of LGBTI people, inclusive education, inclusive digital society, climate change, beekeeping, fair trade, tax justice, corruption prevention, corporate social responsibility, circular economy and international development cooperation**. The report thus addresses and presents in detail some important issues that have not been covered by the government report on the implementation of SDGs.

In order to make the implementation of harmonious development more efficient, each contribution in the report contains a **set of recommendations** focused on an individual goal or issue. The NGO report calls upon the Slovenian Government to strengthen the provision of **civic space**, strengthen the **mechanisms to ensure full inclusion** of all individuals, including vulnerable and marginalised groups, in the drafting of a comprehensive analysis and adequate measures for the full implementation of the 'leaving no one behind' principle, for strengthening of **policy coherence for sustainable development** and the **establishment of a Government advisory body for the 2030 Agenda**. The NGO report is a reflection of **civil society efforts** to help Slovenia stay committed to the set goals.

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INTRODUCTION

Slovenia and Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit, an event that was run as a high level UN General Assembly meeting between September 25 and 27 in New York (USA), and adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (the 2030 Agenda)¹, which includes a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Agenda defines a **universal approach towards development** – the sustainable development goals are to be implemented both by the donor countries and by the countries on the receiving end of the development cooperation funds. The global goals cover three key dimensions: **social, environmental and economic**. With the key message that **no one should be left behind**, new foundations were laid for addressing inequalities, economic growth, decent work, urban and settlement challenges, industrialisation, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, as well as peace and justice.

The **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** – HLPF holds a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs at the global level². The Forum fosters the exchange of experience and ensures political leadership, guidelines and recommendations for further actions. For the civil society and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the HLPF is an opportunity to advocate for the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes.

Under the 2030 Agenda, the countries have committed themselves to report on the SDGs in the form of **voluntary national reviews**. The reviews on the implementation of the SDGs are country-led, yet the 2030 Agenda places high importance on the inclusion and co-operation of various stakeholders. The Republic of Slovenia (RS) published its first Voluntary National Review³ on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in 2017, and the second⁴ in 2020. Both reports recognise the need to strengthen the **policy coherence for (sustainable) development** and to promote the involvement of **various stakeholders**.

In the 2020 SDG Index⁵ Slovenia scores 12th among 166 countries (the same score as in 2019, while in 2018, Slovenia ranked 8th). According to the Index, Slovenia is successfully tackling SDGs 1 (no poverty) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), while major challenges remain in Goals 2 (zero hunger), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 14 (life below water), significant challenges remain in Goal 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) and 17 (partnerships for the goals), and challenges persist in the other remaining goals. The Report also provides progress assessment by individual SDG. According to the Report, Slovenia is on track or maintaining SDG achievement in Goals 1 (no poverty), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 15 (life on land) and 16, while it is experiencing stagnation in Goal 14 and a decreasing trend in Goal 13⁶.

The **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Index (PCSDI)⁷**, which provides an effective follow-up of countries' commitments to sustainable, fair and equitable development,

1 Source: *UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform*; URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

2 URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>.

3 URL (In the Slovene language only): <https://slovenia2030.si/prvo-porocanje-slovenije-2017/>.

4 URL (In the Slovene language only): <https://slovenia2030.si/drugo-porocanje-slovenije-v-teku/>.

5 The Index was developed by Bertelsmann Stiftung and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. URL: <https://www.sdgindex.org/#full-report>.

6 URL: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/static/countries/profiles/Slovenia.pdf>.

7 The PCSDI was developed by the Spanish Development NGO umbrella group *Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo* in cooperation with REEDES, the Spanish Network for Development Studies. URL: <https://www.icpds.info/en/>.

ranks Slovenia 31st (among 148 countries), reiterating the already identified need for further strengthening of policy coherence for sustainable development. Slovenia embedded the SDG indicators in the **Slovenian Development Strategy 2030**⁸, the national implementing document of the 2030 Agenda. The annual implementation of the Strategy is monitored by the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development. The **2020 Development Report of the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD)**⁹ states that in the 2016–2018 period, Slovenia ‘was reducing the economic development gap towards the EU average. Development during the economic upturn was mainly inclusive and the use of energy and other sources even experienced a slight upward trend’. As to productivity growth, the Report stresses that ‘to achieve the SDGs /.../ productivity will have to rely largely on investment in a low carbon and circular economy’¹⁰. When talking about development risks, the Report states that ‘/in certain areas/.../ trends deviated from the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, mentioning in particular the slow response to technological, demographic and climate change’¹¹. The IMAD Report also refers to the commitment to reach the SDGs and the importance of meeting the international commitments to mitigate climate change and promote sustainable development¹².

In order to draft more permanent measures to sustain the development and quality of life in the long run, IMAD lists the following directions for the development policies¹³:

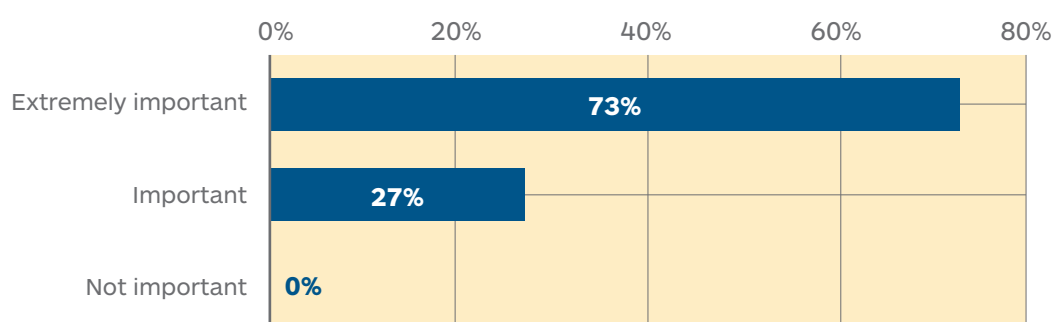
- To accelerate productivity growth;
- To adapt to demographic changes;
- Transition to a low carbon circular economy;
- ‘to enhance the development role of the state and its institutions by: (i) improving the strategic management of public institutions for timely recognition and coherent, efficient addressing of development challenges, (ii) improving regulatory and business framework, and (iii) restructuring fiscal revenue and expenditure, while taking into account the development challenges.’

The SDG indicators and implementation are regularly updated on the subpage¹⁴ of the Statistical Office of Slovenia (SURS) with data published annually.

How do NGOs assess the implementation of SDGs?

Between 29 May and 10 July 2020, the SLOGA Platform carried out an online survey among NGOs about the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Slovenia. 73% of NGOs deem sustainable development to be of utmost importance for Slovenia, while 27% consider it to be important.

According to your assessment, how important is sustainable development for Slovenia? (n = 30)



8 URL (In the Slovene language only): https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/SVRK/Strategija-razvoja-Slovenije-2030/Strategija_razvoja_Slovenije_2030.pdf.

9 Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (2020): 2020 Development Report, pp. 7–8. URL (In the Slovene language only): https://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/razvoj_slovenije/2020/slovenski/POR2020.pdf.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

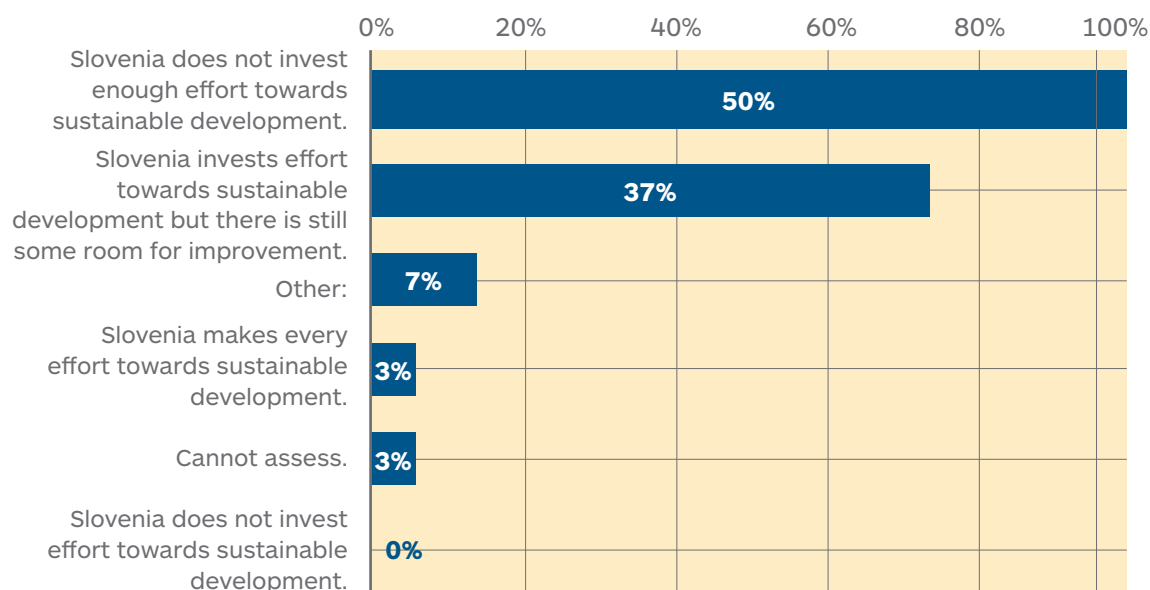
12 *Ibid.*, pp. 82–3.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

14 URL (In the Slovene language only): <https://www.stat.si/Pages/cilji>.

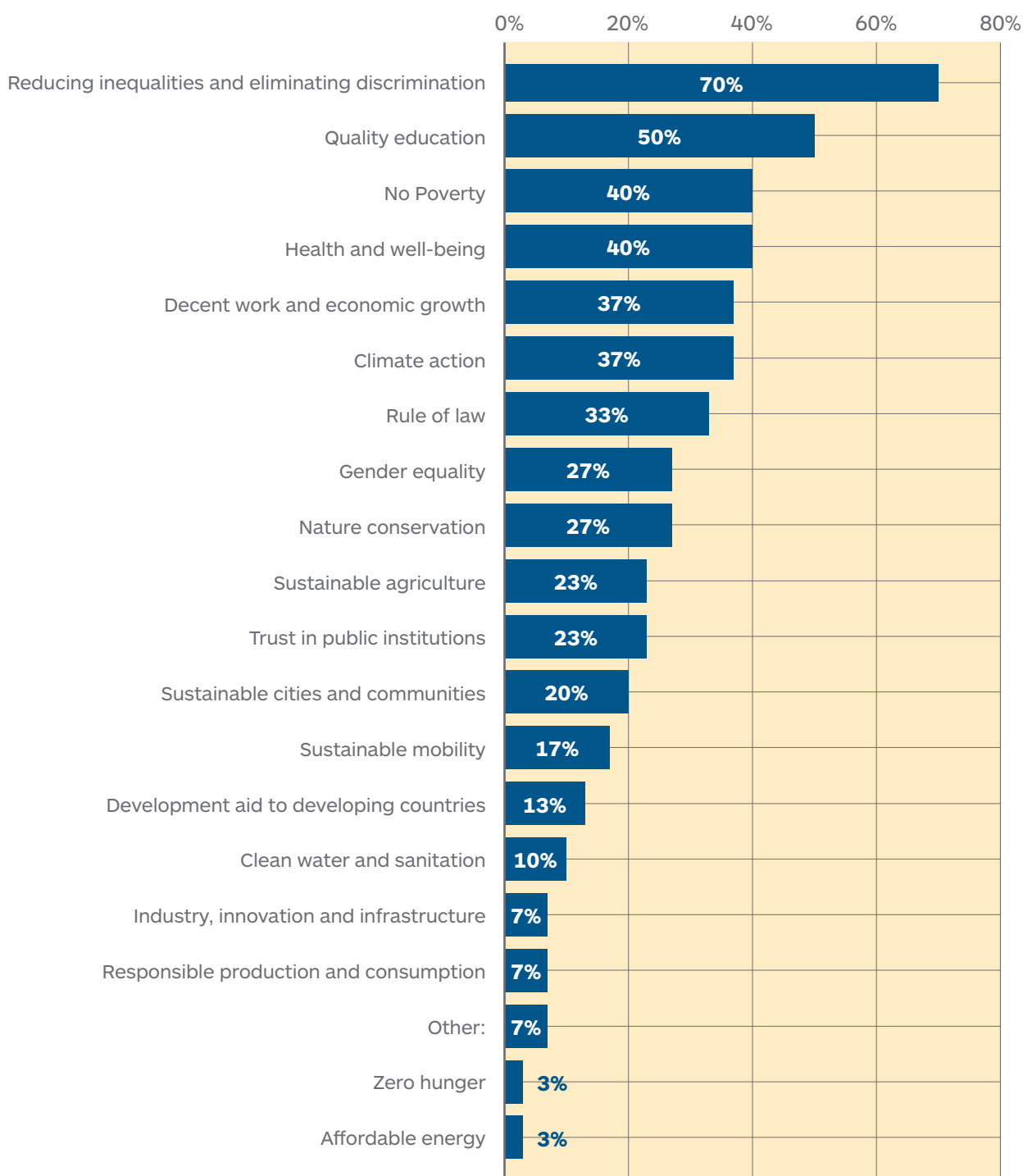
According to half of NGOs, Slovenia does not put enough effort into sustainable development, 37% consider that there is room for improvement in Slovenia's efforts. Only 3% of NGOs believe that Slovenia makes every effort for sustainable development.

What is your assessment of Slovenia's efforts towards sustainable development? (n = 30)



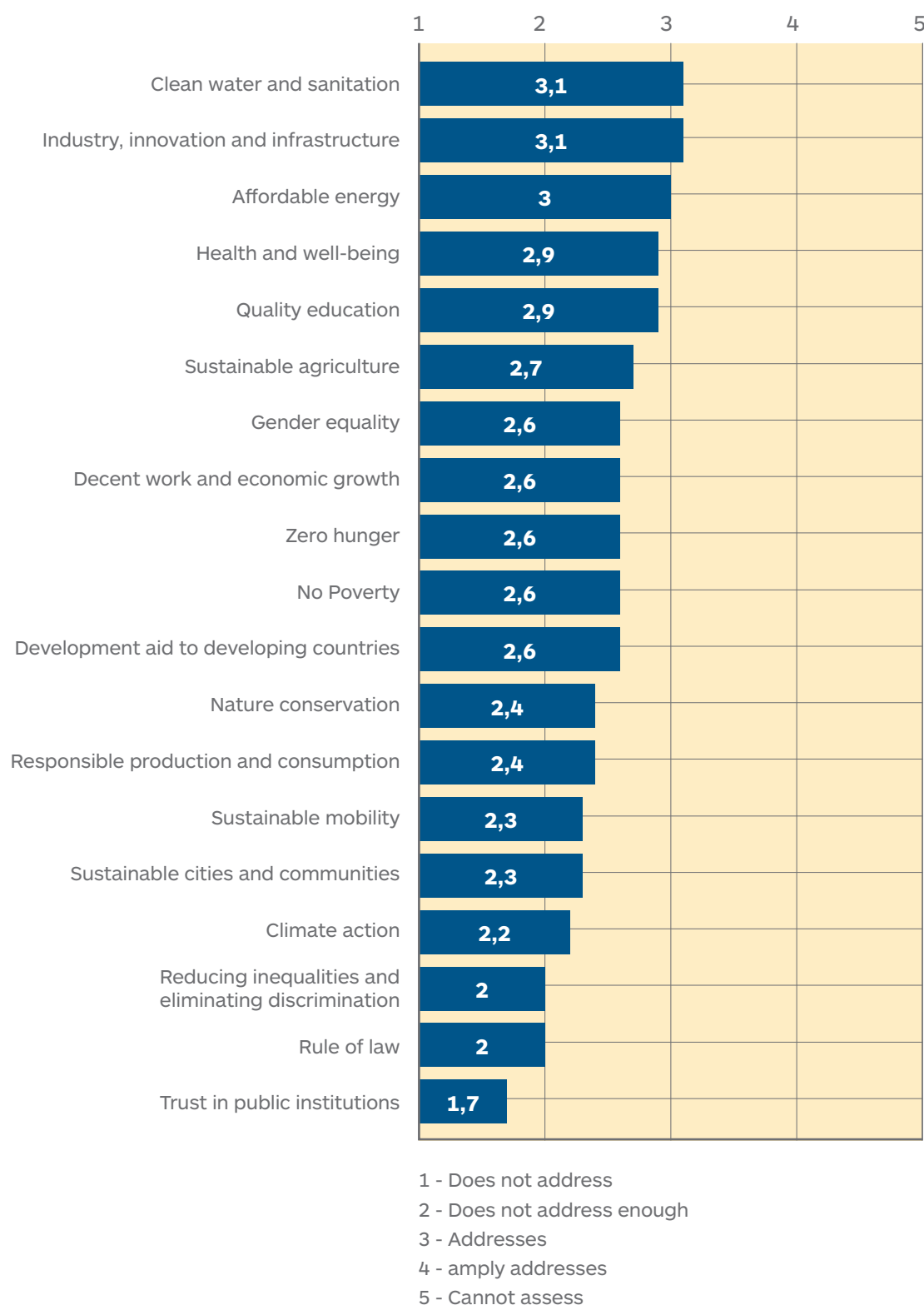
When asked which issues of the 17 SDGs Slovenia should address as a priority (each NGO had 5 goals to choose), the NGOs ranked the top five goals as the following: (1) reducing inequalities and eliminating discrimination, (2) quality education, (3) ending poverty, (4) health and wellbeing and (5) decent work and economic growth.

Select five SDG areas, which, in your opinion, Slovenia should address as a priority (multiple answers possible): (n = 30)



NGOs were also asked to assess how Slovenia addresses specific issues of sustainable development. The following areas were considered as insufficiently addressed: (1) trust in public institutions, (2) rule of law, (3) reducing inequalities and eliminating discrimination, (4) climate action and (5) sustainable cities and communities.

To what extent do you think Slovenia addresses specific issues of sustainable development: (n = 27)



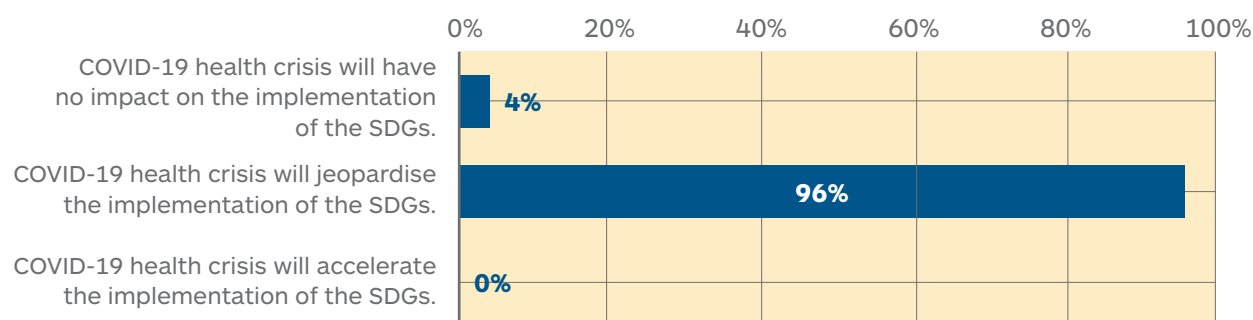
Many of these issues are addressed in detail in the contributions to this report.

COVID-19 health crisis and its impact on SDGs

According to the 2020 Sustainable Development Report¹⁵ COVID-19 has had severe negative impacts on most SDGs. The measures taken to respond to the threat of COVID-19, including the shutdown of many economic activities, have led to a global economic crisis with massive job losses and major impacts, especially on vulnerable groups. This is a significant setback for the world's ambition to meet the SDGs, particularly for poor countries and population groups. The only bright spot is the reduction in environmental impacts resulting from declines in economic activity; a key objective will be to restore economic activity without simply restoring old patterns of environmental degradation. However, all long-term consequences of the pandemic remain highly uncertain at this point.

Bertelsmann Stiftung and the *UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network* also developed a COVID-19 response index, on which Slovenia ranks 7th¹⁶. A large majority of NGOs (96%) participating in the SLOGA Platform survey considers the COVID-19 health crisis will jeopardise the implementation of the SDGs.

How do you assess potential consequences of the COVID-19 health crisis on SDG implementation?
(n = 27)



The COVID-19 health crisis underscored the need for enhanced cooperation in addressing global issues. Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, inequalities have constituted a global scourge, but as is so often the case, the pandemic has unveiled and deepened various forms of inequalities in some countries in the cruellest way. In May 2020, CONCORD – the European confederation of relief and development NGOs, of which SLOGA is an active member, drafted recommendations for decision-makers at the level of the European Union (EU) and its member states¹⁷, about which principles should be considered when drafting and implementing development cooperation policies. Addressing inequalities and creating an inclusive and sustainable economy should be at the top of the priority list for the EU and its member states. COVID-19 responses should be aligned with human rights commitments and with the principle to leave no one behind. The EU and its member states should focus on building resilience of vulnerable persons, particularly in disproportionately affected countries.

Inclusive processes and enabling civil society space

When implementing and monitoring SDGs, NGOs play a multifaceted role: by implementing actions 'in the field' and/or by working in direct contact with individuals and communities with the pur-

¹⁵ URL: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/messages>.

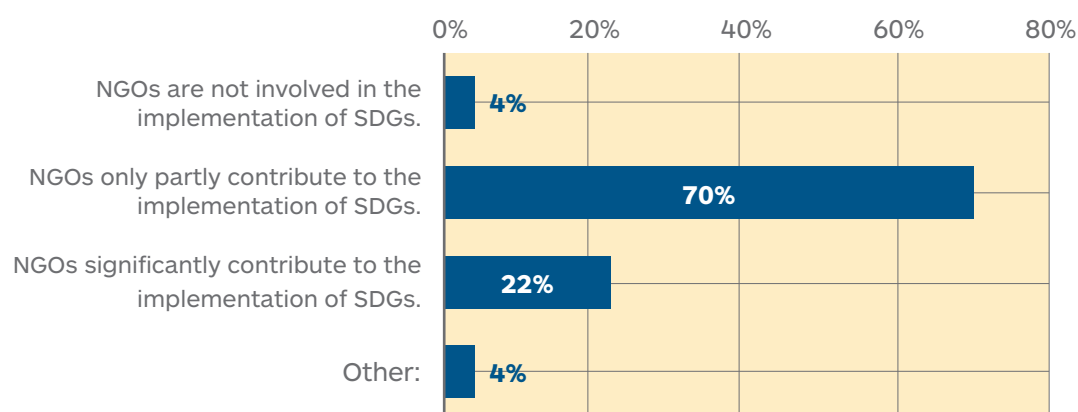
¹⁶ URL: https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020_sustainable_development_report.pdf.

¹⁷ URL (In the Slovene language only): <http://www.sloga-platform.org/globalni-odziv-eu-na-covid-19-tlakovanje-poti-v-pravico-prihodnost/>.

pose of empowering them to fully participate in society; by raising awareness of the public NGOs strive to contribute to sustainable development for all; through their advocacy and in line with their mission and expert knowledge, they hold a mirror to the government, arguing in favour of systemic changes necessary to implement sustainable development for all.

22% of NGOs participating in the online survey of the SLOGA Platform are of the opinion that NGOs significantly contribute to the implementation of SDGs, while 70% consider that they only make a partial contribution. Only 4% believe that NGOs are not involved in the implementation of SDGs.

How do you assess the involvement of NGOs in the implementation of SDGs? (n = 27)



In 2018, under the aegis of Umanotera, the Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, the **Civil Society Manifesto ‘For the well-being of society in a solid network of life’**¹⁸ was drafted by 30 organisations and experts working in the field of social services, environmental protection, social sciences and economy. The Manifesto focuses on ‘key areas that should be (re)iterated in the society and/or need to be discussed more often: basic values, human rights and rights of Nature, open society, democracy, integrity of authorities, public good, social security, well-being indicators, inclusive development planning, public finance, sustainable economy, and openness and global accountability of society. They also highlight the role of culture and the importance of health.’

The supportive environment for civil society is a key element of inclusive development. CIVICUS Monitor¹⁹ assesses Slovenia as an **open society** with an extensive civil society, with relatively high levels of volunteering. It continues: ‘There are institutionalised processes to involve civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly trade unions, in policy-making in several fields; however, guidelines that relevant CSOs should always be involved in policy formulation seem to be ignored more than they are observed’²⁰.

Notwithstanding the above, **NGOs still sometimes experience pressure**. In 2016, environmental NGOs advocating for a quality environmental impact assessment in the case of the construction of the Magna Steyr paint plant were publicly labelled eco-terrorists by the then (and present) Minister of Economy Zdravko Počivalšek²¹. In 2018, the former Minister of the Interior Vesna Györkös Žnidar targeted the Legal-information Centre for NGOs

18 URL (In the Slovene language only): <https://www.umanotera.org/kaj-delamo/aktualne-kampanje-in-projekti/za-druzbo-blaginje-v-trdni-mrezi-zivljenja-manifest-civilne-druzbe-za-razvoj-slovenije/>.

19 URL: <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2017/01/01/slovenia-overview/>.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Slovenia Times*, [http://www.sloveniatimes.com/daily-vecer-magna-investment-hostage-to-political-games/](http://www.sloveniatimes.com/daily-vecer-magna-investment-hostage-to-political-games;); and Delo (2016): Omejiti ekoteroriste in državne bedarije (To limit eco-terrorists and state tomfoolery). URL (In the Slovene language only): <https://www.delo.si/gospodarstvo/podjetja/omejiti-ekoteroriste-in-drzavne-bedarije.html>.

(*Pravno-informacijski center NVO – PIC*). The Minister accused NGOs of the ‘extremely controversial practice’ of allegedly supporting migrants to enter Slovenia irregularly. The accusations were made after the PIC had alerted the Human Rights Ombudsman that police were returning asylum seekers *en masse* to Croatia, thus effectively limiting access to asylum procedure²². During the COVID-19 crisis, the present government targeted environmental NGOs and limited their right to take part in the procedures of integrated building permits²³ in the anti-corona provisions package – despite the fact that ‘these special provisions have no direct impact on the mitigation of the COVID-19 crisis’²⁴. Other instances of pressure on civil society by the present government exist, such as the attempts to suspend already approved funding of NGO projects²⁵, hate campaigns against journalists who are critical towards the government’s work²⁶ and further limitations of civic space for organisations working in cultural spheres²⁷.

In the context of drafting the **second voluntary review** on the implementation of SDGs in Slovenia, an inclusive process of consultations was planned with stakeholders at national and regional levels through meetings, thematic workshops and regional consultations. Regional consultations were carried out by SLOGA Platform in cooperation with the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy. NGOs actively participated in the meetings, regional consultations and thematic workshops and responded to the draft government report with draft recommendations. We regret that, despite this open and inclusive consultation process, the government report does not reflect the important contribution of NGOs. We also regret that civil society, unlike the presentation in 2017, was not provided an opportunity to present its position at the official presentation of the government report to the UN.

