



### Slovakia



- Location: Central Europe, south of Poland
- Area: Total - 48,845sq km; Land - 48,800 sq km; Water - 45sq km
- Natural Resources: brown coal, small amounts of iron ore, copper, salt, arable land
- Population: 5,455,407 (July 2008)
- Languages: Slovak 83.9%, Hungarian 10.7%, Roma 1.8%, Ukrainian 1% unindetified 2.6%
- Government Type: Parliamentary democracy
- Legal System: Civil Law System
- Executive Branch: Chief of State—President Ivan Gasparovic, Head of Government: Prime Minister Robert Fico
- Political parties: (Government Coalition) Party Direction Third Way (SMER), People’s Party for a Democratic Slovakia (LS-HZDS), Slovak nationalist Party (SNS) Other Parties, Slovak Democratic and Hristian Union (SDKU), Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)

### Challenges:

- The government, led by Prime Minister Robert Fico and a three party coalition, came close to a political crisis during the spring of 2008. A dispute between the government coalition and the opposition developed over a controversial press bill. The controversial bill was criticized by the three centre right opposition parties, which in protest, postponed the ratification of the EU Lisbon Treaty. However, the press bill was eventually passed and the EU Lisbon Treaty was ratified by the Parliament in April 2008.
- The European Commission and European Central Bank have endorsed the demise of the Slovak koruna and cleared the way for the adoption of the Euro currency on 1 January 2009. However, Slovakia still needs the approval of EU heads of state before the finance ministers fix the exchange rate in July 2008. However, Slovak policymakers fear that inflation in Slovakia will increase well above the qualifying limit for joining the euro zone.
- The most recent survey conducted by the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) showed that medium and large firms are somewhat more likely to pay bribes than smaller firms, and some 40 percent of managers are said to have paid bribes. Moreover, the survey also indicated that firms in Bratislava were the most likely to have made unofficial payments, and firms in Trenčín were the least likely.



Challenges: Low