POVETY WATCH REPORT

2022

Slovak Anti-Poverty Network
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Introduction

The Slovak Anti-Poverty Network (SAPN) is one of the largest networks in Slovakia. It unites 56 socially oriented NGO ´s as well as individual members. They are united by efforts to protect human dignity in every area of life. Their aim is to reduce poverty and to strengthen social cohesion and to overcome main obstacles to raise awareness of human right, to live in justice, open society. More than 18 years the network has been helping people in need to start living dignified life so they can gradually get rid of the learned powerlesness and regaine courage, optimism, selfconfidence and trust to integrate into society.

In the 1st National Action Plan for social inclusion, adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2004, SAPN enforced formulations concerning the situation of homeless people, as well as a commitment to organize the scientific conference on the situation of poor people and working poors, minimum wage and minimum income.

Last years full of misery and teror **SAPN focused on the strengthening of physical and mental health most affected groups as seniors** (project Restart seniors after pandemie), excluded groups especially children and youth based on model adaptive control, and breathing, psycho-somatic exercicing . **We implement Right for Health - Resolution 69/131 approved by United Nations 11th Dezember 2014 with International Day of Yoga 21. June** (human right to gain top standard of physical, mental and social health through yoga, plus mental exercicing, Schultz autogenic training), which proposed Indian prime minister Modi.

Slovakia and all member countries (except one - Pakistan) give approval. Accepted truth **Yoga provides holistic approach to the Health and Well-being.** Vision: *Europe for People, Well-being and Planet,* though today is very difficult to visualize it, but it is very important remember it. Especially mental health and well-being of people.

Today is new situation of poor people. **The unbearable cost of living'**. It is priority of **EU PEP Meeting 2022.** PEP (People experiencing poverty) with minimum income, with existing minimum wage , with minimum old age pension can´t to struggle for life. Necessary is solidarity, EU strategy and solutions, resist panic, higher emotions of compassion, empathy, moral and social revolution. Equality. Our government under the guidance of prime minister Heger assures of real help to the poorest ones and householders, other citizens in need, social institutions, schools, collapsed companies and corporations under the guidance of EU.

SAPN is a member of the Government Council for Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organisations. Few days ago **Conception of the development of public society during the years 2022 – 2030 was approved by our government**. There is time to implement **1st Action Plan 2022 – 2026.**

Government Council for Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organisations approved the proposal of **Revision of statutes about volunteers N. 406/2011 in September 2022**. Ministry of Finance SR didn´t agree with the dotation system 450 000,-euros /yearly to support longterm voluntary programs . The discussion focused on huge of hours, days, months, which people worked voluntary helping during pandemie covid, during Ukraine crisis.

Volunteers helped refugees survive in winter time in Slovakia and they help refugees to adapt abroad travelling here and there without home. Many with post-traumatic syndrom.

SAPN supported Revision of statutes about volunteers No406/2011 and dotation system 450 000,-euros yearly to support long-term voluntary programs. Ministry of Finance Control mechanism is in order.

32 years non-governmental sector is important part of Slovak social, political, cultural, educational, ecological spheres. Majority of 30 000 NGO ´s in Slovakia work on voluntary base. The most important networks associated in Komora (Board) of NGO ´s work hardly to improve non-governmental sector in Slovakia since FAll down of Totalitarian Regime. **Financial support of Komora of NGO´s , especially longterm voluntary programs** focused on social, health care, psychological, cultural, educational, ecological activities, free-time activities for seniors, children and youth , people in need, handicapped ones and excluded groups and communities, **would be today critical situation quantum jump**. Selfcultivation and self-development through the service to people in need, or through working voluntary with children, youth, adults in free-time activities and hobbies, is sign of the people motivated by higher self-realisation needs.

Especially state sector and business sector both are involved in the fighting for juridic justice state. Today police, procurature and courthouses investigate criminal groups and mafia groups in the highest state level. After cruel assasstination of investigative journalist J. Kuciak and his fiancee Martina in 2017. Previous government is now in opposition and threaten. Oligarchia posses several masmedia. Social atmosphere is heavy, very critical against new government. Not only because of pandemic covid , war on Ukraine, energy and nuclear deterrence. **Cumulative stress we all face daily from morning till evening in Slovakia is taking cca 80% of our vital energy !** answered PEP**.** We should be aware of it. And to focus on the strengthening of physical, mental, social and spiritual health in all age categories and professions and occupations including poor people, handicapped ones and excluded communities.

The latest Eurobarometer survey resonated in the media, where the assessment of the state of democracy in Slovakia was the most critical of all 27 EU countries. Only 32% of people are satisfied with us, and e.g. in Denmark over 90% of people, in the neighboring Czech Republic around 60%. This cannot be underestimated.

Are most people still in favor of democracy?

The public's demand for a strong hand, a strong leader, increased.

SAPN is part of the European Anti-Poverty Network (**EAPN**). It is partner organisation of European Commission. SAPN informs its members regularly about the EAPN projects, activities, issues, EU strategy of fighting against poverty. We are thankful to EAPN for guidance, support and cooperation on equal base.

What do we mean by poverty.

We are writing the report to reflect today social situation in Slovakia, in EU, **from various views , including views of people experiencing poverty we work with**. 60% of middle wage as indicator of poverty is not enough today. Some people lost in Slovakia jobs, more and more families, seniors, employees are in **material deprivation**. Some employers became insolvent, became bankrupt, became closed. Some seniors, physical handiccaped ones and single families with children, families with more children, became poor ones.

At the beginning of 2022 only 15% people answered „they experience poverty", in public opinion research. In August 2022 more than 35% answered „they experience poverty". In September 2022 public research of Agency Focus brought results, that ¾ of householders need 100 euros more, especially for food (increase about 20%), housing and energy (16% more), etc.

They face poverty. This number mounts. They face manipulation and psychological war. There are several petitions, strikes, walk-out organized by main opposite political parties and their leaders accused of corruption and unsatisfied citizens, who canalized angry against decision-makers, especially new government and minister of finance. Union of seniors and handicapped ones also participated under the guidance of opposition leaders with their members, extremists, pro Russian politicians, etc.

