WAGE-UP

Minimum Wage & Collective Bargaining in Slovakia 2026

Slovakia

Statutory Minimum Wage ✓

Monthly Min. Wage	915.00€
Hourly Min.Wage	5.26€

51.00%
MW as % of Median Wage

43.00%
MW as % of Gross Average Wage

Gender pay gap	15.70%

28.00%
Collective bargaining coverage

Process of transposition:
Transposed + Action Plan for CB published

Compare with other countries

Latest update on April 2026

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Minimum wage regime in Slovakia

The statutory minimum wage was introduced in 1991 under Act No. 99/1991 Coll., during the period of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. After the dissolution of the federation on 1 January 1993, the law remained in force in Slovakia. The current version of the minimum wage law was adopted in 1996 and has since undergone several reforms, however.

In the period 2002–2006, under the right-wing government led by Mikuláš Dzurinda, liberal economic policies reduced the influence of trade unions and pushed deregulation. From 2006 to 2020, however, government was dominated by the self-proclaimed social democratic party SMER or coalition governments led by SMER. During this period, some social democratic policies were aimed at prioritising wage growth and stronger labour market protections to address socio-economic disparities.

During SMER's tenure, the minimum wage became a crucial tool for promoting wage fairness and embedding social policies in the labour framework. In 2009, amidst the financial and economic crisis, the government and trade unions signed a memorandum committing to enhance real wages through collective bargaining while sustaining employment during turbulent times. A key milestone came in 2020, when the third Fico government implemented a substantial increase in the minimum wage from 520 euros (€) to €580 and established that, starting in 2021, the minimum wage would be set at 60% of the national average wage. However, the right-wing populist government of Igor Matovič later reduced this threshold to 57% and fixed additional payments for weekend and night work, effectively decoupling them from the minimum wage. The most recent reforms to Slovakia's minimum wage framework occurred in 2024 to align with the European Minimum Wage Directive. Governed by Act No. 663/2007 on the Minimum Wage, the current system emphasises fair wage assessment (Article 5 of the Directive) and the role of social partners in the wage-setting process (Article 7).

Adjustments are negotiated through a tripartite process involving the government, employers and trade unions. If consensus cannot be reached, an automatic adjustment mechanism ensures predictable and consistent wage growth. The current government led by SMER has reversed the changes introduced by the Matovič administration, restoring the automatic minimum wage increase to 60% of the national average and re-establishing the link between wage supplements and the minimum wage.

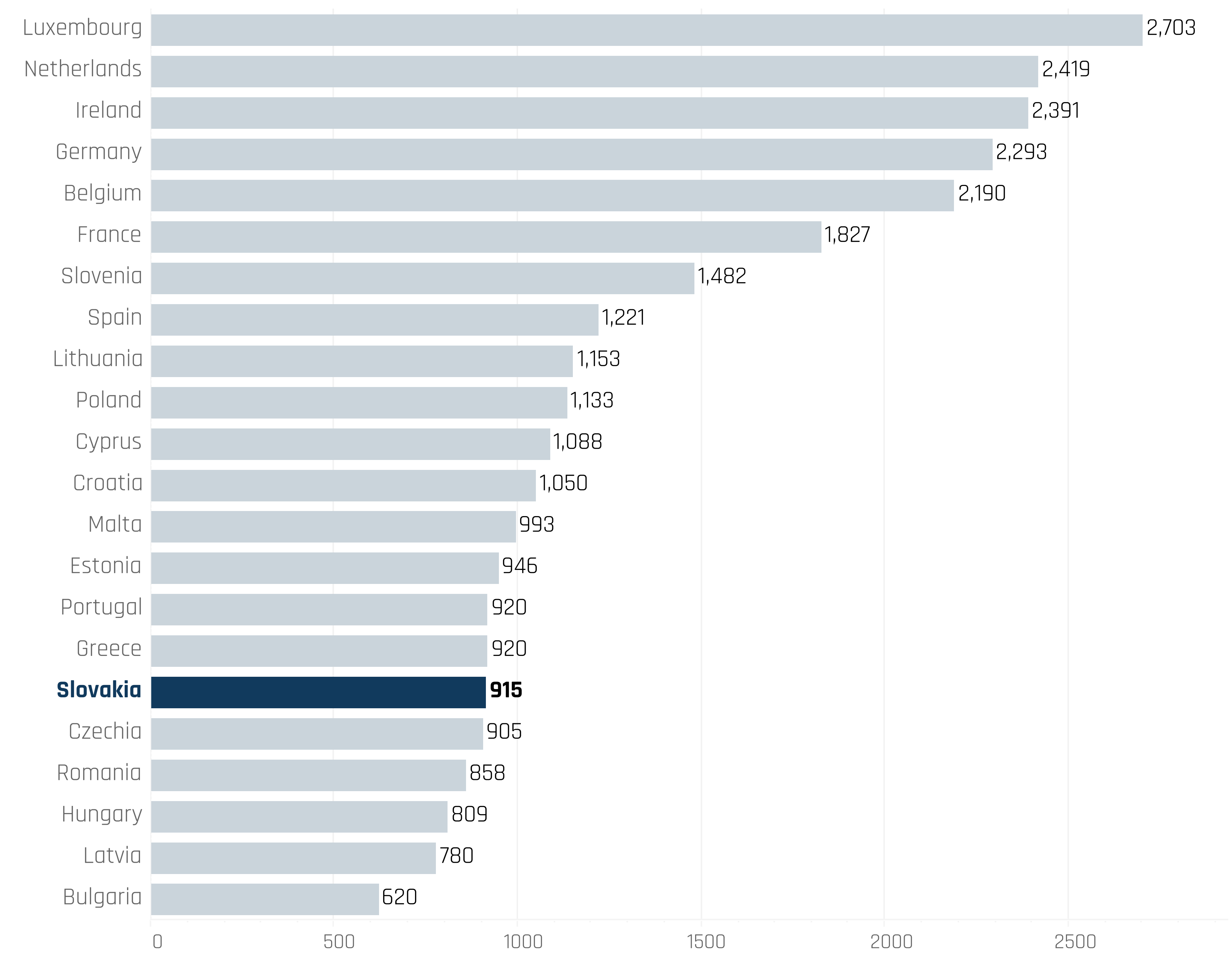
In addition to the automatic indexation mechanism, trade unions and employers' associations can negotiate a higher minimum wage; if no agreement is reached the automatic mechanism applies. Based on the automatic adjustment mechanism, the statutory minimum wage in Slovakia for 2026 is set at €915 per month and €5.26 per hour.