As a result, 35 NGOs called upon the Slovene government on 10 July 2020²⁸ to **form the 2030 Agenda consultative body** at the level of the Prime Minister’s Office, which would bring together various stakeholders and support the government’s decision-making related to sustainable development.

In view of this, NGOs reiterate that the **implementation of the ‘leaving no one behind’ principle requires the active engagement and cooperation of civil society**.

Drafting the NGO report

NGO reports on the implementation of international commitments hold a **mirror to the country regarding the realisation of international commitments**, recognise shortcomings and good practices, and offer a set of recommendations for the fulfilment of international commitments. When drafting the second government report on the implementation of SDGs in 2020, NGOs drafted their civil society report. Representatives of the Focus Association for Sustainable Development, the Forum for Equitable Development (FER), the Ekvilib Institute and the UNICEF Slovenia worked with the SLOGA Platform in the planning of the process and drafting of the report concept. NGOs were in-

22 *Civic Space Watch* (2018): *SLOVENIA: New government open to civil society, pressure on CSOs working with migrants persist*. URL: <https://civicspacewatch.eu/slovenia-new-government-open-to-civil-society-pressure-on-csos-working-with-migrants-persist/>.

23 Only environmental NGOs with the acquired status of acting in the public interest of the environmental protection and nature conservation can be involved in the procedures (a status granted and regularly reassessed by the relevant Ministry).

24 *Civic Space Watch* (2020): *SLOVENIA: new government takes rights from environmental and nature conservation NGOs*. URL: <https://civicspacewatch.eu/slovenia-new-government-takes-rights-from-environmental-and-nature-conservation-ngos/>.

25 *Liberties* (2020): *Slovenia: New Government Targeting NGOs and the Media*. URL: <https://www.liberties.eu/en/news/new-slovenian-government-targeting-ngos-and-media/19141>.

26 *Reporters without Borders* (2020): *Slovenia: Trump’s disciple attacks journalists and introduces a systemic change*. URL: https://rsf.org/en/news/slovenia-trumps-disciple-attacks-journalists-and-introduces-systemic-change?fbclid=IwAR1nDeV_NQlWNsjsmRmm1yPeFu2KO-vsKZT-WDDiWksNKWySld6OOy4wSoc.

27 *Monitor* (2020): *Centre-right party leader becomes Prime Minister raising concerns for civic space*. URL: <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2020/03/17/centre-right-party-leader-becomes-prime-minister-raising-concerns-civic-space/>.

28 URL (In the Slovene language only): <http://www.sloga-platform.org/glas-civilne-druzbe-izgubljen-v-vladnem-porocilu-o-trajnostnem-razvoju/>.

vited to submit a contribution on the implementation of individual SDGs or cross-cutting issues. Furthermore, an online survey on the implementation of SDGs was conducted enabling a cross-cutting overview of the SDGs, which Slovenia should address as a priority. Invitations to cooperate were disseminated through **thematic NGO networks** and **regional NGO hubs**.

Apart from presenting the state of affairs and drafting **recommendations**, the **contributions** also include the **assessment** of the implementation of SDGs or of an individual cross-cutting issue, an overview of the **role of civil society** in the implementation of SDGs and the potential **impact the COVID-19 health crisis** might have on the implementation of SDGs. The contributions drafted by **22 NGOs** address **gender equality, non-discrimination and human rights, well-being of children, the situation of youth, the rights of the elderly, the rights of migrants, the rights of LGBTI people, inclusive education, inclusive digital society, climate change, beekeeping, fair trade, tax justice, corruption prevention, corporate social responsibility, circular economy and international development co-operation**. The Report thus addresses and presents in detail some of the important issues that were not included in the government report on the implementation of SDGs. The NGO Report is a reflection of **civil society's efforts to help Slovenia stay committed to the set goals**.

NGO recommendations for the implementation of sustainable development that leaves no one behind

The implementation of the principle of 'leaving no one behind' requires the full engagement of civil society in the planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of sustainable development policies. Under the 2030 Agenda, the state must strive to reach full cooperation from civil society and include marginalised and excluded groups in the implementation of SDGs. Inclusive processes that ensure active participation of stakeholders and various sectors on all levels are the basis for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In order to ensure cross-sectoral cooperation among various stakeholders, including civil society, in the implementation of SDGs, a **2030 Agenda Consultative Body** at the level of the Prime Minister's office should be established. The body would bring together various stakeholders and support the government in its decision-making regarding sustainable development.

Slovenia must strengthen its **mechanisms for full inclusion of all individuals**, including vulnerable and marginalised groups into social, economic and political life. To recognise groups that are running the risk of being left behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the state should draft a **comprehensive analysis and relevant measures for full implementation of the 'leave no one behind' principle**.

Slovenia must also **strengthen civic space**. A vital and well-developed civil society is at the core of democratic societies, that is why Slovenia should ensure effective long-term support for NGO projects and programmes, including for entities of supportive environments within civil society, in line with the provisions of the NGO Act²⁹. Enhancing support for civil society guarantees further development of the sector and strengthens civic dialogue, while NGO programmes and projects contribute to the implementation of SDGs.

In order to ensure a comprehensive implementation of SDGs it is necessary to strengthen the **policy coherence for (sustainable) development**. The government should establish a permanent mechanism for policy coherence assessment, which – according to the 2030 Agenda – should be open, inclusive and participatory.

Implementing the 'leaving no one behind' commitment goes beyond the sectoral activity and requires strengthened inclusive partnerships. The NGO report and its recommendations is a reflection of **civil society efforts to help Slovenia stay committed to the set goals**.

29 Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 21/18.



Organisation UNICEF Slovenia

Topic **INVESTING IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS –
CREATING A WELFARE STATE**

SDGs

Goal 1:
End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2:
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and to promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3:
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4:
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5:
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6:
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 13:
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 16:
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal 17:
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

**Situation
Overview**

Education, child protection and health are key mechanisms affecting the wellbeing of children and representing the best and the most stable investment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. 'Leaving no one behind' must become a key guideline. It should also be noted that data analysis at regional and local levels are of paramount importance, as it is only disaggregated data that can best show differences and reveal the groups of children that are lagging behind, as they are not reflected in the national data.

Slovenia has committed itself to halve (reduce by 50%) **the child poverty rate** by 2030, which is why it is important to strengthen the relevant policies and adopt an inter-agency approach in their planning for a comprehensive solution to this problem. According to the Slovenian Statistical Office (SURS), the child at-risk-of-poverty rate in Slovenia between 2014 and 2016 fell from 14.8% (2014) to 11.9% (2016), only to increase again in 2017, reaching 12.8%, which is 0.9 percentage points more than in 2016. In 2018 it fell again, to 11.7% (2018) or 45,000 children. The at-risk-of-poverty rate



thus fell by 1.1 percentage points in 2018 as compared to 2017. Looking comparatively at boys and girls, the at-risk-of-poverty rate fell by 0.6 and 1.6 percentage points respectively. The social exclusion rate fell to 13.1% in 2018 (2.0 percentage points less than in 2017). The social exclusion rate for children is based on three indicators: the percentage of people living below the poverty threshold, the percentage of people living in extreme material deprivation and the percentage of people living in households with a very low work intensity. Among the most important measures of family policy that increase the family income or have an impact on it are the child benefit, the income tax-abatement for a dependent child and subsidies for pre-school education programmes.

The 2012 legislative changes amended these correctives, as the establishment of eligibility to these rights based on social status was enforced. Thus, the universal nature of these rights was abolished. Child benefits are an important part of income for families with children. Being the first transfer for exercising rights to public funds, they reduce the significance of financial social aid and the purpose of the child benefit itself, as this is a supplementary income for the subsistence, education and schooling of a child. For families who are entitled to financial social aid, the child benefit is automatically converted into financial social aid, thus missing its purpose. As shown by all surveys, having a safe home is a key element of a child's social security. Losing a place to live is a major factor of influence for social exclusion and causes numerous lost opportunities for children. Data on evictions in Slovenia are relatively modest and do not allow analysis of the phenomenon as per different types of households or regarding the tenure status of households. Data from various records are available, such as the general record of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, but this record only refers to circumstances when the court issued an enforcement decision in certain cases.

Various researchers (Šebart and Štefanec 2017, Marjanovič Umek 2014) underline the problems arising from unequal opportunities and segregation and social differentiation in the field of **education and schooling** throughout the entire educational continuum. Inclusion in pre-school education is considered an important protecting factor that may contribute to the interruption of the transfer of deprivation between generations. According to Statistical Office data (2018) for the last decade (from 2007/08 to 2017/18) the number of children in nurseries grew by 41%, and the enrolment rate in the 2017/18 school year was 80.3%. Differences exist between regions, as data show that more children went to nurseries in western than in eastern Slovenia. The largest share of children attending nurseries is in the Central Slovenian region, while the lowest is in the Zasavje region. The education of parents seems to play a role in the enrolment of children in nurseries, as the children of parents with lower education levels are included in nurseries less frequently. A wide array of social and economic factors may have a negative impact on a child's psychological development and school performance. Among them is exposure to poverty, particularly present among the Roma and Sinti communities, and the non-eligibility of asylum-seeking children for subsidised pre-school education. Pre-school education can significantly reduce the gap in education and schooling to which children from the most vulnerable groups are exposed. The most effective intervention programmes for pre-school education are those containing 'intense, early, child-centred education in nurseries, along with active involvement and education of parents, planned home activities and family support measures'. (EACEA 2009)

The situation of **child health protection** is a cause of concern according to some indicators. Special attention must be devoted to reaching full vaccination coverage of children. According to OECD data (2017) the immunisation levels in infants are high for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and Haemophilus influenzae type B (95% in the period of 2014–2015), while it is somewhat lower for measles. In 2016, this share was 93% for the first dose and only 89% for the second, which points to the need to adopt measures to ensure full vaccination coverage of children. Data from the National Institute of Public Health show child mental health is also a serious public health issue, particularly, suicidal tendencies in adolescents and the increase of psycho-somatic symptoms among school children. Over the past decade, almost every year, suicide has been among the top three mortality factors for adolescents in Slovenia aged 15-19. Suicides are three times more frequent among boys than among girls. We hereby express our concern in view of the financial non-sustainability of the public health system, unequal geographical access and inconsistent quality of public health services due to a persistent lack of human resources planning (public health service network, medical residencies plan) and technological development. We believe that the state must enable cooperation between the primary and secondary levels of child health protection. According to the child welfare index, a large majority of children in Slovenia do not eat breakfast. In the international context, only Romania has higher levels of this indicator. In comparison with other European countries, relatively low results are also achieved in the childhood obesity indicator and illicit drug use. In 2014, 20% of children aged 15 were obese or overweight, predominantly boys. This puts Slovenia in 5th place in the EU regarding child obesity and overweight prevalence (OECD 2017).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the right of children to **participate in decision-making processes** that may influence their position in society. It is therefore important to enable children to be involved in decisions regarding their near future. The participation of all children and adolescents in society is important, as it enables the development of the participatory potential and later of political participation. The 2017 research conducted by UNICEF and Mediana on the satisfaction of children with living and growing up in Slovenia showed that only 7% of children in Slovenia think that the leading state politicians consider their opinion, while as many as 78% of children believe that politicians are out of touch with children. Only 7% of children in Slovenia believe that mayors consider their opinion, while 75% think mayors are out of touch. The Eurostat data (2016) on the inclusion of adolescents aged between 15 and 19 show that, in Slovenia, adolescents are mainly attracted by topics related to their local environment, which shows an important participatory potential, including political participation potential, of young people in their local environment. Special attention should be devoted to digital forms of political participation, where Slovenia holds a special place, with as many as 17% of adolescents in this age group regularly publishing opinions regarding general or political topics on online networks and media. This also points to the importance of awareness raising among young people regarding the advantages and pitfalls of digital participation and the safe use of the internet.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Welfare is a multidimensional concept. As such, it requires an interservice approach and cooperation of various stakeholders, including and in particular civil society/NGOs and children. NGOs have direct contact with children and families; we can therefore observe the impacts of individual



measures and policies directly in the field, which enables the formation of quick, multi-layered assessments on policy implementation. Consultations with children and young people are of key importance, as they are one of the nine core groups who have a role to play in the forming of a sustainable society for future generations. Children are not merely passive recipients of support; they are the agents of change.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The COVID-19 epidemic has had negative impacts on children and young people, not through health, but through secondary social consequences. Children and young people should therefore be included in the assessment of how they were affected by new circumstances due to coronavirus. As many parents were left without their regular income, financial and material support must be guaranteed for families in which parents remain without regular subsistence revenue in order to prevent them from falling into poverty.

Education institutions are an important buffer in overcoming deficiencies faced by certain deprived families. For this reason, access to adequate food support should be guaranteed to children and families in quarantine and self-isolation. Health and education staff, as well as bodies for the support of children should be made aware of the risks befalling children during the epidemic, including the risk of violence, negligence and abuse, and with the methods of identification and referral of children at risk. Furthermore, the public should be made aware of simple mechanisms for reporting abuse. It is necessary to ensure that teachers have adequate knowledge regarding the reduction of gender-based risk of violence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and child abuse, and that they practice safe referral. Since, due to coronavirus-related stigma, some children become more exposed to violence and psychosocial problems, the local community's role in awareness raising and child and family protection should be identified. As children and parents or guardians who have already had mental health problems experience more difficulty accessing the support and services they have had in the past, this may lead to a worsening of existing mental health conditions. It is therefore necessary to identify alternative methods for mental health support and psycho-social help, including awareness raising among children.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- To include in the government documents for poverty reduction clear guidance on how to prevent child poverty based on quantifiable goals for child poverty reduction. These goals must be differentiated from the goals set for the general public.
- To regulate the child benefit system by completely excluding the child benefit from social transfers.
- To establish an inter-agency group for the fight against poverty that includes NGOs.
- To draft a measure with the proposal to amend the Housing Act in order to prevent evictions of families with children from social housing when a family becomes socially deprived and can no longer pay the rent or cover housing costs.

- To create an 'info point', where people would receive prompt and simple information on their rights and obligations.
- To introduce guarantees for children, with the purpose of guaranteeing every child access to key services, such as free education, free health care, free childcare, access to a decent and safe home and appropriate diet.
- Nursery fees are one of the most difficult burdens on a family budget. In light of fostering better inclusion of children in pre-school education and in light of the prevention of social exclusion, the measure allowing a second child's nursery fees to be waived should be reinstated.
- Target measures must be adopted to ensure full inclusion of children in pre-school education in all Slovenian regions, thus contributing to the interruption of the transfer of deprivation between generations.
- To attract more Roma and Sinti children and migrant children to pre-school education, along with parental support.
- To ensure the systematic and continuous follow-up of key indicators of positive and negative health in children, which could serve as support data for drafting public health programmes and interventions intended for fostering health in children and adolescents. Also, to follow-up on mental health and early interventions in the school and home environment in a non-stigmatising way, ensuring support and assistance to children in distress and their families.
- To work towards state politicians taking on board and including the opinion of children in their decisions. We plead for the creation of a regular system of local participation for children that would enable better participation of children in the creation of the local agenda. It is beneficial to provide early education for children on the benefits and pitfalls of the digital environment and the safe use of the internet.

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Organisation **The Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS**



Topic **OLD-AGE POVERTY**

SDGs **Goal 1:**
End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- SDG targets**
- 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
 - 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.
 - 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.



Situation Overview

Given the fact that Slovenia is a welfare state (Article 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia), the ZDUS expects the government to adopt and implement the urgently needed measures for preventing and reducing the stratification of population, as proposed by the government's Vision 2050, which foresees "universal welfare". It is unacceptable to see the income poverty risk among the elderly at such high levels compared to similar EU member states.

The ZDUS underscores the global phenomenon of *ageing unequally*, i.e. inequalities that develop throughout life but manifest in old age. This is often a consequence of specific events in a person's life and their negative impact on health. It can also result from the type of work people do and the payment they receive, or of various personal circumstances. With the current life expectancy, all of this may lead to insufficient income in old age. Younger generations will have to deal with even more inequality as they age. They are expected to live longer, yet they are already encountering unstable conditions on the labour market and growing inequalities regarding wages and household income. All this will definitely reflect in their old age.

Due to unequal ageing, Slovenia's poorest residents live in elderly households. Researchers find that pensions represent more than 95% of all disposable financial means (being virtually the only source of income) in pensioners' households. Their real estate, especially flats, are old and need to be renovated and adapted for safety and care at home. State interventions in this field are indispensable.

In order to mitigate the conditions of those who have and will have insufficient pensions (old-age poverty) due to relatively low wages or other income, low insurance base or other reasons, and will not be able to cover their basic life needs, the ZDUS proposes the adoption of rules and regulations for acquiring minimum pension support and other social assistance tied to the agreed upon cost-of-living basket (the basket of goods and services).

In Slovenia, elderly households are an important source and pillar of help for young families. However, the situation is changing due to the falling standard of living among pensioners. Most pensioners cannot afford full-time care at home or nursing home fees with their pensions, let alone provide financial help to their unemployed or underpaid offspring. The Long-term Care and Insurance Act has been in the pipeline for the past 23 years. The Act is supposed to cover all and not just institutionalised options and should, above all, enable continuous improvement of conditions for carers and users, as well as to outline basic conditions to support and cover people's needs at home.

The following should be noted regarding the current recipients of pensions (616,000): the unfavourable economic conditions in the past and the related mitigating measures significantly reduced the ratio between net pensions and net salaries (pension/salary ratio); thus, a realistic assessment of the consequences is a matter of urgency, along with the introduction of measures necessary to improve the unfavourable conditions. Reducing rights is no longer acceptable, instead it is necessary to gradually improve material and life conditions and align them with social and economic progress.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

NGOs such as the ZDUS, with their programmes and projects of active citizenship, advocacy and other activities, advocate for a better economic position for the elderly through advocacy activities with political decision-makers. Projects and programmes such as the social protection pro-

gramme 'The Elderly for the Elderly', in which volunteers in the field visit elderly people over 69 years of age in their local environment, monitor and identify the phenomenon of poverty among the elderly and organise help wherever it is necessary. Thanks to the findings of the volunteers in the field and their network, which covers all of Slovenia, the ZDUS has a clear picture of the quality of life of elderly people and is therefore in the position to propose to political decision-makers the measures necessary to improve quality of life for the elderly.

**Potential
impacts of
the COVID-19
health crisis
on the
implementation
of SDGs**

Deepening poverty among elderly people due to social isolation during the pandemic and lack of contacts and organised help that would have been provided under normal circumstances.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- The State must adopt well-considered measures to reduce the number of poor among the elderly thereby helping them lead a decent and independent life.
- The mandatory pension and disability insurance must remain the main pillar of the system in the future. The second, third and fourth pillars can only work as a useful complement to the first.
- Preserving the level of pensions throughout their duration ensures that their growth follows the growth of salaries (regular adjustment) in the same percentage for all categories of pensioners. A different approach would undermine the basic principle according to which a pension is the result of a person's contribution during their active employment. Old-age poverty cannot be mitigated with ad-hoc interventions fuelled by populism, which applies, in particular, to supplements resulting in a number of new imbalances. Social aid for pensioners must be paid out from the national budget.
- Regarding all those insured persons who, for various reasons, did not complete a full period of employment, this being one of the reasons why their pensions do not suffice in covering the agreed basic life needs, the ZDUS proposes that the government and its social partners find a common definition for the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and ensure a fair distribution of the necessary minimum pension support, as well as other social transfers, in order to prevent elderly households from sinking deeper into poverty.
- Absence from work due to care for elderly parents must be made possible and legally regulated.

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Organisation The Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (ZPMS)

Topic **POVERTY AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

SDGs **Goal 1:**
End poverty in all its forms everywhere

SDG targets 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

**Situation
Overview**

Poverty is a phenomenon that affects every aspect of our lives and leaves traces in all areas of life. When talking about poverty among children and adolescents, we are also talking about family poverty (children and adolescents live in families; it is therefore more difficult to define them as an independent social category in relation to poverty). Social transfers may help to reduce poverty, but they do not solve the problem. The child benefit, while it is intended to support child development, does not fulfil its role, as it often only helps to mitigate a family's financial hardship. Long-term poverty is a particular problem, as families find themselves locked in a vicious cycle.

According to Slovenian Statistical Office data for 2019, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in Slovenia was 12%, and the social exclusion rate was 14.4%. While both rates are lower than a year before, they are expected to rise again this year due to the COVID pandemic.

Out of 243,000 people living on an income below the poverty threshold, 41,000 were children and adolescents (10.5% of all children).

**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

Through its activities, the ZPMS helps to mitigate the negative consequences of poverty. Activities such as distributing food, clothing, hygiene products, collecting school accessories, paying bills and distributing computers during COVID-19 do not reduce poverty, they merely mitigate it. It falls on the State to eradicate poverty through the adoption of systemic measures in several fields (workplace, decent payment for work, rents regulated by the state, etc.). The ZPMS and a few other NGOs merely mitigate the shortcomings of the state system.

**Potential
impacts of
the COVID-19
health crisis
on the
implementation
of SDGs**

COVID-19 has a negative impact on poverty reduction and fuels inequalities. The unemployment rate increased (88,648 unemployed people in late April 2020).

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- Continuous monitoring of the effects of the crisis on poverty (where special attention must be devoted to monitoring the well-being of children and adolescents, not just of the elderly – with particular focus on women).
- Further provision of appropriate social benefits and allowances, for which better control is needed.
- Stronger active employment policies and job preservation schemes, including part time employment schemes and the introduction of other types of temporary support for companies, such as subsidies for salaries and waiving of social security contributions.
- Strengthening of the economy and consequently preserving jobs.
- Re-initiate the discussion on the introduction of a universal basic income.
- Provide protection to people who are suddenly left without a job/ income.
- Provide protection to people whose income is not adjusted to the growing costs of living.







Organisation The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association

Topic **THE FUTURE OF BEEKEEPING**

SDGs

Goal 2:
Achieve food security and improved nutrition and to promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 13:
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 15:
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Situation Overview

Efforts for the protection of bees bring forward the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development, as coherent action is needed in various spheres of life, including food, agriculture, food processing, trade, use of plant protection products, nature conservation, etc. The importance of bees gained further recognition with the declaration of World Bee Day on the initiative of Slovenia.

Goal 2:

Due to intensive agriculture, areas covered with flowering plants are disappearing, while the use of plant protection products leads to the disappearance of bees and other pollinators (reference also to Goal 15). Current measures from the Rural Development Programme support grass mowing later in the season and sowing of melliferous plants, but for the time being, these measures are not being implemented to a sufficient extent and are therefore not yielding real results.

Labelling the origin of honey for consumer protection and the protection of the beekeeper against unfair competition should be made compulsory. Information on the origin of honey is every consumer's right. The characteristics of honey depend on its geographic origin and since honey is used for food and therapeutic purposes, information on its origin is indispensable. Furthermore, knowing the country of origin of honey is key for ensuring better traceability and, thus, improved consumer protection. It's also useful in raising awareness among consumers that beekeeping is a nature conservation activity in all countries.

Goal 10:

All agricultural activities with the exception of beekeeping are entitled to partial reimbursement of excise duties for energy products. Beekeepers are not eligible for the reimbursement despite theirs being an agricultural activity, too. In Croatia, beekeepers have successfully advocated for themselves in order to avoid the same fate. Despite being a member of



the EU, Slovenian beekeepers are thereby subject to an unequal economic position.

Payment of contributions from Article 55a1 of the Health Care and Health Insurance Act is a matter of dispute for beekeepers and other farmers who are not professionally involved in beekeeping or farming. They are obliged to pay a contribution for occupational injuries and diseases, along with contributions under Article 55a of the afore-mentioned Act. Contributions under Article 55a are disputable in that they do not provide any new health insurance rights.

Goal 13:

The beekeeping sector is extremely exposed to climate change. This calls for measures mitigating the impact of climate change and helping the beekeeping sector fight climate change through planting of indigenous melliferous plants, promoting the processing of melliferous agricultural crops and preserving biodiversity. In our opinion, concrete solutions to help the beekeeping sector face these challenges should be regulated by law.

Goal 15:

Planting melliferous trees should be given more importance in the drafting of forest management plans, as this would contribute to the preservation of bees and other pollinators. We have proposed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food that procedures to declare the bees endangered be continued.

Goal 2:

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association (*Čebelarska zveza Slovenije* – ČZS) has been working on the promotion of beekeeping, transfer of knowledge and quality assurance on the global level for a long time. It promotes awareness on the importance of beekeepers, beekeeping and bees for the preservation of biodiversity, prevention of world hunger and promotion of economy. Furthermore, it draws attention to the importance of expanding areas covered with melliferous crops, reintroducing flowering plants on meadows and delaying grass mowing until after flowering.

In 2018, the ČZS and some other beekeepers' associations from neighbouring countries signed a joint declaration committing themselves to raise awareness of the public on locally produced apiculture products. Moreover, the ČZS has urged the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food several times to start addressing the issue. The problems have also been presented to the Committee for Agriculture in the National Assembly.

Goal 10:

The ČZS seeks to establish equal opportunities for beekeepers. It therefore aims to abolish discriminatory legislation, policies and actions and

1 'Insured persons referred to in Article 15 and their insured family members referred to in Article 20 of this Act shall also pay a contribution at the rate of 6.36 percent:
- for an income from another legal relationship based on which they are not insured under the first paragraph of Article 15 of this Act, received based on performed work or services, when payment received on the basis of this legal relationship is considered income under the act regulating personal income tax and is not exempt from personal income tax or not considered as other income under the act regulating personal income tax,
- from an activity carried out as a secondary occupation.'

fosters the adoption of better legislation, policies and measures. The ČZS has sent initiatives containing specific proposals to address the issue to competent national bodies (the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Ministry of Finance, the National Assembly) on several occasions.

Regarding the payment of contributions under Article 55a of the Health Protection and Health Insurance Act, the ČZS has repeatedly called upon the competent institutions to adopt a more equitable social security policy.

Goal 13:

The ČZS has been pointing out problems and has had a long-standing cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food with the aim to draft measures to mitigate the consequences of climate change. Still, concrete solutions have not been adopted or are not being implemented yet. We refer to a document on managing financial risks in agriculture, forestry and beekeeping caused by natural disasters, and concrete solutions based on a targeted research programme in order to help tackle damage incurred in beekeeping.