There are protests of nurses, physicians, they ask the same very high sallaries as receive doctors and nurses in neigbour western countries (3-4 thousands euros monthly more). Thousands of them wrote letters of designation. They are prepared to leave Slovakia. Similar situation is in agro-food sector.

In Slovakia we haven´t defined motion poverty and poverty national measure, after expert Tomáš Želinský, university profesor, researcher focused on poverty. Author of the publication „Poverty and deprivation in Slovakia. Methodological aspects and empiric impressions.

In an interview, Tomáš Želinský, an expert in the field of poverty research, explains what poverty actually is, what the poverty line is, but also what the state needs to know and implement in order to be able to determine who falls into the area of poverty and who does not, and what is need to know for effective assistance to the poor.

The state has been announcing various forms of assistance to poor households and households at risk of poverty for a long time. However, the expert says that the proposals are not optimal and Slovakia lacks basic indicators for determining the poverty line. As a result, the addressability of the aid is basically unrealistic.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, and especially in the last months, when the war in Ukraine began, we hear the term "poverty" more and more often. However, the definition is more complex and public perception is diverse. So what is poverty?

When you ask a casual passer-by how they would define the term poverty, there is a high probability that they will "hit" on one of the commonly used definitions of poverty. At first glance, defining poverty may seem like a simple task, but it is much more complicated. There are many approaches to defining and measuring poverty.

You will read in the interview

• How can the term "poverty" be defined?

• What is the poverty line in the European Union and Slovakia?

• Can the state define which households and people fall into the area of poverty?

• Why is there a problem in Slovakia with the targeting of aid to poor individuals and households?

• PLUS: Data on the risk of poverty in Slovakia. Do you belong to the most endangered group?

What are they?

I would not like to go into methodological and technical details and boring breakdowns, I would take it more generally. The first step should be to answer the question for what purpose we need to define poverty.

Do we want to identify people who have trouble meeting basic needs? Do we want to focus on a group of people who have trouble meeting a particular need? And when we identify these people, what next? Do we want to monitor the development of poverty indicators over time? Do we want to evaluate the impact of tools to solve the problem of poverty? These are just some of the questions to think about before we proceed to define poverty.

So isn't it one specific definition from which the solutions also reflect?

Exactly. Consequently, the choice of definition of poverty needs to be adapted to the problem we want to solve. As a rule, it is a political decision, and those responsible must agree whether they will consider, for example, income, property, consumption, some other indicator or a combination of several indicators as key.

They should agree on determining the poverty line, that is, the value that divides people into poor and non-poor.

This limit can be defined objectively, for example, a group of experts estimates the level of income that should ensure a person or a household some minimum standard. In this case, it is also necessary to determine what can be considered the minimum standard in the given company.

There is also a subjective approach. Within it, the determination of the poverty line is based, for example, on what people in a given society consider to be the minimum income that will ensure the satisfaction of their essential needs. It might seem that this subjective approach has a low informative value stemming from the element of subjectivity. However, several studies have concluded that in some cases, how they (subjectively) perceive reality is more important for people's functioning in society than what "objective" reality is.

And these are only some of the parameters that can enter into determining the definition of poverty.

Poverty risk rate after social transfers by household type (2021 data).

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Household type Share of households

at risk of poverty (%)

Households without children 9.2%

Households with children 14.6%

1 member household in total -

1 member household, men 24.8 %

1-member female household 25.0%

1 member household up to 65 20.8%

1 member household 65+ 28.5%

2 adults without children (both < 65) 8.4%

2 adults without children (at least one 65+) 6.7%

Other households without children 6.3%

Single-parent families (at least 1 child) 33.6%

2 adults 1 dependent child 11.4%

2 adults 2 dependent children 10.6%

2 adults 3+ dependent children 36.3%

Other households with dependent children 12.2%

Are there any established procedures for determining these boundaries and indicators?

As for specific indicators of poverty, one of the most used in the European Union is the income poverty risk indicator. It is a relative concept of poverty measurement, in which the income of each individual or household is compared to the national poverty line.

In a simplified way, it can be imagined like this. We will calculate the net income at the household level, we will convert the net income per household member, while the weight of each household member depends on his age, and we will determine the median of these values for the entire country. The poverty line in EU countries is subsequently set as 60 percent of the thus determined median in the respective country.

Such an approach to defining poverty is of course justified, but the interpretation of the results requires a degree of caution. First of all, we should avoid easy generalizations. This indicator does not tell how many people are poor, but how many people are at risk of poverty. This means that the poor can be significantly more, but also significantly less.

Comparisons between countries are also very limited and should rather be avoided.

Poverty risk rate after social transfers by economic activity and gender (2021 data).

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Indicator Share of poverty risk rate (%)

Men and women together Working 6.7%

Unemployed 52.6%

Pensioners 10.1%

Other inactive person 17.4%

Working Men 7.2%

Unemployed 55.8%

Pensioners 7.1%

Other inactive person 14.3%

Women Working 6.0%

Unemployed 48.7%

Pensioners 12.2%

Other inactive person 19.0%

So that's assessing poverty based on household income. What are the others?

In the EU, indicators of material deprivation are also used, which is a feeling of insufficient satisfaction of the needs of the household and its members. It is determined whether households can afford, for example, to eat a meal with meat or a vegetarian equivalent every other day, a week of vacation away from home, and so on. But indicators based on a combination of several indicators are also used, usually income, deprivation, property, consumer spending and the like.

So can it be clearly determined who in Slovakia falls into the area of poverty?

The answer to the question of who can be considered poor in the conditions of the Slovak Republic is very difficult. Of course, it is easy for me as a researcher to choose a definition of poverty that is suitable for the needs of a particular research. But when the goal is to identify the poor, for example, so that the state can target various forms of aid, it is more difficult. The fact that we do not have a defined national poverty line in Slovakia can be considered one of the key problems.

