

U.S. Country Commercial Guides



Slovakia
2018

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Doing Business in Slovakia

Market Overview

Discusses key economic indicators and trade statistics, which countries are dominant in the market, the U.S. market share, the political situation if relevant, the top reasons why U.S. companies should consider exporting to this country, and other issues that affect trade, e.g., terrorism, currency devaluations, trade agreements.

Slovakia is a country of 5.4 million people and is strategically located at the geographic heart of Europe. The Slovak market is increasingly dominated by the automotive, electronics, engineering, tourism and service industries. In addition to its strategic location and educated population, Slovakia's stable macroeconomic policies have made it a good place for U.S. exporters to do business.

Slovakia is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, the Visegrad 4 (V4), the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Finance Cooperation, the World Trade Organization (WTO), UNESCO, INTERPOL, and other multi-lateral organizations. It is also a member of the EU Schengen Agreement, which allows for the free movement of people.

Slovakia adopted the euro (EUR) as its currency on January 1, 2009, becoming the 16th member of the European Monetary Union, resulting in the facilitation of trade through lower transaction costs, higher pricing transparency, and greater monetary stability. Slovakia has a positive financial outlook according to Moody's and a stable financial outlook according to S&P and TE rating agencies. Real GDP growth reached 3.4% in 2017, one of the fastest growth rates among all EU countries.

Unemployment nationwide dropped down from 9.7% in 2016 to 5.42% at the end of April 2018, but varies widely from region to region. Inflation in 2017 was 1.4%. Continued GDP growth of approximately 4.1% is anticipated in 2018. U.S. exports to Slovakia in 2016 totaled USD 525 million.

U.S. Imports from Slovakia in 2017 totaled USD 2.33 billion. Total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stands at more than USD 41.5 billion as of 2016, with U.S. FDI estimated at approximately USD 4.6 billion. U.S. imports from Slovakia are dominated by Volkswagen, Audi and Porsche Sports Utility Vehicles that are manufactured in Bratislava. Slovakia's major trading partners are Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, France, Italy and the United States.

Market Challenges

Learn about barriers to market entry and local requirements, i.e., things to be aware of when entering the market for this country.

Corruption: Slovakia ranked 50th on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in 2017. International companies doing business with the Slovak Government or attempting to obtain licenses that are required by the Slovak Government to do business in the country perceive non-transparency in bureaucratic processes to be a problem. Corruption is perceived as widespread in government contracting and public procurement, the courts and in the health care system. While the legal system generally enforces property and contractual rights, decisions may take years, thus limiting the utility of the courts for dispute resolution.

Labor: A lack of labor in specialized and expert professions is the result of the slow adaptation of the education system to new conditions and the needs of specific industries that are developing more rapidly than other industries, for example automotive and IT.

Market Opportunities

Overview of best prospect sectors, major infrastructure projects, significant government procurements and business opportunities.

Best Prospects for U.S. Exporters include:

- Aircraft, Spacecraft
- Reactors, Boilers, Equipment, Machinery
- Mineral Fuel, Oil, Bituminous Substances
- Electrical Machinery, Sound Equipment
- Optical, Photo, Medical/Surgical Instruments
- Automotive Parts and Components and Aftermarket Products
- Agricultural Sectors

Market Entry Strategy

Generalizes on the best strategy to enter the market, e.g., visiting the country; importance of relationships to finding a good partner; use of agents.

The best way to gain firsthand experience in Slovakia is to visit, of course. You can get a feeling of what the market is like and how your product or service would be received; Bratislava is a 45-minute drive from Vienna airport.

After a visit to Slovakia, you may want to consider the other regional markets, including the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Ukraine. Slovakia is an EU member and a gateway to the 28-member EU market.

The Euro became Slovakia's nationwide currency on January 1, 2009, easing trade transactions among the 19 EU countries that use it. The most common and simple option for establishing an office in Slovakia is the limited liability company (LLC). Make the U.S. Commercial Service Bratislava office your first stop when considering entry to the Slovak market.

Political Environment

Political Environment

Links to the State Department's website for background on the country's political environment.

For background information on the political and economic environment of Slovakia, please click on the [link](https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3430.htm) (<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3430.htm>) to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

Selling US Products & Services

Using an Agent to Sell US Products and Services

Includes typical use of agents and distributors and how to find a good partner, e.g., whether use of an agent or distributor is legally required.

U.S. companies wishing to use distribution, franchising and agency arrangements need to ensure that the agreements they put into place are in accordance with European Union (EU) and Slovak national laws. The Slovak Commercial Code closely follows EU legislation and recognizes agents, commissioned merchants, and brokers not bound by contract.

There are many agents and distributors in Slovakia competing to represent companies in a vibrant business environment. Numerous Slovak agents, distributors, and trading companies have excellent business savvy, capital resources, and experienced personnel.

The U.S. Commercial Service offers its Gold Key Matching Service (GKS) and International Partner Search Service (IPS), and International Partner Search Plus Virtual Introductions to U.S. companies seeking potential business partners or representatives in Slovakia. The IPS provides U.S. firms with a shortlist of pre-screened Slovak contacts that have expressed an interest in representing a U.S. firm after reviewing the American company's product information. The IPS Plus Virtual Introductions is the same as the IPS, but also includes virtual introductions via teleconference to the identified contacts (within 30 days of final service delivery). The GKS takes this a step further by arranging one-on-one business appointments with Slovak contacts when a representative from the U.S. firm visits Slovakia. Other customized contact-making services and market research are also available through the U.S. Commercial Service.

For more information about how the U.S. Commercial Service can assist you in expanding your sales to the Slovak market, please contact the U.S. Commercial Service's Global Markets office closest to you, which can be located through the following [website](https://2016.export.gov/usoffices/index.asp) (<https://2016.export.gov/usoffices/index.asp>), or contact the U.S. Commercial Service in Bratislava directly.

Establishing an Office

Includes steps involved in establishing a local office.

The Slovak Commercial Code provides for the establishment of branch offices, joint stock companies, limited liability companies (LLCs), limited or unlimited partnerships, cooperatives, silent partnerships, and associations. All companies must register their names with the Slovak Commercial Register. The following procedures and documents are required for company registration:

- (a) Lease contract for premises, or any approval of the owner of the premises.
- (b) Approval of the office/company's location by local authorities.
- (c) Depositing a minimum share capital of EUR 5,000 (USD 5,649) in a bank account by one or more shareholders.
- (d) Trade authorization from the local trade authority.
- (e) Satisfaction of minimum capital requirements is required. (This does not apply to the OECD Member states and EU citizens.)

The most common option for foreign companies is the limited liability company (LLC). It is the simplest to establish, permits 100% foreign ownership, and allows full repatriation of after-tax profits.

The following rules apply to Limited Liability Companies in Slovakia:

(a) Between 1 and 50 shareholders may form a limited liability company, and the total basic capital must be at least EUR 5,000 (USD 5,649) with a minimum participant deposit of EUR 750 (USD 833) each.

(b) A supervisory board is not required but may be established.

(c) An official appraiser must value non-monetary contributions, and for certain contributions, two appraisers are required.

The Slovak Parliament approved new legislation for creating a Simple Joint Stock Company in order to support start-ups by simplifying the entry and exit of potential investors into and out of the company. A Simple Joint Stock Company has less strict incorporation and winding up rules; it can be founded with minimum registered capital of EUR 1 and exit possibilities well recognized under common law, such as drag along, tag along and shootout rights.

The forms for local office registration and all steps involved in establishing a local office are available on the [Slovak Ministry of Justice's website \(https://www.justice.gov.sk\)](https://www.justice.gov.sk).

The process of registering a company with the Slovak Commercial Register takes approximately five days.

Franchising

Discusses opportunities for U.S. franchisers and legal requirements in the market.

Franchising in Slovakia is growing and includes hotels, fast food operations, gasoline stations and business services. There is no Slovak legislation specific to franchising. Franchising agreements are treated as commercial contracts and are regulated by the Slovak Commercial Code. U.S. franchises in Slovakia are still limited but include, for example, McDonald's, Domino's Pizza, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Subway, Sheraton, Grand Hotel River Park, Century 21, Remax, BNI, Contours, FitCurves, and Levi's. This is an excellent time to enter the market, but franchisers should be prepared to adjust franchise royalties and other mandatory payments to reflect the size of Slovakia's small market and to offer creative financial options, as the financial resources of some of Slovakia's most promising entrepreneurs could be limited.

The Slovak Franchise Association (SFA) supports the development of franchising in Slovakia for existing members as well as for companies planning to implement franchising in the future. The goal of the SFA is to build optimal franchising conditions for both franchisers and franchisees.

Direct Marketing

Discusses the state of direct marketing and what channels are available for companies to use direct marketing.

The main format used in direct selling in Slovakia is person-to-person direct selling. Party-plan direct selling is not so popular. Rising demand was reported in the category of healthy and organic products such as food and drinks. Wellness products and organic cosmetics is also favored. For many years, Avon is a leader in direct selling in Slovakia. Other direct marketing firms include: Herbalife, Oriflame, Mary Kay, and Yves Rocher.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

Discusses the legal requirements/options for joint venture/licensing in this market.

The Slovak Commercial Code permits joint ventures and licensing. However, licensing is less common in Slovakia than it is in some other European countries. There is no specific legislation regulating joint ventures in Slovakia and there is no such legal term in Slovak law, though the law allows for the setting up and operation of various joint venture schemes and structures such as contractual joint ventures and equity joint ventures.

Selling to the Government

Discusses the legal requirements for selling to the host government, including whether the government has agreed to abide by the WTO Government Procurement Agreement or is a party to a government procurement chapter in a U.S. FTA. Specifies areas where there are opportunities.

Slovakia is a founding member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and is an original signatory to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Slovak Government has joined the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement. Government tenders are announced and published on the [Slovak Office for Public Procurement website](https://www.uvo.gov.sk) (<https://www.uvo.gov.sk>). The state authority is also the primary body to offer training on public procurement. Its responsibilities include legislative and regulatory authority, drafting and monitoring implementation of the Public Procurement Act, reviewing public procurement documents, conducting oversight and publishing statistics and guidance, updating online portals, and imposing financial penalties in case of Public Procurement Act violations. The Slovak Public Procurement Office suffers from a lack of adequate human resources.

Slovakia was one of the first Central European countries to adopt an act on public procurement. The Public Procurement system in Slovakia is described as relatively centralized. The Slovak economy depends on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs are active in public procurement system, however, they struggle to compete with larger firms with longer traditions.

Corruption is a major challenge in Slovakia. The government's anti-corruption plan calls for a number of measures, including judicial reform to increase the transparency and efficiency of court proceedings, but passing and implementing effective reforms is an ongoing challenge. In addition, there is no education degree tailored to public procurement. Certain universities only cover procurement topics in several lessons throughout the year.

Potential opportunities for U.S. companies include the following sectors: energy, defense, ICT, e-health and e-government.

Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks. Please refer to "Project Financing" Section in "Trade and Project Financing" for more information.

Distribution & Sales Channels

Discusses the distribution network within the country from how products enter to final destination, including reliability and condition of distribution mechanisms, major distribution centers, ports, etc.

Bratislava is located in the southwestern corner of Slovakia and has the largest metropolitan population in the country, making it the most important retail market with the best-developed distribution networks. The cities of Kosice, Trnava, Trencin, Zilina, Poprad, and Nitra are the major manufacturing areas in Slovakia and are also important retail markets.

The Slovak retail sector is composed of private networks of retail and wholesale businesses. The trend in Western-style retailing, which offers a wide variety of products, has been greatly influenced by the operations of foreign companies such as Tesco. Currently, Tesco operates 152 outlets in Slovakia and employs more than 10,000 people. The breakdown includes Tesco department stores, hypermarkets and supermarkets, upscale "galleries," and a number of small-size retail stores called Tesco Express. Tesco also operates gasoline stations and provides mobile phone and financial services. In 2016 Tesco's sales reached EUR 1.45 billion (USD 1.61 billion).

The second largest retailer in 2016 was Lidl, which belongs to the Schwarz Group along with Kaufland. Lidl had sales of EUR 1.04 billion (USD 1,15 billion) in 2016. It operates about 130 stores throughout Slovakia, with more than 4,000 employees.

Kaufland, the third largest retail chain in 2016, operates 65 stores and employs about 4,500 people in Slovakia. In 2016 Kaufland's sales reached EUR 1 billion (USD 1,11 billion).

The 2016 gross sales of the fourth largest retailer, Billa, which is part of the German retail chain Rewe, reached EUR 548 million (USD 606million) . With 130 stores and about 4,000 employees, Billa is an important employer in Slovakia. Billa operates smaller supermarkets and hypermarkets in shopping centers and downtown areas.

Metro Cash & Carry is Slovakia's fifth largest retailer. Metro's six large hypermarkets sell products and operate on a similar business model as Costco and Sam's Club chains in the United States. In 2016 the company had sales of EUR 427 million (USD 473 million). The company has about 1,300 employees.

Other international retail chains in Slovakia include Hornbach, OBI, Bauhaus, Drogerie Markt (DM), IKEA, and KIKA. Major Slovak retailers include COOP Jednota and Terno. The expansion of large retail chains has caused smaller businesses to consolidate or liquidate, laying the groundwork for franchising opportunities.

Slovakia has two major ports on the Danube river, in Bratislava and Komarno. Both ports are operated by the [Slovak Shipping and Ports company \(http://www.snap.sk\)](http://www.snap.sk).

Express Delivery

Discusses the prevalence and reliability of express delivery firms within the country, time from large U.S. cities, and relevant customs procedures, including de minimis amounts.

Major global organizations such as DHL, FedEx, UPS and others operate in Slovakia and offer express delivery services. Transit times vary but for packages shipped from the United States. to Slovakia, the average time is 2-4 days, including the customs clearance process. Shipments from countries that are not part of the EU with a value of up to EUR 22 are exempted from customs duty and VAT. Shipments with a value of up to EUR 150 are exempted from customs duty except for perfumes and toilet waters, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco and tobacco products purchased in e-shops. Customs procedures and requirements are standard and can be found on the [Slovak Customs Office website \(https://www.financnasprava.sk\)](https://www.financnasprava.sk).

Selling Factors & Techniques

Identifies common practices to be aware of when selling in this market, e.g., whether all sales material need to be in the local language.

Slovak law permits 24-hour and Sunday shopping, but requires stores to be closed on public holidays. Many smaller retail shops confine their hours to 9:00 am to 6:00 pm weekdays, 9:00 am to noon on Saturdays, and are closed on Sundays. Stores located in shopping malls are open Monday to Sunday from 10:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Slovakia's disposable income is lower than the EU average, making price a key competitive factor. Slovaks prefer to buy domestic products, especially groceries, if there is a price advantage. The importance of quality is gradually catching on with Slovak consumers as more foreign brand names begin to appear and more new products are launched.

Slovak retailers, especially those in cities, understand the benefits of promotion techniques used by U.S. and international retailers. Consumer campaigns with special offers and discounts are becoming more common in chain stores, and the use of some promotion techniques, such as coupons and small gifts, is not regulated by law.

