



Slovakia

The country where we live



Where do we live?

My name is Miro.

I live in the heart of Europe.

We can get anywhere in Slovakia within a few hours.

We live in one of the smallest and youngest countries of this continent.

Slovakia lies in the middle of Europe between 16°50' et 22°34' of eastern longitude and 47°44' and 49°37' of northern latitude.



The maximum length of the country from east to west is 428 km and 195 km from north to south. The Slovak Republic covers 49,035 km². It is about the size of Denmark or Croatia, but larger than Holland, Belgium or Switzerland.

Slovakia borders with five countries; it shares the longest border – 679 km with Hungary.



The middle of Slovakia is considered to be the **Hrb** hill, in the northern part of the Poľana mountain range. Its altitude is 1,255m above sea level and it is almost the exact average between the highest and the lowest place of the territory.



The surface of the country is varied and it is characterized by great differences in altitude. The lowest place is the **Bodrog River** (94m above sea level) and the highest place is the top of **Gerlachovský Peak** (2.655m) in the High Tatras.



The area near **St John's Church** in Kremnické Bane, is one of those places that is proud to be called "**the middle of Europe**".



Bratislava – the Danube flows below the castle.

The Danube is the most significant Slovak river; it carries water from 96% of the territory into the Black Sea. Slovakia has a temperate climate. Most of the rivers rise and disappear in the Slovak territory. The longest river is the **Váh** – it is 406km long.



The coldest place in Slovakia is **Lomnický Peak** in the High Tatras with an average temperature of -3.7°C .

The lowlands in the southwest and the southeast of the country occupy 11% of the territory of Slovakia, 2% is covered by high mountains; the rest of the country is rather mountainous. The lowlands are also the driest and warmest areas with an average temperature of 10.4°C .



Our Way

Our nation has lived in the territory of Slovakia for one thousand and five hundred years. I feel good here and I don't want to leave. I guess we are the eightieth generation.



The oldest findings of the settlement in the territory of present day Slovakia are more than 100,000 years old. The most unique evidence of the existing settlement is the stone travertine casting of the brain cavity of Neanderthal man.



Venus from Moravany nad Váhom is 20,000 years old.

According to records, the first farming settlements originated in 5,000 B. C. and the first town with stone walls was established in the 16th century BC. The last five hundred years B. C. is the period of the Celts and at the beginning of the first century A. D., the Roman legions penetrated into Slovak territory.



Devín
The strategic location of the rock situated above the confluence of the Danube and the Morava predetermined the course of its history. Its glory came during the Great-Moravian period, after the Celts and Romans. "Dowina" of Prince Rastislav is mentioned in Fuld records in 864 AD.



Nitra
The statue of Cyril – Constantine – called the Philosopher and his oldest brother St. Methodius in front of the Nitra Castle reminds us of their arrival from the Greek town Thessalonike.



The Slavs started to arrive from the area among the Visla, Bug and Dneper Rivers in the 5th century AD.

- 623 – Establishment of Samo's Empire – the oldest tribal community in the territory of Slovakia
- 828 – Prince Pribina had the first Christian church in Slovakia consecrated in Nitra by Archbishop Adalram from Salzburg
- 833 – Prince Mojmir joined the Kingdom of Great Moravia and the Principality of Nitra, thus forming the Great Moravian Empire was formed.
- 863 – Arrival of the Byzantine Mission of St. Constantine and St. Method
- 1000 – Establishment of the Hungarian Empire
- 1241 – Tartar invasion
- 1467 – Academia Istropolitana – the first humanitarian university, established in Bratislava
- 1515 – beginning of reformation
- 1526 – the Hungarian troops were defeated at the battle of Mohacs – the end of the middle ages in the Slovak history
- 1530 – first Turkish invasions
- 1531 – Bratislava became the seat of the Hungarian chamber
- 1536 – Bratislava became the capital of the Hungarian Empire
- 1563–1830 – 19 monarchs were crowned in Slovakia
- 1683 – the defeat of the Turks near Vienna
- 1762 – the first Mining Academy in the world was established in Banská Štiavnica
- 1780 – beginning of the Slovak national revival
- 1785 – abolition of serfdom
- 1843 – codification of the literary Slovak language
- 1848–1849 – political and armed demonstration of Slovaks for the autonomous status within the Hungarian empire
- 1861 – proclamation of the Memorandum of the Slovak nation – request of Slovak self-administration in Hungary
- 1863 – establishment of Matica slovenská – the Slovak National Foundation
- 1918 – formation of the Czechoslovak state
- 1919 – establishment of University of Comenius in Bratislava
- 1939 – Slovakia proclaimed an independent republic
- 1944 – the Slovak National Uprising against fascism
- 1945 – Czechoslovakia reunited
- 1948 – communist takeover
- 1950 – police troops occupied 56 monasteries, one thousand monks arrested
- 1953 – monetary reform
- 1968 – Alexander Dubček became the leader of the state – military intervention of five Warsaw Pact states
- 1977 – formation of Charter 77 – opposition movement – the independent religious province established by the Pope John Paul II; Slovakia became an independent country from the religious point of view
- 1988 – peaceful “candle demonstration” for religious freedom in Bratislava dispersed by hard intervention of the police
- 1989 – Velvet Revolution – the downfall of communist regime
- 1992 – proclamation of Slovak sovereignty
- 1992 – Constitution of the Slovak Republic
- 1993 – formation of the independent Slovak Republic
- 2000 – accession to the OECD Convention
- 2003 – ratification of NATO accession of the Slovak Republic
- 2003 – ratification of the Convention on EU accession
- 2003 – referendum on the accession of Slovakia into the EU – 92.46% of the participants voted “yes”.



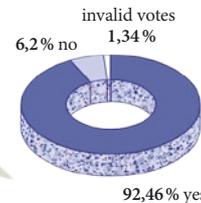
President Rudolf Schuster and Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda at ratification of EU accession in Athens in 2003



...and the head of the parliament Pavol Hrušovský



Revolution flag from 1848



TASR

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We are a part

We have always been on the map of Europe. But it has taken a lot of work truly to belong.

Slovakia's entry to NATO

On the 29th of March 2004 the Slovak Republic, together with a further six states of the former Eastern Block, became a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, whose membership thus expanded to 26 countries. Slovakia will have the same voice in the decision-making of the Alliance as the other members.

Slovakia brings to NATO 26 000 soldiers. Our allies most appreciate our chemical and combat engineering units. The full integration of our armed forces into NATO will be carried out according to the full plan of operational integration over the next 10 to 15 years.



On May 2, 2004, the flags of the seven new member countries were ceremoniously raised at the Alliance's Brussels headquarters. On that same day, on Hviezdoslavovo Square in Bratislava, the playing of the Slovak national anthem, the raising of the Slovak flag and the lighting up of the NATO symbol capped Slovakia's national celebrations of its accession.



of Europe

1. 7. 2003

The National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the Agreement on Accession into the European Union. Under Article 7, Paragraph 5 of the Slovak Constitution, this international agreement takes precedence over the laws of the Slovak Republic.



24. 4. 2004

Maneken Pis, symbol of Brussels, after approximately four centuries standing on his site not far from the main square, was dressed up in folk costume from the Slovak town of Detva. This event capped the Slovak week in Brussels in which Slovakia was introduced as a new member of the European Union.

1. 5. 2004

The Slovak Republic officially became a member of the European Union.



The entry of the countries of central and eastern Europe into the Union is a sign of the peaceful cooperation and integrity of a Europe divided since the Second World War. The vision of the Union is of a "whole and free" Europe, and its expansion eastwards markedly increases its geographical area. We bring to Europe our natural beauties, traditions and knowledge, and our eagerness to help shape our common future.



TASK



Flagbearers of the previous and the newly joined members of the European Union came up the Danube on two ships. Alighting at Bratislava, they strewed soil from all twenty-five countries into the stone tiles of 'Integration Hill'. There, on the banks of the capital city of Slovakia, Europe symbolically became one.



TASK

Slovak Personalities in Europe

Matej Bel (Belius)

1648–1749

Priest, Philosopher, Linguist, Historian, Geographer, "Great Ornament of the Hungarian Lands"

Matej Bel belongs to the most significant personalities of baroque slavinism. He was a polyhistor and in addition to theology, he also studied languages, sciences and medicine. The result of his lifelong study is the work "The Natural History in New Hungary". He received a medal from Pope Clement XII and was appointed correspondent of the London Royal Society, a member of Berlin Akademie der Wissenschaften as well as many scientific societies. He died in Bratislava on 25. 8. 1749.