The living wage can be considered a form of national poverty line. In the case of a couple with one dependent child, the amount is approximately 505 euros per month. In my opinion, this is such a pitifully low amount that it does not even come close to covering the most basic needs of a household of three. In no case would I therefore consider it a meaningfully set poverty line.

So there are probably more poor individuals and households than this imaginary indicator defines. So we don't know what the real numbers are, and therefore we don't even know how to implement mitigation measures?

A few months ago, different opinions were often heard in the media about the generality versus targeting of aid to the poor, and one of the arguments of some politicians was that it is not possible to apply the principle of targeting, as "the state does not know who is poor in Slovakia".

If we had a defined (national) threshold of income poverty under the conditions of the Slovak Republic, the state would definitely be able to identify the poor. Public and state institutions, for example Social Insurance, Financial Administration, have data on people's incomes. Of course, it wouldn't happen overnight, it would require amendments in legislation, changes in information systems and technical details.

After linking the registers, however, the state would ultimately gain a relatively detailed view of the income situation of households and would be able to target aid in the right way. Of course, only official income could be captured. So, in my opinion, the question is not whether the state can do it, but why it does not want to do it.

KEY NATIONAL DATAS *EU SILC*

1. the problem of housing for the homeless is solved through centers of hope, such as Oáza, Father Kuffa, in Bratislava De Paul (founded by Father Srholec). However, they are troubled by being dependent on charity (soup left over from the restaurant, which they ask for every day, they take it away if they get it. Materials from waste for expanding housing capacity.)

2. young people, including those with higher education, there are no salaries for beginners without experience to be able to start a family at all after the age of 25, as they usually live in a room with other siblings, in 2-3 room apartments with their parents. They don't have their own apartment, their own family. And the years fly by. This is reflected in the downward curve of marriages, as well as in the downward demographic curve, as they are partners without children. And then also on the growing curve of the breakup of partnerships and marriages.

3. In addition, there are generally no job opportunities in the poor regions of the East and South of Slovakia. Even if young graduates of secondary schools and universities return home, for the reasons mentioned above (they do not have sufficient income for housing), they do not have a chance to get a job at home, as job opportunities are mainly in the West of Slovakia, where there are automobile plants, where companies, institutions, etc. . It is a vicious circle that leads to the leakage of "brains" and talented graduates abroad. At the same time, unemployment among young graduates in Slovakia was one of the highest in the EU.

4. The covid pandemic has shown that many poor families, especially families from the excluded community, have insufficient housing, there is a lack of space for quarantine of a family member, for distance learning of children, for homework.

At that time, the goal of the new government in the Government Program was to approve legislation and build social housing, to ensure social housing. But item no. it operates in the

minority and there is a threat of early elections. It is related not only to accumulated crises and extremely demanding living conditions, but also to the building of the rule of law (after the brutal murder of journalist J. Kuciak and his fiancée Marta, which caused the fall of the previous government). Dozens of state officials who were supposed to ensure the fight against corruption have confessed and are in custody, but the opposition is creating a targeted mob psychosis against the new government so that police investigations, trials, arrests, etc. she reversed.

Our main messages are:

FUTURE ARE YOUNG PEOPLE

REAL SITUATION and KEY CHALLENGES and PRIORITIES in Slovakia.

New government approved legislation for financial support of families and children. The Parliament of Slovak Republic broke VETO of Zuzana Čaputova – our president. Afterwards begun the irrational political crisis inside government. Of course, financial help of families with children, especially support of hobby groups and development of physical and mental skills 70,-euros / child/ monthly is excellent. After 2 months of fighting between pro family conservatives and self-centered liberals, focused on material progress of Slovakia, supporting especially bussinesmen, is minority government . Collapsed. Why? Because financially supporting families with children. Not because of corruption, or acts contrary to the order. Fear, anxiety, depression works various forms.

RESIST PANIC!

REMAIN COOL HEAD! / Keep your cool

IN-WORK POVERTY

There is 170 000 unemployed people in Slovakia. Some of them lost job because of energy crisis. Majority are long-term unemployed helpless ones to stand up and to start new life period, with learned optimism. Thanks to „kurz-arbeit“ and financial support of workers during impact of energetic crisis on industry, agriculture and production, there is not higher percentage of unemployement.

Over the past 12 months, inflation has cut more than 13% of every euro from employees' salaries. In the period of rising double-digit inflation, not even the trade unions can help employees work towards higher wages for work at a time of high prices. It is difficult to find counterarguments against employers declaring that due to increasingly expensive energy and raw materials they are barely surviving and losing competitiveness in the market with the threat of a drop in sales.

A large part of industry in Slovakia is based on energy-intensive production of goods. This means, according to economist Ľuboš Pavelek, that any subsidies provided as part of calls from the environmental fund would be enough to satisfy only a few large companies. The price index increased by more than 42% year-on-year. Companies cannot compensate the increase in costs with the increase in product prices, because high prices significantly suppress the demand of ordinary customers and also investments in expanding production, renovation of buildings, etc. In combination with higher interest rates on loans and a

negative business environment, the logical outcome is an economic recession. **Negotiations on raising salaries and wages at a time of inflation are a difficult puzzle across Europe.**

NONE OF THAT!

A strike by opposition supporters led by opposition leaders took place in September 2022, along with members of the Pensioners' Union, etc. Their message was **NONE OF THAT!** Approximately 70,000 disgruntled citizens were expected, as recently in Prague, Czech Republic. About 5,000 people came.

ENERGETIC CRISIS

The good news is electrical self-sufficiency thanks to the electricity from the third unit in the Mochovce nuclear power plant. At the end of 2022, Slovakia will be able to produce as much electricity as it consumes itself. The service life of the new block is planned for at least 60 years. This way we have one of the cleanest energy mixes in Europe. The completion of the third block was supposed to cost 2.8 billion euros, but in the end the cost was increased to 6.2 billion euros. More than 64.3% of all electricity produced in Slovakia comes from Slovak power plants. Energy is produced for 30-40 euro/megawatt hour. For sale, item no. for 400 euros and is sold out including energy from Mochoviec for two years ahead. However, price growth is heading towards 1,000 euros/megawatt hour. There is a danger that at such a price Slovakia will have to buy electricity back from the Germans or other distributors in 2023.