The Ministry of Finance does, however, regulate consumer lotteries (sweepstakes) conducted by Slovak and foreign firms alike. The following requirements apply to lotteries held by companies:

- The company must be registered with the Slovak Commercial Register.
- Taxes cannot be charged to consumer participants.

Products made in Slovakia or imported into Slovakia must be labeled with the CE mark. All electrical equipment should have, in addition to the CE mark, an “Energy Efficiency” label. Under the 1995 State Language Law, companies are required to mark contents of domestically produced or imported goods, product manuals, product guarantees, and other consumer-related information in the Slovak language.

eCommerce

Describes how widely e-Commerce is used, the primary sectors that sell through e-commerce, and how much product/service in each sector is sold through e-commerce versus brick-and-mortar retail. Includes what a company needs to know to take advantage of e-commerce in the local market and, reputable, prominent B2B websites.

Overview

eCommerce has been a fast-growing segment over the past several years. The most commonly purchased products by individual consumers and companies are consumer goods, electronics, software, voice, data and TV services, household appliances, furniture, hobbies, music, video on demand, cosmetics, toys, airline tickets, holiday trips, tickets for cultural events, and clothes. U.S. providers of online services, such as video on demand, software, games, and music, should make an effort to penetrate the Slovak market for those products and offer fee-based services to consumers who already have fiber optic and broadband Internet connections at home. Many younger Slovaks speak English, and the general population is highly interested in American entertainment products. Many consumers who have already purchased fiber optic connections belong to a market segment that is receptive to cutting-edge technology.

Current Market Trends

Online shopping is currently becoming a common way of purchasing goods in Slovakia. In 2017 there were about 11,000 e-shops that generated sales of USD 1.06 billion. The traditionally strongest season is Christmas, which reached USD 339 million in turnover. . Almost half of all Slovaks use their mobile devices when purchasing online. The market's largest segment is Electronics & Media, which makes up almost half of the market share. Category House/Garden and DIY ranked second, followed by Cosmetics, Health and Sport. The sector with the greatest growth in 2017 was category Food and Drinks, which grew by 43%. The current user penetration is at 70.9% and is expected to hit 80% in 2021.

Domestic eCommerce (B2C)

There are currently 3.2 million e-Commerce users in Slovakia, with an additional 400,000 Slovaks expected to be shopping online by 2021. These 3.6 million e-Commerce users will represent 78% of the total population. The average user spends USD 231 online per year, which will grow to USD 297 by 2021. 98% of 16-24-year-olds log on daily. Products most likely to be sold on social media include real estate, insurance and consumer goods.

Cross-Border eCommerce

There is more common inward cross-border eCommerce. The most popular eshops for Slovaks are eBay, Amazon UK and Amazon DE, Alibaba and AliExpress. Only three local eshops mall.sk, alza.sk and tpd.sk are popular in neighboring countries.

B2B eCommerce

This is the second fastest growing segment of eCommerce. Local companies successfully offer their products and services to their business clients. Companies usually start with purchase of office supplies and then look for other products and services to increase their efficiency and lower operational, transportation and storage costs.

Popular eCommerce Sites

[Mall.sk](https://www.mall.sk/) (<https://www.mall.sk/>); [Hej.sk](http://www.hej.sk) (<http://www.hej.sk>); [Heureka](http://www.heureka.sk) (<http://www.heureka.sk>); [TPD](https://www.tpd.sk/) (<https://www.tpd.sk/>); [Andreashop](https://www.andreashop.sk/) (<https://www.andreashop.sk/>); [MP3](https://www.mp3.sk/) (<https://www.mp3.sk/>); [Edigital](https://edigital.sk/) (<https://edigital.sk/>); [OKAY](https://www.okay.sk/) (<https://www.okay.sk/>); [Datart](https://www.datart.sk/index.html) (<https://www.datart.sk/index.html>); [Gigastore](https://www.gigastore.sk/) (<https://www.gigastore.sk/>)

Online Payment

The most common payments are done by electronic debit and credit cards because it is safe and there are no additional surcharges. Popular payment method is also pay on delivery that is usually surcharged by USD 1-2, but there is no surcharge if the total purchase is over USD 100 - 200.

Mobile eCommerce

Mobile eCommerce became even more popular thanks to a growing number of local eCommerce applications. The majority of local web sites have implemented Accelerated Mobile Pages to increase reading ease on mobile devices.

Digital Marketing

Many local companies that are using digital marketing have implemented Machine Learning that helps to target marketing to potential customers.

Major Buying Holidays

The major buying holidays are Christmas and Easter.

Social Media

YouTube, for young targets, is already overtaking television in Slovakia as the most watched video content provider. The younger and middle age populations like to read news on social media channels. There is a growing problem with hoaxes that can manipulate public opinion, which can spread quickly via multiple social media channels.

Trade Promotion & Advertising

Includes web links to local trade fair or show authorities and local newspapers, trade publications, radio/TV/cable information.

The major Slovak convention centers are located in three Slovak cities: [Bratislava](http://www.incheba.sk/en.html?page_id=121&lang=en#&panel1-3) (http://www.incheba.sk/en.html?page_id=121&lang=en#&panel1-3) [Nitra](http://www.agrokomplex.sk/) (<http://www.agrokomplex.sk/>) and [Trencin](http://www.expocenter.sk/) (<http://www.expocenter.sk/>).

Many companies, both Slovak and foreign, specialize in advertising, and they vary considerably in quality. Internet, newspaper, radio and television are the most common means of advertising. Private radio stations offer advertising in all metropolitan areas, and billboards are used in cities and along main highways.

Major Slovak-language newspapers and business journals include:

[Pravda](http://www.pravda.sk/) (<http://www.pravda.sk/>)

[SME](https://www.sme.sk/) (<https://www.sme.sk/>)

[Hospodarske Noviny](https://www.sme.sk/) (<https://www.sme.sk/>)

[Profit/Trend](https://profit.sme.sk/) (<https://profit.sme.sk/>; (<https://www.etrend.sk/>)

[Novy Cas \(https://www.cas.sk/\)](https://www.cas.sk/)

[Dennik N \(https://dennikn.sk/\)](https://dennikn.sk/)

The only English-language newspaper in Slovakia is [The Slovak Spectator \(https://dennikn.sk/\)](https://dennikn.sk/).

There is one state-owned television station broadcasting on two channels and three privately owned television stations broadcasting on ten channels. Major radio and TV broadcasting stations include:

[Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska \(http://www.rtv.s.sk/\)](http://www.rtv.s.sk/)

[MARKÍZA - SLOVAKIA, s r.o. \(http://www.markiza.sk/uvod\)](http://www.markiza.sk/uvod)

[MAC TV s.r.o., \(JO\) \(https://www.joi.sk/\)](https://www.joi.sk/)

[TA3 \(https://www.ta3.com /\)](https://www.ta3.com/)

Posters and billboards are commonly used to advertise in Slovakia and are found in post offices, on telephone booths, public transportation, outdoor kiosks, and along public walking and driving routes. Again, there is minimal formal consumer protection, and local companies are advised to use ethical principles in advertising strategies, or run the risk of a backlash from Slovak consumers who tend to be well-informed about unethical advertising.

The U.S. Commercial Service offers its Business Service Provider (BSP), Featured U.S. Exporters (FUSE) or Single Company Promotion (SCP) to U.S. companies seeking potential business partners in Slovakia. BSP is an online program to help U.S. exporters identify professional export service providers to support them in the assessment, financing or completion of an export transaction. FUSE provides U.S. companies with an opportunity to enhance their international marketing efforts through improved search engine optimization. SCP helps U.S. companies with promotional services increasing the awareness of their product/service in a specific market. To obtain more information please visit [U.S. Commercial Service Bratislava's website \(https://2016.export.gov/slovakia/\)](https://2016.export.gov/slovakia/).

Pricing

Discusses pricing formula and other fees, value-added tax (VAT), etc.

The minimum monthly salary for 2017 in Slovakia is EUR 480 (USD 542) per month and the average salary is about EUR 998 (USD 1,127) per month. Thus, price remains a key and sensitive factor for consumers. There is, however, a sizeable segment of the population with significantly higher earning power. There is a gap between prices in urban areas and those in rural areas. Most food prices remain below EU levels.

The VAT rate in Slovakia is 20%. There is also a reduced VAT rate of 10%, mainly for groceries, medicines, and books. VAT is charged on assets and services consumed in Slovakia as well as on imports into Slovakia. In many cases, exports are not subject to VAT. Similarly financial and banking services, insurance, educational services and the rental of real estate, other than new properties, are exempt from VAT. All taxpayers whose revenue exceeds EUR 49,790 (USD 56,248) over the last 12 calendar months must register for VAT with the tax authorities.

Sales Service/Customer Support

Describes what is customary in the market for sales and customer support.

All entities, Slovak and foreign, must provide two-year warranties and after-sales service, especially for electronic products. There is currently no law requiring a company registered in Slovakia to provide this service itself, but it must be able to arrange service for customers either within Slovakia or abroad.

Protecting Intellectual Property

Introduction

Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property (“IP”) rights in the EU. First, it is important to have an overall strategy to protect your IP. Second, IP is protected differently in the EU than in the United States. Third, rights must be registered and enforced in the EU under local laws. Your U.S. trademark and patent registrations will not protect you in the EU. There is no such thing as an “international copyright” that will automatically protect an author’s writings throughout the entire world. Protection against unauthorized use in a particular country depends on the national laws of that country. However, most countries do offer copyright protection to foreign works under certain conditions, and these conditions have been greatly simplified by international copyright treaties and conventions.

Registration of patents and trademarks is on a first-in-time, first-in-right basis, so you should consider applying for trademark and patent protection even before selling your products or services in the EU market. It is vital that companies understand that intellectual property is primarily a private right and that the US government generally, cannot enforce rights for private individuals in EU. It is the responsibility of the rights’ holders to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants who are experts in EU law. The U.S. Commercial Service can provide a list of local lawyers upon request.

While the U.S. Government stands ready to assist, there is little we can do if the rights holders have not taken these fundamental steps necessary to securing and enforcing their IP in a timely fashion. Moreover, in many countries, rights holders who delay enforcing their rights on a mistaken belief that the USG can provide a political resolution to a legal problem may find that their rights have been eroded or abrogated due to legal doctrines such as statutes of limitations, laches, estoppel, or unreasonable delay in prosecuting a law suit. In no instance should U.S. Government advice be seen as a substitute for the obligation of a rights holder to promptly pursue its case.

It is always advisable to conduct due diligence on potential partners. Negotiate from the position of your partner and give your partner clear incentives to honor the contract. A good partner is an important ally in protecting IP rights. Consider carefully, however, whether to permit your partner to register your IP rights on your behalf. Doing so may create a risk that your partner will list itself as the IP owner and fail to transfer the rights should the partnership end. Keep an eye on your cost structure and reduce the margins (and the incentive) of would-be bad actors. Projects and sales in the EU require constant attention. Work with legal counsel familiar with EU laws to create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

It is also recommended that small and medium-size companies understand the importance of working together with trade associations and organizations to support efforts to protect IP and stop counterfeiting. There are a number of these organizations, both EU or U.S.-based. These include:

The U.S. Chamber and local American Chambers of Commerce

National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)

International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)

International Trademark Association (INTA)

The Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy

International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)

Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)

Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

IP Resources

A wealth of information on protecting IP is freely available to U.S. rights holders. Some excellent resources for companies regarding intellectual property include the following:

For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the US and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: 1-866-999-HALT or register here.

For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: 1-800-786-9199.

For more information about registering for copyright protection in the US, contact the US Copyright Office at: 1-202-707-5959.

For U.S. small and medium-size companies, the Department of Commerce offers a "SME IP Advisory Program" available through the American Bar Association that provides one hour of free IP legal advice for companies with concerns in Angola, Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam.

For information on obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights and market-specific IP Toolkits visit StopFakes. This site is linked to the USPTO website for registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website to record registered trademarks and copyrighted works (to assist customs in blocking imports of IP-infringing products) and allows you to register for Webinars on protecting IP.

In any foreign market companies should consider several general principles for effective protection of their intellectual property. For background, please link to our article on [Protecting Intellectual Property \(https://www.export.gov/article?id=Protecting-Intellectual-Property\)](https://www.export.gov/article?id=Protecting-Intellectual-Property) and [Stopfakes.gov \(https://www.stopfakes.gov/welcome\)](https://www.stopfakes.gov/welcome) for more resources.

The U.S. Commerce Department has positioned IP attachés in key markets around the world.

IP Attaché Contact for the EU:

Name: Ms. Susan Wilson
Address: U.S. Mission to the EU, Boulevard du Regent 27, BE 1000, Brussels, Belgium
Telephone: +32 2 811 5308
E-mail: susan.wilson@trade.gov

For more information, contact ITA's Office of Intellectual Property Rights Director, Stevan Mitchell at Stevan.Mitchell@trade.gov.

Due Diligence

Provides advice on how to perform due diligence and in what areas it is necessary for a U.S. company. Includes information on the U.S. Commercial Service International Company Profile service.

The Bratislava office of the U.S. Commercial Service can assist U.S. companies in evaluating potential business partners. The International Company Profile Service (ICP) helps U.S. companies evaluate potential business partners by providing a detailed report on Slovak companies which have been personally visited by a Commercial Specialist or Commercial Officer of the U.S. Commercial Service. Through the ICP, clients can request answers to detailed questions about Slovak companies on a variety of issues and receive expert advice from our commercial staff about the relative strength of the firm in its market and its reliability, among other things. For more information please contact office.bratislava@trade.gov.

Local Professional Services

Provides references to local service providers and other professional associations.

A number of law firms in Slovakia conduct business in English and are familiar with U.S. laws. A few U.S. firms have offices in Slovakia. U.S. companies seeking a list of English-speaking attorneys may contact the U.S. Commercial Service office in Bratislava at office.bratislava@trade.gov. More information on individual law firms can be obtained from the [Slovak Chamber of Attorneys](https://www.sak.sk/blox/cms/en/sak/sak) (<https://www.sak.sk/blox/cms/en/sak/sak>).

Principal Business Associations

Provides references to the principal business associations, indicating which accept U.S. companies. Describes the primary roles of those associations and to what extent they influence government actions.

[The Slovak Chamber of Commerce](http://web.sopk.sk/) (SOPK) (<http://web.sopk.sk/>) was established by the Act No. 9/1992 as a public-law institution to support and protect the business interests of its members in Slovakia and abroad. It now has approximately 1,000 Slovak companies as members.

[The American Chamber of Commerce](http://www.amcham.sk/home) (AmCham) (<http://www.amcham.sk/home>) was founded in 1993 in Bratislava as an independent and self-supporting organization, entirely dependent on contributions from its members. Today, it serves as the most active foreign Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia. Currently, its membership includes more than 330 international and Slovak companies, including many of the largest and most important firms in Slovakia. Approximately 23% of its members are American companies, about 42% are Slovak companies, and about 35% are other nationalities.

Limitations on Selling US Products and Services

Provides information on any manufacturing sectors or services where only citizens or a sub-set of the population in that country are allowed to own or sell.

There are no specific trade barriers and limitations on selling U.S. products and services in Slovakia.

Web Resources

Includes websites relevant to selling US products and services in this country, highlighting resources for small and medium-sized enterprises.

