



# RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS IN SLOVAKIA

Information Guide



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Authors: Milan Jančo, Lucia Mokrá, Michael Šiman

Published by: EUROIORIS - Európske právne centrum, o. z.  
Na Vřšku 6, 811 01 Bratislava  
tel./fax: +421 2 5263 7992  
e-mail: [euroioris@euroioris.sk](mailto:euroioris@euroioris.sk)  
[www.euroioris.sk](http://www.euroioris.sk)

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# INTRODUCTION

Recognition of professional qualifications is important for migrants, since it allows them to pursue professions that are subject to specific requirements in Slovakia (regulated professions). Recognition of professional qualifications is an instrument allowing the migrants having obtained their professional qualifications outside Slovakia to have their qualifications evaluated and transformed into full-fledged professional qualifications in Slovakia. These migrants are not required to acquire their education or training in Slovakia, since their education and training acquired abroad are taken into account.

Recognition of professional qualifications increases the chances of migrants finding a job or doing business in the Slovak market, and thus it facilitates their integration into Slovak society. That is why recognition of professional qualifications can be characterized as a key to better remuneration and professional growth of migrants.

The procedures of recognition of professional qualifications in Slovakia apply to regulated professions only. Migrants can pursue professions that are not regulated in Slovakia without having their professional qualification formally recognised. The Act on Lifelong Learning is being prepared in Slovakia; this act will provide migrants with alternative ways of recognition of professional qualifications by means of an aptitude test, which will also enhance their chances of finding a job. However, alternative recognition will not apply to regulated professions.

Finally, a clear distinction must be made between recognition of diplomas for the purposes of pursuing regulated professions in Slovakia and recognition of diplomas for the purposes of continuing education in Slovakia (academic recognition), which is governed by special procedures.

This guide offers, in form of questions and answers, basic information on recognition of professional qualifications for the purposes of pursuing regulated professions, as well as on alternative and academic recognition of professional qualifications in Slovakia. It concentrates in the first place on the recognition of professional qualifications of third country nationals. The guide includes examples of recognition of professional qualifications of third country nationals and contact details of the competent institutions. References to websites providing further information (e.g. a list of regulated professions in Slovakia) and links to relevant application forms are also included.

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# PURSUIT OF REGULATED PROFESSIONS

## ***What is a professional qualification?***

A professional qualification is a qualification to pursue a regulated profession attested by evidence of such qualification.

## ***What does recognition of professional qualifications mean?***

Recognition of professional qualifications means recognition of professional qualifications obtained abroad as equivalent with professional qualifications obtained in Slovakia.

## ***What is the purpose of recognition of professional qualifications?***

Recognition of professional qualifications obtained abroad is required for the pursuit of professions that are regulated in Slovakia.

## ***What is a regulated profession?***

A regulated profession is a profession, professional activity or group of professional activities that can be pursued only if requirements laid down by Slovak legislation are complied with.

## ***Which professions are regulated in Slovakia?***

A list of regulated professions in Slovakia is available on the European Commission's website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/qualifications/regprof](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/regprof)

Regulated professions in Slovakia include the following professions:

- ⊗ doctor
- ⊗ dentist
- ⊗ pharmacist
- ⊗ nurse
- ⊗ midwife
- ⊗ physiotherapist
- ⊗ dental technician
- ⊗ optometrist
- ⊗ optician
- ⊗ medical laboratory technician
- ⊗ pharmacy technician
- ⊗ psychologist
- ⊗ masseur

- ⊗ veterinary surgeon
- ⊗ architect
- ⊗ landscape architect
- ⊗ civil engineer
- ⊗ attorney
- ⊗ interpreter and translator
- ⊗ teacher of foreign languages
- ⊗ floor layer
- ⊗ tiler
- ⊗ carpenter
- ⊗ watchmaker
- ⊗ hairdresser
- ⊗ locksmith
- ⊗ goldsmith and jeweller
- ⊗ bricklayer
- ⊗ forwarder
- ⊗ butcher
- ⊗ machinery technician
- ⊗ cosmetician



***Which requirements do I have to fulfil if I want to pursue a regulated profession? What are the possibilities of having my qualification recognised for the purposes of fulfilling these requirements?***

The specific conditions for practising a regulated profession vary from profession to profession. A brief description of the conditions of practising selected regulated professions and possibilities of recognition of professional qualifications of third country nationals for the purposes of fulfilling these conditions, along with references to relevant legislation containing detailed rules concerning the profession, is provided below.

***Healthcare professions (doctor, dentist, nurse, midwife, pharmacist, physiotherapist, dental technician, optometrist, optician, medical laboratory technician, pharmacy technician, masseur etc.)***

Legislation: Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on Healthcare Providers

Healthcare professions are practised mainly in an employment relationship or in a similar relationship, on the basis of a permission to run a healthcare facility or a license to run an independent healthcare practice.

Independent healthcare practice can be carried out by healthcare workers in the following professions: doctor, dentist, nurse, midwife, physiotherapist, therapy

pedagogue, speech therapist, psychologist, special pedagogue and masseur. To run an independent healthcare practice, a license is required. An independent healthcare practice is defined as providing healthcare in a healthcare facility run by a different provider on the basis of a permission, or in a facility different from a healthcare facility.

