



Co-funded by the
European Union

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE GREENET PROJECT - SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Funded by the European Union. The views and opinions expressed in this text are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the European Commission. The European Union and the funding body are not responsible for them.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context and objectives of the research

The purpose of this report is to analyse the current situation in the Slovak Republic regarding the issue of green transition and fair transformation in the energy, industry, and transport sectors. This report was produced as part of the „GREENET Fast forwarding the green transition in just and socially responsible way – cases of industry, energy and transport sectors. “The project is co-funded by the European Union.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Analysis of the current situation

The analysis of the current situation considers the fundamental literature on green transition and fair transition policies. Relevant national and European policies, regulations, collective agreements, thematic studies (literature), etc. were taken into account in the analysis.

1.2.2. Questionnaire Survey

The survey was conducted in December 2023 and January 2024. Due to the scope of the questionnaire survey, it was challenging to obtain a sufficient number of relevant respondents in the Slovak Republic. This was particularly difficult as the aim was to gather responses from as many individual organizations as possible, rather than multiple responses from one. The survey was completed by a total of 31 respondents.

1.2.3. In-depth interviews

In January 2024, we conducted in-depth interviews based on project requirements. The respondents were selected to represent all sectors concerned, taking into account the sectoral division within the Slovak Republic. As a counterpoint to the traditional heavy industry, interviews with representatives of the forestry industry (in the Slovak Republic associated with the timber industry) were also conducted. In total, 15 interviews were conducted.

2. NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS RELEVANT TO THE GREEN TRANSITION

2.1. The Green Deal

The climate change and environmental policies of the Slovak Republic are influenced by European policy, particularly the European Green Deal. To address these issues, the following specific measures can be considered within the country:

2.1.1. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Envirostrategy 2030

*Domestically, the environment ministry will focus its attention in the long term on the following areas: climate change, water, biodiversity protection, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and waste management, sustainable consumption and production, with a particular focus on circular economy policy and green growth¹. The Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic has prepared a new **Environmental Policy Strategy 2030**. The strategy includes the objectives of the 2030 Agenda adapted to the conditions of the Slovak Republic.² (Envirostrategy 2030³).*

2.1.2. Strategic Transport Development Plan of the Slovak Republic until 2030⁴

The Strategic Plan is a long-term document that aims to provide direction for the development of the transport sector and outlines how to implement its vision.⁵

2.1.3. Recovery and Resilience Plan (Component 4)

*On 10th October 2022, the European Commission confirmed the **State aid scheme for the decarbonisation of industry from the Recovery and Resilience Plan (Component 4)**. The scheme aims to support industrial decarbonisation projects and contribute to global climate targets under the Paris Agreement by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.^{6, 7, 8}*

2.1.4. Mitigation strategy documents of the Slovak Republic

¹ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic [online]. [cited 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.minzp.sk/agenda-2030/>

² https://www.minzp.sk/files/iep/03_vlastny_material_envirostrategia2030_def.pdf

³ Envirostrategy 2030. Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.minzp.sk/iep/strategicke-materialy/envirostrategia-2030.html>

⁴ https://www.mindop.sk/index/open_file.php?file=doprava/dopinfra/program/Dokumenty/fondyeu20142020/StrategickyPlan2030/Strategicky_plan_2030.pdf

⁵ Strategic Transport Development Plan of the Slovak Republic until 2030 [online]. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.mindop.sk/ministerstvo-1/doprava-3/strategia/strategicky-plan-rozvoja-dopravy-sr-do-roku-2030>

⁶ Recovery and Resilience Plan (Component 4). Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.minzp.sk/klima/plan-obnovy-odolnosti-komponent-4/>

⁷ Text of the scheme:

<https://obchodnyvestnik.justice.gov.sk/ObchodnyVestnik/Formular/FormularDetailHtml.aspx?idFormular=3550367&csrt=2384708614519771708>

⁸ <https://www.minzp.sk/poo/vyzva-dekarbonizaciu-priemyslu.html>

a view to 2050⁹, is the Slovak Republic's response to its commitments in the fight against climate change as a member of the European Union and the United Nations.

It is an obligation to develop a long-term strategy with a scope of at least 30 years. The strategy aims to identify and propose measures, both existing and new ones, within the Slovak Republic to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.¹⁰

2.2. Policies and Programmes for a Just Transition

The just transition mechanism is a key tool to ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy is equitable and leaves no one behind. The Just Transition Fund is the first pillar of this mechanism. It will provide assistance in the form of grants.¹¹ The Just Transition Fund targets the regions most affected by the transition. In Slovakia, the Upper Nitra region and selected districts of the Košice Region have been identified as such.¹²

2.3. National Industrial Relations System

The Labour Code (Act No. 311/2001 Coll.) is a crucial document that regulates individual labour relations in connection with the performance of dependent work by natural persons for legal entities or natural persons and collective labour relations.¹³ The Labour Code includes the rights and obligations of both the employer and employees, as well as their positions in the private sphere. It also covers their mutual relations.

2.3.1. Employee Representation

Section 11a of the Labour Code regulates the representation of employees in the Slovak Republic.

Forms of representation:

- **trade union organisation:** *a civil association established under Act No 83/1990 Coll. on the association of citizens. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees the right to trade union association and activities.*
- **works council, employee trustees, and employee representatives** *participate in the employer's decision-making process regarding social and economic interests of employees. They are designed to provide fair and satisfactory working conditions for those employed¹⁴.*

⁹ <https://www.minzp.sk/files/oblasti/politika-zmeny-klimy/nus-sr-do-roku-2030-finalna-verzia.pdf>

¹⁰ Mitigation strategy documents of the Slovak Republic. Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.minzp.sk/klima/nizkohlukova-strategia/>

¹¹ FAQ - Frequently asked questions [online]. MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATIZATION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. [cited 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://mirri.gov.sk/sekcie/program-slovensko-2021-2027/fond-spravodlivej-transformacie/faq-zoznam-najcastejsich-otazok/>

¹² Available from: <https://mirri.gov.sk/sekcie/program-slovensko-2021-2027/fond-spravodlivej-transformacie/faq-zoznam-najcastejsich-otazok/>

¹³ Dependent work means work performed in a relationship of superiority of the employer and subordination of the employee, personally by the employee for the employer, on the employer's instructions, on the employer's behalf, during working hours determined by the employer (i.e. dependent work is not a trade or other type of business).

¹⁴ MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. Employee Council and Trustee [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/praca-zamestnanost/vztah-zamestnanca-zamestnavateľa/kolektivne-pracovnopravne-vztahy/zamestnanecka-rada-dovernik/>

council is not excluded.

2.3.2. Social dialogue

Act No. 103/2007 Coll. on Tripartite Consultations at the National Level and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Acts has been in force since 1 April 2007.

The Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic was established as a consultative and conciliatory body for the government and social partners at the national level.^{15, 16}

The members of the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic are representatives of:

- *the Government of the Slovak Republic*
- *the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic*
- *the Association of Employers' Unions and Associations of the Slovak Republic*
- *the Republican Union of Employers*
- *the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia*
- *Association of Industrial Unions and Transport*
- *Joint Trade Unions of Slovakia.*

2.3.3. Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is regulated by Act No. 2/1991 Coll. on collective bargaining.