In Slovakia, the minimum wage system includes guaranteed minimum wages, which reflect the complexity of the work being performed. Jobs are categorised into six levels of difficulty, each level having a set minimum wage based on the basic minimum wage. As of 1 January 2026, the statutory minimum wage amounts to €915 per month (€5.259 per hour).

Table 1: Kaitz index of the minimum wage as a percentage of the average gross wage (2015–2024)

Year	Minimum wage (€)	Average wage (€)	Kaitz index (%)
2015	380	883	43.05
2016	405	912	44.41
2017	435	954	45.65
2018	480	1013	47.38
2019	520	1092	47.62
2020	580	1133	51.19
2021	623	1211	51.45
2022	646	1304	49.54
2023	700	1430	48.95
2024	750	1524	49.21
2025	816	1620	50.37

Monthly Minimum Wage (€) per Country



Statutory Minimum Wage
Yes

Real Growth rate of wages
7.60%

% of workers covered by minimum wage
5.00%

Nominal Growth rate of Wages
12.10%

Minimum wage regime in Slovakia

The guaranteed minimum wage is €1,031 at the second level and €1,495 at the sixth level. These figures apply to full-time employees working a 40-hour week.

Historically, Slovakia's minimum wage increases have generally been modest. Alignment with the European directive's reference values, however, has accelerated minimum wage growth considerably. These reforms have significantly enhanced wage fairness.

