National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

Country Profile

Slovakia

Capital:	Bratislava
Geographical Size:	49 036 km^2
Population:	5 415 949 (2014)
Population as % of total EU population:	1.1% (2014)
GDP:	€ 72.134 billion (2013)
Defense Expenditure:	€ 726 million (2013)
Official EU language(s):	Slovak
Political System:	Parliamentary republic
EU member country since:	1 May 2004
Seats in European Parliament:	13
Currency:	Eurozone member since 1 January 2009
Schengen area member?	Schengen Area member since 21 December 2007
Presidency of the Council:	First time to be in 2016

Source: Europa.eu

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a. Political System

The government of the Slovak Republic is a Parliamentary republic, born from the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993. Slovakia's prime power rests in the head of the state, the President. The Slovak people elect its President every five years, currently Andrej Kiska (Independent) since 2013.[1]

The executive branch of Slovakia is run by the government of the Slovak Republic and led by the Prime Minister, currently Robert Fico (Direction – Social Democracy, *Smer – SD*). The prime minister is appointed, and can be recalled, by the President of Slovakia. The choice of Prime Minister is completely determined by the President. The President, upon the Prime Minister's recommendations, appoints the cabinet. It is currently made of eleven ministers from the Direction – Social Democracy Party (*Smer – SD*) and three independent technocrats.[2]

Slovakia's legislative power rests in the National Council, a unicameral parliament that represents the eight districts of Slovakia. There are 150 members directly elected for a four-year term, based on a proportional representation system. Since 2012, the National Council has been made of 83 members from the Direction – Social Democracy Party (*Smer – SD*), 15 members from the Christian Democratic Movement (*KDH*), 13 members from the Ordinary People party (*OL'aNO*), 13 members from the Most-Híd, and 26 independent members.[3]

The judicial power of Slovakia rests in three groups: the general courts, military courts, and the constitutional courts. The general courts are made up of local courts, regional courts, and finally the Supreme Court; a structure similar to most representative democracies of the West. The military courts are specifically for affairs pertaining to military personnel, however, unlike many other EU members, Slovakia has a more defined hierarchy of military courts consisting of three district courts and a higher military court. The Constitutional Court of Slovakia is independent of the General and Military Courts, and is specifically designed for disputes involving the legality of the Constitution.[4]

b. Foreign Policy

Slovakia is largely defined by its past: a former Soviet Satellite state. The new Republic has made great strides to integrate itself into European Society. However, according to a recent article by Milan Nič and Marian Majer for Carnegie Europe, it is clear that its brief economic successes and "civic activism" do not counter its lack-luster ability to define a successful foreign policy model. The three factors they argue that hold Slovakia back from a more successful model are; its deep involvement in international law and multilateralism, transition

[1] Ellicott, Karen. "Slovakia", *Countries of the World and Their Leaders Yearbook 2015*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. http://jc3th3db7e.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info%3Asid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Abook&rft.genre=book%2Bitem&rft.title=Countries%2Bof%2Bthe%2BWorld%2Band%2BTheir%2BLeaders%2BYearbook%2B2015&rft.atitle=Portugal&rft.date=2015-01-01&rft.isbn=9781569958605&rft.spage=2002&rft.epage=2012&rft.externalDocID=3200000161&paramdict=en-US

[2] "Political System of the Slovak Republic", *Slovakia Site*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. http://www.slovakiasite.com/government.php

[3] "Parliamentary Caucuses", *National Council of the Slovak Republic*, 2015. Web. Accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.nrsr.sk/web/?sid=poslanci/kluby/zoznam

[4] "Political System of the Slovak Republic", *Slovakia Site*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. http://www.slovakiasite.com/government.php

to democracy, and ability to handle shock events. After further review, it is clear that the extensive contributions of personnel to humanitarian missions are intended to be a form of insurance against the security of its own people, as it does not have a formidable security doctrine of its own. Slovakia's transition to democracy from a Soviet satellite state to an isolationist authoritarian regime made Slovaks very unaware of the outside world. This lack of knowledge not only stinted the need for comprehensive foreign policy, but it also made it difficult for Slovaks to identify themselves in a democratic environment. Nič and Majer later detail this by saying that the Slovaks "had to fight for their Western identity." The third factor is shock events, such as the energy crisis of 2009 when Russia began restricting the transportation of natural gas and oil where Slovakia ended up being the second most affected EU member.[5]