The requirements for the pursuit of a healthcare profession are:

- a) full legal capacity,
- b) health eligibility,
- c) professional competence,
- d) integrity,
- e) registration, unless provided otherwise by statute.

Reliability is also a requirement for the pursuit of a healthcare profession, if required by statute.

Foreigners also have to possess a knowledge of Slovak and Slovak professional terminology necessary for practising a healthcare profession.

Migrants may demonstrate their professional competence for the pursuit of a healthcare profession with a document attesting recognition of diplomas. Diplomas or groups of diplomas issued by foreign schools or other competent authorities pursuant to the legislation of the relevant state are recognised by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic ('Ministry of Education') in compliance with the Act No. 293/2007 Coll. on Recognition of Professional Qualifications ('Professional Qualification Recognition Act'). Specialization documents and certificates issued by foreign schools or other competent authorities pursuant to the legislation of the relevant state are recognised by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic ('Ministry of Health').

### ***Veterinary surgeon***

Legislation: Act No. 442/2004 Coll. on Private Veterinary Surgeons

Private veterinary activities may be pursued in Slovakia on a permanent basis only by private veterinary surgeons registered in the Slovak Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons ('Chamber'). The requirements to be satisfied by the applicant are, in particular, legal competence, professional competence for the pursuit of private veterinary activities, integrity, and, if the applicant is a third country national, he or she must be a holder of a residence permit in Slovakia.

Third country nationals may only pursue private veterinary activities (not state veterinary activities), provided that they hold a residence permit and have acquired their education:

- a) in Slovakia,
- b) in another Member State, or
- c) in a third country, if their diploma is recognised by the Chamber under the Professional Qualification Recognition Act.

## ***Architect, landscape architect and civil engineer***

Legislation: Act No. 138/1992 Coll. on Authorized Architects and Authorized Civil Engineers

Regulated professions under this Act are the professions of architect, landscape architect and civil engineer. However, this Act only governs recognition of professional qualifications for the purposes of the pursuit of the profession architect. Recognition of diplomas of landscape architects issued by universities not providing education in architecture and recognition of diplomas of civil engineers are governed by the Professional Qualification Recognition Act.

For the pursuit of the mentioned regulated professions, enrolment in the relevant list (list of authorized architects, list of authorized landscape architects, list of authorized civil engineers) or registration in the relevant registry (registry of visiting architects, registry of visiting landscape architects, registry of visiting civil engineers) is required.

However, third country nationals cannot pursue the regulated professions of architect, landscape architect and civil engineer, because they do not satisfy the requirement of Member State nationality, upon which registration in the relevant lists and registries is contingent.

## ***Attorney***

Legislation: Act No. 586/2003 Coll. on Attorneys

To pursue the profession attorney, one has to be enrolled in the list of attorneys kept by the Slovak Bar Association ('Association'). Enrolment in the registry of attorneys is not contingent on a nationality requirement; however, the applicant must, inter alia, demonstrate that he or she has acquired university education of the second degree in law at a university in Slovakia or his or her diploma attesting university education of the second degree in law issued by a foreign university has been recognised. Another important requirement is that the applicant must have at least three years of professional experience as a candidate attorney. Thus, the pursuit of the regulated profession of attorney is, in principle, contingent upon previous practice of another regulated profession – candidate attorney; to pursue this profession, the applicant must possess university education of the second degree in law at a university in Slovakia or his or her diploma attesting university education of the second degree in law issued by a foreign university must be recognised. Another qualification requirement is a bar examination. The three years of professional practice as a candidate attorney and the bar examination are, however, not required in case of assistant professors and professors of law at universities, provided that they satisfy other statutory requirements.

Member State nationals may, by virtue of the Community directives transposed into the Slovak Act on Attorneys, also practice as established European attorneys or

visiting European attorneys. Third country nationals do not have these possibilities. However, a third country national may practise as an attorney in Slovakia, provided that his or her diploma attesting university education of the second degree in law issued by a foreign university has been recognised in Slovakia and he or she has satisfied the requirement of three years of professional experience as a candidate attorney, or he or she is an assistant professor or a professor of law at a university and his or her academic title has been recognised.

Moreover, a national of a third country being a member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development may practise in Slovakia as a foreign attorney and a national of a third country being a member state of the World Trade Organisation may practise in Slovakia as an international attorney, without any recognition of their professional qualifications, provided that they satisfy the qualification requirements in their countries of origin and reciprocity is guaranteed. Nonetheless, the scope of powers of foreign attorneys and international attorneys are, with respect to attorneys, considerably limited.

***Trade licences (interpreter and translator, teacher of foreign languages, floor layer, tiler, carpenter, watchmaker, hairdresser, locksmith, goldsmith and jeweller, bricklayer, forwarder, butcher, machinery technician, cosmetician, etc.)***

Legislation: Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trades (Trade Act)

Many regulated professions are regulated by the Trade Act. A trade is a permanent activity pursued autonomously, on one's own behalf, at one's own responsibility, with a view to achieving profit, under the conditions laid down by the Trade Act. The Trade Act contains a list of activities that are not trades. These include professional activities of attorneys, notaries, psychologists, veterinary surgeons, authorized architects and many other activities.