Goal 15:

The ČZS endeavours to promote planting of melliferous plants and calls upon the competent bodies to include melliferous plants in reforestation activities and to plant melliferous plants and trees in parks and on other public spaces. Without beekeepers, many bees would not be likely to survive. This is why we have been asking that the EU declare bees endangered.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recom- mendations for achieving the goal

- **Goal 2:** Incentives for farmers should be adopted to prevent flowering meadows from disappearing or to encourage farmers to start sowing flowering plants in meadows, to expand the surface of melliferous fields and to promote the delay of grass mowing until after flowering. Such surfaces should be expanded on an annual basis; this should be regulated with relevant legislative measures and policy orientation. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food should immediately launch a formal initiative for honey labelling by country of origin in the EU, calling for an amended EU Honey Directive.
- **Goal 10:** The Ministry of Finance should immediately adhere to the drafting of the amended Excise Duties Act enabling partial reimbursement of excise duties for fuel used in beekeeping operations.
- **Goal 13:** Guidelines on how to help and promote beekeeping in light of climate change should be enacted.
- **Goal 15:** Planting and sowing melliferous plants in public areas should be required by law. Also, a certain percentage of annual reforestation should include melliferous plants. The endangered status of bees should be recognised in EU law.

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MLADINSKI
SVET
SLOVENIJE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
COUNCIL
OF SLOVENIA

Organisation The National Youth Council of Slovenia

Topic **HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUTH**

SDGs **Goal 3:**
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG targets

- Promoting physical activity and balanced diet among youth.
- Promoting mental health in youth.

**Situation
Overview**

Research shows that young people are increasingly aware of a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity is growing, eating habits are changing and smoking is in decline. According to data from the National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ), alcohol consumption among youth is not increasing; what is a matter of concern, however, is the fact that the age of first alcohol use is decreasing. The same data show that the consumption of synthetic drugs is increasing, especially among youth. At the same time, it is noted that young people are increasingly dissatisfied with themselves and with their lives, which has a detrimental effect on their mental health. Promoting mental health among young people is becoming increasingly important, which calls for a wider social response and raising awareness about these problems. In Slovenia, mental health is still insufficiently addressed and lacks systemic regulation. The consequences of this ill-addressed and non-regulated field are felt by all demographic groups, but they particularly affect the young, who must face a number of other challenges in their transition to adulthood, such as finding an adequate job and accommodation, two causes of major uncertainty among young people.

**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

The National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS) and its member organisations promote a healthy lifestyle and propose legal amendments focusing on the reduction of smoking and drug and alcohol consumption among youth.

Other MSS member organisations are also active in the field of promoting a healthy lifestyle. They implement various projects, thus raising awareness among young people and other groups on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, they are an important interlocutor in the drafting of policies promoting a healthy lifestyle.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recommendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- The MSS is of the opinion that part of the curriculum at all levels of education should be devoted to promoting a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, systemic regulation is needed to help alleviate mental distress, as well as to create programmes for the promotion mental health, which would foster positive change.

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Organisation

The Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS



Topic

ACTIVE, SAFE AND HEALTHY AGEING FOR THE ELDERLY

SDGs

**Goal 3:
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

SDG targets

- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.
- 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.
- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

**Situation
Overview**

Active and healthy ageing programmes in the field of culture, technical culture, and sports and recreation are implemented annually at the level of the ZDUS, regional Associations of Pensioners' Organisations and indirectly within Pensioners' Organisations. These programmes are organised for 187,837 members across Slovenia, 30,483 of which are involved in amateur sports, recreation and physical culture; 28,515 take part in organised recreational trips; 9,913 take their vacations in Slovenia and 2,222 abroad, while 8,311 members participate in cultural and technical cultural programmes (Source: ZDUS Annual Report for 2018). In the ZDUS, important emphasis is put on raising awareness about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, as well as running prevention programmes for recreation, sports and cultural activities. Such prevention programmes are extremely important both for the social integration of individuals, which prevent stigmatisation and loneliness among the elderly, as well as for the strengthening of their mental and physical health, which prevents the occurrence or worsening of chronic disease and dementia. The fact that a healthy life and lifestyle can be achieved through various methods, particularly in old age, is also noted in the Strategy for Society Longevity (2017).

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users. In its Analysis and Overview of Road Traffic Safety for January – June 2019, the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency found that in the said period, 11 pedestrians lost their lives in road traffic accidents, which is a notable increase (by 57%) of the

number of deaths among pedestrians from 2018. As for traffic accidents caused by pedestrians, there were 6 fatal traffic accidents in the previous year caused by the irregular behaviour of pedestrians. By way of comparison: there were no such accidents last year. Key findings regarding vulnerable users show that the majority of casualties were aged above 65 (5 victims); this is less than in previous years.

Age is undoubtedly a risk factor. When taking into account natural ageing processes, the decline of life forces, mental and physical capacities and other health factors, it becomes obvious that elderly pedestrians are among the most at-risk groups of road traffic users, while they may also cause accidents due to irregular behaviour in road traffic. As the capacity to use roads safely declines with age, this same age group must become aware of how they – as senior pedestrians – can contribute to their own safety and the safe road use of all other road users.

Healthcare management should be internationally comparable, adaptable and integrated into the global system of knowledge exchange, and should also give access to some top-ranking, rare services. The ZDUS is extremely concerned with the current lack of organisation, skyrocketing costs, lengthy waiting times and constant changing of priority status in services from urgent to less urgent and vice versa. The network of health institutions is outdated and as such, no longer organised in a rational manner, considering present transport options (the current transport infrastructure). The health system should be based on equity, accessibility, quality and efficiency. Elderly people have always contributed their data analyses and expert opinions, but were dismissed and now they have been left behind. They expect the new regulations to be appropriate; they agree with the division of rights between those guaranteed from public funds and those that need to be paid individually or through an additional insurance scheme. Private health services should be a complement to the public system; from the point of view of development, they should represent, mainly, the export of medical services (medical tourism), provided they are properly regulated. But the latter should also refer to the public health system. Civil society should be given an opportunity and the support to participate in the control and development of the health system. A thorough analysis of the current system is needed, since everything (insurance, public institutes, investment, salaries, etc.) falls under the government's remit.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Targets and activities:

- Active citizenship, advocacy and addressing political decision-makers with requirements related to the health system.
- Drafting and implementing prevention programmes to include elderly people in various programmes promoting active and healthy ageing, thereby encouraging elderly people to remain included and active; empowerment of the elderly.
- Implementation of prevention programmes for road traffic safety, life-long learning, skill development and empowerment of the elderly.

Since 2017, the ZDUS has been implementing a project entitled "Elderly pedestrians safe in traffic". It is intended to raise awareness on the importance of safe participation of pedestrians in road traffic with an emphasis on elderly road users, who are the most vulnerable group. The project is co-financed by the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency. The purpose of the project is to make a long-term contribution towards improved safety for elderly pedestrians (over the age of 65), to contribute to organised prevention



activities among the elderly and to increase the level of awareness on the importance of their own contribution to safe road use. The project also aims to contribute to the reduction of the number of road accidents that involve elderly pedestrians either as victims or as perpetrators and to promote life-long learning about traffic safety for seniors.

In order to make elderly drivers feel safe on our roads and help them remain mobile as long as possible, the ZDUS and the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency, in cooperation with the General Police Directorate, the Motorway Company of the Republic of Slovenia (DARS) and Red Cross Slovenia, have been implementing a project called “Co-existence for better road traffic safety”. As part of the project, local communities organise comprehensive health- and safety-oriented events and training for seniors and pensioners. As opposed to the common misconception that senior drivers’ mobility should be limited to protect themselves and others, the project encourages the elderly to remain independent, mobile and safe for as long as possible. Data show there are more than 219,000 driving licence holders over the age of 64 in Slovenia, which is 16% of all driving licence holders. As the population continues to age, the share of senior drivers on the roads will continue to grow. Refreshing knowledge and learning novelties are therefore more than welcome and indispensable if we want to reduce the number of deaths and injuries due to road traffic accidents.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

- Lack of access to health services and preventive programmes, which will be reflected in the deteriorated health condition of the elderly.
- Health complications in the elderly.
- Suspended implementation of training and seminars on road traffic safety.
- Suspended implementation of preventive programmes during the epidemic will have predictable physical and mental consequences for the elderly. Sports and physical inactivity during that period, inability to implement cultural programmes and non-participation in other forms of active and healthy ageing, which may continue after the pandemic, will be reflected in the mental and physical condition of the elderly.

SDG implementation assessment

Preventive programmes to include the elderly in active and healthy ageing programmes: initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Preventive programmes related to road traffic safety of the elderly: successful measures/actions.



Health protection of the elderly: initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- The State must increase NGO funding for raising awareness among the public about public health and activities that improve public health.
- The State must permanently and systematically raise awareness among people to continuously care for their health. These activities would provide the elderly with an opportunity to spend as many years as possible living a healthy life, either on their own or with others.
- The ZDUS requires considerably better accessibility of health services and long-term care based on the broad concept of solidarity between the healthy and the ill, between the affluent and the socially deprived. It is also time for long-term care to be legally regulated. The ZDUS also requires:
 - a gradual increase of funds for health services and long-term care from the national budget due to the continuously increasing share of elderly in the population;
 - guaranteed systematic health care from public funds for the pre-defined basic and essential health services, while other, non-priority health services can be subject to private insurance schemes;
 - promotion of the development of a multimedia platform for telemedicine and tele-therapy, which can significantly reduce costs of treatment;
 - adoption and definition of a public health service network that is more rational and efficient than the present one.

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MLADINSKI
SVET
SLOVENIJE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
COUNCIL
OF SLOVENIA

Organisation National Youth Council of Slovenia

Topic YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

SDGs **Goal 4:**
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG targets

- Ensure quality and equally accessible education for all any age.
- Increase the scope of student scholarship policy.
- Make young people better equipped for the future.
- Facilitate the start of a career for young people.

**Situation
Overview**

For certain young people with fewer opportunities, scholarships are the only possibility to access education. It is therefore considerably worrying that the number of recipients of Zois (merit-based) and company scholarships each year has been falling. The decrease of the latter is particularly problematic, since these are the scholarships that could contribute to better competences of young people and offer equitable access to quality education.

The MSS advocates for an increase in funds allocated to both high school and university scholarships, thus enabling access to education for everyone, regardless of their social status. The MSS fosters and promotes the importance of non-formal education and seeks to improve its recognition in broader society. One of the greatest achievements in this field is the adoption of the national vocational qualification of youth worker. The MSS also implements courses for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that young people need on the labour market but are not sufficiently provided in the formal education system.

In 2020, a proposal was adopted to introduce active citizenship as a subject in school curricula. The subject will first be taught in 2023. This is a step forward in providing young people competences that they need in life that have not been provided in formal education so far. At the same time, this is an opportunity for greater synergy between formal and non-formal education.

In order to improve the quality of education at all educational levels, the MSS works with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport to include the use of information-communication technology in university programmes and to introduce innovative and flexible teaching and learning methods in pedagogical study programmes. Currently, these measures are implemented at the university level and we are promoting the modernisation and digitalisation of programmes at the high school and primary education levels as well.

**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

The MSS and other NGOs use their programmes to raise awareness on the importance of life-long learning and to implement activities in non-formal education both for young people and for the elderly. These NGOs work with schools to offer non-formal education that fosters the development



of young people, increases their employability and assists them with their transition into adulthood.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The crisis has affected the field of education, as young people did not have equal conditions for home schooling. Furthermore, when the schools locked down, some young people lost the only safe place and the only warm meal they had, which further increased their marginalisation and deepened social differences.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- The MSS proposes more synergies between formal and non-formal education, to enable youth organisations to use their knowledge and developed non-formal education programs and actively participate in the implementation of formal education curricula. This will help young people acquire more of the knowledge and skills that they will need throughout life. At the same time, incorporating non-formal education into the education system more often will raise awareness on the importance of life-long learning.
- The MSS advocates for a scholarship policy that will enable all young people to receive education for their desired profession.

Organisations

The SLOGA Platform and Humanitas – The Centre for Global Learning and Cooperation



Topic

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

SDGs

Goal 4:

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG targets

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
- 12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

Situation Overview

In Slovenia, the topics of human rights, development and international development cooperation, intercultural dialogue, tolerance and migration are usually addressed within the context of Global Citizenship Education in formal education and non-formal and informal learning settings. Within formal education, teachers face systemic shortcomings while integrating Global Citizenship Education (Humanitas, 2018)¹, such as time constraints, unsystematic and sporadic integration of the global dimension related to the interest and willingness of individual teachers and one of the key bases for integration of Global Citizenship Education: support from school management and other colleagues.

In 2008, the Global Citizenship Education Work Field, which operates within the SLOGA Platform, defined Global Citizenship Education as 'learning for globally balanced coexistence or shorter Global Citizenship Education as a lifelong process of learning and action, which emphasises interdependence and the individual's involvement in global events. The goal of this kind of learning is to develop globally responsible and active individuals and communities. Global Citizenship Education is a process of encouraging individuals and communities to engage and act on their own to address the key common challenges of humanity. To this end, formal and non-formal education and learning programs need to be developed, based on the development of critical thinking skills and other personal and social skills. In this way, educated and trained active citizens can contribute to fairer and more sustainable economic, social, environmental and human rights-based national and international policies through their own activities and activities within various organisations.' At the institutional level, the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport are responsible for this cross-cutting issue. Slovenia also participates in the European Network for Global Learning (GENE) and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

The existing White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia from 2011, among the strategic challenges and orientations of the education system, recognises that the school system is part of society and that Slovenia is integrated into Europe and a globally connected world. Among the key orientations, the White Paper identifies knowledge in a knowledge-based society and sustainable development. It recognises that 'upbringing and education in Slovenia are included in the frameworks of

¹ Source: Amy Skinner, Research on the integration of Global Citizenship Education into subject teaching (Raziskava o vključevanju globalnega učenja v predmetno poučevanje). Humanitas, Ljubljana, 2018.



increasing global connectivity and interdependence, so it is necessary to include elements of global education at all levels of education in the school system.' It also cites human rights education, education for equality, peace education, media education, intercultural understanding education and education for sustainable development as important elements of global education (White Paper, 2011, pp. 43–5).

From the point of view of international development cooperation, the field of Global Citizenship Education is defined in the Resolution on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia (2017), namely, Slovenia's role in poverty eradication and sustainable development is emphasised. With the aim of ensuring policy coherence, it is crucial that Global Citizenship Education is adequately embedded in the national education system and not only in Slovenia's international development cooperation.

Slovenia's Development Strategy until 2030 (adopted in 2017) defines 'ensuring a quality life for all' as the central goal. Among the strategic orientations for achieving the central goal, learning for and throughout life (lifelong learning) is recognised, to which the goal 'knowledge and skills for quality of life and work' (Goal 2) is also connected. To monitor the implementation of this goal, the following indicators are defined: participation in lifelong learning (population 25–64 years of age), the share of the population with tertiary education (population 25–64 years of age) and PISA – average results in mathematics, reading and science. The strategy defines that Goal 2 (knowledge and skills for quality of life and work) shall be achieved:

- by developing knowledge and skills for life and work, by improving reading, mathematics, digital and financial literacy, by promoting Global Citizenship Education and international engagement and by empowering people to use the latest technologies and thus reducing the digital divide;
- by promoting the concept of sustainable development, active citizenship and ethics as some of the principles of education.'

The concept of Global Citizenship Education partly overlaps at the national level with the better established concept of Education for Sustainable Development (conceptualised as 'Upbringing and Education for Sustainable Development'), the understanding of which often puts the environmental dimension of sustainable development at the forefront. Global Citizenship Education also upgrades the concept of Education for Sustainable Development from the point of activating an individual for global justice and sustainability. Global Citizenship Education focuses on the skills, values and understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of addressed topics.

The CONCORD Europe study² (2018) identifies various projects (implemented by NGOs and public institutions) as the central means of implementing Global Citizenship Education. Project funding for Global Citizenship Education has been associated with a high level of fluctuation over the years. In addition, the study highlights 'a mixed level of NGO involvement in Global Citizenship Education policy processes' and weak coordination between NGOs and government stakeholders. Both NGOs and government stakeholders assessed the involvement of NGOs in agenda setting and policy evaluation as very limited, while both NGOs and government stakehold-

2 CONCORD (2018): Global Citizenship Education in Europe: How Much Do We Care? URL: https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CONCORD_GCE_FundingReport_2018_online.pdf?7c2b17&7c2b17.

ers agreed that NGOs are highly involved in the implementation of Global Citizenship Education policy.

In 2018, Humanitas implemented an extensive survey³ among teachers on the integration of Global Citizenship Education into subject teaching. It also asked about their qualifications and their opinion on the need to address sensitive global challenges. The study found that:

- 63% of participating teachers were already familiar with the SDGs, of which 74% already included the SDGs in their teaching;
- teachers most often address cultural diversity (79%), environmental protection (76%) and social justice (74%). Least commonly included in teaching are topics such as migration (61%), consumerism (61%), peace and conflict resolution (58%) and gender equality (58%);
- teachers are too limited by formal curricula in subject teaching, in which it is usually more difficult to include the global dimension, so they prefer to take advantage of opportunities outside the usual classroom (activity days, project days, etc.);
- teachers are most grateful for ready-to-use materials or methods with reliable resources that they can use in the classroom.

In 2019, the SLOGA Platform commissioned the Center for International Relations of the Faculty of Social Sciences to prepare a situation analysis⁴ of Global Citizenship Education in Slovenia, the key finding of which was that 'most actors in this field work to ensure maximum implementation of sustainable development in the (non)formal education system of Slovenia. But despite many (good) activities in the field, there are many ambiguities and misunderstandings about the concept of Global Citizenship Education and its integration into everyday life.' The analysis highlights the need for a clearer and more comprehensive conceptualisation of definitions of Global Citizenship Education (2008) and Education for Sustainable Development (2007), as both are slightly outdated and do not reflect the idea of the 2030 Agenda. The analysis also proposes the establishment of an institutionalised coordination group, which would include key public (government) actors (ministries, public institutions, etc.), non-governmental actors, academia, representatives of educators and representatives of civil society, with a clear definition of the leadership of the coordination group.

In 2019, the Council of Europe's North-South Center issued new Global education guidelines – concepts and methodologies on global education for educators and policy makers⁵ that introduce methodological approaches to support the measurement and monitoring of Global Citizenship Education. Among others, the guidelines call for the integration of formal, non-formal and informal education. Policy-formulation in education is often focused only on the formal education system. This urgently needs to be reconciled with non-formal and informal learning and practice, as socialisation and learning take place simultaneously at all three levels.

3 Source: Amy Skinner, Research on the integration of Global Citizenship Education into subject teaching (Raziskava o vključevanju globalnega učenja v predmetno poučevanje). Humanitas, Ljubljana, 2018.

4 The analysis was prepared within the European project Bridge 47, with SLOGA Platform as a partner organisation. URL (in the Slovene language only): <http://tuditi.si/porocilo-analiza-podrocja-globalnega-ucenja-v-sloveniji-in-priporocila-za-nadaljnjo-krepitev-podrocja/>.

5 Council of Europe's North-South Centre (2019): Global education guidelines – concepts and methodologies on global education for educators and policy makers. URL: http://tuditi.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/PREMS-089719-Global-education-guide_A4.pdf.



NGOs active in the field of Global Citizenship Education have been emphasising the importance of Global Citizenship Education as a key tool for an inclusive sustainable society for many years. Within the SLOGA Platform, there is a Global Citizenship Education Work field, which brings together NGOs, practitioners and academics and strives to strengthen and upgrade the field and connect stakeholders. NGOs carry out a number of Global Citizenship Education projects and advocacy activities.

In the past year, two important documents have been drafted in the field of Global Citizenship Education in which NGO actors have played a key role: 'Analysis of Global Citizenship Education in Slovenia and recommendations for its further strengthening'⁶ and 'Guidelines for Global Citizenship Education – a contribution to achieving the SDGs', which are currently still in coordination.

Slovenian NGOs are often awarded and recognised for their work in the field of Global Citizenship Education. Projects by Slovenian NGOs can be found among the best practices of Global Citizenship Education, selected annually by GENE.

The Agora Global Citizenship Education project, with the Lojtra and Humanitas Associations among partner organisations, was named among the five best practices in the field of EIU/GCED (Education for International Understanding/Global Citizenship Education) by APCEIU (Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding) in 2019.

Many European NGOs and networks strive to replicate the project awarded GENE's 2018 Global Education Innovation Award in their local environments, i.e. The Club of Global Education Teachers by Humanitas, which has been joined by more than 65 Slovenian teachers so far. The Humanitas initiative is entirely voluntary (for now) due to a lack of necessary continuous financial support and has followed the needs of teachers involved in Global Citizenship Education and working to integrate it into teaching in order to disseminate their knowledge and experience among all schools. Such initiatives, which build a supportive space for teachers to integrate Global Citizenship Education, must urgently be supported so they may continue their important work.

Activities in the field of Global Citizenship Education are also encouraged by the Global Education Week initiative, which is coordinated in Slovenia by the SLOGA Platform in cooperation with the Council of Europe North-South Centre. Global Education Week has been an annual event since 1999, organised by the Council of Europe Member States under the auspices of the North-South Centre. The week includes a number of events held in many European countries that are dedicated to the issues of social exclusion, global interdependence and solidarity.

In recent years, the SLOGA Platform has also successfully included Global Citizenship Education in Lifelong Learning Weeks⁷, during which Global Citizenship Education is among leading themes of joint actions. Lifelong Learning Weeks have been held for 25 years under the leadership of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

6 The analysis was prepared within the European project Bridge 47, with the SLOGA Platform as a partner organisation. URL (in the Slovene language only): <http://tuditi.si/porocilo-analiza-podrocja-globalnega-ucenja-v-sloveniji-in-priporocila-za-nadaljnjo-krepitev-podrocja/>.

7 More information: <https://tvu25.acs.si/>.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

During the quarantine period, the COVID-19 health crisis transferred education online, which severely limited opportunities for non-formal learning (or extracurricular activities), which often include Global Citizenship Education activities, as well as experiential learning within formal education settings. At the same time, it exposed existing social inequalities, including the digital divide, the inaccessibility of online connections and technical equipment of families, the education of parents (to help children) and language barriers (members of minorities, Roma, etc.). In addition, children with special needs did not receive systemic individual additional professional support during the health crisis during quarantine (except for occasional voluntary initiatives by various civil society actors). We are not even aware of the scale of all the consequences of these inequalities.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- Global Citizenship Education is of key importance for an inclusive sustainable society and as a tool for achieving all SDGs, so it must be appropriately included in the new White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia. Its inclusion is key to encouraging children and young people to become drivers of positive change and to develop the ability to meet global challenges.
- Teachers need a more supportive environment to integrate the global dimension (more resources to collaborate with external guests and collaborators) and to address Global Citizenship Education topics within all subjects, as well as to incorporate cross-curricular integration, flexibility and adaptability of the schedule and to involve NGOs and other Global Citizenship Education experts in curriculum reform. This support and structure is important in order to avoid leaving the covering of these topics up to the goodwill and awareness of individual teachers.
- When introducing the global dimension to teaching, special attention should be paid to the training of current and future teachers in the field of Global Citizenship Education. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) has also developed a global competence framework; namely, the acquisition of global competence is a lifelong process and there is no single point at which an individual becomes fully globally competent. PISA will assess the stage at which 15-year-olds are in this process and whether their schools are effectively addressing the development of global competencies.
- The state must ensure equality of starting positions in education – appropriate material conditions and other circumstances relevant for an individual. The example of the COVID-19 crisis clearly indicates the lack of implementation of the principle of equality in education. Above all, greater emphasis is needed on strengthening the competencies of teachers in their work with children with migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- Asylum-seeking children are not entitled to subsidised kindergarten under the current regulations, although, for instance, some collaborative and inclusive municipalities do enable some of these children a subsidised kindergarten fee. Many asylum seekers are aware of the importance of pre-school education for a child's wellbeing, development and, especially, integration into Slovenian society (especially in light



of lengthy asylum procedures), but as asylum seekers, they are not entitled to reduced kindergarten fees, while the material situation of many families does not allow them to afford full kindergarten fees. With the aim of ensuring equal access to pre-school education, regardless of the status of the child, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia must also provide subsidised pre-school education to asylum-seeking children.

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Organisation The Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS



Topic LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND TRAINING IN OLD AGE

SDGs Goal 4:
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG targets 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Situation Overview The ZDUS notes that the Adult Education Act in the Republic of Slovenia has shortcomings in that it excludes people over 65. According to this act, adult persons are 'persons who have completed primary school education'. This definition is contradicted when the Act mentions 'primary school for adults'. The categories 'adult' and 'older adult' need to be defined more specifically in the Act; the best option would be to define them in the same way as the statistical data, in which three main demographic age categories are distinguished: young (0-15); mature (15-64) and old (65 and more). The Act lacks definitions of terms such as upbringing, education, lifelong learning, empowerment, training, information dissemination, etc. Also poorly defined is the description of 'lifelong character of education and learning,' which should be defined, when necessary, with reference to the Strategy for Lifelong Character of Learning, issued by the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia in July 2007.

Because lifelong learning and acquisition of skills are the driving force of every society's development, the ZDUS expects greater support from the Slovenian Government for the provision of opportunities for continuous additional education and training for the elderly – from the drafting of a relevant action plan to the development and facilitation of appropriate and financially accessible education programmes with subjects for the elderly. The ZDUS also expects to see a sufficient number of trained pro-

viders and the necessary technical and spatial facilities. This includes programmes that develop new skills for later life.

Learning makes everybody stronger. This is true for all generations, in all periods of life, under every life circumstance. People learn to exist, to ensure personal growth and to acquire new knowledge in order to work and live in a community. Granted, a very rich spectrum of educational formats is implemented in Slovenia involving adults and young people. However, given the fact that the elderly make up such a small share, the ZDUS emphasises that lifelong learning should be made available to all regardless of their age. Based on the four main pillars of learning – work, personal growth, leisure time and participation – the ZDUS notes that preparation and implementation of curricula and training programmes adapted to the elderly are needed for the first (work) and last pillars (participation) in particular. In Slovenia, there is a considerable lack of opportunity to study gerontology, and, thus, a notable deficiency in staff with the appropriate expertise. We must promote this choice of career. Employers should be encouraged to invest in education and training of their staff over 45 years of age – this should become part of measures at the level of the state. Although interest has been spurred, the future of these actions is uncertain, as they are project-based and financed from EU funds.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Active citizenship, advocacy and addressing political decision-makers with the necessary requirements.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

Social isolation has prevented the elderly, who lack computer access and ICT skills, from being included in society.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- Regardless of an elderly individual's age, gender, ethnicity or health condition, their contribution should receive appropriate recognition and systemic support.
- Age should not be used to define someone's role, value and potential.
- All people, regardless of age, should be given the opportunity to be part of a workplace, while society as a whole should promote flexible employment and retirement.
- As is the case among other population groups, the elderly should be involved in education and training for the third age.