As Minister of Labor M. Krajniak stated on RTVS: "We don't have problems with energy prices only because of Putin. This is due to the fact that Germany and other countries have said that they are going to make ecological electricity. They said we're going to close nuclear, we're going to close coal, and now it turns out they're not able to produce enough electricity for their market, we have to pay for it. That is not fair and Slovakia will not agree to it," said Krajniak. The European Commission is also supposed to prepare a pan-European solution by September 30, 2022, but according to Krajniak, this solution would cost Slovakia 14 billion euros, which is unacceptable, and the 140-million compensation offered by the EU will not help either.

Therefore, through the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Affairs, they filed a counter-proposal to redistribute the excess profits collected after taxation fairly according to how much energy is produced where and how much is consumed. He emphasized that the state will also have to deal with, for example, canceling the contracts that the distribution companies had already concluded in advance.

600 thousand inhabitants should receive energy checks for 200 million euros. It turns out that there will be more residents. However, the goal is to cap the price of energy. And the poor would receive energy checks. According to the Minister of Social Affairs, even in 2023 every household will be able to heat, light and cook. The aid is oriented towards people in need, the poorest. We will see.

Seniors are the group most affected

Message: Low wages, low old age pensions.

Approximately 1.4 million pensioners should receive financial assistance from the state by the end of the year. 1.4 million could go to pensioners as aid from the state.

In addition to energy assistance, pensioners will receive a 14th pension ranging from 30 euros to 210 euros, depending on the amount of the pension. According to ex-Minister of Labor Ján Richter, a low-income household would need at least 1,000 euros to overcome a difficult period.

According to Minister of Labor Krajniak, the systemic solution is the valorization of pensions, which is being prepared from January 1, 2023 and will amount to an average of 60 euros per month. There will also be help for families when the tax bonus and child allowance are to be increased.

Minimum old age pension is 334,30 euros. For 30 years of retirement insurance. 20% of retired people have minimum old age pension.

Living wages, substinence minimum is increased since July 2022 about 7,5% = **234,42 euros.**

Medial pension is 505,- euros.

The chairman of JDS Michal Kotian /Union of pensioners in Slovakia/ calls for an urgent solution to help seniors. / TASR, Reuters source/:

"Senior households contribute more than 400 million euros to the state budget this year due to rising prices and higher prices. With the proposal, they want to pay back only 150 million euros of the 400 million that the seniors have paid and will pay from their low old-age pensions" - he pointed out. He asks why the state wants to keep the remaining amount with this proposal.

At the beginning of 2022, every third old-age pension was paid below the poverty line, and tens of thousands of seniors are falling into poverty throughout the year**.**

We have been warning for several months that the situation of seniors is unsustainable," he added, adding that more than 160,000 people have signed the petition with JDS demands so far. That is also why he is asking for a constructive dialogue and adequate solutions in this regard.

The average pension in Slovakia is 505 euros/month. About 20% of pensioners have a minimum pension of up to 350 euros/month. Those with low pensions and single-member pensioner households, which are most affected by the current rate of inflation, need the most help. This is also supported by experts on poverty, the chairman of the Association of Christian Seniors Peter Mach, trade unionist and member of the Working Poverty movement Ján Košč. He compared it with the Czech Republic, where pensions have already been increased in this way twice, and the third valorization is planned for the fall. Our Slovak

network against poverty also supports the proposal to help lonely pensioners who live alone, e.g. allowance for housing or energy.

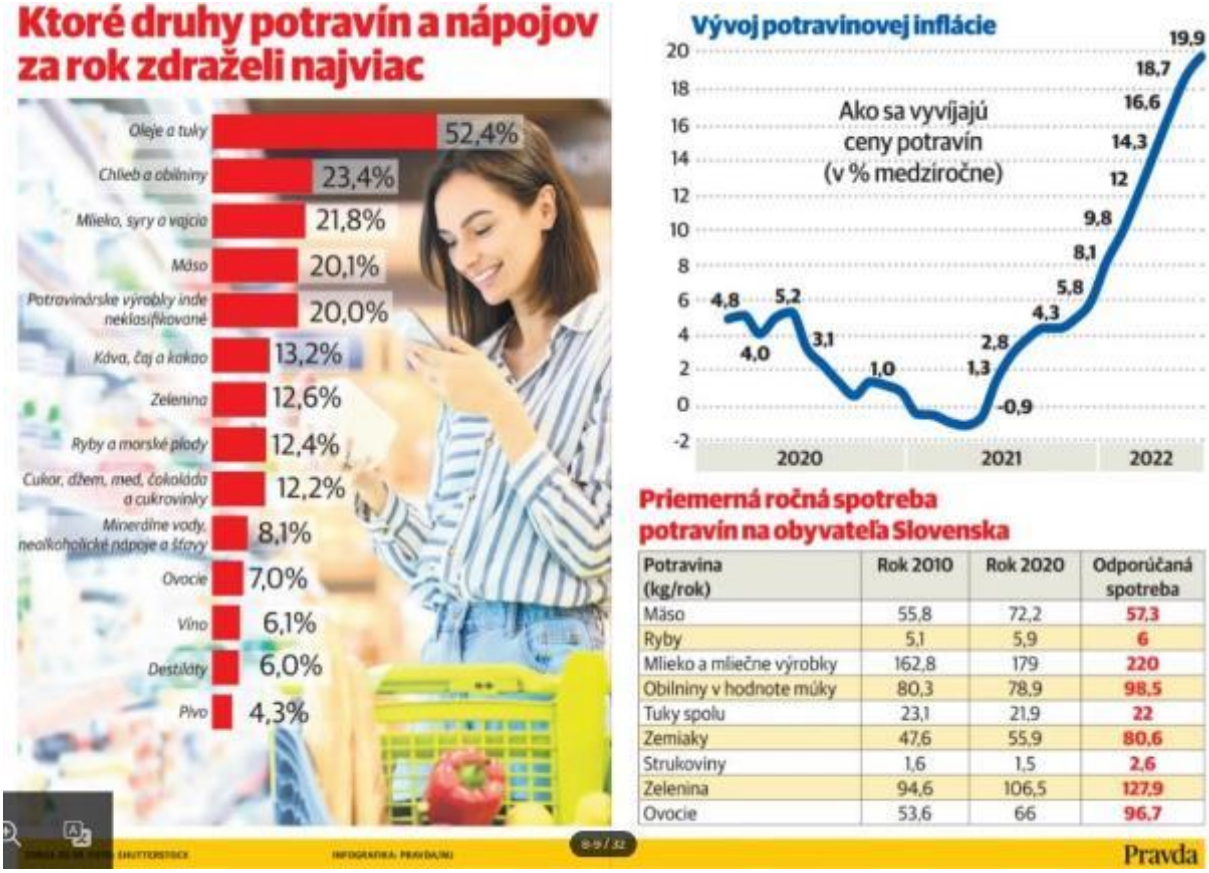
The vice president of the Pensioners' Union, P. Pokorná, emphasizes that the number of seniors has fallen below the poverty line, according to her, there are up to 140,000 of them. Inflation is extremely high already, while the valuation of pensions this year is only 1.3%. The President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová, also supports the opinion that "inflation aid should not only be one-time, but repeated, targeted and in a sufficient amount."

