

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Slovak Republic

**CAPITAL:** Bratislava

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Unitary Multiparty Republic

**AREA:** 49,014 Sq Km (18,924 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION:** 5,463,800

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Slovakia is a landlocked country located in the heart of Europe. It is bound by Hungary to the south, Poland to the north, Austria and the Czech Republic to the west and Ukraine to the east. Slovakia is surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains to the north and northeast. In the northern area the High Tatra, which has rocky peaks, snowcaps and traces of ancient glaciation, reaches the country's highest point of Mt. Gerlachovka at 2,655 metres (8,711 feet). To the south the mountains are lower and form the Low Tatra and Slovak Ore Mountains while to the east other ridges of the Eastern Carpathian Mountains rise. In total mountains account for more than 33% of the total land area and are generally heavily forested or wooded. The lowland area in the southwest is part of the Hungarian Plain and the country's principal rivers are the tributaries of the Danube River, such as the Vah, Nitra and Hron. Major Cities (pop. est.); Bratislava 448,800, Kosice 238,900, Presov 91,000, Nitra 86,700, Zilina 85,700, Banska Bystrica 84,600 (1994). Land Use; forested 41%, pastures 17%, agricultural-cultivated 33%, other 9% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Slovakia has a continental climate with warm humid summers and cold dry winters with snowfall lasting from 27 to 30 days. Average annual precipitation varies from 500 to 700 mm (19.6 to 27.5 inches) while the mountains receive as much as 1,000 mm (39 inches). Average temperature ranges on the plains are from 1 to 3 degrees Celsius (30 to 27 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 19 to 21 degrees Celsius (66 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit) in July while in the High Tatra winter temperatures can fall to 12 degrees Celsius (10 degrees Fahrenheit).

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Slovaks who account for around 85% of the population. Other ethnic minorities include Moravians who account for 10% of the population, Gypsies for 1.5%, Czechs and Ukrainians for 1% each while the remainder are Magyars, Germans and Poles.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 109 persons per sq km (282 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 56.8% urban, 43.2% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 48.8% male, 51.2% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 66.9 years male, 75.2 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 25% under 15, 23% 15 to 29, 23% 30 to 44, 14% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 14.4 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 10.2 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 4.2 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 13.2 per 1,000 live births (1991).

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**RELIGIONS:** Mostly Christians with 64% of the population Roman Catholic while 8% are Evangelical Lutheran. Other religious minorities include Greek Orthodox Christians which account for 0.6% of the population while 10.4% are atheist and 17% are unidentified.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Slovak, although Magyar and Czech are also widely spoken. Both Russian and English are taught in school as second languages.

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**EDUCATION:** Adult and having attained: less than primary education 0.5%, primary and incomplete secondary 30.6%, secondary 58.6%, higher 9.4%, unspecified 0.9% (1991). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over virtually 100% (1990).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1918 after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire the independent republic of Czechoslovakia was established. In Sept. 1938 Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the German areas of Czechoslovakia or Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. On Mar. 14, 1939 the Slovak state declared its independence and the following day the Nazi's annexed the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia. In Mar. 1945 Edward Benes who was elected President of Czechoslovakia in 1935, agreed to form a National Front government with Klement Gottwald, leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz). On May 10, 1945 the National Front returned to Prague after the liberation from Nazi occupation, by the Soviet Red Army. In 1946 Gottwald was elected Prime Minister and in 1948 the communists forced Pres. Benes to form a government made up entirely of communists. In June 1948 Pres. Benes resigned and was succeeded by Gottwald. Pres. Gottwald embarked on a nationalization program which took over all businesses, farms, schools, industries and churches. In Mar. 1953 Pres. Gottwald died and was succeeded by Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocky, who in turn was succeeded by Antonin Novotny after Pres. Zapotocky's death in 1957. In 1960 a new constitution was established which was modeled around that of the Soviet Union and the country's name was changed to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. During the 1960's Czechoslovakia's intellectuals called for more freedom of expression and many Slovaks renewed their efforts to gain recognition for Slovak rights. In Jan. 1968 Alexander Dubcek replaced Novotny as First Secretary of the CPCz and introduced a program of liberal reforms called the "Prague Spring" which included freedom of the press as well as increased contact with noncommunist countries. Leaders of the Soviet Union and other East European nations feared Dubcek's program would weaken communist control in Czechoslovakia and under the Warsaw Pact troops from Soviet Union, Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary as well as Poland invaded Czechoslovakia on Aug 20<sup>th</sup>, 1968. The Red Army remained while others withdrew by late 1968. In Jan. 1969 a federal system of autonomous Czech and Slovak governments was introduced as a result of the Prague Spring