A trade may be pursued by a natural person (trader) or by a legal entity satisfying the conditions laid down by the Trade Act ('entrepreneur'); a license to pursue a trade ('license') is only required in cases defined by this Act.

A natural person residing or a legal entity established outside Slovakia ('foreign person') may pursue a trade in Slovakia under the same conditions and within the same scope as Slovak natural persons and legal entities, unless provided otherwise. Slovak natural persons are persons residing in Slovakia and Slovak legal entities are legal entities established in Slovakia. For the purposes of this Act, a person resides in Slovakia if he or she has a permanent residence in Slovakia or holds a permanent residence permit in Slovakia.

The rights stipulated by the Trade Act are guaranteed equally to all persons in compliance with the principle of equal treatment in employment relationships and

similar legal relationships resulting from the Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equality of Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination ('Non-Discrimination Act'). Under the equal treatment principle, discrimination based on marital status and family status, colour, language, political or other opinions, trade union involvement, national or social origin, health disability, age, property, gender or other status, is prohibited. Any person claiming that his or her rights or interests protected by law have been prejudiced by any non-compliance with the principle of equal treatment may invoke judicial protection established by the Non-Discrimination Act. A Trade Authority may not punish or disadvantage such persons due to the fact that they are invoking their rights under this Act.

To pursue a trade, general conditions and, if required by statute for a specific trade, also special conditions have to be satisfied.

Unless provided otherwise by the Trade Act, the general conditions of pursuing a trade by natural persons are the age of majority (18 years), legal competence and integrity.

Special conditions of pursuing a trade are professional competence or other competence pursuant to the Trade Act or special legislation, if required by the Trade Act.

For the pursuit of the activities listed in Annex No. 4 to the Trade Act (e.g. plumbing, men's, women's and children's hairdressing), special professional competence is required, which is defined as a set of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and command of technical or technological procedures.

Trades are divided into:

- a) notified trades, which may be, once the requirements laid down by legislation are satisfied, pursued upon notification,
- b) licensed trades, which may be pursued by virtue of a license.

Legal entities already registered in the Business Register, legal entities that do not have to be registered in the Business Register and natural persons residing in a Member State of the European Union or in a member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have the authorization to pursue a trade ('trade authorization') as of:

- a) the date of notification in case of notified trades, or, if a later date of trade commencement is indicated in the notification, as of this date; the date of notification is the date on which the notification satisfies all requirements under the Trade Act,
- b) the date of delivery of the license deed.

In case of natural persons residing in a different country than a Member State of the European Union or a member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development, the trade authorization exists as of the date of the person's registration in the Business Register.

Notified trades are divided into:

- a) craft trades, if professional competence acquired by training in the relevant field is required to pursue the trade,
- b) regulated trades, if professional competence acquired otherwise is required to pursue the trade,
- c) free trades, if no professional competence is required to pursue the trade.

Craft trades are listed in Annex No. 1 to the Trade Act. Craft trades include the following professions: floor layer, tiler, carpenter, watchmaker, hairdresser, locksmith, goldsmith and jeweller, bricklayer, butcher, machinery technician and cosmetician.

Professional competence to pursue craft trades is demonstrated by a vocational certificate or by other document attesting completion of the relevant vocational training. These documents can be replaced, under the conditions laid down by the Trade Act, by other diplomas, experience documents or qualification examination documents. If the bill on lifelong learning is adopted in Slovakia, migrants will be able to prove their professional competence also by means of an examination in the alternative recognition system (see below), if they possess the required competence, but cannot prove it with any documents.

Regulated trades are listed in Annex No. 2 to the Trade Act. Regulated trades include foreign language teaching and translating and interpreting services.

Professional competence to pursue regulated trades is governed by special legislation listed in Annex No. 2 to the Trade Act or stipulated in the Annex itself. For instance, for the regulated trades foreign language teaching and translating and interpreting services, either completed studies of the languages in question at a university, or a national language examination diploma, or at least ten years spent in a country where the language in question is an official language are required.

Free trades are trades not listed in Annexes No. 1 to 3 to the Trade Act. Free trades include textile manufacturing, ceramics manufacturing, constructing and reconstructing, purchase of goods for resale to end consumers (retail) or to other traders (wholesale), business brokerage, computer services, administrative services, cleaning services and promotion and marketing services.

General conditions must be satisfied to pursue free trades. No professional or other competence is required. Thus, free trades are not regulated professions under the Professional Qualification Recognition Act.

Licensed trades are listed in Annex No. 3 to the Trade Act. Licensed trades include development and production of weapons and ammunition, forwarding and money exchange.

Professional competence for licensed trades is governed by special legislation listed in Annex No. 3 to the Act or stipulated in the Annex itself. For instance, to pursue the licensed trade forwarding, relevant secondary education and two years of relevant professional experience or relevant university education and at least one year of relevant professional experience are required.