Key challenges and debates

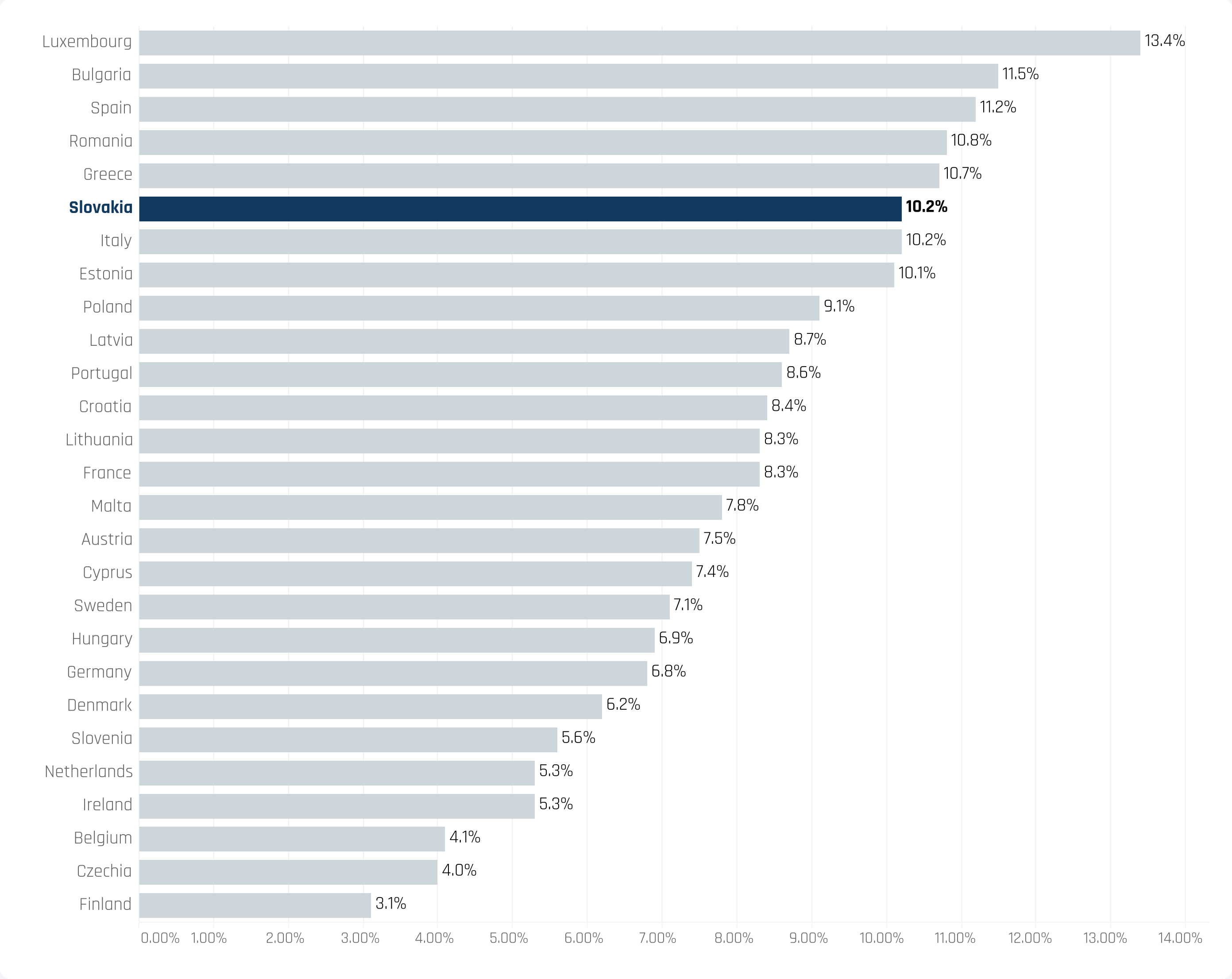
Employers' organisations have expressed concerns not so much about the rising minimum wage itself, but about the impact of the automatic adjustment mechanism on supplementary payments (for example, for weekend, night and holiday work) and guaranteed wages, which are calculated as a percentage of the minimum wage. Despite these objections, the provisions remain in place, reflecting trade union influence. In public debates, trade unions have framed the mechanism as an important tool for ensuring predictability and protecting low-paid workers from inflation and in-work poverty.

When it comes to regional disparities, economically weaker regions, particularly in the east of the country, are struggling to adapt to rising wage costs, raising fears of job losses in smaller enterprises, according to some analysts.

