



# Strategic Report 2012

## of the EEA Financial Mechanism

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**Slovak Republic**  
Version 1.0

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is prepared for the period from 1 January 2012 till 31 December 2012 and after it is approved by the Monitoring Committee it will be submitted to the donor states. The report does not focus on programme administered by the company Innovation Norway (Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue).

In Slovakia, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism supports 4 programmes. 3 programmes are operated by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic.

The delay in these grants implementation is obvious and represents a great risk of the failure to achieve the set objectives. This delay is observed in all the Member States, whereas the Slovak Republic with 70% of programmes approved as at 31 December 2012 was on the seventh position among fifteen states. From the point of drawing, as at 31 December 2012 the beneficiary states were at about the same level – 0%.

Considering the final deadline for the eligibility of expenditures which is in general set to 30 April 2016, the risk of the failure to fulfil the objectives of financial mechanisms is very current.

The assessment process at the level of donor states, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein (hereinafter referred to as the “donors”) took at least 8 months in Slovakia. In some instances it has not yet been completed. The expected term of the assessment process of donors of 4 months doubled in most of the cases. It has to be noted, that the 4-month term starts to run only after the delivery of all the information the donor states consider needed for the programme approval. From this point all the terms were complied with.

A positive thing is that in November 2012 the programme agreements were signed for 2 programmes and their actual implementation may start in 2013. These programmes were SK07 Green Industry Innovation, SK07 Domestic and Gender – Based Violence.

## **2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

The impacts at the national level cannot be assessed at present, because the actual implementation has not yet commenced. Because of that this report focuses on expected impacts and the assessment of potential risks. The National Focal Point contacted independent experts and provided them with the texts of the programmes and asked them to prepare recommendations, to identify potential risks, to assess the way the conditions changed after almost a year after draft programmes submitting and to propose potential improvements. For majority of programmes the assessments were mainly positive.

### **2.1 Cohesion**

Cohesion is one of two basic objectives of the Norway Grants including the removal of economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area. Results-based management requires metering based on objectively verifiable indicators. The assessment of these indicators will provide the possibility to monitor whether Slovakia approaches the average values within the EEA or not in the course of the programme period. Several indicators are not monitored at the supranational level, however, the analysis of data from national resources may be used to postulate whether the situation in Slovakia in this respect is improving or not. A special category is cross-sectional criteria with which it is complicated, save some exceptions, to quantify the benefit of such grants. In the present and following chapters we will describe at least quality changes of certain parameters.

The report defines indicators that will be monitored during the programme period. These are the indicators relevant for individual programmes, i.e. the report does not focus on indicators that will not be influenced by the programmes implemented in the Slovak Republic. The indicators that cannot be statistically verified will not be monitored, too. The list may be completed from time to time. The objective of the strategic report in this part is not to meter the programme contribution to such indicators. This contribution cannot be quantified from the point of the Norway grants allocation and operation. The objective of this report is to analyse the social changes and trends in programme areas. However, we can expect at the same time that if positive changes occur it will be so also with the contribution of the Norway grants.

During the whole implementation period the indicators will be watched in the following areas:

Priority sector	Relevant programmes	Indicators
Climate change and renewable energy	Adaptation to climate change – floods and drought prevention	Losses caused by floods
Civil society	Funds for NGOs	Corruption perception index
Human and social development	Local and regional initiatives for social inclusion support	Persons endangered by poverty and social exclusion in the EEA after social transfers (allowances)
Conservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage	Cultural heritage conservation	Current condition of natural cultural monuments

### 2.1.1 Climate change

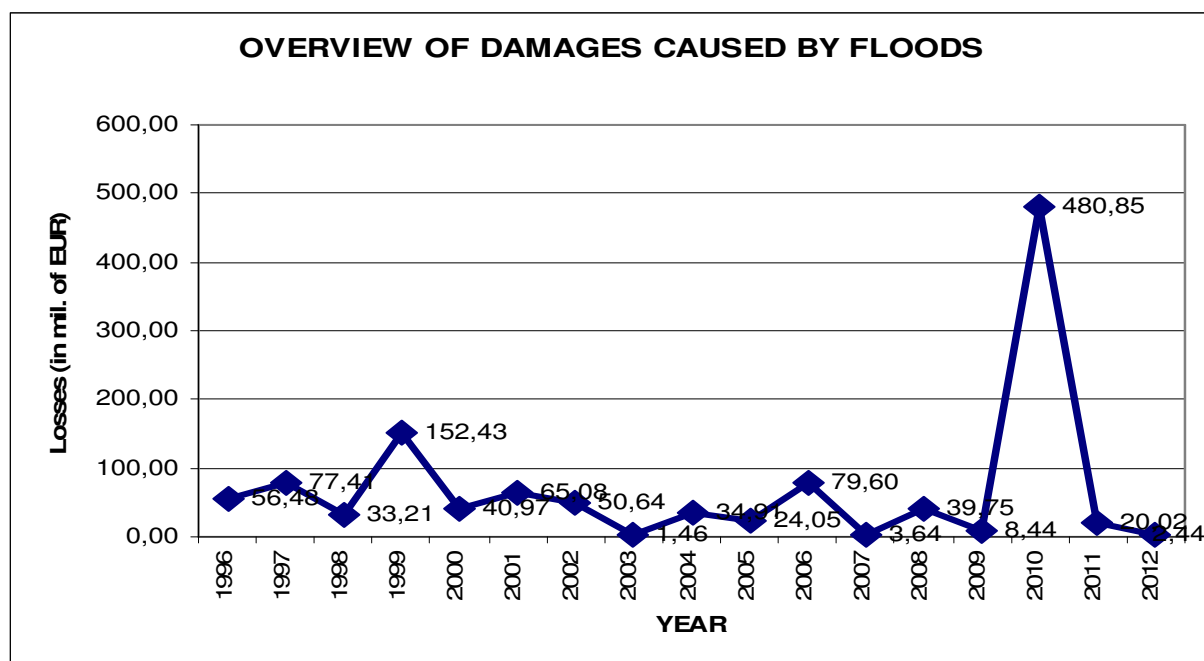
More and more attention is objectively paid to the climate change issues at all the levels starting from the global, European up to the national one. In spite of the fact that most scientists have agreed that the observed increase in world average temperature is “with high probability” i.e. with more than 90% probability caused by the increase in anthropogenic concentrations of greenhouse gasses, the so-called climate sceptics either deny the climate change as such or its anthropogenic origin. This discussion is natural and naturally leads also to deadlocks, it may lead to simplifications, incorrect, hasty or non-verifiable conclusions. In spite of that this discussion is very beneficial, because it turns attention of people including climate sceptics to our environment. Even the fact that the discussion exists may be seen as a positive fact.

#### **Statistics**

The losses caused by floods in 2010 were devastating and had a big impact on the decisions about the direction of the programme Adaptation to Climate Change. In the same years, Memoranda of Understanding were made by the Slovak Republic and donors. The data for 2012 is only till August.

Chart 1: Overview of losses caused by floods in individual years<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: prepared according to the reports on the course and consequences of floods on the territory of the Slovak Republic prepared every year by the Ministry of Environment of the SR



### 2.1.2 Fund for non-governmental organisations

The civil society in Slovakia is provided another impulse to strengthen its status. Almost EUR 7 mil. from the EEA grants have been reserved for the support to non-governmental organisations. The Commissioner of the Slovak Government for Civil Society actively works by the Ministry of Interior of the SR. Other funds are available to non-governmental organisations in other programmes of the EEA Grants and Norway Grants such as e.g. Domestic and Gender-based Violence, Cross-border Cooperation with Ukraine and Conservation of European Cultural Heritage.

