

Indicators Assessment- Unitary States

Slovakia

Egdūnas Račius

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This Indicators Assessment report offers a country assessment of 4 composite indicators: (1) state-religious institutions relations, (2) status of religious minority groups, (3) religious radicalisation level, and (4) radicalisation prevention measures. It is part of a series covering 23 countries (listed below) on four continents. This assessment report was produced by GREASE, an EU-funded research project investigating religious diversity, secularism and religiously inspired radicalisation.

Countries covered in this series:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

<https://www.grease.eu.eu>



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The EU-Funded GREASE project looks to Asia for insights on governing religious diversity and preventing radicalisation.

Involving researchers from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, GREASE is investigating how religious diversity is governed in over 20 countries. Our work focuses on comparing norms, laws and practices that may (or may not) prove useful in preventing religious radicalisation. Our research also sheds light on how different societies cope with the challenge of integrating religious minorities and migrants. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how religious diversity can be governed successfully, with an emphasis on countering radicalisation trends.

While exploring religious governance models in other parts of the world, GREASE also attempts to unravel the European paradox of religious radicalisation despite growing secularisation. We consider the claim that migrant integration in Europe has failed because second generation youth have become marginalised and radicalised, with some turning to jihadist terrorism networks. The researchers aim to deliver innovative academic thinking on secularisation and radicalisation while offering insights for governance of religious diversity.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anna Triandafyllidou from The European University Institute (EUI) in Italy. Other consortium members include Professor Tariq Modood from The University of Bristol (UK); Dr. H. A. Hellyer from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (UK); Dr. Mila Mancheva from The Centre for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria); Dr. Egdunas Raciunas from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania); Mr. Terry Martin from the research communications agency SPIA (Germany); Professor Mehdi Lahlou from Mohammed V University of Rabat (Morocco); Professor Haldun Gulalp of The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Turkey); Professor Pradana Boy of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Indonesia); Professor Zawawi Ibrahim of The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (Malaysia); Professor Gurpreet Mahajan of Jawaharlal Nehru University (India); and Professor Michele Grossman of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). GREASE is scheduled for completion in 2022.

For further information about the GREASE project please contact: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou, anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu

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GREASE - Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

Country Assessment Report

Name of Country Assessed: Slovakia

I. Composite Indicator 1: State-Religious Institutions Relations

Overall Assessment:

Slovakia constitutionally is a secular state. There have been no legal changes in this status over the entire period. In practical terms, the state (political processes, juridical matters) are secular with a lip service to the Christian tradition of the land, something that does not affect the practical politics.

Slovakian legislation allows for religiously-minded groups a role in political decision- and policy-making. There have been no changes in relevant legislation over the entire period. In practical terms, religious institutions and religious groups (foremost, the towering Catholic Church) express their position on issues being discussed in the Parliament that the religious organizations deem relevant to them. Occasionally, individual politicians approach religious organizations (chiefly, the Catholic Church) for consultation on an issue being discussed in the Parliament.

The country's legislation also allows for religiously-minded political parties to participate in the country's political life by taking part in elections. There are several political parties that declare their religious (Christian) identity, among them one of the most popular political parties – Obyčajní Ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti (OLaNO) and another marginal parliamentary party, Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie. There is also a Christian NGO “Magnificat Slovakia”-affiliated extraparlimentary party Magnificat Slovakia.

There has never been state interference in internal affairs of any religious organization in the country. The only thing that the state may be accused of is its refusal to register some of religious organizations the statutes of which do not meet the state-set criteria for registration (such as prohibitively high threshold of membership – currently at 50,000) and running of a religious organization (including a requirement that there be certain internal structures with positions of power and signature).

There is generally no interference in internal affairs of any religious organization in the country. Religious organizations are free to organize themselves as they please, including training and hiring of personnel (clergy and lay) and running their financial matters as long as they are officially registered as religious organizations.

The law on religions, inherited from the socialist times, albeit with amendments while Slovakia was still part of a joint state with the Czech Republic, was changed in 2007 with a number of restrictions on freedom of religion introduced. The most notorious among them is that the required minimum number of members, “who have residential address in the territory of the Slovak Republic and who are Slovak citizens” (Art. 11), of the religious community seeking to register their organization was set at 20,000. Such a high threshold prevents newly emerging minor religious collectivities from institutionalizing. And without being registered as religious communities they may not function as such. Therefore, many of small religious communities register and function as NGOs.