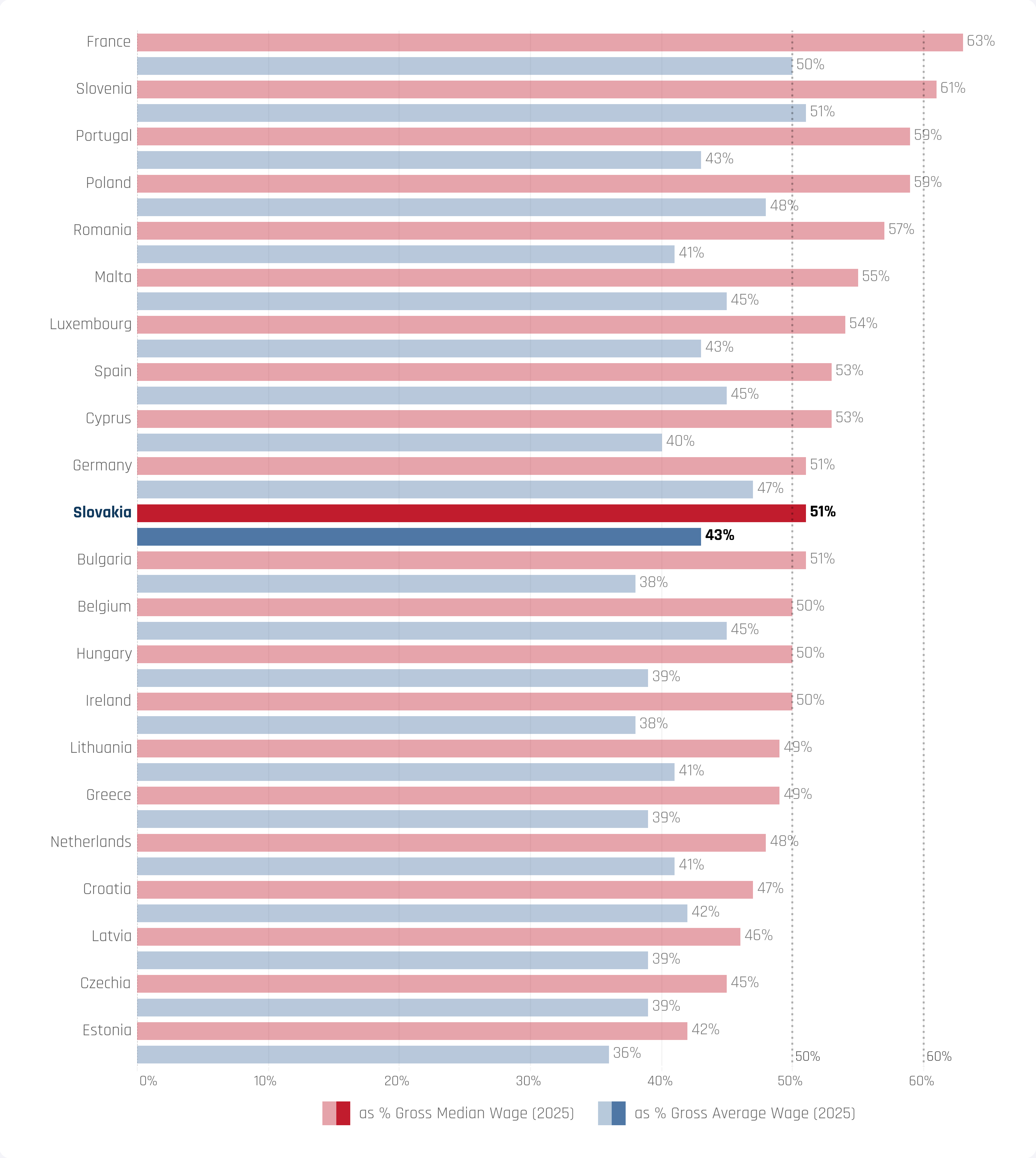
These concerns are often linked to lower productivity levels, weaker investment activity and a higher concentration of small and medium-sized firms in these regions.

Looking at sectoral competitiveness, industries such as hospitality argue that higher minimum wages could undermine their ability to compete with larger, more profitable sectors.

In-work poverty rate (%) per Country



Minimum Wage as % of Gross Median and Gross Average Wage per Country



Collective Bargaining system in Slovakia

The Labour Code states that employees have the right to collective bargaining. Slovakia's collective bargaining system is governed by Act No. 2/1991 on Collective Bargaining, which was adopted under the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, making it one of the first laws enacted at the outset of the political and economic transition. The law regulates agreements at both company and sectoral levels. However, the system remains highly fragmented, most agreements being concluded at the company level. This has resulted in significant wage disparities across industries, particularly between the public sector and manufacturing (which enjoy higher coverage) and private sectors such as services and retail (which lag behind).

Only a limited number of sectoral collective agreements are currently in force. Although the register of the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family lists more agreements, many are already expired or archived. Recent estimates indicate that around eight higher-level collective agreements remain valid into 2026 or beyond. Moreover, collective bargaining at the sectoral level has recently been further weakened by stalled negotiations in the public sector, in which trade unions have refused to sign higher-level agreements for 2026 in response to proposed wage freezes.

Another important recent development is the reintroduction of the extension mechanism for higher-level collective agreements. This reform was adopted in 2024 in the context of the transposition of the EU Directive on adequate minimum wages. It restored the possibility of extending representative sectoral agreements to additional employers within the same industry. While the practical use of this mechanism remains limited, initial cases have already emerged, including in the construction and glass industries.