Institutions that should be involved in the drafting of the document on education for the elderly are stakeholders in the field of education, social work, health, economy and politics.



The reasons why it is necessary to educate people about and develop this activity for the elderly are as follows: population ageing (a growing segment of the population is over the age of 80, an age group that formerly did not exist in such numbers); technological and other changes in society; changes in the lifestyle of those over 65 (people live alone or in nursing homes, only 13% live with their families, etc.); the European old-age paradigm (having as many people as possible continue living in their home if they wish to do so). The purpose of training for people over 65 is the following: quality everyday life (new technologies, traffic, administrative procedures, use of computers, etc.), cooperation or continuation of their work so far or entry into a new career, intergenerational cooperation. The proponents and providers of these activities are the non-governmental sector, associations, third age universities, day-care centres, social enterprises, etc. Financing: for society, financial input in these activities is not a cost but an investment (because people are healthier, happier, etc.)

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Organisations FER Forum (Forum for Equitable Development),
Institute for Gender Equality Studies (IPES)
and TRI Institute

Topic **GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

SDGs **Goal 5:**
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

SDG targets

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Situation Overview

In Slovenia, legislation and other measures ensure formal gender equality in public and private life. Despite the established legal framework, however, we are still falling short of actual gender equality, which would guarantee women an equal position, equal treatment and equal opportunities. Thus, women still carry a larger burden when it comes to child and family care, despite higher levels of education than their male counterparts, they earn less and are less likely to hold leading positions both in business and in politics; also, women are more often subject to sexual violence. Among the more pressing issues are the feminisation of poverty, the lack of a comprehensive approach towards long-term care, deepening of the pay gap and the persistence of gender stereotypes.

The importance of these issues is further corroborated by the European Commission's 2017 Report on Equality between Men and Women in the EU, according to which 81% of Slovenes are of the opinion that when making decisions, women rely on their feelings more than men, and 55% of Slovenes think that the most important role for women is to take care of their home and family. It is not surprising that, regarding the role of women, 81% of women spend at least one hour a day doing household chores and cooking, in comparison to only 28% of men. The same proportion of men spend at least one hour per day providing care for family members, compared to 35% of women. Women therefore perform considerably more unpaid work than men (2019 data from the European In-

stitute for Gender Equality). In the case of affluent families, care services are transferred from women to migrant women, who mainly perform their work as part of the grey economy, which deepens the class differences in society and among women. Considering the perception of the role of women, it is therefore almost impossible to expect gender equality in the public sphere.

The Employment Relationships Act guarantees that the “employer is obliged to provide the same pay for the same work and for the same values to all, regardless of gender”. Still, the pay gap in Slovenia is a reality. While it remains below the European average, it, nevertheless, has the highest growth-rate: according to the Eurostat statistical office, the rate was only 0.9% in 2010, while it had grown to 8% by 2017. Data from the Slovenian Association of Free Trade Unions show that the greatest difference between the income of men and women is in the financial and insurance sectors (men are paid 24.5% more than women), health and social care (23.2%) and education (16%). The pay gap then continues into retirement, resulting in the feminisation of poverty in Slovenia, where the pension gap currently amounts to 24% and every third woman above the age of 70 lives in poverty. The growth of the pay gap shows that the position of women on the labour market is deteriorating, which reflects broader discrimination on the labour market and the increase of gender inequality in society.

Compared to women-citizens of Slovenia, migrant women are in an even more disadvantaged position. Legislation prevents them from becoming economically independent, as they mainly come to Slovenia under family reunification regulations, and do not have equal rights to employment until they receive their permanent residence permit. Work visas can only be arranged by employers, but employers (unless they really need female workers) are usually reluctant to do make these arrangements. We also note the lack of empowerment programmes for migrant women, while the programmes that do exist are not backed with research on the real needs in the field (one such example is the social activation programmes for women with various cultural backgrounds, issued by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and financed by the European Social Fund). It also has to be noted that migrants are not able to get involved in political and public life, as the equitable representation of migrant positions is virtually non-existent.

Despite Slovenia having legally regulated gender quotas for political representation, the number of women Members of Parliament fell drastically after the recent election (from 37% in the 2014-2018 term to 24% in the current term of office). In the Government, too, only 23% of ministerial positions are held by women. These statistics clearly show that gender equality is not addressed systematically in Slovenian politics, where it is difficult for women to break through to the forefront, or to maintain continuity in their political career after their first election, gender quotas notwithstanding.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Civil society and NGOs as integral parts of that society play an important role in reaching gender equality and empowering women. On one hand, NGOs are very active as service providers for women in distress and on the other, they act as advocates in the process of implementation of the principle of gender equality, both when influencing policies and in campaigns for raising awareness. Unfortunately, there is significantly less funding available for civil society's preventive actions as there are for

curative action, which may contribute to women being persistently called the “gentler” sex, being seen as victims and not being seen as stakeholders in social processes with equal rights and value. Under the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, an Expert Council for Gender Equality has been established as the Ministry’s expert consultative body. Members of the Council include representatives of civil society and NGOs. By June 2020, the new government still had not appointed a new council. The umbrella organisation for women’s rights in Slovenia is the Slovenian Women’s Lobby. The Lobby participates and reacts to all the relevant processes and events related to the rights of women and equal opportunities. Unfortunately, it mainly operates on a voluntary basis, which limits the scope of its operations and influence.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

On 27 April 2020, the Slovenian Women’s Lobby sent a public initiative to the women Members of Parliament, in which it drew attention to the difference in impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and men. The pandemic worsened the position of women in society, among other reasons, due to i) increased partner violence resulting from quarantine, the victims of which are mainly women, ii) shut-down of childcare centres and schools and distance learning in a society where traditional gender roles still persist, which is why women took the lion’s share of the burden, remained home more often and did not go back to work; iii) a larger proportion of women employed in the most affected sectors, such as healthcare, underpaid long-term care and childcare, tourism and catering; iv) due to the suspension of social protection mechanisms, the poorest groups of the population, the majority of which are women, fell into even deeper poverty. The impact of the pandemic on the position of women will be long-term, especially in case of potential new waves of crisis, since government measures did not consider the gender aspect and, based on previous global health crises, we can assume that the Government will continue to ignore it in the future.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the Institute of Gender Equality Studies (Inštitut za proučevanje enakosti spolov – IPES) carried out a study entitled Atmosphere in intimate partnership relationships during quarantine and uncertainty. A total of 700 people participated in the study. The Institute examined the persistence of gender stereotyping, how people experienced quarantine and how they dealt with distress. Based on the study data, the Institute concluded that by the time the pandemic is declared to be over, the deterioration of equality for women will be paired with financial uncertainty, along with the psychological consequences of fear and violence. The study showed that 34.7% of responding men and 18% of responding women did not agree that it is always the perpetrator who is responsible for and guilty of violence. A total of 5% of all respondents (entirely) agreed with the statement that violence is sometimes justified, with an additional 10% who neither agreed nor disagreed. As many as 30% of all respondents agreed that, during the crisis, it is appropriate to expect women to ease conflicts and avoid putting their own problems forward. In reference to these findings, the Institute points out that it is inappropriate for any community to perpetuate such gender stereotypes that show women as having to adapt their opinion and needs to the care and happiness of others all the time. Almost 65% of respondents in the survey also agreed that quarantine caused a surge in domestic violence and violence in partner relationships. This was explicitly denied by 25%,



while the remaining respondents offered a neutral opinion. 45% of the respondents did not enjoy staying at home during the quarantine, while 11% did. Based on these answers, the Institute concluded that people faced difficult situations during the pandemic that resulted, among other problems, from unequal distribution of power between women and men. The IPES assumes that half of the relationship problems and abuse in Slovenia resulted from excessive alcohol consumption exacerbated by the pandemic, as 54% of respondents agreed that during the quarantine, addiction problems were much more pronounced. 12% of the respondents said in the study that they had lost their job during the corona crisis, while 4% said their job was threatened. In reference to this finding, the Institute also noted that, for the same work, women receive a salary that is 8% lower than that of their male co-workers, on top of the fact that they are more likely to be employed in more precarious forms of work. This has led to a period of increased dependence on a woman's partner's income. 15% of women said that their survival now depends on their partner even more, while 11% said that this dependence had been established before the pandemic. The study also showed that in 43% of cases, chores such as cooking, tidying up and cleaning, help with home schooling and care for sick or elderly family members were performed by women. More than half of the respondents said that chores were distributed equally. In the remaining 6% of cases, the majority of these chores were performed by men. 89% of the respondents agreed or entirely agreed that not enough is being said about violence in Slovenia. The Institute notes that a high rate of awareness about domestic violence is usually the result of life experience, where the majority had experienced violence personally or were at least closely present when an act of violence was committed.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recom- mendations for achieving the goal

- Strengthening the role of the father in care, which can be achieved, among other programmes, through support organisation structure at the workplace, introduction of non-transferable rights to paternity leave that would expire if not taken and information dissemination and awareness raising about the current rights and their positive consequences for the division of parental leave.
- Introducing a carer's benefit.
- Stepping-up activities focused on raising awareness among target groups on gender stereotypes and the importance of gender equality. Education on gender stereotypes and gender equality for childcare centres and schools.
- Obligation of the employer to adopt a policy of work-(family)life balance.
- Adoption of a gender equality plan for employers in the public and private sectors.
- Transparent collection of gender-disaggregated data on salaries and transparent remuneration policy of public and private employers.
- Adoption of the Long-term Care Act following the pre-school education model (subsidised payment based on the material situation of the care recipient).

- Collection of gender-disaggregated data on the impact of the pandemic, leading to the adoption of policies to fight the negative consequences of pandemic without undermining gender equality. When drafting such policies, women and women's organisations must be included in equal measure.
- Consistent respect and implementation (as well as implementation control) of the legislation adapted to the labour market and enabling migrants in the Republic of Slovenia to access to decent work, which protects workers under the same conditions as it protects citizens of Slovenia and of the EU, with the aim to avoid undeclared work.
- The implementation of programmes, resulting from sociological and anthropological field research, designed to focus on the needs and goals of the people/communities where they are implemented. The financing of these programmes should be embedded in the system, regularly evaluated and improved and require cross-sectoral and community cooperation.
- Financial and expert support is given to the set-up of consultative (and, at a later stage, decision-making) bodies at all levels (local, national), emulating those from Slovenia and abroad..

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Organisation Ekvilib Institute

Topic CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SDGs **Goal 8:**
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
Goal 12:
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

SDG targets Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby companies contribute to sustainable development. As such, it touches upon all SDGs.

Situation Overview Social responsibility refers to organisations and companies (it may also refer to individuals) and the responsibility they assume for their own impact on society as a whole (natural environment and community). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a voluntary contribution of organisations and companies towards sustainable development that goes beyond the legal requirements and involves all stake-holders. The 2030 agenda was created in cooperation with the private sector, with the very awareness that if the world wishes to implement SDGs, it is indispensable that active cooperation of the private sector be established in all its diverse forms: from micro-companies and cooperatives to multinationals.

In relation to CSR, the state should have a significant supportive role in the promotion of sustainable business practices by using a combination of voluntary, and when necessary, complementary regulations. At the same time, the state is also society's biggest customer. As such, it may exert a positive influence on the implementation of CSR in companies. Some good examples are the government decision on green public procurement and recommendations on social public procurement that Slovenia began implementing in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

However, despite the EU's call to action in 2012, Slovenia's membership in the OECD and numerous appeals by NGOs, Slovenia has still failed to draft national strategic documents that would address CSR holistically. In 2017, Slovenia adopted the Development Strategy 2030 of Slovenia, in which Goal 6 is defined as a competitive and socially responsible entrepreneurial and research sector, but neither the stakeholders working in this sector nor those in the field of CSR were included in the drafting of the strategy. As a result, the strategy reflects a limited understanding of the concept of CSR and does not include relevant indicators to monitor the achievement of the goal. That same year, Slovenia transposed the EU Directive as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups into its national legislation¹, which requires the disclosure of information on policies, results and risks related to environmental issues, social aspects, the employees' perspectives, anti-corruption and anti-bribery measures and measures to ensure diversity in

¹ URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014L0095>.

management boards. The Directive was transposed in its entirety for companies with more than 500 employees – without being adjusted to the national context. In an economy driven by 83% of companies falling under the category of small and medium-sized enterprises (MSEs)², and generating 72% of all jobs and almost 63% of the entire added value³, the regulations, which only apply to less than 50 of the largest companies⁴ in Slovenia, do not represent a real commitment by the state to CSR.

Over the past two years, significant developments occurred in the field of respect of human rights in the economy. In November 2018, the National Action Plan of the Republic of Slovenia for the respect of human rights in the economy⁵ was adopted and the national focal point for the promotion of OECD Guidelines for multinational societies⁶ was strengthened. Within the framework of the National Action Plan, the priority tasks are the promotion of equal opportunities, the protection of basic rights of workers (precarious work), environmental protection and sustainable development, prevention of trafficking in human beings and further commitment to human rights due diligence, which, hitherto, 12 Slovenian companies have committed to respecting human rights⁷.

The major share of promoting and developing CSR in Slovenia is borne by civil society, the academic sphere, the media and the companies themselves. The promotion of international standards and guidelines such as the UN Global Compact initiative, ISO 26000 and the Global Reporting Initiative, is not a priority for the state, although some developments can be detected in the direction of enhanced promotion of the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises, which have been limited to foreign investors in the past⁸. The most significant progress is expected to be made under the Presidency Trio of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia (July 2020–December 2021), which calls upon the drafting of a new communication on corporate social responsibility⁹.

It needs to be said that, generally speaking, Slovenia places great emphasis on social and employment policies. Apart from incentives and reliefs and the implementation of the basic international standards and EU directives on human rights and workers' rights, as well as non-discrimination, Slovenia supports awards and certification of good business practices that include measures for the wellbeing of employees, measures against discrimination at the workplace, as well as security and social security measures. This internal aspect of CSR is one that receives most of the NGOs' and companies' attention, which is also proven by the study conducted by

- 2 Source: Government of Slovenia: 'SMEs are the engine of Slovenian economy'. 8 June 2016. URL: http://vlada.arhiv-spletisc.gov.si/en/media_room/newsletter/slovenia_weekly/news/article/smes_are_the_engine_of_slovenian_economy_57951/.
- 3 Source: STA. 'EU report: Slovenia not a favourable environment for SMEs'. The Slovenia Times. 24 November 2016. URL: <http://www.sloveniatimes.com/eu-report-slovenia-not-a-favourable-environment-for-smes>.
- 4 The transposed directive makes reporting binding for an estimated 50 companies. According to AJPES data for 2017, the number is allegedly even lower: fewer than 10 companies that are not insurance companies (13) or banks (6).
- 5 URL (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.gov.si teme/clovekove-pravice-v-gospodarstvu/>.
- 6 More information (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/delovna-teleza/oecd-nacionalna-kontaktna-tocka-slovenije/>.
- 7 Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. URL (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.gov.si teme/clovekove-pravice-v-gospodarstvu/>.
- 8 Source: Annual Reports on OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, URL: <http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/annualreportsontheguidelines.htm>.
- 9 Source: 18-month Programme of the Council (1 July 2020–31 December 2021), URL: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8086-2020-REV-1/sl/pdf>.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

the PIAR Agency¹⁰, in which at least half of the participating organisations claimed to have a main focus on their employees, fewer on the environment and only 28% on organisational management.

In cooperation with the academic sphere, the media and companies themselves, NGOs play the most important role in the development and promotion of the CSR concept. For a long time, the government left it to the companies and civil society to address the issue, providing only occasional support to individual efforts. The situation is gradually beginning to change, as the state is continuously more aware of its role as a customer and of its capacity to make a positive impact on voluntary processes within companies through public procurement.

The knowledge and experience of the NGOs and the private sector, gathered among others through the Social Responsibility network of Slovenia and the Institute for the development of social responsibility (IRDO) and its network, proved to be important for the drafting of sectoral documents, such as the National Action Plan and the Commitment to Implement the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Aside from occasional cooperation in the adoption of documents in which NGOs are recognised as a stakeholder in the process, NGOs are also involved in the promotion of CSR integration into business operations and strategies developed and implemented by Slovenian companies. They organise public awareness campaigns and information dissemination, training of trainers and experts and exchange of good CSR practices (the aforementioned networks and their partners organise two major conferences annually). Among other initiatives, NGOs offer consultancy in the drafting of sustainable (non-financial) reports and company certification – certificates including, for example, the Family Friendly Enterprise Certificate, Sustainable Enterprise Certificate, Socially Responsible Employer Certificate, Standard for Socially Responsible Company Management and Non-Precarious Work, and similar. Civil society organisations are also the initiators and promoters of several CSR awards: the Horus award, the Award for Socially Responsible Practices, the Most Volunteer-Friendly Company Award, the Disabled-Friendly Company Award, etc. As members of the European networks, Slovenian NGOs are involved in efforts to foster CSR on the European and global levels.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The COVID-19 pandemic was a great shock for the economy, regardless of how many or who manage to preserve their businesses. Apart from the obvious financial effects, the crisis has also shed light on major vulnerabilities within companies themselves and in their supply chains – something that remained invisible thus far. CSR is based on the concept of stakeholders – the identification of and strategic cooperation with stakeholders is also a mandatory part of the drafting of sustainable (non-financial) reports. The crisis thus lays bare companies that manage and cooperate with their stakeholders more or less on paper, or as part of their everyday operations, and significantly less on a strategic level. The current crisis will also bring radical changes to the recognition of the owner as the only key stakeholder of a company.

¹⁰ Source: PIAR: Raziskava o razumevanju družbene odgovornosti (Research on understanding social responsibility). URL (in the Slovene language only): <http://www.piar.si/o-drustvu/sekcije/sekcija-za-razvoj-druzbene-odgovornosti-in-nevladne-organizacije/raziskava-razumevanje-druzbene-odgovornosti>.



The crisis is an important reminder – both for companies and citizens – of the role and necessity of a strong welfare state (public health system, education, social security, etc.) and the importance of investing in it. The COVID-19 crisis will thus most probably have an important impact on the development of CSR, as it offers the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive and more honest CSR in a period when social and environmental challenges must be urgently addressed. This is also demonstrated by the programme of the current trio of Presidencies to the Council of the EU, which calls for the drafting of a new EU Action Plan for CSR. International standards and guidelines that are still waiting for broader implementation in Slovenian companies show that the community expects companies to contribute their share towards sustainable development as well as to be aware of the impact their activities have on the environment and society along their entire supply chains. In these recent months, the pandemic has forced companies to re-examine their priorities. In the past, environmental issues, social issues, and governance issues, such as health, security and welfare of employees and employers' practices did not draw as much attention as they have in the past few months. Many companies are now speeding up their adoption of measures to protect their employees and the sustainability of their business operations. We hope that the crisis will convince the government to follow the companies' and NGOs' lead and promote this trend in its legislation, regulations and practices.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- Recommendations for achieving the goal In line with the EU 2012 call to action and in the spirit of the trio of German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies, whose programme includes, among others, an appeal for the drafting of a new communication on CSR, along with an EU Action Plan for Responsible Corporate Behaviour, the Government of Slovenia – in cooperation with key stakeholders – should draft its first national CSR strategy and a national action plan for its implementation.
- The government should prepare guidelines, based on the concept of CSR, for companies covering how to become more actively involved in the implementation of SDGs.
- The government should more actively promote the signing and implementation of companies' commitments to the adopted National Action Plan, along with the implementation of the UN guidelines for the respect of human rights in the economy and the implementation of human rights due diligence by businesses.
- Without further delay, the government should launch the adoption procedure for the EU Directive for the work-life balance of parents and carers, adopted in 2019,¹¹ in cooperation with the key stakeholders, including NGOs and businesses. The Directive must be transposed into national legislation by August 2022.



11 EU Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SL/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019L1158&from=EN>.

Organisation National Youth Council of Slovenia

Topic **DECENT WORK AND
DECENT LIVING CONDITIONS
FOR THE YOUNG**



MLADINSKI
SVET
SLOVENIJE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
COUNCIL
OF SLOVENIA

SDGs **Goal 8:**
**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth,
full and productive employment and decent work for all**
Goal 1:
End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries

SDG targets

- To improve the quality of employment on a systemic level and to ensure quality and decent employment.
- To ensure equal conditions for solving housing issues for all.

Situation Overview

Young people (aged between 15 and 29) encounter more problems in the world of labour than other age groups. A study called Youth 2018/19 points out that the transition of young people onto the labour market is getting increasingly long, while the labour market is becoming increasingly uncertain. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia notes that in the last quarter of 2019, the youth unemployment rate was 7.5%, and was thus almost 3.5 percentage points higher than the aggregate unemployment rate. Data from the Employment Institute of Slovenia (Zavod RS za zaposlovanje – ZRSZ) for 2020 show that 18% of job seekers on average are young people. If we add to this figure young people who are not registered with ZRSZ and are involved in precarious work, the figure would further increase. Youth unemployment is thus still high, and the increasingly more common precarious forms of work do not guarantee young people the social security and opportunities they need in order to plan for their future. Slovenia ranks at the very top among European countries by the number of precarious, ad hoc jobs. Even when employed, young people are still in a worse position than other employees, as the average gross monthly salary of young people (aged between 15–29) last year amounted to three-quarters of the average gross monthly salary of all employed persons in Slovenia.

Long-term unemployed young people remain a challenge, as well as young people whose personal issues (mental, family, physical, etc.) make it more difficult for them to enter the labour market. Special programmes will have to be created for these young people, enabling their comprehensive social and labour market inclusion.

Also important in the fight against poverty – apart from a regulated labour market accessible to all and quality education – is housing policy. Flats on the market are expensive and unattainable for young people, as it is difficult for them to find employment and they often work for a low salary.

We see repeatedly that key problems in education are the transition to the labour market and dropping out of vocational and technical education. There is a lack of emphasis on measures intended for NEET (not in education, employment, or training) youth and young people in rural areas. In a study published on 30 May 2020, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) found an increase in the



number of NEET youth and forecasted that the increasing trend is likely to continue. In future, we will need even more focus on providing quality education and quality youth employment.

In order to prevent early drop-outs from education and to facilitate the transition onto the labour market for young people, two mechanisms apply in Slovenia: apprenticeships and traineeships. In May 2017, the Apprenticeship Act was adopted. In the 2017/18 school year, apprenticeships started to be implemented as a pilot project. The purpose of this measure is to provide practical training to high-school students and thus increase their employability upon graduation.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

The National Youth Council of Slovenia (Mladinski svet Slovenije – MSS) works toward a better position for young people both during their education and in the post-education period through campaigns, participation in public debate and the drafting of bills. The Council puts forward measures to increase young people's employability and draw attention to the deficiencies of the system, which does not provide young people with decent pay for their work. The Council participates in a number of working bodies in Ministries working towards an improved position for young people.

The MSS liaises with various civil society actors mainly through its member organisations. In the field of employment and education, it participates in several working bodies of the government and ministries that include representatives of civil society, practitioners and policymakers.

For a number of years, the MSS has been participating in the working group Youth Guarantee within the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, where it has been working towards systemic measures to increase youth employment with emphasis on creating an environment that enables decent payment for the work done by young people. The MSS participates in public discussions, drafting of legislation and works for improved conditions on the labour market.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The health and socioeconomic crisis affected every sector and deepened social inequalities. Gaining independence has always been challenging for young people due to an increase in precarious forms of employment, relatively low payment for work and an almost non-existent housing policy, but it has become significantly harder during the COVID-19 crisis. Precarious work and problems stemming from it has become particularly pertinent in the present crisis. Many young people lost their employment overnight, as they are the most easily dismissible work force. Thus, the current situation on the labour market does not guarantee survival to many young people, who were already struggling before the crisis.

Those employed in precarious forms of work were among the most threatened groups during the COVID-19 crisis. Their employment fate was left to the arbitrary decisions of employers and were dependent on the mechanisms of solidarity assistance adopted by governments throughout Europe (as opposed to regularly employed workers, who have the mechanisms of social assistance defined in their employment contracts). Based on the trends in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, one can predict that after the wave of dismissals, precarious work formats will again gain ground, as there will be a lot of workforce available.

During the pandemic, the already poor housing situation has worsened for many people. In the current crisis, the worst situation has befallen those who have lost their income while still having to pay high rental prices for their flats. For many people, who already found it difficult to pay the rent with their income before the crisis, the loss of work or diminished income meant that they also lost their home.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



The current employment and education measures are being implemented, but they are mainly not systemic, systemic solutions being something that the MSS has been advocating all along. The MSS expects there will be more systemic, sustainable solutions in these fields in the future, as quality education and decent employment are the basis for the successful transition of young people towards independence.

**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- Through its involvement in various governmental working bodies, the MSS is working for efficient entry into the labour market for young people and for quality and decent employment. At the same time, it points out that active employment policies should be made redundant during the education process.
- The MSS proposes legislative amendments that would disable precarious work that does not grant young people social security and in which young people often work for a salary that is below the poverty threshold. Any kind of work that contains elements of an employment relationship must become subject to a permanent employment contract.

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Organisation

**The Slovenian Federation of
Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS**

**Topic**

**LABOUR MARKET, WORK OF THE ELDERLY
AND RETIREMENT**

SDGs

Goal 8:

**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth,
full and productive employment and decent work for all**

SDG targets

- 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.
- 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

**Situation
Overview**

With the precariousness of work continually growing, it is impossible to implement values such as the common good, socially perceptible and solidary society, partnership between employers and employees and – most important of all – decent work. We need a social consensus regarding the definition of precarious work and adequate, efficient regulatory solutions for its elimination. Precarious work affects mostly young and elderly people, with similar consequences for both generations. Young people experience difficulties in their transition towards independence, often work without



guaranteed income and are forced to accept excessive flexibility and exposure to stress. The consequences of precarious work can be felt at every level, both at the state level, where we speak about low income in the context of a welfare state, and at the level of the individual (weaker health and general well-being) and inter-generational solidarity. One may approach precarious work from a positive angle, as civil society does in cooperation with experts, the state and businesses (standards for socially responsible management of companies and non-precarious work) or from the aspect of sanctions that have to be implemented by the state (the inspectorates). Sustainable forms of work are those that enable both young people and the elderly to be independent and to lead a decent life.

Elderly people have been drawing attention to the major structural problems in Slovenia and the still comparatively low general productivity and lack of adequate workers needed today, which will only continue to get worse into the future. Their estimation is that complete structural reform of the labour market is necessary, rather than partial adjustments or improvisation in response to current pressures. We need an immediate political analysis of the introduction of flexibility of work assignments, labour-time banks and the sharing economy, as well as inclusion of the elderly in these solutions.

