



Country report

Slovakia

**OZ Prevencia V&P
Bratislava, Slovakia**

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1. Context of information

Relevant aspects of legal regulations on the protection of minors

According to Slovak Law (219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009):

Youth welfare services, programmes for low educated young people Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages – Law 219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009:

§ 2 Minors till 15 years of age and underage till 18 years of age are not allowed to consume alcoholic beverages and other substances and are obliged to undergo orientation breath test or other orientation test control of other substances

Violations by minors (till 15 years of age) fine of up to 33€ to legal guardian. Fined by municipality.

Violations by underage (15 – 18 years of age) reprimand from municipality and in indicated cases forbiddance to visit public locations with served alcohol.

Violations by sellers can be punished with a fine from 160€ up to 6666€ acc. to § 12, the Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages 219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009

Minors under 15 years of age can **stay in public locations where alcohol is sold (restaurants, discotheques)** after 21.00 only if accompanied by parents or another legal guardian. Violations by minors (till 15 years of age) fine of up to 33€ to legal guardian. Fined by municipality. Acc. to law Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages 219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009

§ 3 Obligatory identity display: Children and youths must prove their age on request.
Open display of regulations:

The applicable regulations of the Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages must be clearly displayed in open restaurants / pubs with law citation.

In Slovakia – there are no vending machines for alcohol or tobacco products.

This Law clearly says no sell and no either serve alcoholic beverages to minors and to underage. This Law is quite new (from April 2009).

Relevant cultural background of alcohol consumption ¹

1. **Drinking** of alcohol beverages during lifetime, during past 12 months and past 30 days had **grown over** years.

2. Amount of drinking among boys and girls had grown close to risk and harmful levels.

3. About **4 to 6 %** from 15 to 19 year olds reported signs **of problem drinking** or substantial to heavy dependence.

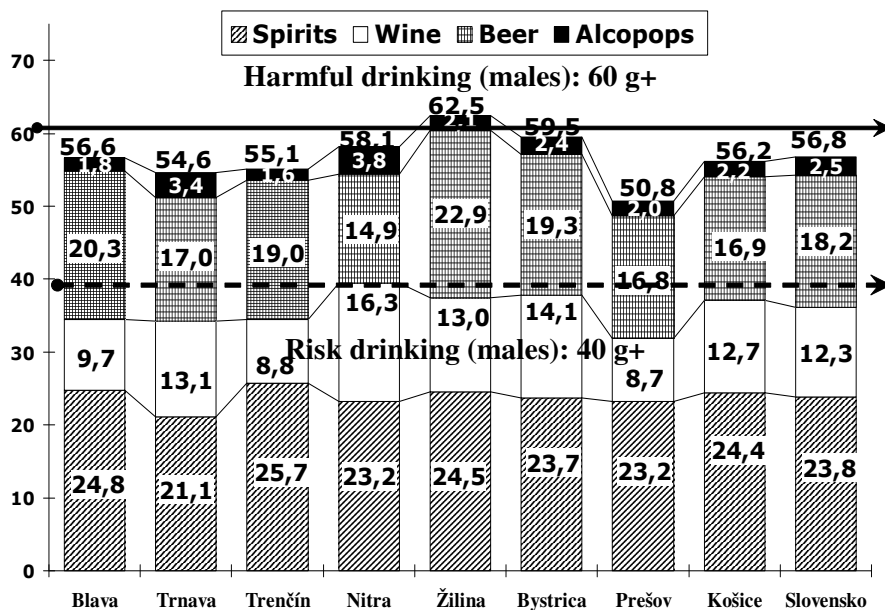
4. Students as non-drinkers do differ from those who drink at progressively hazardous levels.

¹ Nociar, A.: ESPAD 2007. Slovakia 2008.

5. Comparison of students not drinking any alcohol a not smoking marihuana, with either drinking or smoking had shown much higher asocial behaviors among drinkers.