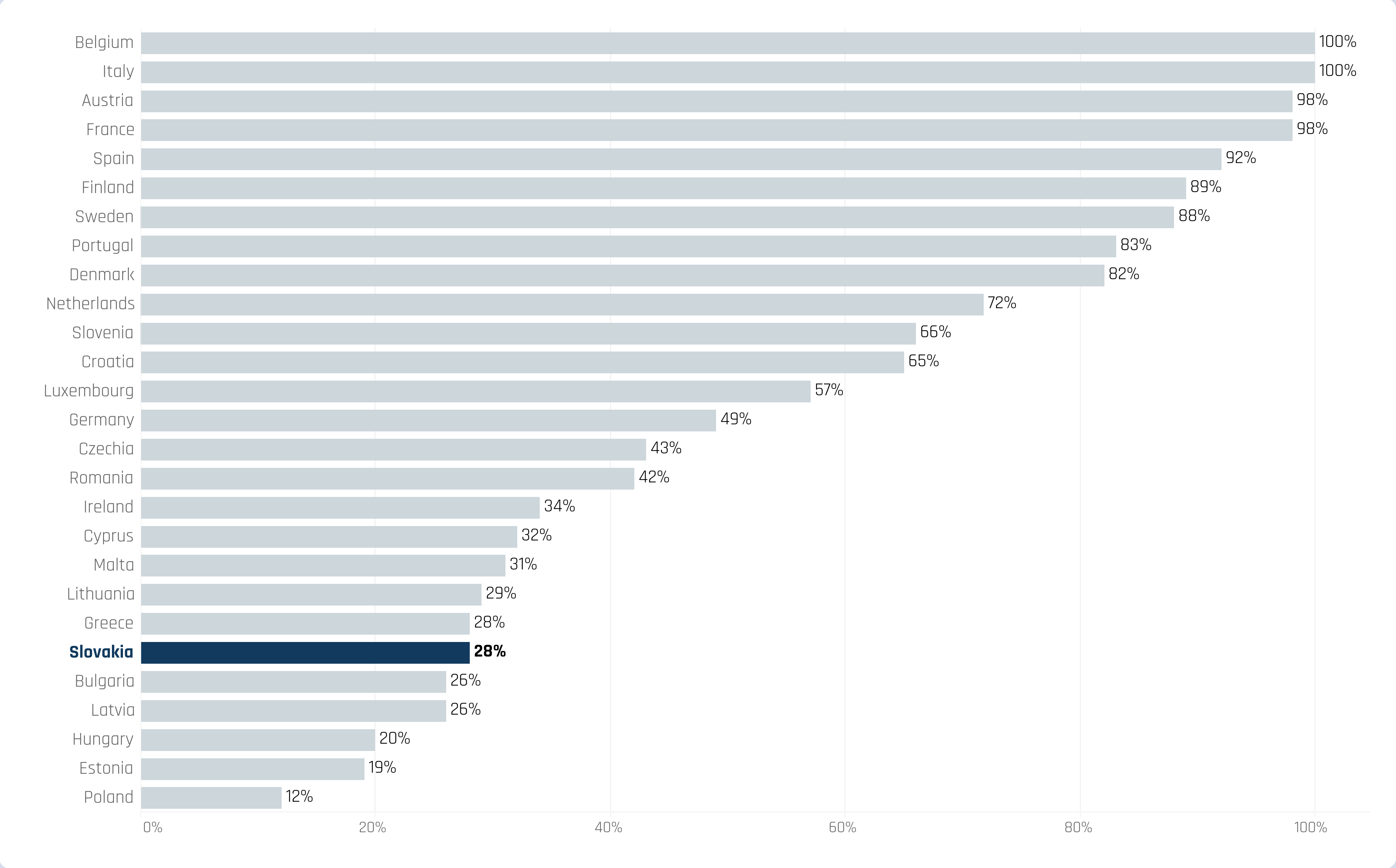
Collective bargaining coverage in Slovakia is estimated at about 25% of employees, far below the 80% threshold envisioned by the European Minimum Wage Directive. In the 1990s and early 2000s, coverage was higher but subsequently declined gradually, in line with the continuous and rapid decrease in trade union density, which had started at nearly 100% as a legacy of the previous state socialist regime. This decline in coverage was also influenced by deindustrialisation and privatisation processes, which reshaped the labour market.

Additionally, the decentralisation of bargaining to the company level, along with the limited number of sectoral agreements, and structural imbalances across industries further contributed to the low coverage. Reforms in the early 2000s under a right-wing government further weakened collective bargaining by liberalising the Labour Code and restricting the extension of collective agreements.

The formation of the first SMER-led government in 2006 marked an effort to revitalise social dialogue. The establishment of the Economic and Social Council in 2007 by Act No. 103/2007 on Tripartite Consultations at the National Level provided a platform for consultations between trade unions, employers and the government (a tripartite body that existed prior to this but was reformed and legally restructured). Through this platform, trade unions advocated for enhanced labour protections and a more functional collective bargaining system. However, the Slovak collective bargaining system is, to a certain extent, caught in a cycle of frequent changes, with alternating right-wing and left-wing governments. This has led to continuous shifts in the system, with collective agreements being either strengthened or weakened, for example, through the abolition and reintroduction of agreement extension or support for sectoral agreements. As a result, the system lacks stability. Despite these developments, structural challenges persist and employers often restructure their organisations or change legal status to avoid being bound by agreements.