[Slovak Commercial Register](http://www.orsr.sk/) (<http://www.orsr.sk/>)

[Database of Slovak Companies](https://www.zlatestranky.sk/) (<https://www.zlatestranky.sk/>)

[American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic](http://www.amcham.sk/home) (<http://www.amcham.sk/home>)

[Slovak Chamber of Attorneys](https://www.sak.sk/blox/cms/en) (<https://www.sak.sk/blox/cms/en>)

[Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency](http://www.sario.sk/) (<http://www.sario.sk/>)

[Slovak Franchise Association](https://sfa.sk/) (<https://sfa.sk/>)

[Industrial Property Office](http://www.upv.sk/) (<http://www.upv.sk/>)

[Media and Copyright Division, Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic](http://www.culture.gov.sk/) (<http://www.culture.gov.sk/>)

Leading Sectors for US Exports & Investments

These are best prospect industry sectors in Slovakia. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Aircraft, Spacecraft, HS Code 88

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Overview

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	54,382	92,972	179,211	389,200
Total Local Production	7,856	8,010	9,000	9,200
Total Exports	41,712	21,515	19,472	20,000
Total Imports	88,238	106,477	189,683	400,000
Imports from the US	45,467	17,772	112,829	200,000
Exchange Rates	1.1095	1.1069	1.1297	1.23

USD thousands (total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources:

Total Local Production: [Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

Total Exports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Total Imports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Imports from U.S.: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Exchange Rate: [European Central Bank](#)

Leading Sub-Sectors

The following specific items were the leading exports from the U.S. to Slovakia covered by this Leading Sector, ranked in USD from 2016 to 2017:

HS code	ITEM	2016	2017
8802	Aircraft, Powered; Spacecraft & Launch Vehicles	16,113,170	103,753,752
8803	Parts Of Balloons Etc, Aircraft, Spacecraft Etc	1,425,625	7,493,791
8805	Aircraft Launch Gear; Deck-Arrest; Gr Fl Train; Pt	154,333	1,525,314
8804	Parachutes (Including Dirigible Parachutes) Rotoch	79,264	56,179

Opportunities

In 2016, the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic purchased two used Airbus A319s and two used Fokker 100s to replace its Tupolev Tu-154 aircraft fleet. Three of the aircraft are equipped with hospital beds for stabilized patients (light or severe injuries), able to transport patients within the European Union. One Airbus can be rebuilt to a capacity of approximately 34 seats and an evacuation capacity of 74 seats. The purchase was

not publicly tendered but conducted by applying a national security exception to the Law on Public Procurement from preselected vendors. The price included general repair, pilot training, insurance and service repair station also available to third parties.

Slovakia is making up for the lost years of low army modernization budget, and currently is planning the biggest military acquisitions in its history to prepare the army for new potential threats, and to reduce dependence on Russian military equipment. Defense spending is due to rise from 1.2 percent of gross domestic product this year to 1.6 percent in 2020 and 2.0 percent by 2024. Slovakia plans to spend about EUR 6.5 billion (USD 7.99 billion) by 2030 to modernize its military.

The Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic has begun with modernization of the Slovak Air Forces by purchasing nine U.S.-made Sikorsky UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters for USD 261 million, to replace its outdated Russian Mi-17 fleet, reducing the NATO country's dependence on Russian parts and servicing. The Slovak Air Force received the first four Black Hawk helicopters in 2017-2018, and the last five in 2019.

In July 2018 the Government of Slovakia decided to purchase U.S.-made F-16s fighter jets to replace its aging Russian-made MiG-29s. Slovakia has a maintenance contract with Russia for its 12 MiG-29s until autumn 2019.

Web Resources

[The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic](#)

[The Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic](#)

Nuclear Reactors, Boilers, Equipment, Machinery, HS Code 84

This is a best prospect industry sector for Slovakia. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Overview

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	7,235,899	7,216,000	9,553,846	9,900,000
Total Local Production	7,410,000	7,316,000	9,640,000	10,000,000
Total Exports	9,241,456	9,200,000	10,246,720	10,400,000
Total Imports	9,067,355	9,100,000	10,160,566	10,300,000
Imports from the U.S.	107,026	106,200	88,644	90,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	1.1095	1.1069	1.1297	1.23

USD thousands (total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources:

Total Local Production: [Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

Total Exports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Total Imports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Imports from U.S.: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Exchange Rate: [European Central Bank](#)

Leading Sub-Sectors

The following specific items were the leading exports from the U.S. to Slovakia covered by this Leading Sector, ranked in USD from 2016 to 2017:

HS code	ITEM	2016	2017
8407	Spark-Ignition Recip Or Rotary Int Comb Piston Eng	46,486,275	32,783,700
8413	Pumps For Liquids; Liquid Elevators; Parts Thereof	8,983,429	12,357,775
8421	Centrifuges; Filter Etc Mach For Liq Or Gases; Pts	14,125,079	9,288,319
8471	Automatic Data Process Machines; Magn Reader Etc	3,793,012	4,003,364
8414	Air Or Vac Pumps, Compr & Fans; Hoods & Fans; Pts	3,250,988	3,133,611
8483	Transmission Shafts, Bearings, Gears Etc; Parts	1,905,060	2,458,905
8481	Taps, Cocks, Valves Etc For Pipes, Tanks Etc, Pts	1,817,905	2,298,330
8412	Engines And Motors Nesoi, And Parts Thereof	1,244,707	2,004,908
8479	Machines Etc Having Individual Functions Nesoi, Pt	3,183,003	1,936,288
8467	Tools For Working In The Hand, Pneum Hyd Etc, Pts	1,735,606	1,844,130
8473	Parts Etc For Typewriters & Other Office Machines	1,555,381	1,694,107
8415	Air Conditioning Machines (Temp & Hum Change), Pts	2,500,101	1,655,248
8433	Harvest Etc Machines, Cleaning Eggs Etc Nesoi, Pts	1,881,264	1,218,760
8466	Parts Etc For Machine Tools Of Head 8456 To 8465	793,894	970,802
8429	Self-Propelled Bulldozers, Graders, Scrapers Etc	1,032,627	794,937
8462	Machine Tools For Forging, Bending, Stamping Etc	378,091	766,107
8454	Converters, Ladles, Ingot Molds & Casting Mach, Pt	770,147	671,485
8477	Machinery For Working Rubber & Plast Etc Nesoi, Pt	254,609	657,499

Opportunities

Excellent opportunities exist in the energy sector, which is mostly covered by HS Code 84. Slovakia had a shortage of electricity production capacity after closing two 440 MW nuclear reactors at Nuclear Power Plant Jaslovske Bohunice in 2006 and 2008. The Slovak and U.S. governments signed a Joint Declaration Agreement concerning industrial and commercial cooperation in the nuclear energy sector in March 2012.

There is promising U.S. export potential in the renewable energy sector, specifically for thermo solar, biomass, biogas, geothermal, hydro, biofuel and alternative fuel technologies. Despite Slovakia's extensive use of forestry waste for energy production, it is estimated that about 24% of this resource is currently being utilized. A significant amount of biomass could potentially be used to generate electricity on a large scale, or perhaps be utilized to supply heat for residential and industrial needs. Slovakia has significant geothermal resources, and some of them have high thermodynamic potential. For example, the Kosice basin has areas suitable for development of geothermal projects. Slovakia also has 21 large hydropower plants and 216 small hydropower plants currently in operation. In addition, there are about 250 locations on Slovak rivers (the Danube, Váh, Hron, Bodrog and Hornád) that have nearly 130 MW of generation potential. Slovakia downsized the maximum allowed by law for installed capacity for photovoltaic power plants to 100 kW. In total, 2,300 photovoltaic power plant projects with a total installed capacity of 678 MW were approved by the end of 2017, which could represent a good export opportunity for U.S. suppliers of photovoltaic technologies. All applications for wind projects are currently on hold, so there is limited potential at this time for U.S. exporters of wind energy technologies.

In addition, opportunities exist for the sale of machines, tools, and production technologies to a number of industries including the construction, food, and automotive industries. A number of new automotive subcontractors have opened production facilities near the three OEM (original equipment manufacturer) automobile manufacturing plants in Slovakia - Volkswagen in Bratislava, Kia in Zilina and PSA/Peugeot in Trnava. Jaguar Land Rover is building a new auto production plant in Nitra, with a projected capacity of about 150,000 cars per year. The construction of the plant began in 2016, and production should start in September 2018. To ensure qualified labor, Jaguar has already launched its first trainee program in Slovakia within which it employed 1,300 young people in its plant near Nitra.

Web Resources

[Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Slovenske Elektrarne a.s.](#)

[Slovak Energy Agency](#)

[Slovak Electricity and Dispatch Company – SEPS](#)

[JESS a.s.](#)

[Public Procurement Office](#)

[Slovak Customs Office](#)

Mineral Fuel, Oil, Bituminous Substances, HS Code 27

This is a best prospect industry sector for Slovakia. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Overview

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	8,624,627	7,340,229	7,821,497	9,000,000
Total Local Production	5,526,159	5,000,000	4,500,000	4,000,000
Total Exports	2,806,267	2,559,010	3,770,057	3,000,000
Total Imports	5,904,735	4,899,239	7,091,554	8,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	39,191	15,795	82,970	80,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	1.1095	1.1069	1.1297	1.23

USD thousands (total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources:

Total Local Production: [Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

Total Exports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Total Imports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Imports from U.S.: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Exchange Rate: [European Central Bank](#)

Leading Sub-Sectors

The following specific items were the leading exports from the United States to Slovakia covered by this Leading Sector, ranked in USD from 2016 to 2017:

HS code	ITEM	2016	2017
2701	Coal; Briquettes, Ovoids Etc. Mfr From Coal	9,712,770	75,253,497
2713	Petroleum Coke, Petroleum Bitumen & Other Residues	5,310,359	6,867,493
2710	Oil (Not Crude) From Petrol & Bitum Mineral Etc.	648,140	818,499

2715	Bit Mix Fr Nat Asph, Nat Bit,Pet Bit,Min Tar Or Pt	129	26,915
2712	Petroleum Jelly; Mineral Waxes & Similar Products	124,465	3,944
2707	Oils Etc From High Temp Coal Tar; Sim Aromatic Etc	74	0

Opportunities

Black coal and briquettes made from black coal are used primarily for production of iron and steel. There are three main producers of iron and steel in Slovakia - U.S. Steel Kosice, Zeleziarne Podbrezova, and Indo-Spanish joint venture ArcelorMittal Gonvarri.. There is also growing import demand for petroleum coke, petroleum bitumen, bituminous coal, and petroleum jelly, which are used by the chemical industry and other industries for further reprocessing and the production of final goods.

Web Resources

[Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Slovak Customs Office](#)

Electrical Machinery, Sound Equipment, HS Code 85

This is a best prospect industry sector for Slovakia. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Overview

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	4,564,590	4,888,000	4,206,254	4,500,000
Total Local Production	5,268,236	5,620,000	4,740,000	5,000,000
Total Exports	15,475,576	16,054,000	17,723,554	18,500,000
Total Imports	14,771,930	15,322,000	17,189,808	18,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	34,305	45,343	41,866	45,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	1.1095	1.1069	1.1297	1.23

USD thousands (total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources:

Total Local Production: [Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

Total Exports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Total Imports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Imports from U.S.: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Exchange Rate: [European Central Bank](#)

Leading Sub-Sectors

The following specific items were the primary exports from the U.S. to Slovakia covered by this Leading Sector, ranked in USD from 2016 to 2017:

HS code	ITEM	2016	2017
8517	Electric Apparatus For Line Telephony Etc, Parts	8,571,450	9,166,878
8542	Electronic Integrated Circuits & Microassembl, Pts	12,867,170	6,996,229
8525	Trans Appar For Radiotele Etc; Tv Camera & Rec	6,965,956	6,542,821
8537	Boards, Panels Etc Elec Switch And N/C Appar Etc.	2,103,305	3,216,727
8544	Insulated Wire, Cable Etc; Opt Sheath Fib Cables	1,660,611	2,558,704
8536	Electrical Apparatus For Switching Etc, Nov 1000 V	2,695,140	2,497,842
8504	Elec Trans, Static Conv & Induct, Adp Pwr Supp, Pt	1,960,464	2,213,199

8523	Prepared Unrecorded Media (No Film) For Sound Etc.	699,126	1,407,872
8529	Parts For Television, Radio And Radar Apparatus	752,447	849,773
8534	Printed Circuits	1,065,656	805,470
8541	Semiconductor Devices; Light-Emit Diodes Etc, Pts	325,015	659,877
8543	Electrical Mach Etc, With Ind Functions Nesoi, Pts	565,986	657,604
8518	Microphones; Loudspeakers; Sound Amplifier Etc, Pt	561,014	574,955
8501	Electric Motors And Generators (No Sets)	543,549	507,890
8538	Parts For Elec Appar Etc Of Head 8535, 8536 & 8537	478,043	329,227
8507	Electric Storage Batteries, Incl Separators, Parts	447,170	269,267
8547	Insulating Fittings For Assembly Nesoi	172,800	251,379
8535	Electrical Apparatus For Switching Etc, Ov 1000 V	44,021	249,832

Opportunities

The development of Slovakia's ICT market reflects investment by the government, municipalities, banks, private companies, financial service institutions and the public sector. The market remains strong for implementations of new cellular and Internet networks as well as merging of existing data to cloud storage, implementation of cyber security solutions, and maintenance of existing network hardware and software, with the main end users of hardware equipment coming from the private sector, government ministries, the Parliament, and state administrative offices. Local industries, such as automobile manufacturers, engineering companies, and energy production and distribution companies, are also contributing to the growth of the ICT sector.

The high demand for ICT services also explains the growing complexity of ICT solutions and the popularity of mobile communication and high speed Internet connectivity, smartphones, packaged applications, increased user investments in cloud solutions, Internet of Things, Smart Cities, networking and communications, and the increasing importance of the Internet, e-government, e-health, e-commerce and rising FDI inflows.

The best prospects in the area of Business Process Technology are complex customer services and call centers solutions, storage systems and application software, customized software, solutions for electronic distribution channels providing all basic retail functions, complex information systems for electronic payments and card services, decision-support information systems, information systems for management staff, and complex information systems for insurance companies.

The best prospects in Communication Technology are: smart phones, tablets, cloud technology, Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) services, and 4G (LTE) equipment and solutions. There are also opportunities for alternate internet providers and other new services such as call centers, home-work services, and tele-education or distance learning services.

The best prospects in Digital Equipment & Systems are cloud-based data systems, thin work stations, servers, data communications equipment, packet switching and routing equipment, key systems and circuit switching equipment, data and network equipment, system and application software, switched data and leased line services, streaming, cable and digital TV services, set-top boxes, and digital presentation technology.

As of 2013, analog television is no longer broadcast in Slovakia. End-users have already replaced traditional CRTs and analog plasmas with digital flat panel displays. Advances in digital technology for the AV/IT/Telecommunications/Consumer Electronics markets are stimulating demand for the latest innovations in both the residential and business sectors. Technological developments gradually being adopted in the market include “triple play” internet services offered by companies such as Slovanet, T-Com and Orange, interactive cable TV offered by companies such as UPC, video on demand, wireless AV applications, streaming media, and Ultra HDTV (4k) broadcasting.