From this point we can state that the EEA Grants and the Norway Grants are currently most probably the biggest donors to the non-governmental organisations in Slovakia, which is a pleasant lead. In spite of that these grants have lost one of their important dimensions which is the cooperation of non-governmental organisation and the state administration.

According to the decision made by donors, the fund for non-governmental organisations has split into two parts and the donors have selected the following operators:

1. Democracy and Human rights (administrated by Open Society Foundation)
2. Active Citizenship and Inclusion (administered by the consortium of Ekopolis Foundation, Socia Foundation, Children of Slovakia Foundation)

#### **In the area of democracy and human rights the EEA Grants go to the following objectives:**

1. Democracy, good and transparent administration of public affairs.
2. Human rights including rights of minorities.
3. Gender equality and combating gender-based violence.
4. Prevention of discrimination, combating racism, xenophobia and other expressions of intolerance.

**Within Active citizenship and inclusions the support areas are defined as:**

1. Active citizenship
2. Environment protection and climate changes
3. Children and Youngsters
4. Development of services in social area

Reports for individual programmes will be prepared by the above stated programme operators; this strategic report will concentrate on the areas marked as horizontal priorities and the ones with which the potential of funds for non-governmental organisations is very important. These issues are the subject of a separate chapter.

**Statistics**

Chart 2: Average ranking of 27 EU countries + Norway and Iceland from 2004 to 2012 in the ranking of countries according to the CPI index<sup>2</sup>

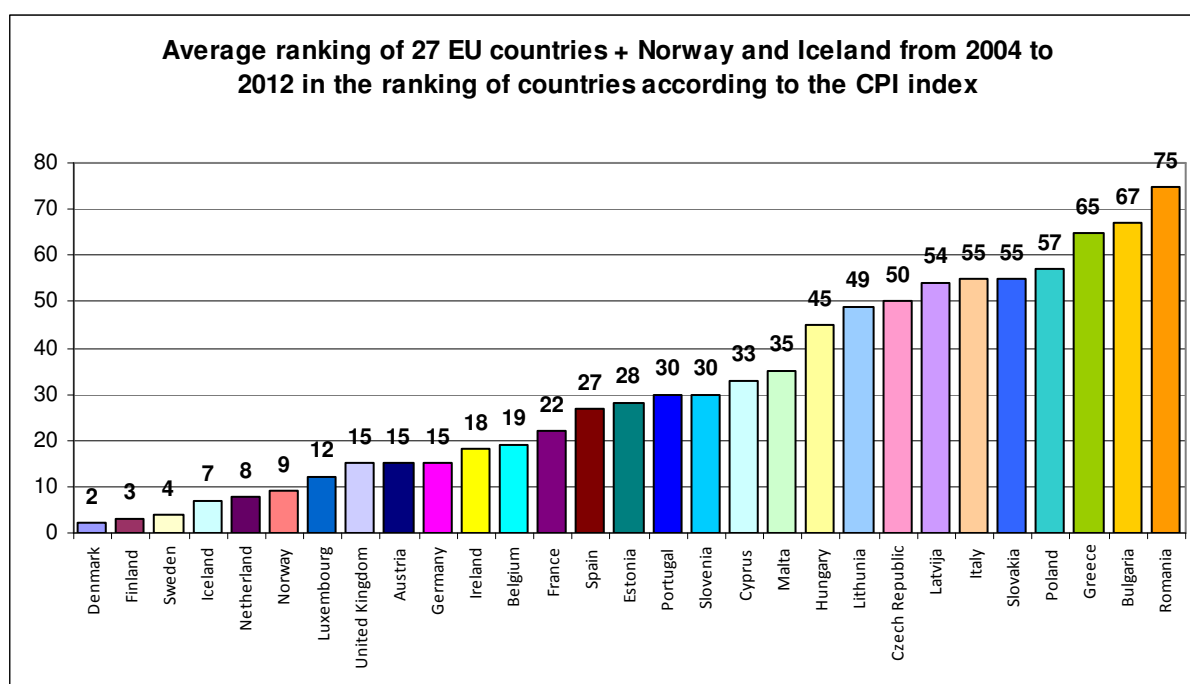
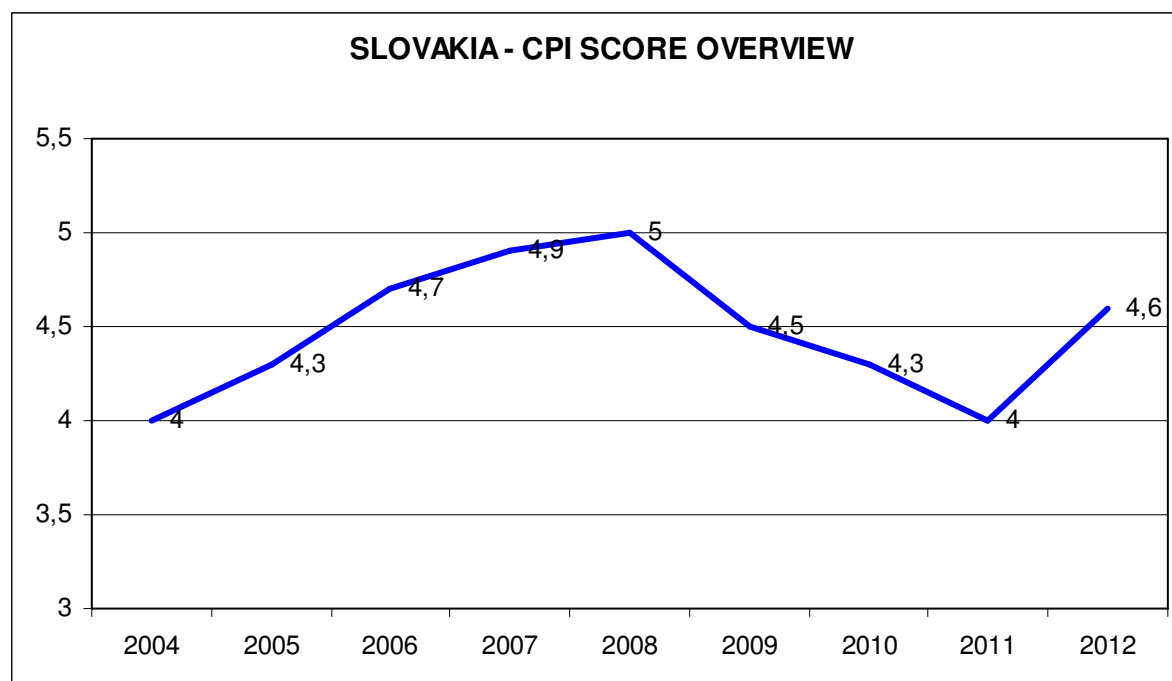


Chart 3: Development of CPI index in Slovakia from 2004 to 2012

<sup>2</sup> Source: According to the ranking prepared every year according to the Corruption Perception Index - Transparency International





### 2.1.3 Local and regional initiatives to promote social inclusion

This programme with a specific focus on Roma minority is a smaller one among the programmes supported in the programme period 2009 – 2014. Its allocation significantly influenced also decision-making about the programme direction which focused on education. Two pre-defined projects were selected and their objective was to prepare teachers for teaching Roma language and culture, to assist pupils by communication in Roma language and small grants for schools interested in inclusive education will be supported.

