

Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental Rights Implications

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1 Measures taken by government/public authorities

1.1 Emergency laws/states of emergency

On 12 March 2020, because of the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, **Slovenia** declared the Covid-19 epidemic on the basis of the Communicable Diseases Act (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*).¹ This legislation has been the legal basis for introducing different measures, including measures restricting social interactions in the country in the subsequent period. The month of May saw visible improvement regarding the epidemiological situation in the country, and the government adopted on 14 May an ordinance declaring the end of the epidemic, applicable from 31 May. According to the ordinance, measures adopted on the basis of the Communicable Diseases Act shall still be in place by the end of May provided there shall be expert justification for their further implementation.² On 29 May, the government adopted decision, in effect from 1 June, laying down that all adopted measures that have not been lifted by 1 June shall remain in force until they are amended or revoked, since there is still the risk of spread of the infection. The instructions and recommendations by the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*), referred to in individual government acts or measures adopted to contain the Covid-19 epidemic as a condition for lifting the prohibition on a certain activity or for the performance of a certain activity, shall also remain in force until they are amended or revoked. Thus, all requisite hygiene measures shall remain in force, including the mandatory wearing of protective masks in enclosed public spaces where the distance between individuals is less than 1.5 metres, in public transport, by persons with respiratory diseases, by employees in healthcare facilities according to the level of exposure, by employees in all nursing homes and social care and educational institutions for persons with special needs, and by visitors to healthcare institutions, nursing homes and social care and educational institutions for persons with special needs.³ On 24 June, following an increase in Covid-19 cases, the government adopted an ordinance, in effect from 25 June, requiring mandatory wearing of protective masks in all enclosed public spaces, including public transport, whether or not safe distance can be kept, as well as hand disinfection.⁴ On 1 July, the Constitutional Court (*Ustavno sodišče*) is set to review the constitutionality of certain provisions adopted during the epidemic (e.g. prohibition of movement beyond municipality borders, stricter conditions for the involvement of

¹ Slovenia, [The Communicable diseases act](#) (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*), 16 November 1995, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Decree on the declaration of the contagious disease SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) epidemic in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odredba o razglasitvi epidemije nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) na območju Republike Slovenije*), 12 March 2020. If not otherwise stated, all hyperlinks were accessed on 8 July 2020.

² Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the revocation of the epidemic of contagious disease SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\)](#) (*Odlok o preklicu epidemije nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 14 May 2020.

³ Slovenia, [The Decision on the application of the measures laid down in the Communicable diseases act to COVID-19 communicable disease](#) (*Sklep o uporabi ukrepov, ki jih določa Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih, pri nalezljivi bolezni COVID-19*), 29 May 2020.

⁴ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the temporary measures for reducing the risk of infection and the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection](#) (*Odlok o začasnih ukrepih za zmanjšanje tveganja okužbe in širjenja okužbe z virusom SARS-CoV-2*), 24 June 2020.

NGOs with the authorised status of organisations in the public interest in the field of environment protection in the building permits issuance procedures).⁵

Protests, especially Friday anti-government protests, including against its handling of the purchase of the protective equipment during epidemic, have been a regular feature of public life in **Slovenia** since April. In the period from 1 to 24 June, 49 Friday protests took place across the country, the largest being in Ljubljana, with the attendance of 2,500 to 7,500 persons. In this same period, there were also some other protests, including protests against government policies in the field of culture during the epidemic, while a counter-celebration of the Statehood Day, the national holiday celebrating the declaration of the country's independence, also took place. All these events were not notified to the competent administrative units, and were thus held without permit. During these events, the police established 19 violations of the Communicable Diseases Act, four violations of the Public Assembly Act (*Zakon o javnih zbiranjih*), 57 violations of the Protection of Public Order and Peace Act (*Zakon o varstvu javnega reda in miru*), two violations of the Identity Card Act (*Zakon o osebni izkaznici*), five violations of the Road Traffic Rules Act (*Zakon o pravilih cestnega prometa*), one violation of the Weapons Act (*Zakon o orožju*) and five violations of the Decree on Waste (*Uredba o odpadkih*). The police also investigated six suspicions of criminal offence of threat to the security of another person under the Criminal Code. During these events the police used the following powers: undertaking identification procedure in 92 cases, using instruments of restraint in 44 cases, apprehension in seven cases. On 5, 12 and 19 June, preceding the main anti-government protests, protests against police violence in the USA involving about 50 persons were held in front of Ljubljana US Embassy. These protests were held in a peaceful manner.⁶

In **Slovenia**, concerns were raised over the police handling of the June protests in Ljubljana. Following the 12 June protests, the Amnesty International Slovenia (*Amnesty International Slovenija*) called on the head of the police to inspect the alleged excessive use of police powers. The case concerned two protesters who were allegedly beaten when already tied up and under the full control of the authorities, while verbal threats were also launched at them. The organisation also prompted the Ombudsman to look into the matter.⁷ The Ombudsman published a summary of their response sent to the organisation with the aim to inform participants in the protest about the complaint mechanisms available in such cases (lodging a complaint with the Ministry of the Interior; filing a criminal report with the Specialised State Prosecutor's Office in case of suspicion of criminal offence). While the Ombudsman noted that the description of cases, as per the Amnesty's letter, could indicate unlawful conduct by police officers, they decided not to investigate the matter in more detail because of generalised allegations in Amnesty's letter and a lack of consent by persons

⁵ For more information, see the webpage of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia on www.us-rs.si/seja/19-seja-ustavnega-sodisca-republike-slovenije-14139/.

⁶ Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 30 June 2020).