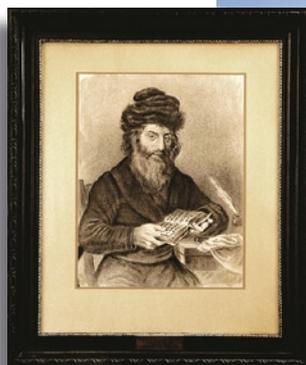
Chatam Sofer

1762–1839

7th Tishri 5523–25th Tishri 5600

Chief Rabbi, author of explanations of The Torah, Bal Din – the highest judge

Chatam Sofer was a chief rabbi in Bratislava for 33 years. He was the head of the Jewish school where he educated more than 120 students. Thank to him, Bratislava's Synagogue, founded in the 13th century became the most important centre of Jewish education in the 19th century. The proof of real world importance of the synagogue itself and of the Slovak Jewish education is the fact that in the 19th century, the Chief Rabbis of Jerusalem, Hungary, Britain, the British Empire, Budapest, Berlin, Frankfurt, Vienna, London, New York and many other cities – all came from Slovakia.



Milan Rastislav Štefánik

1880–1919

Scientist, Politician, General of the French army, Founder of the Czecho-Slovak republic

Štefánik was one of the most significant personalities of Slovak history. He studied astronomy in Prague and after graduating left for the observatory in Meudon near Paris. He took part in many important scientific expeditions. After the beginning of the First World War he joined the air force. Thank to his good contacts, he introduced T. G. Masaryk and E. Beneš to diplomacy and together they tried to form Czechoslovakia. He organized the Czech and Slovak legions abroad and in 1918 was honored General of the air force. In the first government of the newly established state he became the Minister of Armed Forces. He died tragically in a plane crash.



M. R. Štefánik

*Bradlo
The barrow of General Milan Rastislav
Štefánik rises above his native village.
Its creator is Dušan Jurkovič, one
of the best Slovak architects.*



Establishment
of League of
Nations

Štefan Osuský

1889–1973

Diplomat

His involvement in the newly established League of Nations, where he worked as a Chairman of the Control Commission for 14 years, was really important. He is one of a select few diplomats to have his bust and portrait situated in the Palace of Nations in Geneva. He was one of the authors of the Little Entente.



Dr. Ján Papánek

1896–1991

Diplomat and Humanist

He was one of the fourteen men in the coordination committee who formulated the text of the basic document of the Charter of the UN. After the communist takeover in our country, he stayed in the USA, organized aid to the Czechoslovak emigrants, worked in many humanitarian organizations and worked as a professor of the international law at university in New York.

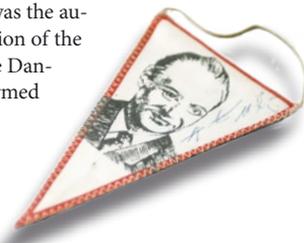


Milan Hodža

1878–1944

*Politician, Journalist, Statesman,
Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak
Government*

He cooperated with Franz Ferdinand and suggested federalization of Austria-Hungary. He was one of the most important politicians of Slovakia; he was a minister of more resorts in many governments and prime minister between 1935 and 1938. In Paris in November 1939 he became a Chairman of the Slovak National Council. He was the author of the idea of Confederation of the Central European States in the Danube Basin, which was to be formed after the defeat over the Nazis.



Alexander Dubček

1921–1992

Politician, Reformer, Symbol of changes of 1968

He participated in the antifascist movement. From January 1968 he was the leader of the communist party. He became a leading personality in the society and a symbol of reforms. His aim was to create “communism with a human face”. The situation changed in August 1968 after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact. Dubček was stripped of all functions and expelled from the party. In 1989 he joined the revolutionary movement and after the dictatorship was overthrown he became Chairman of the Federal Assembly. He died tragically in 1992.

What Slovakia Tastes Like

Everyone likes something different, but when you have visitors from foreign countries, they always want to taste something they cannot try anywhere else.

Food is like the country itself. Warm and fertile lowlands of southern Slovakia have always enabled farming of corn, however, the mountainous country of central and southern Slovakia has been harder to its people. But many favourite and typical Slovak dishes, which are attractive to visitors from around the world, made of potatoes, cabbage, cereals, barley, legumes, mutton, sour milk and brndza come from these areas.



Ceremonial dishes are an important part of the traditions of the nation. They are to ensure wholeness of the family, health, sufficiency of food, and love and are to protect against evil. Typical Slovak Christmas traditions include eating wheat waffles with garlic and honey, and also cabbage soup with dried mushrooms. Drinking hard spirits or plum brandy is also a tradition.



“The most Slovak” meals are considered to be bryndzové halušky, prepared according to regional traditions, potato pancakes – haruľa, lokše, cabbage soup, mutton with garlic, or soups – sour potato soup with mushrooms or legume soup.

Bryndza

It is a traditional Slovak sheep cheese of mild consistency, which can be easily spread. Producers of bryndza in Slovakia use a unique technique of its production within the European Union.



TASR



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Growing vine has also long been a tradition in Slovakia. First records on growing vine were mentioned at the beginning of our era and are connected with the name Marcus Aurelius. The best areas for vine growing are the southeastern slopes of the Small Carpathians. In 1767 empress Mary Therese chose račianska frankovka as a red wine suitable for the royal court. The famous Tokay region stretches into the eastern part of Slovakia from Hungary.



Chorvátsky Grob is a village where Croatian refugees fleeing the Turks settled in the 16th century. Today, the village is famous for baked goose, which is served with potato pancakes.



Liquor from juniper berries (*Juniperus communis* L), a spirit similar to dry gin, with its distinctive taste and original formula is called borovička. In some regions it can be served with pickled root of gentian (*gentium*).

Bryndzové halušky

1 kg potatoes
400 g flour
300 g bryndza
100 g smoked bacon
salt

Peel potatoes, wash and shred them, add salt. Add flour to achieve the right consistency. Moisten the chopping board, put the part of the dough on it, use a knife to drop a little bit of the dough into the boiling salty water. When halušky are done they will float to the top of the water. Pick them out, add bryndza and put fried bacon bits on top.



Haruľa – thick potato pancake

Haruľa is a simple and favourite meal. It is a fried pancake made from raw potatoes, eggs, flour, salt, pepper, marjoram and garlic. People in some areas add cracklings, finely chopped bacon or boiled liver.

Potato pancakes

potatoes, flour, salt

Peel potatoes, boil them in their jackets. When still warm, mash or shred them. Add flour to achieve the right consistency. Flour the chopping board, use a roller to make very thin round pancakes. Bake them on a dry hotplate. When ready, spread goose grease on top.



How We Moved the World

Not only big nations can move evolution forward, among those who were the first were many people from our country.



Eugen Andrew Cernan is until the present day the last man to have walked on the Moon. He is a descendant of the Kysuce family from northern Slovakia. Craters, mountain ranges and the seas on the Moon bear names of many important personalities of the world and pioneers of science. Five of them – Segner, Hell, Zach, Chladny and Petzwal represent Slovakia.

Movement of many nations through our country, integration of the nation into the big regions and also great economic and political emigration connected Slovakia with the world by strong ties of kinship.

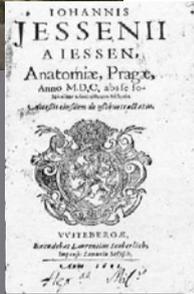
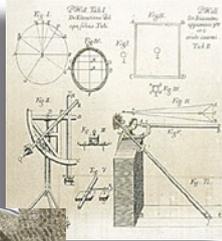




Johan Jessenius *J. Johan Jessenius*

(1566–1621)

He was a significant doctor, surgeon and a versatile scholar of his time. He worked in many places in Europe and executed the first public and commented autopsy. He joined the anti-habsburg movement and was beheaded afterwards.



P. Maximilian

Maximilián Hell

(1720–1792)

He was the first to calculate the distance between the Earth and the Sun.



Mikuláš Bakalár-Štetina

(1450–1520)

In 1504, while working as a Slovak printer in Pilsen, he printed a leaflet called "Book on the New Lands", in which he was the first to inform others about America.