*The Collective Bargaining Act **outlines two levels of collective agreements:***

- *enterprise collective agreement: concluded between a single employer and one or more trade union organisations.¹⁷*
- *A national or regional collective agreement: negotiated for individual economic sectors on a national or regional scale¹⁸*

¹⁵ MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. *Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: z: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/showdoc.do?docid=239&forceBrowserDetector=pc>*

¹⁶ OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. *Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic [online]. updated 18.12.2023 [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.vlada.gov.sk/hospodarska-a-socialna-rada-sr/>*

¹⁷ MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. *Enterprise collective agreement [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/praca-zamestnanost/vztah-zamestnanca-zamestnavatela/kolektivne-pracovnopravne-vztahy/kolektivne-zmluvy/podnikove-kolektivne-zmluvy.html>*

¹⁸ MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. *Collective agreement of higher level [online]. [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/praca-zamestnanost/vztah-zamestnanca-zamestnavatela/kolektivne-pracovnopravne-vztahy/kolektivne-zmluvy/kolektivne-zmluvy-vyssieho-stupna.html>*



If the employer asks the parties to join the higher-level collective agreement and



Co-funded by the European Union

level the

parties agree to do so, the higher-level collective agreement is also binding on an employer who is not a member of the employers' organisation that concluded the higher-level collective agreement.

Funded by the European Union. The views and opinions expressed in this text are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the European Commission. The European Union and the funding body are not responsible for them.

3. THE GREEN TRANSITION AND ITS IMPACT ON REORGANISATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

3.1. Energy

3.1.1. Characteristics of the sector ¹⁹

The energy sector is linked to all sectors of the national economy. Its strategic role is to ensure the safe and sufficient production and transport of different types of energy and fuels to individual consumers. *The Slovak Republic has developed a “Low Carbon Development Strategy for the Slovak Republic until 2030 with a view to 2050” in line with the document “A Clean Planet for All. A European Strategic Vision for a Prosperous, Modern, Competitive and Climate Neutral Economy”. The Energy Policy of the Slovak Republic, titled “Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for the years 2021 – 2030”, was subsequently reviewed and supplemented in this context²⁰.*

3.1.2. DATAcube

Chart no. 1 **Gross turnover - energy sector**

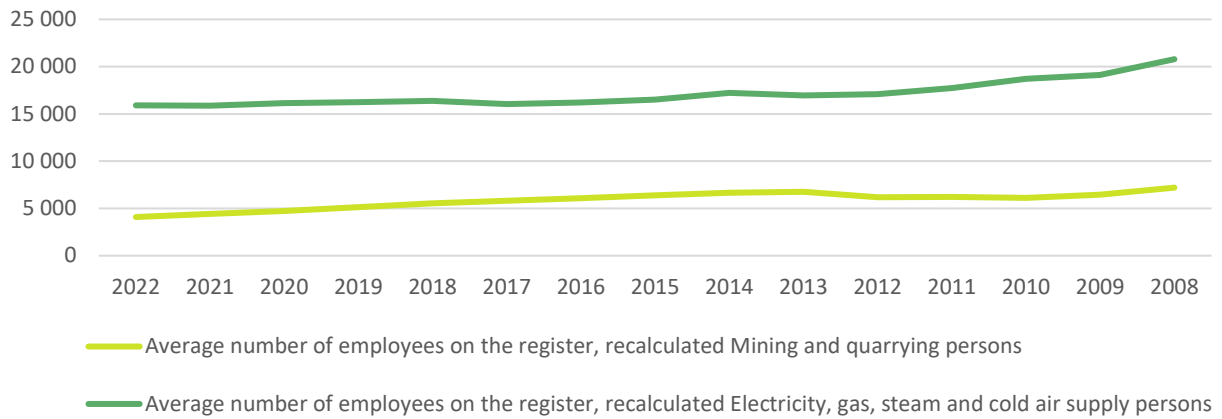


Source: DATAcube, available at: http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/pm1004rs/v_pm1004rs_00_00_00_sk

¹⁹ In the context of the Slovak Republic, the "energy" sector can be defined as the energy, gas and electricity sector. On the basis of the project plan, the chapter is supplemented with data for the mining and processing of raw materials, geology sector.

²⁰ Interim Report No. 12: Sector-driven innovations for an efficient labour market in the Slovak Republic: Annex No. 53 Strategy for the development of human resources in the energy, gas and electricity sector by 2030 [online]. [cited 2023-12-26]. Available from: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/sk/praca-zamestnanost/podpora-zamestnanosti/np-sektorovo-riadene-inovacie/vystupy-mp-sektorovo-riadene-inovacie/prilohy-k-priebezhnej-sprave-c-12.zip>

Chart no. 2 **Average number of employees on the payroll - energy**



Source: DATAcube, available at: http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/pm1004rs/v_pm1004rs_00_00_00_sk

3.1.3. Companies' strategies to meet the challenges of the Green Deal policy ²¹

The energy sector is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. However, there are various alternatives within the sector to move towards less emission-intensive or even completely emission-free production modes, depending on the specific company. However, taking a systemic perspective into account, transitioning to renewables will still require some reliance on fossil fuels such as gas-fired plants, coal-fired plants, and nuclear power to provide market flexibility.

Slovakia has a unique gas and heating infrastructure. To ensure sustainability, it is important to produce sufficient quantities of renewable gases, such as biomethane and hydrogen, and mix them with natural gas. This would be the most effective solution for the country.

However, the transition to green energy not only affects producers but also suppliers who are changing their business models as a result of green policies.

3.1.4. Impact of the Green Deal policy on the reorganization of the sector. ²²

The energy sector is currently experiencing a turbulent period due to the energy crisis, conflict in Ukraine, and the European Union's common direction and objectives. These factors have resulted in unprecedented price increases and impacts on consumers. However, despite these challenges, the European Commission's direction towards green transition has remained unchanged and continues to progress.

However, according to the employers, it is crucial to approach global issues in the energy sector objectively and prioritize safety. Therefore, it is important to make changes during times of peace and stability rather than during crises, as we have experienced in recent years. It is essential to avoid being guided by dogmatic visions and instead set realistic transformation goals, considering the specificities of each country involved.

3.1.5. Impact of the Green Deal policy on employment and working conditions ²³

The Slovak Republic is currently phasing out carbon-intensive production, which has had a direct negative impact on employment. According to one of the companies interviewed for this project, which is directly affected by this issue, the affected employees have been offered alternative positions or work in other plants of the company. Employees who did not accept other job offers after their employment was terminated were given the opportunity to retrain, regardless of their interest in staying with the employer.

Naturally, the industry is also generating a need for new skills and knowledge, which means that companies within the sector may seek to fill positions that were previously unfilled.

In the context of the labour market, it is important to note that historically households were mainly equipped with gas boilers. However, currently, heat pumps, photovoltaic and solar panels are becoming more prevalent. This presents a significant challenge for the labour market, as current students need to be prepared to work with these devices, and technicians operating in the labour market need to be retrained.