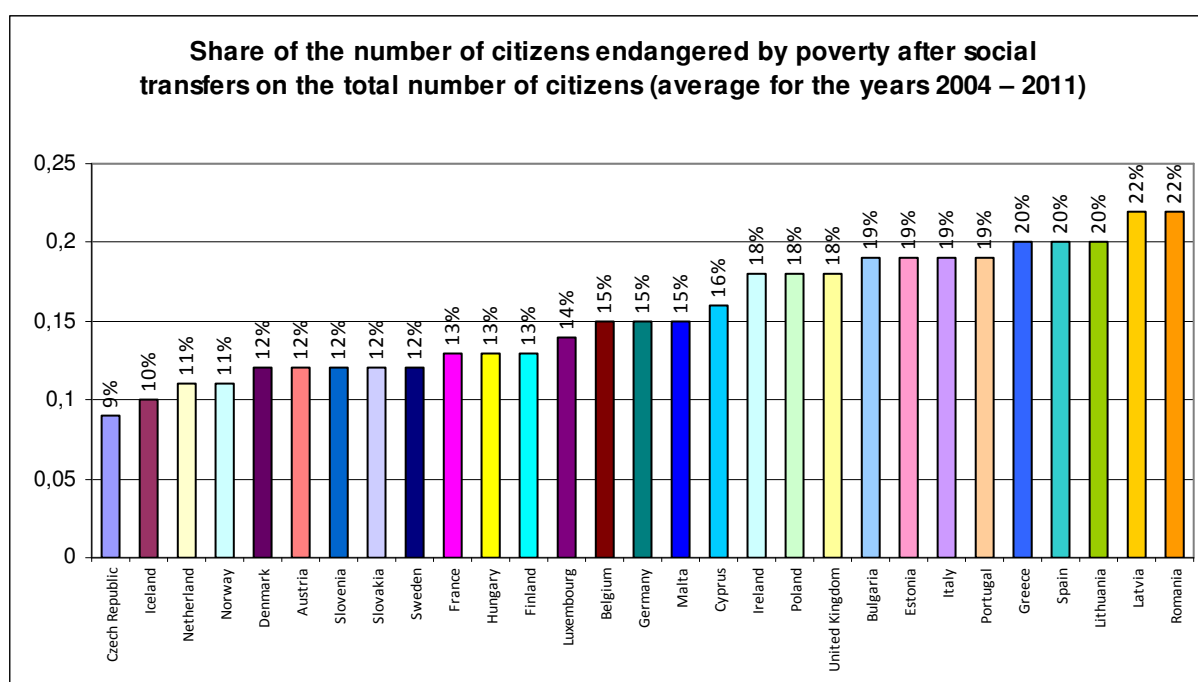
In October 2012 the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities and the Minister of Interior of the SR published a Roma reform in the area of schools and education. The National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the amendment to the anti-discrimination bill providing the possibility in specific instances to temporarily privilege people from unprivileged groups e.g. as job applicants. The amendment changed the section cancelled according to the decision of the Constitutional Court in 2005. We can see the amendment to the bill and its adoption by the Parliament as an acknowledgement of the fact that all the citizens have the same rights and obligations, but not all the citizens have the same opportunities to exercise the rights and fulfil the obligations.

### Statistics

The fact that in Slovakia the data is not assessed and it is not monitored according to ethnicity significantly decreases the possibility of a year-on-year comparison. Probably the only relevant indicator which is statistically recorded and compared on a year-o-year basis in the EEA is the indicator of the percentage share of citizens endangered by poverty. In the period between 2004 and 2011 Slovakia ranked on average on the 8<sup>th</sup> position among 27

EEA states<sup>3</sup>. This indicator cannot be interpreted in a way that Slovakia is the eighth richest EEA country. Simply said, the indicator has to be seen in the purchasing power parity as the quantity of citizens not achieving 60% of average earnings of citizens in the relevant country. The informative value of the indicator is represented mainly by the comparison of social differences; it says nothing about the richness of the country. A country ranked in this ranking on the first status (Czech Republic), is not the richest EEA country, it is the country with the lowest percentage of people not achieving 60% of average earnings in this country.

Chart 4: Share of the number of citizens endangered by poverty after social transfers on the total number of citizens (average for the years 2004 – 2011)<sup>4</sup>



#### 2.1.4 Conservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage

Slovakia is a country rich in certain components of cultural heritage, especially in castle and sacral architecture. The issue of cultural monuments protection in Slovakia – just as in abroad – is the under-dimensioned financing. From the National Focal Point view it is important to link the investments into the revitalisation of cultural monuments with incomes they are capable to generate either directly or indirectly, i.e. to make use of the possibilities of the so-called cultural tourism. Relatively large number of objects registered as immovable national cultural monuments (more than 9,000<sup>5</sup>) does not allow the restoration of all of them.

<sup>3</sup> Lichtenstein is not disclosed separately in EUROSTAT statistics, data for Switzerland is not reported within these grants.

<sup>4</sup> Prepared according to Eurostat's data

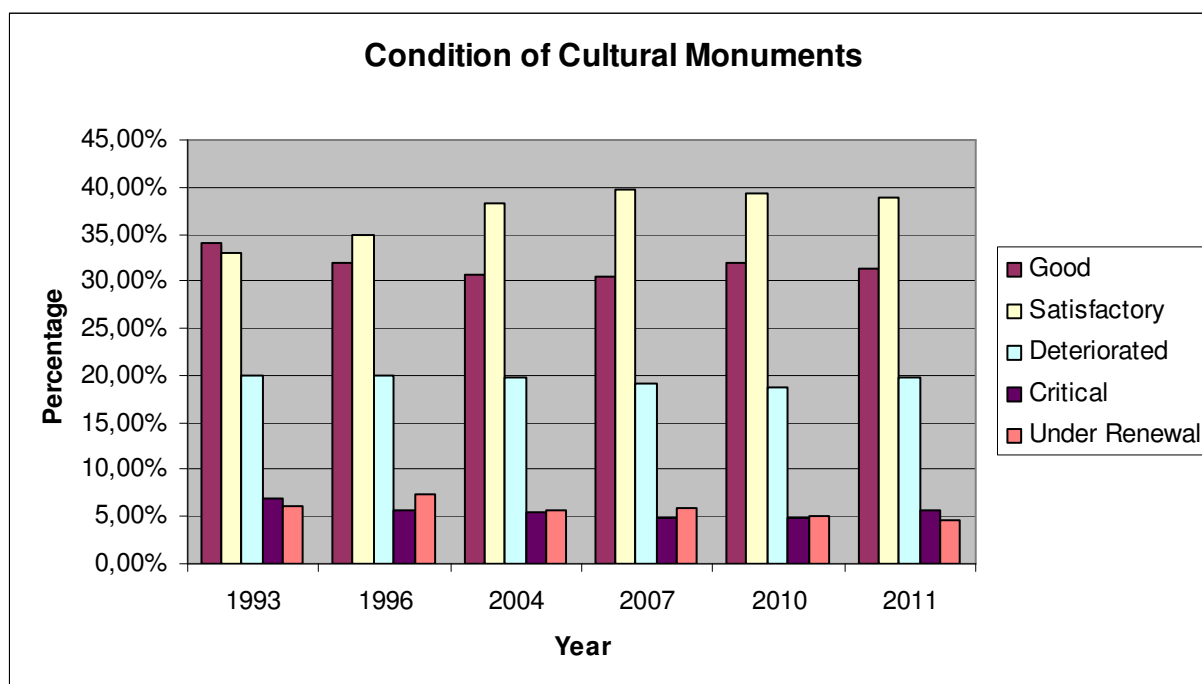
<sup>5</sup> Data from the Monuments Board of the SR - <http://www.pamiatky.sk/sk/page/viac-o-evidencii-nkp>

Prevention and regular expert monitoring of their condition will play increasingly important role at the monuments conservation. Because the programme Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural Heritage after its re-submission has not been approved by donors yet, the National Focal Point cannot assess its direction in this Strategic Report.

