



SLOVAKIA

“ The war has shed light on both the strengths and vulnerabilities of ODA ”

By Ambrela

Main trends

Slovak ODA totalled EUR 151 million or 0.15 % of GNI, which places Slovakia on the last position within OECD DAC donors. Beyond quantity, the quality of bilateral aid represents an equally concerning trend. In 2022, economic inflation surged to unprecedented levels, reaching 13.2 %. The cumulative impact over several years, has eroded the value of Slovak ODA by a quarter. Regrettably, the MFA showed no inclination to address this issue and mitigate the risk of the real impact of the reduction of SlovakAid activities in partner countries. Despite the large humanitarian crisis, ODA has barely any political support in the Slovak foreign policy arena and 2022 was a missed opportunity to modernise the system and significantly increase ODA levels.

Although being a neighbouring country, Slovakia's humanitarian assistance to Ukraine amounted only to EUR 9 million, which not only stands in stark contrast to the EUR 16 million raised by CSO initiatives but placed Slovakia in the 27th position globally in terms humanitarian aid as percentage of GDP. In contrast to the multitude of legislative measures addressing the Ukrainian crisis, no effort was made to enact legislation aimed at enhancing the Slovak humanitarian aid system.

On a positive note, the MFA decided against inflating Slovak ODA with the substantial IDRC. They reported only EUR 1.1 million. This is commendable and the rationale behind this decision could serve as a model for other aspects of ODA.

Government's relationship with civil society

The relationship is good with respect to communication and access, but one worrying trend is the limited ability to influence policy. There were no major legislative or other changes that would improve the civil society environment nor increase in

Reported ODA: EUR 151 million
0.15% GNI (↑ from 0.14% in 2021)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 150 million
0.15% GNI (↑ from 0.14% in 2021)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 1 million
0.8% of total



funding. On a strategic communication level, ODA is overshadowed by a plethora of other topics.

The largest thematic part of the MFA budget is devoted to development cooperation (EUR 13 million in 2021), which is the foreign policy area with the largest civil society involvement by far. However, the future of ODA, given the many other crises challenging Slovak national interests, is marginalised in comparison with other issues of greater priority for the MFA.

Civil society responded swiftly to the war in Ukraine. In a matter of hours following the invasion in February 2022, humanitarian and other non-governmental organisations, along with volunteers and grassroots activists, promptly initiated efforts to offer humanitarian aid to refugees fleeing the harrowing conflict in Ukraine, spanning both sides of the border. To a significant degree, Slovak NGOs and volunteers stepped in to fill the void left by the state, which demonstrated a lack of strategic planning, coordination, resource allocation and logistical support, including providing material assistance.

The Slovak government should:

- Make ODA a priority at ministerial level and in its strategic communication.
- Increase bilateral ODA and make funding more flexible.
- Enhance the quality of ODA, i.e. non-financial improvements, including legislative change and the creation of rapid response mechanisms.
- Increase the predictability and consistency of decision-making processes.