International Students’ Guide to Slovak Republic

As communication and commerce has become multinational, higher education has also become increasingly international. Each year more than 1.2 million students worldwide pursue higher education outside of their home countries.

Slovak institutions of higher education are responsible for advancement of education, and constant development of scientific and technological standards. One of the means to do so is to open doors to foreign students who will increase the diversity in student body.

This booklet is designed for foreign students, who are interested in possibilities to study in the Slovak Republic. It informs briefly not only about the higher education but also about the history, culture, natural beauties and other aspects of life in the country. It is intended to be a small guide for foreign students including helpful hints and instructions. You will find here information you may need before you decide to consider the possible study in the Slovak Republic, as well as some practical advice for your travel and stay in the Slovak Republic.
I. About the Slovak Republic

Geography

The Slovak Republic is situated in Central Europe, sharing frontiers with Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. Mountains, lowlands, canyons, lakes, cave formations, forests and meadows provide many examples of Slovakia's year-round natural beauty. It is a small country but its terrain varies impressively from lowlands to mountain ranges. Almost a half of the country is taken up by the Carpathian Arc, a range of mountains stretching across the north. The smaller ranges include the Lesser Carpathians, White Carpathians, Malá (Lesser) Fatra, Vel'ká (Greater) Fatra, High and Low Tatras and the Slovenské rudohorie Mountains (Slovak Ore Mountains).

The territory is divided into administrative territorial units - 8 regions and 79 districts.

The Capital is Bratislava (www.bratislava.sk).

Other important university towns:
- Banská Bystrica www.bbb.sk
- Košice www.kosice.sk
- Liptovský Mikuláš www.liptovskymikulas.sk
- Nitra www.nitra.sk
- Prešov www.presov.sk
- Ružomberok www.ruzomberok.sk
- Trnava www.trnava.sk
- Trenčín www.trencin.sk
- Zvolen www.zvolen.sk
- Žilina www.zilina.sk

Brief history

The earliest traces of life in what is now the Slovak Republic date back to the early Stone Age. The first historically recognised nation to settle in Slovakia was that of the Celts (from around 450 B.C. to the birth of Christ), whose culture represented the peak of barbarian civilisation. The remains of Celtic oppidums (elevated, fortified settlements) can be found, for example, in Bratislava, Devín, and on Havránok Hill near Liptovská Mara.

The Celts were forced out by the Germanic tribes of Marcomanni, which also fought with the Roman Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (166-180). Remains of the Limes Romanus – the fortifications on the empire’s northern border – have been preserved in Slovakia (for example at Rusovce, Trenčín, and Iža).

1 Pozdĺžne: časová osa a klúčové slová, v texte vyznačené tučným písmom.
2 A depiction of the ‘Moravany Venus’ on the 2 Crown coin.
3 A depiction of a ‘Biatec’ Celtic coin on the 5 Crown coin.
4 A depiction of an inscription on a cliff in Trenčín from the year 179.
Tribes of Western Slavs arrived on the territory of what is now Slovakia at the end of the 5th and beginning of the 6th centuries, and having beaten the Avars, created a tribal union under the Frankish merchant Samo, known as ‘Samo’s Empire’ (623-658). A united state called Great Moravia (830 – 908) was later established by Duke Mojmír I. His successor, Rastislav, invited the two missionary brothers, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, to Great Moravia, where they established an independent church province, created the first alphabet (Glagol), and translated the Bible into Old Church Slavonic. The most important ruler of Great Moravia was Svätopluk, who battled with the East Frankish Empire. Great Moravia disintegrated after its invasion by Magyar tribes and the successes of the East Frankish Empire. Sites dating back to the time of Great Moravia may be found at Devin, Nitra, and Duchové, amongst others.

The Magyar tribes established a Hungarian state in the Danube area, into which the territory of what is now Slovakia gradually became incorporated. The history of Slovakia was thus intertwined with that of the Hungarian Empire until 1918. The development of the Hungarian Empire was interrupted by the Mongol invasion (1240 – 1242). After the Mongols left, Belo IV invited Saxons to come and live in Hungary, which significantly strengthened urban civilisation. Towns such as Banská Štiavnica, Trnava, Zvolen, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Levoča, Bratislava, etc. were founded.

After the male line of the Árpád dynasty died out in 1301, a struggle for the Hungarian crown began, which was won by Charles Robert of Anjou (1308 – 1342). The Anjou family fought against the oligarchy at home, which was led by the most powerful man of the time, Matúš Čák Trenčiansky. In this way, they supported the development of towns.

The period of humanism and renaissance in the Hungarian Empire is forever linked to the name of its ruler, Matthias Corvinus (1458 – 1490). A university – Academia Istropolitana (1465 – 1491) – was established in Bratislava during his rule. The Jagello dynasty (1440 – 1526) failed to hold the centralised state together, and due to the weakness of King Louis II, the Hungarian Empire was defeated in the battle near Mohács in 1526, thus providing the Turks with a gateway to Central Europe. The Habsburg dynasty assumed the throne. The territory of Slovakia became the administrative and economic centre of the Hungarian Empire, while Bratislava was the coronation site of many Hungarian kings. In 1635, Peter Pazmany established Trnava University (which was relocated to Budapest in 1777). The Jesuits founded Košice University in 1657.

The Hungarian nobility rose up many times against royal power in the Anti-Habsburg Uprisings, which the Peace of Szatmár put an end to in 1711. However, it did not stop unrest amongst the subjects, a fact that was reflected by the level of emigration and banditry. It was at this time that the legend about the most famous of Slovak highwaymen, who stole from the rich to give to the poor, was born – the legend of Juraj Jánošík.

The 18th century saw the development of the manufacturing industry and the modernisation of mining technology. In 1770, the enlightened, absolutist ruler, Maria Theresa, established the

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5 A depiction of a Great Moravian Cross on the 10 Crown coin.
6 A depiction of St. Stephen’s Crown.
7 A depiction of the Academia Istropolitana building on Ventúrska street in Bratislava.
8 A depiction of the highwayman, Juraj Jánošík and his apparel (hat, belt, and axe).
first school of mining in the world – the Banská akadémia in Banská Štiavnica. Nevertheless, serfdom in the Hungarian Empire was only banned by Jozef II in 1785.

Slovak national awareness was rekindled in the 18th and 19th centuries; a Slovak civil society began to form. The most important figures of this period were Anton Bernolák, Ján Kollár, Pavol Jozef Šafárik, Ludovít Štúr, Michal Hodža, and Jozef Miloslav Hurban. The first written form of the Slovak language was codified (1847), as well as the first political programme (1848). The late 19th and early 20th centuries were marked by the struggle against tendencies towards Hungarian nationalism, which ended with the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic.

With the end of the World War I and the Austro-Hungarian Empire came the birth of Czechoslovakia, founded by Tomáš Masaryk, the country’s first President, aided by Milan Rastislav Štefánik, and an age of prosperity that lasted until 1938 and the advent of the Nazism.

A dark period followed, in which the country was effectively under German control. During the World War II the Slovak National Uprising in 1944 was the clear sign against the Nazism. In 1948 the Slovaks voted for a democratic government which was aborted when Slovakia was grouped together with its Czech neighbours after the Yalta agreement between the world’s superpowers. Another defining moment took place in 1968 when Alexander Dubček (then the leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) introduced the policy known as ‘socialism with a human face’ that ended with the Prague Spring and the crushing of the reformist movement by the Soviet army. The period of ‘normalisation’ under democratic socialism finally gave way to democratic reforms in November 1989. On January 1, 1993 the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was smoothly divided into two independent Slovak and Czech states.

The Slovak Republic was established in a democratic and constitutional manner. In January 1993 the Slovak Republic joined the United Nations as a full-fledged member. In October 1993 the European Parliament ratified the association agreement between the Slovak Republic and the European Union.

**Political System**

The Slovak Republic was established on January 1, 1993 as one of the successors of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. It is a parliamentary governmental system, and its Constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens without regarding to gender, religion, race, national origin, social status or political conviction.

The National Council of the Slovak Republic is a one-chamber parliament and the main legislative body of the country. The National Council has 150 members elected for 4-year terms in direct elections. The system of elections is proportional representation. Parties are allotted seats in Parliament in accordance with percentage of votes they get in the parliamentary elections.
The President is the Head of State, who is elected for a five-year term by popular vote in two-round election system. The same person can be elected President for a maximum of two consecutive 5-year terms.

The supreme body for exercising executive power is the Government, which consists of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers. The Government is formed on the basis of parliamentary elections. The Prime Minister is appointed and recalled by the President. Upon the advice of the Prime Minister, the President appoints and recalls other members of the Government. The Government is collectively responsible to the Parliament for exercise of governmental powers, which may take a vote of no confidence at any time.

More information is available at the following internet addresses:
- www.government.gov.sk
- www.prezident.sk
- http://slovakia.eunet.sk

Economy

The former Czechoslovakia experienced the highest degree of state control of all the Soviet bloc economies. In the late 1960s the Soviet-backed government revamped the economy to build up heavy industry at the expense of traditional strengths in light and craft-based industries, such as textiles, clothing, glass and ceramics. After the division of the country in 1993, the newly independent Slovak government found these heavy industries to be something of a millstone but they continue to play a central role in the economy. In a few cases, they have benefited from foreign investments. The other major economic problem is a dearth of natural resources.

The agricultural sector – almost all of which is now privately owned – produces wheat and grains, sugar beet, vegetables and livestock. However, its relative economic contribution (five per cent of GDP, eight per cent of the work force) is not substantial.

The bulk of the industrial economy has been transferred to the private sector, including the key areas of machinery industries, chemical industries, textiles, leather, shoes, glass, electronics, nuclear energy and car manufacturing. An estimated 85 per cent of the economy is now in private hands.

Starting in 1998 the Slovak government has focused on macroeconomic stabilization and structural reforms to build a base for long-term prosperity, and on integrating Slovak Republic to European and multilateral organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which the country joined in 2000. Current annual GDP growth is a moderate three per cent.

In October 1993 the Slovak Republic signed an association agreement with the European Union, as the first stage on the road to full membership. Despite its difficulties, the country was able to meet almost all the accession criteria for EU by the end of 2002. Along with nine other countries, including seven others from East and Central Europe, Slovak Republic is expected to join the EU in 2004.
The Slovak Republic maintains its major previous trade links with Poland, Ukraine and Hungary, while important new ones have been established with Germany, France, Austria and the USA.

**Population**

The population of the Slovak Republic is **5,379,455** (May 2001). The ethnic composition of the citizens is **Slovaks** (86%), **Hungarians** (10%), **Czechs** (2%), **Romanies** (1,7%), **Ruthenians and Ukrainians** (0,7%), **Germans** (0,10%), others (0,4%). The population is 77% urban. Slovakia’s western regions are the most densely populated, with the southern and eastern provinces being relatively sparsely settled.