²¹ Source of information: in-depth interviews conducted within the project

²² Source of information: in-depth interviews conducted within the project

²³ Source of information: in-depth interviews conducted within the project

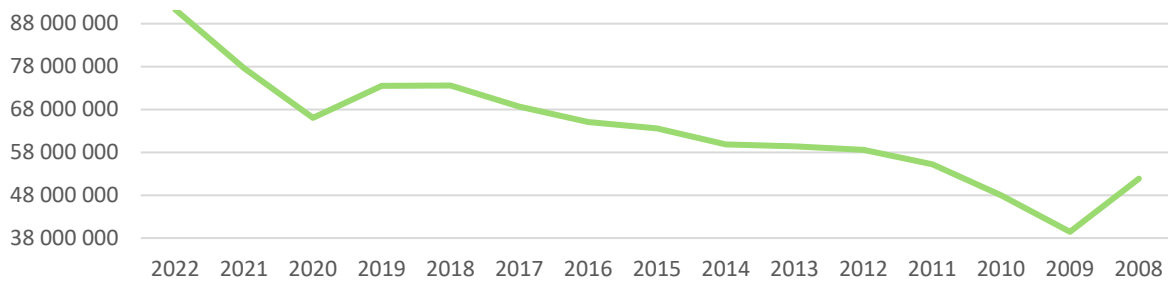
3.2. Industrial production

3.2.1. Characteristics of the sector

The Slovak Republic is a highly industrialised country with one of the highest shares of industry in total GDP in Europe. The automotive and engineering sectors dominate industry in Slovakia. In terms of employment structure, the Slovak Republic has one of the highest numbers of jobs at risk due to the development of Industry 4.0.

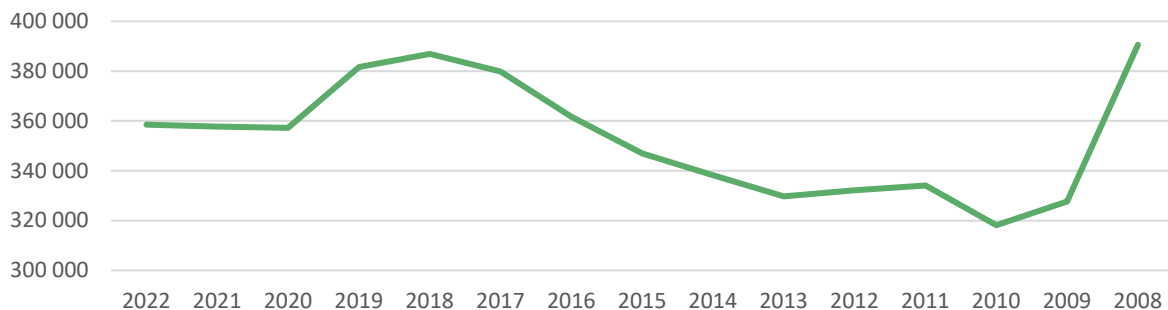
3.2.2. DATAcube

Chart No. 3 **Gross turnover and industrial production (thousands of EUR)**



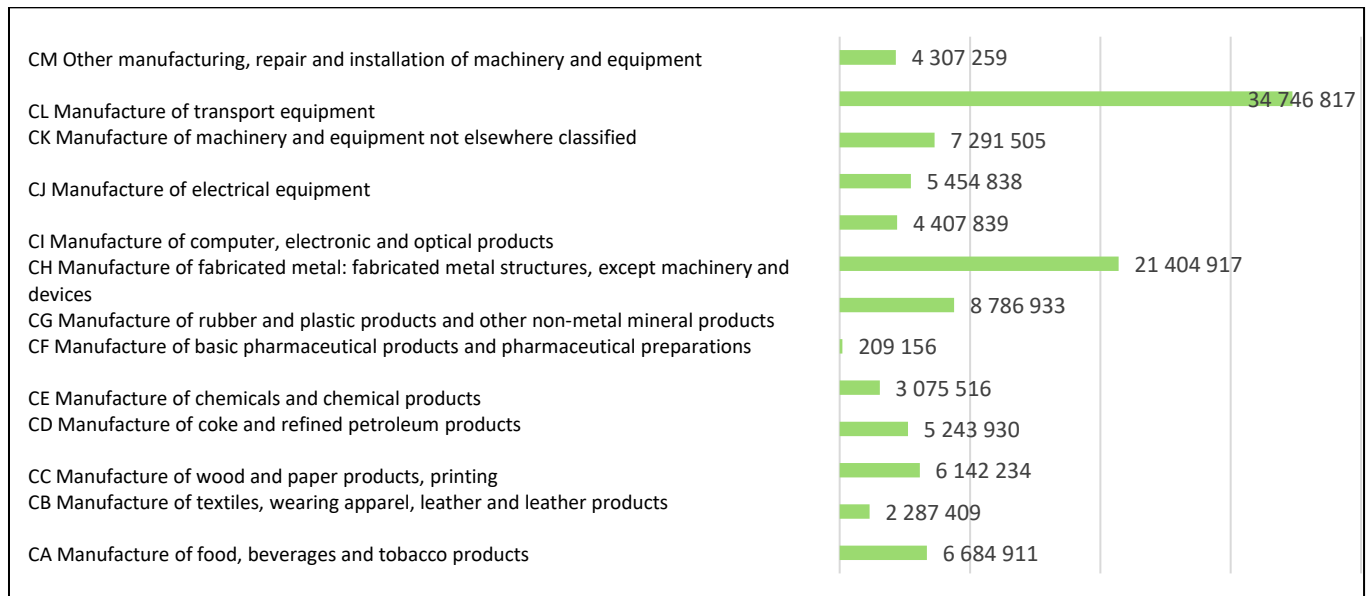
Source: DATAcube, available from http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/pm1004rs/v_pm1004rs_00_00_00_sk

Chart No. 4 **The average number of employees calculated Industrial production persons**



Source: DATAcube, available from http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/pm1004rs/v_pm1004rs_00_00_00_sk

Chart No. 5 **Revenues for 2022 - industry**



Source: DATAcube, available from http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SLOVSTAT/pm2012qs/v_pm2012qs_00_00_00_sk

3.2.3. Company strategies to meet the challenges of the Green Deal policy ²⁴

The current societal crises, such as COVID-19, the energy crisis, and the war in Ukraine, have pushed the topic of green transition to the background. However, it is important to note that companies are still taking action on green issues. It is understandable that if a company is facing a crisis that threatens its survival, green certificates may not be a top priority.

Decarbonising businesses can be a time and cost-intensive process, often taking several years, particularly when financed by multiple funds. Unfortunately, some of these processes have been suspended or delayed in Slovakia due to crises and bureaucratic red tape.

3.2.4. Impact of the Green Deal policy on the reorganisation of the sector ²⁵

The green transformation significantly impacts the industry as a whole. Therefore, it is unlikely to achieve the EU objective of transitioning by the required deadline without financial support from the state and the EU. Employers are prepared to respond to the changes, but they require stronger support from the state, at least at the level of neighbouring countries, to avoid putting themselves at a competitive disadvantage.

3.2.5. Impact of the Green Deal policy on employment and working conditions ²⁶

Paradoxically, some employers in the industry have a positive outlook on the labour market situation. This is due to the green transition, which is often associated with automation, robotics, and digitisation. This transition coincides with a large number of engineering workers retiring or taking early retirement, making it difficult to replace them in sufficient numbers. With new technologies, this gap can be partially covered.

²⁴ Source of information: in-depth interviews carried out within the project.

²⁵ Source of information: in-depth interviews carried out within the project.

²⁶ Source of information: in-depth interviews carried out within the project.

Employees who understand the urgency of education and actively participate in this process will gain a competitive advantage in the industry in the coming years. Employers are also ready to support these employees, because such a workforce is extremely important to them. Employees who repeatedly fail to respond to the needs of the labour market will unfortunately be (even) negatively affected by the green transition and will be replaced by more flexible workers who understand what the modern labour market requires.