Adam František Kollár

(1718–1783)

His contemporaries called him "Slovak Socrates". He was a supporter of enlightenment theories and participated in school system reforms. He became a director of the imperial court library and a court counselor of Marie Therese, the Empress of Austria-Hungary who raised his status to that of an aristocrat.

*A. F. Kollár
Director*

Wolfgang v. Kempelen

Wolfgang Kempelen

(1734–1804)

He was a financial officer of high social status and was a brilliant constructor: Kempelen constructed the first chess machine, speech machine, and writing machine for the blind; he improved the plough and loom, built his own pontoon bridge over the river Danube... He was a theater author and wrote a basic work on the physiology of the human voice "Mechanism of human speech".

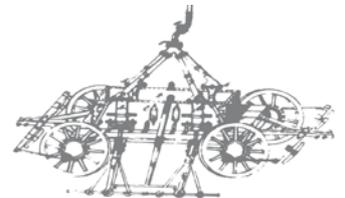
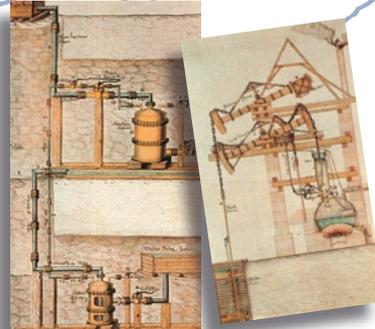


Jozef Karol Hell

Jozef Karol Hell

(1713–1789)

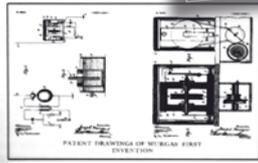
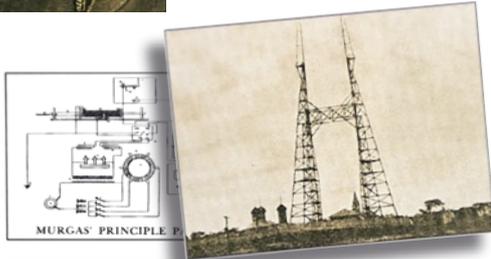
He constructed and was the first to use the water pillar and water pump machine in a mine. The principle is still used for oil pumping. He is also the inventor of the extinguishing carriage.





Jozef Murgaš (1864–1929)

He was a talented painter, but at the age of thirty-two he immigrated as a priest to the Slovak mining colony in Pennsylvania. Besides his work he persistently worked on his experiments. In addition to twelve other patents, he connected the world with the wireless telegraphy apparatus.



Jozef Murgaš
9. x 1899

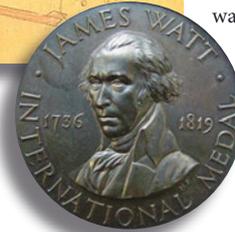
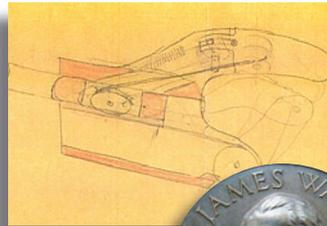
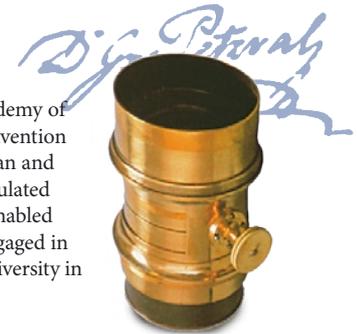


Ján Andrej Segner (1704–1777)

Commemorative plaque on the family house in Bratislava (Michalská 7) announces: childhood home of physicist J. A. Segner 1704–1777. He published works in astronomy, medicine; he is the author of the Introduction to Natural Science. However, his most essential achievement was his discovery that later became the basis for reaction turbines and rockets – Segner's water wheel. He was a professor of mathematics, physics and chemistry at universities in Jena, Göttingen and Halle.

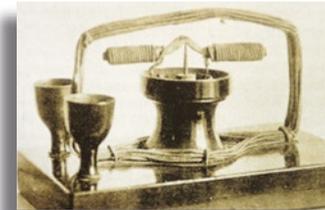
Jozef Maximilián Petzval (1807–1891)

On the 7th of January 1839 in the French Academy of Science, Daguerre officially announced the invention of daugerrotypy. One year later, mathematician and physicist Jozef Petzval from Spišská Belá calculated high-quality light portrait lens and thereby enabled real progress in photography. He was also engaged in acoustics and ballistics and lectured at the university in Vienna for thirty-nine years.



Aurel Stodola (1859–1942)

He was the founder of a theory of steam and gas turbines. In addition to honorary doctorates and many honors, he was also awarded James Watt medal from England. He developed the first moving prosthesis of arm, foot and leg. In 1892–1929 he was a professor of technical university in Zurich.



Štefan Anián Jedlík (1800–1895)

Three years before Faraday he discovered the principle of electromagnetic induction; he constructed the first electric motor and the first functional model of an electric locomotive. However, out of dozens of discoveries and inventions, he had only patented the machine for soda water production.

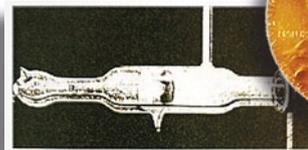


Vojtech Gerstner

(1850–1923)

As a native of Košice, he was the author of the Corinthian canal project and one of the authors of The Panama canal project.

Lenard



Filip Eduard Anton Lenard

(1862–1947)

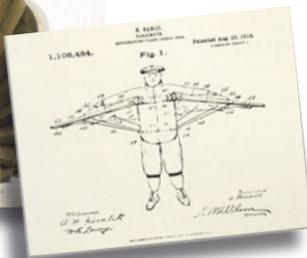
This native of Bratislava started his studies in his hometown and continued in European universities. In Bratislava he started working on gas discharges. Motivated by Prof. Hertz he continued and in 1905 obtained the Nobel Prize for this work. He provided Roentgen with a set of films that enabled him to discover X-rays.

Štefan Banič

(1870–1941)

He demonstrated how his parachute worked by jumping from a skyscraper in Washington. On 25th August 1914 the U.S. Patent Office granted him a patent document. After his return to Slovakia he discovered a significant krasť cave called Driny.

S. Banič



Ján Bahýľ

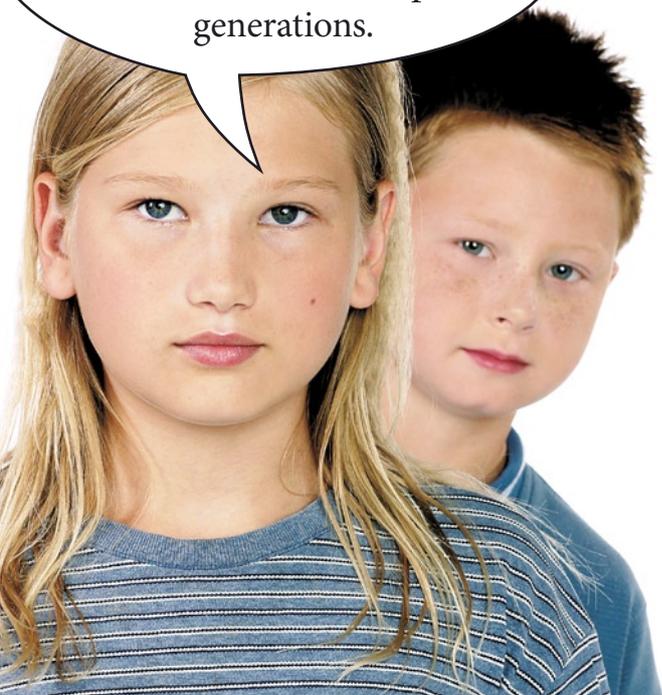
(1856–1916)

He constructed the first helicopter in the world, which he took off in from today's Hodžovo square in Bratislava. He also constructed the first steam tank and invented a contrivance for connecting carriages and a thermal unit for stove.



What you can find here

We inherited one of the most beautiful places in Europe. We live here today, but there are some places in our country that are connected with life of previous generations.



We are a part of the world and our culture is also a part of world heritage. Among five localities inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List there are four preservation areas in the territory of Slovakia.