### **Statistics**

Every year, the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic publishes data about the condition of cultural monuments. The website of the Monuments Board of the SR states: *“Thanks to grant programmes the construction and technical condition of monuments has been successfully stabilised. From 1993 the percentage of monuments in a good condition (1) was gradually falling from 34 % in 1993 to 29.65 % in 2006 and in 2007 it returned back to 30.50 % and 31.0 % in 2010. The share of endangered monuments, monuments in deteriorated condition (3) and in critical condition (4) falls constantly from 27 % in 1994 to 24.55 % in 2006 and 23.60 % in 2010. The condition of majority of monuments changed for the category satisfactory (2) from 33% to almost 40 %. Together with the monuments in good condition in 2011 more than 70 % of the monuments fund is of satisfactory condition.”<sup>6</sup>*

**Chart 5: Condition of cultural monuments – development from 1993<sup>7</sup>**



### **2.1.5 Scholarship Fund**

On 31 December 2012 a public procurement process arranged by the Government Office of the SR for the selection of the Scholarship Fund Operator was underway. With regard to

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pamiatky.sk/sk/page/vyvoj-stavebno-technickeho-stavu-a-vlastnickej-formy-pamiatok>

<sup>7</sup> the same

the fact that as at this date the program proposal has not been prepared it is not possible to assess its benefit or potential risks in the Strategic Report.

## 2.2 Bilateral relations

Among ten programmes implemented in the Slovak Republic 8 are implemented in partnership with the programme's donor partner. The idea to cover the costs from the allocation determined for donors has removed potential issues linked to the public procurement and state aid. From this point we can see the decision of donors and the Slovak Republic to participate in the donor partner programmes in almost all programmes only positively.

Slovakia makes efforts for partnership also at the project level. The programme's donor partners will be asked to prepare a list of potential project partners from donor states. The list should always be published together with the appeal.

The support of the search for project partners in donor states and the development of this partnership and the process of the preparation of the application for the project with the donor partner is supported within the programme bilateral funds. When publishing calls for submitting of projects on programme websites the programme operators will also publish notifications about opening a bilateral fund of the programme.

Area	Relevant programmes	Indicators
Commerce	Green Industry Innovations	DFI of Norway in the SR <sup>8</sup>
Student mobility	EEA Scholarship Programme	Number of Norwegian students studying in the SR – full-time study

### 2.2.1 Commerce

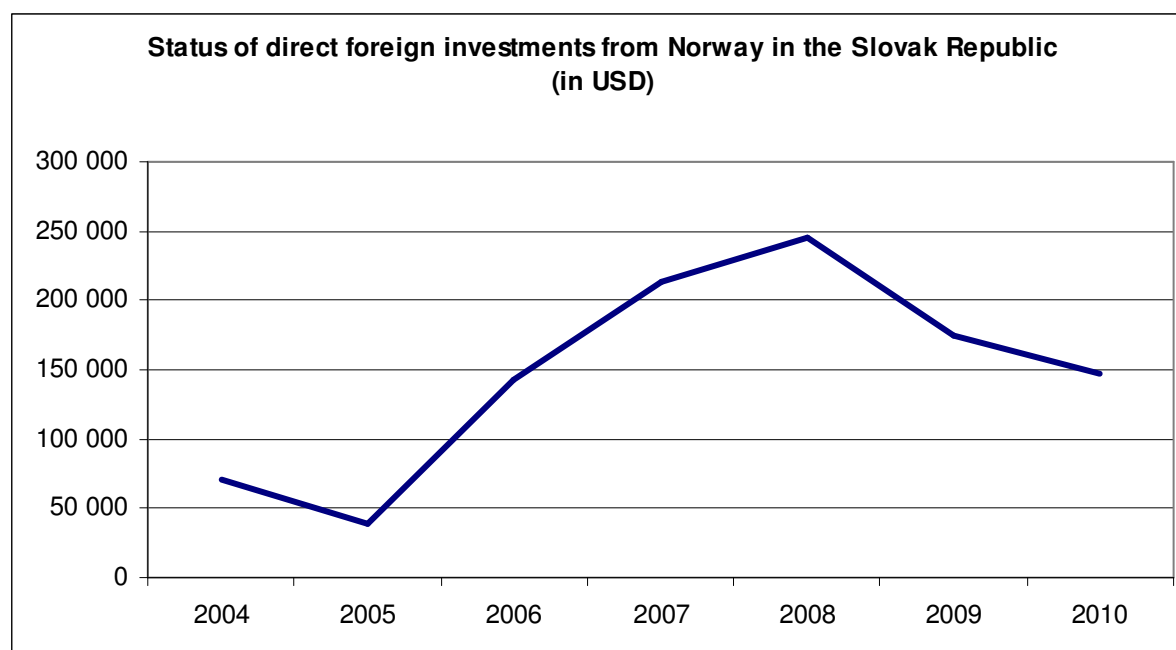
From the point of the National Focal Point it can be stated that the relations of the SR can be metered mainly by economic indicators among which the most appropriate is the status of direct foreign investments (hereinafter referred to as the "DFI") from Norway in the SR. According to the data published by the National Bank of Slovakia the decrease of the DFI of Norway in the SR was recorded in the period between 2008 and 2010. The opposite flow, i.e. the status of the DFI from Slovakia in Norway was not statistically assessed. Inclusion of donor partners in individual programmes may reverse this trend.

#### Statistics

Chart 6: Status of direct foreign investments from Norway in the Slovak Republic<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nbs.sk/sk/statisticke-udaje/statistika-platobnej-bilancie/priame-zahranicne-investicie>

<sup>9</sup> Prepared according to the data from the National Bank of Slovakia <http://www.nbs.sk/sk/statisticke-udaje/statistika-platobnej-bilancie/priame-zahranicne-investicie>



### 2.2.2 Student mobility

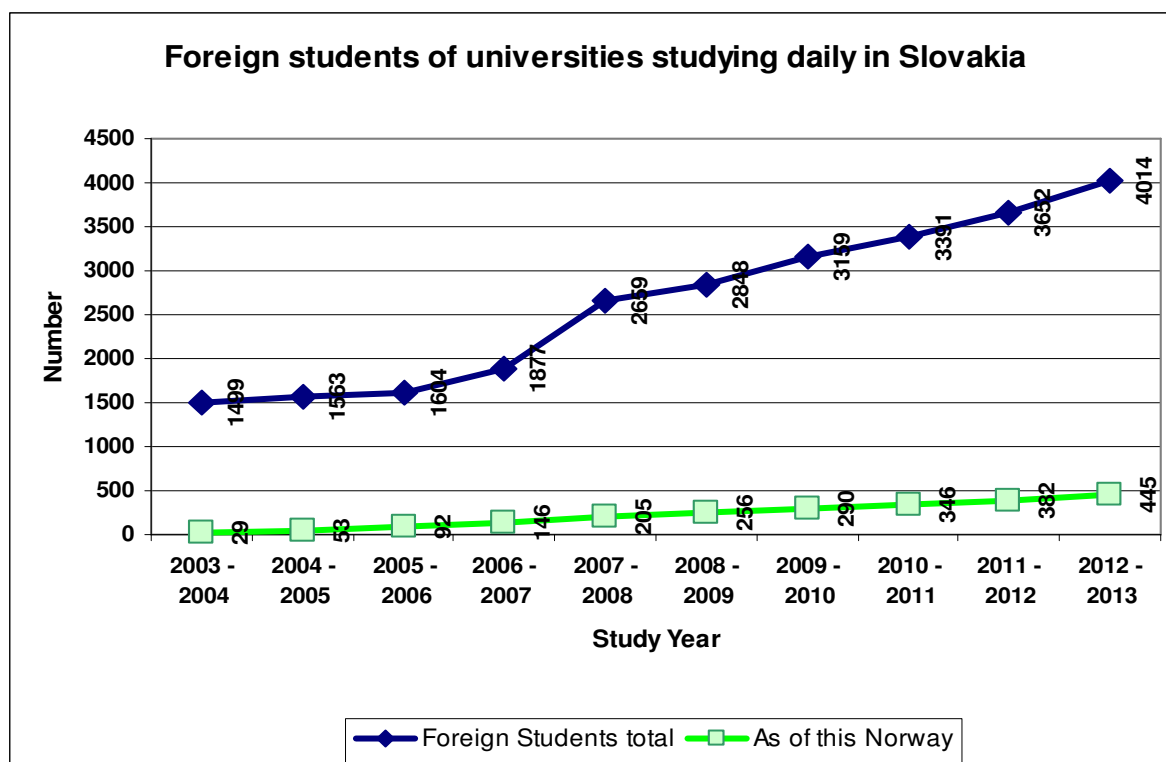
Both in the former and in this period, the EEA grants finance the student mobility. Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein have limited potential to receive foreign students. In spite of that these grants were very popular in former period. The Norwegian students like studying in Slovakia which is also proved e.g. by 300 Norwegian students studying medicine in Martin. This trend should also be supported by the Scholarship Fund. The National Focal Point would appreciate if the Scholarship Fund could work synergically with other programmes of the EEA and Norway Grants, e.g. by privileging schools with the curriculum focus close to other programmes financed from these grants. However, the National Focal Point respects absolute autonomy of the Scholarship Fund Operator and this is only a recommendation made by the National Focal Point.