⁷ Amnesty International Slovenija (2020), '[Navedbe o prekoračitvi policijskih pooblastil je treba preiskati](#)', public release, 16 June 2020.

affected for examination of the application.⁸ On 19 June, the police stopped random people who allegedly went to protest and completely closed access to the Republic Square (*Trg republike*). The latter is a site of high symbolic importance in Slovenia, located opposite to the national parliament, and the police action was a historical precedent. In another public statement, the Amnesty International Slovenia asked whether the right to peaceful assembly was under threat in Slovenia.⁹ Because of different media interpretations of police handling of protests in the recent period, the police issued a statement. They noted that the protests were not notified to the competent authorities, the organisers were not known, so the task to provide for certain tasks fell on the police (e.g. ensuring that participants do not bring dangerous items to the protests, ensuring order at the event, ensuring that the number of participants do not exceed the capacity of the assembly site). The police further stated that security circumstances changed after each protest, and security plans were accordingly adjusted. As at the previous protests a part of a small organised group jumped the fence and moved to closed area, while another masked group of protesters tried to tear down the fence, the police erected fences along the entire Republic Square. According to the police, the purpose of erecting fences was not to prevent the assembly of people and free expression of opinions, but to ensure the safety of participants and objects.¹⁰

1.2 Measures affecting the general population

1.2.1 Social distancing

In **Slovenia**, since midnight, 20 March, movement and assembly of people in public places and public surfaces, and access to such places have been restricted.¹¹ Since then, there have been different arrangements in place. For example, stricter measures were introduced on 30 March when movement of residents beyond municipality borders was also banned.¹² Until 18 May, accessing and staying in public places, subject to maintaining a safe distance to other persons, were only allowed for an individual person, or groups going to work, providing assistance to persons in need or accessing specific services. For the same reasons, and subject to safe distance, access was allowed for groups of immediate family members, of persons in shared households, and groups of up to five co-workers who share personal means of transportation for commuting to work or to perform tasks

⁸ Slovenia, Human Rights Ombudsman (*Varuh človekovih pravic*) (2020), '[Možnosti pritožbenih poti ob ravnanju policistov](#)', public release, 23 June 2020.

⁹ Amnesty International Slovenija (2020), '[V Sloveniji ogrožena svoboda mirnega zbiranja](#)', public release, 24 June 2020.

¹⁰ Slovenia, Police Directorate Ljubljana (*Policijska uprava Ljubljana*) (2020), '[Policija spoštuje svobodo izražanja in udeležbo na mirnih protestih - odziv PU Ljubljana](#)', public release, 24 June 2020.

¹¹ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the temporary general prohibition of movement and assembly of people in public places and surfaces in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni splošni prepovedi gibanja in zbiranja ljudi na javnih mestih in površinah v Republiki Sloveniji*), 19 March 2020.

¹² Slovenia, [The Ordinance on a temporary general prohibition of movement and assembly of people in public places and surfaces in the Republic of Slovenia and prohibition of movement outside the municipalities](#) (*Odlok o začasni splošni prepovedi gibanja in zbiranja ljudi na javnih mestih in površinah v Republiki Sloveniji ter prepovedi gibanja izven občin*), 29 March 2020.

in the ranks of Civil Protection (*Civilna zaščita*).¹³ From 18 May, the government eased this measure allowing gatherings of up to 50 persons in public places and areas subject to safe distance in accordance with instructions produced by the National Institute of Public Health, as well as the institution's hygiene recommendations. From 1 June, the government relaxed these restrictions allowing for gatherings of up to 200 persons, while from 15 June, gatherings of up to 500 persons were possible.¹⁴

Because of an increased number of daily infections in the last ten days of June, when the recorded daily infections went to double digits on several occasions, which has not happened since the end of April,¹⁵ the **Slovenian** government again imposed stricter measures. On 29 June, the government adopted an ordinance, applicable from 30 June, only allowing for gatherings of up to 50 persons in public places and areas subject to safe distance in accordance with instructions produced by the National Institute of Public Health, as well as the institution's hygiene recommendations. If these instructions and recommendations cannot be followed, such gatherings shall be prohibited. However, according to this new regime, organised public events involving gatherings of up to 500 persons shall be allowed provided that safe distance in accordance with instructions produced by the National Institute of Public Health can be maintained. It is further mandatory that event organisers obtain a positive opinion of the National Institute of Public Health for such an event. Every seven days, the government reviews the justification of the determined measures, and by taking into account expert evidence, decides on whether the devised measures are to be continued, modified or abolished.¹⁶

In **Slovenia**, as of 16 March, to prevent social interaction, hence curbing the spread of Covid-19, the offering and sale of goods and services directly to consumers was also banned, which, at the time, effectively closed down a wide variety of operators (e.g. accommodation services, catering services, wellness services, sports and recreational services, cinematographic services, cultural services and hairdressing services). Since the second half of April, the government has gradually eased the lockdown, and only discotheques and nightclubs shall be closed down beyond 1 June.¹⁷

In **Slovenia**, pursuant to the Communicable Diseases Act, upon the proposal of the National Institute of Public Health, the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*) issues decisions on quarantine,

¹³ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on a temporary general prohibition of movement and assembly of people in public places and surfaces in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni splošni prepovedi gibanja in zbiranja ljudi na javnih mestih in površinah v Republiki Sloveniji*), 29 April 2020.

¹⁴ Slovenia, [The ordinance on the temporary general restriction of the assembly of people in public places and areas in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni splošni omejitvi zbiranja ljudi na javnih krajih in mestih v Republiki Sloveniji*), 15 May 2020, and subsequent modifications.

¹⁵ For more information, see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health on www.nijz.si/sl/dnevno-spremljanje-okuzb-s-sars-cov-2-covid-19.

¹⁶ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the temporary general restriction or prohibition of assembly of people in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni splošni omejitvi oziroma prepovedi zbiranja ljudi v Republiki Sloveniji*), 29 June 2020.

¹⁷ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the restrictions on the offering and sale of goods and services to consumers in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o omejitvah ponujanja in prodajanja blaga in storitev potrošnikom v Republiki Sloveniji*), 13 May 2020, and subsequent modifications.

restricting the movement of persons concerned. The act also lays down the measure of isolation, whereby the doctor treating an individual, local healthcare institution or the National Institute of Public Health restrict the movement of an individual to prevent transmission of an infection.¹⁸ According to the Health Inspectorate, until 30 June, there were 18 reports on the alleged violation of the measure of quarantine, but no violation of the measure was established. Until the same date, the inspectorate received 10 reports on the alleged breach of the measure of isolation, and found violations of the measure in question in 7 cases. In these cases, administrative decisions banning movement of individuals who have contracted infection were issued, while no fines were imposed.¹⁹