One of the major problems with Slovak foreign policy is its dependency on Russia. As mentioned with its inability to handle shocks to energy security, Slovakia has previously depended on Russia for 100% of its gas and oil. Despite its membership to the EU, the Republic is struggling to come to grips with its Eastern European identity, Russian past, and EU present. The politics of the Slovakian parties also play a major role here, as the current Prime Minister, Robert Fico, is returning to his old policies from his former term in 2010 of talks with Moscow; Fico's talks with Moscow are directly in contrast to his recent predecessor Radičová. It is unclear where the current administration will take Slovakia's foreign policy narrative: continue the method of tactical responses vs. long-sighted strategy.[6]

European Union (EU)

Within the European Union there are two major areas that absorb Slovakia's attention: the current refugee crisis and energy efficiency. In regards to **energy efficiency**, one of the major topics in Slovakia right now is the recycling of steel packaging. Slovakia is currently recycling 68% of its steel packaging, the second highest of any Visegrád or V4 country (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) country, and close to the EU27 average of 75%. [7] From a recent EU initiative, Slovakia is also using a portion of €13.8 billion loaned funds to promote more energy efficient housing and structures throughout the country. This initiative includes alternative energy resourcing, climate change crisis management, preparing for climate change-related incidents (specifically, flooding), as well as further sustainable use of resources. Research funding will be given with the stimulus package to further aid Slovakia's economic diversification and strength with small medium enterprises.[8]

The developing **refugee crisis** in Europe has been no easy task, particularly with the delicate nature of free movement from within the Schengen area. Slovakia, as part of the Visegrád Group, has taken a particular defensive stance against recent EU planning to handle the crisis. In a recent vote, Slovakia, along with Hungary and the Czech Republic, voted against a new

[5] Nič, M. and Majer, M. "Letter From Bratislava", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, March 6, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=59269
[6] *Ibid*.
[7] Gabrizova, Zuzana. "Steel for the Packaging Industry: A More Ambitious Circular Economy Package Is Needed", *EurActiv*, September 23, 2015. Web. Accessed November 06, 2015. http://www.euractiv.com/sections/sustainable-dev/steel-packaging-industry-more-ambitious-circular-economy-package-needed
[8] Adamowicz, J. and Dupin de Saint-Cyr, S. "Slovakia Will Benefit from €13.8 Billion of EU Funds for Transport, Environment, Research, Energy Efficiency and Human Capital", Press Release, *European Commission*, December 18, 2014. Web. Accessed November 06, 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/cretu/announcements/slovakia-will-benefit-eu138-billion-eu-funds-transport-environment-r-0_en

distribution plan to move over 120,000 migrants across the south eastern region of Europe.[9] Slovakia's Prime Minister, Fico, has recently created a legal investigation following the plan as to its legitimacy in demanding the housing of large amounts of migrants.[10] The Visegrád countries are currently working in tandem to solve EU problems in a more localized and rapid manner. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have committed 50-60 police officers to Hungary to aid in combatting the 320,000 migrants that have recently crossed into Hungary. While the EU has observed these tactics from afar to evaluate its effectiveness (most likely as a model, or not, for future EU operations), the V4 have continually executed operations to contain migrants as an "in-house" issue.[11]

The largest question looming with migrants in South Eastern Europe, particularly Slovakia, is their assimilation. The Slovakian government has issued multiple controversial statements regarding their concern for a largely Muslim population moving into a largely Christian country. The Slovak Republic has made it quite clear that Syria, Libya, and North Africa are not Slovak related incidents, nor Slovak responsibility, and therefore the country is not going to be a positive environment for Muslim immigrants.[12]

c. Peace & Security Policy

European Union (EU)

Dominating Slovakia's membership to the EU is its further membership to the EU's **Visegrád Group** (V4). The V4 is a collection of four central European countries: Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, and Poland. These four countries, through their shared culture help combat issues pertaining to their region through the EU and local coalition level. The primary focus of the group, currently, is handling Russia, through defensive security and/or diversifying resources. In a recent development, the V4 has rallied around new training exercises, military spending, and defense strategies to combat Moscow. Led by Poland, the "**Regional Security Assistance Program**," is aimed to increase security resilience for small EU countries neighboring Russia. This measure is largely a result of the recent Ukrainian conflict. The Slovak Republic plans to purchase 30 Rosomak armored vehicles from Poland, in addition to increasing its military budget. This new increase in military industry and training will likely expand Slovakia's strategic culture and provide opportunity for industry growth and foreign direct investment should Slovakia pursue military production.[13]