The consumer electronics entertainment segment of the AV market is the largest and fastest growing segment in this sector. Among television sets, there is a trend towards medium-size or large digital OLED or LED units with full HD or ultra HD resolution and equipped with DVBT, DVBS and DVBC receivers. Popular products include ultra HD 3D OLED and LED TVs, set top boxes, HiFi audio equipment, and digital satellite receivers. For the business segment, popular AV products include electronic display systems and signage, projectors and control systems. Demand for wireless/mobile/portable products is fast growing.

Good opportunities also exist in the telecommunications sector for innovative peripheral products and services. The largest three mobile operators in Slovakia are Orange, O2 and SWAN, and Slovak Telecom offers both land-line and mobile voice service along with LTE high speed data.

ICT-related consulting, education and training services, and audiovisual equipment are promising value added services, as many SMEs and large enterprises implement or will implement the newest ICT solutions. Examples include cloud data storage, thin office models, home working, and virtual web conferences.

The following major government ICT projects are planned for 2018 and 2019:

Implementation of City Management Integrated Project that includes integration and management of citizens safety, information on air quality, local traffic management and optimization of utilities usage, including energy, heat and water. The total project volume is USD 1 million.

IS DCOM project for migration of remaining cities and municipalities to IS DCOM network followed up by transfer from IS DCOM to government cloud. The total project volume is USD 38 million.

Reference Data Integration Project for local authorities. The goal is to integrate all reference data of Slovak citizens available to all government authorities. The total project volume is USD 19 million.

Upgrade of Slovak Business Register Information System to simplify and speed the process of registering Slovak business entities following the integration of the Slovak Business Register with the European Business Register. The total project volume is USD 12 million.

State Economic Agenda Upgrade. The Slovak Ministry of Finance is searching for an IT solution and methodology for unification of the state economic agenda. The total project volume is USD 38 million.

Supplemental services under the Allocation domain (e-booking, e-referral, e-waiting list, e-vaccination, e-reminder, e-laboratory, e-calendar management). The total project volume is USD 5 million.

Supplemental services under the Medication/Prescription domain (e-medication). The total project volume is USD 5 million.

Supplemental services under the Management and Verification of Financial Flow domain (e-clearing, e-filling, e-verification). The total project volume is USD 5 million.

Web Resources

[Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

[The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic](#)

[UPC](#)

[Orange](#)

[O2](#)

[SWAN](#)

[Slovak Telecom](#)

Optical, Photo, Medical/Surgical Instruments, HS Code 90

This is a best prospect industry sector for Slovakia. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Overview

	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)	2018 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	9,722,422	9,368,855	9,204,438	9,200,000
Total Local Production	7,619,125	7,259,000	7,926,000	7,500,000
Total Exports	769,306	659,740	931,385	800,000
Total Imports	2,872,603	2,769,595	2,209,823	2,500,000
Imports from the U.S.	41,531	23,246	27,513	30,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	1.1095	1.1069	1.1297	1.23

USD thousands (total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources:

Total Local Production: [Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

Total Exports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Total Imports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Imports from U.S.: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Exchange Rate: [European Central Bank](#)

Leading Sub-Sectors

The following specific items were the leading exports from the U.S. to Slovakia covered by this Leading Sector, ranked in USD from 2016 to 2017:

HS code	ITEM	2016	2017
9018	Medical, Surgical, Dental Or Vet Inst, No Elec, Pt	10,978,373	7,348,921
9022	X-Ray Etc Apparatus; Tubes, Panels, Screen Etc, Pt	763,500	5,628,634
9031	Machines, Nesoi In Chapter 90; Profile Project, Pt	3,044,380	3,702,383
9027	Inst Etc For Physical Etc Anal Etc; Microtome; Pts	1,267,937	2,645,667
9002	Optical Elements, Mounted; Parts & Accessories	631,515	1,023,319
9029	Revolution & Production Count, Taximeters Etc, Pts	775,183	855,439
9030	Oscilloscopes, Spectrum Analyzers Etc, Parts Etc	490,153	810,937
9001	Opt Fibers & Bund Etc; Pol Sheets; Unmoun Opt Elem	662,002	789,679
9013	Liquid Crystal Devices Nesoi; Lasers; Opt Appl; Pt	1,373,770	733,032
9021	Orthopedic Appl; Artif Body Pts; Hear Aid; Pts Etc	782,771	692,436
9026	Inst Etc Measure Or Check Flow, Level Etc, Pts Etc	684,079	604,418
9014	Direction Finding Compasses & Navig Inst Etc, Pts	239,500	537,440
9019	Mech-Ther, Massage, Psych Test, Ozone App Etc, Pts	209,401	471,711
9032	Automatic Regulating Or Control Instruments; Parts	142,475	319,302
9015	Survey, Hydrogr, Meteoro Etc Inst; Rangef Etc, Pts	187,243	270,599
9024	Machines Etc For Testing Mech Prop Of Material, Pt	273,491	182,299
9005	Optical Telescopes & Mount; Astro Inst & Mount, Pt	16,099	174,756
9033	Pts, Nesoi For Machines,Appln,Inst/Appts Of Chap90	196,092	127,283

Opportunities

Optical, photo and measuring equipment consumption has increased in Slovakia. The market has become increasingly focused on high tech products. Most equipment is still imported. New entrants face competition

from the same international competitors they encounter elsewhere in the world. Most opportunities are in industrial production, especially automotive, and in the medical and dental sectors.

Automobile and automotive parts and components production dominate industrial applications for products in this leading sector. Three major OEM manufacturers and many automotive parts and components suppliers are located in Slovakia. As new models have been introduced in recent years, the demand for quality measuring and testing equipment has increased.

Following the introduction of e-health and private health care services to Slovakia, most private health care centers continue to invest considerable amounts of money in new health care equipment. Moreover, there are about 3,100 dentists in Slovakia, most of whom are private practitioners who receive full payment for their services directly from patients. Private dental clinics are interested in keeping up-to-date on the latest technological advances and procuring new equipment to satisfy the demands of their customers. Especially promising segments for U.S. suppliers of dental equipment are laser dentistry, implants, and cosmetic/aesthetic dentistry.

The following major government medical and health projects are planned for 2018 and 2019:

Construction of a new hospital in Bratislava with 578 beds and top-notch medical technology should be finished by 2022. The new hospital will have to purchase medical laboratory equipment, diagnostic medical equipment, life support equipment, and treatment equipment. The total project volume is USD 318 million.

Web Resources

[Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Slovak Dental Chamber](#)

Vehicle Parts and Components, HS Code 87

This is a best prospect industry sector for Slovakia. Includes a market overview and trade data.

Overview

	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)	2018 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	8,775,916	8,067,230	8,772,490	8,500,000
Total Local Production	18,257,339	18,396,585	19,000,000	21,000,000
Total Exports	20,013,319	21,763,721	22,284,830	23,500,000
Total Imports	10,531,896	11,434,366	12,057,320	11,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	21,298	13,175	15,000	20,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	1.1095	1.1069	1.1297	1.23

USD thousands (total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources:

Total Local Production: [Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

Total Exports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Total Imports: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Imports from U.S.: [Global Trade Atlas](#)

Exchange Rate: [European Central Bank](#)

Leading Sub-Sectors

The following specific items were the leading exports from the U.S. to Slovakia covered by this Leading Sector, ranked by USD from 2016 to 2017:

HS code	ITEM	2016	2017
8708	Parts & Access For Motor Vehicles (Head 8701-8705)	6,021,850	9,933,353

8701	Tractors (Other Than Works Trucks Of Heading 8709)	4,350,099	9,300,668
8703	Motor Cars & Vehicles For Transporting Persons	1,351,044	1,348,442
8705	Special Purpose Motor Vehicles Nesoi	786,554	300,364
8713	Carriages For Disabled Persons, Motorized Or Not	150,117	188,145
8711	Motorcycles (Incl Mopeds) & Cycles With Aux Motor	254,729	160,277
8714	Parts & Access For Cycles & Invalid Carriages	208,073	101,701
8716	Trailers Etc; Other Vehicles, Not Mech Propeld, Pt	12,324	9,057
8704	Motor Vehicles For Transport Of Goods	20,263	4,829
8712	Bicycles & Oth Cycles (Inc Del Tricycle) No Motor	9,810	2,754
8715	Baby Carriages (Inc Strollers) And Parts Thereof	1,094	2,525
8707	Bodies (Including Cabs), For Specif Motor Vehicles	4,848	2,090
8706	Chas W Eng F Trac, Mtr Veh F Pass/Gd & Special Pur	0	0
8709	Works Trucks, Self-Prop, No Lift; Stat Tractrs; Pt	0	0
8708	Parts & Access For Motor Vehicles (Head 8701-8705)	6,021,850	9,933,353

Opportunities

With three car manufacturers and almost 1.03 million cars produced in Slovakia in 2017, Slovakia is the world leader in per capita auto production for the fourth time in a row.

Automotive production represents about 44% of Slovakia's industrial production, 13% of GDP and 35% of country's industrial export.

In 2017 there were over 340 Tier 1 and Tier 2 auto suppliers, providing parts and subassemblies to clients throughout Europe and beyond. The further development and localization of auto suppliers should decrease car component imports in the future from 60% to 40%. Automotive production directly employs 129,000 people, while the total number of people employed in the automotive industry is 250,000.

Slovakia's favorable geographic location includes proximity to 12 automobile manufacturing plants within the Slovak and Czech Republics, Poland and Hungary.

The allocation by manufacturer is:

- VW Slovakia in Bratislava is the only plant in the world producing five car models. In 2017 Volkswagen's 13,700 local employees produced 361,776 cars.
- KIA Motors Slovakia in Zilina employs 3,625 and produced 335,600 cars in 2017.
- PSA Slovakia in Trnava employs 4,500 and produced 335,069 cars in 2017.

All three car manufacturers continuously expand their production and currently export primarily to the EU markets (mainly Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Great Britain), the United States, and China. Exports to Russia have fallen due to the ongoing political situation, most severely impacting KIA Motors Slovakia, which will also be most affected by Brexit. Exotic export markets include Taiwan, Near East, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and Uruguay.

NEWCOMERS

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) in Nitra has a projected annual production capacity of 150,000 vehicles. The plant's construction began in 2016, and the first SUV Discovery model vehicles should leave the plant in September 2018. The factory will feature a special linear synchronous conveyor with electric drive/electro-induction linked to the production line, making it the first 4.0 industry production in Europe.

The Geely subsidiary EV producer Zhi Dou is planning to establish a production base in Europe and is closely looking at eastern Slovakia and Romania (the final decision to be made in Fall 2018). With around EUR 400 million (USD 432 million) investment, the potentially fifth OEM in Slovakia would produce up to 3,000 electric cars (most likely the two-seater D2) a month as of 2020.

It is probable that German carmaker BMW will come to the new industrial park near Kosice. BMW is looking to build a new factory and further expansion cannot be ruled out.

MADE IN SLOVAKIA

Slovakia announced Aeromobil 4.0 in 2017 – the first commercially sold Slovak flying car. When used as a car, the vehicle has a range of 310 miles and measures nearly five feet long. When used as an airplane, it has a take-off speed of 90 mph and a range of 430 miles. The drivable aircraft will be sold in a limited edition of 500 as of 2019 for an expected cost of EUR1.2 - 1.5 million (USD 1.3 – 1.6 million).

BRUTAL – locally produced 300 horsepower super sports car.

Automobile Parts and Aftermarket Products

Slovakia is an EU member country and thus the market for automobile parts and equipment is largely saturated by products from countries such as Germany, Austria, and France. Competitive pricing and just-in-time delivery are essential for U.S. suppliers to be successful in selling to the three OEM automobile manufacturers in Slovakia and to their Tier 1 suppliers.

The recent data provided by the Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic show that 108,279 new passenger cars, trucks and buses were registered in Slovakia in 2017. New car registrations increased by 9% compared to 2016. The largest segment is the lower middle class, (eg. Škoda Octavia, VW Golf). SUVs represent 30%. The Association warns about the increasing average age of registered cars (27,000 imported cars in 2017 are older than ten years) due to favorable registration fee applied to old and less ecological friendly vehicles.

New Car Registrations	2016	2017	2016 vs 2017
M1 – Passenger Cars	88,163	96,085	+8.99%
N1 – Small Commercial Cars	7,459	7,581	+1.64%

N2 – Trucks up to 12t	474	411	-6.96%
N3 – Trucks over 12t	4,138	3,769	-8.92%
M2+M3 Busses	364	403	+10.71%
Total	100,598	108,279	+7.64%

Source: [Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic](#)

Slovakia has traditionally benefited from an attractive combination of skilled labor and low labor costs. Lately, however, a lack of expertise has been reported in industries including the production of instruments and tools, metalworking, foundry, new materials processing, and machining. It can be difficult to find experienced electronic and technical engineers, machinery and tool engineers, CNC machine and robot operators, technologists, designers, quality controllers, lacquerers, power press operators, logisticians, purchasers and maintenance people who speak at least one foreign language. Experienced managers and IT specialists are in high demand. As a result, U.S. suppliers of training programs that focus on technical skills and foreign language abilities will find opportunities in Slovakia. In an attempt to better align education with sought-after workforce skills, the Slovak government introduced a new dual education program in 2015. In support of this initiative some of the major players in the automotive sector, including Intech and Volkswagen in cooperation with Matador and Siemens, founded vocational programs. A continuous lack of interest by Slovak students in these programs has resulted in a scarcity of skilled, motivated workers in these fields, which forces OEMs and suppliers to look abroad (primarily in the Balkans) to fill jobs openings. A recent survey by PwC and the Automotive Industry Association concludes that up to 50% of auto suppliers claim they have lost business opportunities due to the lack of qualified labor. Through 2020 the Slovak automotive sector may require up to 14,000 new workers (7,000 by OEMs and 7,000 by suppliers) out of who 2,000 should be university graduates. Future workers will be able to obtain dual education.

In Slovakia there is excellent potential to penetrate the R&D activities of the large automobile corporations in specific segments. Current examples include Adient's R&D center in Trenčín which develops interior elements, Continental Automotive Systems in Zvolen which develops braking systems, Plastic Omnium in Lozorno which develops integrated modules for car interiors, and Matador Holding in Dubnica nad Váhom which develops components for automation of production and new material applications. The development of applied R&D in the automotive production field is critical for continued sectorial growth, with target opportunities including smart production (intelligent manufacturing with digitalization, sensors, internet of things and automation), innovative materials (composite, organic, memory), components, complex solutions, adjacent processing, 3D printed equipment and recycling of waste.

The Slovak government and the Slovak Automotive Industry Association share the goals of supporting and streamlining professional education, creating an R&D base, supporting sub-suppliers and improving cooperation with OEM automobile manufacturers, and finalizing the law on the disposal and recycling of old automobiles.