**Religion**

The Slovak Republic is traditionally a religious country; the first bishopric was established in the 9th century in Nitra.

The religious composition according to the last census in 2001 is: **Roman Catholic** (68,9%), **Evangelic Lutheran** (6,9%), **Greek Catholic** (4,1%), **Calvinist** (2,0%), **Orthodox** (0,7%), without denomination (10%).

**Famous Slovaks**

**Art and Culture**

**Brunovský, Albín** (1935 – 1997) → painter, graphic designer, and illustrator

He was one of the most important modern Slovak painters. He employed imaginative, fantastic themes in his creative work. He was an adherent of fantastical realism (the second surrealist wave), based upon perfect drawing and a philosophical/ethical message. Works: Czechoslovak banknotes, paintings on wood at the National Council of the Slovak Republic, and paintings at the UN building in New York.

**Cikker, Ján** (1911 – 1989) → composer and pedagogue

He continued in the tradition of late romanticism, often employing Slovak folk music. In the 1960s, he turned to modernisation and a rational style of composition. He encouraged the development of a Slovak national sentiment and its music, and his art traversed the borders of Slovakia. He became a UNESCO Music Prize Laureate in 1979. Works: The operas *Juro Jánošík* (1950 – 1953), *Beg Bajazid* (1957), and *Mr. Scrooge* (1963), as well as symphonic compositions and the arrangement of songs for folk groups.

**Fleischmann, Arthur** (1896 – 1990) → sculptor

He worked in South Africa, Paris, London, Bali, Australia, and Spain. He was an adherent of kinetism and op-art in sculpture. He created fountains, statues, and the ‘Crystal Crown’ for

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9 From top to bottom: **symbols of parts**, or caricatures or depictions of faces.
Queen Elizabeth II. He also worked with George Lucas on the *Star Wars* sci-fi trilogy. (→ The Arthur Fleischmann Museum, Biela ulica 6, Bratislava).

**Grúberová, Edit**a (1946) → opera singer
She is a leading world artist and an acclaimed soprano in the coloratura style. She graduated from the Bratislava School of Opera. She now sings at the Vienna State Opera in Austria. She primarily plays characters in Italian operas (by Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini and Verdi). She has also sung at the Metropolitan in the USA.

**Popp, Lucia** (1939 – 1993) → opera singer
She was a world-famous opera and concerto soprano. She graduated from the Bratislava School of Opera, emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1963, and worked primarily in Austria and Germany. An event entitled *Hommage à Lucia Popp* is held in Bratislava every year in her honour.

**Sokol, Koloman** (1902 – 2003) → painter and graphic designer
He was one of the most famous Slovak artists in the world, and the founder of modern Slovak graphic art. His paintings involve the intersection of real experience, dreams, fantasy, personal knowledge, desires and belief. He worked in Prague, Mexico, the USA, and Bratislava. He lived in the USA from 1948, and received many state awards. (→ The Koloman Sokol Centre, Pongráczovská kúria, Liptovský Mikuláš).

**Warhol, Andy** (1928 – 1987) → painter, graphic designer, and filmmaker
He was born into a Slovak Ruthenian family that had immigrated to the USA. Warhol was the founder of pop-art and also its most important representative; he was involved in drawing, painting, graphic design, and film. He painted everyday objects and film stars, while his films were about time, boredom, and repetition. (→ The Warhol Family Museum of Modern Art, Medzilaborce).

**Science and Technology**

**Banič, Štefan** (1870 – 1941) → inventor
He lived in the USA from 1907 – 1921. He constructed a prototype parachute in 1913, which was patented at the United States Patent Office. He was also involved in the improvement of mining production and bridge construction. The parachute has, of course, become a vital part of modern aviation.

**Bel, Matej** (1684 – 1749) → polyhistor
He was a polyhistor, a pedagogue, a scientific researcher, and an evangelical priest. He was one of the greatest scientific figures of the 18th century, and was referred to as the *Magnum decus Hungariae* – the Great Ornament of Hungary. He made an important contribution to pietism, was a pioneer in the field of collective research into the Hungarian nation, and carried out comprehensive scientific, historical and geographical research. He was the co-author of a unique account of agriculture in the Hungarian Empire - the works *Hungaria antiquae et novae prodromus* (1723), *Adparatus ad historiam Hungariae* (1735 – 1736) and *Notitia Hungariae novae historico-geographica*. The University of Banská Bystrica bears his name.

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Murgaš, Jozef (1864 – 1929) → priest and electrical engineer
He lived in the USA, where he worked as a priest. He was also involved in electrical engineering, and registered 12 patents in the field of wireless telegraphy. He established different frequencies for the dots and dashes in Morse code, thus accelerating the transmission of messages. He is often referred to as the “Slovak Edison”.

Stodola, Aurel (1859 – 1942) → engineer, professor, and inventor
He graduated in the field of mechanical engineering and worked as a professor at the Federal Polytechnic in Zurich, Switzerland. He achieved his greatest successes in the area of steam turbines; his calculations and constructions formed a basis for this particular field of mechanical engineering. He received the highest engineering awards – the Grashof Medal and the James Watt Gold Medal. He was also a correspondent member to the French Academy of Sciences.

Politics

Benyowsky, Matúš Móric (1746 – 1786) → nobleman and King of Madagascar
Baron Benyowsky began his career in the Seven Years War. He fled to Poland in 1768, where he fought against the Russian Tsar, was captured and was sent into exile in Kamchatka. He managed to escape by boat in 1770. He sailed across the North Pacific and arrived in France in 1772. King Louis XV appointed him the Governor of Madagascar and he was elected the country’s King in 1776. He fought in the American War of Independence in 1779 and 1781, and was a friend of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. Works: *Memoirs and Travels* (1783).

Dubček, Alexander (1921 –1992) → politician
The leading figure in the Prague Spring (1968 – 1969). In the 1960s, he endeavoured towards reforming the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and establishing ‘socialism with a human face’. He faded into the background after the invasion of Warsaw Pact forces in August 1968. During the period of ‘normalisation’ in the 1970s, he was expelled from the party and became a subject of persecution. As a symbol of efforts towards reform, he returned to politics in 1989; he became the Speaker of the Federal Parliament and the leader of the Slovak Social Democratic Party.

Hodža, Milan (1878 – 1944) → politician, diplomat, and statesman
He was involved in the Agrarian Movement, and was a co-founder of the most powerful party in the Czechoslovak Republic (1918 – 1939) – the Czechoslovak Agrarian Party. He was a Member of Parliament, a minister for the unification of laws, agriculture, education, and national edification, and finally the Prime Minister. He immigrated to France in 1939, and then to the USA in 1941. He was active in the foreign resistance movement during the World War II. He created the idea of a federal state in Central Europe, stretching from the Baltic to the Aegean, from Germany to Russia.

Štefánik, Milan Rastislav (1880 – 1919) → politician, soldier, and astronomer
During his studies in Prague, he became acquainted with Tomáš G. Masaryk and Eduard Beneš, with whom he established an anti-Austrian resistance movement abroad for the
creation of an independent Czecho-Slovak state. He worked in France as an astronomer, became a French Air Force officer during the World War I and was one of the founders of the Czechoslovak Republic. He died in a tragic air accident.
II. Higher Education in the Slovak Republic

Institutions of Higher Education

There are public, state, and private institutions of higher education.

Public institutions of higher education are legally established according to the Act on Higher Education. The bodies of the academic autonomy of the institutions are the Academic Senate, the Rector, The Scientific Council and the Disciplinary Commission. They decide on the organization, activities and administration of the institution.

State institutions of higher education are established through the Ministries of the Slovak government.

Private institutions of higher education are established by non-government institutions or founders but they have to get the approval from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic that they can provide education and research.

The public and state institutions of higher education are financed mainly from the state budget. Private institutions of higher education secure its own financial means but they can receive funds from the state budget.

At present, there are 19 public higher education institutions of which nine are more or less traditional universities, three universities of technology, three higher education institutions of art and music, one university of economics, one university of veterinary medicine and one agricultural university. Two military academies, one police academy and medical university are state higher education institutions. In 1999, the first non-state higher education institution specialized in management came into existence.

Public Institutions of Higher Education:

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (www.umb.sk)
Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica (www aku.sk)
Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (www.stuba.sk)
Comenius University in Bratislava (www.uniba.sk)
University of Economics in Bratislava (www.euba.sk)
Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (www.afad.sk)
Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (www.vsmu.sk)
University of Veterinary Medicine in Košice (www.uvm.sk)
Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (www.upjs.sk)
University of Technology in Košice (www.tuke.sk)
University of Constantinus Philosopher in Nitra (www.ukf.sk)
Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (www.uniag.sk)
University of Prešov in Prešov (www.unipo.sk)
Catholic University in Ružomberok (www.ku.sk)
University of Trnava in Trnava (www.truni.sk)
University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (www.ucm.sk)
State Institutions of Higher Education:

Police Academy in Bratislava (http://apz.minv.sk)
Slovak Medical University in Bratislava (www.szu.sk)
General Milan Rastislav Štefánik Air force Academy in Košice (www.vlake.sk)
Military Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš (www.valm.sk)

Private Institutions of Higher Education:

College of Management in Trenčín (www.vsm.sk)

Organisation and structure of studies

Academic year
The academic year begins on 1st September of the current year and ends on 31st August of the next year. Study in one academic year may be divided into two semesters or three trimesters. The specific division of study is determined for every higher education institution in its Statute. The Bachelor study, Master study, Engineer study and Doctoral study start at the beginning of the first semester or the first trimester of the academic year. PhD study may also start at the beginning of the second semester or the second trimester, or the third trimester of the academic year.

Education and degrees
Higher education institutions shall provide higher education within the framework of accredited study programmes. The study programmes shall be carried out at three levels. The study programmes may join the first two levels of higher education into one. The study programme of the first level is the Bachelor study programme. The study programmes of the second level and the study programmes of the first two levels of higher education joined into one whole are: Master study programme, Engineer study programme and Doctoral study programme. The study programme of the third level is the PhD study programme and specialised training in medicine.

The degrees offered are academic degree of "Bachelor" (abbr. "Bc.") in Bachelors’ programmes, academic degree of “Magister“ (abbr. Mgr.) in Masters’s programmes, in the fields of art the academic degree of “Magister of Art“ (abbr. Mgr. art.), academic degree of “Engineer“ (abbr. Ing.) in technical, agricultural and economic fields of engineer’s programmes, and in the fields of Architecture and Town-Planning the academic degree of “Engineer Architect“ (abbr. Ing. Arch.), academic degree of “Doctor of Medicine“ (abbr. MUDr.) in Medicine, and the academic degree of “Doctor of Veterinary Medicine“ (abbr. MVDr.) in Veterinary Medicine. Holders of the academic degree of “magister” may take examina rigorosa.
Graduates of the PhD study are awarded the academic degree of "philosophiae doctor" (abbr. "PhD."). Graduates of artistic PhD study programmes are awarded the academic degree of "doctor artis" (abbr. "ArtD."). The PhD students in the field of Catholic Theology are awarded the degree of "licenciát teológie" (abbr. "ThLic.") after completing the first comprehensive part of the PhD study. The graduates of the PhD study are also awarded the degree of "doktor teológie" (abbr. "ThDr.") in these fields.