The **Slovenian** Health Inspectorate (*Zdravstveni inšpektorat*) supervises the implementation of and imposes penalties for violations of provisions mentioned in this section. Within their rights and obligations, the police participates in the implementation of the listed measures, namely it assists the inspectorate in enforcing them. Since 20 March, after the first regulation banning movement and assembly of people in public places and public surfaces, and access to such places entered into force, until 30 June, the Health Inspectorate received 7,276 reports on the alleged violation of this ban. The inspectorate found violation in 2,982 cases. It issued 344 decisions on minor offence with reprimand, 2,012 decisions on minor offence with a fine, 241 penalty notices, while accusations were filed in the court against underage persons in 385 cases. The fines imposed amounted to 312,513.53 EUR. A number of cases is still pending.²⁰

1.2.2 Education

In **Slovenia**, the government started gradually easing the school lockdown in May and all education facilities, including kindergartens reopened by 3 June. Students in lower grades of upper secondary schools were the only exception, as they remained at home and continued with distance learning. Those students in lower grades of upper secondary schools for whom the schools organised additional teaching assistance or the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills, however, returned to school. All education facilities in Slovenia had to follow recommendations produced by the National Institute of Public Health.²¹ The institute produced recommendations for kindergartens, basic primary and secondary schools, music schools, student dormitories as well as recommendations for work with children with special needs. These recommendations include e.g. advice on how to enter school premises, division of classes in smaller units, maintaining safe distance, about protective face masks (for example, staff is instructed to wear them continuously,

¹⁸ Slovenia, [The Communicable diseases act](#) (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*), 16 November 1995, and subsequent modifications.

¹⁹ Information was provided by the Health Inspectorate (*Zdravstveni inšpektorat*) upon request (email, 3 July 2020).

²⁰ Information was provided by the Health Inspectorate (*Zdravstveni inšpektorat*) upon request (email, 3 July 2020).

²¹ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the temporary prohibition of gatherings in education institutions](#) (*Odlok o začasni prepovedi zbiranja ljudi v zavodih s področja vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 28 May 2020.

while pupils and students may remove them when taking their seats provided safe distance is ensured), as well as general advice regarding hand washing, cough etiquette, airing the premises.²²

On 12 June, the **Slovenian** government adopted an ordinance, in effect from 23 June, fully revoking the prohibition of public gatherings in education facilities.²³ On 24 June, the school year in primary and secondary schools ended with pupils and students receiving their reports.²⁴ The National Education Institute Slovenia (*Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo*) is carrying out a research project on the implementation of the distance education during the epidemic, with preliminary findings expected to be released on 7 July.²⁵

1.2.3 Work

In **Slovenia**, on 14 May, the government issued an ordinance declaring the end of the epidemic on 31 May,²⁶ and consequently ending the supporting scheme under the Intervention Measures to Contain COVID-19 Epidemic and to Mitigate its Consequences for Citizens and Economy Act (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih za zajezitev epidemije COVID-19 in omilitev njenih posledic za državljane in gospodarstvo*).²⁷ To provide for supporting measures in the subsequent period, the National Assembly (*Državni zbor*) adopted on 29 May, applicable from 31 May, the Intervention Measures to Mitigate and Eliminate the Consequences of the COVID-19 Epidemic Act (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih za omilitev in odpravo posledic epidemije COVID-19*). The principal solution in the new law involves subsidising working time. Employers who cannot provide at least 10 % of their workers with 90 % of regular working time per week (i.e. 36 hours) shall be eligible for state subsidies covering up to 50 % of working time. This measure shall apply until the end of the year. During the course of receiving state subsidies and for one month after this period, employers shall not initiate the procedure of termination of the employment contract for business reasons of employees who have been relegated to part-time work, or terminate the employment contract of a large number of employees for business reasons, unless the redundancy program was adopted before 13 March 2020 and the employer did not claim a subsidy for these workers under this act or the Intervention Measures to Contain COVID-19 Epidemic and to Mitigate its Consequences for Citizens and Economy Act. In this same period, employers shall not order overtime work, redeploy or unevenly distribute

²² For more information, see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health on www.nijz.si/sl/sproscanje-ukrepov-covid-19.

²³ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the revocation of the Ordinance on the temporary prohibition of gatherings in education institutions](#) (*Odlok o prenehanju veljavnosti Odloka o začasni prepovedi zbiranja ljudi v zavodih s področja vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 12 June 2020.

²⁴ Slovenia, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (*Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport*), '[Zaključuje se najbolj neobičajno šolsko leto](#)', public release, 24 June 2020.

²⁵ National Education Institute Slovenia (*Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo*), '[Analiza izobraževanja na daljavo v času epidemije](#)', public release, 23 June 2020.

²⁶ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the revocation of the epidemic of contagious disease SARS-CoV-2](#) (COVID-19) (*Odlok o preklicu epidemije nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 14 May 2020.

²⁷ Slovenia, [The Intervention measures to contain COVID-19 epidemic and to mitigate its consequences for citizens and economy act](#) (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih za zajezitev epidemije COVID-19 in omilitev njenih posledic za državljane in gospodarstvo*), 2 April 2020, and subsequent modifications.

working time if particular work can be performed by part-time workers. In addition to this measure, the law extends until the end of June state wage compensation scheme. Temporarily laid off workers with affected employers should be entitled to wage compensation in the amount of 80 % of their average monthly wage for full-time work during the past three months, but not less than the national minimum wage, whereby the state shall provide for 80 % of this amount. These two measures can be used simultaneously, so that an employer can temporarily lay off some workers while also reducing working hours for another group of workers.²⁸ Since 1 June, self-employed persons who do employ other workers may apply for the above measures, but there shall be no measures in place for individual self-employed.

On 28 June, the **Slovenian** government adopted draft Intervention Measures for the Preparation for the Second Wave of COVID-19 (*Predlog Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za pripravo na drugi val COVID-19*). According to the draft law, wage compensation scheme aimed at temporarily laid off workers should be extended throughout the month of July, with the possibility of further extension of up to one month, but no longer than 30 September. In addition, the state shall fund compensation of workers subject to quarantine measures ordered by the ministry responsible for health. Workers who have been ordered to quarantine when crossing the state border should be entitled to 50 % of their average monthly wage for full-time work during the past three months, but not less than 70 % of the national minimum wage (currently 940.58 EUR), as determined in the Labour Relationships Act (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*) in relation to cases when workers cannot work due to force majeure.²⁹ Workers subject to quarantine after being in contact with an infected person should receive the same wage compensation as temporarily laid off workers, that is - 80 % of their average monthly wage for full-time work during the past three months, but not less than the national minimum wage.³⁰

In **Slovenia**, the government practically completely lifted restriction on the provision of goods and services, with only discotheques and nightclubs being shut down beyond 1 June. The National Institute of Public Health produces guidelines and instructions for the introduction of protective hygiene measures in a variety of areas that must be observed by businesses and other operators when performing their activities (e.g. transport operators, education facilities, catering operators, food stores, tech stores, sport and recreational facilities, hairdressing and beauty salons, bookstores, libraries, museums, galleries, repair shops, watchmakers and goldsmiths). These include advice regarding e.g. safe distancing (for example, empty seats in public transportation), cough and hygiene protocols (for example, availability of disinfectants at entry points, disinfection of working area and

²⁸ Slovenia, [The Intervention measures to mitigate and eliminate the consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic act](#) (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih za omilitev in odpravo posledic epidemije COVID-19*), 29 May 2020.