Electric Cars

The Slovak car manufacturing industry produces about 6,000 electric and hybrid cars annually, including the Volkswagen e-up!, Touareg Hybrid, and the Audi Q7 e-tron, the first plug in diesel hybrid in the world. Green cars represent 0.1% of all cars on Slovakia's roads. The low interest in green cars is due to their relatively high price, a limited charging station network, longer charging times, limited range, and electricity prices which are occasionally higher than gas prices. In order to increase interest in green cars the Slovak Ministry of Economy

allocated EUR 5.2 million (USD 5.6 million) to support electric and hybrid car purchases. Until June 30, 2018 electric car purchase is subsidized by EUR 5,000 (USD 5,400) and hybrid cars are subsidized by EUR 3,000 (USD 3,240). As of April 2018, only 56% of these funds had been used (EUR 2.9 million (USD 3.13 million)) representing 682 successful applicants out of which 75% were legal entities.

The Slovak Ministry of Economy considers introducing alternative supporting options such as different vehicle plates, assigned parking lots, advanced amortization for electric cars and charging stations, simplified construction processes for charging stations or public procurement projects.

Web Resources

[Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Internet Portal for Slovak Automotive Suppliers](#)

[Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic](#)

[Slovak Trade and Investment Agency](#)

Agricultural Sector

Overview

In 2017, Slovakia's total agriculture, fish and forestry imports were USD 4.85 billion and exports were USD 3.2 billion. Slovakia's most important agricultural trading partners are the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland.

Slovakia imported USD 10.2 million worth of U.S. food and agricultural products in 2017, a 10% increase up from USD 9.3 million in 2016. Official import numbers do not include significant and steadily growing transshipments of U.S. products from other EU countries.

Best prospects for U.S. agricultural products include consumer-oriented products such as fish and seafood, distilled spirits, and tree nuts, particularly almonds. U.S. food preparations are used primarily by the food-processing sector.

The Slovak government has altered its position, from accepting genetic engineering (GE) technology to striving to make Slovakia a "GMO-free" zone. There is currently proposed legislation that would allow limiting or banning cultivation of GMO products on national level.

The European Union provides grants to local farmers for recultivation of arable land and pastures. Recent publicity surrounding mafia involvement in schemes to illegally obtain EU direct grants for agricultural areas has prompted demonstrations from farmers. Slovak Police are currently investigating these allegations.

Best Sub-Sector Prospects for Agricultural Products

Fish, Crustaceans & Aquatic Invertebrates

Unit: USD thousands

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Imports	58,304	58,326	34,257	61,316
Imports from the US	3,195	4,346	4,302	4,500
Exchange Rates	0.919	0.949	0.833	0.811*

Source: Global Trade Atlas (HS code: 03); Bureau of Fiscal Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury
*) as of March 31, 2018

Distilled Spirits

Unit: USD thousands

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Imports	65,248	82,919	90,730	95,000
Imports from the US	2,507	2,599	2,774	2,900
Exchange Rates	0.919	0.949	0.833	0.811*

Source: Global Trade Atlas (HS code: 2208); Bureau of Fiscal Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury
*) as of March 31, 2018

Dried Nuts and Fruits

Unit: USD thousands

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Imports	312,869	354,377	354,037	355,000
Imports from the US	797	172	1,556	1,600
Exchange Rates	0.919	0.949	0.833	0.811*

Source: Global Trade Atlas (HS code: 08); Bureau of Fiscal Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury
*) as of March 31, 2018

Food Preparations

Unit: USD thousands

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Imports	297,502	319,697	345,580	360,000
Imports from the US	1,46	1,45	1,22	1,3
Exchange Rates	0.919	0.949	0.833	0.811*

Source:

Global Trade Atlas (HS code: 08); Bureau of Fiscal Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury
*) as of March 31, 2018

Web Resources:

United States Department of Agricultural (USDA) Mission to the European Union

Foreign Agricultural Service Europe

Customs, Regulations & Standards

General overview of Customs, Regulations and Standards applicable in EU can be found in European Union market overview, chapter Customs, Regulations & Standards, at the following [website \(https://www.export.gov/article?series=a0pt0000000PAtkAAG&type=Country Commercial kav\)](https://www.export.gov/article?series=a0pt0000000PAtkAAG&type=Country Commercial kav)

Trade Barriers

To report existing or new trade barriers and get assistance in removing them, contact either the [Trade Compliance Center \(https://tcc.export.gov/\)](https://tcc.export.gov/) or the [U.S. Mission to the European Union \(https://2016.export.gov/europeanunion/\)](https://2016.export.gov/europeanunion/).

Information on agricultural trade barriers can be found at the following website: [Foreign Agricultural Service \(http://www.usda-eu.org/\)](http://www.usda-eu.org/).

For information on existing trade barriers, please see the [National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers](https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/reports-and-publications/2017/2017-national-trade-estimate) (<https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/reports-and-publications/2017/2017-national-trade-estimate>) published by USTR. A licensing system is Slovakia's primary non-tariff barrier. The Ministry of Economy is authorized to issue import and export permits or licenses for sensitive goods with the objective of protecting the domestic market. The licensing procedure is governed by Regulation No. 15/1998 and amended Regulation No. 163/1999, which describe the conditions for issuing official authorization for the import/export of goods and services. These regulations also include individual lists of products subject to licensing procedures. There are four specific licensing regimes:

- 1) Extremely dangerous poisons, hazardous chemical substances, pesticides and additive chemical substances are subject to non-automatic licenses that may be issued upon written application of the Slovak importer/exporter of the goods. The licenses are not transferable. The licensing procedure for certain hazardous chemical substances and pesticides is governed by Regulation No. 67/2010.
- 2) Narcotics, psychotropic substances, precursors and additive chemical substances are also subject to non-automatic licenses that may be issued upon written application of the Slovak importer/exporter of these goods. The licenses are not transferable. The licensing procedure for drug precursors is governed by Regulation No. 331/2005.
- 3) Dual-use goods and technologies that can be used in military as well as civilian applications (Wassenaar system). The licensing procedure is governed by Regulation No. 21/2007.
- 4) Weapons, ammunition, explosives and related items.

Import Tariff

Includes information on average tariff rates and types that U.S. firms should be aware of when exporting to the market.

When products enter the EU, they need to be declared to customs according to their classification in the Combined Nomenclature (CN). The CN document is updated and published every year, and the latest version can be found on the [European Commission's website](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/combined-nomenclature_en) (https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/combined-nomenclature_en).

U.S. exports to the European Union enjoyed an average tariff of just three percent in 2017. All the same, U.S. exporters should consult “The Integrated Tariff of the Community”, referred to as TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté), to identify the various rules which apply to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU. To determine if a license is required for a particular product, check the TARIC.

The TARIC can be searched by country of origin, Harmonized System (HS) Code, and product description on the interactive website of the Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union. The online TARIC is updated daily.

Web Resources

[Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic](https://www.financnasprava.sk/en/homepage) (<https://www.financnasprava.sk/en/homepage>)

[TARIC](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/taric_en) (https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/taric_en), the integrated Tariff of the European Union.

Import Requirements & Documentation

Includes import documentation and other requirements for both the U.S. exporter and foreign importer.

The TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté) described above is available to help determine if a license is required for a particular product. Moreover, the European Commission maintains an export helpdesk with information on import restrictions of various products. [Import Restrictions on Agricultural Products \(http://trade.ec.europa.eu/tradehelp/\)](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/tradehelp/)

Many EU Member States maintain their own list of goods subject to import licensing. For example, Germany's "Import List" (Einfuhrliste) includes goods for which licenses are required, their code numbers, any applicable restrictions, and the agency that will issue the relevant license. The Import List also indicates whether the license is required under German or EU law.

For information relevant to member state import licenses, please consult the relevant member state [Country Commercial Guide \(https://www.export.gov/ccg\)](https://www.export.gov/ccg) or conduct a search on the Commerce Department's Market Research Library, available from [Market Intelligence \(https://www.export.gov/Market-Intelligence\)](https://www.export.gov/Market-Intelligence).

Slovakia's import requirements are fully harmonized with the European Union (EU) Laws and Regulations. For more information please visit the [EU Trade Helpdesk \(http://trade.ec.europa.eu/tradehelp/\)](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/tradehelp/)

Alternatively, search the [EU CCG Import Requirements and Documentation website \(http://apps.export.gov/article?id=European-Union-Import-Requirements-and-Documentation\)](http://apps.export.gov/article?id=European-Union-Import-Requirements-and-Documentation)

Labeling/Marking Requirements

Overview of the different labeling and marking requirements, including any restrictive advertising or labeling practices and where to get more information.

There is a broad array of EU legislation pertaining to the marking, labeling, and packaging of products, with neither an "umbrella" law covering all goods nor any central directory containing information on marking, labeling, and packaging requirements. This overview is meant to provide the reader with a general introduction to the multitude of marking, labeling, and packaging requirements and marketing tools to be found in the EU.

The first step in investigating the marking, labeling, and packaging legislation that might apply to a product entering the EU is to draw a distinction between what is mandatory and what is voluntary. Decisions related to mandatory marking, labeling and/or packaging requirements may sometimes be left to individual Member States. Furthermore, voluntary marks and/or labels are used as marketing tools in some EU Member States. This report is focused primarily on the mandatory marks and labels seen most often on consumer products and packaging, which are typically related to public safety, health and/or environmental concerns. It also includes a brief overview of a few mandatory packaging requirements, as well as more common voluntary marks and/or labels used in EU markets.

It is also important to distinguish between marks and labels. A mark is a symbol and/or pictogram that appears on a product or its respective packaging. These range in scope from signs of danger to indications of methods of proper recycling and disposal. The intention of such marks is to provide market surveillance authorities, importers, distributors and end-users with information concerning safety, health, energy efficiency and/or environmental issues relating to a product. Labels, on the other hand, appear in the form of written text or numerical statements, which may be required but are not necessarily universally recognizable. Labels typically indicate more specific information about a product, such as measurements, or an indication of materials that may be found in the product (such as in textiles or batteries).

Products made in Slovakia or imported into Slovakia must be labeled with the CE mark (the letters "CE" are the abbreviation of French phrase "Conformité Européene" which literally means "European Conformity". The term initially used was "EC Mark" and was officially replaced by "CE Marking" in the Directive 93/68/EEC in 1993), an EU designation indicating compliance with health, safety, and environmental protection standards for products sold within the European Economic Area (EEA). All electrical equipment should have, in addition

to the CE mark, an “Energy Efficiency” label. Under the 1995 State Language Law, companies are required to mark contents of domestically produced or imported goods, product manuals, product guarantees, and other consumer-related information in the Slovak language.

Manufacturers should be mindful that, in addition to the EU’s mandatory and voluntary schemes, national voluntary labeling systems might still apply. These systems may be highly appreciated by consumers, and thus, become unavoidable for marketing purposes.

Manufacturers are advised to take note that all labels require metric units, although dual labeling is also acceptable. The use of language on labels has been the subject of a Commission Communication, which encourages multilingual information, while preserving the right of member states to require the use of the language of the country of consumption.

Web Resources

[EU Single Market and Standards \(http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/building-blocks/legal-metrology/pack-sizes/\)](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/building-blocks/legal-metrology/pack-sizes/)

[Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing \(http://www.unms.sk/?home\)](http://www.unms.sk/?home)

U.S. Export Controls

Includes the U.S. government export controls that companies need to abide by when exporting to this country.

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), which regulate the export and re-export of some commercial items, including “production” and “development” technology.

The items that BIS regulates are often referred to as “dual use” since they have both commercial and military applications. Further information on export controls is available [here \(https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/commerce-control-list-ccl\)](https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/commerce-control-list-ccl).

BIS has developed a list of “red flags (<https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/commerce-control-list-ccl>),” or warning signs, intended to discover possible violations of the EAR.

Also, BIS has “[Know Your Customer](https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/forms-documents/pdfs/1320-know-your-customer)” (<https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/forms-documents/pdfs/1320-know-your-customer>) guidance.

If there is reason to believe a violation is taking place or has occurred, report it to the Department of Commerce by calling the 24-hour hotline at +1(800) 424-2980, or via the confidential lead [page \(https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/component/rsform/form/14-reporting-violations-form?task=forms.edit\)](https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/component/rsform/form/14-reporting-violations-form?task=forms.edit).

The EAR does not control all goods, services, and technologies. Other U.S. government agencies regulate more specialized exports. For example, the U.S. Department of State has authority over defense articles and services. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the [BIS website\(https://www.bis.doc.gov/\)](https://www.bis.doc.gov/).

It is important to note that in August 2009, the President directed a broad-based interagency review of the U.S. export control system, with the goal of strengthening national security and the competitiveness of key U.S. manufacturing and technology sectors by focusing on current threats, as well as adapting to the changing economic and technological landscape. As a result, the Administration launched the Export Control Reform Initiative (ECR Initiative) which is designed to enhance U.S. national security and strengthen the United States’ ability to counter threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Administration is implementing the reform in three phases. Phases I and II reconcile various definitions, regulations, and policies for export controls, all the while building toward Phase III, which will create a single

control list, single licensing agency, unified information technology system, and enforcement coordination center.

Additional information on ECR is [here \(https://2016.export.gov/ecr/index.asp\)](https://2016.export.gov/ecr/index.asp).

BIS provides a variety of training sessions to U.S. exporters throughout the year. These sessions range from one to two day seminars and focus on the basics of exporting as well as more advanced topics. A list of upcoming seminars can be found [here \(https://2016.export.gov/ecr/index.asp\)](https://2016.export.gov/ecr/index.asp).

For further details about the Bureau of Industry and Security and its programs, please visit the [BIS website \(https://www.bis.doc.gov/\)](https://www.bis.doc.gov/).

For more information please visit [Consolidated Screening List engine \(https://www.export.gov/article?id=Consolidated-Screening-List\)](https://www.export.gov/article?id=Consolidated-Screening-List) or this [website \(https://www.export.gov/csl-search\)](https://www.export.gov/csl-search).

Temporary Entry

Discusses requirements for products entering the country/economy temporarily. including information on warranty and non-warranty items entering the country/economy for repair.

Please see the [ATA Carnet Customs](https://www.export.gov/article?id=ATA-Carnet) website (<https://www.export.gov/article?id=ATA-Carnet>) for specific information on the procedures used for temporary importation, transit, and temporary admission of goods designed for specific purposes, duty-free and tax-free (such as professional equipment for presentations or trade fairs).

For information on this topic please consult the Commerce Department's Country Commercial Guides on EU Member States: [EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides \(https://www.export.gov/ccg\)](https://www.export.gov/ccg).

Alternatively, search the Commerce Department's Market Research Library, available from: [Market Intelligence \(https://www.export.gov/Market-Intelligence\)](https://www.export.gov/Market-Intelligence) under Country and Industry Market Reports.

Slovakia's Commercial Code allows a full or partial exemption from import duties for customs warehousing, active inward processing, temporary use and temporary imports. The exemption from import duties is allowed for the commercial use of foreign goods, which will remain the property of the importing foreign entity. For example, a person or company that imports goods temporarily doesn't pay the import charges until it is reprocessed and re-exported or officially cleared by the Customs Office for free and permanent circulation and use in the country. The period allowed for temporary importation is set by the Customs Office.

Slovakia is a signatory of international customs agreements on ATA and TIR carnets, which allow for the temporary import or transit of goods without the obligation to secure the partial exemption described above and without import duties or charges in the country of transit or destination. [The Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry \(SOPK\) \(http://web.sopk.sk/\)](http://web.sopk.sk/) is the national guarantee organization and executive body for ATA carnets. The [Czech and Slovak Association for International Automobile Transportation \(Cesmad Slovakia\) \(https://www.cesmad.sk/\)](https://www.cesmad.sk/) holds the same responsibilities for TIR carnets.