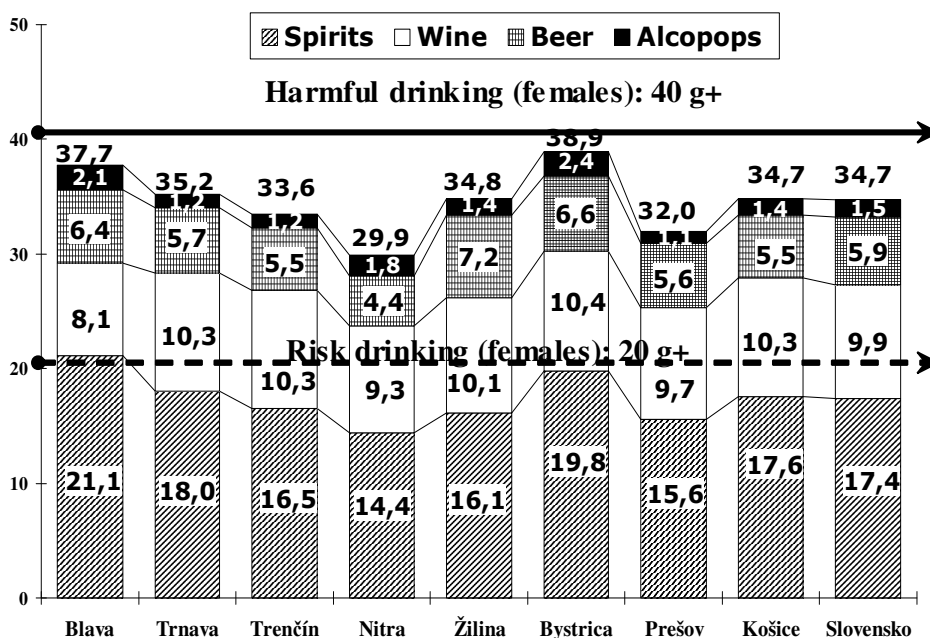
To see regional differences view pictures 1 and 2.

Picture 1 - Amount of alcohol consumed during the last drinking occasion among boys in 2007 (calculated in grams of pure alcohol)



Picture of boys drinking in Bratislava, as a capital city, is above Slovak average – spirit (+1 percentage), beer (+2 percentage). Less than Slovak average is drinking wine (- 2,6 percentage) and Alcopops (-0,7%).

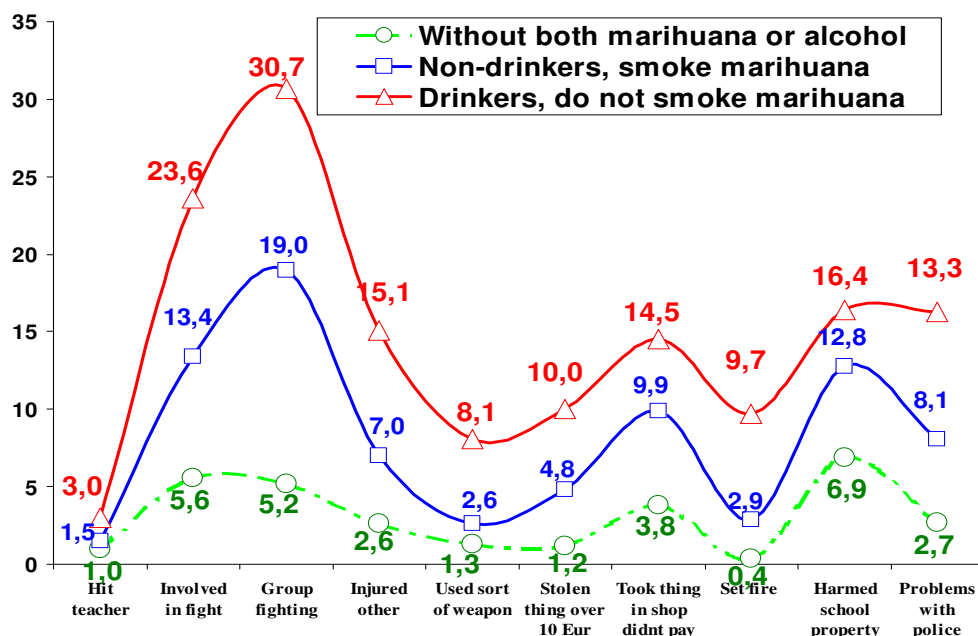
Picture 2 - Amount of alcohol consumed during the last drinking occasion among girls in 2007 (calculated in grams of pure alcohol)



Picture of girls drinking in Bratislava, as a capital city, is much higher than Slovak average – spirit (+3,7 percentage), and alcopops (+0,6%) and beer (+0,5 percentage). Less than Slovak average is drinking wine (- 1,8 percentage). Level of Girls drinking in Bratislava is very high; comparing other regions with drinking level of boys (for example Trnava) is similar.