PhD study may be also organized by the Slovak Academy of Sciences or other institutions of science, education, research, technology or art that is approved by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and upon the proposal or the statement by the Accreditation Commission with the right to provide PhD study in one scientific discipline or field of art at least.

**System of study**
The teaching process includes various forms of instruction such as lectures, seminars, exercises, laboratory work, projects, practical training, consultations, etc.

Organisation of all levels and forms of higher education study is based on a credit system. The credit system of study uses accumulation and transfer of credits. The student's standard load is expressed by the number of sixty credits per academic year, thirty credits per semester and twenty credits per trimester.

The higher education institution shall determine the total number of credits required for due completion of the study in its respective levels.

The credit system follows the rules of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). This system enables a higher mobility of students, the comparison of the content and results of study and warrants an equal procedure within academic recognition abroad.

ECTS has been introduced to Slovak universities already in 1998. Since then, the higher education institutions have gradually started to implement the transfer of credits. In the academic year 2004-2005 all higher education institutions have to implement the credit system on the basis of ECTS and publish the Information package. Some of them have this Information package in electronic version as well.

**Admission**

**General principles**
The general prerequisite for admission to higher education study is a secondary school-leaving certificate and demonstration of skills required for the appropriate study in the higher education institution to be verified, as a rule, through admission examinations.

The entrance examinations are diverse, depending on the field of study. They may be written and oral, or just written (tests). In some fields of study, e.g., arts, the so-called talent examinations are also conducted.

A decision about admission is usually made on the basis of the previous achievements (average marks from the secondary school certificates, sometimes only the final secondary school-leaving certificate, or only marks achieved in the so-called profile subjects) and the results of the entrance examinations. In some faculties, only the results of the entrance examinations are taken into the consideration.
International students
Admission requirements for foreign students are the same as for Slovak nationals. In justified cases the academic senate of faculty may appropriately adapt them upon the proposal given by the dean.
The holders of International Baccalaureate meet general requirements for admission to higher education institutions in Slovakia.
Foreign applicants who do not meet all the requirements for admission may be required to attend preparatory courses, including Slovak language courses. Such courses are offered by the Institute for Language and Academic Preparation of Foreign Students, an independent unit of the Comenius University in Bratislava. Courses of Slovak language are also organized by respective universities.

Every faculty determines its own criteria for admitting of students. The students should ask for information and apply for admission at the faculty of their choice. Information on the Slovak and English study programmes are available on the web pages or at the international offices of the individual faculties.

Tuition
Study at the state and public universities is available free of charge for the residents of the Slovak Republic, Czech Republic and Austria.

Fees for study for international students vary from USD 2,500 to USD 6,500 for one academic year. The exact amount is being determined by the respective school. Information on fees can be obtained from the Foreign students department of individual universities.

Overview of the grants available for foreign students

STIPENDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
- for the entire university or PhD study for international students from selected underdeveloped countries. More detailed information is available at the consular offices abroad and embassies of the Slovak Republic in the respective countries (www.foreign.gov.sk).

STIPENDS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
- for countrymen for the entire university study and PhD study – Slovak minority living in Croatia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina. More detailed information will be provided by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Foreign Relations Department (Tel.: +421-2-692 02 224).

Stipends for students for partial forms of study, Slovak language courses and short-term research stays for PhD students and young researchers based on intergovernmental, interdepartmental agreements or Ad memoire in the field of education with the following countries:
Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, China, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Croatia, India, Israel, Japan, Cuba, Luxembourg, Hungary, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Sweden, Italy, Turkey, Ukraine.
Detailed information and concrete way of nominations for these types of stipends are in responsibility of respective Ministry of Education or Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the named countries.

**Participation of the Slovak Republic in the Mobility Programmes**

Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC) is a nongovernmental organization cooperating with the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic coordinating the community programmes of the European Union, such as Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes.

**SOCRATES II**
Action programme of the European Union in the field of education (2000-2006)

**Socrates/Erasmus designed for the higher education institutions**

The Slovak Republic has been involved into the Socrates programme since the year 1998. Within this programme, the students may take part in mobilities based on bilateral agreements between the partner institutions of higher education for the period from 3 to 12 months. The aim of Socrates/Erasmus is the increase of quality of education and promotion of the European dimension in higher education by means of higher education institutions. Students interested in mobilities within the Socrates/Erasmus can obtain more information at their home university or they may contact their respective National Agency.

A complete list of all higher education institutions participating in the Socrates/Erasmus programme and the list of national agencies can be found at the EU web site [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/higher.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/higher.html)
The list of the Slovak higher education institutions participating in the programme can be found on the web site of the National Agency of the Socrates programme: [www.saaic.sk/socrates](http://www.saaic.sk/socrates)

**Socrates/Comenius 2.2.B - Foreign Language Assistants**

Students studying foreign languages for a teaching profession and wanting to become teachers after finishing their studies have the opportunity to experience this profession at foreign schools (kindergartens, elementary and middle schools, at educational institutions for adults except of the universities). They will improve their language skills, learn new cultures and people.

An assistant may obtain a grant for a stay in length of 3 – 8 months in a country participating in the Socrates programme.

Those who are interested in this program may obtain information and current application forms in the Socrates National Agency in their home country.

Contact:
**SAAIC - Socrates National Agency**
Staré grunty 52, SK-842 44 Bratislava 4
LEONARDO DA VINCI II


Leonardo da Vinci is a grant programme of the European Union to support the international projects in the field of vocational education and training. University students have the opportunity to receive a grant and take a practical training – placement in undertakings in one of the participating countries. The placement has to be an integrated part of the vocational training. The grants are being awarded by the National Agency on the basis of approved projects, elaborated and submitted by the sending institution. More information on the programme may be found at: www.saaic.sk/leonardo

Contact:
SAAIC - Leonardo da Vinci National Agency
Staré grunty 52, SK-842 44 Bratislava 4
Tel.: +421-2-654 412 261, 654 28 911, Fax: +421-2-654 24 483
E-mail: leonardo@saaic.sk, www.saaic.sk/leonardo

CEEPUS (CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXCHANGE PROGRAMME FOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES)

CEEPUS is an acronym for Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies. Currently there are nine member states: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

Requirements for obtaining a scholarship for students:
- Citizenship of one of the CEEPUS membership countries,
- Age up to 35 years,
- Finished 2nd semester.

More information: www.ceepus.org/ceepus

Contact:
CEEPUS National Agency in the Slovak Republic:
SAIA, n. o.
Námestie slobody 23, SK-812 20 Bratislava 1
Tel.: +421-2-5441 1426, 1436, Fax: +421-2-5441 1429
E-mail: saia@saia.sk, www.saia.sk
PROGRAMME ACTION AUSTRIA – SLOVAKIA

Grants for Austrian students for one semester or one year study stays and grants for summer language courses SAS (Studia Academica Slovaca) according the bilateral Programme Action Austria – Slovakia, Cooperation in science and education.
More information www.oead.ac.at

Contact:
SAIA, n. o., AKCIA Rakúsko – Slovensko
Námestie slobody 23, SK-812 20 Bratislava 1
Tel.: +421-2-5441 1426, 1436, Fax: +421-2-5441 1429
E-mail: akcia@saia.sk, www.saia.sk

ÖAD - BAMO
Alserstraße 4/1/15/7
A-1090 Wien
Tel.: +43-1-4277 28 189, Fax: +43-1-4277 28 194
www.oead.ac.at

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP FOR GRADUATE STUDIES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC FOR U.S. CITIZENS

- offers 10 - months research or non degree study at Slovak institutions of higher education.

More information is available at
J. W. Fulbright Commission
Levická 3, SK-821 08 Bratislava 2
Tel.: +421-2-5542 5606, Fax: +421-2-5557 7491
E-mail: office@fulbright.gov.sk, www.fulbright.sk

Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Slovak Republic

In the Slovak Republic, the process of recognition of documents on study obtained abroad involves several institutions:

* Universities,
* District offices (Dept. of Education),
* Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic,
* Ministries, Chambers, etc., when recognizing professional education.

For the purposes of both individuals and institutional bodies to issue recognition, the foreign educational documents are being evaluated by the
Center for Equivalence of Educational Documents (Slovak ENIC/NARIC) of the Institute for Educational Information and Prognosis (thereafter CEED)
Staré grunty 52, SK-842 44 Bratislava 4
Tel./Fax: + 421-2-6542 6521
www.uips.sk
Slovak Language Courses for International Students

A lot of universities organize Slovak language courses for their international students. The students may obtain accurate information on these possibilities from the Foreign Students Department of the respective university.

THE INSTITUTE FOR LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS OF COMENIUS UNIVERSITY

- is the only institution in the country preparing the foreign students for study at all types of universities in the Slovak Republic. It provides the students wanting to pursue their university studies in the Slovak Republic with a training of the Slovak language and some profile subjects.

Contact:
The Institute for Language and Academic Preparation for Foreign Students of Comenius University
Šoltésovej 4, SK-811 08 Bratislava 1
Tel.: + 421-2-5557 7488, Fax: +421-2-5557 7255
E-mail: sr@ujop.uniba.sk, www.uniba.sk/ujop

A foreign student may attend a course in Slovak language at selected private language schools, e.g.:
The Caledonian School: www.caledonianschool.sk, Eurolingua: www.eurolingua.sk

STUDIA ACADEMICA SLOVACA - summer school of Slovak language and culture in Bratislava (AUGUST)

The SAS summer school is the oldest summer language school in the Slovak Republic (since 1965; since 1966 under the name of "Studia Academica Slovaca"). Every year around 150 participants from more than 25 different countries study at this academic institution, taking advantage of its Slovak Studies courses. Those leading the seminars and lectures at SAS are professional teachers and lecturers, experts in teaching Slovak as a foreign language and experienced in teaching both in Slovakia and abroad.

Tuition, Room and Board
All students with a scholarship will receive full-board accommodation during their stay. These students will reside in either double or triple bedrooms.
Information on fees for those students whose costs will not be covered by prior agreement with the appropriate Slovak funding body you can find on www.fphil.uniba.sk/sas

Application Procedure
Deadline: May
Please apply for admission to the course at the Slovak Embassy in your country, where you will receive an application form. Alternatively please contact the SAS administrator's office directly.
Applications should be sent to:

**Studia Academica Slovaca**
Filozofická fakulta UK, Gondova 2, SK-818 01 Bratislava 1
Tel./Fax: +421-2-529 25 463
E-mail: sas@fphil.uniba.sk, www.fphil.uniba.sk/sas

**METHODICAL CENTRE OF MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**

Methodical centre of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica for Slovaks living abroad organizes courses of Slovak language for the teachers of all levels of education and all types of schools with Slovak teaching language.
The courses are also assigned for students at Slovak secondary schools abroad, directors of schools with Slovak teaching language abroad, journalists, cultural workers, Slovak community members, etc.
The persons interested can find the applications for the course in the Slovak countrymen societies in their countries or they can apply directly in the Methodical Centre.

