

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

10 largest employment agencies	3
Labour market	4-14
General overview of the labour market in Slovakia	4
Interview: 2018 will be tough on employers	8
Government accelerates hiring from abroad	9
Wages & labour costs	10
Legislation	15-21
Immigration paperwork: Fewer worries for Slovakia's "aliens"?	15
Slovak firms search for people abroad	16
FAQ: Working in Slovakia	20
Law firms in Slovakia	21
Who's Who	22-29
Professionals at HR departments	22
Job portals	28
Education & training	30-33
Career counselling functions poorly in Slovak schools	30
Slovak education system	31
Job fairs in Slovakia	32
Training companies	33
Trends	34-43
Migration finally reverses	34
Interview: Less money and missing links await migrants upon return	35
How to get your diploma recognised	37
Survey: Cure for lack of workers - foreigners and automation	38
Automation - an opportunity or threat?	40
Lack of labour force: Is employing people over 50 an answer?	41
Human resources sector highlights	42
Tables & contact details	44-50
Who's Who: Professionals at HR companies	44
Human capital consulting firms	46
Executive search firms	47
Recruitment agencies	48
Temporary employment agencies	49
Awards & events focusing on HR	50
Index	51

A few years ago, Facebook and YouTube were merely entertaining social media outlets completely separate from the professional world. However, the increasing problems with a lacking labour force in Slovakia prompted employers to find creative solutions to a problem that was once discussed in theory by labour market watchers during business conferences and TV debates - and job ads even started appearing on very improbable online spaces.

In early 2018, the theoretical problem of a lacking labour force became reality when a big investor announced it was closing down one of its factories in western Slovakia. Since then, professional recruitment through social media has become common; Slovak employers are scrambling for a solution.

Foreign investors suggest that other companies may shut-down as well, citing not just the lack of qualified workers but also the recent changes in labour legislation which include increases in bonuses for night and weekend work.

The government has promised to simplify the process of non-EU countries applying for jobs in Slovakia, and some steps have already been taken, but this issue will most likely continue to plague Slovakia in the following months.

With the increase in average salary, many Slovaks who have left the country as economic migrants during the two major migration waves occurring since 2000, might be interested in coming back home to beef up the labour force. The government's attempts to encourage people to come back have had little success so far, and it is clear that a "return check" will not be enough.

What Slovaks living abroad hope to find when they come back home to reunite with their family and friends is a properly-functioning state, public transparency, an efficient education system and reliable health care. Without at least some improvement in these areas, any hopes that returnees or foreigners will gladly come to Slovakia to patch up the holes in the labour force will be in vain.

Michaela Terenzani, Editor-in-chief

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