

Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental Rights Implications

Country: Slovakia

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1 Measures taken by government/public authorities

1.1 Emergency laws/states of emergency

By the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 366 of 10 June 2020¹, the state of emergency declared in the territory of the Slovak Republic ended on 13 June 2020. This means that the state of emergency for the health care sector, social services and social protection of children has been lifted. Since then, the health care sector operates as before the coronavirus pandemic started. For instance, health care workers can now exercise their right to strike (which was forbidden during the state of emergency according to the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 114 of 15 March 2020²). The state of crisis declared by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 111 of 11 March 2020³ continues after the end of the emergency⁴. The ban on organizing mass events of sporting, cultural, social or other nature was in force by 24 April⁵. In the following weeks, the strict measures for organizing mass events were gradually lifted. From 20 May, it was forbidden to organize mass events of more than 100 people⁶ and since 10 June of more than 500 people.⁷

The march against the measures taken by the cabinet in relation to the coronavirus pandemic took place in Bratislava on 6 June. The organizers had been warned about the ban on mass events of over 100 people. Any fine for violation of this Regulation were to be handled by the Public Health Office⁸. On 1 June, the protest against racial violence took place in front of the US Embassy in Bratislava, in response to the death of George Floyd. There were about a hundred people at the protest⁹. Another

¹ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Úrad vlády SR) (2020), Governmental Resolution No. 366/2020, 'On the Proposal to End the State of Emergency...', 10 June 2020, available at <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Resolution/18506/1>

² Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Úrad vlády SR) (2020), Governmental Resolution No. 114/2020 on the Proposal to Declare State of Emergency Pursuant to the Act No. 227/2002 Coll.", 15 March 2020, available at <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Resolution/18252/1>

³ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Úrad vlády SR) (2020), Governmental Resolution No. 111/2020 on the Proposal to Declare an Emergency Situation in Relation to Threats to Public Health II. Degree Due to COVID-19 Disease Caused by Corona Virus SARS-CoV-2 in the Territory of the Slovak Republic, available at <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Resolution/18249/1>

⁴ Slovakia, The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny), (2020) 'Núdzový stav, hospodárska mobilizácia', 16 June 2020, available at <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/koronavirus-pracovna-socialna-oblast/socialne-sluzby/nudzovy-stav.html>

⁵ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie, Úradu verejného zdravotníctva Slovenskej republiky pri ohrození verejného zdravia', 23 March 2020, available at http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/Opatrenie_UVZSR_zakaz_hromadnych_podujati_od_24032020.pdf

⁶ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva Slovenskej republiky pri ohrození verejného zdravia', 19 May 2020, available at http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/19_05_2020_Opatrenie_hromadne_podujatia.pdf

⁷ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva Slovenskej republiky pri ohrození verejného zdravia', 9 June 2020, available at http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/Opatrenie_UVZSR_prevadzky_09062020.pdf

⁸ Tnoviny.sk (2020), 'V Bratislave sa konal protivládny protest, zišlo sa niekoľko stoviek ľudí', 6 June 2020, available at: https://www.tnoviny.sk/domace/1999342_v-bratislave-sa-konal-protivladny-protest-zislo-sa-niekolko-stoviek-ludi

⁹ Denník N (2020), 'Pred veľvyslanectvom USA v Bratislave sa konal protest proti rasovému násiliu', 1 June 2020, available at: <https://dennikn.sk/minuta/1915206/>

peaceful gathering took place on 13 June in Bratislava. Organizers asked everyone to bring their face masks and have them throughout the whole process¹⁰.

1.2 Measures affecting the general population

1.2.1 Social distancing

In June general lifting of measures continued including rules of physical distancing and mask wearing. As of 3 June 2020, wearing face masks outdoors is voluntary. It is only mandatory when one is within a 2m distance of another person (a stranger). Masks are still mandatory indoors (in shops, retails, business operations, offices) with a penalty of up to 20 000 EUR for the respective business.¹¹