The Slovene Protection against Discrimination Act provides an explicit definition of the scope of access to employment, prohibiting age-based discrimination. One of frequent criticism of the Act is that in the context of access to employment, exceptions allowing age-based discrimination are very loosely defined and allow ample possibilities for unequal treatment based on age, despite the existing safeguards. Obstacles in access to employment are observed due to ageism.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Advocacy for ensuring decent work for all and raising awareness on the risks of discrimination against the elderly.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

Growing precarious and other atypical forms of work, more dismissals, economic downturn.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- The labour market must be organised in such a way that people will remain qualified to continue working for as long as they want to or are able, in a way that they deem best, supported by flexible approaches towards employment and retirement.



Organisation Institute for Electronic Participation – InePA (Network of NGOs for an inclusive information society in Slovenia)



Topic **INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SOCIETY**

SDGs **Goal 9:**
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

Goal 4:
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

SDG targets The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)¹ summarises performance in the area of connectivity, human capital, use of internet services, integration of digital technology and digital public services.

Situation Overview **Strategic goals and indicators**

*Digital Slovenia 2020 – Development strategy for information society by 2020*² is a strategic umbrella document for digitalisation with an intensive and innovative use of information-communication technologies (ICT) and the internet in all segments of society. In the strategy, the general performance is summarised by the indicator ‘Digital growth – general’, which measures the performance in digital growth in Slovenia with reference to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The baseline value of the indicator in the strategy (p. 42) is the DESI score for Slovenia in 2014 (Slovenia ranks 19th, low performance). The target value of the indicator for 2020 is a DESI ranking of 12th for Slovenia (medium or high performance).

*The Slovenian Development Strategy 2030*³ lists the DESI index ranking as one of the development performance indicators. The target value of the strategy for 2030 is to ranking among the first third of EU countries in all five dimensions of the index, or the final ranking of 9th among EU countries. The baseline value is considered to be Slovenia’s ranking of 17th from 2017.

Data and state-of-affairs

In June 2020, the European Commission published the most recent DESI Index, which ranks Slovenia 16th⁴. The IMAD Development Report for 2020⁵ indicates that, in recent years, Slovenia has advanced in the Digital Economy and Society index at a similar pace to the EU, thus, its ranking in the middle of EU countries remains more or less unchanged (p. 101). IMAD

1 URL: <https://digital-agenda-data.eu/charts/desi-composite>.

2 URL (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MJU/DID/Strategija-razvoja-informacijske-druzbe-2020.pdf>.

3 URL (in the Slovene language only): https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/SVRK/Strategija-razvoja-Slovenije-2030/Strategija_razvoja_Slovenije_2030.pdf.

4 URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/scoreboard/slovenia>.

5 URL (in the Slovene language only): https://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/razvoj_slovenije/2020/slovenski/POR2020.pdf.



points out the very modest changes in internet user skills, where Slovenia has not kept up with the EU average (Slovenia ranks 17th)⁶. These developments are even slower than the EU average. According to the Statistical Office of Slovenia, data⁷ for people aged 16 to 74 show that 28% of people had low digital skills and 17% had no digital skills at all in Slovenia in 2019.

2020 Government Review on the implementation of SDGs in Slovenia

In the second voluntary national review of the implementation of SDGs⁸, in the Goal 4 section, the Slovenian Government drew attention to poor digital skills among adults in Slovenia, especially among those with lower education or among the elderly (p. 35). In this context, the government refers to the measure intended to improve digital (computer) literacy in the education system (p. 36) and the commitment to promote digital competences of all of society's stakeholders (p. 97).

On the other hand, in section SDG 9 (p. 56) the government review provides incomplete data on Slovenia's score on the DESI index. The review does not include data on the 2019 score (Slovenia ranked 16th) and it provides incorrect data on the ranking in 2015. Based on the European Commission's database, the correct ranking was 16th⁹. The government review states a ranking of 19th for 2015 and 15th for 2018, thus implying that Slovenia advanced 4 positions over that period. However, when considering the European Commission's data and the IMAD report, the fact remains that Slovenia did not advance at all when compared to the other EU member states.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Within their capacities, NGOs (Association Duh časa, Institute Vsak, Institute Simbioza Genesis, Institute Beletrina, Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations, Inter-municipal association of the blind and visually impaired of Nova Gorica, Institute Nora – LOGOUT, Association Ljudmila, Institute MISSS, Association Rampa, Association Lugos, Institute Kersnikova and others) actively and successfully deal with the problems of poor digital skills among the population, issues around e-inclusion of vulnerable groups and the promotion of digitalisation in the non-governmental sector. However, due to the lack of long-term systemic support for the development of the non-governmental sector in the field of information society and due to excluding conditions for NGOs in public calls related to digitalisation, the majority of NGO projects are not inter-related and thus remain limited to specific target groups.

The NGO Network for an inclusive information society¹⁰ strives to connect and strengthen the non-governmental sector in the field of information society. It brings together 30 NGOs active in fields such as digital equality and accessibility, digital culture and multimedia, management of the internet, ICT solutions, e-government and e-democracy. The network implements advocacy in the drafting and monitoring of policies related to digitalisation and focusing on the human aspects of digitalisation and promotion of the non-governmental sector as a stakeholder in the digital transformation of Slovenia. The Network is the founding member of the Slovenian Digital Coalition.

6 URL: <https://digital-agenda-data.eu/charts/desi-components> (Internet user skills indicator).

7 URL (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/News/Index/8818>.

8 URL: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26450VNR_2020_Slovenia_Report.pdf.

9 URL: <https://digital-agenda-data.eu/charts/desi-composite>.

10 More information (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.informacijska-druzba.org>.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The 2020 Digital Slovenia Strategy contains the measure 'Support to projects of digital literacy and e-inclusion', with funding in the amount of one million euro for the 2016-2020 period (p. 39), yet the state does not implement this measure. Through organised public events, press releases, and dialogue with decision makers, the Network NGO-VID has pointed out the non-implementation of the measures on several occasions, also noting the consequences for an inclusive digital society. The Office for Information Society at the Ministry of Public Administration announced a call to be published in autumn 2020 intended for NGOs and focusing on the fostering of e-skills and the promotion of internet use among the target groups.

On the occasion of the international day of telecommunication and information society, on 17 May 2020, the NGO-VID Network issued a press release entitled 'Coronavirus pandemic unveils gaps in digitalisation in Slovenia in the segment of e-skills, e-services and e-content'¹¹. In the press release, the Network pointed out that during the pandemic and quarantine, various groups of population had problems with distant communication due to insufficient digitalisation of public services, payable and incompatible software and user-unfriendly e-services. Stories about internet fraud, disinformation and addiction to digital technologies resurged. Many problems were encountered in working and education from home, especially with the e-inclusion of vulnerable social groups. The question of the digitalisation of the NGOs themselves appeared, too. During the pandemic, the need for software and internet services for work and online communication of NGOs escalated. Their non-profit nature forced NGOs to look for accessible digital technologies, available at affordable prices from licensed providers. Thus, technological dependence on individual corporations is inevitable. For this reason, it is necessary to develop a supportive environment that will enable NGOs to have access to free digital technologies that are not just financially affordable but also independent, reliable and safe. The NGO-VID Network has concluded that the afore-mentioned gaps in digitalisation among the population and NGOs result from weak political support and insufficient fiscal mechanisms for digital literacy and the development of e-services and e-content.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Measures and actions are being implemented, but due to a low executive capacity (poor implementation of adopted measures and poor inter-service cooperation) at the level of the state, which was also exposed by IMAD in its Development Report 2020 (p. 160), Slovenia has not achieved the foreseen strategic and development goals for digitalisation.

Recommendations for achieving the goal

Recommendations for achieving the goal The NGO network for an inclusive information society calls upon the Slovenian government to include the following financially backed measures in the revised strategy for digitalisation in Slovenia:

¹¹ URL: <https://www.informacijska-druzba.org/2020/05/17/koronavirus-vrzeli-digitalizacije-slovenije-e-vescine-e-storitve-e-vsebine/>.



- Strengthen non-formal learning of e-skills, digital literacy and responsible use of technologies among the Slovenian population;
- Develop free-access open-code digital services adapted to various social groups for an easier life during periods of physical distancing;
- A full-scale digitalisation of public sector services for transactions with citizens;
- Enhanced strategic planning with full adherence to participatory democracy standards that improve the coherence and feasibility of strategic documents of the Slovene state related to digitalisation.

These measures are focused on the advancement of Slovenia's score in the DESI index in the segments 'human capital' and 'use of internet services'. It is in the latter that Slovenia has the highest deficit in comparison to the EU average (22nd position).

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Organisation National Youth Council of Slovenia



MLADINSKI
SVET
SLOVENIJE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
COUNCIL
OF SLOVENIA

Topic **YOUTH, SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CLIMATE JUSTICE**

SDGs **Goal 9:**
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 13:
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its consequences

SDG targets

- To improve and upgrade public transport lines.
- To build public infrastructure in peripheral areas.
- Promotion of sustainable social action with emphasis on transition into low-carbon society.
- To improve travel habits of young people.
- To include young people in drafting, implementing and evaluating programmes, related to the environment.

Situation Overview All over the world, young people are coming together to remind us of climate problems and advocate for a clean and healthy environment. Young people are the ones who will feel the consequences of non-action in climate change mitigation the most, which is why a responsible attitude towards our environment is a requirement that neither politics nor businesses or any other subjects impacting our environment with their actions can ignore.

Despite the efforts and commitment of Slovenia and the EU for rural development, the differences between life in towns and life in rural areas are still very pronounced, which places young people from rural areas in an even

more vulnerable position. Remote and unregulated access to urban centres makes access to quality employment and public services even more difficult. Despite the fact that housing problems are not so pronounced in rural areas, we have to note that young people solve their housing problems primarily by building annexes to their parents' existing homes, which may lead to a slower transition to independence of young people and, consequently, cause greater distress. It is therefore crucial to guarantee equal conditions for young people in towns and in rural areas and to create an environment that will enable young people to lead a decent life in rural areas.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Civil society is of great importance in the fight against climate change. Civil society points out difficulties and is always ready to actively participate in solving the crucial issues of our times.

The MSS is very aware of the social reality and the urgency of action needed to fight climate change. As early as in 2012, they published a document entitled 'Sustainable Development and Youth Organisations', which aimed to raise awareness among youth organisations on the importance of sustainable development and its implementation in youth organisations. In 2018, on the initiative of young people in their structures, the MSS elected the first vice-president for sustainable development, thus giving the topic of sustainable development an important, formal place within the framework of their work and advocacy.

The MSS coordinates the work of Youth Councils in local communities, offers them expert support and provides education and training to enable them to advocate successfully for the interests of young people in the local environment. The MSS thus makes certain that young people in all Slovenian regions, in both towns and rural areas, have adequate opportunities to participate actively in society.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.

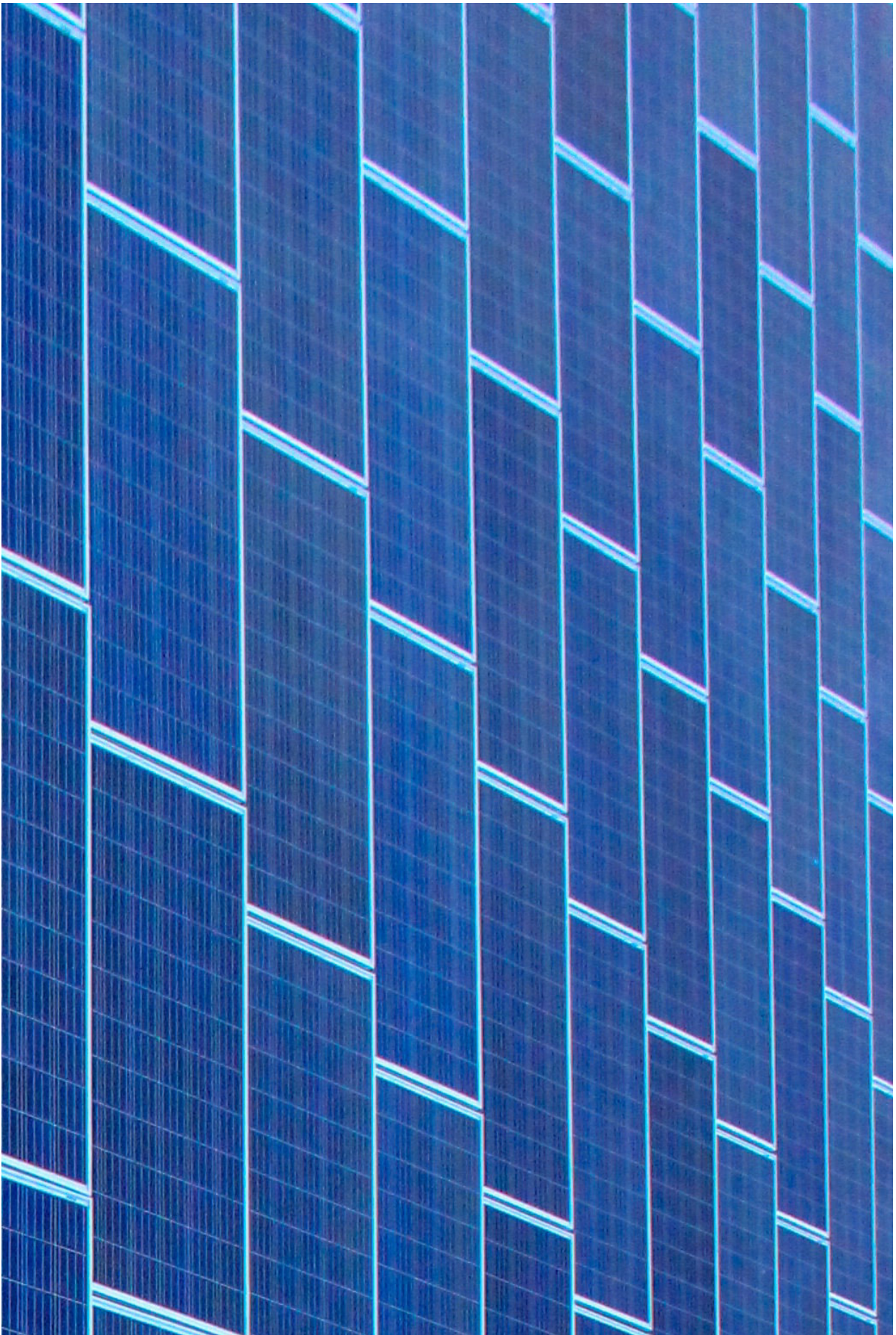


Recommendations for achieving the goal

- **The introduction of subjects related to a responsible attitude towards the environment into school curricula.** The introduction of subjects related to a responsible attitude towards the environment can most certainly be part of the Civic Education subject. The MSS advocates for making this subject mandatory in elementary and high schools within the foreseen reform of the education system.
- **Promoting the use of public transport.** The state should be more aware of the importance of a well-organised public passenger transport system from two aspects: sustainable mobility and providing quality services for all. Public transport passenger lines need to be upgraded and made more efficient and a single ticket must be introduced.
- **Building cycling lanes and footpaths.** In the context of building safe cycling lanes and footpaths, Slovenia still has much to do. It should therefore start earmarking more funds for their building both on the national and the local levels.

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Organisation Association Cultural, Informational and Counseling Center Legebitra



Topic LGBTI RIGHTS

SDGs **Goal 10:**
Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 3:
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG targets

- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.
- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
- 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

Situation Overview

Slovenia has made great progress in the field of LGBTI rights in the past, due to strong and vocal LGBTI CSOs, but for the country to continue to advance in this area, much more involvement of national government and state institutions is necessary, especially in the field of promoting tolerance, diversity and anti-discrimination measures, which will have to be structured and strategic and be developed in dialogue with LGBTI CSOs to be effective.

Discriminatory laws and projects that do not acknowledge LGBTI specific needs and negative social attitudes have hindered implementation of the 'leave no one behind' principle for the LGBTI community. The impact results in lower income, poor health, lower education, lack of access to justice and more inequalities.

The quality of health services, especially trans-specific services, is a significant issue in Slovenia. As Slovenia is a small country, there is only one interdisciplinary team for medical gender confirmation¹. Due to a numerical-

¹ Written Contribution on the position of LGBTI persons to the 3rd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of The Republic of Slovenia, submitted by Legebitra, TransAkcija, Škuc Magnus and ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey, pp. 10–11.



ly small population of transgender individuals, the Slovenian healthcare system does not carry out some medical procedures (for example phalloplasty, vaginoplasty, metoidioplasty, etc.). CSOs TransAkcija² and Legebitra have received reports from transgender individuals that the approach to trans people by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists is frequently demeaning, intrusive, offensive and/or based on stereotypes. Most transgender individuals also report that they are not properly informed about the process, its stages and the various treatment possibilities of medical gender confirmation.

After years of calls about the non-formalised medical gender confirmation process from CSOs TransAkcija and Legebitra to the Ministry of Health, the ministry has summoned the Centre for Mental Health to formalise the interdisciplinary team for medical gender confirmation and strengthen the training of medical personnel on trans-specific issues. At the beginning of 2020, the interdisciplinary team for medical gender confirmation was formalised by the University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana.

In 2018, Slovenia took important steps to prevent stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV. The Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia limited access to information on prescribed medication for HIV to general practitioners only. In 2018, the second instance court in Maribor ruled in a case of a person living with HIV who was refused access to healthcare by a healthcare worker due to their HIV status in 2016, the court decision claiming this as unlawful and discriminatory. There is an existing National Strategy on the prevention and management of HIV³ and the Commission on AIDS, with LGBTI CSOs among its membership, meets regularly.

While young LGBTI people experience most violence and/or discrimination on the streets (39% of respondents), based on the 2018 Pride Parade Association study, a total of 29% of respondents experienced violence in schools and other education facilities⁴. 15% of LGBTI youth that participated in the FRA survey released in 2020 said that they felt discriminated against due to being LGBTI by school/university personnel⁵. 71% of respondents to the 2020 FRA LGBTI survey said that during their education, topics regarding LGBTI issues were not addressed⁶, while 15% of respondents who were targets of physical or sexual attacks because they were LGBTI said that the perpetrator was someone from their school, college or university⁷.

In 2015, the Open Institute, Peace institute and Legebitra collaborated on an analysis of Slovenian legislation that showed that same-sex couples are discriminated against in more than 70 laws⁸. The Civil union Act⁹ was adopted in 2016. In the legislation, the difference is still present in access

2 For more information about TransAkcija, see: <https://transakcija.si/english/>.

3 National strategy on the prevention and management of HIV 2017–2025: <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZ/DOKUMENTI/Preventiva-in-skrb-za-zdravje/nalezljive-bolezni/nac-strat-HIV-2017.pdf>.

4 Parade Association, study: Everyday Life of LGBTIQ + Youth, 2018, p. 22, URL: http://www.ljubljana.pride.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Vsakdanje-%C5%BEivljenje-mladih-LGBTIQ-oseb_eknjiga.pdf.

5 FRA LGBTI Survey 2020, country: Slovenia, LGBTI group: all; URL: https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/2020/lgbti-survey-data-explorer?locale=EN&dataSource=LGBTI&media=png&width=740&topic=2.+Discrimination&question=DEXindd1_2E&subset=AllSubset&country=SI&superSubset=0--All&plot=inCountry&M2V=inCountry.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 URL: https://legebitra.si/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Pravni-polozej-istospolnih-partnerstev-in-star%C5%A1evstva_feb_2015.pdf.

9 Civil Union Act (Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 33/16), URL: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7434>.

to joint adoption for same-sex partners (it is explicitly excluded) and access for single women to procedures of infertility treatment is strictly forbidden (only married women and men and those living in non-marital partnerships have access)¹⁰. Additionally, the Civil Union Act states that partners in civil unions or in non-formal civil unions are not eligible to procedures of infertility treatment and procedures of biomedical-assisted procreation. In 2019, presumption of paternity was made available for female same-sex couples in a civil union, meaning that when the child is born, both of the mothers' names are written in the child's birth certificate, under the section 'Information about the parents'.

Blood transfusion in Slovenia still discriminates against men who have sex with men (hereinafter: MSM), with gay and bisexual men being the largest proportion. Although regulators claim that the regulation is not aimed towards gay men, but based on the fact that MSM are a high risk group for HIV transmission¹¹, they stipulate that men who have ever had sexual relations with another man cannot be blood donors. On the contrary, high risk sexual behaviour of heterosexual persons is not an exclusion criterion for blood donation.

According to the FRA 2020, 32% of respondents hide being LGBTI at work and 47% hide their LGBTI identity in school¹². 51% thought that politicians commonly use offensive language about LGBTI people¹³. 60% of LGBTI people in Slovenia had personally been harassed in the past five years and 22% have been physically/sexually assaulted or threatened with violence at home or elsewhere¹⁴.

More than half of LGBTI people in Slovenia are uninformed about anti-discrimination laws that protect LGBTI people. When stating reasons for not reporting the most recent incident of discrimination, 52% said nothing would happen or change, 33% said they did not want to reveal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and/or sex characteristics, while 37% that it is not worth reporting it¹⁵ – it happens all the time.

In terms of inclusive public spaces, most public LGBT community events are held in the capital of Ljubljana, where most LGBT organisations are based. Other cities in Slovenia have no places operated by and for the LGBTI community. Some rural youth centres have recently adopted some LGBT programmes¹⁶. At the local level, the Municipality of Ljubljana is actively supporting LGBTI issues by specifically mentioning LGBTI topics in

10 Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedical-assisted Procreation Act (Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 70/00 in 15/17 – DZ), URL: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO2518>.

11 The Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia explanation on exclusion of MSM from blood donation: <http://www.ztm.si/pojasnilo/>.

12 FRA Survey 2020; URL: https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/2020/lgbti-survey-data-explorer?locale=EN&dataSource=LGBTI&media=png&width=740&topic=1.+Living+openly+and+daily+life&question=DEXavoid_hands&subset=AllSubset&country=SI&superSubset=0--All&plot=inCountry&M2V=inCountry.

13 Report: 'Life on the Margins: Survey Results of the Experiences of LGBTI People in South-Eastern Europe', World Bank in cooperation with IPSOS, ERA and The Williams Institute, September 2018, pp. 15, 17, 18, 29. URL: <https://www.lgbti-era.org/sites/default/files/pdffdocs/0354%20Life%20on%20the%20Margins%20Survey%20results%20of%20the%20living%20experiences%20of%20lgbti%20people%20in%20south%20eastern%20europe-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf>.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 57, 59, 63, 69, 74.

15 FRA Survey 2020; URL: https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/2020/lgbti-survey-data-explorer?locale=EN&dataSource=LGBTI&media=png&width=740&topic=1.+Living+openly+and+daily+life&question=DEXavoid_hands&subset=AllSubset&country=SI&superSubset=0--All&plot=inCountry&M2V=inCountry.

16 As stated by members of LGBTI communities in Slovenia.

their strategy for the development of social welfare in Ljubljana¹⁷ and their LGBT friendly certificate program¹⁸. Apart from that, there is no LGBTI strategy or action plan on the national or local levels.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Despite important services and advocacy activities implemented by LGBT CSOs, most LGBT CSOs are funded through projects and programs without ensured core funding or operational funding provided by the state. Often, CSOs are part of specific interdisciplinary commissions (Inter-departmental Commission for Human Rights, Commission for Istanbul convention, Council for NGOs, etc.), but recently, the Government has established a working group on Legal gender recognition in which NGOs were not invited to participate.

In Slovenia, decision-makers (Government) lack a focal point to act as the key interlocutor and who would engage in dialogue with civil society in providing access to LGBTI rights. This hampers the opportunities for constant and meaningful dialogue for LGBTI NGOs. There is also no comprehensive action plan or strategy in the field of LGBTI equality (or tackling discrimination in general).

LGBTI CSOs implement important support services for LGBTI people. HIV/Aids prevention activities have been initiated by ŠKUC Magnus since 1984, while Legebitra has developed a good practice of community-based testing, advocacy, support and prevention activities¹⁹.

In 2014, Legebitra organised the first national expert meeting on transgender issues – TransMisija, which is now organised every year in November by TransAkcija. Legebitra has been cooperating with TransAkcija since its establishment in 2015, especially on the issue of legal gender recognition²⁰.

In recent years, Legebitra has established a dialogue with the leadership of the Slovenian Police force. In 2020 they started collaborating on a project called Trust Co(o)p. One of the goals of the project is to train police officers on how to deal with LGBTI victims of hate crime and to establish police LGBTI liaisons who will provide victims support in cases of police processing of hate crimes based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression and sex characteristics. However, at the moment, the police service does not collect data regarding violence that has been committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (hereinafter: SOGIESC). The police service only records crimes initiated by hate, but does not differentiate between different grounds on which the hatred is based. Therefore, Legebitra collects statistical information on hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or sexual expression through the <https://nprav.si/> application. In 2019,

17 Strategy for the development of social security in Ljubljana; URL: <https://www.ljubljana.si/assets/Uploads/strategija-sv-v-mol-2013-2020.pdf>.

18 LGBT Friendly; URL: <https://www.ljubljana.si/sl/moja-ljubljana/odprto-in-dostopno-mesto/lgbt/certifikat-lgbt-prijazno/>.

19 Compendium of good practices in the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region; URL: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/compendium-of-good-practices-in-the-health-sector-response-to-hiv-in-the-who-european-region>.

20 Written Contribution to the Report on Legal Gender Recognition of UN Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, ERA and 15 other CSOs, June 2018, p. 23; URL: <https://www.lgbti-era.org/sites/default/files/pdfdocs/Report%20on%20Legal%20Gender%20Recognition%20in%20the%20Western%20Balkans%20and%20Turkey.pdf>.

**Potential
impacts of
the COVID-19
health crisis
on the
implementation
of SDGs**

Legebitra recorded 4 cases of violence based on sexual orientation, 2 based on sexual expression and 2 based on all three personal circumstances (sexual orientation, sexual identity and sexual expression).

Social distancing, isolation, quarantine

The Legebitra counselling and youth programs were approached by a large number of students who were forced to move out of student residence halls because of a governmental measure but could not return to their primary settings due to extremely poor relationships with their parents or caretakers or they were unwelcome because of their sexual orientation and/or identity. The student dormitories, after the intervention of student organisations, remained open and residence has been allowed for those who have no alternative residence, but this applies only to university and not secondary school students. Some students that could return to their environments were not out of the closet at home, because these environments were homophobic, transphobic and/or biphobic, so they generally avoided their home environments where possible. Income shortages also mean that LGBTI people may be forced to move out of their apartments due to their inability to pay rent, which increases the risk of homelessness among LGBTI people. A larger number of our users have reported economic problems they face due to a loss of income. It is harder for LGBTI persons and other minorities to find a job in general, let alone in times of crisis, which is why many apply for various types of precarious work, which is now unavailable in most cases. Also, a large percentage of our users are students, whose only income allowing them to study was student work, which they currently cannot do.