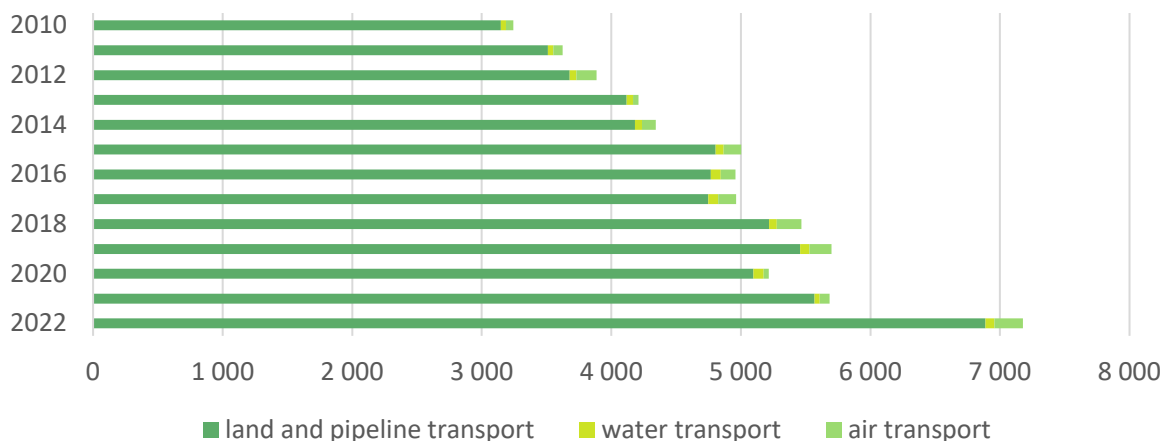
3.3. Transportation

3.3.1. Characteristics of the sector ²⁷

The characteristics of the transport sector in the national economy of the Slovak Republic can be derived from its overall evaluation within the framework of the White Paper²⁸, which defines the basic guidelines for establishing national development strategies. Transport has a global character, which is why the Slovak republic must also be part of international cooperation. The Slovak Republic is aware that it is a crossroads of roads from north to south and west to east, and for that reason, it must follow the accepted conclusions of the White Paper to the full extent.

3.3.2. DATAcube

Chart No. 6 **Sales development for own services and goods**



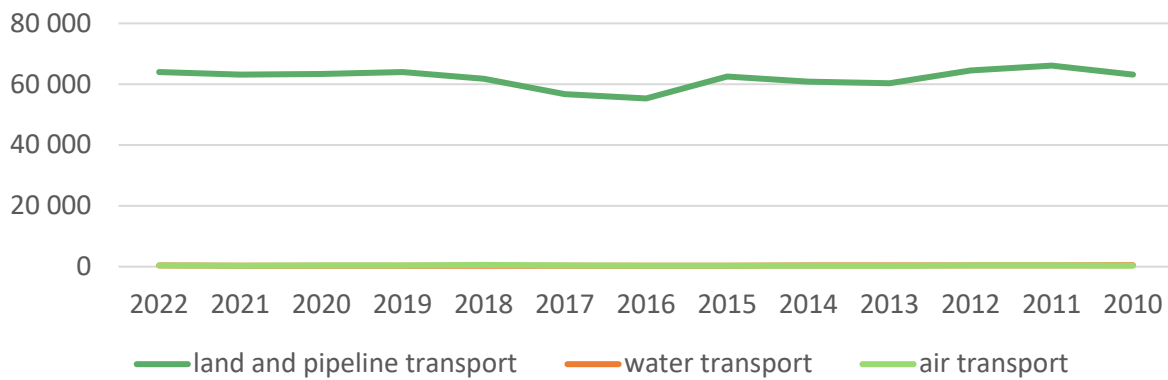
Source: DATAcube, available from:

http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/do1001rs/v_do1001rs_00_00_00_sk

²⁷The transport sector is often examined in the context of the Slovak Republic as "Transport and postal services" or "Transport, logistics, postal services". Those statistics are therefore aggregated for the areas concerned.

²⁸ WHITE PAPER: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system [online]. In: [cit. 2023-12-25]. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0144:FIN:sk:PDF>

Chart No. 7 **Development of the average number of employed people**



Source: *DATAcube*, available from: http://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/VBD_SK_WIN/do1001rs/v_do1001rs_00_00_00_sk

3.3.3. The company's strategies against the challenges arising from the Green Deal policy²⁹

Within the transport sector, we are talking about several, essentially separate, sectors, each facing individual problems.

Road transport – freight transport: *While a lot of attention and support is paid to the issue of greening in passenger transport, freight transport is in the background in this regard. The problem is that the requirements are basically the same in both areas. For trucks, there is practically no comparable alternative (electromobility vs. internal combustion engines). In addition, the financial complexity of "green" trucks is also a problem. If the Slovak Republic insists on switching to these vehicles, it will not be possible without significant financial assistance from the state. At the same time, with the number of trucks that move daily on the roads, it is unrealistic to fully replace this number with green alternatives in a short period of time (insufficient production capacity). The charging infrastructure is also a current problem, which is insufficient and the infrastructure for passenger cars is not usable.*

Urban public transport: *Funding from the budget of the public administration ensures adequate financial means for the normal operation of public transport in individual regions of Slovakia. However, finances do not allow any further development and investment. Until now, these have been financed through European projects. However, this method of financing can currently only be used for electric and hydrogen vehicles, which are considerably more financially demanding and require investments in infrastructure (charging stations), for which the founders do not have allocated resources. Currently, for most of them, the obligation to make at least 50% of their fleet emission-free is unrealizable.*

Railway transport: *Rail transport is generally considered a greener alternative. However, the railway network in Slovakia is currently outdated and, despite the fact that there is discussion about the transition from truck to train transport, the current lines are fully utilized.*

As part of the modernization and more significant greening of railway transport in Slovakia, it would be possible, for example, to replace diesel locomotives with electric ones. But this exchange requires considerable funds.

²⁹ Source of information: in-depth interviews carried out within the project.

Shipping: Shipping in Slovakia is a major polluter due to outdated technology, although it represents only a fraction of total transport. In addition to the huge cost of remotorizing ships, the availability of sufficient greener technologies is also a problem.

Air transport: *The greening of air transport in Slovakia concerns primarily supporting infrastructure.*

Transport support infrastructure: The need to make energy management more efficient and switch to greener alternatives thus also concerns supporting infrastructure in transport - airports, stations, administrative buildings, etc. However, many of them are currently in such poor technical condition that their greening is problematic to ensure.

In conclusion, from the above described in the conditions of the Slovak Republic, it can be concluded that the representatives of the transport sector are aware of the need to focus on the green transition, but the limiting factor is primarily financial resources and, consequently, the production capacities of technology suppliers.

3.3.4. The impact of the Green Deal policy on the reorganization of the sector ³⁰

Individual representatives have been struggling for a long time with a lack of specific solutions. It emerged from the interviews conducted within the project that the issue is repeatedly raised from several sides, but the proposed solutions are extremely costly and unavailable.

Representatives of the sector are calling for slower changes, which will have more moderate results, but will be realistic and feasible in the short term. One of the solutions presented is, for example, a "scrapage premium" for older trucks with a subsidy for the purchase of diesel vehicles (which is not in line with EU policies) with a higher Euro emission standard (e.g., replacement of Euro 3 vehicles with Euro 6 vehicles).

3.3.5. The impact of the Green Deal policy on employment and working conditions ³¹

If we talk about employees in transport, we are primarily focusing on drivers. However, the green transformation will have a negligible effect on their competence model.

For road freight transport, changes in the competency model will be more pronounced, e.g., for route planning dispatchers.