Restrictions on the number of customers in shops have also been loosened to 1 customer per 10m² or securing a 2m distance. Face masks and provision of hand disinfection is mandatory.¹² As of 20 June 2020 businesses and shops do not have to close for Sundays (for sanitation) any longer but have to secure regular disinfection of premises.¹³ All sport facilities (both indoor and outdoor) have been re-opened, restrictions for restaurants and other hospitality facilities have been lifted (no limit on number of persons per table, 2m distance between table is now only recommended).¹⁴

The Public Health Authority specified a penalty of up to 20 000 EUR for businesses in case of violation of its rules and measures.¹⁵

1.2.2 Education

Since June 2020, preschools and primary schools (grades 0-5) have been opened (as reported in the previous bulletin). Since 22 June 2020, Ministry of education decided on opening all other types of schools and school facilities, if the establisher of the school (mainly municipalities, regional self-governments, private establisher or church) decides so. If parents have concerns about the health

¹⁰ Information from FB Event BLM Peaceful Gathering in Bratislava, available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/271491044001498/>

¹¹ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva pri ohrození verejného zdravia č. OLP/5090/2020', 19 June 2020, available at

http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/19_06_final_opatrenia_ruska_stredne_skoly.pdf; Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva pri ohrození verejného zdravia č. OLP/5091/2020', 19 June 2020, available at

http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/19_06_final_opatrenia_prevadzky_a_HP.pdf

¹² Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva pri ohrození verejného zdravia č. OLP/5091/2020', 19 June 2020, available at

http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/19_06_final_opatrenia_prevadzky_a_HP.pdf

¹³ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva pri ohrození verejného zdravia č. OLP/5091/2020', 19 June 2020, available at

http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/19_06_final_opatrenia_prevadzky_a_HP.pdf

¹⁴ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (Úrad verejného zdravotníctva) (2020), 'Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva pri ohrození verejného zdravia č. OLP/5091/2020', 19 June 2020, available at

http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/19_06_final_opatrenia_prevadzky_a_HP.pdf

¹⁵ Slovakia, Act No. 355/2007 Coll. on Protection, Support and Development of Public Health as amended (Zákon č. 355/2007 Z.z. o ochrane, podpore a rozvoji verejného zdravia a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov), Para 57 Art 33 and 41, 21 June 2007, available at <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2007-355>

conditions of their children, pupils can stay at home and continue with distance learning. Parents thus have the right to receive social benefits for staying at home with children.¹⁶

Several hygienic measures introduced at the beginning of June (when the schools were opened) were changed as of 15 June 2020¹⁷:

- Limit of 20 pupils in the classroom in primary schools and 15 children in kindergartens was cancelled
- Ban of mixing children between groups was cancelled
- School operates daily for 10 hours (instead of 9 hours)
- Mandatory temperature measurement was cancelled
- Limit 10 minutes for parents in the school building was cancelled
- Ban for organisation of garden parties and other collective activities was cancelled

In June, the Ministry of education opened a call for the organisation of the summer schools. This project aims to help children to overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic situation, when schools were closed and many children (especially those from the socially disadvantaged environment) have had no adequate access to distance learning due to the many barriers (no internet access, poor living conditions in households, etc). Ministry of education provides funds (500 000 Euro) for organising the summer schools. Schools can apply for the small grants (2600 Euro maximum for organising three summer weeks in August)¹⁸

On 26 June, the State pedagogical institute organised the webinar on positive aspects of summer schools, provided the good practices and recommendations for teaching children with the special focus on children from socially disadvantaged environment¹⁹. State pedagogical institute also published the recommendations for organising the summer schools with methodical guides.²⁰

1.2.3 Work

Employed parents who had to stay at home with their children due to suspended schooling could claim so called “taking care of a family member” benefit (*ošetrovanie člena rodiny, OČR or pandemické ošetrovné*) that covered approximately 70% of their net salary.²¹ This benefit is suspended as of 30 June 2020.²²

¹⁶ Slovakia (2020) `Rozhodnutie Ministra školstva, 2020/12836:1-A2110`, 16 June 2020, available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/16677.pdf>

¹⁷ Information published at official website of Ministry of education for distance learning: <https://www.ucimenadiaku.sk/usmernenia/otvaranie-skol>