Legebitra estimates that there has been an increase in various forms of violence, about which we are lacking more detailed information. They have been informed of increased anxiety, sexual dysphoria and depression among young LGBTI people.

Temporary suspension of HIV and other sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing in communities of men who have sex with men and impaired medical activities that enable treatment of HIV and other STIs have led to poor health circumstances for LGBTI people. There is a risk of increase of new HIV infections and other STIs in the months that will follow the pandemic.

Due to the suspending of health services for non-life threatening conditions, access to procedures such as hormone therapies, surgeries for people in the early stages of transition and further specialised treatment for those already in transition has become difficult or almost impossible.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

In order to secure the achievement of the targets set within SDGs and in line with the *leave no one behind* principle, Legebitra proposes the following list of recommendations be considered when reflecting on the position of LGBTI people in Slovenia:

- Ensure that all awareness-raising activities related to the Istanbul convention include vulnerable groups of women mentioned in the



explanatory memorandum of the Convention, especially lesbians, bisexual women and transgender persons, as well as all LGBTI topics, in order to achieve equality in Slovenia;

- Amend the current legislation to allow access to joint adoption for same-sex partners, as well as infertility treatment for same-sex couples and single women;
- Remove any provisions related to blood transfusion that discriminate against men who have sex with men as blood donors;
- Establish an LGBTI focal point inside the governmental structure that would hold a dialogue with LGBTI CSOs and encourage progress in the field of LGBTI rights and life;
- Introduce strategies on tackling violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons, including within the educational and employment systems, accompanied by relevant action plans of implementation on the national level and within local governments and develop programs for LGBT youth safe houses;
- Amend the Criminal Code of Slovenia to introduce explicit definition of hate crime as an aggravating circumstance on the basis of, *inter alia*, SOGIESC; and amend criminal legislation in order to ensure higher protection from hate speech based, *inter alia*, on SOGIESC;
- Provide support to LGBTI civil society in organising public campaigns and events to increase visibility of intersex persons;
- Ensure the prohibition of non-urgent operations on intersex persons and ensure provision of adequate medical, psychological and social support to intersex persons and their families and establish adequate protocols and annual data gathering on intersex-related diagnoses and medical interventions in state medical centres and private practices;
- Amend antidiscrimination legislation to include sex characteristics as personal grounds for protection from discrimination;
- Provide support to trans CSOs in organising public campaigns and events to increase the visibility of trans persons and combat prejudices, stereotypes, hate speech, transphobia and discrimination; as well as events and services for the trans community in order to increase, *inter alia*, awareness on how to combat their human rights violations and sustain their well-being;
- In cooperation with trans CSOs, introduce precise protocols and guidance on legal gender recognition and trans affirming healthcare based on a person's self-determination and in line with international standards and best practices;
- In cooperation with LGBTI CSOs, introduce safe spaces and public events for LGBTI communities living outside the capital of Ljubljana;
- Secure sustainable core and operational funding for LGBTI CSOs and secure adequate representation of LGBTI CSOs in decision-making and consultative processes related to LGBTI legal and policy frameworks on the local and national levels.

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Organisation Association for raising awareness and protection – antidiscrimination centre (Društvo za osveščanje in varstvo – center antidiskriminacije – OVCA)



Topic **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND, THE PRINCIPLE OF (INCLUSIVE) EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE 2030 AGENDA**

SDGs **Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries**

**Situation
Overview**

A reflection on the particularities of the Slovene understanding of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs from the point of view of protection of human rights (especially its legal dimension) raises concern that the transformative content of the commitments stemming from the Agenda is not understood at all and that some crucial, indispensable structures, mechanisms and processes are missing that would ensure that the Agenda becomes a real basis for policies with more tangible, positive results.

The question of misunderstanding of the goals, illustrated by the difficulties in the Agenda's Slovene translation

We wonder whether the Slovene public and public authorities really understand the scope of adopted obligations and political commitments from the Agenda. It seems the commitments were adopted with some reservations. The Slovenian translations of some of the key documents, which set the standards for the protection of human rights, are manifestly incorrect in some of the key aspects. This has already been established, for instance, in the translation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as pointed out by the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018. In the translation of the Convention, terminology was based on established, yet sometimes obsolete terms and concepts in the Slovene language, which distorted the understanding of the document. The Slovenian understanding of the topic was thus projected on the Convention and its mechanisms, instead of the other way around. Crucial emphases were, thus, lost in translation and with them, the awareness on the necessity to change the paradigm. The same was true of the document Changing the World: the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda¹. We fear that the transformative aspect of the 2030 Agenda was lost. We have not performed a detailed analysis of the complete document in the Slovene language from this point of view, but have concluded that the translation is incorrect based on two key priorities that highlight the issues of poverty elimination and accessible education. The Agenda's emphasis on efficient and concrete *de facto* (or inclusive – *vključujoč*) equality (*enakost*) is completely distorted (in the Slovene translation the goal is, as a rule, limited to formal equity – *enakopravnost*). The same refers

¹ Slovene translation available at: https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/publikacije/Agenda_za_trajnostni_razvoj_2030.pdf.



to the capacity to develop human potential – *človeške potencialne* (replaced in the translation by mere endowments – *danosti*). To develop human potential, states are determined – and this is a key emphasis – to eliminate poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions and to ascertain that all people will be able to fulfil their potentials (not just ‘endowments’ – *danosti*) in dignity – *v dostojanstvu* (not just ‘in decency’ – *dostojno*) and equality – *enakosti* (not just equity – *enakopravnosti*) and in a healthy environment². Among the individual goals, the distortion of goal 4 really stands out: to ensure inclusive and equal – *enako* (not equitable – *enakopravno*) quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all³. Under goal 4, target 4a reads as follows: Build and upgrade – *nadgraditi* (not only ‘transform’ – *preurediti*) education facilities that are child, disability – *invalidnost* (not just ‘for the disabled’ – *za invalide*) and gender sensitive (not only ‘adapted to’ – *prilagojene*) and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive – *vključujoče* (not just ‘accepting’ – *sprejemljivo*) and effective – *učinkovito* (not just ‘encouraging’ – *spodbudno*) learning environments for all⁴. With the exception of gender equality, the meaning of the words *equal* and *equitable* is distorted in almost every instance (in items 20, 25, 35, 61, 68, in Goal 4, Targets 2.3, 6.1, 6.2, 9.1, 10.4, 16.3, 10.10) by use of the word ‘equity’ – *enakopravnost*. Many distortions also occur in items that require inclusion – *vključevanje* (not merely ‘open’ – *odprto* or ‘acceptable’ – *sprejemljivo* in SDGs 4 and 16).

Content highlights: the ‘leaving no one behind’ principle, equality and mechanisms for protecting and promoting the respect of human rights

The ‘leaving no one behind’ principle, as well as other goals (and indeed all the international agreements on the protection of human rights) require a detailed monitoring of the situation and trends (upward or downward trend or *status quo*) for different groups of people, especially those that are particularly exposed to individual violations of human rights, for example to discrimination, poverty or social exclusion. This is the only way to plan and assess all the *impacts* of public policy measures in a truly responsible and sufficiently rational way and evaluate their effectiveness regarding the individual SDGs. Thus, measures can be adapted to real situations in real time and sometimes even extremely rapidly if necessary, as was the case in the COVID-19 pandemic. In Slovenia, adequate and sufficient monitoring of the situation is not ensured and the collection of ‘equality data’ is insufficient. This is why the data and indicators in the government report are only disaggregated in a few places and, even then, primarily only by age and gender. The global framework of indicators for SDGs and their targets recommends explicitly that the states disaggregate the SDG indicators by

2 According to the Slovene translation, the states are only committing themselves to enabling people to ‘use their endowments in a decent and equitable way, and in a healthy environment.’ – *‘dostojno, enakopravno in v zdravem okolju izkoriščali svoje danosti.’*

3 English original: ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’. Slovenian translation: ‘Vsem zagotoviti vključujočo in enako /ne enakopravno/ kakovostno izobrazbo ter spodbujati možnosti vseživljenjskega učenja za vsakogar.’

4 English original: ‘Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all’. Slovenian translation: ‘Zgraditi in nadgraditi /ne le »preurediti«/ izobraževalne ustanove, občutljive /ne le »prilagojene«/ za otroke, invalidnost /ne le »invalide«/ in spol, ter vsem omogočiti varno, nenasilno, vključujočo /ne le »sprejemljivo«/ in učinkovito /ne le »spodbudno«/ učno okolje.’

income, gender, age, race, ethnic origin, migrant status, disability, geographical location and other circumstances²¹. In general, the monitoring of the situation regarding the protection of human rights in Slovenia is greatly inadequate and mainly limited to procedural indicators (the number and nature of measures). This deficiency alone severely hampers, if not prevents, any serious implementation of commitments stemming from the Agenda and is particularly problematic in the broader context of the deficient structure and mechanisms of protection and promotion of the enjoyment of human rights, which is also reflected in the warnings issued by control mechanisms of the UN and the Council of Europe.

The system of respect, protection and promotion of the enjoyment of human rights is weak and needs a complete overhaul. What is particularly lacking is that the vision, strategic policy orientation and governance for the topic of human rights – with the exception of declarations – is far from the political priorities.

The respect, or indeed the prevention, of potential violations by the authorities and the protection of human rights require adequate legal regulation. However, a number of rights still do not enjoy sufficient safeguards and are subject to far too much legal interpretation. There is a lack of clarity with regard to the existence and content of rights (for example, the right to adequate housing is explicitly recognised only in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the European Social Charter), conditions for their enjoyment (for example, the right to social security and other related rights are not just entitlements of citizens, as stipulated by the Constitution; or the question of which rights children enjoy, with respect to their age), and/or modalities of the implementation or procedures for exercising a certain right (for example, the right to participate in the drafting of regulations exists only in theory) and at the level of protection mechanisms (for example, a diffused system of legal remedies in cases of discrimination). In certain cases, sanctions are not prescribed (for example, for the majority of safeguards for the protection against hate speech). From the point of view of the 'leaving no one behind' principle and the principle of (inclusive) equality, it is problematic that there is no adequate regulation of intersectional discrimination and of the requirement for reasonable adjustments (for persons with disabilities). This narrows the perspective considerably on who can be left behind and why (what needs to be done to ban the omissions that can lead to people being left behind).

We urgently need a comprehensive system of truly accessible and effective legal and other remedies for the prevention and elimination of all human rights violations. It is necessary to consistently enforce effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions and measures to eliminate the consequences of violations, as protection in practice is weak. The probability that those directly responsible (even for serious, mass or long-term violations of human rights) will be subject to any serious repercussions, is unfortunately minimal in Slovenia. The most serious violations committed by the state are being eliminated at a snail's pace (sometimes taking several decades); they are being 'socialised'; reductions of compensation are being introduced, etc. Emphasis on the enforcement of sanctions is unfortunately dictated by a low culture of rights and omnipresent legal positivism.

It is not clear which entity really governs, directs and coordinates human rights-related policy (the government does it only nominally). This question alone leads to a situation in which the adopted policies are often just the

21 Annex to the Resolution of the UN General Assembly UN A/RES/71/313 from 6 July 2017.



smallest common denominator of inter-sectoral 'harmonisation'. It's common for several stakeholders to declare competence in one field (for example, anti-discrimination) in practice; however, it later transpires that no one is actually competent in the field at all. Cases of grey zones and unsystematic approaches are compounded in policies, as these generally do not follow a human rights-based approach, but at best only mitigate the consequences of the situation (and do not address, at least not to a sufficient extent, the reasons for the situation). Slovenia does not have, even nominally, a comprehensive strategy for the protection of human rights (the commitments from the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action from 1993), nor does it have individual indispensable vertical strategies, for example, for the fight against racism and xenophobia (Durban Declaration from 2001), or for the protection of the rights of the child (the new Programme for Children has been in the pipeline since 2017).

The situation in certain fields (for example, anti-discrimination) and the situation regarding the position of 'vulnerable social groups' (for example, persons with disabilities, children) require additional, proactive measures, including actions by special independent institutions (safe environment, direct support in the exercising and protection of rights, monitoring of the situation, promotion of all players). Such institutions are either completely non-existent, despite international legal obligations (for example, regarding the rights of children under Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child), or they do exist but their functioning is not efficient enough (the mechanism to monitor the situation and promote the rights of persons with disabilities under Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). The Advocate of the Principle of Equality (promotion of equality and protection against discrimination) has had its budget formally increased over the past few years; however, it was still not possible for the institution to develop its full capacities. The executive branch has leverage to obstruct even independent institutions in the absorption of funds from their budget and sometimes prevents them from using the budget at all. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately one-third of the approved budget was cancelled, including funding to the Advocate of the Principle of Equality.

Even the functioning of the Human Rights Ombudsman as the national institution for human rights is developing at a slow pace. The monitoring of the situation regarding human rights is critically deficient. It is not even clear who is supposed to implement this monitoring (not even after the launching of the Ombudsman's office as the national institution for the promotion of human rights), and even the sections that are clear (for example, the field of anti-discrimination) are still missing a system for data collection and indicators and mainly quality indicators. In the procedures for drafting and implementing legislation and policies, there is no *ex ante* human rights impact assessment, no systemic investigation of grey zones and no relevant *ex post* assessment. These processes are indispensable for comprehensive monitoring of the implementation of the Agenda and in order to anticipate how protectionist actions by the state (and economy) may affect third countries (including their economies and people).

The promotion (the example set by the state, guidelines, raising awareness, education of crucial actors) and development of the culture of rights have no clear direction. These activities are mainly implemented *ad hoc*, through projects of limited duration, financed from external sources and preferably left to external actors, such as NGOs. Also missing is systemic support for the establishment and capacity building of network alliances of all stakeholders, including, particularly, the non-governmental sector and

‘vulnerable groups’. These groups would provide indispensable feedback as an integral part of democratic and control processes. It is symptomatic that there is no platform for expert and democratic consultation about these topics; some sectoral consultations that did exist have since been abolished (for example, about anti-discrimination). The mechanisms of direct participation in the execution of power remain undefined. Promotional and positive measures (for example, subsidies, the employment quotas system) and special minority rights are necessary; however, they may only be legitimate and effective as an upgrade or a complement to execution of primary functions for the respect and protection of human rights and not as leverage for cosmetic and makeshift interventions, let alone a substitute for the execution of primary functions for the respect and protection of human rights, such as in addressing the processes of exclusion.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

NGOs point out that the goals are not sufficiently recognised, that the priorities are wrong and that no balance is sought among them. In Agenda point no. 5, the wording is that the goals ‘balance’ – *uravnotežijo* (not merely ‘equitably combine’ – *enakopravno združujejo*) all three dimensions of sustainable development. The perspective of the respect of human rights is the very essence of the goals (and the methods for their implementation) and not a necessary evil or obstacle to understanding of other components. Individual parts are interpreted out of context and are given undue importance (for example economic development and the related goal of profit making).

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The currently poor situation for the most vulnerable is becoming even worse. Measures adopted to mitigate the crisis lack the perspective of priority treatment of the most vulnerable people by deploying all available sources (for example, care for people in precarious employment, pockets of poverty, intersectional impacts).

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- It is necessary that a comprehensive and effective policy for exercising all human rights be adopted, one that addresses not only the general but also the intersectional approaches towards discrimination, racism and all other structural problems and that gives direction and combines policies in all fields of social life, as well as vertical approaches and the protection of rights of ‘vulnerable groups’, while trying to find optimum synergies among them. Rights must be taken seriously.
- We need due diligence, a review of the regulation of rights and a guarantee that the legislation adequately follows their detailed breakdown and that methods and procedures for their exercising and protection are in place.
- A system of efficient legal remedies with simple and real access should be established for all human rights, along with measures to

eliminate the consequences of the violation of rights, including the enforcement of adequate sanctions. The state should pay maximum attention to its own violations and should eliminate them without undue delay. Every effort is lost if the state abolishes protection and if it does not serve as a good and unambiguous model.

- Comprehensive monitoring of the situation should be established immediately and, if possible, by independent institutions. The mechanisms that are still missing in the system (for example, the mechanism under Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or under Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) should be established without undue delay. It is also necessary to guarantee conditions for each of their efficient and optimal functioning.
- The state should establish a constructive and honest cooperation with NGOs, including the NGO platform, and should develop clear methods for a continuous dialogue on these subjects. It should ascertain a safe support environment and capacity building of all stakeholders in order to enable them to participate efficiently in all the processes of protection, monitoring and reporting on the exercising of human rights both in Slovenia and on the international level following all mechanisms of appeal, including those from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the European Social Charter. Advocates of human rights and nature conservation, whistle blowers and others who report violations must receive the state's maximum concrete and unambiguous protection, not only in theory but also in practice, to protect them against potential retaliation.

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Organisation Institute for African Studies

Topic **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND
INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS**



- SDGs**
- Goal 10:**
Reduce inequality within and among countries.
 - Goal 3:**
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
 - Goal 4:**
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
 - Goal 11:**
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
 - Goal 17:**
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

SDG targets

- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 10.2. By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- 10.3. Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
- 10.7. Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
- 10.c. By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.

Situation Overview

In the Migrant Integration Policy Index for 2015²², Slovenia ranks 27th among 44 analysed countries. The index notes that integration policies in Slovenia still create slightly more obstacles than opportunities for full integration of migrants into society. The family reunification policy is deemed migrant-favourable, followed by the regulations on discrimination prevention and permanent residence as slightly favourable, and access to nationality, which is somewhat favourable of migrant integration. Among the shortcomings of the Slovenian integration policy, the index recognises labour market mobility, education and political participation as slightly unfavourable for migrants, while access to health services is considered to be the weakest point of the integration policies. Among its recommendations, the MIPEX states that Slovenia should allow access to the labour market for family members of migrants and increase access and targeted support within the education system for all immigrant pupils, students and adult learners; it should also guarantee universal healthcare for all migrants and Slovenian citizens, enable dual citizenship and speed-up naturalisation for migrants meeting the requirement after 5-7 years of residence, strengthen reporting rates on discrimination cases and provide an adequate victim support system. The analysis on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection shows that they are facing administrative obstacles and specific challenges when accessing housing and the labour market.

Inclusive education is an important part of policies to integrate migrants and to educate global citizens. Knowledge about SDGs and awareness on global interdependence should be strengthened in the education system.

²² URL: <http://www.mipex.eu/slovenia>.



**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

NGOs play an important role in the integration of migrants into society by providing support services. The Institute for African Studies (*Inštitut za afriške študije* – IAŠ) works on raising awareness among applicants for international protection about the risks of trafficking in human beings. It involves refugees and third country nationals in youth exchanges, thus promoting equal opportunities in access to non-formal education and development of 8 key competences of lifelong learning.

On the EU level, the Institute participates in the African Diaspora Network in Europe, and in the AU-AIR Steering Committee (African Institute of Remittances under the African Union).

Many NGOs, including the Institute for African Studies, provide non-formal education to train teachers, youth workers and young people about SDGs. Within the framework of the GEGL project (Global Education Goes Local) 22 young people have received training and become active advocates of SDGs and 15 teachers have actively and successfully included SDGs in their curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The promotion of NGO-lead training and seminars for teachers and trainers should be regulated on a systemic level.

Empowered young people who take part in the activities at the Institute related to the 2030 Agenda can later develop activities for raising public awareness in their local communities. Young advocates of SDGs raise awareness on reproductive rights in Slovenia and abroad and spread laughter yoga as a preventive measure against developing chronic diseases. The Institute performs activities with young people in rural parts of Slovenia, promotes active citizenship among them and promotes the development of all 8 key competences of lifelong learning based on the understanding of global interdependence, thus enhancing their competitiveness on the labour market. It encourages young people to recognise, respect and promote local cultural and natural heritage and to plan sustainable communities.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- In order to include SDGs in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, more transformative education is needed.
- Mechanisms for full integration of migrants in society must be enhanced.



Organisation Peace Institute

Topic **RIGHTS OF REFUGEES,
ASYLUM SEEKERS
AND MIGRANTS**



SDGs

Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal 1:
End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 3:
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4:
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5:
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 8:
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 16:
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

**Situation
Overview**

The broader EU framework is crucial for understanding the current situation in Slovenia. It is also the best predictor of future trends. Studies that are critical to the policies of asylum, deportation, integration, social policies and labour market policies confirm the limitations and discriminatory effects of migration policies in Slovenia.

Migration policy in Slovenia is centralised, with the majority of measures implemented at the level of the Ministry of the Interior, competent for asylum and migration. An important change occurred in July 2017, when a special Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade RS za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov* – UOIM) was established. The Office took over part of the responsibilities that previously fell under the remit of the Ministry. Drafting policies and administrative procedures for acquiring international protection and procedures relating to foreign citizens remain under the competence of the Ministry of the Interior. Despite its broad title, however, the UOIM and its a) Reception and Support Division and b) Integration Division, is only responsible for asylum seekers and persons with recognised international protection (holders of refugee status or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection). In July 2019, the total number of these persons was approximately 1,000. However, there are many foreign citizens in Slovenia who are not asylum seekers or are not beneficiaries of international protections, which is why integration measures for these people remain without a public body responsible for their implementation.

On 1 January 2019, there were 539 persons in Slovenia with recognised international protection, 492 of which were granted refugee status, while 47 were the beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Among those with refugee

status, there were 150 women and 342 men, while of those with subsidiary protection, 9 were women and 38 men. Among those with refugee status, 128 persons were under 18, while of those with subsidiary protection, 17 were underage. By July 2019, Slovenia had granted international protection status to 679 persons, 115 of which allegedly live abroad, while the rest live in Slovenia.

Until 2019, Slovenia did not have a strategy for the integration of persons with recognised international protection or a migrant integration strategy. What existed was just the Strategy of Economic Migration for the period of 2010 to 2020, which focused on migrant workers. In July 2019, the Government of Slovenia adopted a new strategy in this field. The coordination and drafting of the Strategy was entrusted to the Ministry of the Interior, which is reflected in the content of the document. The Strategy has a strong focus on irregular migration, security issues, protection of borders and asylum procedures, while the majority of migration cases in Slovenia are actually documented economic migration (migrant workers and not asylum-seekers or irregular migrants). Despite a very proactive group of NGOs who invested a lot of effort in advocacy and tried to convince the inter-sectoral working group to invest more time and draft a more comprehensive migration strategy, the government hurriedly adopted the Strategy on 18 July 2019.

Currently (June-July 2020), two key Acts are being amended in this field, namely, the Foreigners Act and the International Protection Act. Both Acts were amended and, in certain aspects, made more stringent by the previous government, but the current government is even more restrictive, just as the NGOs expected. The situation is expected to worsen in this field (both in the sense of restriction of rights and more stringent conditions). The current government also included in the draft a non-constitutional amendment that requires the amendment of Articles 10a and b (Articles 4 and 5 of the Act amending the Aliens Act), the purpose of which is clearly to bypass the decision of the Constitutional Court, which ruled on such limitations of access to asylum.

The said amendment is a non-constitutional provision that allows temporary suspension of the right to asylum in case of altered migration-related circumstances that might jeopardise public order or internal security. The Ministry of the Interior is now reintroducing the special legal regime (complex migration-related crisis) based on which it wants to limit the right to asylum procedure, thus bypassing the Constitutional Court decision from 2019 in its entirety.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Non-governmental and humanitarian organisations active in the field of refugee rights, rights of asylum-seekers and migrants have been cooperating in an informal network for refugee support since 2015. They are actively engaged in advocacy work: their representatives participated in a meeting with the Ministry of the Interior and they help draw attention to the non-constitutionality of the proposed amendments to the Foreigners Act; the network also called upon the Human Rights Ombudsman to take a stance towards the proposed amendments to the Foreigners Act; letters to members of the European Parliament and the relevant European Institutions are being drafted. The network also closely monitors proposed amendments to the International Protection Act, in which access to rights and conditions for access are being – unsurprisingly – made more stringent and limited.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

Civil society has always been very active and many NGOs implement projects intended for asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants in general; the problem is that this is always project-based work short in duration and with unstable financing.

COVID-19 and its related measures demonstrated that the most vulnerable groups felt the consequences (and future consequences) disproportionately more than the rest of the population. The consequences are felt in all dimensions related to SDGs:

- Goal 1 – during a crisis, poverty is amplified, as many people are left without an income or their income is reduced;
- Goal 3 – due to COVID-19, all the non-urgent medical examinations and interventions were put on hold and waiting times were longer, which had consequences for the health and well-being of people. Furthermore, asylum-seekers, for example, only have access to emergency medical help, which has long-term effects on their health;
- Goal 4 – education moved online virtually overnight and was implemented from home; vulnerable groups not only lack appropriate computer hardware and software, but the parents of refugee, asylum-seeking or migrant children very often do not have computer literacy skills, do not speak Slovene and do not have space in the home for to undisturbed work and study;
- Goal 5 – During the quarantine and working and studying from home, negative consequences were also seen in gender equality. Especially poignant was the increase in cases of violence against women, domestic violence, addiction, etc.
- Goal 8 – Due to COVID-19, many people lost a decent job or were forced to accept poor work or poorly paid work;
- Goal 10 – As already mentioned, inequalities have deepened during the crisis, to the detriment of the most vulnerable groups.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- **Broad social and political integration as a two-way process should be the aim of comprehensive integration policies for all groups of migrants.** Unfortunately, this is not the case. Members of the communities that host migrants are not sufficiently informed and migrant and refugee issues are not perceived as something that concerns the local population. Institutions do not provide sufficient information and facts, which means that fake news and the feeling of uncertainty is perpetuated. All of this has an impact on public discussions and on the work of all institutions, not only those directly responsible for integration.

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Organisations Legal-Informational
Centre for NGOs (PIC)
and Slovene Philanthropy



Topic CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

SDGs Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries

SDG targets 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

**Situation
Overview**

Children on the move, and especially unaccompanied children, are an extremely vulnerable group of children at risk of exploitation and violence. They need special protection and care. In 2019, 826 children (22% of all accommodated) were placed in accommodation facilities of the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants. Of them, the majority were unaccompanied children (81%). There were 11 girls among the unaccompanied children.