Employers have long preferred company-level collective bargaining, while trade unions, especially at the confederation level and within certain federations, have sought to strengthen sectoral agreements. In some sectors, however, there is scepticism toward sectoral collective bargaining even within trade unions. Regarding trade unions' right of access to workplaces, the Labour Code and the Collective Bargaining Act ensure that unions are able to inform and consult employees. The protection of workers and trade union representatives from dismissal and discrimination is also guaranteed by these laws. They also protect union members from unfair dismissal or discrimination related to union activities, requiring strict legal justification for such actions. However, cases of union busting occur, and subsequent court proceedings on unlawful dismissal can last for several years.

Collective Bargaining Coverage per Country (%)



Collective Bargaining system in Slovakia

This is common in the Slovak judicial system, allowing employers to factor this into their decision-making when attempting to remove union members. More recently, however, European-level initiatives have begun to re-open debates on strengthening collective bargaining institutions, suggesting a possible shift away from the previously stagnant trajectory. In Slovakia, no specific employee groups are excluded from collective bargaining, and all workers can organise in trade unions. However, the law restricts the right to strike for certain groups of employees during disputes over collective agreements or their implementation. These include workers in health care, emergency services, the armed forces, and similar sectors in which the public interest is critical. Regarding the expiry of collective agreements, the law states that the agreement ends once the set period expires, unless specific provisions establish that the agreement should continue beyond that period.

In Slovakia, the practice of requiring a collective agreement in public procurement has not been established or legally mandated.

Key characteristics and challenges

Low coverage and fragmentation: Slovakia's bargaining coverage remains one of the lowest in the EU; the majority of agreements are confined to the company level.

Employer avoidance: some employers restructure their organisations to evade collective bargaining obligations. Recent legislative amendments have addressed this by clarifying that even interest associations of legal entities shall be recognised as employers' organisations under the law.

However, initial experience suggests that these legislative changes have not yet significantly altered employer behaviour in practice, as the legal framework still lacks clear and effective mechanisms to enforce bargaining obligations.

Sectoral imbalances: public sector and manufacturing industries enjoy relatively higher bargaining coverage, while some private economy sectors suffer from critically low representation.