MC UMB for Slovaks living abroad cooperates with all UMB faculties, with pedagogical, scientific, culture and artistic organizations in Banská Bystrica and Slovak Republic and with departments of Slovak language at foreign universities.

Contact:

**Methodical Centre of Matej Bel University**
Tajovského 51, SK-974 01 Banská Bystrica
Tel.: +421-48-446 51 75, Fax: +421-48-415 31 80
E-mail: ibarickova@umb.sk, www.umb.sk

Socrates National Agency in the framework of the Socrates/Erasmus programme organizes **Intensive Language Preparation Course (ILPC)** for Erasmus students coming to Slovak Republic.
The ILPCs, an initiative supported by the European Commission, are intended to enable Erasmus students to function socially and academically in a host country whose language is not widely spoken or taught abroad. The ILPCs take place in the summer before the start of the academic year.
Detailed course information are available from university ERASMUS offices and from the following web sites: www.saaic.sk or europa.eu.int/comm/education/ilpc/index_en.html

**Student Organizations, Student Allowances**

In the Slovak Republic, there are several international student organizations associating students from equal study fields.

**AIESEC** (Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales) is an international association of students from the economic and business oriented fields of study. AIESEC is functioning at the following universities: Economic University in Bratislava (also at its Faculty of Business Economics situated in Košice), Faculty of Management of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovak University of

**IAESTE Slovakia** (The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience) is an international association for exchange of students from technical fields of study for specialized experience, acting at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Universities of Technology in Košice and Zvolen and at the University of Žilina. (www.iaeste.sk, www.iaeste.org).

**BEST** (Board of European Students of Technology) is an international student organization for students from technical universities. In the Slovak Republic, this organization operates at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and at the University of Technology in Košice. (www.best.tuke.sk, www.best.eu.org).

**ELSA** (The European Law Students' Association) is an international organization associating law students and young lawyers. In the Slovak Republic, ELSA is functioning at the Faculties of Law of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and Univeristy of Trnava. (www.elsa.sk).

**SloMSA** (Slovak Medical Students’ Association) is a member of International Medical Students Association (IFMSA). SloMSA is acting at the Medical Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava and Martin and at the Medical Faculty of the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. (www.slomsa.sk).

**IAAS** (International Association of Students in Agriculture and related sciences) is an international association of agricultural students. In the Slovak Republic, the IAAS functions at the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra. (www.iaasworld.org).

**IFSA** (International Forestry Students’ Association) is the world-wide organisation of local and national association of forestry students. In the Slovak Republic, the IFSA functions at the University of Technology in Zvolen (www.ifsa.net).

**The Student Higher Education Council**
The Student Higher Education Council is a supreme representative body of Slovak higher education students (www.srvs.tnuni.sk).

**The Youth Council of Slovakia**
The Youth Council of Slovakia is the basic organisation associated with other children and youth institutions and is recognised as a reference to organizations established to provide various activities for youngsters (www.mladez.sk).
STUDENT ALLOWANCES

Several international cards can be used in the Slovak Republic. These cards enable students to get allowances within travelling, accommodation, restaurants, cinemas, concerts, museums and exhibitions. For students, the most advantageous is the worldwide recognized ISIC (International Student Identity Card) and for the teachers, the worldwide-recognized teachers’ card ITIC (International Teacher Identity Card). Young people under 26 years can use allowances also with the Youth card EURO<26. The cardholders may buy also health insurance.

More information can be found at: www.istc.org and www.euro26.org

The cards can be bought in CKM 2000 TRAVEL (Tel.: +421-2-5273 1024, Fax: +421-2-5273 1025, E-mail: ckm@ckm.sk, Web site: www.ckm.sk).

Science and Research

Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV – Slovenská academy vied) (www.sav.sk) with its seat in Bratislava is an independent scientific institution. Its activities are devoted to the development of science, education, culture and economy. The Academy pursues basic research and takes part in applied research in selected areas.

Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (www.education.gov.sk) Division of science and technology – covers professional and administrative tasks resulting from this scope including tasks resulting from intergovernmental agreements on international scientific-technological cooperation and international programmes of research and development (for example the 6th Framework Programme).

Other
• Centre for Development, Science and Technology SARC (www.sarc.sk)
• Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (www.sltk.stuba.sk)
• Agency for Support of Science and Technology (www.apvt.gov.sk)
III. Coming to the Slovak Republic

Passport and Visa

Foreigners coming to the Slovak Republic for the purpose of study will need permission for the temporary stay. The application must be submitted personally to the respective consulate of the Slovak Republic in the home country, or at the respective police departments after the arrival in the Slovak Republic. The police department will decide about the bestowal or refusal within the period of 90 days.

We recommend the student to contact the international office of the host university prior to the arrival for obtaining recent information about required documents necessary to bring along for the issuing of the temporary stay visa.

Citizens of the European Union have to submit a request for a registration only at the consulate of the Slovak Republic in the home country or after the arrival at the respective police department in the Slovak Republic. The registration should be done within 14 days.

The addresses and contacts for the consulates and embassies of the Slovak Republic and detailed information about the visa requirements for foreigners can be found on the web page of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mzv.sk, www.foreign.gov.sk

At present a new law is being negotiated to enable the foreigners pursuing study up to 3 months to come to the Slovak Republic without visa. For more than 3 months of study the application should be submitted after the arrival to the Slovak Republic.

Passport is needed valid for at least two months after expiry of visa required by all except nationals of the Czech Republic, Germany and Switzerland who can enter with a valid national ID card. For current information on visa requirements check the web page of the Slovak Embassy in your country.

Note: Visitors should have a minimum of £40 ($50) per day spending money; this may be checked by customs.

**Types of visa and validity:**

*Tourist:* 90 days.  *Double-entry:* two stays of up to 30 days each.  *Multiple-entry:* unlimited number of 30-day stays during a three month period.  *Transit:* Three days (plus seven extra days in case of any problems).  Visas must be used within six months of date of issue and are only valid with the visa application form, which should be kept with the passport. Fees are dependent upon bilateral agreements between the Slovak Republic and respective countries and may vary. Certain nationals receive visas free of charge. For study and work in the Slovak Republic contact the Consular section at respective Slovak Embassy.

**Requirements:** (a) Valid passport. (b) Completed application form. (c) One passport-size photo. (d) Passport valid for at least eight months, with one blank page. (e) Fee, payable by cash, cheque or postal order. (f) Self-addressed, stamped envelope (for registered post) for postal applications.

**Working days required:** All visa applications are referred to the Slovak Immigration Headquarters, and local embassies cannot guarantee the time required for processing.

**Temporary residence:** Special application form required.
Arrival

Arriving by Plane

There are several possibilities to fly into the Slovak Republic. You can fly directly to the M. R. Štefánik Airport in Bratislava (www.letiskobratislava.sk, www.skyeurope.sk). The airport is located 30 minutes by bus from the centre of the city. There are some international flights to the airport of Košice town (www.airportkosice.sk), in the eastern part of the Slovak Republic. It is located 6 km from the city centre by bus or a taxi. Many students take the advantage of the Vienna Airport (www.viennaairport.com), with the most international flights. The airport is located only 45 km from Bratislava. There is direct bus connection from Vienna airport to the Main Bus Station Mlynské Nivy in the downtown of Bratislava. The bus commutes from 8.00 to 22.30 and it takes cca 1 hour 20 minutes including crossing the borders. The price of the ticket is cca 10 EUR. When taking a taxi from the airport, look for those with company name listed on the car.

Arriving by Train

The railroad service in the Slovak Republic is comfortable. The capital Bratislava is connected with the railroad network of all neighbouring countries (Austria – Vienna, Hungary – Budapest, Poland – Warsaw, Czech Republic – Prague, Ukraine – Kiev). From the Main Train Station in Bratislava, located 5 minutes from the city centre) you can easily reach all university towns in the Slovak Republic. When taking a taxi from the train station, look for those with company name listed on the car. For foreign students there are international discounts available for all European countries. Information about the train connections can be found at: www.busy.sk, www.slovakrail.sk/zs

Arriving by Bus

If you want to travel to the Slovak Republic, you can take advantage of bus connection from all over the Europe, provided by the company EUROLINES. All buses arrive at the Main Bus Station Mlynské Nivy in Bratislava city centre. Some of the international bus connections continue to other towns in the Slovak Republic (Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Košice, Prešov). When taking a taxi from the bus station, look for those with company name listed on the car. Information about the bus connections you will find at: www.eurolines.sk, www.busy.sk

Arriving by Car

Driving licence and international motor insurance are mandatory. All foreign national driving licenses are recognized. Seat belts are compulsory. The right side traffic regulations are the same as in other European countries. Tolls: For the highways, your automobile has to have a toll sticker. There are different prices for different types of motors. They are available at border crossings, filling stations and post offices.
IV. Living in the Slovak Republic

Climate

The climate is determined by the country's geographical position, since Slovak Republic is situated in the moderate climate band. The climate is 'continental' in character, with warm summers and cold winters. It can often get uncomfortably hot in July and August, with afternoon temperatures sometimes in the mid-30's degrees Celsius (90's degrees Fahrenheit) and uncomfortably cold in January and February, when the temperature will not rise above freezing point, even in the afternoon. The period from May to July is often considered the best season. During late autumn it can sometimes be cold, damp and grey. Always bring rainwear for every season, as rainfall totals everywhere are high. Exposure to wind plays considerable role especially in Bratislava and on the plains in southeast of the country.

Required clothing: Medium weights, heavy topcoat and overshoes for winter; lightweights for summer. Rainwear is advisable throughout the year.

Time

GMT + 2, GMT + 1 from last Sunday in October to last Saturday in March

Language

The Slovak language is the official language and belongs to the West Slavic subgroup of the Indo-European language family, using the Roman script. It differs only slightly from Czech, and fluency in both languages is rather common. Hungarian, Polish, German, Ukrainian, Russian, and Romany also are spoken as minority languages. English and German are the mostly spoken foreign languages.