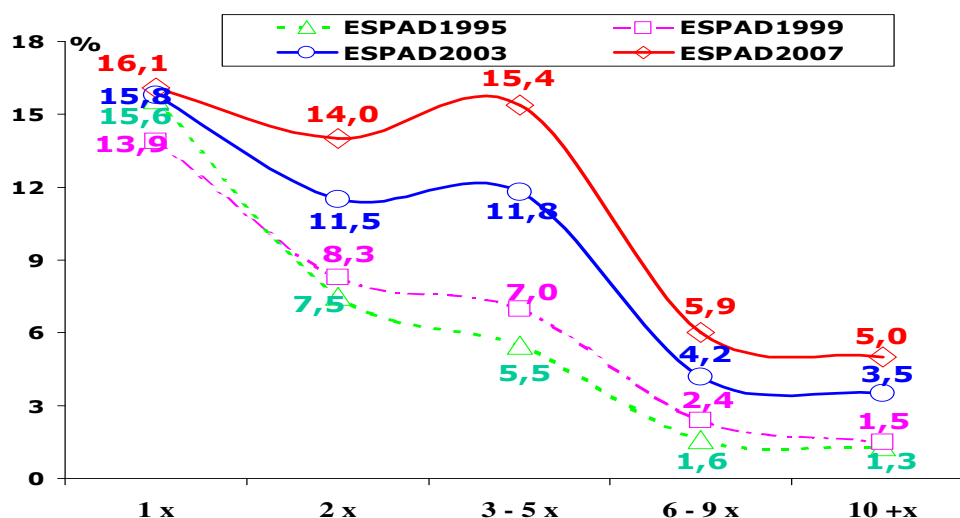
To see social impact of risky drinking on behavior we found cross analyze drinking and variables of asocial and violent behaviors.

Picture 3 - Asocial or violent behaviors in relation to alcohol and marihuana use: data from 2007



According to variable analysis of Asocial and violent behaviors risk drinking and signs of alcohol dependence accounted for such behaviors, in contrast to relatively lower contribution of marihuana alone.

Picture 4 – Five and more doses alcohol more time for last 30 days.





Picture 4 shows increasing level of risky drinking, comparing ESPAD 1995 – 2007). 3 – 5 time drinking in last 30 days has increased from 11,8 to 15,4 %. Similar figure has a drinking 2x in last 30 days of risky drinking.

Summary

There is 5 % population abstinent, cca 60 % are no problems consumers, 30 % risky drinkers and 5 % is dependency from alcohol.

ESPAD survey found:

1. No drinking alcohol is from 3 to 6 % students (age of 15 – 19).
2. Under ADS<9 - were in ESPAD classified 58,0 % students, standard consumers.
3. Score 9+, as a screening risky level, was found for 29,3 %. Their drinking was risky and health damaging.
4. percentage problem drinking students with typical symptoms for dependency were from 4 to 6 %.

We see another negative general factor – content of drinking. From 1995 to 2007 increased, for both boys and girls too, level of drunken alcohol, mostly spirit. It reflected fact; there were 2 times more capacity of alcohol drunk comparing last drinking.

There is general founding that cca postpone of first contact with legal drug on half of year may delay even start of using illegal drug. This phenomena may play protect role. On the contrary – early beginning with legal drug may play role to higher vulnerability against illegal drug

Interventions and services for young people with problematic alcohol consumption

During previous two decades alcohol became most used and abused substances amongst licit and illicit drugs. As health and social risks became too high in youngsters, as well as these drugs were widely considered as a gateway drugs, it was necessary to take some effective measures to tackle this phenomena.

There is National act plan for problems with alcohol in Slovakia (protection youth against alcohol, education, health programs and so on) which support preventive and intervention activities to reduce alcohol use.

As a first contact for young people with problems is school advisor who recommends other specialized services. As a next contact is Center of educational – psychological counseling and prevention (72 centers in each county around Slovakia) or centers working nearby offices Social welfare. Most of professionals working in such centers provide general counseling and therapy mostly according to social problems of youth. Alcohol problems are mostly hidden behind this problem.