A special condition of pursuing licensed trades is also reliability, which is assessed with respect to the business object, taking account of protection of life, health, proprietary and other rights of persons and public interests. The Trade Authority may impose conditions of pursuing a trade on the entrepreneur. In particular, it may limit the pursuit of a trade to a certain territory due to public interest, or grant a license for a definite period of time.

Anyone wishing to pursue a notified trade must notify this to the Trade Authority competent for the legal entity's registered office or the natural person's residence. For foreign persons, the Trade Authority in the seat of the region where the foreign person's undertaking pursues its business activities or where the place of business of the foreign person's organisational unit is located is competent.



If there are several organisational units of a foreign person's business in Slovakia, the foreign person may choose which region's Trade Authority will be competent. The same applies to filing a license application.

Trade notification requirements, other information to be notified and license application requirements, with special rules related to foreign persons, are contained in the relevant provisions of the Trade Act. With respect to foreign persons, it must be noted that for natural persons that are not Slovak nationals, the required criminal record extract is deemed to be the criminal record extract issued by the competent authority of the country of which the natural person is a national, or in which the natural person has been demonstrably residing in the last five years at least during six months without interruption; if no such document is issued in the mentioned countries, the criminal record extract is replaced by an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority or an affidavit certified by the country's competent authority. The criminal record extract must be issued no earlier than three months prior to being presented and an official translation into Slovak must be provided. If it is not possible to determine the character of the crime on the basis of the criminal record extract, the final judgment with an official translation into Slovak

must be provided.

The Trade Act contains special provisions related to Community persons, which are natural persons – nationals of a Member State (Member State of the European Union, the European Economic Area and Switzerland) and legal entities established in compliance with the legislation of a Member State, the registered office, headquarters or principal place of business of which is situated in a Member State. These provisions contain, in particular, special rules related to demonstrating professional competence of Community persons. However, these provisions do not apply to third country nationals.

If a third country national wants to pursue a trade in Slovakia, it is crucial whether he or she is permanently residing in Slovakia. If so, the migrant is deemed to be a Slovak natural person. A third country national not permanently residing in Slovakia is deemed to be a foreign person. If the migrant is not residing in a Member State of the European Union or in a member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, he or she may pursue a trade in Slovakia only after registration in the Business Register.

If a third country national wants to pursue a free trade in Slovakia, no recognition of his or her professional qualification is necessary, because there is no requirement to provide evidence of such qualification. However, if a third country migrant wants to pursue a craft trade, a regulated trade or a licensed trade, in order to satisfy the special conditions laid down for the trade concerned, the migrant's qualification must be recognised.



In case of craft trades, professional competence must be proved by means of a vocational certificate or a different diploma, or a document attesting professional experience in the relevant field or in a similar field. Recognition of diplomas is governed by the Professional Qualification Recognition Act. As far as recognition of documents attesting professional experience is concerned, the special provisions of the Trade Act related to recognition of professional experience and professional qualifications do not apply to third country nationals. Therefore, the professional experience requirement is assessed, in case of third country nationals, by Trade

Authorities on an individual basis, without any guarantee of recognition. The same applies to assessment of professional experience for the purposes of pursuing regulated trades and licensed trades. However, the pursuit of regulated trades and licensed trades is mostly contingent upon certain education, qualification or authorization pursuant to special legislation (e.g. professional competence certificate under the Construction Act, construction inspector's certificate under the Act on Authorized Architects). In these cases, recognition of diplomas is governed by the Professional Qualification Recognition Act and the professional experience requirement is assessed by Trade Authorities on an individual basis.

***If the profession that I want to pursue is not regulated in Slovakia, can I pursue it without any recognition of my qualification?***

Yes, professions that are not regulated may be pursued without any professional qualification recognition.

***Is it relevant whether I want to pursue the profession in question in a self-employed or employed capacity?***

Yes, because the same profession may be considered regulated or not regulated according to whether it is pursued as in a self-employed or employed capacity. For instance, the professions of bricklayer, carpenter, hairdresser or translator may be pursued as employment without any recognition of professional qualifications (non-regulated professions), but if you want to pursue them in a self-employed capacity, your professional qualification must be recognised (regulated professions). Certain regulated professions (e.g. attorney), however, may not be pursued as employment, but only as self-employment (liberal profession), and therefore, recognition of professional qualifications is always required in case of these professions.

***What should I do if I want to take up employment?***

If the profession in question is a regulated profession, your professional qualification must be recognised by the competent authority first. If the profession in question is not regulated, no formal recognition of your qualification is required. Your prospective employer will assess your professional qualification autonomously and decide whether to hire you.

***What should I do if I want to take up self-employment?***

If the profession in question is a regulated profession, your professional qualification must be recognised by the competent authority first. If the profession in question is not regulated, no formal recognition of your qualification is required. If you satisfy the non-qualification requirements (age, integrity etc.), you can start your business.

## ***Is it relevant which country I come from for the purposes of professional qualification recognition?***

Yes, for the purposes of professional qualification recognition, it is relevant whether you are a Member State national or a third country national.