The increase in the retirement age will apply to those born in 1967 and younger. Those born in 1966 and earlier will retire according to the current law, i.e. at the age of 64 at the latest. After the new one, the customary table will be abolished and the retirement age will be linked to the average life expectancy. Because people will spend an average of the same period of time in retirement, which will have a positive impact on the long-term sustainability of the pension system, according to the report of the press department of the Department of Labor.

In addition to pensioners, aid should also go to other vulnerable groups. 100 euros should also be given to people with severe disabilities, orphans and children with invalid replacement child support. The same subsidy will also be aimed at inmates of centers for children and families, at persons whose substitute family care has ended, and at more than 20,000 households with an income up to 1.5 times the subsistence minimum. The total costs should be at the level of 5.7 million euros.

FOOD INDUSTRY and COLLAPS

Slovakia is 2nd country EU with the greatest grow in price of food.



Bakers say that maintaining current bread prices could lead to a bread price of 7 euros per kilogram. A stronger message cannot be sent to the minority government. Not only among bakers and milkmen, but also among butchers and farmers. Energies turn the wheels of agriculture and processing industry. The agricultural and food self-administration points out that the reserves are exhausted and the collapse of the agro-food industry is just around the corner. The President of the Slovak Chamber of Agriculture and Food Industry, Emil Macho, warned: "if the government together with the EU does not do anything about energy prices, there will be no livestock or food production here for some time!" , because that's what it's all about, will only bring more price increases. Macho pointed out that if until now food prices have risen by about 1/5, then from November, if the government does not cap prices, people must expect them to rise by another 20 to 30%. Brussels approves capping energy prices. Slovakia is waiting for approval and a response from Brussels.

But who will actually be able to afford to buy such expensive food? Water companies are already announcing that the increase in electricity prices may also be reflected in a rapid increase in the price of drinking water. For example the water company in eastern Slovakia paid about 6 million euros per year for electricity. Today, according to "good" prices, it still pays 11 to 12 million euros, and next year, from January 1, 2023, it should pay 56 million euros. As the Chairman of the National Council of the SR Boris Kollár added: "maybe wine or vodka will be cheaper than drinking water". The government is ready to adopt resolutions based on the declaration of an energy emergency and threat to Slovakia. "It will be

necessary to take non-standard steps. Maybe it will cause a lot of lawsuits, but we have to take that risk in order to save people, communities, companies and the economy" - added Kollár.

Real wages are falling, people are spending more on fuel for their cars, and spending on all kinds of goods and services is also rising. However, food must be given priority, it is impossible to live without it.

HEALTH CARE

The departure of 3,500 doctors and hundreds or thousands of nurses from the health sector. He will have no one to treat.

According to Brigita Schmognerová, the former Minister of Finance of the Slovak Republic, it is a miracle that the Slovak healthcare system survived until 2022. After the fall of socialism, the "transformation" began with the entry of the private sector into the former socialist health system without experience and sufficiently defined conditions reminiscent of the functioning of the so-called investment funds/IF. Without adequate legislation and control in privatized enterprises, looting and killing took place as during gold mining in the Klondike. Deductions to the health sector were legislatively ensured, and they attracted several sharks - businessmen. However, the competition of new health insurance companies opened the door to a permanent leakage of public funds from the health sector. Cooperative health insurance company Perspektíva went bankrupt after tunneling. For the entrepreneurs, it was not about serving patients, but about their own profits. The underfunding of the healthcare system from the beginning, the "outsoursing" of the most lucrative activities into the hands of the private sector, and the often inefficient management at various levels only worsened the disease of the healthcare system.

Hospitals are closing departments and postponing operations due to staff shortages. Estimates show that the number of preventable deaths has not decreased, it has increased. One of the reasons is that hospitals are depopulated. If there is no medical staff, there is no one to treat the patients. The reason is, among other things, the salary level of doctors and nurses compared to neighboring EU countries. Even though on 8/19/2022 the Minister of Finance I. Matovič announced the "historically highest salary increase" for nurses and midwives, they were not enthusiastic. There is no interest in entering Slovak health facilities. And the number of doctors and nurses leaving is increasing. 3,500 resignations of doctors are registered. But it's about more than salaries. The medical trade union presented demands to the government regarding the financing of hospitals, the reform of the system of health insurance companies, etc. Tens of thousands of patients are exposed to threats to their health or lives due to the departure of doctors, nurses, and paramedics.