#### Statistics

From 2003-2004 the quantity of foreign students studying in the SR has more than tripled. For comparison, more than 37,000<sup>10</sup> students studied in the neighbouring Czech Republic in 2010 – 2011. More than a half, exactly more than 24,000 of them were from Slovakia. The total quantity of Slovak students studying in abroad is not statistically assessed according to the information at our disposal.

Chart 7: Overview of the quantity of foreign students studying in Slovakia on a full-time basis

<sup>10</sup> Source: Statistical Almanac of Education 2010, <http://www.msmt.cz/file/21814>



### 2.2.3 Assessment of bilateral relations

The National Focal Point could monitor the inclusion of the donor programme partners in the creation of programme proposals. We can state that there were problems in the beginning in some instances caused by the fact that the whole partnership system on the programme level was new and the competences of individual institutions were not fully clear. However, these initial issues were quickly resolved and the donor programme partners enriched the programmes by expertise and know-how from other cultures and countries.

Because no projects have been implemented so far, not even projects with the donor partner, the National Focal Point asked all the donor partners for the assessment of cooperation. Their standpoints are attached to this Report.

## 2.3 Horizontal questions

The EEA and Norway Grants considered as horizontal priorities mainly the following cross-cutting issues:

1. Democracy, good governance
2. Human rights and minorities
3. Vulnerable groups, e.g. Roma minority
4. Combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia
5. Combating poverty and social exclusion
6. Gender equality, gender-conditioned violence
7. Combating hate speech

In this part the Strategic Report concentrates only on democracy, good governance and combating hate speech. The points 2.-5. are the subject of previous parts of this Report. The point 6. is the subject of Strategic Report on Norway Grants.

### **2.3.1 Democracy and good governance**

The National Focal Point implements measures that should help at increasing the measure of public control of these grants, mainly in the area of public procurement. In this programme period the beneficiaries are obliged e.g.:

1. To submit the tender documents to programme operators before their announcement so that the programme operator could assess the decisive parameters, mainly with respect to non-discrimination of applicants.
2. The public procurement must be made in the form of an open public competition always when possible.
3. The National Focal Point intends to publish the information about all the public procurements announced on the websites [eeagrants.sk](http://eeagrants.sk) and [norwaygrants.sk](http://norwaygrants.sk) and it will negotiate with other institutions about the data sharing.
4. The beneficiaries will be responsible for revealing potential collusive behaviour among applicants.

Almost all the programmes have been prepared not only in cooperation with relevant departments, but also with the representatives of the civil society in Slovakia and representatives of the programme donor partners. In this way the principles of participative democracy are strongly strengthened.

### **2.3.2 Combating hate speech**

Hate speech is a global issue and to a significant scope it relates to the development of the Internet, Internet discussions and social networks. Media do not avoid it, too. Hate speech in Slovakia is directed against many groups. The subject-matter of the hate speech is generalisation and acknowledging the principle of collective fault. The National Focal Point has been involved in the initiative of the EEA Grants and on its website it has published information about the campaign of the European Council in combating the hate speech in Europe<sup>11</sup>.

## **3 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.1 Management and control system**

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<sup>11</sup> [www.eegrants.sk](http://www.eegrants.sk), [www.norwaygrants.sk](http://www.norwaygrants.sk)

The management and control system in the Slovak Republic is centralised and unified for all the programmes operated by the programme operators appointed by the National Focal Point. The objective of centralisation and unification is to eliminate the pending risk of not drawing the funds assigned to the Slovak Republic.

The management and control system of the National Focal Point was audited by the auditing body. The audit was completed in 2011, whereas in 2012 the National Focal Point presented an updated version of the Detailed Description of Management and Control System. It was approved by donors on 10 August 2012.

## 3.2 Compliance with legal regulations

All the management documents and approved programmes were prepared in compliance with the legal regulations of the EU, domestic legal regulations and the Memorandum of Understanding. No specific issues have occurred so far.

## 3.3 Status of programmes

### 3.3.1 SK02: Adaptation to Climate Change – Floods and Drought Prevention

Programme area:	Adaptation to climate change
Programme operator:	National Focal Point – Government Office of the SR Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning
DPP:	Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate
Allocation from the EEA FM:	EUR 12,463,750
State budget co-financing:	EUR 2,199,485
Programme performance status:	Preparation of a call for submitting the applications for project

The main objective of the programme is to propose strategies, implement measures to adapt to the climate change, increase capacities for the assessment of vulnerability to climate change and to increase awareness and knowledge about adaptation to climate change to public. The objective of the programme is to find economically efficient and environmentally sustainable adaptation measures based on the change of land-use and solutions of risks caused by the climate change.

Generally, the programme consists of four components, whereas the first two will develop the proposal and consequent implementation of adaptation measures in the regions of Zemplín and Horná Nitra, the third component focuses on the issues regarding the climate change in the urban environment and the fourth one is a small grant scheme focusing on



dissemination and development of knowledge about the climate change and adaptation measures at schools in the whole SR.

The programme considers the cooperation of local governments and also non-governmental organisations, working and informative meetings, workshops, etc. Because the programme has not yet reached the project implementation stage, its outputs and outcomes have not yet been fulfilled even in part.

### **Risks**

The programme proposal expects that the indicators at the level of programme outcomes will be achieved. One of such indicators is also the performance of 50,000 adaptation measures. The basic premise of the programme is that the measures performance shall be preceded by the creation of adaptation strategy which will determine what types of measures are appropriate in the relevant region. However, this setting of indicator a priori presumes that the outcome of the adaptation strategy will be the measures that represented majority within the revitalisation programme e.g. check dams and erosion control dams.

### **Work plan 2013**

- Q1: Preparation and launching of open calls for the programme (component Zemplín, Horná Nitra and Healthy Cities)
- Q2: Preparation and launching of calls for small grant scheme (Blue Schools)  
 Launching conference on announcing the calls and match-making seminar for potential parties performing the project and project partners within the programme  
 Regional seminars for open calls  
 Calls closing
- Q3: Assessment of applications submitted within calls
- Q4: Making of contracts with beneficiaries

#### **3.3.2 SK03 and SK10: Fund for Non-governmental Organisations**

Programme area:	Funds for non-governmental organisations
Programme operators:	Open Society Foundation Ekopolis Foundation and partners
Allocation from the EEA FM:	EUR 6,903,000
Programme performance status:	Preparation of a call for submitting the applications for project

The programme objective is supporting the development of non-governmental organisations, support of social justice and sustainable development. The programme will focus also on the needs of minorities, reforms in judiciary, support for activities in the area of environment,

etc. Because the programme is administered by the Office for Financial Mechanism in Brussels, the analysis of risks and Work plan 2013 are not the part of this Report.