reforms. In Apr. 1969 Dubcek was replaced by Gustav Husak as First Secretary which resulted in further anti-Soviet protest. In May 1970 a new 20 year Treaty of Friendship was signed with the Soviet Union. During the 1980's economic stagnation developed and in Dec. 1987 Husak was replaced by Milos Jakes as head of the CPCz, although Husak remained President. In Aug. 1988 some 10,000 demonstrators took part in a protest which marked the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968. During 1989 many pro-democracy demonstrations were held which began the Velvet Revolution and in Dec. 1989 a new coalition government was formed. Pres. Husak resigned and was replaced by the dissident playwright as well as leader of the Velvet Revolution, Vaclav Havel. On Jun. 8, 1990 the first free elections in more than four decades took place. The return to democracy also instigated an insurgence for Slovak independence during 1991. In Mar. and Sept. 1991 there were calls from Slovak politicians for a declaration of sovereignty from Czechoslovakia, that resulted in the Czech republic demanding a referendum on the issue. Also in 1991 the government continued with its complex and controversial privatization program. In June 1992 the federal and regional parliamentary elections brought the independence matter to a head and on Aug. 27, 1992 Slovak Prime Minister, Vladimir Mecair and his Czech counterpart, Vaclav Klaus announced after marathon talks in Brno that Czechoslovakia would no longer exist as a single state as of Jan. 1, 1993 opening the path for the independent Slovak and Czech republics. In March 1993 Michal Kovac became President while Mecair of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia retained his position as Prime Minister. Throughout 1993 relations between Slovakia and the Czech Republic deteriorated following disputes over the former Czechoslovakia's assets and the Czech government's insistence on border controls while bilateral trade also suffered due to the strained relations. Also in 1993 Hungary's concerns with Slovakia increased of their escalating nationalism and fears for the fate of ethnic Magyar minorities as well as the construction of the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros dam on the Danube river.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Euro divided into 100 Cents.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$10,156,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$2059,000,000 (1993). Imports; Slovak Koruna 201,545,000,000 (1993). Exports; Slovak Koruna 167,724,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$390,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; Slovak Koruna -33,821,000,000 (1993). Economically Active Population; 2,548,733 or 47.9% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 15.2% (1995).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are Germany, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, Bulgaria and other CIS nations.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Antimony, Cereals, Coal, Iron Ore, Lignite, Livestock, Magnesium, Mercury, Potatoes, Sugar Beets, Timber, Uranium.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Cement, Ceramics, Chemicals, Fertilizers, Forestry, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Oil and Gas Refining, Ornaments, Paper Products, Sheet Glass, Textiles, Transport Equipment.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Chemicals, Clothing, Coal, Food, Footwear, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Motor Vehicles, Railway Vehicles, Textile Yarns and Fabrics.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 3,661 km (2,275 mi) (1991), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km 17,254,000,000 (11,817,000,000 short ton-mi) (1991). Roads; length 17,866 km (11,114 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 906,129 (1991), trucks and buses 109,106 (1991). Merchant Marine; N/A. Air Transport; N/A.

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 21 with a total circulation of 378,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,068,185 (1992). Television; receivers 1,279,101 (1992). Telephones; units 892,800 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 47,000 (1995) total active duty personnel with 70.2% army, 0.0% navy and 29.8% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.7% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).