

## Demographic development in 2025

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### Fertility rate hit a historic low in the modern history of Slovakia

Slovakia's population has been declining for five consecutive years, and the rate of decline even accelerated. Mortality levels remained steady at values close to long-term averages, while fertility rates dropped to a historic low. Even positive net migration was not sufficient to mitigate the overall population decline.

At the end of 2025, the total population of the SR was 5 409 407, representing a year-on-year decrease of more than 10 000 persons. Since the SR's establishment in 1993, the population had been increasing annually; however, this trend reversed in 2021, after which the population of Slovakia declined for five consecutive years. The development in 2025 represented the second most significant population decrease in the history of independent Slovakia, following 2021.

*"Although Slovakia has experienced a population decline in recent years, the balance remains positive in the long-term perspective since 1993. Over three decades of independence, the country's population has increased by nearly 73 000 persons,"* stated Zuzana Podmanická, Director of the Population Statistics Department.

The country's total population is affected by two basic indicators—**natural increase/decrease**, which is the difference between the number of live births and deaths, and **migration increase/decrease**, which is the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants to the country.

### Slovakia has recorded a natural decrease in population for the sixth consecutive year

The main driver of the SR's population decline was natural decrease. Over the past year, just over 42 000 live births were recorded in Slovakia<sup>1)</sup>, while more than 53 500 deaths occurred. This resulted in a natural population decrease of about 11 500 people. Slovakia has recorded a natural decline for the sixth consecutive year, and this was the second-highest (after 2021). Overall, over the past 6 years (between 2020 and 2025), the country's population dropped by nearly 51 000 residents due to natural decrease. *"While in 2021 and 2022 the natural population decrease was driven primarily by the coronavirus pandemic, over the past three years the main contributing factor has been the critically low level of the total fertility rate,"* added Zuzana Podmanická.

Shortly after the SR's establishment, more than 73 000 live births were recorded annually. This number gradually declined until the early 2000s, reaching approximately 51 000- 52 000 live births per year (in 2001–2003). Fertility then increased again, with annual live births exceeding 60 000 in the period 2009–2011. Over the past eight years, fertility rates have shown a sustained decline, with the current number of live births dropping below those recorded in the years following 2000. In the last four years alone, annual live births have decreased by approximately 2 000 to over 4 000 children each year.

## **The historic low in births was further validated by the crude birth rate**

The main driver of the SR's population decline was natural decrease. This indicator allows for comparisons of developments over a longer time period, including periods during which the total population size of the country changed substantially.

In connection with the decline in the number of live births, the crude birth rate also reached record low levels, falling to 776 live births per 100 000 population in 2025. A marked decrease in the crude birth rate, with fewer than 1 000 live births per 100 000 inhabitants, has been recorded in Slovakia over the past four years.

*"In 2025, the crude birth rate in Slovakia dropped to its lowest level in the past 100 years, meaning it was even lower than, for example, during the Second World War,"* added Z. Podmanická.

During the 30-year history of the independent SR, this indicator reached levels of more than 1 000 live births per 100 000 population in the first decade. The following four years (2001 to 2004) recorded a slight decline to a level of 900 to 1 000 live births per 100 000 population. This was followed by a longer period of growth and stability. Over the next 17 years (until 2021), the birth rate remained between 1 000 and 1 130 live births per 100 000 population.

## **Positive net migration is not enough to guarantee overall population growth**

The second factor affecting the country's total population is foreign migration. Migration balance (the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants from the SR) has long remained positive. In 2025, roughly 6.4 thousand persons immigrated to Slovakia for permanent residency, while more than 4.9 thousand persons emigrated. The second highest number of emigrants since 1993 resulted in a decrease in migration balance after two years, to a level of just under 1.5 thousand persons.

Since the SR's establishment, the number of immigrants outpaced the number of emigrants every year, ranging from 0.9 to 7.1 thousand persons. However, over the past five years, foreign migration has proven insufficient to offset population losses caused by natural decrease.