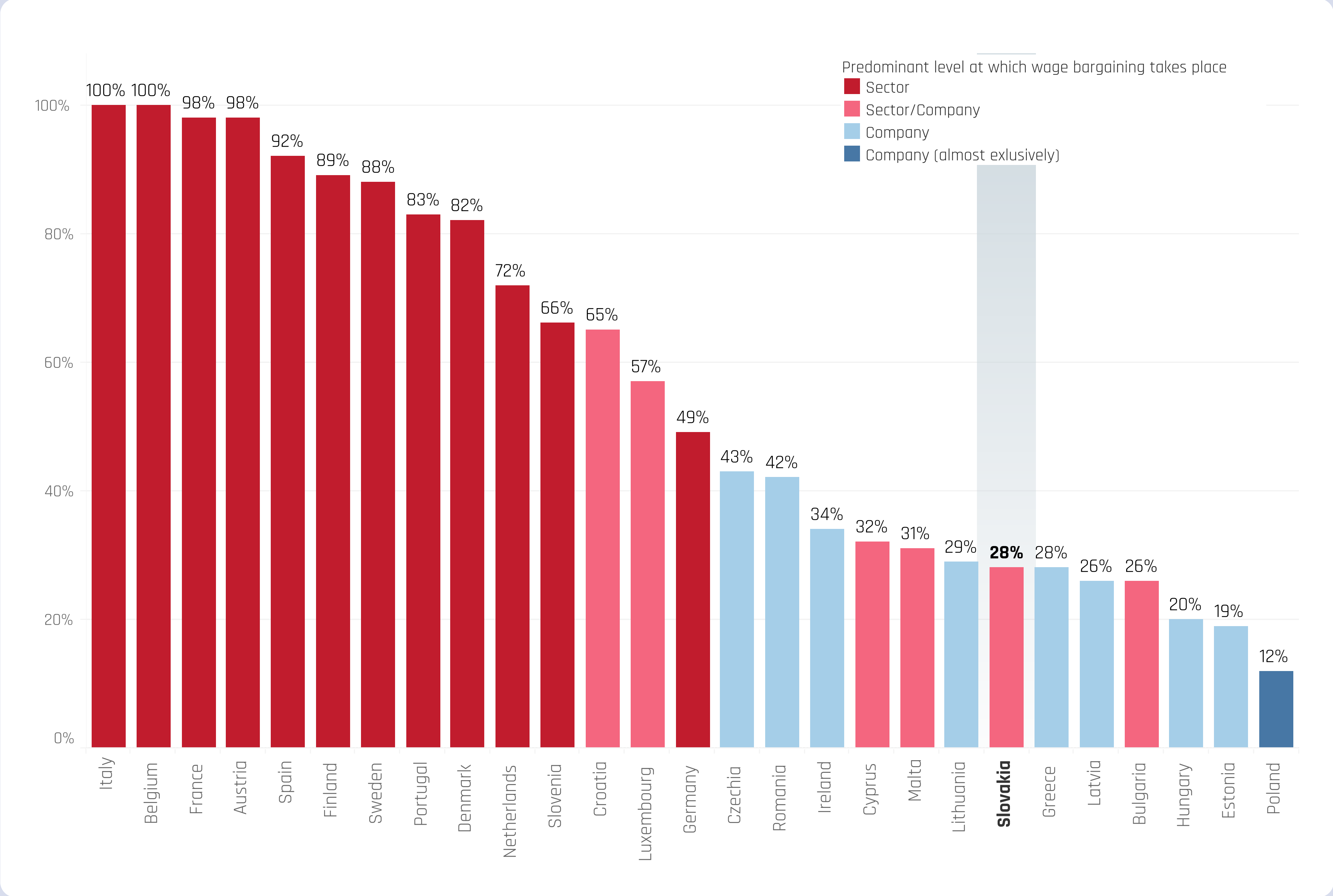
Collective Bargaining Coverage
28.00%

Trade Union Density
11.80%

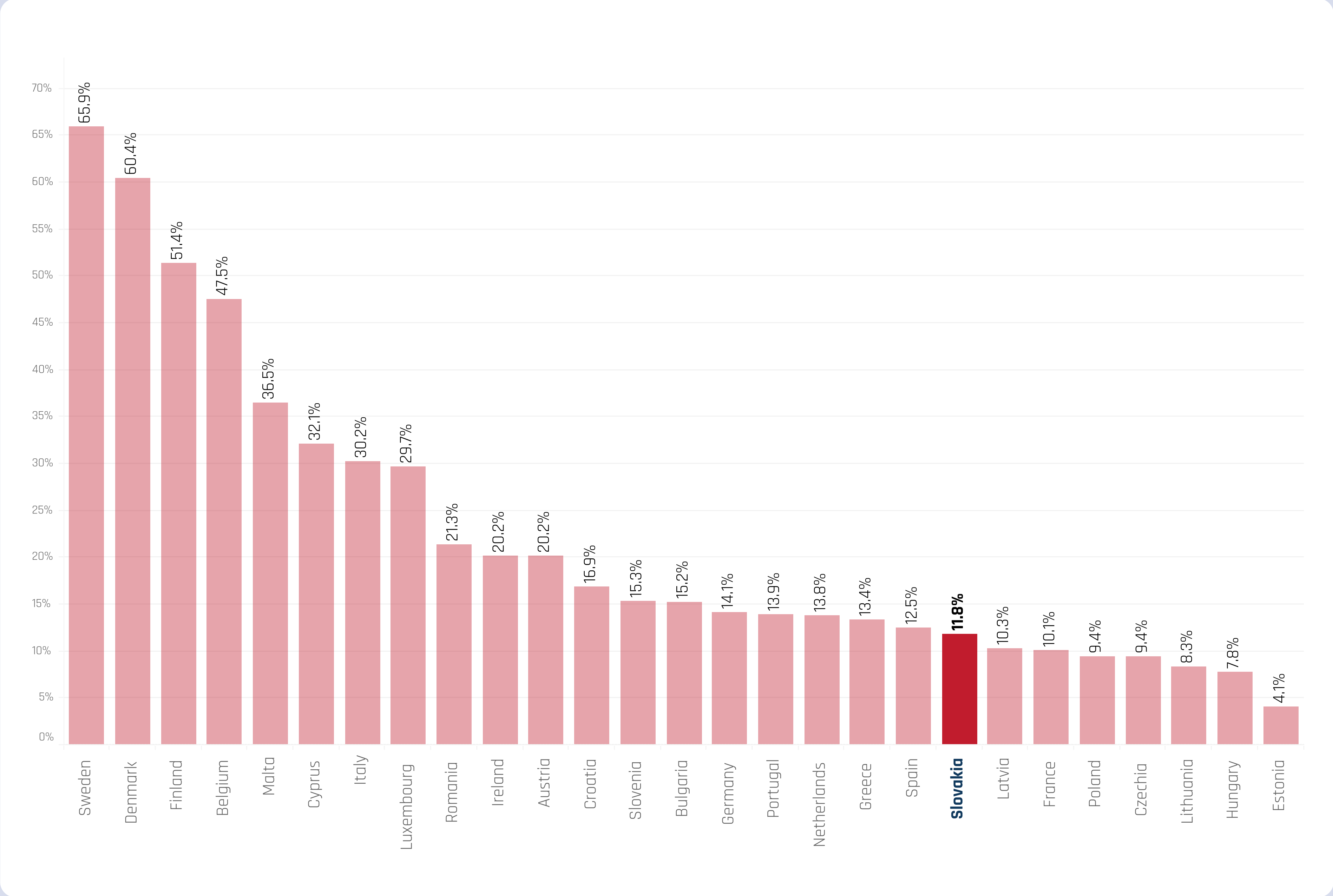
Extension Mechanism
Rare Extension

Valididy of Collective Agreeements after expirations?
No

CB Predominant level at which wage bargaining takes place per Country



CB Trade Union Density (%) for each Country



Transposition of the European Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in the EU

Slovakia successfully transposed the European Minimum Wage Directive in November 2024, marking a significant milestone in aligning its labour policies with EU standards. The process involved amendments to both the Minimum Wage Act and the Collective Bargaining Act, aimed at strengthening the role of social partners in wage-setting and fostering greater wage fairness. Social partners actively participated in the interdepartmental review, contributing through the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic.

The directive introduced a framework for extending sectoral agreements, with the ambitious goal of increasing collective bargaining coverage to the EU recommended threshold of 80%. This measure is intended to increase Slovakia's current collective bargaining coverage. While employers expressed disagreement and short-term political obstacles arose among coalition parties, the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family successfully secured approval for the legislative package and its transposition.

Following the transposition process, the government adopted an Action Plan to strengthen collective bargaining coverage in December 2025. However, the plan relies largely on analytical, consultative and awareness-raising measures rather than on binding legislative interventions, which has led to a degree of scepticism among trade unions regarding its potential effectiveness. In practice, the most consequential changes remain those legislative amendments adopted earlier in the course of the Directive's implementation, while their real impact on bargaining dynamics is still at an early stage and so far remains limited.

Key legislative changes in the context of transposing the Directive

Clarification of collective bargaining participants

The law was amended to explicitly define that collective agreements can be concluded by trade union bodies and employers or their organisations. This includes interest associations of legal entities and civil associations, provided they are part of an employers' federation under specific regulations. These changes aim to prevent certain employers' associations from altering their legal status to avoid participating in sector-level collective bargaining.

Monitoring and transparency