A major problem in the transport sector is the current massive retirement of workers related to the change in relevant legislation, which has paralysed rail transport in particular, where there are professions that cannot be replaced without sufficient qualifications (e.g., dispatcher).

The specificity of the sector is that employers are already today (at a time when the fleet of vehicles is still largely with internal combustion engines) are warning about the current shortage of electricians. While today vehicles are primarily taken care of by car repairers, electric vehicles require technicians who have "Section 21" according to current legislation. However, they will not receive it without completing the relevant secondary education and the paragraph cannot be obtained within the framework of a regular lifelong learning course.

³⁰ Source of information: in-depth interviews carried out within the project.

³¹ Source of information: in-depth interviews carried out within the project.

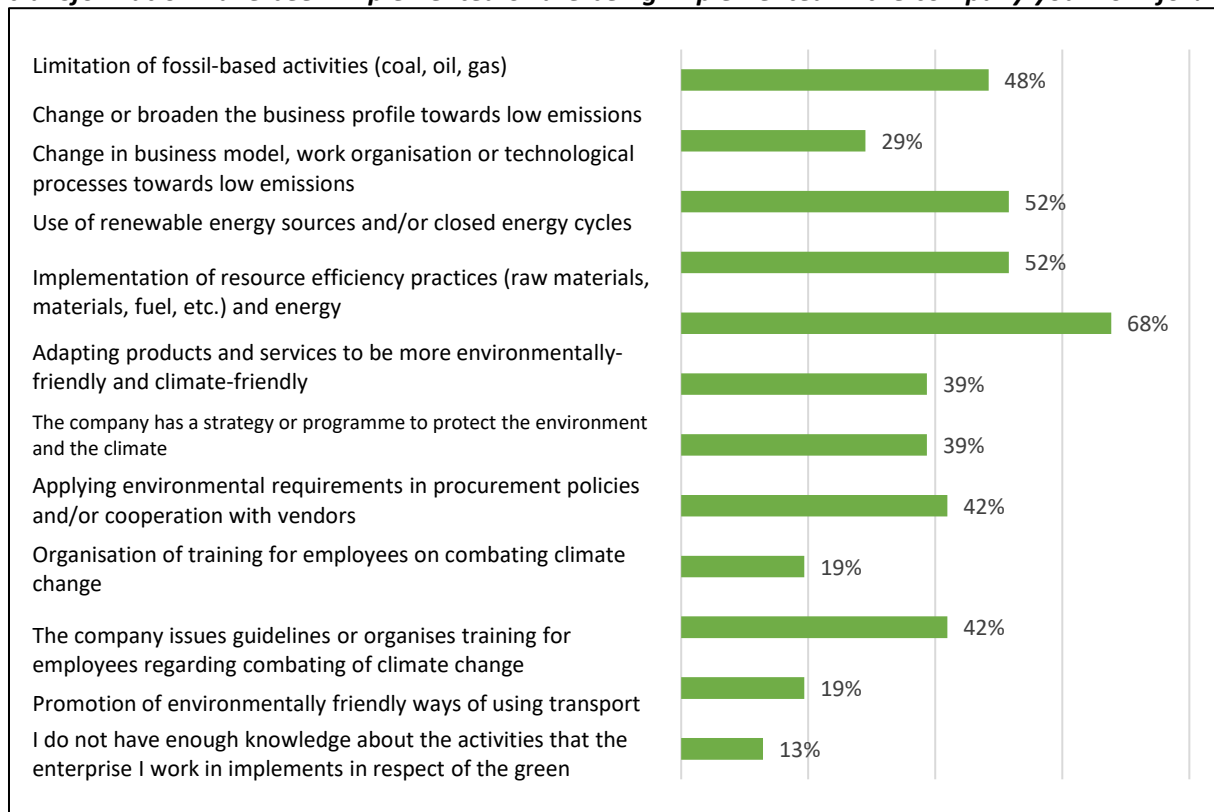
4. CROSS-SECTORAL PICTURE OF CHANGES IN EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS

4.1. Green Transition activities implemented in the sectors concerned at company level

Up to 68% of respondents said their company had implemented resource and energy efficiency practices. 52% said they had introduced the use of renewable energy and/or closed-loop energy systems and changed the business model, work organisation or technological processes to reduce emissions.

Only 13 per cent of the respondents did not have enough knowledge about the activities that the company for which they work is carrying out for a green transformation.

Chart No.8 **Respondents' answers to the question "What activities related to green transformation have been implemented or are being implemented in the company you work for?"**



Source: own processing of questionnaire survey

4.2. Impact of the green transition on employment and working conditions

Up to 30% of the interviewed employees do not know whether there are transformations of jobs in their workplace due to the green transition. In 44% of cases, no changes occur. At the same time, in 67% of cases, new jobs are not created due to its influence.

At the same time, the green transition has no effect on the employment of new workers as replacements for retiring persons (52%). 59% of the respondents also stated that the green transition did not have an impact on the disruption of jobs in their company.

In 22% of cases, due to the impact of green transformation, jobs are lost.

If such a situation occurs in the company, the employer offers employees:

- *transition to another job position within the company - 50% of cases*
- *assistance in finding a job outside the company – 33% of cases.*

Employees in the company can use social protection:

- *early retirement/paid leave before retirement – 50% of cases,*
- *one-off severance pay - more than 80% of cases.*

5. EMPLOYEE VIEWS, EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS

5.1. Perception of the green transition of workplaces

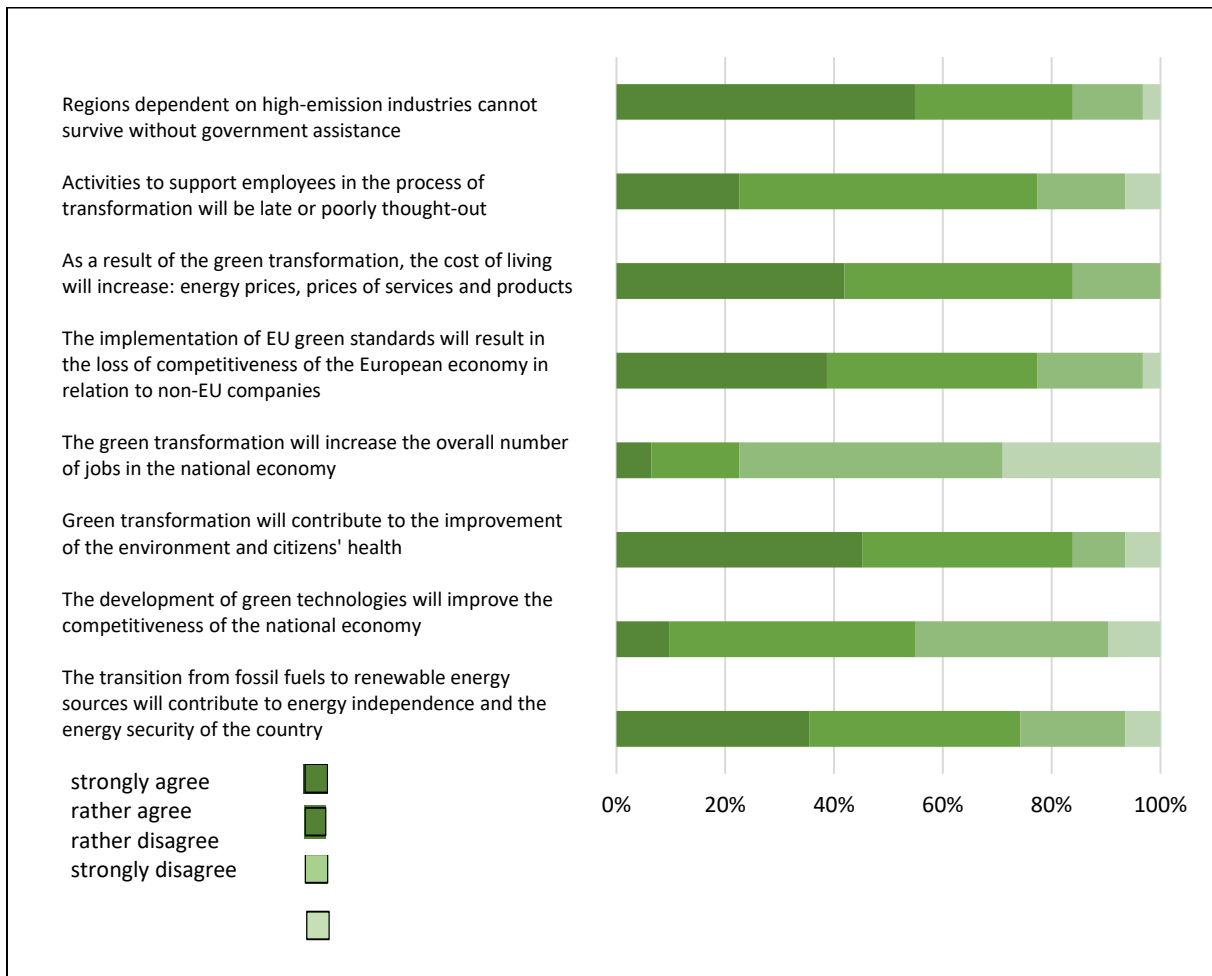
The majority of respondents believe that switching from fossil fuels to renewables will contribute to the country's energy independence and security.