Bardejov

In 1986 Bardejov was awarded The European Prize – Gold Medal for preservation and restoration of historic sights. Gothic and Renaissance buildings are concentrated on a great central square. In the middle there is a magnificent building of gothic/renaissance building, which has been known as Town Hall since the early 16th century. The Saint Egidius church with three wings and 11 altars is one of the most remarkable buildings of gothic architecture in Slovakia.



Banská Štiavnica

By the end of the 13th century the town became rich thanks to silver and gold mining. During medieval times it was the second largest town in Hungary. During the middle of the 8th century it became the most important world centre for mining technique. Out of the practical mining school founded in 1762 arose the Mining Academy – the first mining university in the world. The preservation area protects 13 national cultural sights and 326 historical monuments.

The Spiš Castle
 On a travertine rock there is one of the most precious castles in Europe of its time – The Spiš Castle. From the beginning of the 12th century the castle protected the important route from the south towards the Baltic sea.

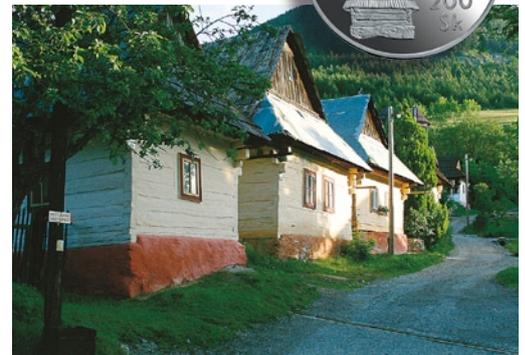


Rose-cut window of the St. Egidius church in Bardejov



Vlkolínec

The village represents the best-preserved urbanistic unit of original folk houses. Most importantly, people are still living in Vlkolínec. The first written mention of the settlement is from 1376. Up to the present time there have been about 45 objects of folk architecture preserved.



Our houses are our reflection. Continuous development of the architecture is characteristic by reconstruction; therefore we can often see influence of more architectural styles that are witnesses of their time.

Archeological findings provide much evidence about settlements, which are 7,000 years old. The oldest stone town on the territory of Slovakia, discovered at Spišský Štvrtok dates back to the 16th century B.C. Many areas contain reminders of Celtic presence as well as Roman settlements, which lasted for 1,500 years.



Cathedral of St. Martin in Bratislava

Castles and sacral objects like the Cathedral of St. Martin in Bratislava, the Cathedral of St. Elizabeth in Košice, and the Saint Egidius church in Bardejov are not the only monuments that represent gothic style; there are also many civic houses.

Romanesque St Martin's Cathedral in Spišská Kapitula



Roman inscription on the rock in Trenčín

The oldest preserved building in Slovakia is the early Romanesque church of St. George in Kostolany pod Tribečom from the 10th century. Rotundas and monumental cathedral buildings represent Romanesque style.



Because of the renaissance of 16th and 17th century there are many bell towers scattered all over the north-eastern Spiš region. There are beautiful town halls in Levoča and Bardejov and many citadels and castles that were able to withstand the Turkish attacks.

The Old Town Hall building in Bratislava is the oldest secular building in Slovakia.

Visitors of the eastern part of Slovakia can find **26 precious wooden sacral buildings** from the first half of the 19th century. Many of them hide treasurable iconostasis. The complex was designated a national cultural monument.



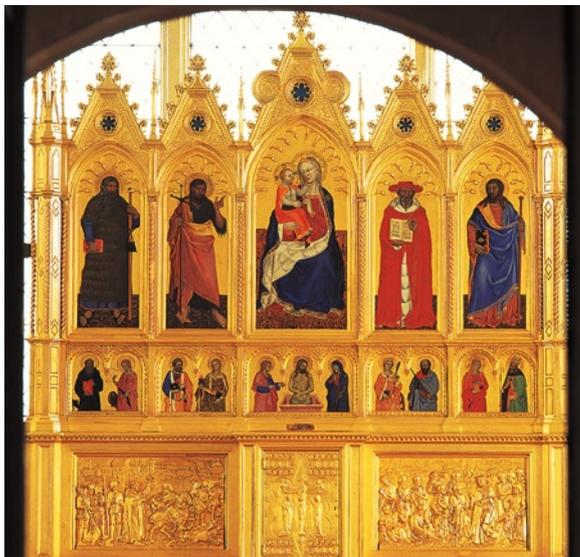
Luxurious aristocratic baroque settlements and monastic complexes are result of master workers from all over Europe.

A chateau in Bernolákovo from 1722 and a **monastery in Jasovce** with a baroque garden are among the most important works of architecture. Most of the historical sights are concentrated in Trnava and Bratislava.



Rococo is a period of time when many palaces were built in Bratislava. At the end of the 18th century there was a period of classicism and the **Primatial Palace**, which is the present seat of the city mayor, was built in this style.

Michalská Tower in Bratislava, which is situated in the street of the same name, “touches” house N° 15, the narrowest building in Europe, with a width of only 125 cm.



Beginnings of modern architecture are connected with the period between the two world wars. Since 1989, Europe has brought trends of present-day architecture to Slovakia.

Building of the National Bank of Slovakia

In the following century the rich aristocracy turned their attention back to history. Romantic castles, chateaus and palaces like Bojnice, Budmerice, Rusovce were built in this time. There is a **treasurable altar** in Bojnice castle and a big zoological garden near the rampart.



Bojnice



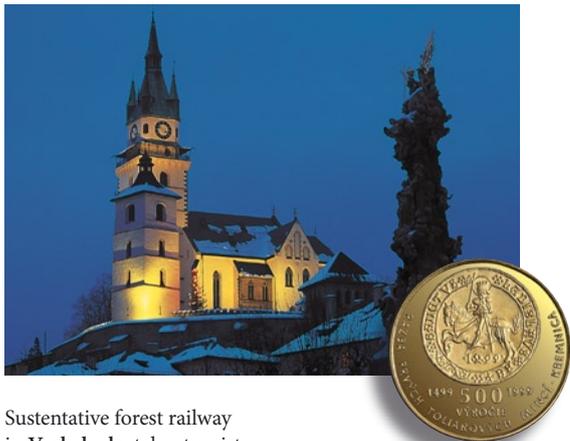
Rusovce



Polyfunctional object on the riverbank of the Danube is one of many projects of the immediate future.

You can find something unusual everywhere you go...

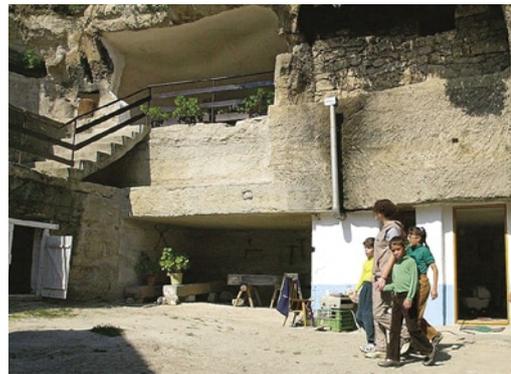
Kremnica is an ancient mining town with the oldest mint in the world. First Kremnica ducats were minted here in 1335; the mint has never stopped its work since then.



Eleven Hungarian monarchs and 8 queens were crowned in **St Martin's Cathedral** in Bratislava from 1563–1830.



You can find 45 dwellings that were not built but hewn out of the volcanic tuff in **Brhlovce**, a village near Levice. The museum of Housing is in one of them.



Sustentative forest railway in **Vychlovka** takes tourists to the heights. The closest similar system is in Southern America.



I am Kristína and this is Anikó. Anikó's nationality is Hungarian, at school she learns in Slovak and also in her mother tongue. We live in the same street and understand each other perfectly.



Who are we?

Preamble of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic:

“We, the Slovak People, Bearing in mind the political and cultural heritage of our predecessors, the experience gained through century of struggle for our national existence, and statehood, mindful of the spiritual bequest of Cyril and Methodius, and the historical legacy of Great Moravia, recognizing the natural right of nations to self-determination, together with members of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic..”