¹⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of education (*Ministerstvo školstva SR*) (2020) `Deti môžu ísť cez prázdniny do letnej školy, ministerstvo školstva im rozdelí pol milióna eur.` press release, 10 June 2020, available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/deti-mozu-ist-cez-prazdniny-do-letnej-skoly-ministerstvo-skolstva-im-rozdeli-pol-miliona-eur/>

¹⁹ Slovakia, State Pedagogical Institute (*Štátny pedagogický inštitút*) (2020), `Nový webinar ŠPÚ o letných školách`, 23 June 2020, available at: <https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/aktuality/nova-web-stranka-51.html>

²⁰ Slovakia, State Pedagogical Institute (*Štátny pedagogický inštitút*) (2020) `Odporúčania na výchovno vzdelávacie aktivity počas letných škôl v školskom roku 2019/2020`, June 2020, available at: https://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/aktuality/novinky-main/2020/letne_skoly_24_06_2020.pdf

²¹ Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR*) (2020), `Koronavírus a pracovné právo, PN a ošetrovné`, 10 March 2020, available at <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/informacie-media/aktuality/koronavirus-pracovne-pravo-pn-osetrovne.html>

²² Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo práce,*

The Labour Inspectorate published a non-binding guidelines based on the EU guideline on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace after the return of employees.²³

The system of “first aid” for employers and employees is still in place (as described in previous reports).²⁴

1.2.4 Access to justice

As of 2 June 2020, courts conduct proceedings in all matters all the while following rules and measures of the Public Health Authority (i.e. wearing face masks indoors, regular disinfection of courts’ premises, provision of hand disinfectants, 2m distance, and where possible measuring of body temperature of all persons entering the court buildings). All hearings are now open for public. However, 2m distance should be kept in the courtrooms which decreases their capacities. If, due to this measure, persons interested in attending the hearing cannot be fit in the courtroom the court should at least ensure attendance of media with national coverage.

In order to minimize escorting of convicts it is advised to use video-conference calls as much as possible when hearing the convicts.²⁵

The Ministry of Justice issued guidelines for parole and mediation officers. It is advised to pay increased attention to cases of domestic violence and make a record from each phone call with victims of domestic violence.²⁶

Penalties of compulsory work are to be individually re-assessed. If execution of such penalty was interrupted due to pandemic the parole officer should inform the judge and propose complete abolition of the sentence (depending on the number of unexecuted hours of work and the time remaining to execute them).²⁷

If assessment of housing conditions is ordered the officer of court should verify with persons concerned the risk of infection in their household. The verification should be done over the phone and a standardized questionnaire should be used.²⁸

sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR) (2020), ‘Pandemické ošetrovné v súvislosti so skončením núdzového stavu a otvorením predškolských, školských zariadení a zariadení sociálnych služieb’, press release, available at <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/koronavirus-pracovna-socialna-oblast/osetrovne-nemocenske/pandemicke-osetrovne-suvislости-so-skoncenim-nudzoveho-stavu-otvorenim-predskolskych-skolskych-zariadeni-zariadeni-socialna.html>

²³ Slovakia, National Labour Inspectorate (*Národný inšpektorát práce*) (2020), ‘COVID-19: Návrat na pracovisko – Prispôsobenie pracovísk a ochrana zamestnancov’, press release, available at https://www.ip.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/EU_guidance_COVID_19_SK.pdf

²⁴ For more information please see <https://www.pomahameludom.sk/>

²⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR*) (2020), ‘Opatrenia rezortu v rámci ochrany pred COVID-19. Opatrenia pre rezort spravodlivosti platné od 2. júna 2020’, press release, available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk/Stranky/Ministerstvo/Opatrenia-COVID-19.aspx>

²⁶ Slovakia, Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR*) (2020), ‘Opatrenia rezortu v rámci ochrany pred COVID-19. Opatrenia pre rezort spravodlivosti platné od 2. júna 2020’, press release, available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk/Stranky/Ministerstvo/Opatrenia-COVID-19.aspx>

²⁷ Slovakia, Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR*) (2020), ‘Opatrenia rezortu v rámci ochrany pred COVID-19. Opatrenia pre rezort spravodlivosti platné od 2. júna 2020’, press release, available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk/Stranky/Ministerstvo/Opatrenia-COVID-19.aspx>

