

## EU SILC 2021: The pandemic has increased the number of people living below the income poverty line, but not dramatically

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In Slovakia, every eighth inhabitant was exposed to the risk of income poverty in 2021, representing almost 660 thousand people. For the first time, the at-risk-of-poverty rate increased year-on-year in all regions of Slovakia, the most significantly in Prešovský kraj. The most vulnerable were multi-child households, single-parent households with children, although their situation improved slightly year-on-year.

In Slovakia, a total of 12.3% of the population was at risk of income poverty in 2021. This means that their income was lower than the calculated national poverty line. With an income lower than the income poverty line, 660 thousand people had to get on by, which was by 45 thousand more than in the previous year.

*"Current EU SILC 2021 data take into account revenues for the whole of 2020, thus reflecting the effects of the first year of the pandemic on income poverty. After five years of improving the situation, the at-risk-of-poverty rate increased by 0.9 percentage points and reached the level of 2018. However, this is not a significant deterioration of the situation,"* said Róbert Vlačuha, Director of the Department of Population Statistics.

It is interesting to note that the amount determining the poverty line dropped year-on-year, which confirms that the total income of the population for the whole of 2020 decreased. In a single-person household it was about EUR 11 to EUR 424 per month (EUR 5 084/year). For a complete family with two children (2 adults + 2 children under 14) the limit was EUR 890 per month (less than EUR 24). The at-risk-of-poverty line changes each year and is derived from the total income of the population. It has different values according to the number and age of people living in the household (more details in the appendix table).

Income poverty is the most common of the three surveyed dimensions/components of poverty and social exclusion in the Slovak society. The Statistical Office of the SR is currently the first to publish this dimension of poverty and will issue further data during May and June 2022.

### Development of income poverty by type of household

The results of EU SILC 2021, which comprehensively take into account the incomes for 2020, showed that the first year of the pandemic had a very diverse impact on income poverty and it is important to monitor it according to different groups of the Slovak population.

The first year of the pandemic did not increase the proportions of people at-risk-of-poverty rate in the households having the greatest long-term problem with it. The situation improved slightly year-on-year in multi-child complete families with 3 or more dependent children, as well as in single-parent households with one or more children. However, in both of these households, more than a third of people are at risk of poverty. For multi-child complete families it is 36.3% persons and for single parents with one child or children up to 33.6% persons.

In households without children, poverty is most common in the category of single seniors aged 65 and over, more than a quarter of them (28.5% of people) lived below the poverty line and their share increased slightly year-on-year. Their situation has deteriorated significantly over the last five years, while in 2016 only 9.0% of seniors suffered from poverty.

### Twice as many children as pensioners lived in poverty

In terms of age groups, the youngest children under the age of 18 are the most at risk, with almost every sixth child living in a household with an income below the poverty line. The pandemic increased the share of children at risk of poverty year-on-year,

from 17.0% to 17.6%.

*"Almost twice as many children lived below the income poverty line as pensioners. Children represent more than a quarter of the total number of people at risk of income poverty in Slovakia," says Róbert Vlačuha.*

The most significant deterioration occurred in the age group of young people aged 18-24, their number increased by 1.6 p.p. and poverty threatened about one in six people in this age group. Of the total number of seniors (people aged 65 and over), 10.3% were poor, and their share has almost doubled since 2016.

## The number of working poor has also increased

Current results have confirmed the long-term trend that income poverty in Slovakia is most at risk for the unemployed (52.6% of people). Although the total number of the unemployed increased year-on-year, the share of the poor among them decreased year-on-year. 6.7% of working people were also living in income poverty, which is an increase by 1.5 p.p. compared to the previous year. As workers represent the largest group of the population in terms of economic activity, in absolute terms it is the largest group living at risk of income poverty.

## The worst situation was in Prešovský kraj

For the first time in history, the shares of people at-risk-of-poverty rate increased year-on-year in all the eight regions of the SR. However, the situation with income poverty differs fundamentally within the regions of Slovakia, which in the long run reflects income inequalities, manifested between the regions of the SR and other indicators of the economic situation. In 2021, the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate was in Prešovský, Banskobystrický and Košický kraj, i.e. mainly in eastern Slovakia. The situation deteriorated the most in Prešovský kraj, where the share of people below the poverty line increased from 17.2% to 19.2%. Banskobystrický kraj, with 19.1% of the population below the income poverty line, which was the most at risk of income poverty in Slovakia in the previous two years, was similarly affected.

Žilinský kraj was also above the Slovak average in terms of the share of the poor. The population in Bratislavský kraj was again the least endangered (4.0%). The year-on-year increase in the share of people below the poverty line was the smallest of all regions in the region around the capital Bratislava<sup>1)</sup> (0.3 p.p). A very low share of poor population was also in Trenčiansky kraj (5.8%). Trnavský kraj and Nitriansky kraj were also below the level of the Slovak average.

The EU SILC survey provides a comprehensive picture of poverty, social exclusion and living conditions in Slovakia. It is conducted in all EU Member States according to a uniform methodology. The obtained data enable international comparison of Slovakia within the EU and serve as basis for analyzing the social situation of households in Slovakia. The EU SILC 2021 sample survey was conducted in the form of field data collection through questionnaires in almost 7 000 randomly selected households in Slovakia.

- <sup>1)</sup> Bratislavský kraj

Further more detailed data from the EU SILC 2021 survey will be gradually published in the form of publications, press releases and data cubes on the website of the Statistical Office of the SR during the months of May and June 2022.

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