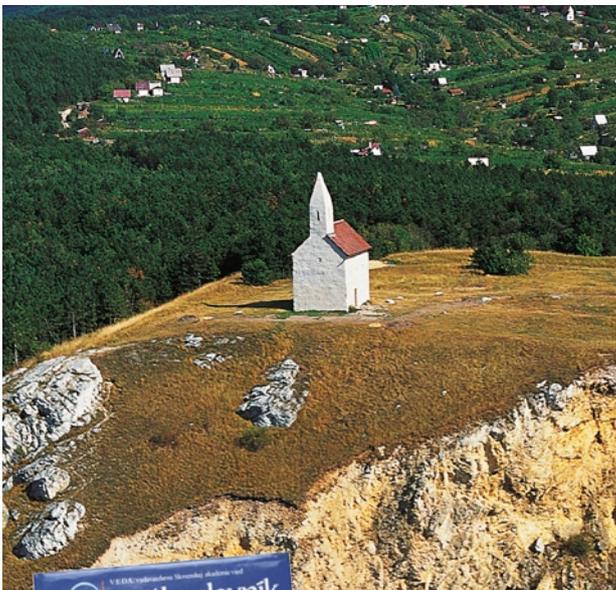


5,430,000 inhabitants live in Slovakia out of which 2,611,306 are men and 2,767,855 are women. The average age of the inhabitants is 36 years. The average length of life for men is 69.5 and 77.6 years for women.

Our country is situated on the crossing point of many roads. There was the Great Moravian Empire; we were a part of multinational Austria-Hungary and a part of Czechoslovakia for 75 years. The presence of national minorities is a natural status of the society.

85.8% of all inhabitants are Slovaks. The rest belongs to one of eleven minorities – Hungarians 9.7%, the Roma 1.7%, the Czechs 0.8%, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Russians, Germans, Poles, Bulgarians, Jewish and Croatians together make 2%.

National minorities of the Slovaks live in the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, the USA, Canada, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Australia...

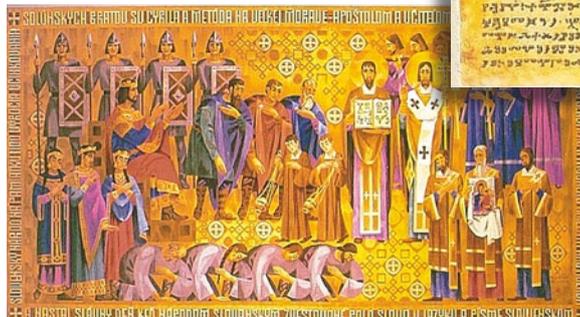


St. Michael's Church in Drážovce



The Slovak language is the official language of the Slovak Republic. One of the first words recorded in the chronicles is “medovina” (mead) – an ancient beverage that is still prepared by fermenting honey and seasoning it with herbs. Slovak differs from many other languages by its usage of letters such as ä, ô, č, š, ž, ď, ť, ň, ĺ, dz, and dž. There are various dialects in particular natural regions.

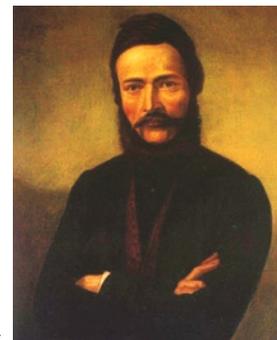
The original name of the Slovaks belonging to the group of the western Slavs was **Sloveni**. The first system of writing was **Glagolic script**, created by Cyril-Constantine called the Philosopher and his brother Method. In 868 the Pope Hadrian II acknowledged the writing as well as translations of the religious texts and allowed usage of Old Slavonic as a language for religious services on the territory of Great Moravia.



Glagolic script

Arrival of Cyril and Method in the territory of Slovakia

The Slovak language has been developing since the 10th century. Anton Bernolák first codified the Slovak language at the end of the 18th century. Its almost final standardization was brought about by Ludovít Štúr, leader of the national revival movement in the mid 19th century.



Ludovít Štúr



In 1999 the National Council of Slovakia adopted a law regarding the usage of the languages of national minorities by defining usage of their mother tongue languages in official communication. In March 1999 Government of the Slovak Republic established a Council of the Government for national minorities and ethnic groups. There are 859 schools and education facilities using the language of national minorities in the Slovak Republic.

Many public associations, four state theatres, nine museums, numerous folkloric groups and regional centres participate in the development of culture and languages of the eleven minority groups. There are 66 Hungarian, 60 Roma, 16 Ukrainian and Ruthenian, 3 Czech, 2 Croatian, 1 Bulgarian, 4 German, 2 Jewish and 1 Russian public associations are registered today. 30 periodicals, which are being issued in the languages of the national minorities, are supported by state grants. Regular programmes of the Slovak Television and Slovak Radio are broadcast in languages of the national minorities.



Traditions of the regions and national minorities stay alive particularly because of folkloric and free-time associations.



Ruthenian and Ukrainian national theatre of Alexander Duchnovič

Performance of the Carpathian-German group in Slovakia



There are 15 **registered churches** in Slovakia. 84.1% of inhabitants of the Slovak Republic profess one of the following religions – Roman-Catholic (68.9%), Evangelists of the Augsburg Confession (6.9%), Greek-Catholic (4.1%), Calvinists (2%), not specified (2%). 13.7% of the inhabitants are without denomination.

Greek-Catholic churches are situated in the east of the country.



Trnava is the centre of the Catholic Church in Slovakia. It is a seat of the archbishop – Slovak metropolitan.

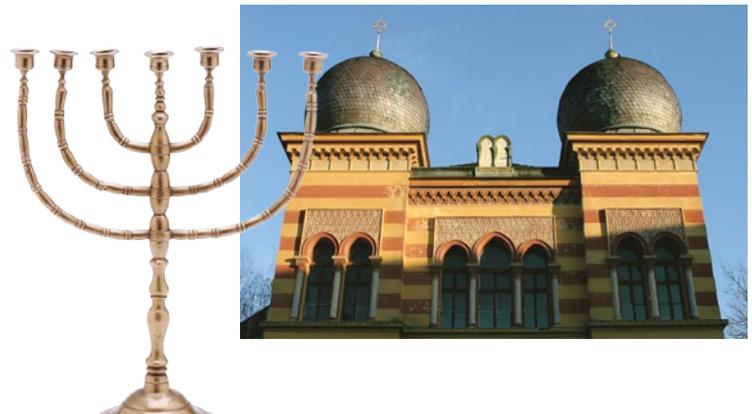
The Roman-Catholic Cathedral of St. Martin in Bratislava

Synagogue in Malacky



Evangelic Lycee in Bratislava

International covenants on human rights and fundamental freedoms that were ratified by the Slovak Republic are higher than law of the Slovak Republic if they provide wider range of the fundamental rights and freedoms.



We work for

My name is Tomáš.
I am of the same age as the Slovak
Republic so I don't remember
what it was like before.

The essential role that emerged from the revolutionary democratic changes in 1989 was to change the old planned economic system into a market economy. Radical transformation of the economy started in January 1991 by price liberalization and joining the world economy after opening the market for foreign investors. The economy of the Slovak Republic stabilized in 1994. Many economic remedies accompanied complicated economic development in the next period of time.



Forests

In 13th century, 75 % of the land was covered by forest. Today, it is more than 40 % of the whole area of the Slovak Republic. Along with Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and Austria we are one of the most woody countries of central Europe. Deciduous forests cover 58.3 % – mainly beech and oak trees and coniferous forests 41.7 % predominately spruce, less pine and fir. Most harvested timber is sold in the domestic market.

our future

Agriculture

The Slovak Republic is self-sufficient with almost all main agricultural products.



Most of the cultivated land is located in the fertile southern flatlands, in the Danube Lowlands in the west, and the East-Slovakian Lowlands in the east of the country. The greatest percentage of animal breeding includes pigs; sheep and cows. Contribution of agriculture to GDP is relatively low.

Providing good quality food for people, stabilization of rural settlement and employment are really important. Protection of the countryside is of the same importance, too.



Danube Salmon – Hucho Hucho

Water Economy

Water economy of the Slovak Republic includes protection against floods, drinking water supply, sewage system regulation, environmental protection, as well as protection of the recreation and tourist areas...

It is important to create good conditions for electric power production. Water hydro-electric power plants are situated on dams of the Váh and Danube Rivers.

Industry

Slovak metallurgic companies have taken a leading role concerning the volume of steel (eastern Slovakia) and aluminum (central Slovakia) processing within the Central Europe.