²⁸ Slovakia, Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (*Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR*) (2020), ‘Opatrenia rezortu v rámci ochrany pred COVID-19. Opatrenia pre rezort spravodlivosti platné od 2. júna 2020’, press release, available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk/Stranky/Ministerstvo/Opatrenia-COVID-19.aspx>

No specific measures to address the backlog has been introduced other than those described in the previous report.²⁹

1.2.5 Freedom of movement

In June 2020, the Government introduced a list of safe countries. No restrictions are imposed on travelling from the following countries: Germany, Lichtenstein, Switzerland, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Monte negro, Faroe Islands, Monaco and Poland (with the exception of the Silesia region).³⁰

When travelling from an “unsafe” country it is mandatory to present a negative COVID-19 test not older than 96 hours at the border crossing or at the nearest Public Health Authority office (in case of entering the country via uncontrolled border crossing). It is also mandatory to undergo a 5-day domestic isolation and then to take another COVID-19 test.³¹

As of 10 June 2020, neither smart quarantine nor quarantine in state facilities is in place any longer.³² However, the Prime Minister did not rule out it could be reintroduced again if number of positive cases continued rising.³³

Asylum proceedings returned back to pre-pandemic mode of operation in May 2020, however, general epidemiological rules are to be followed (face masks worn indoors, hand disinfection, regular disinfection of premises etc. – as described in the previous report). Number of asylum applications lodged in the period of March - May 2020 was by 37 % lower than in the period of March - May 2019 (34 in 2020 vs. 54 in 2019).³⁴

1.3 Impact of measures on particular groups

- *persons with disabilities*

The ombudsperson for people with disabilities stated that the most negative impact on people with disabilities in June was inappropriate application of the *Plan of lifting up measures in social services*. According to this plan, 4 phases have been planned and implemented in June 2020. Since 3 June – social care institutions (only those providing services for people younger than 62 years) allowed visits; clients can leave the facility for a short period of time, etc. Since 8 June, the same applies also for

²⁹ Information provided by the Ministry of Justice via telephone on 26 June 2020.

³⁰ Slovakia, Public Health Authority (*Úrad verejného zdravotníctva*) (2020), ‘Opatrenie Úradu verejného zdravotníctva pri ohrození verejného zdravia č. OLP/5089/2020’, 19 June 2020, available at http://www.uvzsr.sk/docs/info/covid19/Opatrenie_k_hraniciam_doplnenie_bezpecnych_statov_do_prilohy_1_9062020.pdf

³¹ For more information please see <https://korona.gov.sk/karantenne-opatrenia/>

³² For more information please see <https://ekarantena.korona.gov.sk/>

³³ Slovakia, The Government Office of the Slovak Republic (*Úrad vlády SR*) (2020), ‘Premiér: Otázka opätovného zavedenia povinnej štátnej karantény je na mieste’, 17 June 2020, press release, available at <https://www.vlada.gov.sk/premier-otazka-opatovneho-zavedenia-povinnej-statnej-karanteny-je-na-mieste/>

³⁴ Statistics on asylum applications are available at <http://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20>

facilities with clients above 62 years. Since 15 June – all limitations for enrolling new clients has been cancelled and organisation of collective events is permitted. Since 1 July, all restrictions are cancelled³⁵.

According to the ombudsperson, the plan is not implemented properly in many facilities – there are many cases where visits are not allowed, interactions with relatives outside the facility is restricted, the new rules have not been published. People with disabilities and their relatives are not properly informed about changes in measures. Thus, the rights of people with disabilities to maintain contacts with people outside the facilities are disproportionately restricted³⁶.