Some words to know in Slovak:

I don't speak Slovak/I don't understand — Nehovorím po slovensky/nerozumiem.
Do you speak English (French, German)? — Hovoríte po anglicky (francúzsky, nemecky)?
My name is... - Volám sa ....
Yes/No - Áno/Nie
Thank you! - Ďakujem!
I am sorry! - Prepáčte
Where is... - Kde je...
One, two, three, four, five - jeden, dva, tri, štyri, päť
six, seven, eight, nine, ten - šesť, sedem, osem, deväť, desať
twenty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand - dvadsať, päťdesiat, sto, tisíc

- dobré ráno
- dobrý deň
- dobrý večer
- dobrú noc

- dobroj ránu
- dobroj deň
- dobroj večer
- dobrú noc

Good morning - dobré ráno
Good day - dobrý deň
Good evening - dobrý večer
Good night - dobrú noc

- dovidenia
- ahoj, čau
- sanitka
- lekár

- dovidenia
- ahoj, čau
- sanitka
- lekár
Pharmacy - lekáreň
Police - polícia
Exit - východ
Emergency exit - únikový východ
Entrance - vstup
Departure/arrival - odchod/príchod
Open/closed - otvorené/zatvorené
Restaurant - rešturácia
Café - kaviareň
Meals - jedlá
Drinks - nápoje
Price - cena

How much is it? - Koľko to stojí?
I would like the bill, please. - Účet, prosím.
Store - obchod
Grocery - potraviny
Water - voda
Bread - chlieb
Milk - mlieko
Wine - vino
Beer - pivo
Vegetable - zelenina
Fruit - ovocie

Currency and Financial Matters

The currency is the Slovak crown „Slovenská koruna“ (SKK) = 100 halierov. Notes are in denominations of SKK 5000, 1000, 500, 200, 100, 50 and 20. Coins are in denominations of SKK 10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20 and 10 halierov.

Currency exchange: Foreign currency (including travellers cheques) can be exchanged at bureaux de change; main hotels, all banks, and road border crossings, as well as major travel agencies. Check the daily rates on www.nbs.sk.

Credit & debit cards: Major credit cards (American Express, Diners Club, Visa and MasterCard/Eurocard) and debit cards (Maestro, Cirrus, Eurocheque cards and Visa Electron) may be used to withdraw cash from automatic dispensers and for payments in hotels, restaurants, shops and petrol stations. Credit cards can also be used to obtain currency. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Thomas Cook, American Express and Visa travellers cheques are accepted in banks and at bureaux de change. Exchange rate charges are at least one per cent of the nominal cheque value. To avoid additional charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Euros, US Dollars or Pounds Sterling. You can also use the services of Western Union, operating at the bank Tatra Banka in the whole Slovak Republic.

Currency restrictions: The import and export of local and foreign currency is permitted. Amounts above the equivalent of SKK 3,000,000 must be declared.

Duty Free: The following goods may be imported into the Slovak Republic by visitors 18 years of age or older without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco products; 1l of spirits and 2 l of wine; 50g of perfume or 250ml of eau de toilette: these items should not be worth over €80 each.
Note: (a) All items of value, such as cameras, computers etc. must be declared at customs on entry in order to facilitate export clearance on departure. (b) Only half the above quantities are permitted if stay lasts for less than for two days.

**Electrical Appliances and Computers**

For safety and to avoid hauling electric appliances, computers or printers in for repair, it is important to bring either dual voltage equipment or equipment designed for a 220 V, 50-cycle electrical system. For those bringing U.S. standard equipment, a grounded step-down transformer is necessary for computers, monitors and printers. Even with the most expensive transformers, one should always monitor the electrical supply. Most printers will need an adapter but not all adapters are recommended for printers. Outlets are also different. In all cases, it is good to consult your owner's manual or contact your computer and printer manufacturer's technical departments and ask for their recommendations for transformers and surge protectors.

**Clothing**

The way the people dress for work varies according to the type of institution or company they work for - it ranges from casual to formal. When going out for a concert or to the theatre, people dress very formally and it is insulting to wear jeans or carry the backpack. In some of the concert halls or theatres they would not even let the person in. You also may be invited to various receptions and meetings, which require formal clothes.

**Public Holidays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Slovak Republic Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>Epiphany</td>
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<tr>
<td>March-April</td>
<td>Good Friday, Easter Monday, set according the Christian Calendar, check the concrete dates of the respective year after arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>End of World War II</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>St. Cyril and St. Methodius Day</td>
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<td>August 29</td>
<td>Slovak National Uprising Day</td>
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<td>September 1</td>
<td>Slovak Constitution Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>Day of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>All Saints Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>Day of Fight for Democracy and Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 24</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 25</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 26</td>
<td>St. Stephen’s Day</td>
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Medical Care

Food & drink: Water is normally chlorinated and safe for drinking in any place of the country. Wide range of bottled mineral water is available in grocers’ shops and restaurants. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption.

Emergency: dialling the telephone number "155". Ambulances are well staffed and equipped with the life-sustaining apparatus needed to transport patients to the hospital safety. Hospitals provide 24-hours emergency service.

Pharmacy: in Slovak called LEKÁREŇ, they sell domestic and foreign medical products. Certain medicines are obtainable only with a prescription from a physician. In most towns there is at least one pharmacy open 24 hours a day.

Foreign students should obtain a health insurance prior to arrival to the Slovak Republic. There are discounts available based on international student cards (see pg. 20) Supplementary insurance for foreigners in the Slovak Republic is offered by Vzájomná životná poistovňa (insurance company), covering curative and preventative health care, outpatient and hospital care, and dental treatment in serious cases.

Contact:
Vzájomná životná poistovňa
Špitálska 35, SK-811 01 Bratislava 1
Tel./Fax: +421-2-5296 8148, Mobile phone: +421-903-416 938
E-mail: kusy@vzp.sk , www.vzp.sk

Accomodation

Accomodation in the Dormitory
Most institutions of higher education offer housing in dormitories. The standard of these may differ. Usually rooms housing 2-3 students are standard, but rooms for a single student are also available. The rooms are furnished with beds, tables, and wardrobes. Bathrooms are generally shared between two rooms, or between all the rooms on each floor. Each dormitory has its own dining hall or buffet, where meals are available for low prices and generally provided throughout the academic year. Lunch or dinner generally costs around €1. Some halls have their own gymnasiums, swimming pools, fitness centres, etc.
The price of accommodation in a dormitory varies from €15 to €40 per month.
Students who wish to study in the Slovak Republic outside the framework of bilateral agreements or exchange programmes cannot be guaranteed a place in a dormitory of residence, due to the limited capacity of individual dorms.
If the student interested in living in a dormitory, he/she should contact the university at least two months before commencing his/her studies or before the start of the given academic year. Many universities provide information about their dormitories on their websites.
Another Possibilities of Housing
Easiest way (except for staying in a hotel) is to rent a privately owned apartment. In such cases, it is recommended to sign a lease with your future landlord defining precisely the terms and conditions of the stay in the apartment. The apartments should be provided with basic pots, dishes, linens, etc. Most apartments have washing machines, but automatic dryers are not used.

Food and Eating

The food is European with a variety of Slovak and European products and brand names. In the markets there are all kinds of vegetables and fruits with seasonal variation. Some restaurants may be closed or have only limited hours during weekends. Stores and restaurants with extended hours usually have a sign that says: "Non Stop". There is a large number of restaurants ranging from the very expensive ones to inexpensive pubs. Larger cities usually have a variety of both Slovak restaurants and restaurants with a specialized cuisine (Italian, Chinese, Mexican, Japanese, etc.). The beer and wine are good and commonly consumed at both lunch and dinner. Look for the menu of the day. Lunch is the main meal and Slovaks are more accustomed to eat out for lunch than for dinner. There are certain restaurants open just for lunch (jedáleň), others that have special lunch offers which are cheaper than dinner.

Unless the menu says that service is included, tipping is expected. Five to ten percent is a standard tip in any restaurant with table service. The usual custom is for them to tell the customer the total bill and for customer, as he hands over the money, to say how much he is paying with the tip included. In restaurants and bars it is usual to round up the price, the tip is about 10%.


Transportation

Travelling by car
Driver requirements: All foreign national driving licenses are recognized. Visitors riding mopeds must be at least 15 years of age and must hold a driving license even if such a license is not required in their country of residence. Visitors riding motorcycles over 50 ccm must be at least 17 years of age, and visitors driving private cars or lorries at least 18 years of age. International driving permits are recognized. Seat belts are compulsory.

Traffic regulations: The current traffic regulations are the same as in other European countries. The use of mobile phones is forbidden while driving. All accidents must be reported to the police. It is prohibited to drink any amount of alcohol before or while driving. No degree of alcohol in blood is tolerated.

Speed limits: - 4-lane controlled access highway: 130 km/h (80 mph)
- open roads: 90 km/h (55 mph)
- build-up areas: 60 km/h (30 mph)
Tolls: For the highways, your automobile has to have a toll sticker. They are available at border crossings, filling stations and post offices. The sticker must be placed on the right-hand side of windscreen. Any sticker not fixed is not valid.

Breakdown service: Road assistance service can be reached at 124 or 0124. The service operates 24 hours a day.

**Taking the train**

Trains in the Slovak Republic are the safest and most agreeable way to travel in this country, and considering the low cost is generally recommended. The websites [www.slovakrail.sk/zs](http://www.slovakrail.sk/zs) provides the information about the time schedule, prices, whether you have to switch the trains at any points, and how long the journey will take. [www.busy.sk](http://www.busy.sk) provides a travel itinerary combining trains and busses to come with the shortest journey.

Once at the train station, tickets can be purchased under the window reading KVC (Komplexné vybavenie cestujúcich). If applicable, the teller may ask about the type of train: EC – Eurocity train (international), IC – Intercity train, fast train (rýchlik) or slow train (osobný). To assure a seat, there is a possibility to buy a seat reservation (miestenka), since the trains may be crowded especially Friday and Sunday, when university students travel to and from school.

International trains run several times a day from several train stations in the country and the international tickets can be bought at the KVC window or at the international ticket office (medzinárodná pokladňa).

When taking a taxi from the train station, look for those with company name listed on the car.

**Taking the bus**

While the trains are more comfortable, buses are sometimes more direct. The first thing is to check out the web site [www.busy.sk](http://www.busy.sk).

When travelling by bus domestically, the tickets can be bought during the boarding after telling the driver the destination (smer jazdy). Buses connect most of the towns and villages, and they are reliable, satisfactory and inexpensive. There is a possibility to buy reserved seats (miestenka, a must at certain times of the week or by father destinations) for most buses at any main bus station. On crowded routes, drivers may sell tickets to as many people as can be squeezed on, even if it means standing for several hours.

For international bus travel the tickets can be bought at the ticket office or within Eurolines ([www.eurolines.sk](http://www.eurolines.sk)), which provides service to 21 European towns.

When taking a taxi from the bus station, look for those with company name listed on the car.

**Air Travel**

The travelling by air is provided by the Czech airlines (ČSA – [www.csa.cz](http://www.csa.cz)), Sky Europe Airlines ([www.skyeurope.sk](http://www.skyeurope.sk)), Slovak airlines ([www.slovakairlines.sk](http://www.slovakairlines.sk)) is quite satisfactory to many of European Cities. There are airports in Bratislava, Košice and Poprad.

When taking a taxi from the airport, look for those with company name listed on the car.