### ***Which countries are deemed to be Member States?***

Member States are member states of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

### ***Which countries are deemed to be third countries?***

Third countries are all countries that are not Member States.

### ***What are the differences between recognition of professional qualifications of Member State nationals and of third country nationals?***

Member State nationals enjoy a more favourable regime of recognition of professional qualifications, based on the Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, which is transposed into Slovak legislation. Under this special regime, Member State nationals have the right to automatic recognition of their qualifications in certain professions (doctors, nurses, dentists, veterinary surgeons, midwives, pharmacists and architects) or to a simplified recognition regime (attorneys) as well as the right to recognition of their professional experience for the purposes of pursuit of industrial, commercial and craft activities.

### ***Does this mean that third country nationals cannot have their professional qualifications recognised for the purposes of pursuing the regulated professions mentioned above?***

No, recognition of professional qualifications of third country nationals is, in principle, possible also in these cases, but it is not automatic. Thus, the competent authority will assess the professional qualification of a third country national on an individual basis and decide whether his or her professional qualification may be recognised in Slovakia. In case of certain professions (e.g. architect), however, the applicant must be a Member State national and, consequently, third country nationals may not pursue such professions.

### ***If I am a third country national, can I, under certain circumstances, invoke the benefits of the Community rules?***

Yes, the following third country nationals enjoy the same benefits resulting from the Community directives as nationals of Member States:

- a) family members of citizens of the Union having the right of residence or the right of permanent residence in a Member State under the Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States,
- b) third-country nationals who are long-term residents under the Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents,
- c) holders of residence permits for the purposes of scientific research under the Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research,
- d) beneficiaries of refugee or subsidiary protection status under the Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted,
- e) students under the Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service,
- f) family members of third country nationals residing lawfully in a Member State and applying or whose family members apply for family reunification to be joined with them under the Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification.

# PROCEDURE

## ***Which legislation governs the procedure of recognition of professional qualifications for the pursuit of a profession?***

A general source of law governing the procedure of recognition of professional qualifications is the Act No. 293/2007 Coll. on Recognition of Professional Qualifications ('Professional Qualification Recognition Act'). Recognition of professional qualifications for the pursuit of certain professions (e.g. architect, veterinary surgeon, and attorney) is, however, governed by special legislation.

## ***Which authority decides on the recognition of a professional qualification?***

In case of most professions, it is the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic ('Ministry of Education') that decides on the recognition of professional qualifications. In case of certain professions, however, a different authority, e.g. the Slovak Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons, decides.

## ***Where can I find the application for professional qualification recognition?***

The application for professional qualification recognition for the pursuit of a regulated profession is available on the website of the Ministry of Education:

[http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/UDOV/UUVZ/Regulovane\\_Povolanie\\_ziadost.rtf](http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/UDOV/UUVZ/Regulovane_Povolanie_ziadost.rtf)

## ***Which information has to be included in the application?***

Besides your personal data (name, surname, title, date of birth, address etc.), you also have to provide information concerning the diploma that you want to have recognised, and your previous completed education (type, duration, place). You also have to indicate which regulated profession you want to pursue.

## ***Which attachments have to be provided with the application?***

The following attachments have to be provided:

- a) the diploma to be recognised; its copy must be notarized and officially translated into Slovak,
- b) a copy of the applicant's identity card (passport),
- c) other evidence, if required for the assessment (e.g. a document attesting professional experience),
- d) a revenue stamp of appropriate value.

## ***Are there any specific requirements regarding the authenticity of the copy of my diploma?***

Yes, the copy of your diploma must be notarized by a notary in Slovakia.

***Are there any specific requirements regarding the translation of my diploma into Slovak?***

Yes, your diploma must be translated into Slovak by an official translator in Slovakia.

***How much does professional qualification recognition cost?***

The basic fee for professional qualification recognition is 99.50 euros. If the diploma has already been recognised in a Member State, the fee is 33 euros.

***How long does the professional qualification recognition procedure take?***

This procedure takes two months.

***What are the criteria applied by the competent authority deciding on the recognition of a professional qualification?***

The competent authority deciding on the recognition of a professional qualification applies the criteria of public interest and interests of natural persons and legal entities that may be prejudiced by the pursuit of a regulated profession by persons with insufficient professional qualifications and are protected by special legislation governing the requirements of the pursuit of a regulated profession. These protected interests include protection of national security, public policy and public health.

***How can the competent authority decide on my application for professional qualification recognition?***

The competent authority can either recognise your diploma or reject your application. The decision rejecting the application must include possible compensation measures for the applicant.

***Can I appeal against the decision issued by the competent authority?***

Yes, an appeal may be filed against this decision within 15 days of notification.

***What are compensation measures?***

Compensation measures are measures allowing completing or compensating differences between foreign professional qualifications and requirements for the pursuit of a regulated profession in Slovakia.

***When will the competent authority impose compensation measures upon the applicant?***

The competent authority will impose compensation measures upon the applicant if there are substantial differences in terms of duration or contents of professional training or if the duration of education completed by the applicant is at least one year

shorter than required in Slovakia, unless the applicant demonstrates skills acquired by professional experience completing or compensating these substantial differences.