The government outsourced the task of measuring collective bargaining coverage to a private company, which continues to be responsible for producing official coverage estimates. While this step addressed capacity constraints, it has also raised concerns about methodological transparency and the reporting of coverage figures, particularly as some calculations focus on larger firms and exclude enterprises with fewer than 20 employees, where union presence is structurally weakest.

Extension of collective agreements

A reinstated framework allows for the extension of sectoral agreements to a broader range of employers. While this aims to boost bargaining coverage, it faces significant resistance from employer organisations, who argue that the diverse needs of companies within sectors make such extensions impractical.

Future developments

Following the adoption of the action plan and recent legislative amendments, the key issue for the coming years will be their practical implementation and impact on collective bargaining coverage. No substantial follow-up measures have been implemented since the Action Plan was adopted in December 2025, although several procedural deadlines are scheduled in the near future. Trade unions are expected to use tripartite and other institutional forums to push for further progress in the implementation phase. While the reform agenda formally aims to strengthen sectoral bargaining and reduce fragmentation, its effectiveness will depend largely on enforcement capacity, political continuity and the willingness of social partners to engage.

The Covid-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities in Slovakia's social dialogue framework, as trade unions faced significant challenges in organising protests and maintaining influence during the state of emergency. In response, they shifted towards 'bread-and-butter unionism', focusing on public campaigns, petitions and company-level actions to protect workers' rights, emphasising direct engagement over political affiliations. More broadly, Slovakia's collective bargaining system continues to face structural constraints, including low union density, limited sectoral coordination and uneven representation across firm sizes. Although recent reforms and European-level initiatives have reopened debates on strengthening bargaining institutions, their long-term impact on bargaining coverage and wage-setting practices remains uncertain and will also depend on broader political constellations, which have historically played a significant role in shaping the direction and stability of collective bargaining reforms in Slovakia.

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WAGE-UP

WAGE-UP is the ETUC Monitoring Tool presenting information on Minimum Wage setting procedures and Collective Bargaining systems in all EU countries, as well as the progress in EU countries toward the transposition and the implementation of all the provisions of the Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU (2022/2041).

www.wage-up.etuc.org/

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