



STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT – SLOVAK REPUBLIC

2018

25th anniversary of annual reports



Dear readers,

You once again hold in your hands the regular **State of the Environment Report for the Slovak Republic, this time for 2018 (the Report)**. It bears the subheading **Extended Assessment of Quality and Care**. Other than the annually published data and information, its objective is to provide a more comprehensive overview, not only of the quality of the environment in Slovakia, but also of assessment of selected tools used to care for the environment and also activities in the field of international collaboration.

Another new feature in publication of this document will be its availability on the respective website as an **interactive version**. This will allow you to obtain additional information which the document is unable to include due to the limited scope of the printed version in a user-friendly manner. We have also chosen a new approach for elaboration of the interactive version. It will be open to incentives for providers of verified data and information with an offer for them to serve as a means of interconnection between available sources of information, not only within the Ministry of the Environment, but also within other authorities and organisations concerned.

The main findings of the Report confirm that the greatest challenges facing the environment in Slovakia are waste management, air quality and protection of habitats and species, above all in forest, meadow and wetland ecosystems. Another challenge I could mention is the quality of surface water and groundwater. In order to address the above-mentioned and other environmental challenges, intensive work was performed over the course of 2018 on preparation of a new strategic document defining Slovak environmental policy until 2030. The document entitled **A Greener Slovakia – Strategy for the Environmental Policy of the Slovak Republic until 2030 (Envirostrategy 2030)** was approved by the government of the Slovak Republic in February 2019. In doing so, the government at the same time expressed its continuing support for consistent environmental protection in Slovakia as defined in the adopted **programme declaration**.

The basic **vision** of Envirostrategy 2030 is to achieve a better quality of environment and sustainable circular economy based on consistent protection of environmental components and use of the minimum possible non-renewable natural resources and hazardous substances, leading towards improvement of public health. We would thus like to achieve a state of affairs in which both the public and the policy makers have a general awareness of environmental protection and sustainable consumption. By preventing and adapting to climate change, its impact on Slovakia should be as low as possible.

Despite certain persisting problems, I would like to emphasise the fact that we are exerting a considerable amount of effort and spending a significant amount of funds on environmental protection from national and foreign resources. From the point of view of **positive developments**, I would like to give a few examples.

Our country is meeting its commitments arising from the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary **Air** Pollution and its protocols. We are not exceeding the emission ceilings which regulate limit values for emission of selected pollutants into the air until 2020 for any of the monitored substances. We have over the long term enjoyed a consistently high quality of **drinking water** supplied to consumers via the public water mains. The volume and level of pollution in **waste water** which is released is decreasing. Almost a quarter of the territory of Slovakia is included in the national **system of protected areas** dedicated to nature conservation. The **NATURA 2000** system covers approximately a third of the territory of Slovakia. However, its consistent protection and targeted care in line with international requirements remain a problem. It is expected that the reduction targets relating to **emission of greenhouse gases** determined until 2020 will be met. The Slovak Republic has supported the idea of climate neutrality and has also set itself some ambitious reduction targets until 2030, meeting of which will require adoption of further specific measures.

Other than correctly determined policies, targets and tools, progress in the field of environmental care will also require the involvement of all key groups in our society. Each and every one of us must also play an active part in this. We can all support the efforts of state administration and local government authorities to make a positive change in the environment with our attitude and actions. I would here like to provide a specific example illustrating this claim using one of the above-mentioned challenges, this being **waste management**. We are not managing to meet the targets for recycling of municipal waste and reduction in the share of waste stored in landfill sites. We are thus losing valuable sources of secondary raw materials, increasing demands on exhaustible natural resources and imposing demands on energy sources. However, even the very best system put into place by the responsible authorities will not work if the general population does not participate actively in it. Failure to do so will mean that we will continue to be unable to meet the set targets.

As regards the poor **quality of air**, I would also like to mention an important fact in relation to the public in general. The most important problem in recent years has been air pollution by dust particles, nitrogen dioxide and ozone. The main causes of pollution today include emissions from household heating as well as emissions from traffic. These are again areas which each and every one of us can have an impact on through our actions. For example, by correct heating and use of means of transport other than cars in cities.

While forming environmental awareness and appreciating the consequences of our actions on the environment, but also the options open to us to ensure a positive impact on the environment, a major role is played by education, edification and provision of high-quality and relevant **information about the environment**. This **State of the Environment Report for the Slovak Republic 2018** is just one of the tools used by the Ministry of the Environment for this purpose. I hope that it will be possible via this Report to fulfil the intention of the authors, but also that of all of our colleagues who contribute towards acquiring, collecting and assessing data and information about the environment, without whom the Report itself could not have been created. This intention is to raise awareness and to provide motivation for us to all redouble our joint efforts to protect the environment in our country.

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of the Slovak Republic