**Public Transportation**

Public transportation system in cities and towns is exceptional and reliable. A network of streetcars, bus lines and trolley-buses (buses running on overhead electrical wires) covers
most of the town areas. Operating hours are from 5:00 to 23:20 h. After 23:00 there are a few night bus lines. Information on the routes and schedule in Bratislava: www.imhd.sk.

Every town and city is responsible for running its own public transport (mostly by buses, in bigger cities also by trolley-buses and/or trams). Since the whole system of the public transport is undergoing a transition, there exist specifics unique to every public transport provider. However, few common features can still be found to help to get oriented:

- Generally, the bigger a city, the more complicated system it has and vice-versa;
- It is the most spread way of transportation, reliable, but sometimes less comfortable;
- Schedule is found at every stop;
- Tickets are not sold in busses. The tickets can be bought in newsstands, or in special ticket machines on some bus stations. Purchasing a one-use ticket varies by city. Sometimes from a vending machine, sometimes from centrally located booths, sometimes from a newspaper stand, and sometimes from the driver. The flexibility of a ticket for transfer also varies by city and you generally should purchase a reduced ticket (half price) for large luggage.
- There are two ways how you can pay for the transport: either by one-time travelling tickets or 1, 3, 6 or 12 monthly passes (highly recommended unless you have a car);
- Students travel for reduced fare (ask for details, the conditions may vary by city);
- To get a monthly pass, you need a recent photograph of you (cca 3x3,5cm), your ID card and you must fill out an application form – it is always good to consult with the local people and possibly ask somebody to assist you.

Glossary:
bus - autobus
tram - električka
trolleybus - trolejbus
stop - zástavka
schedule - cestovný poriadok
single (one-time) travelling ticket - cestovný lístok
a monthly pass (for one or even more months) - mesačník
an official term for mesačník - predplatný cestovný lístok
another name for mesačník in cities with trams - električenka

Taxi
Taxis are plentiful, although cruising taxis are seldom available. Taxi stands are located throughout the town. Some drivers may try to rip off foreigners by not turning the meter on and then claiming an outrageous total, so make sure it is running before he/she takes off. When taking a taxi, look for those with company name listed on the car. Taxis ordered by phone have cheaper fares.
Communications

The Post Office
At a Slovak post office (Slovenská pošta) you can pay your utility bills, send telegrams, buy lottery tickets, receive payments, make phone calls and buy phone cards, and of course send mail. Often, the simplest thing to do with the outgoing mail (listova priehradka) is to hand it to the person behind the counter. It will be stamped for you in the correct price, and send off for you (the same will happen with a package). For incoming packages and money orders please bring your passport with you.
There are Poste Restante services available.

Telephone
IDD is available. The country code is 421. Outgoing international code is 00. For calls in the Slovak Republic there are two digits for dialling the area code - they are listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory. All numbers in the world can be dialled directly; the area codes for the whole world are listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory. There are public booths, including special ones for international calls. Surcharges can be quite high on long distance calls from hotels. Public phones work either by coins, or by phone cards. You can buy phone cards (telefónna karta) at news-stands, petrol stations or at the post offices.

Mobile phones
Network providers include Eurotel (www.eurotel.sk) and Orange (www.orange.sk).

Telegram and fax
Services are provided by the post offices. Telegram messages can be taken at the local post office or dictated over the telephone with the charge appearing on your telephone bill. Fax machines are available at hotels and local post offices.

International mail is relatively quick: for example a letter from the United States or from Australia takes six to twelve days, within Europe up to one week. You have to put the zip code for your city or town before the name of the town and to write out "Slovak Republic".

Internet
Your access to e-mail either at home or at the university can be installed without any problems, and your account will be set up in a few days. There are also low cost, public Internet cafes in Bratislava and all larger towns.

General Phone Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information (within the city)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information (in another city)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recently changed numbers</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Information</td>
<td>0149 or 0139</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT&amp;T USA-Direct</td>
<td>00421 001 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCI WorldPhone</td>
<td>00421 001 12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Shipping and Packing

Personal belongings may be air-freighted, which is rather expensive, or sea-freighted. Sea-freight cost is low, but will take 6-8 weeks for your goods to arrive. Contact your local post office about requirements and procedures. Customs officials will open, inspect and hold the shipment at the post office nearest your place of stay. When they arrive, you will be notified to claim them. All your shipments will be opened, inspected, and re/secured before you arrive to pick them up.

We recommend that you follow the old traveller’s rule of not bringing more than you can carry. Send everything else ahead. The advantage is a much lower cost to the shipper.

Shopping

Souvenirs include pottery, porcelain, wooden carvings, hand-embroidered clothing and food items. There are a number of excellent shops specialising in glass and crystal, while various associations of regional artists and artisans run their own retail outlets (pay in local currency). Other special purchases include folk ceramics from all regions of the Slovak Republic and woodcarvings from the eastern and central parts of Slovakia (Spišská Belá, Michalovce and Kyjatice).

Shopping hours: Most stores are open Monday through Friday 9.00 – 18.00h, on Saturdays till noon, and on Sundays are closed. However, there is no strict regulation like in Germany. Therefore some stores can be open longer.

In larger cities the supermarkets and hypermarkets are usually open up to 22.00.

Services

There is a variety of service such as dry cleaners, shoe repair shops, beauty salons, hairdressers, barbershops and video stores, but no laundromats! There are private laundries that wash and iron clothing and linens for their clients.

Documents to Bring Along

If you plan to drive a car in Europe, inquire about obtaining an international driver's license. The birth certificate, and/or marriage certificate can facilitate the issuance of a new passport, in the event the old one is stolen, or for issuance of other legal documents.
Culture and Entertainment

The Slovak Republic is a very colourful and interesting place to visit, with numerous fine old towns, original villages, castles and chateaux, spas, caves, mountain resources with well-equipped tourist centres, and lakes and ponds. Those who prefer the spectator's role will find possibilities to attend concerts, plays, musicals, opera and ballet performances, to visit art galleries, museums and various famous cultural, art festivals and sports events.

Theatre, Opera, Balet

The theatre network consists from 24 professional theatres funded from the state budget in Bratislava, Tmava, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Zvolen, Martin, Žilina, Košice, Prešov, Spišská Nová Ves. The most important is Slovenské národné divadlo in Bratislava (www.snd.sk). It comprises drama, opera and ballet sections, each with its permanent professional company, with a central scene shop providing sets for all productions. SND is a repertory company with a season extending from the beginning of September to the end of June. Performances are staged every day except Sunday (opera and ballet) or Monday (drama).

Other important institutions are the Štátne divadlo Košice (www.sdke.box.sk), and Štátna opera a ballet in Banská Bystrica (www.stateopera.sk).

The only theatre offering different types of performances also during the summer break is the theatre Aréna in Bratislava (www.divarena.sk).

Music

Music has long occupied an important and distinguished place in Slovak cultural life. In the first half of the 19th century, a national musical tradition began to develop around Slovakia’s impressive folk heritage. Modern Slovak music has drawn from both classical and folk styles. Well-known works from the 20th century include the compositions of Alexander Moyzes and the operas of Ján Cikker.

Today, music is one of the most significant aspects of Slovak culture. Some of the most renowned orchestras are: The Philharmonic Orchestra of Bratislava (www.filharm.sk) and Košice (www.sfk.sk), The Symphonic Orchestra of Bratislava Broadcast and Slovenský komorný orchester Bohdana Warchala.

The music performances begin usually at 19.00 and the tickets can be bought also an hour before the beginning, though it is recommended to reserve the tickets several days before at the box office of the respective theatre. The tickets may be also reserved on-line at www.ticketportal.sk.

More information about cultural events can be found at www.kultura.sk, www.divadlo.sk.
The most remarkable ensembles performing folk dance and music are Slovenský ľudový umelecký kolektív (SĽUK- www.sluk.sk) and Lúčnica (www.lucnica.sk).

Hudobné centrum (www.hc.sk) provides information on the classical and contemporary music.

There are many clubs with live music of different genres.

*Arts*

Slovak modern art is influenced both by Slovak folklore and world trends and is represented today by numerous artistic associations.

The contemporary art is represented by numerous artists who can exhibit their work in many galleries throughout the Slovak Republic. Actual information on exhibits can be found on web pages of cities and towns.

*Museums and Galleries*

The Slovak Republic has more than 50 museums. The Slovak National Museum (www.snm.sk), located in Bratislava, contains exhibits on Slovak history, archaeology, nature and musicology, and is probably the country’s best-known museum. Other museums include the Slovak National Gallery (www.sng.sk), also in Bratislava; the Slovak National Uprising Museum in Banská Bystrica, Hunting Museum in Antol, Technical Museum in Košice, Slovak mining Museum in Banská Štiavnica etc.


Closing day is Monday if not given otherwise.

*Folk Art*

Folk arts and crafts, which include wood carving, fabric weaving, and glass painting, have a long and popular tradition, especially in rural areas. Examples of folk architecture, such as wooden churches and brightly painted houses, are found throughout the country. Wooden sacral architecture is unique. Wooden churches became a Central European rarity because of their construction and valuable interior (www.geocities.com/woodchurch99). The oldest of the Catholic wooden churches the history of which dates back to 15th century is the church in Hervartovo near Bardejov.

*Folk culture* may be seen in museums (including open-air museums) and folk architecture reservations. The Museum of the Slovak Village in Martin is a museum of Slovak folk architecture in general. An open-air museum dedicated to the Šariš region may be found at Bardejov Spa, while the Orava region is presented at Zuberec, the Kysuce region at Vychylovka in Nová Bystrica, and the Liptov region near Pribylina. If you are more interested in living museums, then you should not miss the villages of Čičmany, Vlkolínsce, Špania dolina, Ždiar, Podbiel, or Sebechleby, which are folk architecture reservations.

Most towns have their own folk festivals, with dancing, local costumes and food. These tend to be in the summer months leading up to the harvest festivals in September.
Cinema

Cinemas can be found in all of the larger towns. The widest range of films can be found at the multiplex cinemas in the Aupark and Polus shopping centres in Bratislava (see www.stercentury.sk and www.palacecinemas.sk). Bratislava also has a 3D cinema (see www.kinoimax.sk). Film clubs are popular and can be found in all university towns.

Most of films have original soundtrack with subtitles. Some films have Slovak dubbing. Over 90% of films come from U.S. production. Some cinemas show also non-commercial and older production.

Radio/TV/Newspapers

There is one national TV/radio network with several channels and also several independent commercial and public TV and radio stations. In areas you can subscribe to cable service for TV, or in many apartment buildings it is already supplied, which offers programs of various European TV stations in German, English, and French. Check the BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies at www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice and www.voa.gov. The Slovak Spectator (www.slovakspectator.sk), an independent English-language newspaper, is published every week, with information on politics, economy, business, daily life, advertisements and cultural events. There are many varieties of local newspapers and journals. You can also buy or subscribe to foreign newspapers and journals.

Religious Services

There are services available in foreign languages all over the country. Please consult your church.