Every child is first and foremost a child, regardless of his legal status in the country. The refugee/migrant crisis in 2015–2016 highlighted a number of shortcomings in the protection of migrants and refugees in Europe, especially children. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warns that asylum seekers in Europe are exposed to serious protection risks¹. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)² emphasises that children are most affected by war, armed conflict, climate change and poverty. UNICEF therefore emphasises the crucial importance of providing migrant children with education, healthcare, adequate accommodation and care and access to legal and psychosocial support.

The increased arrival of refugees and migrants in the period between 2015 and 2016 in Slovenia stimulated efforts to provide adapted accommodation and care for unaccompanied children. In 2016, a government pilot

1 UNHCR (2016): *Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe; January to December 2017*. URL: [https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2017%20Regional%20Refugee%20&%20Migrant%20Response%20Plan%20for%20Europe%20-%20Jan-Dec%202017%20\(December%202016\).pdf](https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2017%20Regional%20Refugee%20&%20Migrant%20Response%20Plan%20for%20Europe%20-%20Jan-Dec%202017%20(December%202016).pdf).

2 UNICEF: *Uprooted – The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children*. URL: https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Uprooted_growing_crisis_for_refugee_and_migrant_children.pdf.

project of special accommodation for unaccompanied children in student dormitories was established and, since 2017, an inter-ministerial working group, in which NGOs are represented, has been developing a systemic solution for the care of unaccompanied children, i.e. several forms of care for unaccompanied children.

Despite progress in regulating the protection and care of unaccompanied children, integrated treatment of children should be strengthened in Slovenia. Custody or (legal) guardianship is the central protection safeguard for children without a family in Slovenia, but an unaccompanied child can go through a number of (legal) guardians in the Republic of Slovenia due to changes in their status (foreigner, applicant for international protection, person with recognised international protection), all of whom should be well acquainted with the child's personal circumstances, should establish a confidential relationship with the child and should ensure the child's best interests are taken into account.

Slovenia is characterised by a high number of arbitrary departures or disappearances of unaccompanied children, indicating the need for the state to strengthen the system of protection and care of unaccompanied children.

Despite the Foreigners Act defining placement in the Centre for Foreigners (police detention intended for foreigners undergoing return procedures to a neighbouring country or country of origin) as a last resort measure (Article 82), it is regularly applied. Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the project of accommodation of unaccompanied children in student dormitories also provide for the accommodation of all unaccompanied children, but decisions are usually not implemented for children who do not apply for asylum. Many international organisations (UNICEF, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of the Council of Europe) warn that the detention of a child is never in his best interest and can have long-term consequences for the child's development and well-being. Accommodation of unaccompanied children in a student dormitory should be provided to all unaccompanied children in accordance with government decisions, regardless of whether they apply for asylum in Slovenia.

In addition to developing various adapted forms of care for unaccompanied children, Slovenia should strengthen the individual treatment of unaccompanied children and ensure greater flexibility in care and integration measures, including transitional measures upon transition to adulthood.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

NGOs provide a number of support services and leisure activities for unaccompanied children, while monitoring the protection of children on the move, providing training for stakeholders and proposing policy changes aimed at strengthening the protection of children on the move.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recommendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- Slovenia must ensure that the care of children on the move and all procedures concerning children are based on the principle of the best interests of the child, namely with a commitment to respect the rights of migrant children and to provide protection and care according to their needs and circumstances; with a child rights-based approach; by strengthening the supportive environment for the integration of migrants into society, including migrant children; and by providing special protection and care for unaccompanied children in line with the priority areas of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016–2021).
- To minimise the negative impact on the child's well-being and development, the international protection procedure needs to be adapted to the needs of children, from adequate space for formal proceedings to an adapted procedure (terminology, proper interpretation) ensuring that the child's views are heard and taken into account in accordance with the child's age and maturity. Best interest assessment or individual factors of this principle must be duly substantiated in the decision in the procedure of international protection, which applies to decision-making in the procedure of international protection of unaccompanied children and children accompanied by parents or guardians in Slovenia (which also applies to the right to participation of children or ensuring that the child's opinion is heard and taken into account in accordance with the child's age and maturity).
- In developing the systemic solution for the accommodation and care of unaccompanied children, which the Government of the Republic of Slovenia has been developing since 2017, it is necessary to establish a multifaceted care system that will enable an individual approach and take into account various personal circumstances and vulnerabilities of individual unaccompanied children, while ensuring their best interests are taken into account. When planning systemic solutions, it is therefore necessary to reasonably plan the gradual transition of unaccompanied adolescents to adulthood and ensure adequate care after coming of age.
- Slovenia must refrain from detaining children on the move and establish alternatives to the detention of children – both unaccompanied children and children who come to Slovenia with their families.
- The state must strive to ensure safe and legal routes for individuals on the move, including participation in the UNHCR-coordinated refugee resettlement program and the relocation scheme for applicants for international protection within the EU, and by establishing a humanitarian visa to prevent high-risk routes and fatalities on the way to Europe, which individuals face due to indecent living conditions in their countries of origin. By participating in the resettlement program, the state provides a permanent solution and a decent life for the most vulnerable and strengthens legal and safe migration.

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Organisation POVOD Institute

Topic REDUCING INEQUALITIES

SDGs Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries

**Situation
Overview**

Since 1980, a small percentage of the world's richest people held twice as much wealth than the poorest half of the global population.

But inequalities are not simply about possessions and material wealth, but about gender inequality and discrimination. This is about obstacles that prevent people from voicing their opinions and that deny groups social protection; it's about unfair opportunities for and unequal impact of climate change on the most vulnerable. The poorest inhabitants bear the heaviest consequences of the economic system that is so detrimental to the environment.

Environmental benefits and burdens must be distributed equitably. The proponents of political or economic power still exploit our planet's resources, to the detriment of the poorest communities. The poorest people are often the most exposed, because they live in the most environmentally degraded areas, which have detrimental effects on their health. The effects of climate change tend to disproportionately affect those who create the least greenhouse gas emissions.

A decent life for all is the responsibility and commitment of the entire society. It is based on the respect of human integrity. It depends on the income and assets of individuals or households and access to education, health services, appropriate living environment, quality food, energy, clean environment and personal safety. Slovenia is among the countries with low income inequality and a relatively low risk of poverty; the efficiency of social transfers is also relatively high. As technological advancement and demographic and climate change are rising, preserving decent quality of life for all is a challenge.

Women account for 40% of the global workforce, yet they are often trapped in unstable, low-paid jobs without social security and with very little chance for further education or promotion. Women still face much higher unemployment rates compared to men and are paid less for the work done. Due to a lower share of women Members of Parliament in comparison to the previous term of office in the National Assembly, the index of gender equality in the dimension of power has fallen. Slovenia is also below the EU average in the difference of knowledge among men and women. The Development Report for 2020 states that this 'is mainly the result of the difference in the number of persons enrolled in tertiary education programmes, which is linked to the persistent stereotypes on the lower value of women and women's work'¹.

Twenty-one to thirty-two billion US dollars are parked in tax havens and are mostly untaxed assets. All these assets are concentrated under the ownership of just 10 million of the richest people. Due to tax havens,

¹ IMAD, Development Report for 2020, Gender Equality Index 3.2, p. 120, Ljubljana, 2020.

inequalities are even higher than those measured by economists. This tax competition has a very negative impact on global tax systems, as it reduces tax rates for the rich and increases tax rates for the poorest people.

The second source of inequalities is in the guarantee of anonymity in tax havens. While the rich perform looting in developed countries and accumulate wealth in tax havens in anonymity, they avoid paying taxes. This 'legalised' crime causes an even greater accumulation of wealth and, consequently, political power. It is in this vicious circle that the system is perpetuating deeper and deeper inequalities.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Attempts of the state to deal with inequalities are often insufficient. Civil society organisations have now become the principal provider of assistance services and advocacy for human rights. Successful actions performed by civil society may contribute to a decrease in social inequalities in several different ways:

- By providing basic services and by protecting and promoting human rights;
- By encouraging governments to adopt legislation that promotes equality;
- By monitoring the situation regarding the inequalities in a country and their consequences and impacts and by using these data to inform the public about the implementation of interventions;
- Data collection and analysis.

Among others, civil society plays a crucial role in clarifying and drawing attention to inequalities. The presence of inequalities will not result in social mobilisation and solving of the problem until they are understood by the wider public as serious and unjust. It is the role of NGOs to clearly and comprehensively explain and draw attention to inequalities and their consequences.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the role of NGOs have become even more exposed, particularly in relation to the fight against inequalities. Civil society organisations provide an important assistance; for example, they provide assistance to victims of various types of domestic abuse (who have remained in quarantine), assistance with distribution of food and psychological and social assistance to people living on the margins of society.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The pandemic has brought to light deficiencies in the system and has exposed drastic inequality in our global neoliberal system. Thus, by way of example, the privileged minority of the global world has been able to work from home, while the majority of workers have risked their health and that of their families to be able to sustain them. Poor people are the worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While rich people can self-isolate in relative comfort, working people without savings are faced with the choice of whether to risk their lives in hazardous workplaces or to live in jeopardy due to lack of income. The virus has exposed the most crucial deficiency of underpaid workplaces in the health and food-processing sectors. It is women who feel these socio-economic impacts most acutely, as they represent the majority of workforce in those two sectors and it is more likely for them to perform unpaid household chores and provide care at home.

Inequalities between citizens have become particularly apparent during the pandemic with the introduction of the system of online schooling. This is where major differences have come to light, starting with the conditions for participating in online education.

During the introduction of online classes, it became apparent that many people do not have a computer or access to the internet. In the later stages, differences emerged between those with basic computer and internet use competences and those without. Another major gap lies in the capacity of parents to be able help their children with schoolwork at home. Many parents do not have the time nor the skills to help their children with online schooling. The majority of parents working in industry have lower education levels, making it more difficult for them to help their children learn. Another factor is that these parents generally had to go to work as normal and simply did not have enough time to help their children with online learning. Great inequalities were detected among those who had adequate support at home and those who did not.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we also witnessed an increase in cases of domestic violence, the victims of which were mainly women and children.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recom- mendations for achieving the goal

- Economic, social and cultural factors must be dealt with simultaneously, as they all cause inequalities and make people sink deeper into poverty. In order to enable all people to live in dignity, it is important to create and promote activities focused on poverty mitigation.
- To ensure equal access to health services, education and social security, we need progressive taxes and the elimination of tax havens. We must stop subsidising polluting industries, which base their activities on fossil fuels.
- We must eliminate child work, and violence against women and girls. We need transparent political processes, which empower all people, everywhere. To have a peaceful world, we need equitable world.
- Without reducing inequalities, it is impossible to implement SDGs. We must strengthen and promote social, cultural, economic and political inclusiveness of all – in particular women, children and minorities. We must foster equal opportunities and public investment into basic services and systems of social security, climate justice and tax justice. We must promote safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, and eliminate every form of discrimination against women and girls.
- It is urgent to introduce a basic standard whereby every school child will have internet access and adequate computer hardware. During the COVID-19 epidemic we recognised numerous systemic errors which cause inequalities in the access to adequate education. The government must guarantee equal opportunities for education to all, which primarily means adequate computer hardware and software, and internet access for all.

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Organisation

Slovenian Federation of
Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS

**Topic**

**DISCRIMINATION, GERONTOPHOBIA
AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THE ELDERLY**

SDGs

Goal 10:

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 5:

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

SDG targets

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this.

**Situation
Overview**

For more than a decade, the ZDUS has been implementing the Age Demands Action (ADA) campaign. Through this campaign, it participates in the global network HelpAge International, which organises actions to raise awareness about discrimination of the elderly and fights against gerontophobia, it being the main obstacle in equal access to services for the elderly. The ZDUS is of the opinion that a major problem contributing to gerontophobia is the 'social invisibility' of the elderly. In Slovenia, this can be illustrated with a situation in which prices and costs of living are rising and salaries are increasing, along with other, similar changes, yet pensioners are the last on the list or are not on the list at all. Although old age is one of the personal circumstances based on which discrimination in any form is legally forbidden, the fact that cases of discrimination are not reported remains a problem.

Since 2011, volunteers for the ZDUS working under the programme Elderly for the Elderly (a social protection programme of voluntary assistance offered by the elderly to the elderly) have identified 233 cases of violence across Slovenia. These cases often consisted of two or three forms of violence combined, but the most frequent were neglect and verbal abuse. Victims were usually women aged between 80 and 85. These numbers are not high, which is understandable. Volunteers are often faced with the dilemma of whether to report violence or not, as

they may lose access to a person who might need considerable help very soon.

In early 2018, the ZDUS supported the first concrete action from the European pillar of social rights, adopted in late 2017. The AGE Platform Europe, which includes among its membership the ZDUS, strongly lobbied for the action. The action in question is the Directive on work-life balance, proposed by the European Commission. We informed our government and our EU representatives about it, while at the same time submitting a proposal for Slovenia's support for decision-making at the EU level. In February 2019, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, achieved a temporary agreement on the Directive on work-life balance. The purpose of the Directive is to enable parents and carers to remain on the labour market through a more even distribution of care between women and men. The agreement introduces, among others, the right to five days of annual leave for carers, the right to demand flexible working arrangements for workers with family obligations and an amendment to parental leave that allows two months of parental leave for both parents. The EU agreement is less ambitious than the legislative package on work-life balance that the European Commission initially proposed in April 2017. However, if it is endorsed by the EU Council and the European Parliament, this will be a breakthrough moment for carers and women. For the first time, the agreement recognises the challenges that non-formal carers must face when they balance work and obligations related to care. At the same time, it will contribute to the elimination of inequalities between women and men on the labour market and inequalities that increase the risk of poverty for elderly women.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

- Raising awareness among the target group, prevention campaigns and activities, education on violence and its forms, empowerment of elderly women and voluntary assistance.

One of the tasks of the volunteers participating in the Elderly for the Elderly programme is to detect violence and to offer support and assistance where the victim consents. To this end, as early as in 2013, the ZDUS adopted a Protocol of Volunteer Conduct in case a volunteer encounters a case of violence. Unfortunately, their observations are that violence is increasing and is present in all its forms, from material, to physical, psychological, neglect and breaches of duty of care. It is women who are the most exposed to violence perpetrated by their partners, children and grandchildren.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The COVID-19 period, with its isolation, limited spatial conditions, loss of employment for family members and the broader family, is in itself a fertile ground for tensions. At the same time, it provides even more opportunities for neglect and material and psychological violence. We also encountered such problems during the 2008–2015 crisis. Data analysis from the Elderly to the Elderly programme shows that the need for all forms of assistance is growing. The lack of provision of basic assistance is often a cause of violence.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, ZDUS volunteers detected violence in two regions and organised help through the Social Work Centre.



**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- Empowerment of target groups and volunteers working with victims of violence; more intensive campaigns for zero tolerance for violence.



Organisation 3MUHE Institute

PRAVIČNA
TRGOVINA SLOVENIJA
Mi smo sprememba!

Topic TRADE FAIR, LIVE FAIR

SDGs **Goal 12:**
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

SDG targets 12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.
12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

Situation Overview World international trade is based on the extreme exploitation of natural resources and of people in countries with a weak public administration. Owners of capital and organisers of international trade in the richer countries of the Global North are increasing their wealth at the expense of over-exploitation of the environment and people in countries of the Global South. The existing policies and legislation allow buyers in the North to set buying prices for raw materials from the South and to carry out most of the processes with added value in the North, all the while avoiding transparency. Such is the case of the textile industry – 90% of all clothes we buy in Europe are manufactured in Bangladesh. In Europe, we wear these clothes for a short period, after which they are transported to Africa, where they are sold for a miniscule price or immediately dumped. Such conduct destroys local economies and perpetuates the exploitation of workers involved in the production and processing of products. As consumers, we get a false impression that these products are very cheap, but we are not aware that somebody is paying the price – sometimes with their health or even their life.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs NGOs raise awareness on extreme consumerism and point out the negative consequences both on the local and on global levels. We have managed to convince individuals to start changing their consumer habits and helped create a group with enough critical mass that, by merely changing their consumer habits, they have influenced change towards more sustainable consumption and production. This gives NGOs enough clout to approach decision-makers and influence legislative amendments that will turn the currently voluntary codices into mandatory ones. This is the only way to achieve more sustainable consumption and production in the long run. NGOs are active on the local, national and international levels; we cooperate with one another when implementing activities, as this is the only way to achieve tangible results. At this moment, the 3MUHE Institute is involved in the promotion of the shadow European strategy for sustainable textiles¹, which was written jointly by European NGOs and submitted to the European Parliament and the European Commission. Some of the Slovenian Members of the European Parliament

1 URL: <https://fairtrade-advocacy.org/our-work/eu-policies/textile/>.

and some Slovenian Members of Parliament are familiar with and support the strategy.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

COVID-19 has confirmed that price is the primary criterion in consumer decisions that turn people away from sustainable consumption. It has also spurred an increase in the use of disposable packaging and unnecessary stockpiling. Although the international research shows that awareness on sustainable production and consumption has grown, this trend cannot be seen in Slovenia to a great extent. Further awareness raising activities are necessary and stronger pressure will have to be exerted on decision-makers in order to make the voluntary codices mandatory for all and change consumption and production processes on a systemic level.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- Further networking of NGOs at the international level and joint activities in the form of common actions such as those implemented within the project Trade Fair Live Fair are needed². Continuation of awareness-raising activities, promotion and fostering of sustainable consumer and production practices, along with enhanced activity in advocacy on the global, European and national levels is also necessary.

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Organisation **POVOD Institute**

Topic **SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**

SDGs **Goal 12:**

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

This goal is closely linked to a circular economy and the introduction of 'green technologies' in production processes.

Situation Overview

The use of materials at a global scale is growing rapidly, which threatens the implementation of SDG no. 12. Currently, the demand for materials leads to overexploitation of sources.

One of the greatest global challenges is to connect environmental sustainability with economic growth and prosperity in such a way that more is done with less. In order to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, along with a transition towards a greener and more socially inclusive global economy, we must decouple economic

² More information: <https://wfto.com/projects/dear-trade-fair-live-fair>.

growth from environmental exploitation and increase the material efficiency of our society. In terms of material productivity (the ratio between GDP and consumed raw and other materials), Slovenia is below the EU average.

In order to achieve sustainable development, we must urgently reduce our ecological footprint by changing our methods of production and consumption of goods and resources.

To ensure sustainable consumption and production practices, it is necessary that we respect the bio-physical limitations of our planet and reduce the current global rates of consumption in order to balance the bio-physical capacity with eco-systemic services and benefits.

The global population will continue to rise, the middle class will reach 5 billion by 2030 and numerous developing countries will try to gain greater prosperity. This will cause enormous pressure on our environment and natural resources, which will be continuously more difficult to obtain.

Due to uncertainty around the future availability and accessibility of raw materials, many countries are striving to establish a certain control over resources that are often located in the countries of the Global South. In the search for stable conditions for their operations, many multinationals and larger companies are interested in a transition to more sustainable use of resources and production, but these practices should also take place, to a much greater extent, among small and medium companies. The pandemic has further exposed today's vulnerability of global production and trade chains.

SDG 12 promotes a circular economy, social innovations, new concepts of green mobility and economy of sharing, which will contribute to changes in consumption and production patterns, solving the problems of high youth unemployment and high carbon footprint, along with issues related to population ageing and the rapidly rising global population.

In parallel to that, the idea of the circular economy as an alternative economic framework has gained importance over the past few years and now appears to be the right approach to achieve local, national and global sustainability. This growing interest is demonstrated by a number of players, including governments, cities and, last but not least, large multinational companies who are actively exploring ways to transition towards circular economy practices.

The reason to transition into a circular economy, which is an integral part of a green economy, is the recognition that the foundations for the new model of a more competitive economy – the 'green economy' – are sustainable consumption and production, green growth and a low-carbon economy and the efficient use of resources. Such a transition would lead to new challenges and opportunities for the transformation of the economy and for the creation of new, sustainable competitive advantages both for Europe and for Slovenia.

In the forthcoming EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the 2020-2027 period, environment protection and sustainable use of resources will be two environmental challenges of key importance for the preservation of wellbeing and quality of life in our region.

**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

NGOs hold a crucial role in the implementation of development goals in the following:

- awareness raising and mobilisation;
- capacity-building;
- project planning and implementation;
- monitoring of trends;
- data collection;
- providing technical and expert knowledge.

It is with great concern that NGOs are observing the reduction of civic space. They are calling upon greater political and financial support for the cooperation of civil society in all levels and stages of implementation and review in order to increase the options for successful implementation of the goals.

When drafting progress reports on the implementation of SDGs, NGOs promote the involvement and cooperation of all the key civil society groups in all the stages of reporting.

Within SDG 12 and a circular economy, several areas with promising potential can be defined for cooperation between NGOs – education and raising awareness of the public, promoting the search for and use of sustainable solutions, advocating sustainable solutions in everyday life, critical rethinking of the existing model of subsidies for non-sustainable practices, etc.

Civil society must participate in inter-governmental meetings and negotiations on the implementation of SDGs. At the same time, it is necessary that a quality and efficient support environment based on the principles of inclusion and cooperation be set up at the local and national levels.

By becoming engaged, civil society contributes to the goal of creating more comprehensive solutions for implementing the more sustainable use of resources.

**Potential
impacts of
the COVID-19
health crisis
on the
implementation
of SDGs**

The current crisis is an opportunity for a thorough, systemic transition towards a more sustainable economy that works both for people and for the planet. This is definitely the time to analyse our practices and reorient ourselves towards a sustainable approach in how we treat nature. Other values have resurfaced during this time, too, that are not related to material wealth but, rather, to the value of living in harmony with nature and other living beings.

The phenomenon of COVID-19 put emphasis on the relationship between human beings and nature and unveiled the basic principles behind the compromises that we regularly encounter. Regardless of 'infinite' human needs, we are living on a planet of finite capacities, to which we must adapt our consumer and production patterns.

COVID-19 could be a catalyst for social change. We must redirect our consumer and production patterns towards more sustainable practices. We have a chance to transform our economy and focus on building a different economy. The better we manage nature and natural resources, the better we manage human health. We must not forget these patterns once we have gotten back to pre-COVID-19 levels of growth.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recom- mendations for achieving the goal

- We need inclusive and green economic growth with a high level of innovation.
- Fiscal sustainability is an important part of economic stability, along with the supporting institutional environment.
- In order to achieve our goals in a sustainable manner, we need higher public investment in research and innovations in green, environmentally friendly technologies.
- It is necessary to ensure continuous and integrated support in all phases of growth to 'green' or 'circular' enterprises. This comprehensive support should be provided by the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, through which the Government should provide systemic financial support and not just support to individual projects, as has been the case until now (in the amount of 2–3 million Euro annually). The Slovene Enterprise Fund is a state institution implementing various programmes for the promotion of entrepreneurship. Its support ranges from micro-loans to co-financing or restructuring of business processes. It also provides various forms of support to businesses. Within the P2 programme, it grants start-up capital to innovative enterprises, which includes the 'green' companies. This programme has a budget envelope of just slightly more than 2 million Euro annually, which does not suffice to support one of the most rapidly growing and most urgently needed economic sectors.
- NGOs propose that an independent programme for circular economy be established that will provide comprehensive support to such companies, from start-up funds and support to the restructuring of business processes towards more sustainable and natural ones, as well as consultancy and training.





Organisation Focus Association for Sustainable Development

Topic CLIMATE CHANGE



SDGs **Goal 13:**
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

**Situation
Overview**

Slovenia is a contracting party to the Paris Agreement, ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia in November 2016. The aim of the Paris Agreement is to keep the global temperature rise for this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius, thus reducing the risks and impacts of global climate change. In order to implement the Paris Agreement, the EU adopted a 2030 climate/energy legislative package that defines common EU goals in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. Furthermore, the EU Council confirmed the EU commitment for Europe to become a climate neutral community by 2050. Based on the legislation mentioned above, Slovenia had to deliver a National Energy and Climate Plan (Nacionalni energetska in podnebni načrt – NEPN) 2030 by the end of 2019 and a long-term climate strategy by early 2020. While the NEPN was drafted with some delay and forwarded to the European Commission in February 2020, the long-term climate strategy has not yet been adopted. Based on the 2020 climate/energy framework, Slovenia has set a binding goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for those sectors that are not included in the Emissions Trading Scheme to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources by 2020. Separate action plans were drafted for the implementation of individual goals by 2020 (renewable energy sources, efficient use of energy) and the Operational Programme for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Monitoring of implementation of the goal shows that Slovenia will not achieve its renewable energy sources goal in 2020. The biggest problem in achieving climate-related goals in Slovenia is within the transport sector. Transport emissions are still growing, while policies and measures addressing this problem are lacking.

The goals adopted by the EU in order to implement the Paris Agreement lack ambition. In line with the Special Recommendation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC on global warming for 1.5°C, the EU should achieve climate neutrality by 2040 and reduce total emissions by 65% compared to 1990 by 2030. The current EU goal is a 40% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, while the European Commission has announced it will bring the goal up to 50–55%. While Slovenia supports the new, higher goal by 2030, this is not reflected in the adopted NEPN. The NEPN foresees further growth of transport emissions by 2030 and a practical suspension of progress in renewable energy sources (from 25% in 2020 to 27% in 2030), with further subsidies for fossil fuels and the use of coal until 2054.

In a similar vein, Slovenia has not been successful in the implementation of its commitment to ensure international climate financing. It provides less funding for climate measures in vulnerable countries than its fair share. At the same time, it reports these climate financing funds as official development assistance.



**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

NGOs are involved in the adoption processes for policies and measures for climate change; they monitor their implementation, implement concrete projects related to raising awareness and information dissemination and promote practical solutions and research. Similarly, at the level of concrete investments, they assess the climate impact of programmes or projects as parties to the proceedings for environment impact assessment. Some NGOs are actively involved in the drafting of policies and legislation at the EU level and in international processes dealing with climate change.

**Potential
impacts of
the COVID-19
health crisis
on the
implementation
of SDGs**

Although the EU points out that post-COVID-19 measures for revitalising the economy must be green, the adopted decisions show there is a risk that measures to this end are being watered down. For example, the request that 20% of European funds in individual member states be spent on climate measures has already been abolished. In Slovenia, a list of important investments is being drafted to encourage post-crisis economic activity. It includes a number of projects that are not compliant with the mitigation of climate change (investments into roads, fossil gas). Due to the crisis, investment capacity in general may fall, which could lead to a slow-down or even a complete halt in the implementation of certain policies and measures.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

Slovenia must make its climate goals coherent with Paris Agreement goals and the findings from the Special IPCC Report on global warming for 1.5°C. This means setting a higher goal for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reaching climate neutrality around 2040.