### **3.3.3 SK04: Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion**

Programme area:	Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion
Programme operator:	National Focal Point – Government Office
DPP:	Council of Europe
Allocation from EEA FM:	EUR 1,000,000
State budget co-financing:	EUR 176,471
Programme progress:	On 24 October 2012 the programme was approved by donors and on 6 November 2012 the Programme Agreement was signed between Financial Mechanism Committee and the Government Office of the SR

The programme objective is strengthened social and economic cohesion at the national, regional and local level. The programme in compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding focuses on specific needs of Roma people and the funding is complementary to and supportive of the national strategy with regard to the social inclusion.

The main objective of the programme is creating conditions, mainly human and expert resources, for quality intercultural educational programmes with the help of Roma language in wider scope and the support for primary and secondary schools interested in the development of inclusive education by means of intercultural education. All the programme activities focus on promoting the social inclusion by means of intercultural education, Roma language and culture and cooperation among schools and families.

#### **The programme consists of the following components:**

- Creating an accredited programme of extended education focusing on Roma language and culture. The objective of the extended education is to provide the teachers from practice (teachers with masters degree and qualified to teach other subjects) with accredited study programme that would help them to acquire sufficient competences to teach Roma language and culture at primary and secondary schools. The component also includes preparation of study materials and textbooks for the extended education attendants. The component is planned as pre-defined project performed by the Institute of Romology Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.
- Creating an accredited study programme of innovative education for teachers at primary schools to improve their intercultural competencies in the educational process of Roma pupils. The main objective of the innovation education is to train teachers at primary schools to be able to use Roma language as a supportive language in the educational process.

The project also includes:

- a) preparation of study materials for the innovative education attendants
  - b) preparation of textbooks focusing on Roma language and culture for teachers and pupils at primary and secondary schools. This component is planned as pre-defined project to be performed by the National Institute for Education in Bratislava.
- Small grants to support Roma inclusion and intercultural projects at primary and secondary schools. The primary and secondary schools strengthen the implementation of school educational programmes and out-of-school activities focusing on intercultural education, Roma language, culture and history of Roma people with the participation of family, school and community. The component is planned as a call for submitting the proposals for primary and secondary schools. The only call in the programme is planned within this component.

In the process of the programme preparation and during its implementation the programme operator has been closely cooperating with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR, Open Society Foundation, National Institute for Education and Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. However, these institutions do not participate formally as partners in the programme. The cooperation has been taking place mainly at the level of individual experts providing consulting and proposals on an ad hoc basis and according to the requirements of the Programme Operator.

### **Risks**

By the beginning of 2013, the National Focal Point tasked an independent expert to prepare a study about the programme focusing on the strategic assessment of the programme relevance, development in relevant legislation from the moment of programme submitting for the assessment by the donor till the end of 2012, and the progress in the programme for the relevant period and last but not least the assessment of the appropriateness of the proposed indicators setting and quantification. The outcome of the study is a conclusion that the programme “Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion” in terms of its content fully complies with the measures and activities of the “*National Work Plan*” and the national strategy.

In March 2013 the Programme Operator received a notification from the party performing the pre-defined project (Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra) pointing to an unexpected amendment to the Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on universities, which is in force from 1 January 2013 and a major change in the criteria for university study programmes accreditation valid from 1 April 2014, according to which the University is not able to fulfil the objectives defined in the pre-defined project. Based on the changes above stated the University is not able to fulfil the primary objective of the pre-defined project – to acquire accreditation for the study programme “Roma language and culture” and to achieve the project objectives within the stated deadline, because the extended study term is changed from 2 to at least 3 years. Based on this fact, the Operator initiated a meeting of experts participating at the programme proposal preparation and of the parties performing the PDP with the objective to find a solution of the situation.

**Work plan 2013**

- Q1: Preparing the Programme Study by an independent expert  
Call for submitting of applications for the PDP
- Q2: Cooperation Committee meeting – selection criteria, solution of the PDP  
Assessment of applications for the PDP  
Making of contracts for pre-defined projects  
Preparation of call and its annexes texts  
Creating the programme profile on social networks
- Q3: Announcing the call for schools  
Starting the implementation of pre-defined projects  
Programme information days – regional seminars  
Programme launching conference and match-making seminar for the programme  
Closing of open call  
Receiving applications for the project  
Assessment of applications submitted within an open call  
Concluding contracts for projects submitted within an open call
- Q4: Start with the implementation of projects for schools  
PDP implementation

**3.3.4 SK05: Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage and Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage**

Programme area:	Protection and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage
Programme operator:	National Focal Point – Government Office
DPP:	-
Allocation from the EEA FM:	EUR 11,922,000
State budget co-financing:	EUR 2,103,971
Programme performance status:	Finalisation of programme agreement to be signed and approved by donors

The main objective of the programme is the conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage.

With regard to the whole territory of the Slovak Republic the programme proposal has three parts for now:

1. Support for protection of castles and city palaces
2. Conservation of the most important religious monuments
3. Small grant scheme.

The programme objective is to support the protection and conservation of castles and making them accessible to the broad public as well as the restoration and providing access to the most important religious monuments belonging among our most important historical monuments for their extraordinary scenic, architectonic and historic value. The support for and conservation of these objects of cultural heritage will have a synergy effect also on the support of regional development of tourism and cultural tourism.

The small grant scheme within the programme will focus on broad support of diversity in the areas of culture and arts that we perceive as European cultural heritage.

The programme performance will also include the implementation of two pre-defined projects – reconstruction and renewal of the former Servant House in Rusovce and the revitalisation of the adjacent park as well as the pilot project ProMonumenta – Prevention by Maintenance.

As the programme agreement is now being prepared for signing, the programme outputs and outcomes have not yet been fulfilled even in part and it is also not possible to assess the potential risks.

### **Work plan 2013**

- Q1: Programme proposal assessment by donors  
Preparation and signing of programme agreement  
Cooperation Committee meeting
- Q2: Creating the programme profile on social networks  
Request for submitting of applications for predefined projects  
Making of contracts for predefined projects  
Preparation and launching of open calls for the programme
- Q3: Preparation of Communication Work plan for the programme  
Launching conference and match-making seminar for the programme  
Opening the measure A for the programme bilateral fund  
Regional seminars for open calls  
Closing of open calls and starting the process of applications assessment
- Q4: Assessment of applications submitted within open calls  
Making of contracts for projects submitted within open calls  
Opening the measure B for the programme bilateral fund

#### **3.3.5 SK06: EEA Scholarship Programme**

Programme area: Scholarships

Programme operator:	-
	Iceland Research Centre
PDP:	National Agency for International Agency Affairs, Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in University Education
Allocation from the EEA FM:	EUR 1,917,500
State budget co-financing	EUR 338,382
Programme progress:	As at 31 December 2012 the public procurement process for the selection of programme operator was underway.

The programme objective is to create a scholarship fund to support the student and teacher mobility. At the turn of 2012/2013 a public procurement for the programme operator was announced. The deadline for proposal submitting was 15 January 2013.