Vienna basin stretches into the territory of eastern Slovakia in the form of Záhorská lowland where oil and gas are fields are situated. Mining was gradually substituted by the change of the deposit into an important gas reservoir, located near the Austrian border. Nearby Bratislava is a centre for gas and petrochemical industry.



Sediment of underground reservoir of natural gas



Car production in Europe

krajina	v tis. kusov	2002	2007*
Česko		431	733
Turecko		328	626
Slovensko		200	491
Polsko		312	488
Maďarsko		138	204
Rumunsko		79	153
Slovinsko		126	115
Ukrajina		43	103
Juhoslávia		12	23
Západná Európa		16 260	17 000
Východná Európa**		2 861	4 441

* odhad, ** vrátane Ruska  Zdroj: HN ČR



Entry of big foreign investors into engineering and electromechanical industry is significant. Automobile production is located in the western part of the country. With the entry of another world automobile producer, Slovakia is becoming one of ten biggest world producers per one inhabitant. This branch is taking a leading position when considering the vision of economic development of the country.



TASR



TASR

Inspection of chemical, biological and nuclear safety is essential for the future.

The government supports research and development of those products and services that are protective towards the environment and searches for possibilities for supporting entrepreneurs both large and small in terms of increasing their investments into "clean" production.



Comenius University in Bratislava

Projects in industrial parks solve difficult situations in some of the regions. Our science is only a small part of scientific life of Europe. From the formation of the independent Slovak republic in 1993 until the end of millenium, Slovak scientists obtained more than 100 patent rights and many world prizes in various fields of science and they lectured at many universities.



TASR

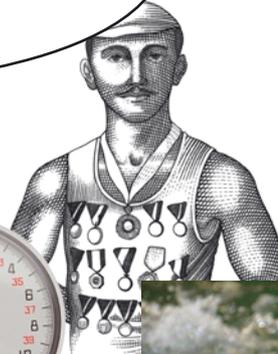
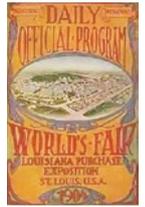


Come on Slovakia!

We root for our
sportsmen from all our hearts.
It is great that such a small country
has so many champions.
We are great!

Sport is a part of our culture. Our success
is older than our state.

During the first modern Olympic Games
in Athens in 1896, athlete **Alojz Sokol**
obtained a bronze medal. The first Olympic
winner from Hungary was **Zoltán Halmaj**
from Záhorie; it was in St. Louis in 1904.
Altogether he obtained eight medals.
Many successful sportsmen followed
him in the same century.

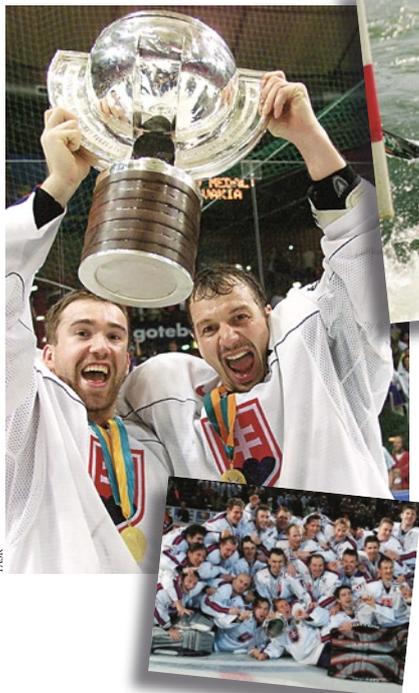


Martina Moravcová is the best swimmer in the history of the European Championship in the short swimming pool with a total of 15 gold, 5 silver and 3 bronze medals. She is 17 times a European record holder and a total winner of a serial of the World Cup in 2001/2002. During the Olympic Games in Sydney she took the second place. She obtained 55 medals during various top international championships from 1993–2003. During the ten years of independent Slovakia she has obtained 60 titles of female champion of Slovakia and has set 195 Slovak records.

Ice hockey is among our favourite sports. Members of the national team obtained silver, golden and bronze medals during the last four championships. Šatan, Pálffy, Bondra and others are among the best players of the NHL. Stan Mikita and Peter Šťastný have entered the NHL Hall of Fame.

Brothers Pavol and Peter Hochschorner's won fifteen world cup championships from 1997–2003 and were total winners of the same competition five times. In the same period of time they won the Championships of the SR in canoe slalom five times. During the Olympic Games in Sydney they obtained gold medals and they are proud to be successful at winning Olympic Games, World Championships, European Championships and serial of the World Cup.

Michal Martikán – wild water slalom racer. He became the youngest C1 winner in history during the Olympic Games in Atlanta. At the age of 16 he became the youngest medallist in the history of the World Championships – two bronze medals in C1 and 3 x C1 during the World Championships in 1995 in Nottingham. At the age of 18 he became the youngest individual world champion ever. He won the World Cup in 2000 and 2001 and was second in 2002. From 1996–2003 he won 12 titles of Slovak champion in C1 and 3 x C1.



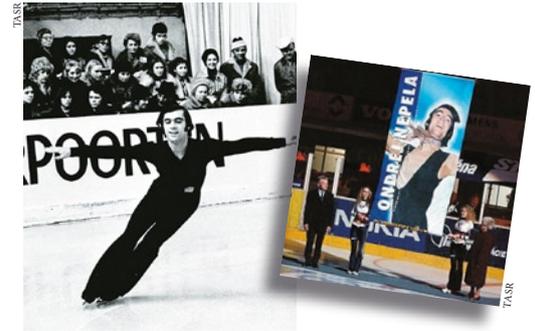
Artificial canal for water sports in Čunovo at Bratislava belongs to the best races of its kind on the continent.



Jozef Gönci obtained a bronze medal in sport shooting at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996. He is a twofold holder of absolute world performance in the discipline of air rifle – 60 shots (600 points out of 600 possible), twofold holder of world survey on the best sport shooter (1998–1999), quadruple total winner of serial of the World Cup (1996, 1998, 1999, 2000). From 1993–2003 he won 20 Champion of the SR titles.



Football is the most popular sport in Slovakia. There are 2,415 football clubs and 263,867 registered players in our country. That is every twentieth person in the country. Almost every village has its own football field.



Our paralympionics belong to the best ones. They brought 13 medals from Summer Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000 and 9 medals from Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City in 2002.

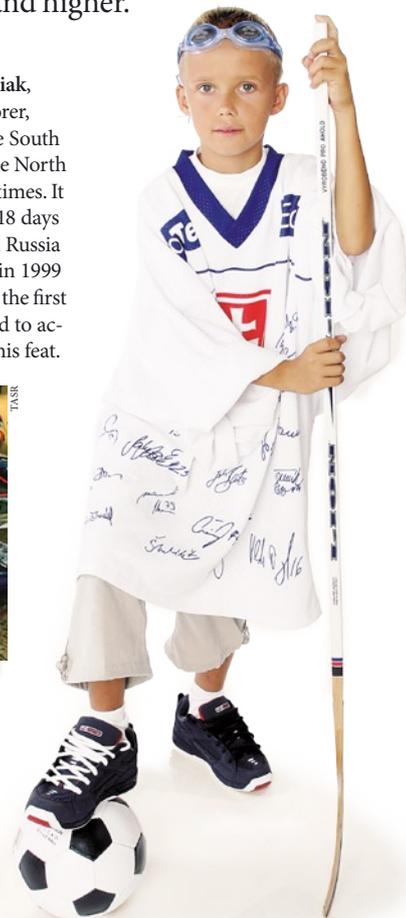
Figure skater Ondrej Nepela was announced to be the best Slovak sportsman of the century. He is a winner of OWG of 1972, he was the fourth in 1968, triplicate world champion (1971, 1972, 1973), he became a five time European champion (1969–1973), and a holder of silver and bronze medals from World and European Championships.

Top level sport performances can have different forms. We are trying to go higher and higher.

There have been seven Slovak mountain climbers on Mount Everest so far. The first were **Zoltán Demján** and **Jozef Psootka** in 1984.



Peter Valušiak, polar explorer, reached the South Pole and the North Pole three times. It took him 118 days to get from Russia to Canada in 1999 and he was the first in the world to accomplish this feat.



A state for everyone

When I am able to vote, we will have already been in the European Union for several years. I still don't understand these things, but I know that it is always important to express your own opinion.

The Slovak Republic is a parliament democracy.



