

Demography: The number of inhabitants in the SR in 2023

Posledná aktualizácia: 12.04.2024 | Počet zobrazení: null



Vydavateľ: null

Tématická oblasť: null

Okruh: null

Dátum publikovania: 11.04.2024

The population of the SR has decreased for the third consecutive year, due to the critically low birth rate

The total number of inhabitants in Slovakia in 2023 dropped for the third consecutive year. Mortality was again at the level of long-term averages, but the sharp drop in birth rates in the last two years was surprising. The number of immigrants still exceeded the number of emigrants, but it could not eliminate the natural population decrease.

At the end of 2023, the Slovak Republic had a total of 5 424 687 inhabitants. The number of inhabitants decreased by more than 4 000 people year-on-year. The size of the Slovak population thus decreased for the third consecutive year in a row, while previously it had been increasing for 75 years. Since the establishment of the SR in 1993, the population has increased by 88.2 thousand inhabitants.

The total number of inhabitants in the country and their increase or decrease are influenced by two basic indicators - **natural increase** as the difference between the number of live births and deaths, and **migration increase**, which is the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants to the country.

Natural decrease for the fourth consecutive year

The decrease in the total number of inhabitants of the Slovak Republic in 2023 was mainly influenced by the natural population decrease. During the past year, more than 54.1 thousand people died in the SR and more than 48.6 thousand children were born alive. Thus, there was a natural decrease in the population at the level of 5.5 thousand people.

The number of deaths in Slovakia was higher than the number of live births for the fourth consecutive year. During the years 2020-2022, it was due to a high mortality rate, and in the years 2022 and 2023, a decrease in the number of births. *"The natural population decrease in the Slovak Republic continued in 2023, despite the fact that the mortality rate reached the long-term average after three pandemic years. However, the birth rate has decreased to a very low value, the number of live births has dropped below 50 000,"* stated Zuzana Podmanická, the Director of the Population Statistics Department of the SOSR.

The year-on-year decrease in the number of live births in Slovakia has been observed for the past six years, but these were only moderate values not indicating a fundamental change in the development trend. The significant decline in the number of births in the last two years results not only in historical lows in the birth rate, but also in the overall population decrease.

Only half as many children are being born compared to historical highs

The birth rate in Slovakia has undergone fundamental demographic changes since the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993. At the beginning of the 1990s, the number of live births began to decline sharply. From the original number of more than 70 000 live births per year, the birth rate gradually reached the level of less than 51 000 live births in 2002.

Subsequently, the birth rate increased year-on-year again to the level of less than 61 000 live births in 2011. For the next ten years, it remained at a lower level, between 55 000 and 58 000 children were born annually, and exceptionally low values were reached only in the last two years.

From a long-term perspective, the birth rate curve in Slovakia peaked after the two world wars and at the end of the 1970s, when twice as many children were born in Slovakia as at present. There were more than 100 000 live births annually.

The number of children per 100 000 inhabitants dropped significantly

The decrease to the historically lowest value has been also confirmed by **the gross birth rate**, which enables comparison of developments over a long period, i.e. during periods when the total number of inhabitants in the country also changed fundamentally. During the last 20 years, this indicator has reached the value of 1 033 live births per 100 000 inhabitants. It declined below the threshold of 1 000 children in 2022, and last year it even dropped even deeper, to the value of 896 children per 100 000 inhabitants.

"The gross birth rate in Slovakia reached an unprecedentedly low value in 2023, not only in the modern history of the independent Slovak Republic, but in the last 100 years," explained Zuzana Podmanická.

Migration balance in positive numbers for a long time

The second factor that affected the total number of inhabitants is foreign migration and the indicator of migration balance - i.e. the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants from the SR. This indicator has a long-term positive value. In 2023, more than 5.9 thousand people immigrated to Slovakia for permanent residence; this was 1.4 thousand people more than the number of emigrants. The migration balance was thus slightly higher than in the previous year, but in the long term, it was at the level of the lowest values. Since the establishment of the SR, the number of immigrants has exceeded the number of those who emigrated every year, ranging from 0.9 to 7.1 thousand people.

Thus, the migration increase has been in positive numbers for a long time, but in the last three years, it has not been able to compensate for the losses from the natural decline of the population caused mainly by a fall in the birth rate.

Data source DATAcube. database.:

1. 1. 1. 6 – Stock and Change of the Population

- [Stock and Change of the Population-SR-Area-Reg-District, U-R\[om7011rr\]](#)
- [Stock and Change of the Populat. by Sex-SR-Area-Reg-Dist,U-R\[om7013rr\]](#)

1. 1. 2. 2 – Births

- [Births by Sex, Birth Weight, Legitimacy and Vitality - SR-Area-Reg-District, U-R \[om7017rr\]](#)

1. 1. 2. 4 – Deaths

- [Deaths by Age and Sex - SR-Area-Reg-District, U-R \[om7034rr\]](#)

1. 1. 2. 6 – Migration

- [International Migration by Sex and Country of Next residence - SR \[om7051rr\]](#)

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