### **3.3.6 Technical Assistance Fund and Bilateral relations fund at National Level**

#### **2012**

- Q1: A budget for the Technical Assistance and bilateral relations fund at the national level for the whole implementation period and the budget for the calendar year 2012 was prepared and submitted to donors.
- Q2: The Agreement on Financing the Technical Assistance and bilateral relations fund at national level was signed between the Financial Mechanism Committee and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government Office of the Slovak Republic on 25 May 2012.  
The Agreement on Drawing the Funds from the Technical Assistance Fund and the bilateral relations fund at the national level within the EEA FM and the NFM was signed between the Government Office of the SR and the Ministry of Finance of the SR on 22 June 2012.  
The first meeting of the Monitoring Committee took place on 24 May 2012.
- Q3: Guideline of the Head of the Government Office of the SR about funds drawing within the Government Office of the SR at the implementation of programme period 2009-2014 EEA FM and NFM was issued in August 2012.  
Interim financial report No. 1 within the TA Fund and the bilateral relations fund at the national level was submitted to the Certifying Authority in August 2012.  
A detailed budget for the Technical Assistance for the calendar year 2013 was sent to donors in September 2012.  
On 25 July 2012 the donors were sent the first version of the work plan for the bilateral fund for their approval; the first comments and questions regarding the presented work plan version for the BF by the donors were delivered to the NFP on 30 August 2012.

On 5 September 2012, the NFP sent responses and explanations to the provided comments to the donors and in respect to the included comments made by donors it submitted the second version of the work plan for the BF.

Q4: The launching conference of EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 in Slovakia was held on 6 November 2012, where the Programme Agreements for the programmes SK02, SK04, SK07 and SK09 were signed.

The second anniversary meeting of the EEA FM and the NFM 2009-2014 was held on 7 November 2012.

On 19 October 2012 the donors delivered the last comments on the submitted Work plan for the BF and a new (third) version of the Work plan for BF was prepared according to them and it was sent to donors for their approval on 14 December 2012.

### **Work Plan 2013**

Q1: Continuous process of reporting and information database preparation  
Continuous process of preparing the implementation documents for bilateral fund at the national level.

Q2: Informative events  
Participation at the meetings of Selection Committees  
The second meeting of the Monitoring Committee  
After the approval of the work plan for the BF by donors the preparation of implementation documents for bilateral fund at national level will be completed as soon as practicable.  
Opening the bilateral fund at the national level for submitting the applications for contributions.

Q3: Participation at Cooperation Committees meetings  
Donors will be sent a detailed budget for the Technical Assistance for 2014  
First on-the-spot control of projects  
Preparing first applications for contributions by applicants from the bilateral fund at the national level, bilateral activities and approval of submitted payment claims; performance of first predefined NFP activities.

Q4: Third anniversary meeting  
Process of implementing the bilateral fund's activities and preparation for the assessment of activities performed in the first year of the bilateral fund implementation at the national level.

### **3.4 Irregularities**

No irregularities were found and identified in the process of the Strategic Report preparation.

### **3.5 Audit, monitoring, review and assessment**

#### **3.5.1 Audit**

Based on the authorisation by the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic an internal audit was done on 25 June 2012. The internal audit was performed in compliance with the Act No. 502/2001 Coll. on financial control and internal audit and on amendments and supplements to certain laws as amended. The audit verified the Internal Manual for the Employees of the National Coordination Unit for the EEA FM and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. This Internal Manual was prepared in compliance with the Regulations and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

No Government audits took place in the relevant period. As for the Government audit plan for 2013, it has not been prepared yet, because the plan of audits in 2013 depends on the programmes approval and management documentation of programme operators that is to be audited.

#### **3.5.2 Activities of Certifying Authority**

##### **Bank accounts**

On 27 March 2012 the Certifying Authority audited the bank accounts for receipts and payments:

- EEA FM (interest-bearing bank account);
- NFM FM (interest-bearing bank account);
- co-financing (account subsidised by the amount of EUR 782,307 from the state budget for 2012);
- irregularities;
- balancing.

##### **Sending of estimate of expected expenditures**

According to the regulations on the EEA and NFM financial mechanism implementation for 2009 – 2014 and based on documents provided by the Programme Operators the Certifying Authority sent the estimate of expected expenditures to the Office for Financial Mechanism on 13 February 2012, 14 May 2012, 17 September 2012 and 6 December 2012.

##### **Financial drawing and IFR certification**

Within the programme Technical Assistance Fund and the bilateral relations fund at the national level on 15 August 2012 the Certifying Authority received from the Office for Financial Mechanism the advance of EUR 142,117 and on 8 November 2012 the funds of the



first interim payment in the amount of EUR 213,778 for the Technical Assistance Fund that were paid on a proportionate basis:

NFP – EUR 137,902.92 for the EEA FM; EUR 152,466.08 for EEA FM and EUR 51,242.00 for co-financing;

CA – EUR 20,325.98 for EEA FM; EUR 22,472.02 for EEA FM and EUR 7,552.00 for co-financing;

AA – EUR 10,794.10 for EEA FM; EUR 11,933.90 for EEA FM and EUR 4,011.00 for co-financing.

The advance for the bilateral relations fund at the national level was not provided by the Office for Financial Mechanism as at 31 December 2012.

Within the first interim financial report (IFR) for the programme of Technical Assistance Fund and bilateral relations fund at national level the amount of total eligible expenses was certified and approved for the relevant reporting period in the amount of EUR 139,840 for the donor resources, and subsequently submitted to the FMO in September 2012.

On 17 December 2012 the funds of the first advances determined for programmes in respect to which an agreement had been signed were received on the CA's accounts. The total amount of funds received EUR 4,090,075 will be paid to the Programme operators in January 2013 and will be structured as follows:

SK02 – EUR 2,566,490 for the EEA FM and EUR 452,910 for co-financing;

SK04 – EUR 222,624 for the EEA FM and EUR 39,287 for co-financing;

SK09 – EUR 1,300,961 for the NFM and EUR 229,581 for co-financing.

### **Organisational structure of the Certifying Authority:**

Section for European and International Matters at the Ministry of Finance of the SR fulfilling in the conditions of the SR the duty of the Certifying Authority for the EEA Financial Mechanism and for the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Programme Period 2009 – 2014 with the validity from 15 September 2012 according to the Amendment 27 to the Organisational Guideline changed its structure and name to the **Section of European Funds**. This organisational change has no impact on the system of financing and financial management of the EEA FM/NFM and all the former functions in respect to the EEA FN/NFM remain unchanged.

### **Methodological documents**

For the period from 1 January 2012 till 31 December 2012 the Certifying Authority issued the following documents:

- The system of financing and financial management of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the programme period 2009 - 2014, version 1.1 valid from 21 June 2012;
- Guideline 1/2012 – U about the forms used within the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the programme

period 2009 - 2014, version 1.0 valid from 19 April 2012, update of the relevant guideline, version 1.1 valid from 27 August 2012 and version 1.2 issued on 27 December 2012, valid from 2 January 2013.

### **3.5.3 Monitoring**

The Programme Operator is liable to monitor the projects according to the conditions stipulated in the programme agreement and in the agreement about the programme implementation. With regard to the current situation monitoring is done by the Government Office of the SR. Because the National Focal Point performs monitoring also in the role of the Programme Operator the monitoring is limited to six in the course of the whole implementation period. Monitoring will take place in 2013 and 2014.

Basic inputs of monitoring at the level of projects:

1. Interim project report, annual programme report and final programme report;
2. On-the-spot projects control;
3. Interview with beneficiary and project partner;
4. Research with players operating on the relevant territory

According to the Regulations monitoring takes place at least once a year.

### **3.5.4 Monitoring Committee**

14 members took part at the meeting of the Monitoring Committee which was held on 24 May 2012. The main point on the agenda was the approval of the Rules of Procedure and Strategic Reports for 2011. The Committee approved both documents by a resolution.