"Not only will there be no one to treat, but also nowhere" - state the experts. As the decision to apply the recovery plan to the hospital infrastructure was postponed. Experts pointed to the insufficient capacity of the future university hospital in Rázsochy. Optimizing the hospital network /UN/ can have serious consequences for the availability of medical care. The Slovak Medical Chamber asks the government to postpone the categorization of hospitals. As he states, the proposed transformation of some hospitals into type 1 would lead to the demise of many of them and endanger the provision of institutional health care in Slovakia. In addition, even those hospitals and medical facilities that the state, cities, or local

governments have sold to private individuals and continue to want to sell other buildings to Pro Care, Svet zdravia, or Penta Investment, Czech Agel for financial reasons - without the condition of preserving their original purpose, the Ministry of Health does not resolve . As B. Schmognerová notes, "when the first button on the shirt is fastened incorrectly, the others will also be fastened incorrectly. That is why the Slovak healthcare system is in a bad way. It will have to be reset."

"Coalition politicians should realize that they may have power for the last time. They decide whether the EU will break up," states Aneta Világi, a political scientist. Political scientists and experts such as They agree that: "Whoever promises gas for half the price has a relatively high chance of winning the elections in Slovakia." And voters won't even think much about whether it's possible."

So far, health care is generally available to everyone, including people at risk of poverty. Also to excluded groups. However, the difference is evident in the purchase of food, healthy and high-quality food, in the use of medicines prescribed by doctors, in the use of vitamins, nutritional supplements, in the quality of the diet, which affects the immune system and resistance. It is important that people calm down, trust this government and finish the government period. They did not succumb to panic, crowing, intimidation.

MENTAL HEALTH

Last 2-3 years in masmedia, newspapers, magazines, majority political debates, dialogues, round tables in TV, in TV news, Saturday radio , Sunday morning and noon TV discussions with the political leaders and politologists are negative expectations sparking fears that people fall down into poverty. Such way people waste vital energy loosing especially mental health. Quite another is social situation during „good years“ than today during cumulative stress and war on Ukraine with unpredictable economic and financial impact.

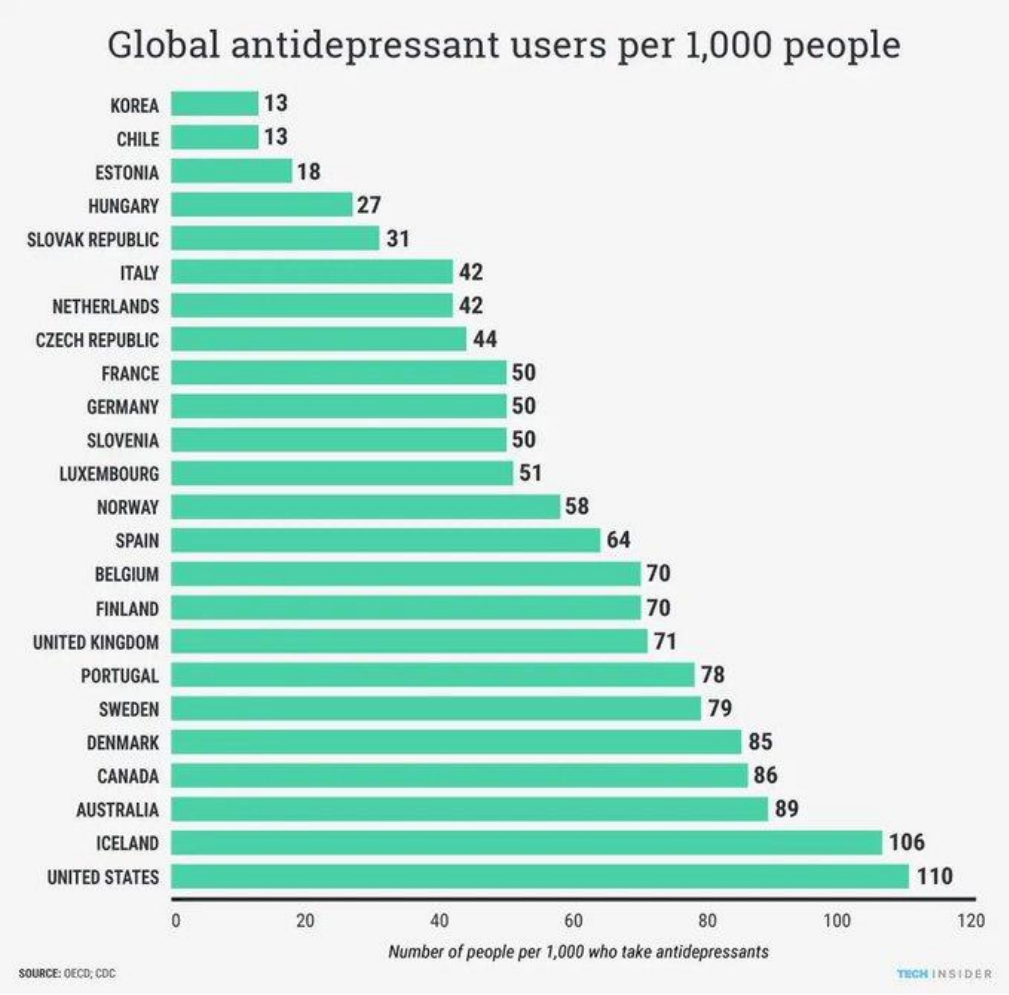
Some of the best journalists, commentators, columnists, diagnose main political state leaders with various diagnoses as psychic ill ministers, head of Parliament with immoral conduct, emotionally disbalanced ex-prime minister, non-autonomous prime minister, sociopatic minister, manio-depresive minister, Stockholm syndrom, etc. Some prestigious polimetrician wrote, that today political scene is work-place for psychiatrists, not polimetricians.

Mental health is not as straightforward as diagnosing physical illnesses. The scale between the seriously ill and the mentally healthy is wide. If we consider that indicators of impaired mental health are, for example, fear, anxiety, sadness, depression or restlessness, excitability, negative destructive feelings, toxic thoughts, name-calling, scheming, manipulation, threatening, attacking and "lightning rod", when do we reduce the cause of the crisis to one the person who is to blame is responsible for the vast majority of existing problems in society, so we face many attacks from mentally unbalanced, psychologically disturbed individuals in various spheres of social life, not only in politics, but also in the media. Not only because we are facing cumulative stress, long-term stress in the form of concerns about the health of ourselves, loved ones, uncertainty about the future, the situation in the world, facing war again, not only a pandemic, etc.