Since 2007, the regime of governance of religion in Slovakia is considered to be very unfair toward newly emerging minor religious groups as they cannot meet the set threshold for registration and therefore, technically, are not allowed to function as religious communities. Historical minority religious groups, that have been registered by the state even without meeting certain requirements, are more or less on the equal footing with the majority Catholic Church.

Registered religious organizations have a right to establish and independently run their own educational institutions. Several Christian denominations and Judaists have done so. Newly emerged minority religious groups that do not meet the requirements for registration (first of all, the threshold), may not set up educational institutions. Autonomy of religious media is guaranteed and several religious organizations run their own media – newspapers, magazines, radio and TV channels. But, like with any other activities, this is available and guaranteed only to registered religious organizations.

1. State autonomy from religion	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law defines the state as secular	Very high	2020
(1b) Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/independence from religion	High	2020
2. Participation of religious institutions and religious groups in political decision-making and policy-making.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids formal participation of religious institutions and religious groups in formal political decision-making.	Medium	2020
(2b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Low	2020
3. Religiously-based political parties in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids participation of religiously-based political parties in political life.	Medium	2020
(3b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	Low	2020
4. State non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including regulation of religious courts, councils, religious family laws, etc.).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities.	Very high	2020
(4b) Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Very high	2020
5. State non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including personnel and funds).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation (e.g., personnel, financial matters) of the	Very high	2020

administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities.		
(5b) Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs (e.g., personnel, financial, etc.) of religious institutions and religious communities.	Very high	2020

6. State recognition of freedom of religion.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation allows freedom of religion.	High	2020
(6b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.	Medium	2020

7. Freedom for religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2020
(7b) Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.	Medium	2020

8. Autonomy of religious media	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(8a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation recognises and allows religious media.	High	2020
(8b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.	Medium	2020

II. Composite Indicator 2: Status of Religious Minority Groups

Overall Assessment:

Since 2007, the regime of governance of religion in Slovakia is considered to be very unfair toward newly emerging minor religious groups as they cannot meet the set threshold for registration and therefore, technically, are not allowed to function as religious communities. Historical minority religious groups that have been registered by the state even without meeting certain requirements are more or less on the equal footing with the majority Catholic Church.

Religious minority groups that are registered by the state may participate in political life mainly through their individual members. Some of the minority group members (chiefly of minority Christian denominations) are members of political parties and have served as MPs, ministers and other high ranking state officials.

Registered and therefore state-recognized minority religious communities have the same rights as the majority religious group, Roman Catholics. Non-registered minority groups, however, do not have them. Registered and therefore state-recognized minority religious communities are treated more or less the same way as the majority religious group, Roman Catholics. Public accommodation is not extended to non-registered minority groups, which often are perceived as dangerous sects and cults.

1. Legal status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation recognises religious minority groups.	Medium	2020
(1b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.	Medium	2020
2. Religious minority group participation in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to participate in the political life of the state.	High	2020
(2b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.	Medium	2020
3. Special social security status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to special social security benefits.	Medium	2020
(3b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.	Medium	2020
4. Access of religious minority groups to public spaces.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public spaces.	Medium	2020
(4b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.	Medium	2020
5. Access to public funds for initiatives/activities of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Medium	2020
(5b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Medium	2020
6. Public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Medium	2020
(6b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	Medium	2020

7. Ownership of houses of worship.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to own their houses of worship.	Medium	2020
(7b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Medium	2020

III. Composite Indicator 3: Radicalisation Levels

Overall assessment:

The available data suggest that there is little ground for radicalization in the country – though there are individuals who are not satisfied with their personal and the country's situation, most of them are of elderly age and do not pose a potential threat of radicalization. Most of the younger generation are content with their personal prospects and the country's development.

There have not been any incidents of religious radicalization, let alone violence, over the course of the reported period, as the overwhelming majority of the country's inhabitants are not religious. Consequently, there is no real worry about religious radicalization threat or terrorist violence.

There is, however, potential for nationalist/racist/chauvinist sentiments, particularly if and when more immigrants (especially from Asia and Africa) start settling in the country. There already are successful political parties whose agenda include anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim sentiments. These parties are the agents of nationalist radicalizations, which has religious (Christian) overtones. For the time being, however, the share of foreigners in the country is negligent (and one of the lowest in the EU).