## **3.6 Informing and publicity**

### **3.6.1 Overview and assessment of informing and publicity measures**

Key informing and publicity measures which significantly supported the objectives set in the communication strategy were performed in 2012. The National Focal Point performs several communication activities from time to time, whereas the performance of these measures is based on the principle of efficient and quick communication with the controlled impact on target groups. This type of communication process can provide for improved transparency and efficiency of the EEA FM and NFM 2009-2014 implementation.

### **3.6.2 Communication Strategy preparation and approval**

During the last quarter of 2011, the National Focal Point prepared and submitted the first version of the Communication Strategy to the donors for approval. Subsequently, on 17 January 2012 it received comments from the donors which were included and on 9 February 2012 the donors were sent the reviewed version of the Communication Strategy. The Communication Strategy was approved by the resolution of donors on 19 March 2012.

### **3.6.3 Programme Communication plans preparation and approval**

For six programmes (out of the total of 9) the National Focal Point performs the Programme Operator duties. An obligatory attachment to programme proposals sent to the donors for the review in March 2012 were also the communication plans. The Programme Communication plan presents the starting documents for the performance of publicity measures at the programme level.

### **3.6.4 Website [eeagrants.sk](http://www.eeagrants.sk) / [norwaygrants.sk](http://norwaygrants.sk)**

The NFP administers the website [www.eeagrants.sk](http://www.eeagrants.sk) and in cooperation with the IT and Electronic Services Department of the Government Office of the SR.

In the course of the first quarter of 2012 the website redesign was completed. A new structure of the website was made and all the information relating to the programme period of 2004 – 2009 was moved to archive. A complex graphical redesign of sites was made with the aim to create user-friendly and intuitive control of all the components of the web site as much as practicable.

### **3.6.5 Regular updates of information on websites**

The NFP regularly publishes all the important information on websites. In 2012 tens of updates and basic documents were published.

### **3.6.6 Establishment and administration of filings mechanism**

The filing mechanism was prepared according to the Article 11.8 of the Regulation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009 - 2014 and the Regulation of the NFM 2009 – 2014 Implementation with the aim to report a suspicion of disagreement with the principles of good management within the EEA FM and NFM implementation in the programme period 2009 – 2014 at all the management levels and their efficient processing and decision-making about them. The filing by means of the form prepared may be filed by any natural or legal person having a suspicion about or finding a disagreement with the principles of good management within the EEA FM and NFM 2009 – 2014 implementation. No such motion was filed within the relevant period.

### **3.6.7 Establishment and administration of the system for website visits rate monitoring**

By means of the GoogleAnalytics portal the NFP established a system for the websites visits rate monitoring. The NFP monitors in detail the quantity of visitors on websites, time they spend on individual sites, exclusive visitors/returning visitors. With the help of this system it can efficiently assess the visit rate of the websites. In 2012 22,478 visits were recorded on the website including 51.30% of returning visitors (recorded according to unique IP addresses) and 48.70% of new web visitors. Out of the total visits 71.33% were the visitors from web

nodes.sk and 28.67% from foreign web nodes. Higher average visit rates of websites were recorded in October and November 2012, most probably due to launching conferences. The average time spent by the visitor on the website was 3 minutes 21 seconds and clicking on more than four pages which is a signal that these were the visitors looking for specific information.

### **3.6.8 Creating pages for individual programmes**

Within the websites redesign separate websites were created for individual programmes. Subsequently aliases (specific names of hypertext links) were defined that will automatically direct the user (visitor) to the programme's website. In cooperation with the communication plans of individual programmes the following hypertext aliases were made in the last quarter of 2012:

<a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk/climate">www.eeagrants.sk/climate</a>	and	<a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk/climate">www.norwaygrants.sk/climate</a>	for the programme SK02
<a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk/inclusion">www.eeagrants.sk/inclusion</a>	and	<a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk/inclusion">www.norwaygrants.sk/inclusion</a>	for the programme SK04
<a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk/culture">www.eeagrants.sk/culture</a>	and	<a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk/culture">www.norwaygrants.sk/culture</a>	for the programme SK05

### **3.6.9 Social network - Facebook**

In compliance with the communication strategy the National Focal Point has made an account on the social network - Facebook named "EEA and Norway Grants Slovakia". The National Focal Point regularly publishes information on Facebook.

### **3.6.10 Launching conferences**

#### **Launching conference for EEA and Norway grants 2009 – 2014, held on 6 November 2012**

The first launching conference of the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009 – 2014 took place within the premises of the Bôrik hotel in Bratislava. More than 200 participants took part at the conference. At the launching conference the participants were informed about the possibilities of funds drawing in programmes supported from these grants. The conference was open to public and raised an exceptional interest. Four programme agreements for programmes focusing on the adaptation to climate changes, green industry innovations, social inclusion and prevention of domestic and gender-based violence were made during the conference.

### **3.6.11 News releases**

Within the launching conferences news releases were issued and published on the websites [www.eeagrants.sk](http://www.eeagrants.sk) and [www.norwaygrants.sk](http://www.norwaygrants.sk). The news releases were sent by the Press and Information Department of the Government Office of the SR to news agencies.

### **3.6.12 Promotion items and materials**

To support the visual identification the NFP prepared 10 roll-ups, 1,000 plastic ball pens, 200 umbrellas, 500 notepads, 250 whistles – all the promotion items and materials were produced with the logos of EEA Grants and Norway Grants and the logo of the Government Office of the SR.

### 3.6.13 Plan of measures relating to informing and publicity for 2013

Activity type (file)	Activity name
Web	Websites <a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk">www.eeagrants.sk</a> and <a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk">www.norwaygrants.sk</a> – Regular publishing of updates
	Website monitoring
Social networks	Regular updates and communication by means of social network - Facebook
	Creation of user profiles on social network - Facebook
	Regular update of profiles on social network - Facebook
Bulletin	Electronic bulletin of the EEA FM and NFM in the programme period 2009 - 2014
Communication action plan preparation	Preparation and approval of communication action plan for the upcoming period (usually 1 year) by the National Focal Point in cooperation with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Slovakia

## 3.7 Work plan

In 2013 the National Focal Point plans:

1. Preparing a manual for the beneficiary and partner as a methodological document to regulate the processes at projects implementation.
2. First monitoring of programmes.
3. Completing the process of information and reporting database creation.
4. Providing funds within the National Bilateral Fund.

## 4 SUBMITTING REPORTS ABOUT PROGRAMMES

The Programme operators were not obliged to submit the programme report for 2012. For this reason it is not relevant to fill in this point of the Strategic Report.

## 5 SUMMARY LISTING OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Focal Point has identified three principal issues:

1. Time delay.
2. Indicators in the programme of Adaptation to Climate Changes.
3. Pre-defined project in Social Inclusion Programme.

In respect to the time delay the National Focal Point – knowing the situation in other countries – considers it necessary to think about general extension of the eligibility of expenditures within the projects minimum till 30 April 2017.

The National Focal Point also recommends reviewing the programme proposal and programme agreement within the programme of Adaptation to Climate Changes, mainly in the area of indicators at the programme results level.

In March 2013 the Programme Operator received a notification from the party performing the pre-defined project (Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra) pointing to an unexpected amendment to the Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on universities, which is in force from 1 January 2013 and a major change in the criteria for university study programmes accreditation valid from 1 April 2014, according to which the University is not able to fulfil the objectives defined in the pre-defined project. Based on the changes above stated the University is not able to fulfil the primary objective of the pre-defined project – to acquire accreditation for the study programme “Roma language and culture” and to achieve the project objectives within the stated deadline, because the extended study term is changed from 2 to at least 3 years. Based on this fact, the Operator initiated a meeting of experts participating at the programme proposal preparation and of the parties performing the PDP with the objective to find a solution of the situation.

## **6 ATTACHMENTS**

1. Assessment of bilateral cooperation by programme donor partners.