



## FOREWORD

**The Constitution of the Slovak Republic** guarantees for each citizen **the right** to suitable environment, as well as the right to timely and complete information on the state of the environment, its causes and consequences.

The most significant sources of complex information on the environmental situation in the whole Slovak territory certainly include the **State of the Environment Report of the Slovak Republic**, which has been published by the Ministry of Environment since 1993, pursuant to Act 17/1992 on the environment as amended. This Report provides a complex overview of the components of environment - air, water, rocks, soil, flora and fauna, including the cumulative environmental issues, especially climate changes, depletion of the ozone layer, acidification, and eutrophication. Attention is given also to nature and landscape protection, environmental risk factors with emphasis on waste management, and chemical and physical risk factors. The Report also assesses the degree of environmental impact by individual sectors - transportation, power management, industry, agriculture, forestry, recreation and tourism. Besides, it also refers to the outcomes of implementation of selected environmental protection indicators including environmental impact assessment process, prevention of major technological hazards, integrated pollution prevention and control, environmental management and audit, environmental assessment and labelling of products, science, research, promotion and issues of genetic technologies and genetically modified organisms.

Due to the **cross-sectional character of environmental assessment**, the data contained in the Report represent in summary the result of the work of a broad spectrum of state administration professionals together with other professional institutions in the sector of environmental protection, as well as other involved and cooperating resorts, mainly the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications, Statistical Office, and Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic. The Report shows a number of outcomes and information reached within the framework of environmental monitoring, mapping of the state of the environment and its components, statistical monitoring, and modelling.

Monitoring of the long-term environmental trend shows a permanent, decreasing trend in basic pollutants emissions, as well as in anthropogenic greenhouse gasses emissions. However, some air quality monitoring stations still show exceeded pollution limits. This especially relates to **air pollution** by the suspended PM10 particles, which substantially exceed the air pollution threshold values generally binding since January 2005. Hence, we do not fully meet the obligations set forth by the pertinent EU provisions as more effective corrective measures are needed. A number of sites still show negative characteristics in ground ozone air pollution, also with exceeded limit values adjusted to human health protection and vegetation protection. It should be noted that the exceeded ground ozone values are largely the result of increased ozone concentrations in the surrounding countries. Outcomes of model calculations have pointed to a very small contribution of Slovakia to the middle-European concentration of ground ozone. Therefore, this issue will have to be solved only through a mutual cooperation with these countries.

Slovakia is to comply with ambitious objectives also in the area of **sewerage systems and waste water treatment**. Notwithstanding the permanent growth of the portion of population connected to water sewerage and treatment systems, much effort and funds are still to be invested into meeting the objectives of the Council Directive 91/271/EEC on treatment of municipal waste water. The Directive also demands that all EU countries ensure that collection systems and adequate treatment be available for all agglomerations of more than 2,000 equivalent inhabitants. In total, the obligation set forth by the Framework Directive on Water requires to achieve a **good water balance** by 2015. Should any of the member states fail to meet this deadline for any reason, the new European water policy may grant exceptions if adequately justified. Slovakia, mindful of its obligation to optimally meet these objectives, created important water management documentation - Water management plan of Slovakia, together with watershed management plans that take into consideration environmental demands and ecological aspects.

Assessment of the **waste management** situation suggests that total volumes of generated waste remain unchanged or show a slight increase for municipal and hazardous waste types, respectively. However, there is still a high proportion of waste disposed of through landfills and a low volume of separated waste calculated as per one inhabitant. To change this will require more than the "overnight" approach. What is needed the most is a responsible approach to implementing the measures included especially in the Waste Management Program of the SR, which can only be carried out with adequate funding. Trend in the collection and disposal of old vehicles and waste from electrical and electronic appliances shows positive outcomes.

**Nature and landscape protection** in 2008 focused mainly on the protected nature segments and implementing the NATURA 2000 system. The system represents a continuous European ecological network of protected areas under special attention of the EU community, created by the member states, independent of their national protected areas systems. In the course of the year, other 14 regulations of the Slovak Ministry of Environment came into effect, declaring other protected bird territories.

In 2008, **implementation of the EU environmental legislation** was carried out. Considering the set objectives, this legislation represents the most ambitious policies, placing high demands on the

professional, organisational, as well as financial involvement. Therefore, this State of Environment Report of the Slovak Republic in 2008 includes also a complex assessment of the **financial coverage of environmental care** not only from domestic financial sources (state budget, Environmental Fund, Recycling Fund) but also from international sources. The assessed time period still included the last PHARE program projects. Implemented were projects within the framework of the first program period of Basic Infrastructure operation program, ISPA, and the Cohesion Fund. The first calls for proposals made within the second programming period under the **Environment Operation Program**. Also, funds from other sources were used for solutions to environmental problems, these including the European Union Life and Life+ program, Global Environmental Assistance, INTEREG III B CADSES, etc. A number of internationally-recognised environmental projects implemented in the territory of Danube marshes promise an excellent cooperation between the state administration authorities, local governments, representatives of the state administration, local governments, water management, forest management, agriculture, scientific and professional institutions, schools, and non-government nature protection associations. The projects also create conditions for social and economic development of the poorer regions, especially in the area of tourism, agro-tourism, and eco-tourism.

Slovakia achieved a major success in Quebec, in 2008 where the World Heritage Committee approved to register **eight wooden churches located in the Slovak part of the Carpathian arch** into the world cultural heritage list. Total number of world heritage sites in Slovakia thus reached the number of seven. A year before, the Vihorlat PLA hosted a ceremony where the UNESCO certificate on registration of Slovak-Ukrainian **Carpathian beech virgin forests** into the world natural heritage list was awarded. The Slovak Government through its Resolution 740/2008 approved the first **Strategy of Geoparks in the SR** with the preference to build three geo-parks located in Banská Štiavnica, Novohrad, and Banská Bystrica.

In the beginning I mentioned the right of each one of us to live in the environment which will not negatively influence our **health and well-being**. Therefore, also the adopted Slovak Government programme declaration together with the National Strategy of Sustainable Development focus on cultivating the environment. However, all of us should create and preserve a high-quality living environment. This obligation for all citizens is also anchored in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, which holds everyone responsible for protecting and cultivating the living environment and cultural heritage, while we must not, beyond the measure given by law, endanger or damage the environment, natural resources, and culture monuments. Also, this **State of Environment Report of the Slovak Republic in 2008** clarifies for the general public as well as the youth the importance of a systematic environmental education which leads to awareness of the significance of environmental protection.



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