Prohibited & Restricted Imports

Includes a list of goods that are prohibited from being exported to the country or are otherwise restricted.

The Tarif Intégré de la Communauté TARIC is designed to show various rules applying to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a product is prohibited or subject to restriction, check the TARIC for the following codes:

- CITES Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species

- PROHI Import Suspension
- RSTR Import Restriction

For information on how to access the TARIC, see the Import Requirements and Documentation Section [here](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/taric_en) (https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/taric_en).

Customs Regulations

Includes customs regulations and contact information for this country's customs office.

Customs Valuation – Most customs duties and value added tax (VAT) are expressed as a percentage of the value of goods being declared for importation. Thus, it is necessary to maintain a standard set of rules for establishing the goods' value, which will then serve for calculating the customs' duties.

Given the magnitude of EU imports every year, it is important that the value of such commerce is accurately measured for the purposes of:

- economic and commercial policy analysis;
- application of commercial policy measures;
- proper collection of import duties and taxes; and
- import and export statistics.

These objectives are met using a single instrument - the rules on customs value.

The EU applies an internationally accepted concept of '[customs value](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-customs-valuation_en)' (https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-customs-valuation_en).

The value of imported goods is one of three 'elements of taxation' that provides the basis for assessment of the customs debt, which is the technical term for the amount of duty that has to be paid, the other two are origin of the goods and the customs tariff.

Key Link: [Customs Procedures](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/customs-procedures_en) (https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/customs-procedures_en)

Information about Slovak Customs procedures and contact information for Slovak Customs authorities can be found at the following [website](https://www.financnasprava.sk/en/individuals/customs-duty) (<https://www.financnasprava.sk/en/individuals/customs-duty>).

For information on this topic please consult the [Commerce Department's Country Commercial Guides on EU member states](https://www.export.gov/ccg) (<https://www.export.gov/ccg>).

Standards for Trade

Describes the country's standards landscape, identifies the national standards and accreditation bodies, and lists the main national testing organization(s) and conformity assessment bodies.

Overview

Products tested and certified in the United States to American regulations and standards are likely to have to be retested and re-certified to EU requirements as a result of the EU's different approach to the protection of the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Where products are not regulated by specific EU technical legislation, they are always subject to the EU's General Product Safety Directive as well as to possible additional national requirements.

European Union legislation and standards created under the New Approach are harmonized across the member states and European Economic Area countries to allow for the free flow of goods. A feature of the New Approach is CE marking.

The concept of New Approach legislation is slowly disappearing as the New Legislative Framework (NLF), which entered into force in January 2010, was put in place to serve as a blueprint for existing and future CE marking legislation. Existing legislation has been reviewed to bring it in line with the NLF concepts, which means that, as of 2016, new requirements are being addressed and new reference numbers are to be used on declarations of conformity. For more information, please see the [NLF website \(http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/new-legislative-framework/\)](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/new-legislative-framework/). While harmonization of EU legislation can facilitate access to the EU Single Market, manufacturers should be aware that regulations (mandatory) and technical standards (voluntary) might also function as barriers to trade if U.S. standards are different from those of the European Union.

Agricultural Standards

The establishment of harmonized EU rules and standards in the food sector has been ongoing for several decades, and in January 2002 the EU passed a law establishing general principles for EU food. This regulation introduced mandatory traceability throughout the feed and food chain as of Jan 1, 2005. For specific information on agricultural standards, please refer to the [Foreign Agricultural Service's website \(http://www.usda-eu.org/\)](http://www.usda-eu.org/).

There are also export guides to import regulations and standards available on the Foreign Agricultural Service's website: [FAIRS Export Certificate Report \(http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/\)](http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/).

Standards

EU standards setting is a process based on consensus initiated by industry or mandated by the European Commission and carried out by independent standards bodies, acting at the national, European or international level. There is strong encouragement for non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups, to actively participate in European standardization.

Many standards in the EU are adopted from international standards bodies such as the International Standards Organization (ISO). The drafting of specific EU standards is handled by three European standards organizations:

1. European Committee for Electro-technical Standardization ([CENELEC, https://www.cenelec.eu/](https://www.cenelec.eu/))
2. European Telecommunications Standards Institute ([ETSI, http://www.etsi.org/](http://www.etsi.org/))
3. European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards ([CEN, https://www.cen.eu/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.cen.eu/Pages/default.aspx))

Standards are created or modified by experts in Technical Committees or Working Groups. The members of CEN and CENELEC are the national standards bodies of the member states, which have "mirror committees" that monitor and delegate experts to participate in ongoing European standardization. CEN and CENELEC standards are sold by the individual member states standards bodies. ETSI is different in that it allows direct participation in its technical committees from non-EU companies that have interests in Europe and provides some of its individual standards at no charge on its website. In addition to the three standards developing organizations, the European Commission plays an important role in standardization through its funding of the participation in the standardization process of small- and medium-sized companies and non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups. The Commission also provides money to the standards bodies when it mandates standards development to the European Standards Organization for

harmonized standards that will be linked to EU technical legislation. Mandates – or requests for standards - can be checked [online \(http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/mandates/index.cfm;jsessionid=2F7A26FD1478875B205FF5F20AA23E9A.cfusion22204?fuseaction=refSearch.main&CFID=301803&CFTOKEN=c026be6bcb966194-1B3AF9EE-F265-F900-CFA6308D7B44B559\)](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/mandates/index.cfm;jsessionid=2F7A26FD1478875B205FF5F20AA23E9A.cfusion22204?fuseaction=refSearch.main&CFID=301803&CFTOKEN=c026be6bcb966194-1B3AF9EE-F265-F900-CFA6308D7B44B559).

Given the EU's vigorous promotion of its regulatory and standards system as well as its generous funding for its development, the EU's standards regime is wide and deep - extending well beyond the EU's political borders to include affiliate members (countries which are hopeful of becoming full members in the future) such as Belarus, Israel, and Morocco, among others. Another category, called "[companion standardization body](https://www.cenelec.eu/intcoop/Agreements/PSB/Pages/default.aspx)" (<https://www.cenelec.eu/intcoop/Agreements/PSB/Pages/default.aspx>) includes the standards organization of Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Australia, which are not likely to become a CEN member or affiliate for political and geographical reasons.

To know what CEN and CENELEC have in the pipeline for future standardization, it is best to visit their websites. Other than their respective annual work plans, CEN's "what we do" page provides an overview of standards activities by subject. Both CEN and CENELEC offer the possibility to search their respective database. [ETSI's portal \(https://portal.etsi.org/home.aspx\)](https://portal.etsi.org/home.aspx) links to ongoing activities.

The European Standardization system and strategy was reviewed in 2011 and 2012. The new standards regulation 1025, adopted in November 2012, clarifies the relationship between regulations and standards and confirms the role of the three European standards bodies in developing EN harmonized standards. The emphasis is also on referencing international standards where possible. For information, communication and technology (ICT) products, the importance of interoperability standards has been recognized. Through a newly established mechanism, a "Platform Committee" reporting to the European Commission will decide which deliverables from fora and consortia might be acceptable for public procurement specifications. The European standards bodies have been encouraged to improve efficiency in terms of delivery and to look for ways to include more societal stakeholders in [European standardization \(http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/policy/\)](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/policy/).

Testing, inspection and certification

Conformity Assessment is a mandatory step for the manufacturer in the process of complying with specific EU harmonized legislation. The purpose of conformity assessment is to ensure consistency of compliance during all stages, from design to production, to facilitate acceptance of the final product. EU product legislation gives manufacturers some choice regarding conformity assessment, depending on the level of risk involved in the use of their product. These range from self-certification, type examination, and production quality control system, to full quality assurance system. Conformity assessment bodies in individual Member States are listed in the [New Approach Notification and Designated Organizations \(NANDO\) information system \(http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/nando/\)](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/nando/). To promote market acceptance of the final product, there are a number of voluntary conformity assessment programs. CEN's certification system is known as the Keymark. Neither CENELEC nor ETSI offer conformity assessment services.

More information on testing can be found at [Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing \(http://www.unms.sk/?home\)](http://www.unms.sk/?home) and at [Slovak Institute for Technical Standardization \(https://www.sutn.sk/\)](https://www.sutn.sk/).

Product Certification

To sell products in the EU market of 28 Member States as well as in EFTA (Norway, Liechtenstein Iceland, Switzerland) and Turkey, U.S. exporters are required to apply CE marking whenever their product is covered by specific product legislation. CE marking product legislation offers manufacturers a number of choices and requires decisions to determine which safety/health concerns need to be addressed, which conformity

assessment module is best suited to the manufacturing process, and whether or not to use EU-wide harmonized standards. The CE marking process is very complex and this section attempts to provide some background and clarification. The CE marking addresses itself primarily to the national control authorities of the Member States, and its use simplifies the task of market surveillance of regulated products. As market surveillance was found lacking, the EU adopted the New Legislative Framework, which went into force in 2010. As mentioned before, this framework is like a blueprint for all CE marking legislation, harmonizing definitions, responsibilities, European accreditation and market surveillance.

The CE marking is not intended to include detailed technical information on the product, but there must be enough information to enable the inspector to trace the product back to the manufacturer or the local contact established in the EU. This detailed information should not appear next to the CE marking, but rather on the declaration of conformity (which the manufacturer or authorized agent must be able to provide at any time, together with the product's technical file), or the documents accompanying the product.

Accreditation

Independent testing and certification laboratories, known as notified bodies, have been officially accredited by competent national authorities to test and certify to EU requirements.

"[European Accreditation](http://www.european-accreditation.org/)" (<http://www.european-accreditation.org/>) is an organization representing nationally recognized accreditation bodies. Membership is open to nationally recognized accreditation bodies in countries in the European geographical area that can demonstrate that they operate an accreditation system compatible to appropriate EN and ISO/IEC standards.

Publication of technical regulations

The Official Journal is the official publication of the European Union. It is published daily on the internet and consists of two series covering adopted legislation as well as case law, studies by committees, and more, which can be found [here](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/oj/direct-access.html?locale=en) (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/oj/direct-access.html?locale=en>). It also lists the [standards reference numbers](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/harmonised-standards/) (<http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/harmonised-standards/>) linked to legislation.

National technical regulations are published on the [Commission's website](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/tris/en/) (<http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/tris/en/>) to allow other countries and interested parties to comment.

Contact Information

U.S. Commercial Service Bratislava
Hviezdoslavovo námestie 5
811 02 Bratislava
Telephone: (+421) 2 5922 3222
E-mail: Office.Bratislava@trade.gov

[Website: https://2016.export.gov/slovakia/](https://2016.export.gov/slovakia/) Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to notify to the WTO proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures that could affect trade. [Notify U.S. \(www.nist.gov/notifyus\)](http://www.nist.gov/notifyus) is a free, web-based e-mail registration service that captures and makes available for review and comment key information on draft regulations and conformity assessment procedures. Users receive customized e-mail alerts when new notifications are added by selected country(ies) and industry sector(s) of interest, and can also request full texts of regulations. This service and its associated web site are managed and operated by the USA WTO TBT Inquiry Point housed within the National Institute of Standards and Technology, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Trade Agreements

Describes bilateral and multilateral trade agreements that this country is party to, including with the United States. Includes websites and other resources where U.S. companies can get more information on how to take advantage of these agreements.

For a list of trade agreements with the EU and its member states, as well as concise explanations, please visit this [website \(https://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/index.asp\)](https://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/index.asp) or [EU Trade Agreements \(http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/negotiations-and-agreements/\)](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/negotiations-and-agreements/)

Licensing Requirements for Professional Services

Includes license requirements for key professional services that are open to U.S. service providers.

The recognition of skills and qualifications acquired by EU citizens in EU Member States, including the corresponding recognition procedures and charges are, corresponding with article 165 of the TFEU, the responsibility of Member States. Similarly, recognition of skills and qualifications earned in third countries is also a national responsibility.

However, the European Commission takes initiative to facilitate recognition procedures. For example:

- Recognition of professional qualifications obtained in one Member State for the purposes of access and pursuit of regulated professions in another Member State is subject to Directive 2005/36.
- Recognition of qualifications for academic purposes in the higher education sector, including school-leaving certificates is subject to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The ENIC-NARIC network provides advice on (cross-border) recognition of these qualifications.

Recognition in other cases is assessed and granted (or denied) by the receiving educational provider or employer. For them to be able to recognize skills and qualifications an understanding of the level, content and quality is needed. The Commission is currently exploring possibilities on how to better support these recognition decisions.

The “Your Europe” website maintains a webpage dedicated to help citizens identify what the regulated professions are and what document are needed for their recognition in each Member State. Please see: [Recognition of Professional Qualification \(https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/professional-qualifications/recognition-of-professional-qualifications/index_en.htm\)](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/professional-qualifications/recognition-of-professional-qualifications/index_en.htm).

Web Resources

Includes any websites pertaining to trade regulations, customs, and standards in this country.

EU websites:

[TARIC](#)

[The Modernized Community Customs Code](#)

[ECHA](#)

[Taxation and Customs Union](#)

[Security and Safety Amendment to the Customs Code](#)

[Electronic Customs Initiative](#)

[Modernized Community Customs Code Regulation](#)

[Legislation related to the Electronic Customs Initiative](#)

[Trade Helpdesk](#)

[What is Customs Valuation?](#)

[Establishing the Community Customs Code](#)

[Pre-Arrival/Pre-Departure Declarations](#)

[AEO: Authorized Economic Operator](#)

[Contact Information at National Customs Authorities](#)

[New Legislative Framework](#)

[Cenelec, European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization](#)

[ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute](#)

[CEN, European Committee for Standardization](#)

[Standardisation- Mandates](#)

[ETSI- Portal- E-Standardisation](#)

[CEN- Sector](#)

[CEN- Standard Search](#)

[NANDO \(New Approach Notified and Designated Organizations\) Information System](#)

[European Co-Operation for Accreditation](#)

[Eur-Lex- Access to European Union Law](#)

[Standards Reference Numbers](#)

[What's New?](#)

[National Technical Regulations](#)

[NIST- Notify U.S.](#)

[European Union Eco-Label Homepage](#)

Slovak websites:

[Slovak Customs Office](#)

[Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing](#)

[Slovak Institute for Technical Standardization](#)

[Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic](#)

U.S. websites:

[National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers](#)

[Agricultural Trade Barriers](#)

[Trade Compliance Center](#)

[U.S. Mission to the European Union](#)

[The New EU Battery Directive](#)

[The Latest on REACH](#)

[WEEE and RoHS in the EU](#)

[Overview of EU Certificates](#) (FAS)

[Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition](#)

[Trade Agreements](#)

Investment Climate Statement

To be provided by The U.S. Department of State by mid July 2018.

Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of State's Investment Climate Statements, prepared annually by U.S. embassies and diplomatic missions abroad, provide country-specific information and assessments of the investment climate in foreign markets. Topics include: Market barriers, business risk, legal and regulatory system, dispute resolution, corruption, political violence, labor issues, and intellectual property rights. The statements are available in two ways.