The fact that many of the patients are not psychiatrically hospitalized, nor do they visit a psychiatric facility on an outpatient basis, does not mean that their mental illness has

stabilized or disappeared without professional help. Helpline consultations and similar services have been expanded. We observe community support. Conversations with psychologists, psychotherapists on various hot topics affecting people, children and youth. But it takes a population survey - it's like a snapshot to give us a picture of how many people have a mental disorder using a diagnostic questionnaire that asks about different symptoms in a sample of the population. In Slovakia, according to the latest surveys, 20% of the population have anxiety disorders, 30% have depressive symptoms. Unfortunately, only 2% of the population is treated in psychiatric clinics. Awareness of mental health is still very low in Slovakia and prejudices are high.

Table Global antidepressant users per 1000 people



MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN and YOUTH

In the Czech Republic, they discovered that every fourth citizen will go through a mental crisis during their lifetime. That's why they started to launch centers aimed at prevention and strengthening of mental health. They stress that it is extremely important that the topic of mental health finally becomes part of the mainstream public debate. You cannot have good physical health without mental health. It is necessary not to stay alone with your problems. Also this year, the Municipal Library in Prague is organizing various programs, including Mental Health Week.

In Slovakia, in 2021, we recorded an increase in the number of completed suicides compared to previous years in all age groups. Suicide is one of the indicators of the mental health of the population. This is the worst possible impact of disturbed mental health. The highest increase occurred in the age range of 15- to 19-year-olds. A large number of data on suicidal thoughts and attempts are obtained from telephone and Internet contacts of psychological crisis lines. The number of "calls for help" has more than tripled. We are not ready for this increase. In addition, the presence of Ukrainian asylum seekers does not add to the mental satisfaction of the locals in terms of time. Not to mention the post-traumatic syndrome of some refugees, which apparently no one is addressing yet. So far, however, people have accepted the refugees with open hearts. However, it is worse for Ukrainian children who did not find a place in primary school. Their mental and social development is at risk. However, even those refugee children who go to school have to go through adaptation. And this process is difficult even for Slovak children, whose time is cut short in classes.

Therefore, we welcome that the strengthening of the mental health of children and youth has appeared among the priorities of the EAPN.

There is researched that 60% of jobs, professions will be new ones in future. Not today existing. And after **Microsoft Mc Kensly and Company research (School) Class 2030** : DIGITAL SKILLS and 40% of work places : EMOTIONAL and SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (psychohygiene, moral principles, self-regulation, management skills, decision-making with responsibility, solution of the problems in the society, in community and innovation

Even Pope Francis focused on Innovation and Christianity. There is necessary to explain better mental and spiritual development of mankind, of human.

MESSAGE:

INVESTITION FOR MENTAL HEALTH - BETTER LIFE and FUTURE FOR ALL

RESULTS of the largest WHO research last 2 decades focused on Global Psychic Health (before pandemie COVID - 19: published by World Health Organisation 16. June 2022.

- **One billion** people suffered some **mental disorder**
- **First year of Pandemic** the number cases **depression and anxiety increased about ¼**
- **Suicide** 1 from 100 dead persons.
- **70% ill people** received therapy in rich countries
- **12% ill people** received therapy in poor countries
- **Only 2% of national health care** are dedicated to Mental Health
- **1% finance** of International Health Care (Mark Van Ommeren)
- **Young people and women : one from 8 persons suffered mental disorder**
- **1 from 5 – in conflict zone**

Meeting of the Minister of Health of the SR Vladimír Lengvarský with the head of the WHO

They discussed the expansion of cooperation in the field of mental health or the issue of missing medical personnel. At the security conference Globsec 2022 Bratislava - Forum with gener. by WHO Director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. At the meeting, the partners discussed the strengthening of primary health care, as well as the field of mental health and

psychosocial support within the framework of intensified cooperation with the WHO. – explained the communication department.

The results of the Depression Scorecard research, which involved ten European countries, were also presented during the conference. It concluded that care for people with depression must be improved. "Depression affects 3.8% of people worldwide, including 5% of adults, and even more people over 60 years of age. Just as we tried to solve the pandemic of the disease COVID-19, we must now focus on fighting this growing problem, which affects the whole society," emphasized Jozef Šuvada, a member of the WHO Executive Board. Also patient org. they emphasized the need to improve and modernize the care system. "Patients with depression and their families deserve the same strategic plan as patients with cancer," warned Andrej Vršanský, director of the League for Mental Health.

Promising practices in Slovakia

Meeting of Minister of Health Slovak Republic Vladimir Lengvarsky with general director of World Health Organisation Tedrosom Adhanom Ghebreyesus is very important step towards reducing poverty. It showed us, that **SAPN supported by EAPN in strengthening physical and mental health of vulnerable groups, seniors (project Restart seniors after pandemics COVID-19), excluded people is important and good strategy reduce poverty.**

Dementia robs millions of people of their memories, independence and dignity, but also robs the rest of us of the people we know and love“ – said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO. „The world is failing people with dementia, and that hurts all of us. 4 years ago, governments agreed a clear set of targets to improve dementia care. But targets alone are not enough. **We need action to ensure that all people with dementia are able to live with the support and dignity they deserve.**

Dementia is caused by a variety of diseases and injuries that affect the brain, such as Alzheimer ´s disease or stroke. It affects memory and other cognitive functions, as well as the ability to perform everyday tasks. The disability associated with dementia is a key driver of costs related to the condition. **In 2019 the global cost of dementia was estimated to be 1,3 trillion US dollars. The cost is projected to increase to 1,7 trillion by 2030, or 2,8 trillion dollars for encreases in care costs.**

The number of people living with dementia is growing according to the report: WHO estimates that more than 55 million people (8,1% of women and 5,4 % of men over 65 years) are living with dementia. This number is estimated to rise to 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050.