### ***What is the form of compensation measures?***

Compensation measures have the form of an adaptation period of no more than three years or of an aptitude test.

### ***Can both forms of compensation measures be imposed on an applicant?***

No, only one form of compensation measures may be imposed on an applicant.

### ***Who decides which form of compensation measures will be imposed?***

The form of compensation measures is chosen by the applicant. However, this rule does not apply to certain professions requiring detailed knowledge of Slovak law (e.g. attorney).

### ***What is an adaptation period?***

An adaptation period is the pursuit of a regulated profession in Slovakia in an employment relationship or in a similar relationship under the supervision of a qualified professional. Compliance with the adaptation period requirements are assessed by competent authorities in cooperation with professional organisations and chambers. An adaptation period may include further training. The required duration of an adaptation period, including duration of further training being part of the adaptation period, is laid down by the competent authority in the decision rejecting the application for recognition of a professional qualification.

### ***What is an aptitude test?***

An aptitude test is a test focused on assessing the applicant's professional knowledge and competences with respect to the regulated profession in question. The aptitude test takes place before a commission the members of which are nominated by the competent authority. The subjects to be included in the aptitude test are laid down by the competent authority in the decision rejecting the application for recognition of a professional qualification.

### ***Which titles may I use once my professional qualification is recognised?***

Once your professional qualification is recognised, you may use the professional title or the name of the profession corresponding to this profession in Slovakia, as well as your academic title and an abbreviated form thereof, in the language of your country of origin.

# KNOWLEDGE OF SLOVAK LANGUAGE

## ***What knowledge of the Slovak language do I have to possess if I want to pursue a regulated profession?***

You have to possess a knowledge of the Slovak language necessary for practising the regulated profession in question.

## ***Are Slovak language examinations compulsory?***

No, Slovak language examinations are imposed only in justified cases.

## ***Who examines the knowledge of the Slovak language?***

The knowledge of the Slovak language is examined by a commission consisting of three members nominated by the competent authority. The commission's president is a holder of a university degree in the Slovak language. The other two members are experts in the field of the regulated profession in question.



## ***What parts does the Slovak language test include?***

The Slovak language examination includes:

- a) an interview, during which the applicant has to answer questions concerning himself and his family and friends; both general questions and specific questions related to the regulated profession are asked,
- b) reading an article selected at random from the press or a professional review in Slovak containing at least 1,000 words; the applicant is given the article immediately before reading it,
- c) a discussion about the article,
- d) a test consisting of 25 to 50 questions regarding the basic Slovak vocabulary required for the regulated profession; the applicant has to mark the correct answers within 80 to 120 minutes.

# ALTERNATIVE RECOGNITION

## ***Can I have my professional qualification recognised even if I have no evidence attesting this qualification?***

An Act on Lifelong Learning is being prepared in Slovakia; this act will allow applicants to have their professional qualifications recognised even in absence of any diplomas or other formal evidence. This act should take effect in 2010 and the system of alternative recognition should be implemented as of 2011.

## ***How will professional qualification be attested in the alternative recognition system?***

The applicant's professional qualification will be examined by means of an aptitude test. A particular feature of alternative recognition is that not only full professional qualifications, but also partial professional qualifications (e.g. a partial qualification 'gingerbread baker' being part of the full qualification 'baker') can be recognised.

## ***What is the outcome of the alternative recognition procedure?***

If the applicant passes the aptitude test for the professional qualification in question, his or her professional qualification will be formally attested by a document, which will enhance the applicant's chances of finding a job.

## ***Will this alternative recognition apply to regulated professions as well?***

No, the system of alternative recognition will be applied without prejudice to the system of recognition of professional qualifications for the purposes of pursuing regulated professions.

## ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

***Do I also need to have my education acquired abroad recognised if I do not want to pursue a profession in Slovakia, but to study here?***

Yes, in this case recognition of diplomas for academic purposes is required.

***What should I do if I want to study in Slovakia and need to have my diplomas from a foreign primary or secondary school recognised in Slovakia?***

Applications for recognition of diplomas issued by foreign primary and secondary schools are dealt with by the competent Regional Education Authority.

***What should I do if I want to study in Slovakia and need to have my diplomas from a foreign university recognised in Slovakia?***

Applications for recognition of foreign university diplomas are dealt with by:

- a) a university providing education in the same or similar study programmes as the education acquired abroad,
- b) if there is no such university in Slovakia, the Ministry of Education will decide.

***Are there any treaties between Slovakia and other countries to facilitate recognition of diplomas for academic purposes?***

Yes, there are treaties between Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Germany and Romania guaranteeing automatic recognition of diplomas for academic purposes.

***Are there any specific procedures for recognition of doctoral (PhD.) degrees?***

Yes, diplomas attesting a doctoral (PhD.) degree issued in a Member State of the European Union, the European Economic Area or in Switzerland are recognised by the Ministry of Education automatically.