- Visit the U.S. Department of State's Investment Climate Statement website at <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/>.
- Download the Country Commercial Guide at www.export.gov/ccg (the Investment Climate Statement is Chapter 6).

Openness to and Restrictions upon Foreign Investment

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Bilateral Investment Agreements and Taxation Treaties

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Legal Regime

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Industrial Policies

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Protection of Property Rights

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Financial Sector

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State-Owned Enterprises

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Responsible Business Conduct

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Corruption

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Political and Security Environment

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Labor Policies and Practices

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OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment Statistics

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Contact for More Information on the Investment Climate Statement

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Trade & Project Financing

Methods of Payment

Discusses the most common methods of payment, such as open account, letter of credit, cash in advance, documentary collections, factoring, etc. Includes credit-rating and collection agencies in this country. Includes primary credit or charge cards used in this country.

Since January 1, 2009 interest rates for commercial financing have been derived from interest rates of the [European Central Bank](http://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/html/index.en.html) (ECB) (<http://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/html/index.en.html>).

There are special credit programs available for small and medium enterprises. The availability of credit for SMEs (small and medium-size enterprises) is based on their credit rating.

Large-scale project financing may be obtained from the multilateral lending institutions such as the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](http://www.ebrd.com/home) (EBRD) (<http://www.ebrd.com/home>), [International Finance Corporation](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/home) (IFC) (https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/home), or the [European Investment Bank](http://www.eib.org/) (EIB) (<http://www.eib.org/>).

Methods of payment are similar to those in the United States and other countries and include payments in advance via Swift, letters of credit, bank guarantees, and open terms.

Primary credit or charge cards include Visa, VisaElectron, MasterCard, Maestro and Diners Club.

For more information about the methods of payment or other trade finance options, please read the Trade Finance Guide available at <https://www.export.gov/TradeFinanceGuide>.

Banking Systems

Includes special features of this country's banking system and rules/laws that might impact U.S. business.

The Slovak banking system is based upon a European model rather than a U.S. model and is governed by the Slovak Banking Act. Under Slovak law, commercial banks may engage in investment banking and brokerage activities, as well as traditional commercial transactions and lending. These activities are subject to licensing and supervision by the [National Bank of Slovakia](https://www.nbs.sk/en/home) (NBS) (<https://www.nbs.sk/en/home>), which controls minimum capital, reserve requirements, and bank supervision. Recent adoption of the Council Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2013 will confer the authorization and supervision of over three quarters of the banks located in Slovakia to the ECB.

Foreign banks can establish representative offices or full-fledged branches. Representative offices are limited to offering advice and informing clients of the services of the parent bank. Branches may handle any transactions authorized by the parent bank. Foreign banks must agree to take over the assets and liabilities, effectively guaranteeing the financial health of the branch. Thus far, foreign banks in Slovakia have concentrated on providing international payment services and loans to foreign clients or Slovak companies with extensive export business.

The Inter-Bank Payment System (SIPS) is operated through the National Bank of Slovakia. By law, all banks are obliged to carry out their domestic payment transactions through this center. Security of the Inter-Bank Payment System in Slovakia is based on a high level of data protection during all stages of processing and settlement at National Bank of Slovakia. All participants in the Inter-Bank Payment System Slovakia must have a backup facility for both data transfer and processing.

New European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No. 260/2012 came into effect on February 1, 2014. This regulation unifies the rules and standards in the payment systems. Single EUR Payments Area (SEPA)

removes the boundaries for the execution of cashless payments in the Euro zone. All consumers, businesses and other economic operators within the SEPA will therefore be able to send and receive payments in EUR, whether within a country or between countries, under the same basic conditions, rights and obligations, and no matter in which country they hold a payment account. A direct result of the implementation of the SEPA payment instruments will be the replacement of the currently used domestic payment instruments, in particular for credit transfers and direct debits, with common SEPA payment instruments. SEPA payments will be carried out according to the same rules, the same procedures and in accordance with the same standards in all SEPA countries (Iceland, Norway, the European Union countries, plus Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Monaco). IBAN and SWIFT Codes will be used uniformly for payments within and across the SEPA countries.

Foreign Exchange Controls

Includes how foreign exchange is managed and implications for U.S. business.

There are generally no foreign-exchange controls. Slovakia adopted the EUR as its national currency on January 1, 2009. For more information please visit this [website for National Bank of Slovakia \(https://www.nbs.sk/en/monetary-policy\)](https://www.nbs.sk/en/monetary-policy).

US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks

Includes a list of U.S. banks operating in the market; indicates whether Ex-Im Bank offers any country-specific programs.

There is one subsidiary of a U.S. bank with a physical presence in Slovakia:

[Citibank Europe plc \(http://www.citibank.com/slovakia/homepage/slovak/index.htm\)](http://www.citibank.com/slovakia/homepage/slovak/index.htm)

Other banks in Slovakia that have correspondent relationships with U.S. banks include:

[Prima banka Slovensko \(https://www.primabanka.sk/\)](https://www.primabanka.sk/)

-- Deutsche Bank Trust Company Americas, NY

[Tatra Banka \(https://www.tatrabanka.sk/sk/\)](https://www.tatrabanka.sk/sk/) (through Tatra Raiffeisen, Austria)

-- Bank of America, N.A., NY

-- The Bank of New York Mellon, NY

-- Standard Chartered Bank New York

[UniCredit Banka \(https://www.unicreditbank.sk/sk/obciana.html#home\)](https://www.unicreditbank.sk/sk/obciana.html#home)

-- JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., NY

[Eximbanka SR \(https://www.eximbanka.sk/\)](https://www.eximbanka.sk/)

-- Cooperation Agreement with the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York

-- Memorandum of Understanding with the Export-Import Bank of the United States

Project Financing

EU financial assistance programs provide a wide array of grants, loans, loan guarantees, and co-financing for feasibility studies and projects in a number of key sectors (e.g., environmental, transportation, energy, telecommunications, tourism, public health). A number of centralized financing programs are also generating procurement and other opportunities directly with EU institutions.

The EU supports economic development projects within its Member States, as well as EU-wide "economic integration" projects that cross both internal and external EU borders. In addition, the EU provides assistance to candidate and neighbor countries.

The EU provides project financing through grants from the EU budget and loans from the European Investment Bank. Grants from the EU Structural and Investment Funds program are distributed through the Member States' national and regional authorities. Projects in non-EU countries are managed through the Directorate-Generals Enlargement, Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid), Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

EU Structural Funds, including the European Regional Development and the European Social Fund, were created in 1975 with the aim to mitigate economic and social differences between the regions of the European Union. New budgets are approved every seven years for all Member States. The budgets and the allocation of funding between the different priorities (social, economic or environmental) are based on the conclusions of the "Partnership Agreements" (PAs) which are negotiated between the European Commission and the member state national authorities. For the period of 2014 – 2020, the EU has earmarked EUR 352 billion (USD 398 billion) for regional development and cohesion policy projects. For information on [approved programs \(http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm\)](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm) that will result in future project proposals.

For projects financed through ESIF, member state regional managing authorities are the key decision-makers. They assess the needs of their country, investigate projects, evaluate bids, and award contracts. To become familiar with available financial support programs in the Member States, it is advisable for would-be contractors to develop a sound understanding of the country's cohesion policy indicators.

Tenders issued by Member States' public contracting authorities for projects supported by EU grants are subject to EU public procurement legislation. All ESIF projects are co-financed by national authorities and many may also qualify for a loan from the European Investment Bank and EU research funds under Horizon 2020, in addition to private sector contribution. For more information on these programs, please see the market research section on the website of the U.S. Mission to the EU:

Market Intelligence

The Cohesion Fund

The Cohesion Fund is another instrument of the EU's regional policy. Its EUR 63 billion (USD 71 billion) in 2014 to 2020 budget is used to finance projects in two areas:

Trans-European transport projects including transport infrastructure, and environment, including areas related to sustainable development and energy for projects with environmental benefits.

The fund supports projects in Member States whose Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90 % of the EU average, such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

These projects are, in principle, co-financed by national authorities, the European Investment Bank, and the private sector:

Key Link: [The Cohesion Fund \(http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/\)](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/)

Other EU Grants for Member States

Other sets of sector-specific grants such as Horizon 2020 offer assistance to EU Member States in the fields of science, technology, communications, energy, security, environmental protection, education, training and

research. Tenders related to these grants are posted on the websites of the European Commission and the relevant Member State authorities. Participation is usually restricted to EU-based firms or tied to EU content. Information pertaining to each of these programs can be found at: [EU Funding and Tenders \(https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en).

External Assistance Grants

“Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid” is the Directorate-General (DG) responsible for implementing EU development policies through programs and projects across the world. Its website offers extensive information on the range of grant programs, the kind of projects that are eligible, as well as manuals to help interested parties understand the relevant contract law. However, participation in these calls for tender is reserved for enterprises located in the EU Member States or in the beneficiary countries and requires that the products used to respond to these projects are manufactured in the EU or in the aid recipient country. Consultants of U.S. nationality employed by a European firm are allowed to participate. European subsidiaries of U.S. firms are eligible to participate in these calls for tender.

For more information: [International Cooperation and Development \(https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm\)](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)

The European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) provides assistance to countries that are the Southern Mediterranean and Eastern neighbors of the EU. ENI is the follow-up to the European Neighborhood Policy program (ENPI) covering the countries of Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. The ENI budget is EUR 15.4 billion (USD 17.4 billion) for 2014-2020. Additional information can be found at: [EU External Action \(https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en\)](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en).

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II (IPA II) is an EU program for pre-accession countries that provides support for political and economic reforms, preparing the beneficiaries for the rights and obligations that come with EU membership and that are linked to the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* (the body of European Union law that must be adopted by candidate countries as a precondition to accession). These programs are intended to help build up the administrative and institutional capacities of these countries and to finance investments designed to aid them in complying with EU law. IPA II runs from 2014 to 2020 and finances projects in: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. The budget of IPA II for 2014-2020 is EUR 11.7 billion (USD 13.2 billion).

For more information, see:

[here \(http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/overview/index_en.htm#ipa2\)](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/overview/index_en.htm#ipa2)

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is an EU financing mechanism that uses the EC budget as well as the Cohesion Funds to finance projects in three key areas: energy, transport and telecom. It was created by Regulation 1316/2013 on December 11, 2013.

Along with the [European Fund for Strategic Investments](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe-juncker-plan_en) (EFSI), CEF (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe-juncker-plan_en) is expected to play a role in bridging the investment gap in Europe, which is one of the Commission's top priorities. In all three main categories the focus is on creating better conditions for growth and jobs. Annual and multi-annual work programs specify the priorities and the total amount of financial support allocated for these priorities in a given year.

Only actions contributing to projects of common interest in accordance with Regulations 1315/2013, No 347/2013 and a Regulation on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure, as well as program support actions, are eligible for support.

Projects supported through the CEF mechanism focus on the following:

- cleaner transport modes,
- high speed broadband connections, and
- the use of renewable energy (in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy), integration of the internal energy market, reduction of the EU's energy dependency and ensuring security of supply.

The total budget of the CEF for the period 2014 to 2020 is set at EUR 30.44 billion (USD 34.4 billion). This amount is distributed between the main priority areas as follows:

- a) transport sector: EUR 24.05 billion (USD 27.2 billion);
- b) telecommunications sector: EUR 1 billion (USD 1.13 billion);
- c) energy sector: EUR 5.35 billion (USD 6.04 billion)

Please see: [Connecting European Facility \(https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/growth-and-investment/financing-investment/connecting-europe-facility-cef-financial-instruments_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/growth-and-investment/financing-investment/connecting-europe-facility-cef-financial-instruments_en)

Loans from the European Investment Bank

Headquartered in Luxembourg, the European Investment Bank (EIB) is the financing arm of the European Union. Since its creation in 1958, the EIB has been a key player in building Europe. As a non-profit banking institution, the EIB assesses reviews and monitors projects, and offers cost-competitive, long-term lending. Best known for its project financial and economic analysis, the EIB makes loans to both private and public borrowers for projects supporting four key areas: innovation and skills, access to finance for smaller businesses, climate and environment, and infrastructure.

While the EIB mostly funds projects within the EU, it lends outside the EU as well (e.g., in Southeastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Pacific and Caribbean states). In 2016, the EIB loaned EUR 76 billion (USD 84.12 billion) for projects. The EIB also plays a key role in supporting EU enlargement with loans used to finance improvements in infrastructure, research, and industrial manufacturing to help those countries prepare for eventual EU membership.

The EIB presents attractive financing options for projects that contribute to the European objectives cited above, as EIB lending rates are lower than most other commercial rates.

Projects financed by the EIB must contribute to the socio-economic objectives set out by the EU, such as fostering the development of less favored regions, improving European transport and environment infrastructure, supporting the activities of SMEs, assisting urban renewal and the development of a low-carbon economy, and generally promoting growth and competitiveness in the EU. The [EIB website \(http://www.eib.org/projects/pipelines/index\)](http://www.eib.org/projects/pipelines/index) displays lists of projects to be considered for approval.

Multilateral Development Banks

[The World Bank](https://www.nbs.sk/en/about-the-bank/international-relations/the-world-bank) (IBRD - the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) (<https://www.nbs.sk/en/about-the-bank/international-relations/the-world-bank>)

Slovakia became IBRD's member in 1993. Ministry of Finance on behalf of Slovakia executes its shareholding rights resulting from its membership in the IBRD. Since 1993 until 2008 Slovakia borrowed funds and benefited from technical assistance relating to health care system modernisation, banking sector restructuring, public finance management reform, social benefits administration reform. In 2008 Slovakia graduated from the World Bank's operations and became donor of development assistance. The current effort of the Ministry of Finance is focused on better involvement of the Slovak private sector to development projects financed by the IBRD.

Slovakia also regularly contributes resources through Ministry of Finance every three years to support responses to development challenges in the poorest countries in the global world.

The Governor for Slovakia in the Board of Governors, the highest decision-making body, is the Minister of Finance. The Vice Governor of the National Bank of Slovakia, was appointed as Alternate Governor. Slovakia is represented by the Executive Director in the Executive Board of the IBRD, the executive body, and belongs to the Belgian Constituency where Slovakia has its representative.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Slovakia joined of the EBRD in 1991. Slovakia is a member of a Constituency together with the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Croatia and Georgia. Since May 1, 2016 the Director representing the Constituency in the Board of Directors is Mr. László Havas (Hungary) and the Alternate Director is Mrs. Klára Krol (the Czech Republic). Slovakia is represented in the Constituency by the Advisor to the Director, currently Mr. Mária Virčík.

The Governor for Slovakia in the Board of Governors is the Minister of Finance of the Slovak Republic and the Alternate Governor is the Governor of the National Bank of Slovakia.

The EBRD has been active in Slovakia since 1992. The Bank has been an active participant in Slovakia's successful transition to a market economy, financing mainly private sector projects across a broad spectrum of economic sectors. Since 1992, the Bank has committed around EUR 2 billion to its operations in Slovakia.

More information can be found [here](http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country/slovakrepublic.shtml) (<http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country/slovakrepublic.shtml>).