²⁹ Slovenia, [The Employment relationships act](#) (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*), 5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications.

³⁰ Slovenia, Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vlada Republike Slovenije*), '[Vlada sprejela PKP4](#)', public release, 28 June 2020.

equipment before serving the next customer), airing workplace, use of protective masks.³¹ The Association for Occupational, Transportation and Sports Medicine (*Združenje za medicino dela, transporta in športa*) of the Slovenian Medical Association (*Slovensko zdravniško društvo*) also produced recommendations for employers on e.g. how to provide for risk assessment in workplaces, introduce prevention measures and organise work, as well as on how to deal with cases of infection. For example, employers are instructed to identify jobs with an increased risk of infection and other critical points in the organisation (e.g. jobs where employees come in close contact with the customer, spaces where a larger number of staff is present at the same time, places where at least 1.5 meters of distance between workers cannot be secured), to find solution to reduce contact between employees at critical points (e.g. introduce work from home, consider shift patterns with an eye on reducing the number of employees on the job, extend lunch times, slow down conveyor belts or reduce production if so required, to prioritise vulnerable groups such as workers on chemotherapy, workers with certain underlying conditions and workers above 65 years of age in cases when layoffs are necessary to secure safe workplace, to temporary suspend work process if it is not possible to ensure safe working conditions by means of organisational and hygiene measures), and to have hygiene measures in place.³²

1.2.4 Access to justice

After adopting decision declaring the end of epidemic, the **Slovenian** government adopted on 21 May a decision terminating grounds for interim measures including as regards judicial matters, applicable from 1 June.³³ The President of the Supreme Court in Slovenia, referring to government decisions, subsequently established that reasons which due to Covid-19 epidemic hindered the regular exercise of judicial power ceased to exist, and revoked the order on special measures relating to judicial proceedings during epidemic.³⁴ Courts in Slovenia thus resumed normal work on 1 June, meaning that, as in the pre-epidemic times, the hearing of cases are governed by general rules laid down in the Courts Act (*Zakon o sodiščih*) which also determine essential judicial proceedings. Apart from this, when deciding on hearing other cases, a judge may, in addition to the date a case was filed at the court, take into consideration the category, nature and importance of

³¹ For more information, see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health on www.nijz.si/sl/sproscanje-ukrepov-covid-19.

³² For more information, see the webpage of the Association for Occupational, Transportation and Sports Medicine (*Združenje za medicino dela, transporta in športa*) on www.anticovid.zmdps.si/.

³³ Slovenia, [The Decision establishing the termination of grounds for interim measures in respect of judicial, administrative and other public law matters to control the spread of SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) infectious disease](#) (*Sklep o ugotovitvi prenehanja razlogov za začasne ukrepe v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 21 May 2020.

³⁴ Slovenia, [The Revocation of the Order on special measures due to the occurrence of the conditions referred to in the first paragraph of Article 83.a of the Courts act and reasons from Article 1 of the ZZUSUDJZ](#) (*Preklic Odredbe o posebnih ukrepih zaradi nastanka pogojev iz prvega odstavka 83.a člena Zakona o sodiščih in razlogov iz 1. člena ZZUSUDJZ*), 27 May 2020.

the case.³⁵ During the epidemic, as regards the use of technical devices, the use of videoconferencing was prioritised in non-litigious procedure concerning confinement in psychiatric hospitals. In other court proceedings, technical devices are used according to the needs and existing capacities, while taking into account the particularities of individual court proceedings.³⁶

The National Assembly in **Slovenia** adopted on 29 May the Intervention Measures to Mitigate and Eliminate the Consequences of the COVID-19 Epidemic Act, applicable from 31 May, which shortened month-long judicial vacations, the period of time in which courts only decide on essential matters, to 15 days. In 2020, judicial vacations shall take place between 1 to 15 August.³⁷

In **Slovenia**, the Supreme Court is drafting an exit strategy. The goal of the measures envisaged in the strategy is to provide for the regular functioning of judicial power while ensuring a safe environment for employees and participants in proceedings. For this purpose, the strategy envisages legal (e.g. changes in legislation), information (provision of remote access, videoconferencing, work from home, etc.) and organisational (spatial standards, entry protocols, rules governing access to and stay in public parts of courts, etc.) measures. By the end of June, the strategy has not been officially adopted.³⁸ The Supreme Court recommends that all parties pay visits to courts only when necessary and if they have no signs of infection. However, if attending court by an infected person is necessary, they are advised to inform the court about any signs of infection. Specific rules regarding entry, stay and conduct in courts are to be posted in a prominent place in each court.³⁹

1.2.5 Freedom of movement

In the territory of **Slovenia**, all public passenger bus and railway transport, including from abroad, and also transport by cableways was suspended on 16 March. In May, the government lifted the ban on domestic transport. On 11 June, the government adopted an ordinance, applicable from 13 June, further lifting the ban on international public passenger transportation, both bus and railway, provided that recommendations produced by the National Institute of Public Health are observed (e.g. wearing of protective masks by staff and passengers, availability of hand disinfectants at bus and train entrances and exits, safe distancing including by ensuring empty seats between passengers). The government shall check the justification of the determined measures every 21

³⁵ Information was provided by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vrhovno sodišče Republike Slovenije*) upon request (email, 1 July 2020). Slovenia, [The Courts act](#) (*Zakon o sodiščih*), 24 March 1994, and subsequent modifications.

³⁶ Information was provided by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vrhovno sodišče Republike Slovenije*) upon request (email, 1 July 2020).