On a positive note, up to 84% of those surveyed believe that going green will help improve the environment and citizens' health.

Respondents have no expectation of an increase in the total number of jobs in the national economy as a result of the green transition. They also say that implementing EU green standards will make the European economy uncompetitive compared to non-EU companies.

Respondents also expect citizens' living costs to rise as a result of the green transition, and measures to help workers through the transition to be delayed or poorly designed. Regions dependent on high-emission industries will not survive without government support, according to 84% of respondents.

Chart No. 9 Respondents' answers to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"



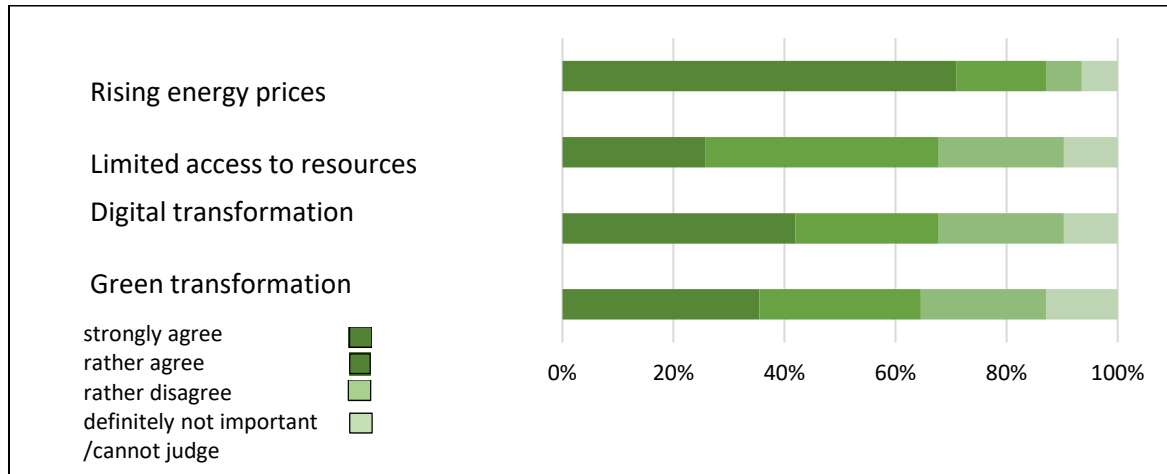
Source: own processing of the survey

5.2. Expectations related to a fair transition

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the importance of a number of issues to the future of the company for which they work. Based on respondents' answers, rising energy prices can be considered the most important issue. 87% of respondents rated it as (very and somewhat) important.

The issue of limited access to resources and digital transformation will be (very or somewhat) important to businesses, according to 68% of respondents. Least important, according to 65% of respondents, is the issue of green transformation.

Chart No. 10 **Respondents' answers to the question "In your opinion, how important are the following topics for the future of the company where you work?"**



Source: own processing of the survey

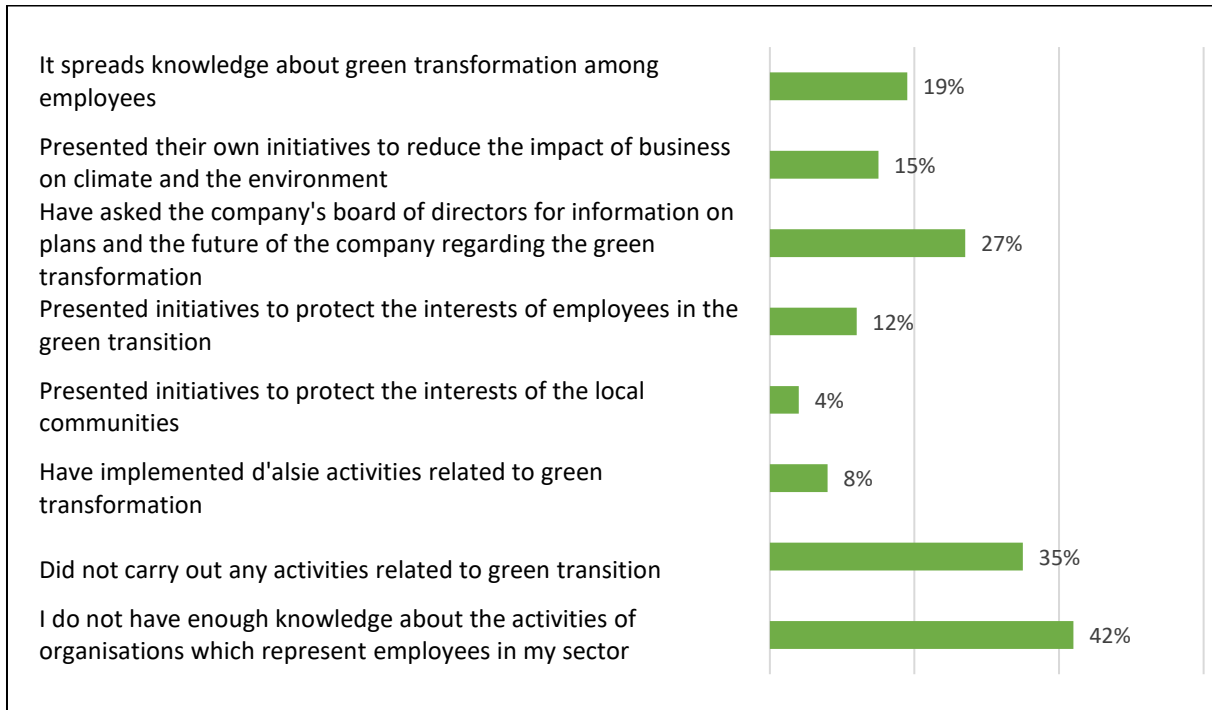
5.3. Available forms of support for employees in connection with the transition

In 84% of cases, there is a trade union or works council in the companies whose employees took part in the survey. This provides a platform for the direct transfer of information (including on green transformation issues) between employers and employees.