Under the European Union's Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), Slovakia is an active member of the Common Security Defense Policy (CSDP), which provides crisis management capability across Europe. Until 2004, the CFSP and CSDP acted as policy machines for European Security and Defense, however their capability was largely based of a "catalogue" of local European state's forces and equipment. In 2004, the European Defense Agency (EDA) was established to better streamline this process and better organize forces throughout

[9] Nelson, Nikolaj. "Member States Lag behind on Refugee Pledges", *EU Observer*, October 23, 2015. Web. Accessed November 06, 2015. https://euobserver.com/migration/130809
[10] Gabrizova, Zuzana. "Steel for the Packaging Industry: A More Ambitious Circular Economy Package Is Needed", *EurActiv*, September 23, 2015. Web. Accessed November 06, 2015. http://www.euractiv.com/sections/sustainable-dev/steel-packaging-industry-more-ambitious-circular-economy-package-needed
[11] Zalan, Eszter. "Eastern EU States Agree Joint Border Patrols", *EU Observer*, October 15, 2015. Web. Accessed November 06, 2015. https://euobserver.com/migration/130711
[12] O'Grady, Siobhán. "Slovakia to EU: We'll Take Migrants — If They're Christians", *Foreign Policy*, August 19, 2015. Web. Accessed November 06, 2015. http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/19/slovakia-to-eu-well-take-migrants-if-theyre-christians/
[13] *The Visegrad Group*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.visegradgroup.eu

the EU for more mobility. The CSDP was largely created as a complimentary EU tool to NATO, however it reiterates that is not made to conflict with members commitment to NATO, such as the Slovak Republic. Slovakia largely relies on the weight and effectiveness of NATO members, while its policy objectives are largely more relevant in the EU with the CSDP.[14]

One of the most important aspects of the CSDP's operations is its use of various European **battle groups**. The Visegrad group is currently working to establish their own battle group for 2016. Within this battle group, they hope to create a formidable and easy-to-deploy force in Eastern Europe, while solving the logistical problems with EU security forces such as technology and defense markets. The V4 group has issued suggestions to the EDA regarding the European Defense Equipment Market (EDPM) and the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). This push is twofold: European military operations will work better with harmonized equipment and technology, as well as a stronger economy to combat larger defense budgets and markets of potential combatants and competitors.[15]

In sum, the Slovakian participation in CSDP operations can largely be seen as obligatory. The nation's defense budget is expected to decrease in relation to the national GDP, despite its membership to organizations that plan to increase research and development for military capability. In a recent statement, the Slovak Republic stated that it plans to continue to develop its security policy and military capability in response to growing global conflicts such as terrorism in Western Europe, Syria, and Russia. In future years it is fair to assume that if Slovakia does not increase its defense budget, it will largely use NATO funds to develop its forces and policy and allocate those resources to both NATO and CSDP functions.[16]

North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO)

The Slovak Republic has been involved with NATO since its conception. After splitting from the Czech Republic, Slovakia became a NATO partner in 1993. Participating actively, and serving as a strategic foothold in Eastern Europe, Slovakia joined six other nations in full membership to NATO in 2002.[17]

Slovakia continues to enjoy a productive relationship with NATO, including active participation in training and missions. In a recent visit from Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Slovakia was complimented on its '**continued commitment**' to NATO. One of the major missions of NATO currently is its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, a mission that is reinforced by Slovakian troops. From the 2002 deployment of engineers to the 2011 deployment of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic 5th Special Forces Regiment, Slovakia has showed continued support for the training and participation in ISAF.[18]

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[14] "Security Policy", Foreign Policy, *Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic*, January 9, 2015. Web. Accessed November 08, 2015. http://www.foreign.gov.sk/en/foreign_policy/security_policy

[15] *The Visegrad Group*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.visegradgroup.eu

[16] Sopóci, Milan. "Security and Defense Sources for the Slovak Republic", *Journal of Defense Resources Management*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 55-60. Web. Accessed November 8, 2015. http://web.b.ebscohost.com/abstract?site=ehost&scope=site&jrnl=20689403&AN=103017342&h=H9PfKLGFaKxXXxTFz5jdLIeDZybr5DcSjom7gaG%2bmqmQlcQ1qqsvpPznGkizIeDQpY1Xdrp8gIGf1wpJ%2fAUFYw%3d%3d&crl=c&resultLocal=ErrCrlNoResults&resultNs=Ehost&crlhashurl=login.aspx%3fdirect%3dtrue%26profile%3dehost%26scope%3dsite%26authtype%3dcrawler%26jrnl%3d20689403%26AN%3d103017342