³⁷ Slovenia, [The Intervention Measures to Mitigate and Eliminate the Consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic act](#) (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih za omilitev in odpravo posledic epidemije COVID-19*), 29 May 2020.

³⁸ Information was provided by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vrhovno sodišče Republike Slovenije*) upon request (email, 3 June and 1 July 2020).

³⁹ For more information, see the webpage of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia on www.sodisce.si/vsrs/.

days, and by taking into account expert evidence, shall decide on whether the devised measures are to be continued, modified or abolished.⁴⁰

Since March, special arrangements have also been in place at **Slovenian** borders. The government lastly modified border arrangements on 24 June, and the current regime entered into force the next day.⁴¹ According to this regulation, four road control points at the border with Italy are open, three checkpoints are open at the border with Austria, and two at the border with Hungary. Outside these checkpoints, borders with the countries in question may only be passed by Citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and the citizens of respective countries.

In **Slovenia**, during the reference period (i.e. by the end of June), groups of persons allowed entry into the country without restrictions and quarantine include Slovenian citizens and foreigners with permanent or temporary residence in Slovenia coming from an European Union or Schengen Area member state (unless a certain member state has been placed on the list of states with a deteriorated epidemiological situation, that is – on the so-called red list), and persons with permanent or temporary residence in a country which is on the list of epidemiologically safe countries and are coming from these countries (countries on the so-called green list; at the end of June there were 22 countries on this list).⁴² Quarantine lasting 14 days shall apply to persons with permanent or temporary residence in countries that are not on the list of epidemiologically safe countries or persons coming from the countries that are not epidemiologically safe (i.e. countries that are neither on the green nor on the red list). There shall be, however, 16 exceptions to these rules, and the quarantine shall not apply to e.g. daily/weekly cross-border workers holding proof of having an employment contract in an EU or other Schengen Area Member State; persons providing services for which they have been issued a certificate by the competent ministry that ordering a quarantine to such an individual could result in major social or economic damage because of non-provision of these services; persons crossing the border for family reasons in order to maintain relations with close family members and who are returning on the same day.⁴³ The 14-day quarantine shall further apply to all persons, regardless of their nationality or place of residence, who have temporary or permanent residence, or who are coming from the countries with a deteriorated epidemiological situation (the above-mentioned red list; at the end of June, there were

⁴⁰ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the manner of carrying out public passenger transport in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o načinu izvajanja javnega prevoza potnikov na ozemlju Republike Slovenije*), 11 June 2020.

⁴¹ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on imposing and implementing measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic at the border crossings at the external border and checkpoints within national borders of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o odrejanju in izvajanju ukrepov za preprečitev širjenja nalezljive bolezni COVID-19 na mejnih prehodih na zunanji meji in na kontrolnih točkah na notranjih mejah Republike Slovenije*), 7 June 2020, and subsequent modifications.

⁴² For more information, see the webpage of the National Institute for Public Health on www.nijz.si/en/list-countries-crossing-national-borders-without-restrictions. Hyperlink was accessed on 1 July 2020.

⁴³ For more information on exceptions, see the webpage of the police on www.policija.si/images/stories/NovinarskoSredisce/SporocilaZajavnost/2020/06_junij/25_crossing_the_border_quarantine_exceptions/Quarantine_exceptions_Article_10_of_the_Ordinance_25062020.docx.

36 countries on this list).⁴⁴ There shall be six exceptions to this rule, namely groups of persons captured under points 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Article 10 of the relevant government ordinance (e.g. persons travelling in transit through the Republic of Slovenia to another country within 12 hours, diplomatic passport holders, persons providing services for which they have been issued a certificate by the competent ministry that ordering a quarantine to such an individual could result in major social or economic damage because of non-provision of these services). Persons qualifying as exceptions under points 1a, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of Article 10 of the Ordinance shall produce a negative test for Covid-19, that is not older than 36 hours and was taken in an EU or Schengen Area member state or was performed by an organisation or individual authorised by the National Institute of Public Health.⁴⁵ Based on the epidemiological assessments by the National Institute of Public Health, the government determines or modifies the list of epidemiologically safe countries. The government may also, in the event of deterioration of the epidemiological situation in a certain country or administrative region of a certain country, revoke the applicable exceptions in full, or may determine that only specific exceptions apply. The government shall review the justification of the determined measures every seven days, and by taking into account expert evidence, shall decide on whether the devised measures are to be continued, modified or abolished.⁴⁶

Media in **Slovenia** reported that national asylum authorities stopped accepting asylum applications in the period from 29 March to 3 May, resulting in overcrowded reception facilities in asylum home and its branches.⁴⁷ While there were no reports by authorities, civil society organisations or the media on infections among the asylum seekers, the number of asylum applications lodged in Slovenia in the first six months of 2020 was relatively modest. In this time period, Slovenian asylum authorities received 1,476 asylum applications, compared to 3,821 applications they received in the whole of 2019.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ For more information, see the webpage of the police on www.policija.si/eng/newsroom/news-archive/103470-crossing-the-state-border-during-the-coronavirus-epidemic.

⁴⁵ For more information on exceptions, see the webpage of the police on www.policija.si/images/stories/NovinarskoSredisce/SporocilaZaJavnost/2020/06_junij/25_crossing_the_border_quarantine_exceptions/Quarantine_exceptions_Article_10_of_the_Ordinance_25062020.docx.

⁴⁶ Slovenia, [The Ordinance on imposing and implementing measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic at the border crossings at the external border and checkpoints within national borders of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o odrejanju in izvajanju ukrepov za preprečitev širjenja nalezljive bolezni COVID-19 na mejnih prehodih na zunanji meji in na kontrolnih točkah na notranjih mejah Republike Slovenije*), 7 June 2020, and subsequent modifications. For more information, see the webpage of the police on www.policija.si/eng/newsroom/news-archive/103470-crossing-the-state-border-during-the-coronavirus-epidemic and www.policija.si/eng/newsroom/news-archive/104715-changed-rules-for-border-crossing-apply-as-of-25-june.

⁴⁷ Kramberger, U.Š. (2020), '[Migranti po zaslugi notranjega ministrstva ostajajo ujeti v Sloveniji](#)', *Dnevnik*, 11 May 2020.