The results of the questionnaire survey show that the employer involves employee representatives in monitoring and introducing elements of occupational safety and health when new tasks are introduced in up to 63% of cases. 22% of respondents were unable to assess the involvement. In 15% of cases employee representatives are not involved.

42% of respondents were not sufficiently aware of the activities of employee representative organisations in their workplace. 35% felt that they were not involved in anything related to greening the workplace.

Chart No. 11 Respondents' answers to the question "What steps are the organisations that represent employees in your company taking in relation to green transformation?"



Source: own processing of the survey

Only 10% of the companies whose employees participated in the questionnaire survey have a joint body/board of directors that deals with green transformation together with employee representatives.

The green transformation is a relatively marginal issue in the dialogue between the employers and the employees or the representatives of the employees. Only about a third of the employees who responded to the questionnaire said that these issues had been the subject of discussions between employers and employee representatives.

Chart No. 12 **Respondents' answers to the question "Are there green transformation provisions in this collective agreement in relation to:"**



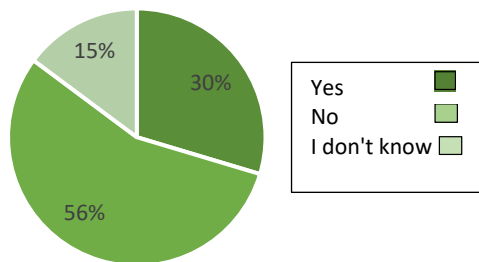
Source: own processing of the survey

5.4. Reviewing and strengthening staff skills

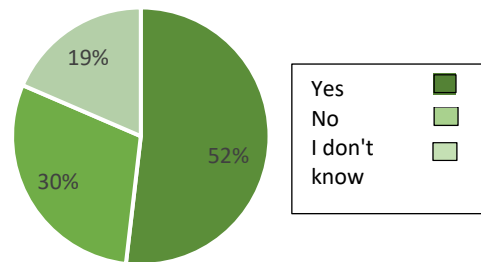
More than 50% of respondents to the survey said that the employer does not review the qualifications and skills of employees in the context of green transformation. However, in 52% of cases the employer has provided/is providing training to employees to improve their qualifications (skills).

Chart No. 13 **Respondents' answers to the question "In the context of green transformation, employers..."**

verifies the qualifications and skills of staff



provided/is providing staff with training to improve their skills



Source: own processing of the survey

Where employers have provided/are providing training to workers, up to 64 % of this training includes digital skills training as part of continuing education.

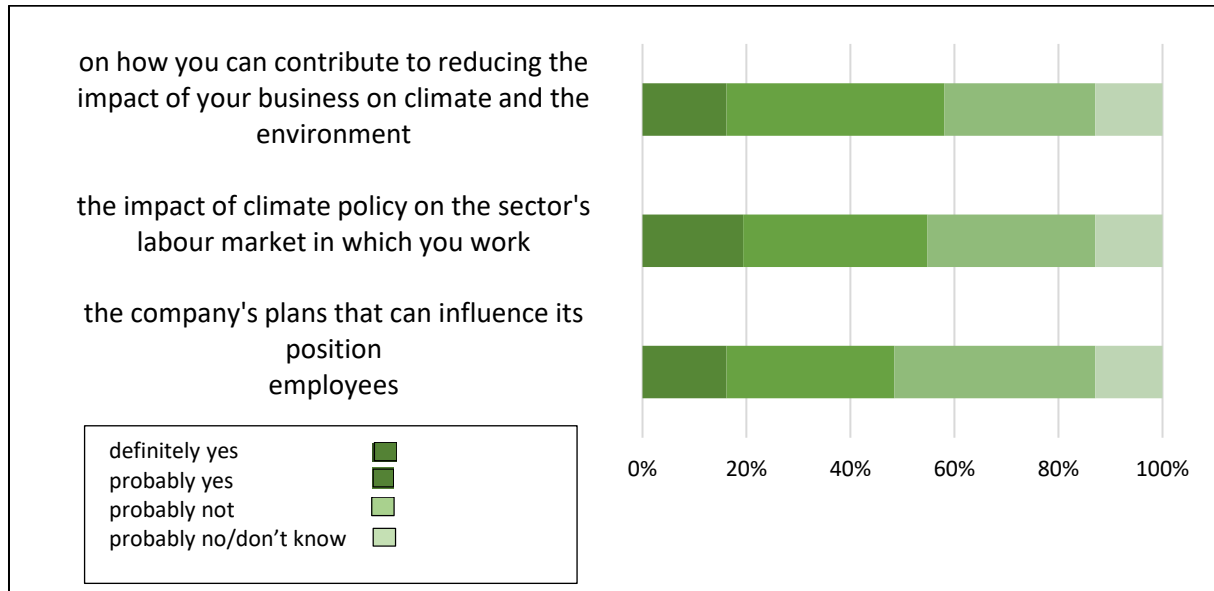
86% of respondents also said that their employer provided/provides retraining for employees, and in 67% of cases this retraining includes training in digital skills.

On the positive side, working conditions (health and safety) in the workplace have not deteriorated as a result of the green transformation, and in 19% of cases they have improved.

5.5. Perception of own situation: awareness, career prospects, support needed

The questionnaire results showed very different levels of (perceived) employee awareness of these issues. Up to 58% of respondents feel sufficiently informed about how they can help reduce the company's climate and environmental impact.

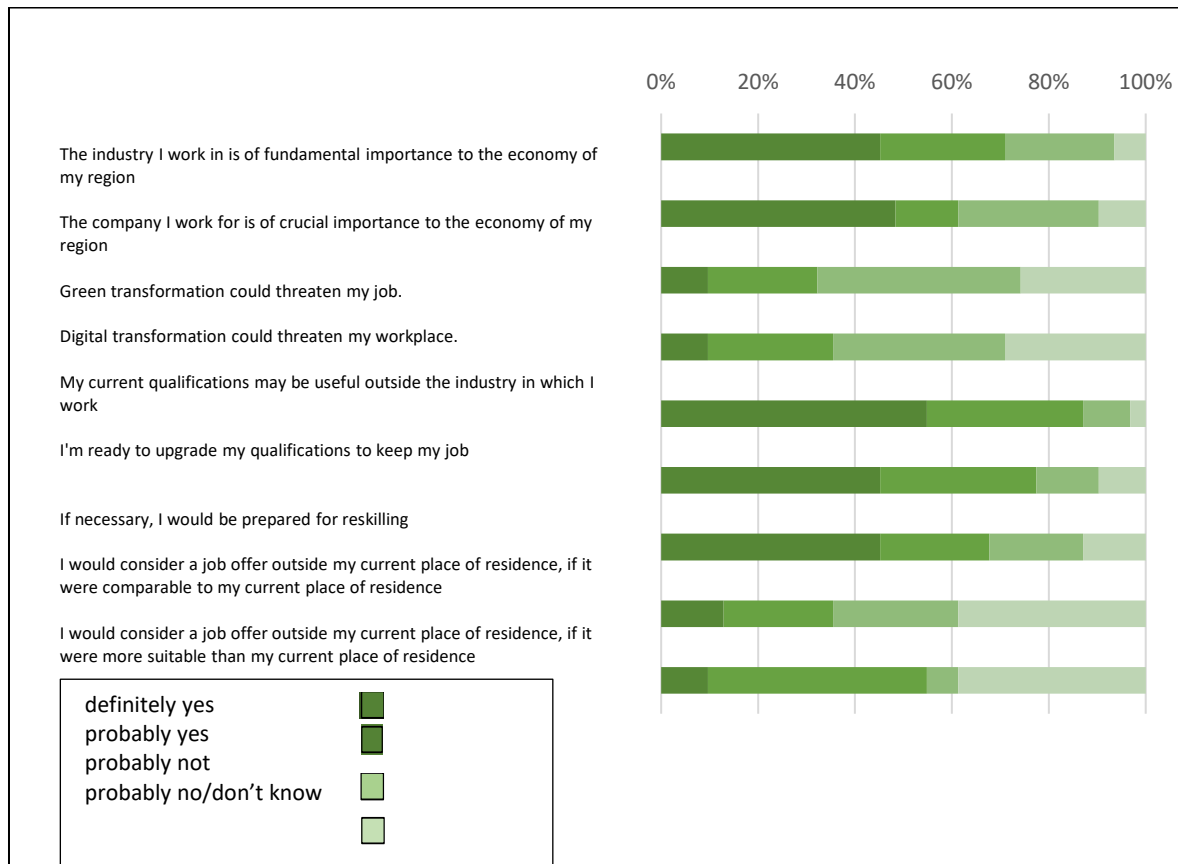
Chart No. 14 **Respondents' answers to the question "Do you think you are well informed:"**