- *women*

The Government Office of the Slovak Republic points out on its website “korona.gov.sk” that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a significant increase in domestic violence cases. As a result of the accompanying pandemic phenomena, such as stress, isolation, loss of economic security and labour constraints, domestic violence is estimated to have increased by 30-40%. The website also published a security plan for victims of domestic violence during the Covid-19 quarantine. The plan includes instructions for a woman experiencing domestic violence together with advice and guidance for anyone who identifies such a woman, and a list of contacts of social services that can help them. ³⁷ From 30 March to 14 June 2020 the Coordination and Methodological Center for Prevention of Violence against Women and Institute for Labour and Family Research conducted weekly surveys of service providers for women experiencing violence, to find out how many clients were looking for help and how many of them needed crisis accommodation. A total of 1,251 women turned to services in the observed period, 362 of them were women who had not previously used their services. After an initial reduction in the use of services by women experiencing violence at the beginning of the quarantine, there was an increase after Easter, which, except of one week, continued until June. At the beginning of the quarantine, women found it difficult to find a safe way to seek help. In the middle of April, thanks to the media coverage of the issue and organizations providing services to women experiencing violence, there was a gradual increase in the number of clients who turned to them. With the freeing of quarantine measures and growing possibility of seeking help, the number of clients continued to rise. While in the first week of April, organizations were contacted by an average of 3 women, it was 9 women by the beginning of June.

In addition, the increase in partner violence against women during the quarantine period can be confirmed. The stated numbers of women are significantly higher than they were in the same period last year. The National Line for Women Experiencing Violence which operates within the Institute for Labour and Family Research, reports up to twice the number of women who called the line for the

³⁵ Slovakia, Ministry of labour, social affairs and family (*Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny*) (2020), Plán uvoľňovania opatrení v sociálnych službách v súvislosti s ochorením COVID 19, May 2020, available at: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/uvzsr/plan-uvolnovania-opatreni-socialnych-sluzbach.pdf>.

³⁶ Information provided by the Ombudsperson for people with disabilities via email on 30 June 2020.

³⁷ Korona.gov.sk (2020), ‘Pomoc obetiam domáceho násillia’, available at <https://korona.gov.sk/pomoc-obetiam-domaceho-nasillia/>

first time³⁸. While in April and May 2019, the national line registered 49 new clients, this year it was 96 for the same period of time.³⁹

- *Roma and Travellers*

In June, no Roma settlement was in quarantine anymore. However, several negative impacts of the pandemic situation persist in Roma communities:

The income of households in marginalized Roma communities dropped significantly due to the return of those working abroad. That, in turn, increased indebtedness and usury.⁴⁰

People in Peril NGO reported that difficult access to health care in marginalized Roma communities made Roma more vulnerable to COVID-19 due to their generally poorer health condition. In June, the number of positive cases of COVID was on the rise in Roma communities (as for 26 June there were 4 new cases in Roma settlement in Žehra and there are concerns that situation may become even worse in upcoming weeks). Thus, the question of access to medical care is still relevant.

In June, kindergartens and First 5 grades of primary schools were opened again on 1 June 2020 and “higher” grades of education were opened since 22 June 2020. However, no information on how many Romani children returned to schools and what are the main challenges they faced after three months of distance learning is available. For instance – the organisation EduRoma in their monitoring of the impact of the pandemic on the education of Romani children states that the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma children will even increase⁴¹. Ministry of education created the scheme to support the summer schools to fill the gap in education of children affected by closure of schools (see part 1.2.2).

In June 2020, Amnesty international published a new report documenting violations of the economic, social and cultural rights of Roma and Travellers in 18 out of 35 European countries (including Slovakia). In some cases, the enforcement of lockdown measures has led to further marginalization, stigmatization and violence. Informal settlements and migrant camps in countries such as Bulgaria, France and Slovakia have been heavily policed, including the deployment of the army, and subject to mandatory testing. In several instances, Amnesty International obtained information about the unlawful use of force by law enforcement officials against the residents. Concerns over measures targeting Roma settlements in Slovakia and Bulgaria were also shared with the Council of Europe and the European Commission⁴².

³⁸ Slovakia, Institute for Labor and Family Research (Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny), ‘Tlačová správa: Dáta potvrdili, že násilie na ženách počas koronakrízy výrazne stúplo’, Press release from 18 June 2020, available at: https://ivpr.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TS_zistovanie_kr%C3%ADzov%C3%A9-ubytovanie_2020_final.pdf

³⁹ Information published on the website of the Coordinating-methodical centre for gender-based and domestic violence, available at: <https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/news/data-potvrdili-ze-nasilie-na-zenach-pocas-koronakrizy-vyrazne-stuplo/>