1. Structural factors/environment	Score/Level/Percentage	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Level of Freedom	Classification: Free Rating: 88	2019
(1b) Level of adherence to rule of law	No information	2020
(1c) Level of religious-related government restrictions	No information	2020
(1d) Level of state legitimacy	Moderate (4.1)	2020
(1e) Level of protection of human rights	High (2.4)	2020
(1f) Level of group grievances	Moderate (6.0)	2020
(1g) Uneven economic development	Low (2.6)	2020
(1h) Wealth disparity (top 10% possessing above average percentage of the total income share)	Percentage: 23.8 %	2015

2. Perception-based indicators (social grievances)	Percentage (%)	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Distrust in national institutions	Parliament: 72% Government: 72% Other: NA	2018
(2b) Political discontent	Discontent with country direction: 57% Discontent with situation: 50%	2018

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	Discontent with democracy/government performance: 45% Other: NA	
(2c) Economic discontent	Discontent own financial situation: 31% Discontent with country's economy: 48% Economic situation is the most serious problem: NA Other: NA	2018
(2d) Discrimination	Discrimination is widespread: 15% Opposing diversity: NA Discomfort with minorities: not comfortable with Muslims 63% Experiencing discrimination: 2% Other: NA	2015
(2e) Views on violent extremism	VE is a serious problem/threat: NA Endorsement of VE actions/ actors: NA Other: NA	2020

3. Incidence-based indicators (religious violence and conflict)	Score/Level/Number	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) State-based armed conflict	No	2020
(3b) Level of social hostilities involving religion	Moderate (3.7)	2015
(3c) Incidence and impact of terrorism	Number of Incidents: 0 GTI 2019: 0.057	2020
(3d) Violent extremist incidents	Number: 0	2020
(3e) Significant violent extremist actors/networks	Level: Low	2020

IV. Composite Indicator 4: Radicalisation Prevention Measures

Overall assessment:

There have not been any initiatives or programs to prevent and counter religious radicalisation and violent extremism over the course of the reported period. Though there was a national security strategy adopted in 2005, subsequent attempts to adopt a new one in 2017 failed and since then there has not been a security strategy or accompanying plans to prevent and combat radicalization. Religious radicalization in the country is not seen as an imminent threat. This is mainly due to the fact that there are no individuals or groups that could be prone to radicalization. Individual state institutions, particularly secret services and special police units do have internal plans that include monitoring and prevention of radicalization but these documents are not accessible. The public annual reports of the intelligence community consistently reveal that radicalization is not viewed as a real threat to the country's security and stability.

1. Comprehensive strategic approach	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legislative foundation for adoption of PVE action plan	No	2020
(1b) Existence of PVE strategy and a national action plan	No	2020
(1c) Presence of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms of strategy / action plan implementation	No	2020
(1e) Presence of dedicated body tasked with PVE strategy development and coordination	No	2020
(1f) Participation of a wide range of government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	No	2020
(1g) Participation of non-government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	Not applicable	2020
(1h) Reference to FTFs and related measures in PVE strategy/action plan	No	2020
(1i) Reference to terrorism financing and related measures in PVE strategy and action plan	No	2020
(1j) Reference to communication counter- or alternative narrative campaigns in PVE strategy/action plan	No	2020
2. Comprehensiveness of measures - areas of action, actors and projects	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Development and implementation of programmes for support of victims of terrorism and violent extremism	No	2020
(2b) Training for frontline practitioners	No	2020
(2c) Initiatives to improve the preparedness of security forces, law enforcement and justice institutions to deal with radicalisation.	No	2020
(2d) Development and implementation of P/CVE-specific education initiatives for youth	No	2020

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(2e) Development and implementation of P/CVE education initiatives and projects for women	No	2020	
(2f) Platforms for intra and interfaith dialogue between the state and religious leaders	No	2020	
(2g) Networks for civil society, religious leaders, youth and women's organisations for dialogue, cooperation and best practices.	No	2020	
(2h) Grassroots initiatives by civil society actors focussed on prevention	No	2020	
(2i) Counter- and alternative- narrative campaigns	No	2020	
(2j) Multi-agency cooperation and/or referral mechanisms at local level identifying and supporting at-risk persons	No	2020	
(2k) State-commissioned research on religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism	No	2020	
(2l) programs and measures to prevent radicalisation into violent extremism in prison and probation settings	No	2020	

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Project Coordinator: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou

Contact: anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu

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