⁴⁸ For more information, see the government webpage on www.gov.si/podrocja/drzava-in-druzba/priseljevanje-v-slovenijo/. Hyperlink was accessed on 7 July 2020.

1.3 Impact of measures on particular groups

In **Slovenia**, for preventing the spread of the Covid-19, legislation was passed in March allowing for e.g. transfer of inmates to other correctional facilities, suspension of imprisonment for up to one month in the absence of security concerns, and with the possibility of extension. In cases where no security concerns exist, and under certain conditions an early release of prisoners six months before completion of the penalty was possible.⁴⁹ However, after adopting decision declaring the end of epidemic, the government adopted on 21 May a decision terminating grounds for interim measures including as regards judicial matters.⁵⁰ This meant that convicts whose imprisonment was temporarily suspended resumed their sentences from 1 June. As of 13 March, visits to prisons and a correctional home had been banned,⁵¹ on 18 May the ban was partially lifted, and on 5 June the Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia (*Uprava Republike Slovenije za izvrševanje kazenskih sankcij*) announced that visits were to take place according to pre-epidemic house rules in prison facilities.⁵²

An evaluation of the short-term impact of the Covid-19 on prison populations produced by the Université de Lausanne on behalf of the Council of Europe, released in mid-June, showed that the lockdown-related measures favourably affected the prison population in **Slovenia**. The evaluation showed that 15.9 % of the total number of inmates in Slovenia was released as a preventive measure related to Covid-19 by 15 April, as compared to the number of inmates on 1 January 2020. While on 1 January 2020 Slovenian prisons were overcrowded (prison density was 108.9 inmates per 100 places), that was no longer the case on 15 April (84.4 inmates per 100 places). The evaluation noted that, 'Apart from the infections among inmates, one case of infection was confirmed in a worker for an external company that carries out some activities in a Slovenian prison.' It, however, included no exact numbers on Covid-19 cases among the prison population in Slovenia.⁵³ In Slovenia, national authorities have not reported separate data on infections among the population in prison facilities. The media reported that two cases were recorded in one prison by the end of March, while 60

⁴⁹ Slovenia, [The Temporary measures relating to judicial, administrative and public law matters for the containment of the spread of the communicable disease SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) act](#) (*Zakon o začasnih ukrepih v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 20 March 2020, and subsequent modifications.

⁵⁰ Slovenia, [The Decision establishing the termination of grounds for interim measures in respect of judicial, administrative and other public law matters to control the spread of SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) infectious disease](#) (*Sklep o ugotovitvi prenehanja razlogov začasne ukrepe v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 21 May 2020.

⁵¹ Slovenia, Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia (*Uprava Republike Slovenije za izvrševanje kazenskih sankcij*) (2020), '[Obvestilo obiskovalcem zaprtih oseb v zavodih za prestajanje kazni zapora in prevzgojnem domu – dopolnilo](#)', public release, 13 March 2020.

⁵² Slovenia, Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia (*Uprava Republike Slovenije za izvrševanje kazenskih sankcij*) (2020), '[Obvestilo obiskovalcem zaprtih oseb v zavodih za prestajanje kazni zapora in prevzgojnem domu – dopolnilo](#)', public release, 5 June 2020.

⁵³ Aebi, M. F., Tiago, M. M., Université de Lausanne (2020), [Prisons and Prisoners in Europe in Pandemic Times: Anevaluation of the short-term impact of the COVID-19 on prison populations](#), Strasbourg, Lausanne, Council of Europe.

persons were isolated in the same facility.⁵⁴ Since then, however, there have been no significant reports on the situation in prisons, and no major outbreak in the prison system has been reported.

The Institute for the Study of Gender Equality (*Inštitut za proučevanje enakosti spolov*), a **Slovenian** NGO, carried out an online survey on intimate partner relationships and families during quarantine. The survey captured 702 respondents, of whom 628 (89.5 %) were women, 73 (10.4 %) men and one a non-binary person. In terms of perceptions, 65 % of respondents were of the opinion that quarantine was the reason for an increase in domestic and intimate partner violence. Among the female respondents, 15 % claimed that they were now more dependent of their partners for subsistence, compared to 11 % before the quarantine, while 4 % claimed that they experienced violence on the part of their partners during quarantine, and an additional 4.3 % stated that they were subject to violence by other family members.⁵⁵

During the epidemic in **Slovenia**, the Silver Thread – Association for decent ageing (*Srebrna nit – Združenje za dostojno starost*) the Slovene Federation of Pensioners' Associations (*ZDUS – Zveza društev upokojencev Slovenije*) organisations working for the benefit of the elderly raised concerns over the situation in nursing homes.⁵⁶ For example, the Silver Thread issued a public letter in May commending the performance of staff in nursing homes during epidemic, in a situation where they faced staff shortages, lack of protective equipment, lack of expert knowledge on how to deal with epidemic, as well as instructions that were often overdue. According to the organisation, although the Ministry of Health claimed that it provided that all those in need of hospital care have been hospitalised, there was information about triage of residents whereby, upon inspecting residents' medical records, medical teams had decided in advance who would not receive hospital treatment and who would remain in palliative care without the consent of the individual residents or persons close to them. The organisation concluded that there were violations of human rights (the right to adequate health care) and discrimination of the elderly taking place during the epidemic.⁵⁷ Slovenian media also reported on medical teams examining medical records of residents in nursing homes and deciding in advance who would be referred to hospital for treatment and who would not without informing the persons concerned and their relatives about these assessments. It was also reported that not much time was budgeted for the assessments on the part of medical teams.⁵⁸ Representatives of different medical organisations rejected these claims, stating, among other things, that the treatment of the elderly during the epidemic was professionally adequate and

⁵⁴ Zupan, U. (2020), '[Nova okužba v zaporu na Dobu, v izolaciji že 60 oseb](#)', *24ur.com*, 31 Marc 2020.

⁵⁵ Pavlič, A. (2020), '[Vzdušje v intimno-partnerskih odnosih in družinah v času karantene in negotovosti](#)', Ljubljana, Inštitut za proučevanje enakosti spolov.

⁵⁶ For more information, see the webpage of the Silver Thread – Association for decent ageing (*Srebrna nit – Združenje za dostojno starost*) on <http://www.srebrna-nit.si/>, and webpage of the ZDUS – the Slovene Federation of Pensioners' Associations (*ZDUS – Zveza društev upokojencev Slovenije*) on www.zdus-zveza.si/podpora-pozivu-skupnosti-socialnih-zavodov-slovenije.