Specific measures to be adopted as a matter of priority:

- abolish the use of coal by 2030;
- abolish all subsidies for fossil fuels as soon as possible;
- strengthen measures pertaining to energy efficiency and energy savings;
- promote the use of dispersed renewable energy sources (particularly solar energy) by supporting community energy projects, etc.;
- implement measures for sustainable mobility, including intensive investment in railway infrastructure;
- transition to locally produced organic food, mainly of plant origin.

It is necessary that we ensure policy coherence and support the goals related to climate change.

Similarly, Slovenia must strengthen its activities related to climate change adaptation, i.e., it must implement a strategic framework for adaptation to climate change.

When planning the distribution of EU funds in the 2021–2027 period, we must ensure that the funds do not support measures or projects that are contrary to climate goals and that at least 40% of the funds are used for climate measures (climate mainstreaming and climate proofing).

Slovenia must contribute more funds for international climate financing in vulnerable states, where the majority of funds should be used for measures helping to adapt to climate change impacts.





MLADINSKI
SVET
SLOVENIJE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
COUNCIL
OF SLOVENIA

Organisation National Youth Council of Slovenia

Topic YOUTH PARTICIPATION

SDGs **Goal 16:**
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

SDG targets

- Promote conventional political participation of youth.
- Promote and strengthen permanent mechanisms for youth consultation.

**Situation
Overview**

Conventional political participation of youth in Slovenia is very weak, which has resulted from the characteristics of the current lifestyle of young people and the related difficulties in the process of gaining independence. Distance from the centres of power and constant demotion to inferior positions causes apathy among young people, irresponsible behaviour and non-constructive reactions to the current state of affairs. Supporting motivation and participation while people are still young helps ensure their inclusion in decision-making processes in later years and prevents their alienation from society. Active involvement of youth in the processes of participation is therefore one of the key elements for democracy and social development.

**Civil society's
role in the
implementation
of SDGs**

At the national level, the MSS has been implementing youth dialogue projects for the last 11 years. The purpose of the projects is to empower young people and integrate them into society. In direct dialogue with decision-makers, young people present their proposals, comments and visions. Thus, the MSS works towards the responsive and open decision-making of all young people, through their representatives, at all levels. The projects are implemented in various local environments. In cooperation with the Government Office for Youth, the 'Let us Grow Together' project has been implemented since 2015 with the intention of strengthening youth policies, youth work and youth organising at the local level. In 2017, the same project was implemented in the form of bilateral cooperation with selected municipalities. The purpose was to obtain a clearer picture on how individual local environments function and how various local players contribute to the strengthening of the youth sector. In 2019, the Government Office for Youth, in cooperation with the MSS, carried out regional events with themes focused on youth information at the local and regional levels, communication with young people, methods and use of communication tools and inclusion of young people in decision-making processes at local and regional levels, as well as the promotion of youth e-participation. Apart from regional participation, 2019 also saw individual work with municipalities in order to support them in the drafting of youth policies.



**SDG
implementation
assessment**

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

- The MSS proposes that youth representatives be included in all decision-making structures in society. The organisation publicly presented the proposal to include young people in the Council of the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute (pension system), in the assembly of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (health system) and the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia (the second house of parliament, bringing together representatives of various interest groups in society). The MSS also advocates the introduction of 'youth quotas' in elections. At the moment, youth participation in the local environment depends on the interest and will of an individual local community.

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Organisation Transparency International Slovenia



Topic **CORRUPTION PREVENTION, TRANSPARENCY, INTEGRITY, TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS**

SDGs **Goal 16:**
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**Situation
Overview**

SlIn recent years, Slovenia has not made significant progress in the fight against corruption. This is partly due to the absence of systemic measures, as most of the fundamental legal basis needs to be revised. The Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act is incomplete regarding topics such as lobbying, conflict of interest, asset control and protection of whistle-blowers; yet, after five years of deliberations, the novel act still remains in the air. The Resolution on the prevention of corruption was adopted in 2004 and is now out-of-date. Only a few measures from the implementing action plan are still active. At the same time, the executive side of the legal basis has been faced with obstacles. According to the assessment of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption – GRECO, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (Komisija za preprečevanje korupcije – KPK) lacks both the finances and staff to implement its tasks and competences in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, internal conflicts and inadequate management in recent years have resulted in a major loss of public trust. This is reflected in the considerable fall in the number of cases reported to the KPK, as the numbers have dropped from 1,931 reported cases in 2013 to 541 cases in 2018. A similar decline in trust was recorded by Eurobarometer, according

to which only 27% of people would make a report to KPK, as opposed to 46% in 2013.

The protection of whistle-blowers is also ineffective. The legislation only provides them with partial protection and the existing provisions are rarely implemented in practice. Between 2014 and 2019, the KPK used its competencies in just 18 instances.

There is a lack of preventive activities, such as raising awareness, in all spheres of society. This is reflected both in the recurrent deviating conduct and negative patterns of the highest decision-makers (politically motivated recruiting, non-transparent spending of public funds) and in the assessment of the awareness of citizens. According to Eurobarometer, for example, 61% of people knew where to report corruption in 2013, as opposed to only 48% in 2019. Lack of awareness, scandals and lack of scandal closure in courts is also reflected in the very low trust in key public institutions, such as the National Assembly (trusted by only 26%), the government (trusted by 31%) and the courts (trusted by only 25% of respondents).

Above all, this shows the failings of 'watchdog' organisations on the national and local levels. In this respect, existing NGOs lack the capacities to address these issues and there is a significant lack of NGOs available to take it on. Equally problematic is the media environment, where investigative journalism in the established media is decreasing, while very few independent media exist at the local level due to unfair competition by municipal media.

Prosecution of criminal deeds in corruption is inefficient. This has been reflected in the investigation of the most serious cases, where doubts have been raised regarding the structure of the National Bureau of Investigation. The Specialised State Prosecution Office is understaffed and the courts are hindered by material conditions and procedural obstacles – in recent years, many representatives of the judiciary have exposed the (non)necessity of judicial investigation, which lengthens court proceedings considerably.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Civil society is weak in corruption prevention. There are not enough organisations specialised in the field, while organisations working in cross-cutting topics are not very active in corruption issues. No financing is available for civil society's projects and programmes in corruption prevention, despite the fact that the KPK has legal basis for such financing in its umbrella law.

When revising the umbrella act, the Ministry of Justice dutifully involved the professional community. The Ministry of Public Administration has partly included civil society in its plans to make public sector data available to the public. In all other fields, there is no systematic cooperation with civil society. The biggest existing problem is the systematic violation of the Resolution on Legislative Regulation, which limits the participation of the professional public in the adoption of decisions of public importance and, consequently, increases the risk of the state being kidnapped by powerful interest groups.

Transparency International Slovenia implements programmes in public procurement, education of young people and prevention of corruption in sports and in the field of political integrity.

In order to establish integrity and transparency in the public sector, it is important to provide access to public information and to publish



databases proactively, with the cooperation of civil society. The amended Public Information Access Act has improved access to information in recent years. Despite this, in certain cases (for example, acquiring contracts for the purchase of barbed wire), some systemic deficiencies can still be observed, especially as regards to the speed of access. By centralising records and databases on one portal, the Ministry of Public Administration established a good foundation for cooperation of the public in the functioning of the public sector; however, what is still missing is a policy to ensure a supportive environment for the users of these data (financing, content support in ensuring support environment, etc.)

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

Soon after the declaration of the pandemic, the updating of data from the Public Payments Administration was briefly interrupted. These data are the basis for the functioning of the Erar application (which shows public spending in the Republic of Slovenia). The non-functioning of the application was a serious infringement of the transparent use of public funds; however, once this information went public, the updating of data was soon re-established.

Another breach of transparency in operations included measures in the field of administrative, court and other deadlines, which, in practice, interrupted the provision of public information.

Risk of corruption and less transparent public spending is also posed by a measure that doubled the maximum values for the procurement of goods and services, following a fast-track procedure (small-value contracts). Despite the pandemic being declared over, the said measure is still in place.

Another risk to the integrity of the political system is the scandal regarding the purchasing of personal protection equipment during the pandemic, since this is yet another reason for mistrust in institutions and decision-making processes, while the complexity of the case puts constraints on the controlling institutions.

During the crisis, measures were introduced that hamper the involvement of expert communities in administrative procedures (regarding the environment). This negatively affects the cooperation of civil society in the implementation of the goal.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- Strengthen the protection of persons reporting on corruption and other non-ethical acts by transposing Directive 2018/0106 on persons reporting on breaches of Union law.
- Strengthen human resources and the financial capacities of the KPK to increase preventive actions, particularly in relation to lobbying, financial position of officials and conflict of interest (for example, the phenomenon of revolving doors).
- Strengthen the role of civil society players, while ensuring the transparency and integrity of the public sector.
- Adopt amendments to the Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act in order to improve the legal basis for the operations of the KPK and

to better regulate lobbying and conflict of interest.

- Strengthen regulations and control mechanisms for the financing of political parties and election campaigns.
- Strengthen control of the use and transparency of use of public funds by including civil society through mechanisms such as Integrity Pacts.
- Adopt a new Resolution on Prevention of Corruption.
- Strengthen the standards of corporate management of state-owned companies and prevent politically motivated recruitment of staff.
- Increase the transparency of transactions between the private and public sectors.
- On the local level, strengthen the transparency of decision-making in decisions of public importance and exert more active prevention of patronage, nepotism and similar phenomena.
- Strengthen investigative and local journalism and other 'watchdog' organisations to ensure greater accountability of authorities.
- Implement in practice the deontology code of conduct for deputies in the National Assembly to achieve a higher degree of integrity of the highest authorities.
- Ensure legal and institutional conditions for the efficient fight against corruption in sports (doping, match fixing).
- Continue providing public sector data to the public (particularly in open-format) and promote the use of published databases.

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Organisation Ekvilib Institute

Topic **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF SLOVENIA
IN THE FIELD OF COMBATING TAX AVOIDANCE**

SDGs **Goal 17:**
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development
Goal 16:
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
Goal 10:
Reduce inequality within and among countries

Due to the nature of the mentioned goals and the strong role of taxes in the financing of sustainable development, the implementation of goals in the selected field bears an indirect but very strong influence on the remaining SDGs.

SDG targets

- 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.
- 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence.
- 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime.
- 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
- 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.
- 10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.

Situation Overview SDG 17 can be understood as the fundamental goal for the implementation of all other goals, as it focuses on methods and means for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including, among others, the acquisition of national funds for development and capacity building in tax collection within Slovenia and in other, including developing, countries.

In the international community, taxes have long been recognised as the main and the most stable source of financing for sustainable development.



However, we are still witnessing the growing industry of tax avoidance. Based on an assessment by a study, published in 2017 by Cobham and Jansky¹, countries all over the world lose a total of 500 billion US dollars annually due to companies' tax avoidance. A 2016 study by the European Parliament² estimates that the EU loses at least 50–70 billion Euro of tax income annually due to aggressive corporate tax planning. Although Slovenia does not have its own official estimate, the study, by researchers Tørsløv, Wier and Zucman, estimates that Slovenia loses at least 70 million US dollars in tax revenue through multinationals transferring their profits into tax havens³. That Slovenian companies and companies that conduct business in Slovenia, as well as some wealthy individuals, take advantage of tax havens was unveiled through several tax scandals spanning from 2014 to today: LuxLeaks, the Panama Documents, the Paradise Documents, the Azerbaijani Money Laundry, etc. This proves that, as far as taxes are concerned, participating in international cooperation is a pressing issue for Slovenia, too.

Despite this fact, between 2015 and 2020, Slovenian Governments mainly focused on solving domestic tax system problems. In 2017, the government increased the tax rate for corporate tax from 17 to 19%, which meant the effective tax rate increased from 11.5 to 13.12%⁴. The government went on to introduce a minimum effective corporate tax rate in 2019, thus preventing companies from reducing their tax contribution to below 7%⁵ by using a multitude of available tax reliefs. The tax rate is nevertheless still relatively low when compared to many other EU member states. On the other hand, the VAT rate – VAT being a regressive tax, which deepens social inequalities – is higher than the OECD average. By introducing certified cash registers in 2016, Slovenia generated additional revenue in the total amount of 81 million Euro in just the first year, more than half of that sum stemming from VAT. Slovenia also has above-average taxation of employee income through contributions. The share of labour tax in the aggregate tax revenue amounted to 50.28% in 2017⁶.

According to the Corporate Tax Haven Index for 2019⁷, Slovenia belongs to those legal systems where laws, regulations and documented administrative practice represent less of a risk for a diminishing tax base in other countries. This good ranking on the index (50/100) is primarily the result of the size of the financial market rather than the excellence of policies, as Slovenia lags behind in the field of transparency and the fight against tax avoidance. The same goes for the Financial Secrecy Index for 2020 (38/100), which measures the contribution of individual legal systems to financial secrecy.

According to the above rankings, Slovenia belongs among exemplary tax jurisdictions. However, in the international arena, it does not actively support the adoption of measures that would require similar conduct in other countries or in large multinational companies. In some cases, Slovenia is even considered to be a country that obstructs these processes at

1 URL: <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/wp2017-55.pdf>.

2 URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/558776/EPRS_STU\(2016\)558776_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/558776/EPRS_STU(2016)558776_EN.pdf).

3 URL: <https://missingprofits.world/>.

4 Source: <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MF/Davcni-direktorat/DOKUMENTI/Informacija-o-davku-od-dohodkov-pravnih-oseb-za-leto-2017.pdf>.

5 Source: <http://www.racunovodski-servis-zeus.si/aktualne-informacije/vlada-potrdila-predloge-sprememb-starih-davcnih-zakonov>.

6 Source: <https://www.stat.si/Pages/cilji/cilj-17.-okrepiti-na%C4%8Dine-in-sredstva-za-izvajanje-ciljev-ter-o%C5%BEiviti-globalno-partnerstvo-za-trajnostni-razvoj/17.5-dele%C5%BE-okoljskih-davkov-in-davkov-na-delo-v-skupnih-dav%C4%8Dnih-prihodkih>.

7 URL: <https://corporatetaxhavenindex.org/en/introduction/cthi-2019-results>.

the EU level. For instance, despite the initial support for the proposal on public reporting of multinationals by country in which they operate (Country-by-Country Reporting – CbCR), Slovenia is one of 10 countries currently holding up the process. These countries wrote a joint statement claiming that the CbCR proposal must be processed as a tax matter and not an accounting matter. If the draft indeed has a fiscal legal basis, then a consensus of all EU member states is needed for its adoption. This includes tax havens in the EU, which is not realistic to expect. By co-signing the statement, Slovenia contradicted its own position in 2018, when it wrote that, despite certain reservations, the government would not oppose continuance of the process under the existing legal basis, unless there was a consensus among the member states to change it. In late 2019, however, Slovenia insisted on the change, despite the fact that there was no consensus for it. European citizens are therefore still waiting for a common position of the EU Council that would enable the launch of negotiations for the introduction of public reporting by individual countries, even though the EU and, consequently, Slovenia, have already introduced public reporting by country for banks⁸ and payments to governments for extractive industries⁹.

Despite all of the above, Slovenia has made some very important steps in the field of transparency, particularly by introducing the public register of real company owners for all companies, funds and similar legal entities operating in Slovenia. Although there is room for improvement, for instance, by ensuring that the data are available in machine-readable format, Slovenia was still among the first EU countries to do this.

In the context of international development cooperation of Slovenia, it is problematic that the Slovene government does not support the establishment of a UN inter-governmental body that would give developing countries a truly equitable voice in global decision-making in relation to tax matters. After its initial support, Slovenia changed its position and attributed this role to the OECD and the Global Information Exchange Forum. Unfortunately, these two entities do not ensure an equitable inclusion of developing countries in their processes. Despite a smaller number of signed bilateral tax agreements with developing countries, these agreements reduce tax rates of partner states by more than the average of the 18 European countries included in the Eurodad report from 2017¹⁰. It is a matter of some concern that Slovenia intended to sign even more agreements with developing countries without performing a risk analysis to check for adverse effects. On the other hand, as a member of the Addis Tax Initiative, it supports measures to strengthen the capacities to mobilise national resources in developing countries, mainly through the Centre of Excellence in Finance¹¹.

As part of its commitment to the Addis Tax Initiative, Slovenia committed itself to ensure policy coherence for development in the field of taxation, which Slovenia included in its Strategy for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid by 2030 (2018)¹². The first overview of practice and recommendations to the government should be put forward by the competent department in cooperation with the national coordinator by 2021 at the latest. It is not known, however,

8 Source: <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6716>.

9 Source: <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4291>.

10 URL: <http://www.ekvilib.org/sl/kaj-delamo/publikacije/davcne-igre-tekma-proti-dnu/>.

11 URL: http://www.ekvilib.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/STD_2017_slovenian_FINAL.pdf.

12 URL: [http://vrs-3.vlada.si/MANDAT18/VLADNAGRADIVA.NSF/71d4985ffda5de89c12572c3003716c4/09883fea9a693619c1258360002c0efc/\\$FILE/StrategijaTekst_P.pdf](http://vrs-3.vlada.si/MANDAT18/VLADNAGRADIVA.NSF/71d4985ffda5de89c12572c3003716c4/09883fea9a693619c1258360002c0efc/$FILE/StrategijaTekst_P.pdf).



whether monitoring internal policies from the aspect of possible influence on partner countries and the issuing of warnings due to non-coherence with international development cooperation policies, whose implementation should already have begun in 2019, includes the drafting of impact assessments of tax policies for developing countries.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

Although NGOs are increasingly more aware of the importance of taxes and tax policies for the implementation of SDGs, there is only a small number of development NGOs in Slovenia that deal with the monitoring of international tax policies and initiatives for greater corporate transparency. Slovenian NGOs participate in international networks and global movements advocating for tax justice and transparency on the national, European and international levels.

The Ekvilib Institute has been systematically monitoring tax policies and Slovenian positions on tax issues since 2013. The Institute works on raising awareness, information provision and educating the general public on problems stemming from tax avoidance. It also conducts research and advocating activities. In 2016, it joined forces with the SLOGA Platform, the Focus Association, Transparency International Slovenia and the EnaBanda Association to create an informal network Tax Justice Hub, working mainly in the field of corporate tax transparency.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

COVID-19 quickly turned from a health crisis into a humanitarian, economic and financial crisis, which shed light on structural inequalities between countries, which had already been causing a great deal of human suffering before the crisis. As is so often the case, it is the most vulnerable people that will feel the impacts of the crisis the most. The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, however, will be felt even more acutely due to the inadequate reactions of governments during the previous economic and financial crisis in 2008, which included wide-ranging austerity measures, the lowering of corporate taxes and insufficient measures to reduce tax avoidance.

Thus, the present crisis again triggered appeals in some countries for more just taxation, with increasingly insistent voices calling upon states to refuse help to enterprises linked to tax havens¹³. It is now on decision-makers to make better use of the public support summoned in the current crisis than after the economic crisis in 2008 and to use it for actual improvement of the international tax system, thus contributing to the collection of funds that would guarantee enhanced implementation of SDGs. For this reason, the European Parliament has argued for the adoption of a package of measures to guarantee EU's own resources for its financing. Some possible sources mentioned were a common consolidated corporate tax base, digital services taxation and a financial transactions tax¹⁴. Likewise, the European Commission is considering the digital services tax if no other solution is found¹⁵. However, when seeking solutions, one has to be careful to consider the impact on smaller member states such as Slovenia, as well as the impact of the measures on developing countries. In doing this, urgent measures for enhanced transparency should not be forgotten.

13 More information: <https://www.law360.com/tax/articles/1266196/france-is-3rd-eu-nation-to-deny-crisis-aid-to-tax-haven-cos->.

14 Source: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0124_EN.pdf.

15 Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/commission-mulls-digital-tax-to-fund-europes-multi-billion-euro-recovery/>.

**SDG
implementation
assessment**

No measures or very little action.

**Recom-
mendations
for
achieving
the goal**

As a responsible member of the international community, Slovenia can and must adopt several recommendations to help end cases of tax avoidance and guarantee global tax justice:

- The current economic crisis, triggered by COVID-19, can help identify needs for new and additional funds available at the national and EU levels. It is important that Slovenia guarantee that its tax systems are progressive and intended for the abolishment of growing inequalities within and among other countries (by introducing appropriate rates for corporate income tax, introducing a financial transactions tax and by guaranteeing new and additional sources of support for developing countries). Slovenia should also guarantee that its tax policies promote gender equality and are coherent with development policies. Furthermore, it must continue its exit from the race towards the bottom in relation to the taxation of legal entities, where corporate tax rates were reduced and harmful tax practices inducing corporate tax avoidance were implemented.
- Slovenia must support measures that will give the public access to key information pertaining to economic enterprises – this information is an indispensable precondition to preventing international tax avoidance and for ensuring accountability and tax justice (support to the comprehensive public reporting of large multinationals by country looking at where they conduct their business and how much tax they pay in an individual country).
- Slovenia should take a firm stance on the just and transparent adoption of all international decisions pertaining to international tax matters with the equitable involvement of all countries, including developing countries, under the UN auspices.

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Organisation SLOGA Platform



Topic GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SDGs Goal 17:
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

SDG targets 17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to



consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries.

17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Situation Overview

Sustainable development is one of the stated cornerstones of Slovenian foreign policy (Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia¹⁶, adopted in 2015), recognising Slovenia's responsibility in achieving the SDGs.

The Resolution on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia (2017)¹⁷ states that 'the key goal of the international development cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia is to contribute to poverty eradication, reducing inequalities and achieving sustainable development in partner countries' (pt. 5). Slovenia's international development cooperation is guided by the following principles (pt. 7): a human rights-based approach, development cooperation effectiveness, policy coherence for development, the ownership of countries over their own development and partnership for sustainable development. The resolution states the following priority issues (pt. 10):

- promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, with an emphasis on good governance, equal opportunities, including gender equality, and quality education;
- combating climate change, with a focus on sustainable management of natural and energy resources.

Slovenia has been an official development assistance donor since 2004. It has committed to allocating 0.33% of GNI to official development assistance by 2030. In 2018, funds earmarked for international development cooperation amounted to 70.76 million EUR or 0.16% of gross national income (GNI)¹⁸. 65% of Slovenian development cooperation is allocated as multilateral development aid, and 35% as bilateral aid.

Slovenia embedded the implementation of the 2030 Agenda into the 2030 Development Strategy of Slovenia (2017)¹⁹. On a national level, implementation of the SDGs is coordinated by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinating the external dimension. A network of focal points for policy coherence for development across ministries has been set up to strengthen the policy coherence for development. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia publishes indicators of achievement of the goals of sustainable development annually²⁰.

16 URL (in the Slovene language only): <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=DEKL37>.

17 The Official Gazette of Republic of Slovenia, No. 54/17.

18 Source: Poročilo o mednarodnem razvojnem sodelovanju Republike Slovenije za leto 2018 (Report on the International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia for 2018). URL (in the Slovene language only): [http://vrs-3.vlada.si/MANDAT18/VLADNAGRADIVA.NSF/71d4985ffda5de89c12572c3003716c4/184de2b604099141c12584da00444ab3/\\$FILE/PorociloMR2018.pdf](http://vrs-3.vlada.si/MANDAT18/VLADNAGRADIVA.NSF/71d4985ffda5de89c12572c3003716c4/184de2b604099141c12584da00444ab3/$FILE/PorociloMR2018.pdf).

19 URL (in the Slovene language only): https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/SVRK/Strategija-razvoja-Slovenije-2030/Strategija_razvoja_Slovenije_2030.pdf.

20 URL (in the Slovene language only): <https://www.stat.si/Pages/cilji>.

According to the Special Eurobarometer No. 494 (2019)²¹, 77% of Slovenes assesses assistance to people in developing countries as important (EU28 average: 86%), while 74% agree that tackling poverty in developing countries is also in the EU's interest (EU28 average: 79%).

In 2017, Slovenia defined the policy coherence for development as one of the principles steering international development cooperation. With the 2018 International Development Cooperation Strategy, it also set out concrete measures to support policy coherence, namely, an annual review of the selected area, designation of focal points at the ministerial level, awareness-raising and strengthening of the national framework for monitoring and ensuring policy coherence for sustainable development.

Civil society's role in the implementation of SDGs

NGOs are strongly involved in the field of sustainable development. They are implementers of international development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects, and, through projects that raise awareness and Global Citizenship Education, they contribute to public awareness on sustainable development, global solidarity and co-responsibility.

However, NGOs perceive a lack of cross-sectoral cooperation, including the need to strengthen the capacity of actors or stakeholders traditionally not involved in sustainable development issues and policy coherence for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda emphasises the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships, at several levels, in planning, implementing, monitoring and assessing the implementation of the SDGs.

On the initiative of NGOs, a national PC(S)D network was established in 2018. The PC(S)D network connects actors from various fields and sectors by providing space for informal discussions. In addition to the common definition of PC(S)D, the network highlighted the need to strengthen the principle of policy coherence in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of government policies.

Potential impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis on the implementation of SDGs

The COVID-19 health crisis highlighted the need for enhanced international cooperation in addressing global issues. The provision of funds to respond to the crisis and its consequences could jeopardise the implementation of the 0.33% of GNI commitment for ODA by 2030. Despite Slovenia's commitment to allocate 0.33% of GNI for ODA by 2030, the share of funds is stagnating, reflecting a lack of political will.

The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated various forms of inequalities. The response to COVID-19 must be steered by the 'leaving no one behind' principle. It must focus on developing the resilience of those at risk, especially in disproportionately affected countries.

SDG implementation assessment

Initial planning or implementation of measures/actions.



Recommendations for achieving the goal

- As a responsible member of the international community, Slovenia must fulfil its commitment to allocate 0.33% of GNI to official develop-

²¹ URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2252>.



ment assistance (including 0.20% of GNI to official development assistance to the least developed countries) and strengthen the share of bilateral development aid to at least half of the development cooperation of Slovenia. The country should develop its bilateral development cooperation with the active involvement of partner countries and in accordance with ownership principles. In partner countries, too, Slovenia should operate in a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder manner through not only projects, but also through programs.

- The government should establish a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder advisory body for the 2030 Agenda, bringing together various stakeholders and supporting government decision-making in the field of sustainable development. The advisory body will strengthen ownership over the SDGs. Slovenia should strive for the full participation of civil society and ensure the involvement of marginalised and excluded groups in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDG implementation. Slovenia should strive to plan and develop a coordinated approach to the capacity building of civil society and other stakeholders related to the requirements for monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- With a view to strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development, the government should establish a permanent policy coherence assessment mechanism, which should be open, inclusive and participatory, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

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NO POVERTY

ZERO HUNGER

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

QUALITY EDUCATION

GENDER EQUALITY

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

REDUCED INEQUALITY

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

CLIMATE ACTION

LIFE BELOW WATER

LIFE ON LAND

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACHIEVING THE GOALS