The EBRD has also supported the successful privatization of banks and its current activities include infrastructure, the enterprise and the financial sectors. In addition, the Bank has launched an energy efficiency framework for Slovakia with the aim to raise the share of renewable resources in energy generation and improve Slovak energy security.

The [EBRD Strategy for Slovakia](http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country/slovakrepublic/strategy.shtml) was approved on November 13, 2012 (<http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country/slovakrepublic/strategy.shtml>).

Web Resources

Includes web resources related to trade and project financing.

EU websites:

[The EU regional policies, the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm)
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm

[EU Funding and Tenders](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en) (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en)

[EuropeAid Co-operation Office](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm) (https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)

[EU Tenders Database](http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do) (<http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>)

[The European Investment Bank](http://www.eib.org/) (<http://www.eib.org/>)

[EIB-financed projects](http://www.eib.org/projects/index.htm?lang=-en) (<http://www.eib.org/projects/index.htm?lang=-en>)

U.S. websites:

[Market research section on the website of the U.S. Mission to the EU](https://www.export.gov/Market-Intelligence) (<https://www.export.gov/Market-Intelligence>)

[Export-Import Bank of the United States](https://www.exim.gov/) (<https://www.exim.gov/>)

[Country Limitation Schedule](https://www.exim.gov/tools-for-exporters/country-limitation-schedule) (<https://www.exim.gov/tools-for-exporters/country-limitation-schedule>)

[OPIC](https://www.opic.gov/) (<https://www.opic.gov/>)

[Trade and Development Agency \(https://www.ustda.gov/\)](https://www.ustda.gov/)

[SBA's Office of International Trade \(https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-locations/headquarters-offices\)](https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-locations/headquarters-offices)

[U.S. Agency for International Development \(https://www.usaid.gov/\)](https://www.usaid.gov/)

Slovak websites:

[National Bank of the Slovak Republic \(https://www.nbs.sk/en/home\)](https://www.nbs.sk/en/home)

[Citibank Slovakia \(http://www.citibank.com/slovakia/homepage/slovak/index.htm\)](http://www.citibank.com/slovakia/homepage/slovak/index.htm)

[Eximbanka SR \(https://www.eximbanka.sk/\)](https://www.eximbanka.sk/)

Business Travel

Business Customs

Includes information on acceptable business etiquette, dress, business cards, gifts, etc.

Business practices and etiquette in Slovakia represent a mixture of those used in Western Europe and the United States and those used in Eastern Europe. Decision-making in a company is often restricted to a small number of people, if not just one person. Even relatively minor decisions may require the approval of a high level official. Appointments should be made well in advance, with re-confirmations made one or two days prior to actual meetings. Business dress is similar to that in Western Europe.

Titles and positions are highly respected and are generally used on business cards. U.S. business people occasionally have difficulty in receiving replies to inquiries and are encouraged to follow-up to ensure contact with the intended recipients. E-mail is the most common way of communicating.

Doing business successfully in Slovakia generally requires the establishment of good personal relationships and a feeling of mutual trust. General social conversation prior to getting down to business is the norm, and launching directly into business topics may impede the development of a good personal relationship with the Slovak business partner. After initial meetings, written summaries of goals, objectives, and points of agreement or disagreement should be used to minimize misunderstandings among business parties.

Offers to host business dinners and/or lunches are welcomed as compensation for gifts. If invited to a person's home, you are expected to bring flowers for the hosts. Small gifts are also appreciated, but not expected. It is common to give small presents such as a bottle of wine, cookies or chocolates in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Travel Advisory

Includes a link to the State Department consular information sheet.

Please check the following [U.S. Department of State website \(https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html\)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html) for updated travel advisories.

Visa Requirements

Includes information on what is needed to travel to the country/economy.

Slovak Entry Requirement for U.S. Citizens

Slovakia is a party to the Schengen Agreement. As such, U.S. citizens may enter Slovakia for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa issued prior to departure from the United States. U.S. passports should be valid for at least six months beyond the period of stay.

In accordance with the Law of the National Council of Slovakia No. 48/2002 Coll. on the stay of foreigners in Slovakia as later amended by law 558/2005 (effective December 15, 2005), persons intending to stay in Slovakia longer than a total of 90 days during any 6-month period must submit an application for a Temporary Term Residence Permit, either at a Slovak diplomatic or consular mission in the country of their residence ([Embassy of Slovakia, https://www.mzv.sk/web/washington](https://www.mzv.sk/web/washington), 3523 International Court, NW, Washington D.C. 20008, telephone: 202-237-1054), or at the alien's police department in the Slovak district of their residency. A permit can be granted for a period of not more than two years, with a possibility of repeated extensions provided that the application for renewal of the permit is submitted no later than 60 days before the expiration of its validity. Please check the [documents \(https://sk.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-](https://sk.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-)

[u-s-citizens/residency-permit/](#)) needed to accompany an application for a permit, which is to be completed in Slovak.

Meeting the requirements of Slovak law to obtain a long-term stay permit can be a long and difficult process, with health and police checks, among other things, needed to complete the process. Slovak authorities have been criticized for the length of this process.

U.S. companies seeking long-stay residency permits for their employees should contact the [Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C.](#) (<https://www.mzv.sk/web/washington-en>), for further application information and detailed instructions. Most U.S. companies engage the services of an attorney with extensive knowledge and experience with Slovak immigration law to guide them through the application process.

U.S. Entry Requirements for Slovak Citizens

Slovaks may travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). To travel under the VWP, Slovak citizens must have a biometric passport issued by the Slovak Government after January 1, 2008, an electronic travel authorization obtained in advance of the trip through the [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) (<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>), and be staying in the U.S. for 90 days or less for tourism or non-paid business purposes. Visitors seeking to travel to the United States under the VWP can apply directly for travel authorization via this [website](#) (<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>). The ESTA application website is available in many different languages and includes a "help section" that helps guide VWP travelers through the application process. There is no benefit to utilizing private web sites that charge for information about ESTA or to apply for an ESTA on behalf of VWP travelers.

[Embassy of the United States of America Consular section](#) (<https://sk.usembassy.gov/visas/>)

U.S. companies that require the travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process.

Visa applicants should go to the following [link](#) (<https://sk.usembassy.gov/visas/>) for additional information.

Currency

Includes the local currency, other currencies commonly accepted and where, credit or debit cards accepted, access to ATMs that accept U.S. ATM networks (and which networks are readily accessible), and acceptability of travelers' checks.

Slovakia joined the Euro-zone on January 1, 2009. The EUR is therefore the official currency. Other currencies are commonly exchanged in banks and at exchange booths on the street.

Payments can be made with a credit or a debit card that holds the Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus Discover symbol. American Express and Diners Club are not as widely accepted, thus it is recommended to ask in advance when using them.

Each bank affiliate has an ATM, and ATMs are plentiful in the cities. (The "ATM Slovakia" applications for Apple and Android can help you find the nearest ATM.) ATMs offer instructions in Slovak and other languages including English. Check the logos on ATMs to determine which card brands are accepted. Prior to your departure, ask your bank if they have a Slovak partner bank, find out what fees are charged when withdrawing cash abroad.

Bratislava is the home of Europe's first Bitcoin ATM. Another bitcoin ATM is in Košice. Travelers' checks are not accepted.

Telecommunications/Electronics

Includes information on internet accessibility, the cellular phone technology in use, which U.S. cell phone services work in this country, the prevalence of Wi-Fi in hotels, what types of voltage and plugs are used, and other technological information of interest to U.S. businesses.

The Slovak telecommunications system is comparable with other EU countries. Internet access in Slovakia is widespread. According to the Slovak Ministry of Telecommunications, there are approximately 1.2 million customers connected to the Internet with fixed access and approximately 5.1 million with mobile access. Approximately 2.5 million customers have broadband Internet access. Internet access is easily available in all cities and towns. Wi-Fi spots are widely available in hotels and public places, including restaurants and coffee houses in several major cities.

Mobile telecommunication and Internet services are provided in the LTE, GPRS/EDGE, UMTS/HSDPA, F-OFDM and UMTS/FDD standards. There are four mobile service providers in Slovakia: Orange, T mobile, O2 and Swan. More than 94% of the country is covered by mobile telephone service, with the exception of very remote rural areas. Fixed line services are very reliable. There is one primary fixed-line operator, T-Com, and 52 alternative fixed-line operators. The country code for Slovakia is +421. Direct-dial, VoIP and cellular telephone calls can be made easily throughout the country.

Electric voltage is 220 volts, with a frequency of 50 Hz. Slovakia uses the standard continental European "europlug," with 2 round pins and a socket and plug system.

Transportation

Includes how to get to and from the country/economy as well as the different transportation options and their reliability within this country.

Slovakia's transportation system is well organized but some modes of transport are aging. In 2017, commercial air transport was available regularly from Bratislava and Košice, and seasonally from the Žilina, Piešťany and Poprad - Tatry international airports. As of 2017, the country's leading international airport is Bratislava with 1.75 million passengers, 25,700 flights and 26,000 tons of cargo. Slovakia does not have a national carrier. Commercial service operators at Bratislava airport are: Ryanair, Pobeda, Flydubai, Czech Airlines, Wizz Air, Smartwings, Travel Service, Air Cairo, ABS Jets, AirExplore, Air Transport Europe, Elite Jet, Go2Sky, JetAge, Tatra Jet and Georgian Airways. The top three are Ryanair (87% of flights), Wizz Air, and FlyDubai. The new 2018 destinations from Bratislava are Burgas, Malta, Pafos, Solun, Catania and Tbilisi. The summer flight schedule can be viewed [here \(https://www.bts.aero/lety/letovy-poriadok-letu-2018/priletly/\)](https://www.bts.aero/lety/letovy-poriadok-letu-2018/priletly/).

Commercial air transportation in Slovakia is hampered by the close proximity (30 miles) of Bratislava to the Vienna International Airport and the availability of long-haul flights from there. Vienna International Airport can be reached by car, taxi or scheduled bus service that starts at as low as EUR 1 (USD 1.23) per ride.

Travelers should check destinations and timetables carefully, as they change frequently. Travel by train within Slovakia is reliable, although coaches are not generally up to the standards of those in Western Europe.

Bus transport in Slovakia was considered more flexible and geographically more accessible before the November 2014 introduction by the government of free rail transport for Slovaks, available only to: children up to 15 years, students, retirees up to 62 years old, and the elderly of 62+ years. Private Czech companies RegioJet and Leo Express service specific rail routes and compete with Slovakrail in price and in service (WIFI, free refreshments, food delivery to the seat, mobile bar, free newspapers, and 24hour free parking).

Automobile travel is another option, although, due to many narrow two-lane roads, travelers often find that driving times can be longer than expected.

Slovakia imposes a "road user fee" for intercity highways and certain other roads, which applies to both citizens and foreigners. Fees vary by length of validity and vehicle type and weight. E-stickers can be purchased at border crossings, gas stations, and through the internet or mobile applications. Information on highways and stickers can be found [here \(https://www.ndsas.sk/spoplatnenie/elektronicka-dialnicna-znamka\)](https://www.ndsas.sk/spoplatnenie/elektronicka-dialnicna-znamka). Vehicles exceeding 3.5 tons (trucks, buses, etc.) are obliged to pay additional tolls on certain highways and motorways. Please check the following [website \(https://www.ndsas.sk/spoplatnenie/elektronicke-myto\)](https://www.ndsas.sk/spoplatnenie/elektronicke-myto) for fees and a list of roads that require the purchase of an e-sticker. Taxi service is readily available, reliable, safe, and generally inexpensive. Many drivers do not speak English, but some taxi companies have English-speaking dispatchers. Potential difficulties may arise from the confusing system of multiple rates (based on distance, location, use of a highway or a regular road when getting to the destination and how the taxi was called, whether by telephone or at a taxi stand), but taxis are metered. It is advisable to call for a taxi or use HOPIN application rather than hail one on the street, as called taxis are typically less expensive and more reliable. All major cities have public bus and tram services that are convenient and inexpensive.

Language

Includes official and accepted business languages spoken in this country/economy.

Slovak is the official language. Slovaks are usually friendly and open to Americans, and English is increasingly used as a business language, especially in Bratislava. German is also widely spoken as a second language, especially outside of Bratislava. Czech and Russian are widely understood by older Slovaks. Hungarian is spoken by about 10% of the population, mainly in southern Slovakia, but is not widely understood in Bratislava. Many Slovak companies have English speakers among their top managers, but U.S. business representatives should be prepared to sometimes do business through interpreters in order to avoid possible misunderstandings.

Health

Includes health and sanitation standards within the country, as well as any potential health risks that businesspeople should be aware of. Includes any mandatory or highly recommended vaccinations.

There have been no major health risks encountered in Slovakia. Updates may be found [here \(http://www.health.gov.sk/Index.aspx\)](http://www.health.gov.sk/Index.aspx).

There are several private medical clinics in Bratislava with English-speaking doctors on staff. Many private dentists use the most recent technologies and equipment. Medicines are easily available at pharmacies conveniently located throughout larger towns and cities. Some provide 24-hour service. Pharmacies in smaller cities and towns may be closed during the weekend. Prescriptions are always required. If a U.S. traveler's private health insurance does not cover medical services in Slovakia, it is highly recommended that he or she obtain temporary coverage from a well-known international insurance company. Hygienic standards are comparable to those in Western Europe.

Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays

Includes the local time zone, typical hours of business and a list of holidays in the country/economy.

Slovakia is on CET (Central European Time). As in many European countries, the workweek is Monday through Friday (40 working hours), and Saturday and Sunday are days off for most employees.

The following holidays will be observed in Slovakia in 2018:

January 1 (Monday) Slovakia Day; New Year's Day

January 6 (Saturday) Epiphany

March 30	(Friday) Good Friday
April 2	(Monday) Easter Monday
May 1	(Tuesday) Labor Day
May 8	(Tuesday) End of World War II
July 5	(Thursday) St. Cyril & St. Methodius Day
August 29	(Wednesday) Slovak National Uprising Day
September 1	(Saturday) Slovak Constitution Day
September 15	Saturday Day of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows
November 1	(Thursday) All Saints Day
November 17	(Saturday) Day of the Fight for Freedom & Democracy
December 24	(Monday) Christmas Eve
December 25	(Tuesday) Christmas Day
December 26	(Wednesday) St. Stephen's Day

Business travelers to the European Union seeking appointments with officials in the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels, Belgium, should contact the Commercial Service in advance. The Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union can be reached by telephone at +32-2 811-4100 or e-mail at Office.BrusselsEC@trade.gov. A current directory of staff and locations worldwide may be accessed on the [U.S. Commercial Service website \(https://www.export.gov/welcome\)](https://www.export.gov/welcome).

Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings

Includes information on what is required for temporary entry.

There are no difficulties or special requirements for bringing personal items such as software, laptops and other belongings into Slovakia on a temporary basis. See “Temporary Entry” above for information on obtaining temporary import approval for commercial goods.

Web Resources

Includes a list of all travel-related websites.

[U.S. Department of State Travel Information and Resources](#)

[Embassy of Slovakia in the United States](#)

[U.S. Embassy in Slovakia](#)

[Bratislava Stefanik International Airport](#)

[Vienna International Airport](#)

[Slovak Toll Road Network Information](#)

[Slovak National Tourism Portal](#)

[State Department Visa](#)