As far as alcohol is concerned, Slovakia took part in the second phase of the **Phepa (Primary Health Care European Project on Alcohol)** at the autumn of 2005. Plan of dissemination of methods of early identification and brief intervention against hazardous and harmful drinking among secondary school students was outlined. The Clinical Guidelines and the Training manual for the Early Identification and Brief Inter-



vention were adapted and translated to Slovak. In these materials properly standardized tools for screening and detection of alcohol problems and dependence, like ADS, MAST, CAGE and Trauma Scale were used, together with the Stages of Change Questionnaire and the Processes of Change Scale.

Practical-training part of the project had started at the beginning 2008 and it was carried out for several groups of selected workers from the network of Centers of Educational and Psychological Counseling and Prevention, and other institutions taking care about youth.

2. Key questions

Alcohol consumption

Places where inappropriate drinking was observed:

In Ružinov region we pointed followed areas:

- Sport stadiums area (ice hockey stadium)
- skate park for children and youth,
- during local feasts, playgrounds (in area Štrkovec)
- pubs and small groceries close to park (Vihorlat)

Way to get the alcohol – The older one to buy them beers and drink it outside the official pub area, or buy big cola drink and add some strong spirits

Summary groups with inappropriate drinking:

We pointed three basic groups:

1. Rich eccentric young people
2. Lower social class (street children drink cheap alcohol)
3. Youngster attending sports (ice hockey matches in Ružinov) and weekend celebration parties

Summary times when inappropriate drinking is noticed:

1. Friday and Saturday evenings (weekends)
2. Holidays, day off (mostly during summer)
3. During sports matches

groups having influence on young people's drinking:

Friends, peers, parents



Prevention

5 a) How can we reach young people to prevent inappropriate drinking?

Our interviewed persons pointed to do:

- General development of life skills at schools
- Stress in spending qualitative leisure time if youngster, having fun experiences activities without alcohol
- disseminate information of impact alcohol on health on every grade of schooling
- organise discussion about “control drinking”
- empower implementation for alternative punishment while caused breaking the law (consuming and selling alcohol under 18)
- support hard reach alcohol products approaches

5 b) What should we avoid?

- no lectures, long hearings, judgmental or mentoring style
- no judge alcohol consumption
- to set up relevant goals

5 c) What do you think young people should know / learn to prevent inappropriate drinking?

1. basic life skills (communication, how to refuse, have a fun without alcohol)
2. health impacts (dependency, information)
3. Alcohol – as a culture point while serving food (have a glass o vine)

6 a) How can we reach parents to prevent inappropriate drinking?

To do:

- educate parents through courses (from general upbringing information to specific impacts of alcohol consumption on the child)
- put stress on parental supervision children younger 18
- media campaign
- different approaches for kinds of families

6 b) What should we avoid?

- avoid talking about abstinence
- no long mentoring lectures
- not to make parents feel guilty
- do not have a too high expectation of this education



6 c) What do parents need (information, skills) to support their children to drink responsibly?

- developing general parenting skills (psycho-development, upbringing)
- developing special skills (effective communication to youngster)
- general information about state policy of drug prevention
- support parents

7 a) What could motivate key persons (teachers, trainers, street workers, etc) to participate in a programme to prevent inappropriate drinking?

- work with them to support their role of models (information, self-awareness)
- support – financial, support with equipments they needed (sports, travelling) and benefits.

7 b) What should we avoid?

- do not using pressure, forcing them
- boring theoretical presentation

7 c) What can key persons do to support the prevention of inappropriate drinking?

- To show youngster key persons in their real life occasions
- train competences to improve relationships
- using interactive activities

8 a) What can retail employees do to reduce inappropriate drinking of young people?

- To have attractive alternative products to sell youngsters
- sell alcohol after small snack
- Support retailers (not to sell minors) – active way + leaflets, stickers

8 b) What should we avoid in order not to lose their support?

- no judging, criticism

8 c) How can we reach retail employees in order for them to participate in a program to prevent inappropriate drinking?