[17] "Slovakia", *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.nato.int/invitees2004/slovakia.htm

[18] n.a. "Slovak Republic: An ISAF Legacy", RS News, Afghanistan Resolute Support, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, n.d. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.rs.nato.int/article/isaf-news/slovak-republic-an-isaf-legacy.html

Despite cordial relations and continued support, there has been **recent tension** in the NATO-Slovakian Relationship. Recently, NATO forces have looked to expand their military bases into Eastern Europe to combat the rising presence of Russia, however Slovakia and the Czech Republic have denied NATO permission to build bases in their territories. The Slovakian government cites that the unruly behavior of NATO troops and the sensitive nature of deployed forces in Slovakia as the reasons for not allowing NATO bases. This will undoubtedly prove to be a strategic issue in NATOs continued training efforts against Russia.[19]

All this being said, in 2015, Slovakia devoted 1.0% of its GDP to defense expeditures[20]. Moreover, for the period 2014-2015 Slovenia contributed 0.45% of the NATO Common-Funded Budgets and Programmes[21].

United Nations (UN)

Similar to NATO, Slovakia joined the United Nations following its divide from the Czech Republic in 1993. The nation prides itself on the fact that in just over 20 years of membership, the country has participated in "all three main pillars of UN work: peace and security, development, and human rights". Slovakia attributes this to its 2006-2007 membership of the United Nations Security Council, 2008-2011 membership of the UN Human Rights Council, and 2010-2012 membership of the Economic and Social Council. On the 10th of January 2012, Ambassador Miloš Koterec was elected chairman of the ECOSOC and provided the Slovak Republic with a more resilient presence in the international coalition. Slovakia has showed **continued devotion** to the participation in peacekeeping in Cyprus, Haiti, and the Middle East, as well as work on developing better human rights protocol.[22] In fact, as of October 2015, Slovakia had 171 nationals engaged in peacekeeping missions (MINUSTA in Haiti, UNFICYP in Cyprus, and UNTSO in the Middle East)[23]. For the period 2014-2015, Slovakia contributed 0.10% of the UN Peacekeeping budget[24].

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Upon joining the OSCE in 1993, after its separation from the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic has struggled to adhere to OSCE mandates and policies. This year, the OSCE reprimanded the Slovak Supreme Court for their obstruction to the freedom of the press. In 2011, the Slovakian news agency Novy Cas published photos of high-ranking judges mocking a homicide case in a bar. The judges in turn sued the agency for fraud and defamation, only

[19] n.a. "NATO troops and bases not welcome in Slovakia and Czech Republic", *RT News*, June 5, 2014. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. https://www.rt.com/news/163784-slovakia-no-nato-troops/

[20] "NATO publishes defence expenditures data for 2014 and estimates for 2015", Press release PR/CP(2015)093-COR1, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, June 22, 2015, p. 6. Web. Accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150622_PR_CP_2015_093-v2.pdf

[21] "NATO Common-Funded Budget & Programmes", *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Web. Accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140611_20140601_NATO_common_funded_budgets_2014-2015.pdf

[22] "Slovakia and the United Nations", Foreign Policy, *Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.foreign.gov.sk/en/foreign_policy/slovakia_and_the_united_nations

[23] "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, October 31, 2015, p. 37. Web. Accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/oct15_3.pdf.

[24] United Nations General Assembly, "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236", *Report of the Secretary General*, December 27, 2012, p. 3. Web. Accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1.

later to be reviewed by the OSCE's Representative on the Freedom of the Media's Duja Mijatovic in favor of the News Agency.[25]

Despite violations of OSCE policies domestically, Slovakia has contributed to international OSCE operations. In March 2014, Slovakia contributed unarmed military personnel to monitoring of Ukraine, to observe the "situation on the ground".[26] Slovakia continues to aid the OSCE's goal of serving as an intermediary of communication between the East and the West.In 2014, Slovakia contributed to 0.2% (€284,651) of the Organization's budget[27], and 7 nationals were involved in its staff[28].

Council of Europe (CoE)

Slovakia's current relationship with the Council of Europe is tumultuous. Historically, Slovakia has supported its membership to the EU and EU institutions by following obligations, but holding national objectives as superior. This relationship is evident in recent CoE findings and reports.