Slovakia's legislative body is the 150-seat unicameral National Council of the Slovak Republic. Delegates are elected for 4-year terms. A particular political party has to obtain 5% of the valid votes of participated voters to be able to enter parliament.

The head of the Slovak Republic is the president who is elected directly by the citizens for a period of five years. This executive body represents the Government of the Slovak Republic. Judicial power is independent and is separated from legislative and executive powers.



The President is the head of the Slovak Republic.

*Constitution, Chapter 6, first section,
Article 101*

The seat of the president is rococo Grassalkovich summer palace, built in 1760. It is facing the Hodža square which was a coal market place in the 15th century. In the middle of the square there is a fountain representing the Earth on which water washes away the conscience of the world.



The National Council of the Slovak Republic is the only constituent and legislative body of the Slovak Republic.

Constitution, Chapter 5, fifth section, Article 72

The building of the National Council is situated near the castle gate. Although physically they are almost touching, these two buildings are separated by more than a half a millenium of this country's history.



The Government of the Slovak Republic is the highest executive body.

*Constitution, Chapter 6, second section,
Article 108*

Government office. Only a few minute's walk from the Presidential Palace in the middle of a park, the former summer residence of the Archbishops from Ostrihom is situated. The workshop of one of the best baroque sculptors – J. R. Donner was situated in the garden.



Seal of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

The currency of the Slovak Republic is the Slovak Crown; the abbreviation of the name is Sk. The ISO code is SKK. The Slovak Crown divides into 100 halers.

The first coins on our territory were minted by the Celts 2,200 years ago.



This is Slovakia

There is only one “me” in the world and there is only one world. There are many levels amongst. Every unit is divided somehow and every group creates something.

Slovakia is divided into the **natural cultural regions**, which are at the same time tourist regions:

Bratislava (1), Malokarpatský region (2), Záhorie (3), Myjavská solitary cottager's region (4), Podunajsko (5), Považie (6), Upper Považie (7), Ponitrie (8), Upper Nitra (9), Kysuce (10), Orava (11), Turiec (12), Horehronie (13), Pohronie (14), Podpolanie (15), Novohrad (16), Gemer (17), Malohont (18), Liptov (19), Spiš (20), Zamagurie (21), Šariš (22), Abov (23), Upper Zemplín (24) and Lower Zemplín (25).



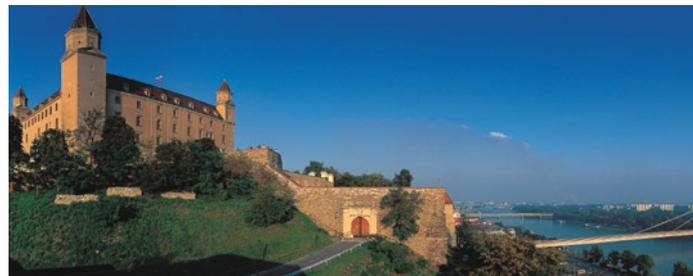
The capital city is **Bratislava** (449,500 inhabitants). It is situated at the meeting point of Záhorská and Podunajská lowlands, the Danube and Morava Rivers, at the foot of the Small Carpathians.



The territory of the Slovak Republic is divided into eight autonomous regions, with their seats at the biggest Slovak towns – Bratislava, Košice, Prešov, Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Trnava and Trenčín.

Bratislava

In the 9th century the city was already a great settlement of the Great-Moravian Empire neighboring the Devin castle, which is situated above the confluence of the Danube and Morava Rivers. In 1189 it was a meeting place of the third crusade participants. After the Turks begun occupation of Budin in 1536, Bratislava became the capital and coronation city for three centuries.



Nitra

Our history started right here. The castle on the rock was the seat of rulers of the Great-Moravian Empire and was the first state formation in our territory. At the beginning of a thousand year long history were the Slavonic knights Pribina and Svätopluk. Today, the castle is the seat of the Episcopal office.



Prešov

The town, which is today a centre of the Sharish region, originated in the vicinity of salt mines, at the confluence of trade routes. Lenticular square is bordered by dozens of Renaissance houses.



Banská Bystrica

This ancient town in the heart of Slovakia used to be one of the biggest copper producers. Its historical square indicates the town's fortune. In 1944 Banská Bystrica became a centre of the national uprising against the fascist regime and Nazi occupation.





Trnava

is the oldest Slovak town with privileges from 1238. Several times it witnessed the meeting of various kings. The town is called “Slovak Rome” because of its many churches. After the south of Hungary was occupied by the Turkish and the of Ostrihom primas was relocated (religious dignitary from Ostrihom) it became the most important religious centre of the country.



Trenčín

The first written record of this place comes from the Roman soldiers who named it Laugaricio. In 179 they left evidence of their presence and victory in the inscription on the rock at the castle. The castle, mentioned already in 1069, was a seat of Matúš Čák, one of the most influential men of his time, during the 14th century.



Košice

is a metropolis of eastern Slovakia and the second biggest city of the state. In the Middle Ages it used to be one of the most important centres of the Hungarian Kingdom. St. Elizabeth's Cathedral is the last standing gothic monument in the east of the country.

Žilina

In 1373, an unprecedented written code of legal regulations and town customs, entitled “Privilege for Slovaks from Žilina” was written, thus making this town a model for others in northwestern Slovakia.





Population density is 110 inhabitants per 1 km². Hungary, Austria, Portugal and France have almost the same population density. The Danube River basin is the centre of settlement. More than a half of the population lives in towns. There are 2,787 municipalities, out of which 136 with a town statute.

Considering size, the largest Slovak town is Vysoké Tatry. 15 villages create a cadastral territory with an area of 398.16 km².

The country around us

The country around us looks like an overview of all the places in Europe. The only thing we do not have is the sea.



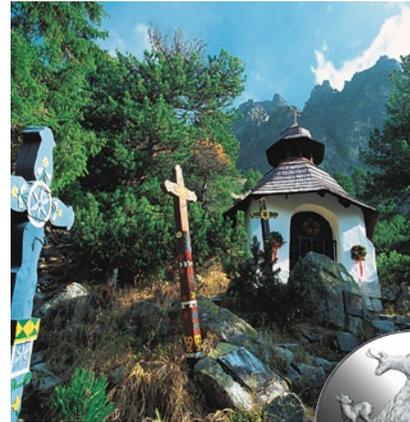
- (1) Every person shall have right to favorable environment
- (2) Every person shall have duty to protect and improve the environment and foster cultural heritage.
- (3) No person shall imperil or damage the environment, natural wealth and cultural heritage beyond the limits set by law.
- (4) The State shall be responsible for the economical use of natural resources, an ecological balance and an effective environmental policy.

Constitution of the Slovak Republic

More than a fifth of the territory of the Slovak Republic is under a certain level of legal protection of nature and the countryside. Tatranský National Park (TANAP), Pieniny, The Low Tatras, Little Fatra, Muránska Plain, Poloniny, Slovak Karst and Great Fatra are the top nine important national parks.



TANAP – Tatranský National Park is the oldest Slovak protected territory, established in 1948. A sixty-five-kilometer-long tourist route has passed through the southern slopes since 1937 in order to show visitors the smallest mountain range in the world. The Tatra chamois and precious alpinian edelweiss have become symbols of TANAP.



Sixteen protected zones and 1,043 small-protected areas represent the lower level of nature protection.



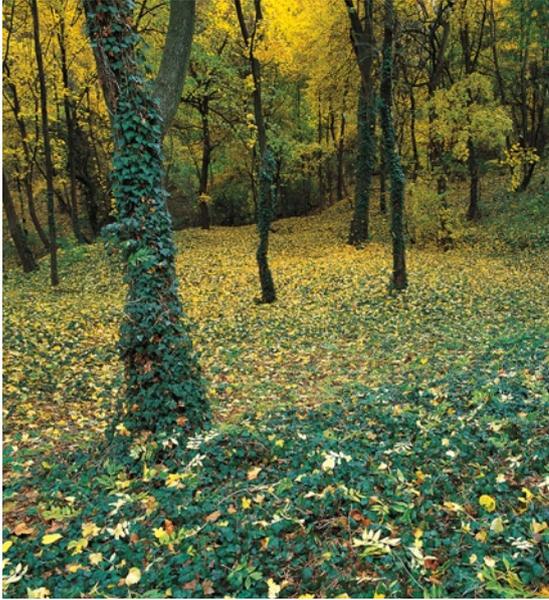
More than 1,300 species of plants have been identified in the High Tatras, however, there is altogether more than 11,000 species in Slovakia. The number of animal species is much higher – it is more than 35,500.