⁴⁰ People in Peril (*Človek v ohrození*) (2020), ‘Spájame sa pre ochranu zraniteľných pred COVID-19’, press release, 21 April 2020, available at <https://clovekvohrozeni.sk/spajame-sa-pre-ochranu-zranitelnych-pred-covid-19/>

⁴¹ Rafael, V. – Krejčíková, K. (2020), *Ako zostať blízko na diaľku. Prvé výsledky monitorovania žiakov z marginalizovaných rómskych komunit počas pandémie COVID 19*. Bratislava, EduRoma., available at: <https://eduroma.sk/docs/ako-zostat-blizko-na-dialku.pdf>

⁴² Amnesty International (2020), *Policing the pandemics. Human Right violations in the enforcement of Covid 19 measures in Europe*, London, Amnesty International, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0125112020ENGLISH.PDF>

2 Selected issues emerging during the COVID-19 crisis

2.1 Xenophobic speech, acts of harassment and violent attacks

During the reporting period, there have been several incidents recorded that attracted public attention and were published by the media. We list them although it was not confirmed that they were directly linked with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shortly after a deadly knife attack from 11 June at a primary school during which one person died and others were seriously injured (including children)⁴³, the MP from far-right People's Party – Our Slovakia (ĽSNS) started to spread fake information that the attacker was of Roma origin. This information was further shared by various FB pages and had many views, comments and other reactions. The information on the ethnic origin of the attacker was rebuffed by the police as well as the PM Igor Matovič⁴⁴. The police published correct information on its official FB page and warned the public against the spread of false information⁴⁵. Other MPs filed a criminal complaint since the MP from ĽSNS was suspected of committing the crime of incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred and crime of spreading an alarm message⁴⁶.

An employee of a private company informed via Facebook post on an incident when the company looking for accommodation for their employees in the town of Trenčín was informed by the owner of the accommodation facility that they have no accommodation capacity for Roma⁴⁷. According to the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (equality body), the Centre is dealing with the case as a direct discrimination since the accommodation facility first declared free places but after knowing the clients should be Roma they refused to accommodate them⁴⁸.

Violent attacks and riots were reported to happen during June in several localities inhabited by the Roma. Police informed on the incidents from villages in the Spiš region (eastern Slovakia) as well as in Čierna nad Tisou (south-east of Slovakia)⁴⁹. Violent attacks have been reported to getting worse in the village of Plavecký Štvrtok (western Slovakia) where a conflict among several Roma families is ongoing

⁴³ Euronews.com, 'Slovakia school attack: Knifeman kills one, injures five before being shot dead by police', 12 June 2020, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/06/11/slovakia-school-attack-knifeman-kills-one-injures-five-before-being-shot-dead-by-police>

⁴⁴ Slovak Spectator (2020), 'Two former prime ministers part ways during an eventful week', 15 June 2020, available at: <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22426178/two-former-prime-ministers-part-ways-on-an-eventful-week.html>

⁴⁵ FB page of the Police of the Slovak Republic, Post from 12 June 2020, available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/hoaxPZ/photos/a.317666309061243/723031075191429/?type=3&theater>

⁴⁶ Webnoviny.sk, 'Polák podal trestné oznámenie na Mazureka a chystá ďalšie na Kotlebu', 23 June 2020, available at: <https://www.webnoviny.sk/pollak-podal-trestne-oznamenie-na-mazureka-a-chysta-dalsie-na-kotlebu/>

⁴⁷ Dennik N, 'Rómovia alebo bieli? V trenčianskej ubytovni Janka tvrdili, že pre Rómov nemajú miesto', 9 June 2020, available at: <https://dennikn.sk/1923537/romovia-alebo-bieli-v-trencianskej-ubytovni-janka-tvrdili-ze-pre-romov-nemaju-miesto/?fbclid=IwAR1OIBS88ecv24Mj9Nq5U-OKOibI2Y2wCoi4BMXINT6JlkaHDJzY5AQIQcs>

⁴⁸ Slovakia, Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (Slovenské národné centrum pre ľudské práva), FB post from 9 June 2020, available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Stredisko/photos/a.341423002875537/1119852401699256/?type=3&theater>

⁴⁹ Tvnoviny.sk, 'Polícia riešila konflikty v osadách. Jednu hádku ukončil až varovný výstrel', 23 June 2020, available at: https://www.tvnoviny.sk/domace/2000712_policia-riesila-konflikty-v-osadach-jednu-hadku-ukoncil-az-varovny-vystrel, FB page of the Police of the Slovak Republic, Post from June 2020, available at: 23 June 2020, available at: https://www.facebook.com/policiaslovakia/posts/3452825758080955?_tn=-R

for a longer time⁵⁰. The incidents were reported to stem from bad relations among Roma families, it is not known whether the conflicts were linked with the pandemic situation.