The application form is available on the website of the Ministry of Education:

[http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/UDOVI/UUVZ/PhD\\_VS\\_treti\\_stupen\\_ziadost.rtf](http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/UDOVI/UUVZ/PhD_VS_treti_stupen_ziadost.rtf)

## CASE STUDIES

These case studies are focused on third country nationals interested in pursuing a specific profession in Slovakia.

### ***Architect from Azerbaijan***

A migrant from Azerbaijan, having graduated in architecture from a university in his country of origin, wants to pursue the profession of architect in Slovakia. It is the Slovak Chamber of Architects that decides on registration of applicants in the registry of authorized architects. However, given the fact that the applicant is not a Member State national, he cannot pursue this profession under the Slovak Act on Authorized Architects.

### ***Planner from Azerbaijan***

A migrant from Azerbaijan, having graduated in architecture from a university in his country of origin, wants to pursue the regulated trade of drafting documentation and projects of simple constructions, small constructions and modifications of these constructions. A special condition of pursuing this trade is a university degree or a full secondary vocational education in the relevant technical area. The Ministry of Education will decide on the recognition pursuant to the Professional Qualification Recognition Act.

### ***Foreign language teacher/translator/interpreter from Argentina***

A migrant from Argentina wants to establish a language school in Slovakia to teach Spanish and provide translating and interpreting services in Spanish, i.e. he wants to pursue the regulated trade of foreign language teaching, translating and interpreting services. A special condition of pursuing this trade is a university degree in the languages concerned or a national examination diploma or evidence of at least ten years spent in a country where the language concerned is an official language. Since the migrant can prove that he has spent ten years in Argentina, he meets the qualification requirements laid down for this trade.

### ***Attorney from Serbia***

A university professor of law from Serbia wants to pursue the profession of attorney in Slovakia. His diplomas will be evaluated by the Ministry of Education in compliance with the Professional Qualification Recognition Act. The Slovak Bar Association will enrol him in the list of attorneys if his diplomas attesting the university degree in law and the academic title of professor are recognised by the Ministry of Education and if he meets other non-qualification conditions.

### ***Attorney from Turkey***

An attorney from Turkey wants to pursue the profession of attorney in Slovakia. His university diploma has not been recognised by the Ministry of Education as equivalent with a Slovak diploma. But even if his diploma were recognised, the attorney does not fulfil the condition of three years of training as a candidate attorney in Slovakia. However, given the fact that Turkey is a member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Trade Organisation, even though the migrant cannot pursue the profession of attorney in Slovakia, he can pursue the profession of foreign attorney or the profession of international attorney, provided that reciprocity is guaranteed and further non-qualification requirements are fulfilled by the applicant.

### ***Attorney from Botswana***

An attorney from Botswana wants to pursue the profession of attorney in Slovakia. His university diploma has not been recognised by the Ministry of Education as equivalent with a Slovak diploma. But even if his diploma were recognised, the attorney does not fulfil the condition of three years of training as a candidate attorney in Slovakia. However, given the fact that Botswana is a member state of the World Trade Organisation, even though the migrant cannot pursue the profession of attorney in Slovakia, he can pursue the profession of international attorney, provided that reciprocity is guaranteed and further non-qualification requirements are fulfilled by the applicant.

### ***Merchant from Turkmenistan***

A migrant from Turkmenistan wants to open up a furniture shop in Slovakia. Given the fact that he wants to pursue the free trade purchase of goods for resale to end consumers (retail) or to other traders (wholesale), he does not have to fulfil any special qualification requirements and can pursue this trade, provided that he complies with other non-qualification requirements.

### ***Bricklayer from Macedonia***

A migrant from Macedonia, having worked in his country of origin for twelve years as a bricklayer, wants to pursue the craft trade of bricklayer in Slovakia. The professional competence requirements for the pursuit of this craft trade will be complied with if the applicant produces evidence attesting at least ten years of relevant experience, terminated no earlier than three years prior to the date of application. His professional experience will be assessed by the Trade Authority.

### ***Doctor from Tajikistan***

A doctor from Tajikistan specialized in the field of internal medicine wants to pursue the profession of doctor in Slovakia in his field of specialization. His university diploma will be assessed by the Ministry of Education in compliance with the Professional Qualification Recognition Act. His specialization diploma will be assessed by the Ministry of Health in compliance with the Act on Healthcare Providers.

### ***Veterinary surgeon from Croatia***

A veterinary surgeon from Croatia wants to pursue the profession of private veterinary surgeon in Slovakia. His university diploma will be assessed by the Slovak Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons in compliance with the Professional Qualification Recognition Act. If his diploma is recognised, the applicant can pursue the profession of private veterinary surgeon, provided that he fulfils other non-qualification requirements.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### ***General information: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Diploma Recognition Centre***

Ministerstvo školstva SR  
Stredisko na uznávanie dokladov o vzdelaní  
Stromová 1  
813 30 Bratislava  
Slovenská republika  
[www.minedu.sk](http://www.minedu.sk)

### ***Doctors: Slovak Medical Chamber***

Slovenská lekárska komora  
Račianska 42/A  
831 02 Bratislava  
[www.lekom.sk](http://www.lekom.sk)