Source: own processing of the survey

71% of respondents said the industry they work in is vital to the economy of the region they live in, 61% said the same about the company they work for. Respondents do not feel that green transformation (42% rather not, 26% definitely not) or digital transformation (35% rather not, 29% definitely not) may put their jobs at risk. In fact, 87% of respondents believe that their skills are useful outside the sector in which they currently work. 77% of them are prepared to upgrade their skills if necessary to keep their jobs. For the same reason, 68% of respondents would consider retraining.

Chart no. 15 **Respondents' answers to the question "To what extent do the following statements describe your situation or your preferences?"**



Source: own processing of the survey

6. Social partners' position on the Green Transition Policy

6.1. Strategies, postulates, perception of one's own role

Industry as a whole, from traditional engineering to heavy industry, is the most sensitive and pays the most when implementing green goals. This is because industry is both the biggest polluter and needs to invest the most in green technologies. This raises costs and makes the sector less competitive not only within the EU but especially with countries outside Europe.

Based on discussions with employers' representatives, the issue of green transformation is therefore a regular item on the agenda of the Committee on Energy and the Environment. The Green Deal and its implementation in Slovakia is, in fact, the main agenda of the Committee. The Committee's aim is to draft legislation in such a way that it does not harm the competitiveness of Slovak companies.

Over the last 4 years there has been a problem with communication with the Ministry of the Environment, which is the main body responsible for implementing the Green Deal. This has led to problems with the Environmental Fund, to which businesses contribute but which has failed to feed back into the system to support green investment. Social partners' aim is to communicate with new Ministry of Environment leadership to ensure that implementation of green transition policy considers needs of industry and business community and ultimately prosperity of Slovakia.

6.2. Social partners activities at sectoral and enterprise level

There are three levels of impact of the green transition on the labour market in Slovakia. It affects the labour market from the point of view of the companies concerned. They are forced to adapt to new legal conditions and to invest in technologies that meet demanding green requirements. This in turn has an impact on cost growth, which automatically has an impact on wage costs, which in turn has an impact on employment. Employment in the sector is also affected by reduced competitiveness (higher costs = higher prices). It is important to note that new technologies create new jobs requiring new skills. This leads to a third level - the level of qualifications. That means that employees involved in any part of the green transformation of the business need relevant new knowledge and skills that they may not have acquired in the formal education system, and they need to supplement that education.

7. SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE CONTEXT OF A JUST TRANSITION

7.1. Social dialogue at industry level

The interviewees reported that the green transition is regularly discussed at various levels. However, there is a lack of expert discussion in society as a whole. It is necessary to inform all stakeholders about the goals of the Slovak Republic and the European Union, and at the same time to provide the tools to achieve them (not to rely on the market to reinvent itself).

Discussions with the government on the issue of green transformation are ongoing in all sectors concerned and have been perceived as open by employers and employer representatives, especially in areas that are more strategic for the government.

However, employer representatives feel that the dialogue is currently focused on getting the right regulatory framework in place to meet the requirements of the Green Deal milestones and to avoid a rapid decline in business competitiveness.

The aim of the employee representatives is to increase government involvement in environmental policy implementation activities and to ensure that funding for these activities from various sources is used efficiently.

7.2. Social dialogue at company level

Despite the fact that collective bargaining is a regular feature in the companies involved in the talks, green clauses or demands in relation to the company's environmental performance have so far not been put forward by the trade unions in any of the companies. However, individual employers do cooperate with international trade union organisations on a case-by-case basis. For example, to achieve common objectives. However, this is ad hoc rather than systemic cooperation with regular dialogue.

7.3. Information and consultation procedures in collective agreements

Corporate sustainability issues, including social issues, do not form a specific part of the provisions negotiated with the social partners; discussing the various issues that make up this agenda takes place within the normal social dialogue.

7.4. Collective agreement provisions that promote a fair transition

In the context of the analysis of higher-level agreements, it can be noted that none of the agreements examined in the sectors concerned contained a fair or green transition clause. The agreements concerned were analysed individually using the following keywords: green economy, green deal, just transition, ecology, etc.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Conclusions and reflections on the future model of green social dialogue

Finally, we emphasise the need to see and present the change associated with the green transition as an opportunity rather than a threat, which inevitably requires well defined and communicated policies.

The result of the research was a very rational and pragmatic approach on the part of all parties. Approaching green policy requires an open mind and a willingness to compromise and to seek to balance the interests of employers and employees, the direction of the State and the requirements of the EU. The issue of green transition, due to other global problems, has not been a priority in Slovakia. EU requirements are - in the context of the current requirements - being met, but addressing the issue, e.g., at the level of collective bargaining, is not a priority.

If the Slovak Republic wants to be able to fulfil the requirements and obligations it has towards the EU, it will be necessary to set up a system of state support in the future. In the Slovak context, the green transition is a threat because the Slovak economy is based on heavy industry, which is affected by both the green transition and other recent crises. Because the requirements of green transformation are extremely costly, companies in the regions are already scaling back production.

8.2. Recommendations to the social partners

In Slovakia, the issue of green transformation is not a primary topic of discussion among social partners, mainly due to the lack of a comprehensive vision of the direction of the state as such.

All stakeholders confirmed that dialogue takes place at all levels, but is often limited to ad hoc issues and is not comprehensive. The dialogue also lacks a broad, rational view of the issues. However, there is also a certain limitation in terms of EU legislation and requirements, which the Slovak Republic must also comply with.

However, the setting of adult learning is an important issue. The lack of a society-wide solution was highlighted by several of the experts interviewed. Indeed, without a comprehensive understanding of the issue, stakeholders will not be able to respond to the challenges of the green transition. The need for a more active involvement of trade unions in the issue of employee training was stressed, in addition to the state itself, which should cover the issue. At present, their involvement is very limited and not prioritised in collective bargaining.

Employers' organizations can make an important contribution by:

- *providing a common platform for discussion with policy makers,*
- *facilitating the exchange of experience between members.*

9. RESOURCES AND REFERENCES