As for the increase of hate attacks in relation to the coronavirus pandemic, there were manifestations of hostile behaviour reported towards Roma people. At the beginning of the pandemic, Roma coming from abroad were blamed for not keeping the home isolation and thus spreading the coronavirus in their environment⁵¹. Roma were also rejected to enter shops, drug stores, post offices etc. or were verbally attacked by people from the majority⁵². The most serious violent incident against Roma was the attack on five Roma children in Krompachy on 28 April who were beaten by a police officer for not keeping the quarantine (the locality was in lockdown at that time). The incident was condemned by several public figures and has been investigated by the Police inspection unit⁵³.

Although the lockdown of several Roma localities during the coronavirus pandemic was criticised by several NGOs, human rights institutions, etc., it was strongly supported by the public. According to a public opinion poll carried out by Slovak Academy of Sciences, the measure of the lockdown of some of the Roma localities received the highest support among all the measures adopted by the Government (86 % of population completely agreed with this measure)⁵⁴.

No official report on the increase of hate speech or other violent attacks on Roma (or other categories of population) has been published by Slovak public authorities.

Regarding the Covid-19 crisis, no other violent attacks or acts have been identified during the reporting period.

2.2 Infringement of privacy and/or data protection rights

The issue of using mobile applications for contact tracing and for checking persons in quarantine were discussed mainly in May and April. An application named *Covid-19 ZostanZdravy* was intended for finding out contacts of a person tested positive for coronavirus. Another application *eKaranténa*, was introduced in the second half of May for persons coming from abroad who were required to stay in home quarantine⁵⁵.

As the lifting of measures has progressed, the issue of contact tracing application is more relevant again. Instead of the application *Covid-19 ZostanZdravy*, the state authorities intend to use a new application for tracing of contacts of persons tested positive. The application should be based on the

⁵⁰ Denník N, 'Čtvrteckí, bučanskí, Malačané. Znepriatelene rómske rodiny v Plaveckom Štvrtku sa bijú a štát to nevie riešiť', 22 May 2020, available at: https://dennikn.sk/1900493/ctvrtecki-bucanski-a-malacane-znepriatelene-romske-rodiny-v-plaveckom-stvrtku-sa-biju-a-stat-to-nevie-riesit/Situ%C3%A1cia?fbclid=IwAR1AjcZLxPdEYujdkWt_SH_Srmt3_ZEcPIU-v_LH6DX4tVmmA_2epHXqY

⁵¹ Jádu (2020) 'Donúti pandémie riešiť postavenie Rómov žijúcich na okraji spoločnosti?', May 2020, available at: <https://www.goethe.de/prj/jad/cs/the/cor/21886312.html>

⁵² Michal Sivák, FB post from 18 March 2020, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/michal.sivak.14/posts/2841868965850232>

⁵³ Slovak Spectator (2020), 'Inspectorate deals with police intervention against Roma children in Krompachy', 29 April 2020, available at: <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22394831/inspectorate-deals-with-police-intervention-against-roma-children-in-krompachy.html>

⁵⁴ Sme.sk (2020) 'Viac ako polovica Slovákov je spokojná s postupom vlády pri zvládání pandémie', 5 May 2020, available at: <https://domov.sme.sk/c/22398191/vacsina-slovakov-je-spokojna-s-postupom-vlady-pri-zvladani-epidemie.html>

⁵⁵ Slovakia, korona.gov.sk, 'Smart karanténa – najčastejšie otázky ohľadne karantény v domácej izolácii s využitím aplikácie eKaranténa', available at: <https://korona.gov.sk/najcastejsie-otazky/ekarantena/>

decentralized system developed by Apple and Google⁵⁶. According to the head of Permanent Crisis Staff, the state plans to develop the application in cooperation with an external supplier, however, the state authorities have not taken final decision on the development of the app and on the public procurement connected with the process yet⁵⁷.