- empower participation retailers on community life
- organize non-alcoholic parties for good price
- support this kind of activities in local newspaper



- controls and penalization of alcohol selling to underaged

3. Half-open/semi-structured interviews.

From the **key persons** we have made interviews with the two social pedagogues and two teachers (2 males and 2 female). Presented ideas show very motivated teacher and social pedagogues interested in social-psychological aspects of school environment and the role of teachers and educational process. Also one presented personal experience as a child of parent – alcoholic. Provided information about local situation with drinking of underage and activities done by their professional centre. Presented ideas as a teacher but also as person living in the area and visiting places where young people go for fun.

Youngster (2 male (15, 19), one female (12)) – We get information about situation around classmates, friends and peers, living and attending school in the area, previous years visited local secondary school in Ružinov.

Retailers - One person from petrol station in the area, near sport stadiums, second one (female) - owner of daily bar in the area, sale of alcoholic drinks (male). They informed about contact with young people buying alcohol during sport events at petrol station.

Parents – One parent of two children (male) – son 16y, daughter 20y, second one parent (female) – of son 17y.

Other/key person - Local Authority - Chief of Municipal Police Bratislava II. – contact with children and young people and their parents - when controlling, doing preventive work, at streets, pubs, inviting parents, cooperation with municipal office according to special regulations according to the Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages – Law 219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009. Identifies problem groups drinking alcohol, places of detected conflicts, experience with communication with parents, measures taken against retailers, cooperation with other professionals in the field of prevention. He is active member of multi resort commission for prevention.

Summary of results of the key questions of the semi-structured interviews

Generally we assess area in the district of Ružinov - sport stadium area, skate park, playgrounds, pubs and small groceries close to park. There are three basic groups observe with inappropriate drinking - rich eccentric youngsters, lower social class – street children and youngsters attending sports, mainly ice hockey matches in Ružinov and weekend celebration parties.

Together with the municipality police and social service officer, we can exactly assess map of frequent drinking areas in Ružinov. We expect there might be three places for each group pointed.

To provide prevention for each target group, we found most important at first to put stress on general development of life skills (for youngster and parents), then openly discuss drinking alcohol, controlling with support as a main topics.



All activities we expect to be announced in local media campaign, by leaflets and so on to disseminate not only to target group but to public too.

4. Preliminary conclusions regarding the key questions up to this stage

Important for implementing the project for us is (strengths):

- there are exist professional facilities providing professional care for children and youth in Ružinov (Center of educational-psychological counseling and prevention, Center for treatment alcohol and drug dependency)
- our organization has a practical collaboration with lot of state and nongovernmental organizations in Ružinov (church youth club, salezians, low threshold facilities)
- we are with close cooperation with Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology, located also in Ružinov
- together with others professionals we provide systematic professional and methodical activities for school counselors and coordinators drug prevention at schools, so we hope to easily add key persons to our present target group
- our activities have support from municipality office (even new election is on in November😊)

Open questions:

- low level of information for parents/careers and public how to reach professional help and quality intervention
- it seem to be difficult for us to reach parents group – because of low motivation, business, most parent give responsibility for intervention to schools or to professional, tradition only to work with parents with problems children and so on.
- we find more negative context to transfer information by Home parties – in our country is this method used by companies offering and selling expensive products by not very emphatic sellers.

5. Focus group

We have not done any focus group. During interviews were presented clear statements by all interviewees with no relevant differences.

6. Final conclusions

Important points which must be considered for the implementation of the project:.

- we are working on the basis on “integratedness of the system” - which we understand as the united synergic functioning of basal components of the activity of educational and psychological care mostly for sake of making optimal adaptation of psychological, pedagogic, and social status of clients.
- Followed by „algorithmic system” we understand the condition in which the integrated basal activities (psychological, pedagogic, and social ones) are employed according to accurate and logically unambiguous prescriptions for their execution, while the order for the solution of tasks of the given type is determined, too.



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- after implementation of this project we plan to build all approaches of Take Care in our systematic intervention care service
 - and improve multidisciplinary team cooperation of professional workers working in Ružinov area (psychologists, therapists, special pedagogues, social pedagogues, and social workers, etc.) and methodological precision-making and methodical optimization of particular methods of diagnostic, counseling, therapeutic, and treatment-preventive work for all type of problem behavior children and youth, not only alcohol drinking.