Libraries

There are 12 state scientific libraries, 473 libraries affiliated with universities and institutions of higher education, and 2600 public libraries. The University Library in Bratislava (www.ulib.sk), founded in 1919, contains more than 2 million volumes and is the country’s most important library. The Slovak National Library (1863) (www.smk.sk), located in Martin, includes a collection of materials relating to Slovak culture.

The Most Important Cultural Events in the Slovak Republic:

- **Bratislava Music Festival** – International festival of classical music
- **Bratislava Musical Spring** – International festival of classical music
- **Košice Musical Spring** – International Music Festival
- **Summer festival of culture** – International Festival held in Bratislava including the Chamber Music Series, Series of Fanfare Concerts, J.K.Mertz International Guitar Music Festival, Days of Organ Music, Convergence and fringe events
- **New Slovak Music** - Festival of new pieces by Slovak composers
- **Melos-ethos** – International festival of contemporary music, every two years
- **Východná traditional folk festival** – Festival of Slovak traditional and folk culture
- **Bratislava Jazz Days** – International jazz festival
- **Klikkfest** - International festival of rock, pop and jazz and other genres
- **Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava** - Children books illustrations exhibition, every 2 years.
Divadelná Nitra – International theatre festival
Pohoda (Easy) – international festival of alternative, rock, pop, punk and world music with fringe events (cinema, plastic arts)
Febiofest – International festival of film, television and video
Áčko – International festival of student films

Sport

The Slovak Republic has a great deal on offer for sport lovers. Open-air sporting events are very popular, whether in summer or winter; in fact, everyone will come into their own. We have therefore included some interesting information for all sports enthusiasts. You can find more information on the internet and at tourist information offices, or simply ask your friends.

Winter Sports

Thanks to its mountainous nature, the country offers great opportunities for downhill and cross-country skiing, as well as snowboarding. The mountains enjoy over 80 days of snow per year, which often reaches a level of 200cm in the Low and High Tatra Mountains. In these high mountain regions, there is snow on the ground for 130 days each year. This is one of the reasons why skiing is a national sport. Regular information about ski resorts and the condition of individual slopes and trails may be found on www.ski.sk, www.yeti.sk, and www.holidayinfo.sk.

The success of Slovak ice-hockey players on an international level is proof of the fact that this is one of the most popular sports in the country. Ice-hockey and ice-skating are sports that may be practiced in closed stadiums, as well as outdoors. Figures such as George Gross (a sports journalist), Peter Šťastný (a former player for the national team), Vladimir Dzurilla (a former goalkeeper for the national team), and in fact the entire team that won the Ice-Hockey World Cup for Slovakia at Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2002 – with players such as Miroslav Šatan, Peter Bondra, Žigmund Pálffy, and others – represent the very pinnacle of sporting achievement in their field.

Ondrej Nepela, the 1972 Olympic champion in Sappore, Japan, was a personality without equal in the world of figure skating.

Summer Sports

There is a wide range of facilities for cycling, water sports, horse riding, mountain climbing, and adrenaline sports. Large reservoirs such as Zemplínska šírava, the Oravská Reservoir, Liptovská Mara, Slňava near Piešťany, Ružín na Hornáde, and Domaša na Ondave, along with artificial lakes like the Slnečné jazerá near Senec and Zlaté píesky in Bratislava offer visitors the chance to enjoy water sports. Many Slovak rivers are navigable and canoeing is very popular amongst young people (see www.swim.sk). In this area, the country has been immortalised by the likes of Michal Martíkán, an Olympic champion at Atlanta 1996 and World Champion in 1997, and by Peter and Pavol Hochschorner, who successfully defended their title at the Canoe/Kayak Slalom Racing World Cup in 2002.

Horse riding is becoming more popular. Stables exist in many towns, and information about them can be found on www.horses.sk.
Many people have been enchanted by the beauty of the landscape. **Mountaineering, hill-walking, white water rafting, adrenaline sports, and paragliding** are only some of the ways to spend a weekend in the mountains. Another very popular activity is camping or renting cottages, and **hiking** in the mountains. More information is available at travel agencies, which can be found in every Slovak town. If you are seeking inspiration in this area, please see [www.ast.sk](http://www.ast.sk) or [www.hory.sk](http://www.hory.sk).

**Tennis** has a long tradition and the success of the Slovak women’s team in the 2002 Fed Cup is proof of this. Names like Miloš Mečíř, Daniela Hantuchová, and Karol Kučera, amongst others, also testify to the sport’s popularity in the country. Many towns have tennis clubs, whose courts are also open to the public. In addition, golf is also becoming a common sport. Golf courses set in beautiful surroundings provide an escape for the world’s overworked. Please see [www.tenisclub.sk](http://www.tenisclub.sk), [www.tenis.sk](http://www.tenis.sk), or [www.golf.sk](http://www.golf.sk).

**Indoor Sports**

**Fitness, squash, and aerobics** are offered by sports centres in every corner. These centres are often equipped with saunas, solaria, and masseurs and many also offer body care services, such as cosmetic and pedicure facilities. Sports centres are particularly popular with young people.

The **universities** have their own sports facilities, which are used by sports clubs and students alike. The study departments of every university will provide you with more information. Many Slovak towns have **indoor swimming pools** that provide saunas and massages, as well as swimming, of course.

The Slovak Republic is a country with something to offer everyone when it comes to sport. If you cannot find what you are looking for in this guidebook, try the internet. When you come, your friends will be more than happy to help you; alternatively, visit the tourist information offices that can be found in every large town. For more information, please see [www.sportslovakia.sk](http://www.sportslovakia.sk).

**Hiking**

The Slovak Republic is a hiker’s paradise – its terrain varies considerably. It is criss-crossed with valleys, basins, lowlands, and hills, which means it is a country full of natural beauty – one of the reasons why tourists love it so much. If you are planning to visit the mountainous regions, then you must see the **Tatra Mountains** in the north of the country – a national symbol. The range is divided into three parts – the Western, High, and Belianske Tatra Mountains. See ([www.tatry.net](http://www.tatry.net), [www.tatry.org](http://www.tatry.org), [http://tatry.region.sk](http://tatry.region.sk), [www.vysoke-tatry.sk](http://www.vysoke-tatry.sk) and [www.tanap.sk](http://www.tanap.sk)).

**The High Tatra** range is the highest mountain range; 25 of its peaks reach a height of over 2,500m. Some of the highest and most beautiful peaks in the range are Kriváň (2,494m), Gerlachovský štít (2,655m), Slavkovský štít (2,452m) and Lomnický štít (2,632m). The Tatra National Park contains protected flora and fauna, the beauty of which is enhanced by natural mountain lakes (plesá) that formed during the ice age. The largest of these is Veľké Hincovo.

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11 A map of Slovakia with the Tatra region shaded.
pleso, while Štrbské pleso, Modrý pleso, Zamrznuté pleso and Zelené pleso are amongst the most picturesque. Many waterfalls may also be found in the High Tatra range, of which the most celebrated are the Obrovský and Kmeťov Falls. 350km of marked tourist paths are also available to hikers.

If you are more interested in shorter strolls, we recommend that you visit the Pieniny national park, situated to the east of the High Tatra range. The most popular attraction is a fork in the River Dunajec, where rafting is on offer. For more information, please see www.pieniny.sk.

The Low Tatra range is the second highest mountain range, and lies between the Váh and Hron valleys. The highest peaks there are Ždiarmier (2,043m) and Chopok (2,024m), from which there is a matchless view of the surrounding landscape. More about the Low Tatra range can be found at www.nizketatry.com.

If you love green trees, fragrant grass, clear streams, and country rambles, you cannot afford to miss Slovenský raj – ‘Slovak Paradise’. It is full of beautiful gorges and waterfalls. For more information, please see www.slovenskyraj.sk.

Another natural attraction is Slovenský kras (the Slovak Karst) on the border with Hungary; it is the largest karst region, made up of seven plains. Information about the caves there and the region itself may be found at www.showcaves.com and www.slovenskyraj.sk.

In addition to the mountainous areas cited above, we also recommend a trip to the Little and Great Fatra Mountains, the Štiavnické vrchy, Javorníky, Slovenské Beskýdy, and Vtáčník hills, as well as Muránska planina, with its unique flora and fauna, including wild horses.

If you are staying in Bratislava (www.bratislava.sk) and want to see a little of the countryside, then you could take a trip to the Little Carpathians, or travel along the Little Carpathian Wine Road (www.tourist-channel.sk), or the cycle paths along the Morava and Danube Rivers. Do not forget the thermal spas and museums in the area. Use your stay in Trnava (www.trnava.sk) to visit the Little Carpathians and the Driny cave – the only cave open to the public in western part of the country. Nitra (www.nitra.sk), in addition to its historic treasures, also offers the possibility to visit the nearby thermal spas in Diakovce and the popular resort of Piešťany. A stay in Trenčín (www.trencin.sk) provides a golden opportunity for trips to the White Carpathians, as well as the Strážovské vrchy and Považský Inovec hills. If you like spa resorts, you should definitely pay a visit to Trenčianske Teplice. Banská Bystrica (www.bbb.sk) is the starting point for rambles around the Starohorské vrchy hills, the Low Tatra and Great Fatra ranges, the Kremnické vrchy hills, Poľana, and the Veporské vrchy hills. Be sure not to miss the resorts of Donovaly and Králiky. Zvolen (www.zvolen.sk) is surrounded by a stunning landscape – the Kremnické vrchy, Štiavnické vrchy, and Vtáčník hills. The spa towns of Kováčová and Slniač offer relaxation after a long hike. Žilina (www.zilina.sk) is the centre of north-western Slovakia, as well as a starting point for hikes in the Little Fatra Mountains, the Súľovské vrchy hills, the Kysucké vrchoviny heights and the Javorníky hills. One of the most beautiful areas is that of the Súľovské vrchy hills, which are made up of bizarre rock formations such as Skalné mesto, Súľovská tiesňava,
and Gotická brána. Again, the spa resort of Rajecké Teplice provides a chance to unwind after your walks. Ružomberok (www.ružomberok.sk) is situated in the foothills of the Great Fatra and Low Tatra ranges, and the Chočské vrchy hills. The mineral springs of Kúpeľné Lúčky and Korytnica provide refreshment to everyone. Prešov (www.presov.sk) is the centre of the Šariš region and a starting point for trips to the nearby areas of Sigord, Haniska, and Čemjata, as well as the Slanské vrchy hills, the Ondavské vrchoviny heights, and the Domaša reservoir. Be sure not to overlook Dubník with its opal mines – a real rarity. Košice (www.kosice.sk) is the largest city in eastern Slovakia. Herlany lies not far from Košice, where a unique cold geyser and mineral springs may be found. Excursions to the surrounding countryside are not complete without seeing the Zemplínska šírava region, while wine lovers should certainly pay a visit to the wine cellars of the Tokaj region, such as those in Malá Trňa.