As for the application eKaranténa, the state authorities plan to introduce several changes to the application to improve its functioning. During the June, the usage of this application by people coming from abroad was not mandatory, however, the state authorities intend to use the application again if the pandemic situation is getting worse⁵⁸.

The Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic published a report summarizing findings of a survey on how public authorities (local and regional self-governments, state institutions) protect personal data in practice. According to the survey, the protection of personal data by public authorities is not sufficient. The legislation on data protection is extremely complicated and public authorities have not enough funds to take steps in compliance with the GDPR and respective national legislation. The smaller is the public institution, the worse is the personal data protection. The survey was carried out on the sample of 62 public institutions and was not directly linked with the coronavirus pandemic⁵⁹.

During the reporting period, no cases of breaking the right to personal data protection or serious concerns about personal data protection regarding coronavirus pandemic have been identified. The Office for Personal Data Protection (data protection authority) has not recorded such cases.

2.3 Spread of disinformation online

During the new coronavirus pandemic, false information began to spread on social networks. Since the beginning of the pandemic in Slovakia, from March to 26 June, the Police of Slovak Republic refuted more than 65 false pieces of information. In order to prevent their spread and reassure the population, the “Hoaxes and Scams – the Police of the Slovak Republic” FB page continues to refute false information.⁶⁰ “Among the most communicated topics in connection with COVID-19 were hoaxes such as concealing the number of the infected or new cases, or secret information coming from a Slovak doctor in China, ‘guaranteed’ preparations for prevention of or treatment of infection, text

⁵⁶ Zive.aktuality.sk, ‘Ako ide Apple zmeniť svet osobných počítačov a čo je nové s apkami proti korone’, 28 June 2020, available at: <https://zive.aktuality.sk/clanok/147487/ako-ide-apple-zmenit-svet-osobnych-pocitacov-a-co-je-nove-s-appkami-proti-korone/>

⁵⁷ Denník N, ‘Šéf permanentného štábu Škodný: S uvoľňovaním niektorých opatrení sme mohli počakať’, 26 June 2020, available at: https://e.dennikn.sk/1946401/sef-permanentneho-stabu-skodny-miera-medialnej-paniky-bola-asi-vyrazne-vyssia-aka-bola-realita/?ref=list&_ga=2.170609056.1445493425.1593411159-300653743.1588092225

⁵⁸ Zive.aktuality.sk, ‘Ako ide Apple zmeniť svet osobných počítačov a čo je nové s apkami proti korone’, 28 June 2020, available at: <https://zive.aktuality.sk/clanok/147487/ako-ide-apple-zmenit-svet-osobnych-pocitacov-a-co-je-nove-s-appkami-proti-korone/>

⁵⁹ Slovakia, Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic (Navyšší kontrolný úrad SR), https://www.nku.gov.sk/aktuality/-/asset_publisher/9A3u/content/nezrozumitelnost-legislativy-komplikuje-ochranu-osobnych-udajov, Zive.aktuality.sk, ‘Verejná správa nezabezpečuje ochranu osobných údajov dostatočne, odhalilo NKU’, 12 June 2020, available at: <https://zive.aktuality.sk/clanok/147262/verejna-sprava-nezabezpecuje-ochranu-osobnych-udajov-dostatočne-odhalilo-nku/>

⁶⁰ FB page of Police Force of the Slovak Republic on hoaxes and scams, available at: https://www.facebook.com/pg/hoaxPZ/posts/?ref=page_internal.

messages from state authorities and so on,” said Michal Slivka, the spokesman of the Presidium of the Police Force of Slovak Republic.⁶¹

⁶¹ Mračnová, S. (2020), 'Falošné správy a koronavírus na Slovensku: Polícia vyvrátila desiatky hoaxov', *Noviny.sk*, 28 June 2020, available at <https://www.noviny.sk/slovensko/538979-falosne-spravy-a-koronavirus-na-slovensku-policia-vyvratila-desiatky-hoaxov>