⁵⁷ Srebrna nit – Združenje za dostojno starost (2020), '[Javno pismo - nujne aktivnosti za starejše](#)', public release, 5 May 2020.

⁵⁸ Jager, V. (2020), 'Odpisani z dekretom', *Mladina*, 15 May 2020.

correct, and that decisions on referrals to hospitals for treatment had been taken with a view to the best interests of residents in the nursing homes.⁵⁹

In June, the Amnesty International Slovenia (*Amnesty International Slovenija*) issued a public statement calling on the **Slovenian** authorities to provide for an investigation into the treatment of residents in nursing homes during the Covid-19 epidemic. According to the organisation, such an investigation should be carried out by independent and impartial experts. The organisation further called for e.g. the abolition of any classifications of residents of nursing homes, where these were made, which determined whether a person would be admitted for hospital treatment or not, as such classifications were allegedly adopted upon assessments conducted in extremely short time (2-3 minutes) and without the knowledge of persons concerned and their relatives; ensuring transparency, namely that documentation kept about residents should be disclosed to them and their relatives; ensuring redress for any possible violations of rights.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Cerar, G. (2020), 'Medicinska stroka: Vložni listi so le seznam bolezni in mnenje zdravniškega konzilija', *MMC RTVSLO*, 10 June 2020.

⁶⁰ Amnesty International Slovenia (2020), '[Zahtevamo preiskavo glede zdravljenja stanovalcev domov za starejše v času epidemije covid-19](#)', public release, 10 June 2020.

2 Selected issues emerging during the COVID-19 crisis

2.1 Xenophobic speech, acts of harassment and violent attacks

The **Slovenian** police do not keep separate data on criminal offences motivated by racial, ethnic or religious hatred in the context of epidemic. Data are kept according to articles of the Criminal Code, and the police investigated 12 cases of alleged public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance during the epidemic. In seven cases, the police lodged criminal complaints with the responsible state prosecutor, while five cases are still being investigated. One case in which criminal complaint was lodged involved alleged ethnic intolerance, two cases involved alleged religious intolerance, one of which is still being investigated, while in one case the police lodged criminal complaint.⁶¹ The mainstream media have not reported hate incidents, including hate speech online by the time of writing of this information. The same applies to civil society organisations.⁶²

By 1 July, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (*Zagovornik načela enakosti*), the equality body in **Slovenia**, received two complaints claiming discrimination on grounds of race, ethnic origin or religious affiliation in relation to Covid-19 epidemic. Both cases are still pending, and no particularities of the cases in question are available at the time of writing.⁶³

2.2 Infringement of privacy and/or data protection rights

On 28 June, the **Slovenian** government adopted draft Intervention Measures for the Preparation for the Second Wave of COVID-19 Act (*Predlog Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za pripravo na drugi val COVID-19*), and submitted it two days later to the National Assembly for consideration. The draft law, among other things, lays down legal basis for the use of mobile application for tracking contacts of individuals who contracted Covid-19 or who were ordered to quarantine. The mobile app shall be introduced for the purpose of e.g. protection of health and life; informing users about a risk of becoming infected because they were in the vicinity of another user who was positive for the virus, or was ordered to quarantine or self-isolate; raising awareness of the users about the symptoms of the infection and seeking medical assistance in case they experience symptoms typical of Covid-19. The ministry responsible for public administration shall be responsible for the introduction and functioning of the mobile application. The application shall be free of charge, and shall be installed and used on a voluntary basis. However, provided that they possess adequate smartphones, installing and use of the application shall be mandatory for individuals who contracted the virus or

⁶¹ Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 30 June 2020).

⁶² An overview of the online resources of the following media was carried out: national public broadcaster (rtvslo.si), major national commercial broadcaster (24ur.com), dailies Dnevnik (dnevnik.si), Delo (delo.si), Večer (vecer.com), weekly Mladina (mladina.si), online media Siol.net. An overview of webpages of the following NGOs working for the benefits of migrant population was carried out: Slovene Philanthropy (*Slovenska filantropija*), Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs (*Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij – PIC*), Association Relationship (*Društvo Odnos*).

⁶³ Information was provided by the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (*Zagovornik načela enakosti*) upon request (email, 1 July 2020).

were issued a decision to quarantine. If they failed to do so, they shall face a fine ranging from 200 to 600 EUR. Such individuals The application shall be designed in such a manner as to ensure anonymous recording of contact data and informing the users about their contacts with infected persons or persons ordered to quarantine, but shall not allow for user identification, collecting information about their location or other personal data. In order to ensure the anonymity of the user, the mobile application assigns a random identification code to the user at the time of the app installation. Individuals testing positive for the virus shall indicate this in the app. To do this, they shall receive a one-time random code along with the test results. A similar procedure shall apply to persons who received a decision on quarantine. They shall receive their code together with the relevant decision. The minister responsible for health shall determine, based on the expert opinion by the National Institute of Public Health, the distance and duration of contacts between users that are required for the application to record a contact. They shall also determine the time period in which users are informed about contacts with an infected person or a person ordered to quarantine. Data on contacts between the users shall be automatically deleted 15 days after being recorded. This measure shall be in place until the reasons for it cease to exist, as determined by the government with a decision.⁶⁴ The law does not further specify technical details of the application. According to the media reports, it should be based on Bluetooth technology and will most likely be modelled on the Italian or German application.⁶⁵

The Information Commissioner, the data protection authority in **Slovenia**, has not been consulted during the preparation of the draft law. In a statement, the commissioner warned that the envisaged mandatory use of the app by infected persons and persons ordered to quarantine ran contrary to the regulations in other EU Member States, where the use of the application is fully voluntary. They called on the authorities to follow the example of other Member States. The commissioner further warned that such applications worked reliably only on newer smartphones, and that forcing anyone, under the threat of a fine, to use the app even if it did not work reliably on their devices, was disproportionate and did not contribute to the goals pursued by the legislature. They also pointed out that the provisions of the draft law did not constitute sufficient legal basis for the processing of personal data. According to the Commissioner, the draft law did not clearly define obligations of the bodies involved regarding the safe and proper functioning of the application. In the commissioner's opinion, the law should clearly define who the data controllers are, what data can be processed, for which purpose, for how long shall the data be kept, and who can access the data.⁶⁶ The Commissioner's concerns were reported by the national media.⁶⁷ Representatives of the Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana (*Inštitut za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani*) also raised concerns over the draft provisions, including the lack of clear provisions concerning e.g. the identity of data controllers, scope of the data collected, bodies having access to data and

⁶⁴ Slovenia, [The Draft Intervention measures for the preparation for the second wave of COVID-19 act](#) (*Predlog Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za pripravo na drugi val COVID-19*).