There are many karst regions in the Slovak Republic, of which the largest is Slovenský kras; the Low Tatra Mountains, Slovenský raj, the Belianske Tatra Mountains, the Great Fatra Mountains, and the Little Carpathians are also well worth seeing. 565 caves are currently registered, including ten stalactitic caves, two ice caves, and 1 aragonite cave that are open to the public. These are: the Demänovská Cave of Liberty and the Demänovská ice cave, the Bystrianska and Važecká caves in the Low Tatra Mountains, the Domicia, Jasovská, and Gombasecká caves in Slovenský kras, the Driny cave in the Little Carpathians, the Belianska cave in the Belianske Tatra Mountains, the Dobšinská ice cave in Slovenský raj, in Slovenský kras, the Harmanecká cave in the Great Fatra Mountains, and the Ochtinská Aragonite Cave in the Slovenské rudohorie area. For more information, please see www.skonline.sk or www.slovenskýraj.sk.

Spa treatment has a long history, thanks to the country’s large number of mineral springs. You can find out more about spa treatments on the following websites: www.skonline.sk, www.spa-piestany.sk, www.tatry.kupelesp.sk, www.pages.sk.

The country’s historic and architecturally precious buildings are also great tourist attractions. The first castles were built in the 10th century at strategically important locations. In the period of humanism and renaissance, the nobles began to move into fortified mansions. Find out more at http://castles.sk, www.skonline.sk, www.zamky.sk. Some of the most beautiful castles in western Slovakia include Bratislava, Devín, Čerwený kameň, Bojnice, Nitra, Trenčín, and Beckov Castles.

In central Slovakia, you can find castles in Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Kremnica, and Zvolen; in the north, there is Budatín Castle in Žilina, as well as Strečno and Krásna Hôrka, while one of the grandest in the area is Orava Castle. Eastern Slovakia contains the largest castle complex in Central Europe – Spiš Castle. You can also visit the castles of Kieżmarok and Stará Ľubovňa, and the ruins of Šariš and Kapušany Castles.

Many mansions were constructed on the sites of former castles. Most mansions in Slovakia have a renaissance character. The most splendid of these include the Antol, Topoľčiansky, Oponický, and Bytčiansky mansions, the chateaux at Strážky and Markušovce, and the mansions of Fričovce, Betliar, and Humenné. Many castles and mansions have Slovak
There are also many precious religious buildings. These include the Gothic Church of St. Egidius in Bardejov, St Elizabeth’s Cathedral in Košice (the most beautiful Gothic building in Slovakia), the highest Gothic altar in the world (18.6m high and 6m wide) in St. George’s Church in Levoča, which is the work of Master Pavol of Levoča, and the Gothic Cathedral of St. Martin in Bratislava, which was long the coronation site of Hungarian monarchs. The renaissance bell towers of Spiš and the wooden churches of eastern Slovakia, with their magnificent decoration, are the pride of the Slovak people. Detailed information may be found at www.geocities.com/woodchurch99/.

Slovak UNESCO Natural and Cultural Heritage
Objects included in the UNESCO list of the world cultural and natural heritage:

- Town of Banská Štiavnica and technical monuments in its surroundings;
- Village of Vlkolínce, historical reservation of folk architecture;
- Spišský Castle, the most extensive stronghold system in Central Europe, and monuments in its surroundings;
- Town of Bardejov;
- Slovak Karst - the greatest karst region in Central Europe;
- Dobšinska ľadová jaskyňa (Ice cave).
Contacts:

**Embassies** – the contacts of the consulates and embassies of the Slovak Republic abroad can be found at the home page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic: www.mzv.sk, www.foreign.gov.sk

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- Faculty of Economics
- Faculty of Finance
- Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations
- Faculty of Law
- Philological Faculty

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- Faculty of Dramatic Arts

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Faculty of Natural Sciences
Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics
Faculty of Physical Education and Sports
Faculty of Education
Evangelical Theological Faculty
Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology of Cyril and Methodius
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"Education is the best means - probably the only means - by which nations can cultivate a degree of objectivity about each other behavior and intentions... Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations."

Senator J. William Fulbright

The J. W. Fulbright Commission for Educational Exchange in the Slovak Republic was established on September 24, 1994 under a bilateral agreement between the United States of America and the Slovak Republic.

The program operates on the principle of reciprocal exchange of participants, to increase cooperation and mutual understanding. Individuals are selected on the basis of academic and professional qualifications, as well on their willingness and ability to share ideas and experiences. The Fulbright Commission administers following programs:

- **Fulbright Scholarship for Graduate Studies** offers one-year non-degree fellowship for Slovak and U.S. graduate students for studies at U.S. and Slovak universities respectively.
- **Fulbright Awards for Research and Lecturing** offers Slovak and U.S. scholars and university teachers to conduct research or lecture in the U.S. and in the Slovak Republic respectively for a period of three to ten months.
- **Fulbright High School Teacher Exchange Program** involves one-to-one exchanges between Slovak and U.S. secondary schools.
- **Fulbright Summer Institutes** – short-term academic programs on American Studies.
- **Fulbright Senior Specialist Program** – bring U.S. specialists in all disciplines to Slovak universities for short term lecturing or research.

The Commission is the leader in the Slovak Republic in providing comprehensive, reliable and qualified information about studies in the U.S.A. through its Educational Advising Center. Attached to the Fulbright Commission it provides information on studying in the U.S. Educational materials, both printed and electronic, can guide anybody who is interested in studying at secondary schools, universities or colleges, who is going to take necessary entrance tests or who would like more about special academic programs or financial aid. The center prepares seminars for university international departments and its representatives visit Slovak universities.

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**Fulbright Commission**
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SAAIC - SLOVAK ACADEMIC ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

SAAIC is a voluntary association of physical persons and legal entities, whose objective is to support and coordinate international cooperation of Slovak universities, especially with the countries of the European Union within the framework of the educational and other programmes. The Association is working as an information and publicity centre assembling and distributing information for the universities concerning the possibilities of participating in educational and research activities through international programmes.

SAAIC has been established in 1992 and the main purpose of the Association is to:

- Build information system about the accomplished programmes and about the other international activities;
- Provide information, consulting, and advisory services about international educational programmes;
- Organize national and international seminars and conferences;
- Publish information materials and promote Slovak education abroad;

The TEMPUS programme was the first activity administrated by the Association from 1992 to 2000. National TEMPUS Office within SAAIC provided all information for universities in the Slovak Republic in order to prepare the projects, consulted and monitored them. In the years 1996 – 1998 the Association administrated “Phare Multi-Country Cooperation in Higher Education” programme. The main objective of this programme was pre-accession activities in the field of higher education of 13 countries from middle and east Europe. SAAIC was the coordinator of this programme.

In years 1998-2000 the Association coordinated “Higher Education-Industry Cooperation” project (Leonardo da Vinci pilot project). The Association is also participating as partner in the other projects e.g. ESTIA, Guidenet, Telefonberatung, Berufbildungsatlas etc. In addition SAAIC has been involved in the international assessment of Phare project, realized by Slovak Republic in the framework FM 1997-1998.

Since 1996 Association has been managing European Community action programmes like Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci. For each programme there is in SAAIC a national agency created to be responsible for preparation, organization and administration of the programme.

Socrates National Agency administrates all Socrates actions - ERASMUS, COMENIUS, GRUNDTVIG, MINERVA, LINGUA, ARION, EURYDICE, except NARIC.

Leonardo da Vinci National Agency administrates all activities related to mobility projects, pilot projects and other types of projects, as well as National Recourse Centre (Euro guidance centre) and CEDEFOP study visits.

The Association is cooperating with institutions of similar nature in the Slovak Republic, and organizations of similar nature abroad, especially in the countries of the European Union. The Association has a close cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic as a national authority for both programmes.

SAAIC together with SAIA is an associated member of Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), which associated almost all institutions dealing with international education in the field of higher education in Europe (CIMO, DAAD, British Council etc.), in USA (IIE) and Australia (IDP Education).
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SAIA, N. O.
SLOVAK ACADEMIC INFORMATION AGENCY – SERVICE CENTER FOR THE THIRD SECTOR

- is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which, since its establishment in 1990, has been enhancing civil society and assisting in development of education in Slovakia. Currently, it offers its programmes and services through a network of offices in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Košice, Nitra, Prešov and Žilina.

ACADEMIC MOBILITIES
In the area of academic mobilities SAIA
- offers information and advising services to those interested in study at foreign educational institutions;
- organizes open scholarship competitions for foreign study stays;
- administrates CEEPUS, a multilateral programme supporting cooperation of Central European universities;
- administrates an intergovernmental programme "Austria - Slovakia Action, Cooperation in Science and Education";
- coordinates receiving foreign students, holders of Slovak Ministry of Education scholarships, for study stays and courses in the Slovak Republic;
- organizes seminars, workshops and information days focused on international educational programmes;
- mediates language courses abroad;
- issues SAIA Bulletin, a monthly information journal for students, and publications about studying abroad.

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES FOCUSED ON THE THIRD SECTOR
In the area of services and activities focused on the third sector SAIA-SCTS
- administrates database of non-governmental, non-profit organizations in Slovakia and makes it accessible for public;
- provides consulting services and organizes trainings for NGOs;
- organizes conferences and seminars focused on civil society;
- publishes various publications and materials for NGOs;
- collects publications and information materials about the third sector in specialized library;
- creates a space for cooperation of NGOs with state administration, local governments and corporate sector;
- offers various services to and cooperates with various NGO coalitions as Gremium of the Third Sector, Regional Gremia, Donor’s Forum and others;
- gets involved in international programmes and regional cooperation.

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**SRC - SLOVAK RECTORS’ CONFERENCE**

Original title of the organization is „Slovenská rektorská konferencia“. It is a non-governmental association according to Slovak law and also one of the three representative bodies of Higher Education Institutions. Conference is based in the capital Bratislava. It was established in 1993 after the establishment of the Slovak Republic. Before that Slovak rectors were members of a common Czech and Slovak Rectors’ Conference established in 1989.

Every rector or a statutory deputy of a Slovak Higher Education Institution can be a member of the Slovak Rectors’ Conference. Former rectors or statutory deputies can be honorary members that are co-operating within exact themes of higher education policy. At present the Slovak Rectors' Conference has 24 full and 10 honorary members.

The basic aim of the conference is to support co-operation of rectors of the Slovak Higher Education Institutions and their activities within the frame of higher education policy. The Slovak Rectors’ Conference discusses and decides on standpoints on basic issues concerning higher education, legal proposals, funding, establishment or abolishment of a new Higher Education Institution, disseminates new ideas and trends between its members and etc. The Slovak Rectors’ Conference has a very good connection to the Higher Education Council and the Student Higher Education Council of SR and with the Ministry of Education of SR.

The Slovak Rectors' Conference is a member of European University Association residing in Brussels. It participates at EUA’s activities, and establishes contacts and co-operation with National Rectors’ Conferences and other organizations.

For more information about conference browse its internet address.

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