Regarding the current migrant crisis in Europe, the Slovak Republic has been independent in the **handling of refugees**. The EU and Council of Europe have been working to develop a comprehensive distribution of refugees to EU members, and recently in August 2015, the EU asked Slovakia to accept 802 refugees based on pre-approved quotas. Slovakia later issued a statement from Bratislava that it would only accept 200 refugees based on new criteria. The most difficult part of this tension between the EU, CoE, and Slovak Republic is the fact that even if Slovakia were taken to court by the EU they would continuously receive funding from the EU and in order to change that, the EU and would have to change its entire framework.[29] The General Secretary of the Council of Europe further condemned Slovakia's handling of the migrant crisis in August 2015 because of Slovakian **discrimination**. Secretary Thorbjørn Jagland said that the Slovak Republic is guilty of chronically denying refugees based on their religion (generally Muslim).[30]

The Council of Europe has also pressed Slovakia on the inclusion of the disabled in the country. The Mental Disability Advocacy Centre recently published that the report on Slovakia's handling of disabled persons is twofold. The Council reported that Slovakia has made significant progress in abolishing complete guardianship of institutions over mentally disabled, however in schools, disabled children are largely segregated. As of 2014, the UN reported that 20,639 children were being educated in segregated environments because of their disabilities. Slovakia retains its membership to the Council of Europe, but not without scrutiny.[31]

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[25] Targeted News Service. "OSCE Representative Welcomes Court Decision in Slovakia Dismissing Defamation Charges Against Newspaper", *ProQuest*, January 21, 2015. Web. Accessed November 8, 2015. http://0-search.proquest.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/docview/1647274108?pq-origsite=summon&http://search.proquest.com/newsstand/advanced

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015, p. 105. Web. Accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true.

[28] *Ibid*., p. 109.

[29] Cuprik, Roman. "Slovakia Ignores EU Rules on Refugees", *The Slovak Spectator*, November 3, 2015. Web. Accessed November 08, 2015. http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20063001/slovakia-ignores-eu-rules-on-refugees.html

[30] n.a. "Council of Europe Urges Slovakia to Stop Discriminating Refugees", *Sputnik News*, August 20, 2015. Web. Accessed November 08, 2015. http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150820/1025968449.html

[31] n.a. "Council of Europe: Slovakia Must Get Children out of Institutions and into Inclusive Education", *Mental Disability Advocacy Center (mdac)*, October 16, 2015. Web. Accessed November 8, 2015. http://www.mdac.info/en/news/council-europe-slovakia-must-get-children-out-institutions-and-inclusive-education

The Slovak Republic has been a member of the Council of Europe since January 30th 1993. Its contributions to the 2015 annual budget total €1,462,558.[32]

Strategic Culture

The Slovak Republic's strategic culture is one of complacency and confusion. In a recent article by Jaroslav Nad' for the Central European Policy Institute, the Slovak Republic reported its 2015 defense budget to be 1% of the national GDP. A staggering comparison to the former 27% of the budget following the Nation's inception, the defense spending may even fall to lower than 1% next year. Nad' argues that this statistic is still incredibly low despite 10% GDP growth in the past year, as it does not measure up to Slovakia's V4 comrades like Poland and the Czech Republic. Further detailed by Nad' is Bratislava's capability and aptitude. The Slovak Republic is fitted with largely out-of-date Russian weapons such as MiG-29 planes and S300 air-defense systems. This poses a problem when faced with a much bolder and well-equipped Russian aggressor.[33] With Slovakia's **decreasing budget** and **questionable operability**, many of its allies are left wondering if Slovakia is intentionally lowering its guard or putting all of its faith in the protection provided by its NATO membership. Despite its questionable foreign policy objectives and lack of military vigor, Slovakia is an active member of the V4, which acts to complement EU and NATO defense objectives in South Eastern Europe as well as provide a first-strike capability in situations that require immediate attention in the region.[34] Moving forward, Slovakia will be forced to take more initiative in the building of its forces and participation in military operations, both domestically and abroad.

d. Economic Policy

European Union (EU)

The Slovak Republic is one of the more resilient economies of the small EU members. This is large part due to its high amount of domestic demand and spending by local population. Since its membership in 2004, the Republic has nearly doubled its GDP and was one of two EU members to rebound from the recession.[35] What's more is Slovakia is expected to run future surpluses due to its **expanding economy**, making it a valid asset for the EU in the east.[36]