The curve of the **Carpathian mountain range**, which separates the lowlands to the east and west, is visible on the map of Slovakia. The country northwards offers all kinds of biotopes from swamps to steppes with shifting sand, from warm plains to steep peaks, which are high above the last zone of vegetation.



The geological history of our country is very rich. Periods when the territory of present day Slovakia was under sea level alternated with periods of drought. The oldest rocks can be found in eastern Slovakia and remind us of particular periods. Deposits of fossils in sandstone and limestone sediments are really rich.





Slovak forests are full of game – boar, deer, roebuck, moufflon, fallow deer... There are many carnivores as well, such as fox, badger, wolf or bob cat. The brown bear is the largest omnivore. Because of its unique diversity of biotopes, many precious animal species can be found in Slovakia.



TASR



TASR

Great Peacock Moth (*Saturnia pyri*) is the largest European butterfly; the lowlands in the southern part of the Danube Lowlands are home to the **great bustard** (*Otis tarda*), the largest European land bird.



Alpine Edelweiss – *Leontopodium alpinum* is the most precious species of the High Tatras.



The great number and beauty of our underground caves are our heritage from the oldest geological periods. There are more than **4,300 caves and chasms** in Slovakia that can be found mainly in the Slovak Karst, Slovak Paradise, canyon, waterfall, underground hall and window areas...



Until the discovery of Australian deposits, most **opals** came from the area of Dubník in Slánske Mountains near Prešov. **Fourteen new minerals** have been discovered in Slovakia.



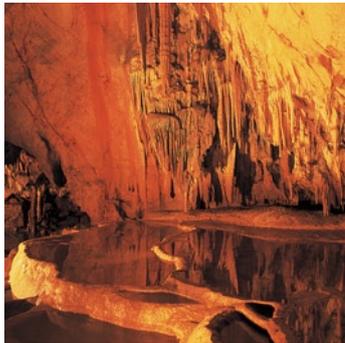
The longest cave in the country is **Demänovský cave system** in the Low Tatras that measures 33 kilometers.

Dobšinská ice cave is among the biggest glaciated caves in Europe, as it is comprised of 145 thousand m^3 of ice with a thickness of 26.5 m, covers an area of 11,200 m^2 .

Poľana – This hill mentioned in many Slovak songs and legends, is actually a 13 mil. year old extinct volcano with a partially preserved crater.



Ochtinská argonit cave with acicular and spiral decorations of stone flowers is one of only three caves of its kind in the world (Mexico, Argentina, Ochtiná).



Piešťany, the most famous Slovak spa town, is situated on the right bank of the Váh. Napoleonic spa was founded in 1813. The procedures performed there have been designed to use thermal mud and warm calcium sulphate mineral springs found there.

There are more than **1,300 mineral and thermal springs** in Slovakia. Many of them became the basis for establishing spa towns, many of them come to the market as table and mineral waters.

The highest temperature of thermal spring in Podhajska reaches 83 °C, which is higher than temperature of all the springs in Karlove Vary (the most famous spa town in the Czech Republic) and its content is similar to water of the Dead Sea.



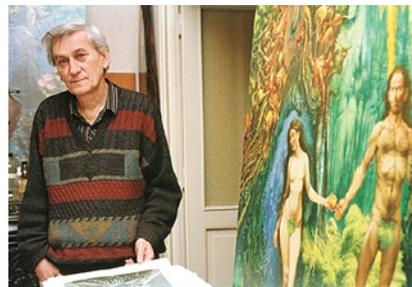
Geyser in Herľany, located in this area with terminated tectonically activity is the only cold geyser in the world. Every 32 hours it streams out to almost 20 m.

Domica cave, this Slovak treasure, has been included by UNESCO on the list of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Subterranean streams Styx and Acheron create a 22km long complex running far into the territory of Hungary. It is the biggest karst territory in Central Europe as it covers 600 km².



Martin Benka (1888–1971) painted Slovakia, its people and folk costumes. He designed and made musical instruments in the style of his pictures.

Martin Benka

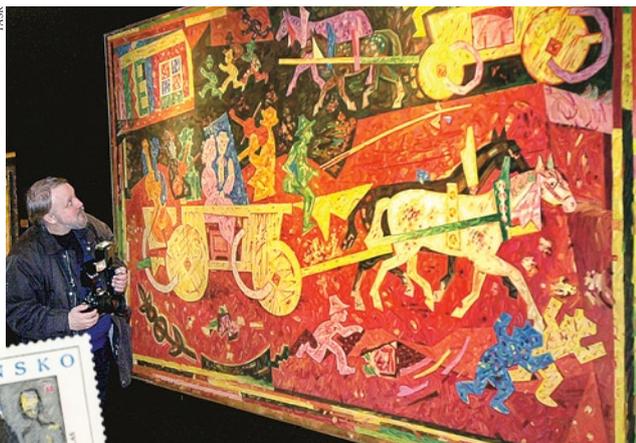


Albín Brunovský (1935–1997) in his technically perfect works he painted unreal world of fantasy in detail.

Albín Brunovský

Koloman Sokol (1902–2003) represents the expressive modern movement of fine art. He achieved great success at exhibitions all over the world. In 1938 he was invited by the Mexican government to Mexico City where he was appointed a professor of graphics at the National University. He lived in the USA from 1948 to his death in 2003.

TASR



Eudovít Fulla (1902–1980), graphic artist, painter, illustrator, he connected folk art and the modern expression of art of the 20th century. Part of his work is concentrated in his gallery in Ružomberok.

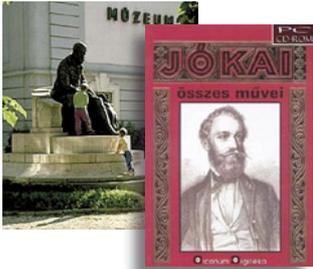


Tinker's craft belongs to the traditional crafts of the early 20th century. In the interior of the **Budatin** castle in Žilina there is an exposition of the tinker art of craftsmen.



Our homeland is where we live.

Komárno is a town in the south of Slovakia. It is a native town of Mór Jókai, classic of Hungarian literature and Franz Lehár, world famous Austrian operetta composer.

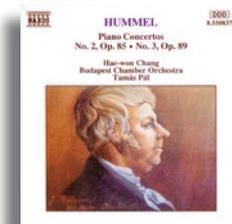


Andy Warhol, was the son of a Ruthenian emigrant family from Miková, a village in eastern part of Slovakia. He changed the view of the art itself. There are only two museums in the world which are dedicated to his works – in Pittsburgh, America and Medzilaborce, Slovakia.

andy Warhol



Ján Nepomuk Hummel was a musical composer of European importance. When he was seven he took free classes from Mozart. He created the connection between classicism and romanticism.





The first steps of cinematography in Slovakia date back to 1908. The first full-length film from 1921 was a story of folk hero Juraj Jánošík. *Obchod na korze* (Promenade Shop) from 1965 is the only Slovak film that won an Oscar, which is an American film Academy Award.



Juraj Jakubisko is among the most significant present-day film directors. Among children of Slovak emigrants can be found such world famous film stars as Paul Newman and Štefan Innačák – known as Steve McQueen.



Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava is the most important theatre scene in Slovakia. World famous opera singers such as **Lucia Poppova**, **Peter Dvorský** or **Edita Gruberová** have been members of this theatre.



Pantomimer **Milan Sládek** is a world famous personality and the greatest representative of Slovak pantomime.



Stringed instruments (violin, cymbalo) and pipes (shepherd pipe, **fujara**, bagpipe) are typical in Slovak folk music. A great number of amateur and professional music groups spread traditional folk music and dance. The most popular Slovak folkloric group is **Lučnica**, founded in 1948. Famous folkloric festivals are regularly held in Myjava, Detva, Východná, Terchová... These festivals are at the same time a performance of other folk arts and crafts.



One type of guitar called the **dobro**, which is a part of American culture, was invented by **Ján Dopjera**. The name is an abbreviation of the company name, **DOpyera BROthers**.