⁶⁵ A. S. (2020), '[Kako bodo sledili okuženim in njihovim stikom?](#)', MMC RTVSLO, 29 June 2020.

⁶⁶ Slovenia, Information Commissioner (*Informacijski pooblaščenec*) (2020), '[Vlada kljub vsemu želi zbirati tudi podatke o naših lokacijah](#)', public release, 30 June 2020.

⁶⁷ See e.g. M. Z., G. C. (2020), 'Informacijska pooblaščenka: Vlada želi z aplikacijo zbirati podatke o lokacijah', MMC RTVSLO, 2 July 2020, N. S. (2020), 'Informacijski pooblaščenec nenaklonjen aplikaciji za sledenje stikov', *24ur.com*, 30 June 2020.

retention period. Among other things, they also warned that envisaged provisions did not necessarily provide for anonymity of the data collected. They also pointed to the fact that the key stakeholders in the field, the Information Commissioner and the Human Rights Ombudsman, as well as the public were not involved in the consultation during the preparation of the draft law.⁶⁸

The draft law produced by the **Slovenian** government also includes provision providing for the processing of personal identification and location data, respectively, in the field of electronic communications strictly necessary for the protection of life, body or health. According to the draft law, such data may be temporarily processed, regardless of the fact that there is no other legal basis for this. The draft law stipulates such an arrangement for the period when a person's personal liberty is temporarily restricted due to measures taken under the law governing communicable diseases (e.g. quarantine).⁶⁹

The **Slovenian** Information Commissioner heavily criticised this scheme. According to the Commissioner, such a provision can be read as allowing the authorities to obtain for the purpose of monitoring compliance with quarantine or self-isolation measures data on the location of an individual, their phone or other device. The Commissioner warned that this constitutes a major interference with many constitutionally guaranteed rights, while lacking necessary safeguards (e.g. lower threshold for obtaining data than in the case of criminal proceeding, as in the latter case it is frequently necessary to obtain a court order to obtain the relevant data).⁷⁰ In their statement, representatives of the Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana (*Inštitut za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani*) also raised concerns over this provision, including pointing to the fact that the draft law is silent on e.g. data controller and retention period.⁷¹

2.3 Spread of disinformation online

Slovenian media reported on the spread of disinformation on social media immediately at the time of Covid-19 outbreak. They reported on the spread of fake news (e.g. conspiracy theories) as well as ineffective, and occasionally dangerous, advice on how to prevent infection or cure the symptoms of disease, including on the largest Slovenian Facebook group dedicated to the virus outbreak.⁷² The Slovene Association of Journalists (*Društvo novinarjev Slovenije*) shared in March recommendations on reporting on Covid-19 and slowing the spread of misinformation produced by the First Draft non-

⁶⁸ Šarf, P., Završnik, A., Mihelj Plesničar, M., Inštitut za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani (2020), '[Mnenje Inštituta za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani o predlogu Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za pripravo na drugi val COVID-19](#)', public release, 5 July 2020.

⁶⁹ Slovenia, [The Draft Intervention measures for the preparation for the second wave of COVID-19 act](#) (*Predlog Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za pripravo na drugi val COVID-19*).

⁷⁰ Slovenia, Information Commissioner (*Informacijski pooblaščenec*) (2020), '[Vlada kljub vsemu želi zbirati tudi podatke o naših lokacijah](#)', public release, 30 June 2020.

⁷¹ Šarf, P., Završnik, A., Mihelj Plesničar, M., Inštitut za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani (2020), '[Mnenje Inštituta za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani o predlogu Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za pripravo na drugi val COVID-19](#)', public release, 5 July 2020.

⁷² Tomšič, M. (2020), '[Epidemija koronavirusa ni ena. Epidemiji sta dve.](#)', *Siol.net*, 17. March 2020. The Facebook group is accessible on www.facebook.com/groups/coronaslovenija/?epa=SEARCH_BOX.

profit (e.g. avoiding sensationalist language that could cause elevated levels of fear, directing readers to official sources of information, avoiding derogatory language), as well as recommendations by the World Health Organization (WHO) (e.g. avoiding stigmatisation of individuals who contracted the disease, avoiding topics inducing fear, providing content with practical advice for the prevention of the infection or when to report to healthcare practitioners).⁷³ In April, for example, Awareness Centre SAFE.SI, which raises awareness of children, teenagers, parents, teachers and social workers about safe and responsible use of internet and new technologies, warned that social media were full of false and unverified information about the virus.⁷⁴

In June, for example, media in **Slovenia** reported on a misinformation placed on Facebook stating that Croatia was about to close its borders for all foreigners for at least two weeks, whereby the author abused visual identities of the Slovenian Press Agency (*Slovenska tiskovna agencija*), the national news agency, and 24ur.com, the online edition of the major national commercial broadcaster, when creating the misinformation. The latter media outlet dedicated in June a special news item to the issue of misinformation and fake news in which it was established that misinformation was widespread particularly at the time of outbreak of the epidemic, but that it did not grossly affect the general population as the latter generally followed the advice of authorities and experts.⁷⁵ Also in June, an online newspaper targeting children organised a webinar aimed at children, their parents and teachers on how to identify fake news and protect oneself from online abuse.⁷⁶

⁷³ Društvo novinarjev Slovenije (2020), '[Društvo in novinarji v času virusa](#)', public release, 13 March 2020.

⁷⁴ Safe.si (2020), '[Družabna omrežja polna laži in nepreverjenih informacij o koronavirusu](#)', public release, 7 April 2020.

⁷⁵ 24UR Fokus (2020), '[Neresnice in laži v času koronavirusa](#)', *24ur.com*, 21 June 2020 (please see the attached video with the summary of the news item; the latter is available to subscribers only).

⁷⁶ Merljak Zdovc, S. (2020), '[Lažne novice v koronačasih](#)', *Časoris*, 15 June 2020.