In the 2015 European Commission report, Slovakia struggled to achieve high marks in all economic development areas. In areas such as Public Finance Development, Slovakia prevailed with record numbers, such as a decrease in the deficit from 8% of the GDP in 2009 to 2.4% of the GDP this year. The Republic of Slovakia also plans to make continuous developments in its domestic Fiscal Policy. The European Commission report details these as changes to the Value-added tax policy and corporate taxation to limit the deductions on interest payments and primarily focus on drawing in more foreign direct investment. Slovakia has done poorly however on a number of EU required fronts, such as the employment of women (under 40%), childcare provision, public employment service, job mobility, and

[32] "Slovak Republic – Member States", *The Council of Europe*, Web. Accessed September 22, 2015. http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/slovak-republic

[33] Nad, Jaroslav. "Ten Years of Slovakia in NATO", *Central European Policy Institute*, April 7, 2014. Web. Accessed November 6, 2015. http://www.cepolicy.org/publications/ten-years-slovakia-nato-gaining-security-guarantees-strategic-disinterest

[34] *The Visegrad Group*, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.visegradgroup.eu

[35] Nič, M. and Majer, M. "Letter From Bratislava", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, March 6, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=59269

[36] European Commission, "Country Report Slovakia 2015", *Commission Staff Working Document*, March 18, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_slovakia_en.pdf

providing equal and ample opportunity to the minority Roma population. With the domestic economy growing, foreign direct investment declining, and EU policies looming, the new regime in Slovakia will need to be able to harness its domestic growth while improving the corporate structure and promoting its economy to neighbors to remain formidable.[37]

Economic Diplomacy & Foreign Trade

Exports have been the main factor behind Slovakian robust growth. Slovakia exports vehicles, machinery and electrical equipment, base metals, chemicals, and minerals. Main export partners are Euro Area members with Germany, the Czech Republic, France, and Poland being the most important. The biggest share of Slovakian imports are machinery and transport equipment, intermediate manufactured goods, fuels and chemicals. Main import partners are Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, and Hungary[38].

In a recent article by the Wall Street Journal, Slovakia made huge strides toward **energy autonomy and diversification**. As of November 2014, the Slovak Republic is working to receive its enriched Uranium energy supply from an outside source other than Russia. The nation's Slovenske Elektrarne paired with Italy's Enel S.p.A to create a system of transferring enriched Uranium for consumption in Slovakia. While Slovakia is the first "post-communist" country to receive a supply from enriched Uranium from a non-Russia provider for fuel use, it is still largely dependent on Russian company, TVEL, for the processing of the fuel rods. This move is one of many Eastern EU members to further increase resource and energy security against the looming threat of Russia.[39]

e. Other Diplomatic Priorities

Priorities at the European Level

In Europe, the Slovak Republic has several diplomatic priorities. It is currently leading missions to offer bilateral assistance to Eastern Partnership countries, as well as support democratic reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey. In addition, Slovakia is supporting missions on the EU and Turkish strategy to combat ISIL, taking a position on the Bosnian crisis, ensuring the deal between Serbia/Kosovo holds.[40]

Priorities at the Global Level

In world affairs, Slovakia has multiple interests. Regarding Russia, Slovakia has taken a hard stance against Russia's actions in **Ukraine**, including; censoring of the press and monopoly over energy distribution. With the United States, the Slovak Republic has continuously supported bilateral EU-US action against Russia, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (**TTIP**) deal, as well as US maritime security. Similar to Russia, Slovakia's Asian foreign policy is primarily focused on **China** and its human rights violations along with conduct in the South China Sea. The foreign ministry's overarching goals for the global policy are: "development and humanitarian aid, taking action against Ebola, responding to

[37] *Ibid*.
[38] "Slovakia Balance of Trade", *Trading Economics*, last update November 9, 2015. Web. Accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.tradingeconomics.com/slovakia/balance-of-trade.
[39] Carney, Sean. "Slovak Utility Diversifies Enriched Uranium Supply Chain Away from Russia", *The Wall Street Journal*, November 11, 2014. Web. Accessed October 28, 2015. http://blogs.wsj.com/emergingeurope/2014/11/11/slovak-utility-diversifies-enriched-uranium-supply-chain-away-from-russia/
[40] "Slovakia", *European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2015*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2015.Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2015/countries/slovakia

South Sudan and the CAR, fighting climate change, and supporting future security development in Afghanistan."[41]

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[41] *Ibid*.

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