Our health care consume more power and money every year! Through responsibility for own health and preventive medicine we can save a lot of money!

As an opera singer, I had to be able to breathe well while singing. Yoga breathing exercises and relaxation helped me. However, now during the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, yoga practice helps me stay fit, maintain and strengthen my mental health, not succumb to panic, intimidation. I realize that when I get up in the morning, until the evening, people around me live in fear. Yoga must be brought to schools. And support yoga courses*.V.K.*

Good progress in awareness raising compaigns to improve public understanding of dementia, with strong leadership by civil society. 2/3 countries have taken action to improve the accessibility of physical and social environments for people with dementia and to provide training and education to population groups outside the health and social care sector, such as volunteers, police, fire services and first responders.

WHO ´s work on the „Global dementia action plan“, including the Global Dementia Observatory, has been supported by the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency of EU, the Governments of Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Without mental hygiene people are unable to recognize glimse of truth, what is real and what is conspiration, be emotionally stabile. Not panic, resist fear from all corners.

Preventive medicine and strengthening of mental health became part of Recovery plan. SAPN became member of Liga pre duševné zdravie (League for mental health org).

We recommand to the European Commission focus on Mental and social health on the Recovery and REsilience Plan as one of the priority. It can help citizens become autonomic, concertrating on basic issues, positive way of thinking and expectations, resist panic. And EU survived in this difficult times of conspirations, war in Ukraine, pollarised society, energetic and financial crisis, during election in member states EU and EU Parliament.

Our government is taking positive steps, though under attacks from the opposition. Especially to form justice state, justice court houses, free police without influence of politicians. After 2 years we see results, and there is more money for social and health care. And we didn ´t fall down during pandemics and war on Ukraine, with open door to Ukrain refugees.

SAPN our network is active in team-building. We open new branch in town Poprad, and we involved young people to participate in our projects Restart seniors! We cooperate with Malta friends in the project Strengthening of physical and mental health of vulnerable groups and excluded communities and we begin cooperation with Catholic University in Ružomberok.

We help Ukraine refugees. Very important is PEP participation. These days our longterm member Oasis established by Mgr. Peter Gombita run MARATHON to make visible poverty throughout Slovakia.

The overall impression of the visit to Riga and the program created for us as guests of EAPN Latvia is very positive, above-standard and unforgettable. The experiences exchanged with the project participants escalated from the first experience and offered a broad view into issues of the fight against poverty in Latvia. We have seen, experienced and learned a lot, as have I believe the other stakeholders. Many thanks to EAPN Latvia and the European EAPN for the personal opportunity to be inspired by the good practices of another company culture and way of thinking. We evaluate the project as an invaluable contribution to our lives, but especially to our surroundings, which we will try to enrich by transferring the knowledge and experience exchanged in Latvia. On behalf of the entire Slovak Network Against Poverty, we thank you.

John and Elizabeth

Our priority areas are END of WAR! SOLIDARITY with REFUGEES!

Huge of money we all lost because of War in Ukraine. And more – HEALTH. Especially Mental Health and DECENT LIFE. The best is be aware and „ beyond“ as pope Francis explained. Not be captured in black-white approach towards Ukrainees and Russians. See cause of war „beyond“. Be above duality.

There are three leaders : Indian prime minister Modi, Chinese president Si Ťin-pching and Russian president Putin.

During Asian Meeting in Samarkand Indian prime minister Modi spoke 1st time with Putin after War on Ukraine and told him to end the war on Ukraine. We should know, that prime minister Modi is not „Ferko Mrkvička“, but one of the most powerful world leaders. And if Putin wants to be regarded as serious partner in Asia, he needs act properly and quickly.

It reveals behind Ukraine – Russia war, behind unfinished „cold war“ (United States of America x Soviet union) is new geopolitical situation. New world power group.

As two experts discussed in American Express

- Stuart A. Levey, previous state secretary of ministry of finance in United States of America focusing on terorism under presidents G.W.Bush and Barack Obama
- Francis Fukuyama, philosopher, polimetrician, ekonomist, famous intellectual today

About US dollar as leader world currency today, but situation can change tomorrow! Especially when China is focused on alternative of US dollar. What happened to Russia through sanctions, can happen in future to China, or other country, too? Private sector has already alternative digital payment system , right stablecoins.

Traditional financial system could be replace by digital chinnese juan, under centralized control.Alternative system can´t be control by United states of America. After S.A. Levey is very important to communicate with India and other Asian partners not join China and Russia.

We are sure that way how to cooperate with India is through United nations approved Resolution 69/ 131 – Right on Health.

DIALOGUE INSTEAD KILLING. DIALOGUE CAN HELP END the WAR on Ukraine. After mobilisation of Russian citizens and start of referendum in Rusian- Ukraine border towns there is possibility to end the War on Ukraine. BUT **it is necessary to focus on dialogue**, not killing innocent people , destroying towns, country. **To start dialogue we need to see hot problems from other angle, other views.** Based on evolution psychology: all situations even war and extreme life situation we can see from the positive angle (Selingman ´s Positive Psychology). We are unable to see good in our deeds and approaches, in myself, ourselves. But also unable to see good in others, their deeds, actions and reactions. Such way we don ´t use our mental potential fully, only partially, cca 7- 10% of it.

To reach high mental level, see glimpse of truth, we need long life mental training and self-cultivation, self-reflection. Rare are those called Mahatma, recognized as man of genius.

One of the greatest personalities last millenium Mahatma Gandhi followed Satja-graha – path of truth. He noticed that to speak truth is main priority in his life. Truth = God, everywhere. We can ´t see God, only glimpse of Truth. Speaking truth helps us develop higher mental abilities, as to distinguish truth from lie. Reality from un-reality, conspirations, manipulations. Etc.

25.9.2022, Piestany, Slovakia

Anna Galovičová, PhD. – Chairwoman of Slovak Anti-Poverty Network