### ***Dentists: Slovak Chamber of Dentists***

Slovenská komora zubných lekárov  
Fibichova 14  
821 05 Bratislava  
[www.skzl.sk](http://www.skzl.sk)

***Nurses and Midwives: Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives***

Slovenská komora sestier a pôrodných asistentiek

Amurská 71

821 06 Bratislava

[www.sksapa.sk](http://www.sksapa.sk)

***Pharmacists: Slovak Chamber of Pharmacists***

Slovenská lekárnická komora

Vajnorská 134/B

831 04 Bratislava

[www.slek.sk](http://www.slek.sk)

***Veterinary surgeons: Slovak Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons***

Komora veterinárnych lekárov SR

Botanická 17

841 04 Bratislava

[www.kvlsr.sk](http://www.kvlsr.sk)

***Architects and landscape architects: Slovak Chamber of Architects***

Slovenská komora architektov

Panská 15

811 01 Bratislava

[www.komarch.sk](http://www.komarch.sk)

***Civil engineers: Slovak Chamber of Civil Engineers***

Slovenská komora stavebných inžinierov

Mýtna 29

810 05 Bratislava

[www.sksi.sk](http://www.sksi.sk)

***Attorneys: Slovak Bar Association***

Slovenská advokátska komora

Kolárska 4

813 42 Bratislava

[www.sak.sk](http://www.sak.sk)

***Trades: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic***

Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky

Pribinova 2

812 72 Bratislava

[www.minv.sk](http://www.minv.sk)

## ***Other institutions***

*Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Migration Office*  
Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky  
Migračný úrad  
Pivonková 6  
812 72 Bratislava  
[www.minv.sk](http://www.minv.sk)

*National Union of Employers*  
Republiková únia zamestnávateľov  
Jašíkova 2  
821 03 Bratislava  
[www.ruzsr.sk](http://www.ruzsr.sk)

*Association of Unions and Societies of Employers*  
Asociácia zamestnávateľských zväzov a združení  
Čulenova 5  
811 09 Bratislava  
[www.azzz.sk](http://www.azzz.sk)

*Centre of Employment, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic*  
Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR  
Vazovova 7/A  
816 16 Bratislava  
[www.upsvar.sk](http://www.upsvar.sk)

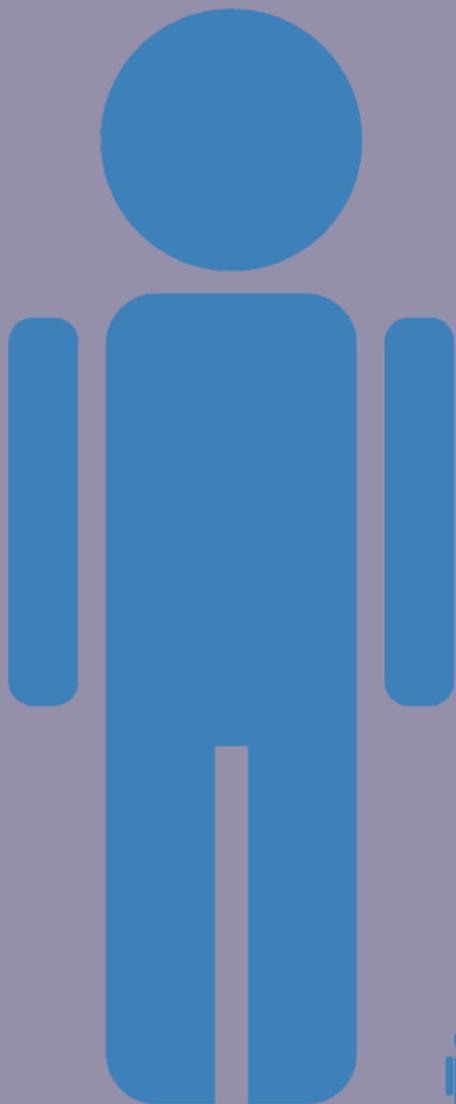
*Slovak Humanitarian Council*  
Slovenská humanitná rada  
Páričkova 18  
821 08 Bratislava 2  
[www.shr.sk](http://www.shr.sk)

*Human Rights League*  
Liga za ľudské práva  
Hurbanovo nám. 5  
811 03 Bratislava  
[www.hrl.sk](http://www.hrl.sk)

*Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Slovak Republic*  
Úrad vysokého komisára OSN pre utečencov v SR  
Štúrova 6  
811 02 Bratislava  
[www.unhcr-budapest.org/slovakia](http://www.unhcr-budapest.org/slovakia)

***Further information:***

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|--|--|
| <a href="http://ec.europa.eu">ec.europa.eu</a>                   | European Commission  |
| <a href="http://www.minedu.sk">www.minedu.sk</a>                 | Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic                         |
| <a href="http://www.minv.sk">www.minv.sk</a>                     | Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic                          |
| <a href="http://employment.gov.sk">employment.gov.sk</a>         | Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic |
| <a href="http://www.migration.sk">www.migration.sk</a>           | Labour Pool for Migrants   |
| <a href="http://mic.iom.sk">mic.iom.sk</a>                       | Migration Information Centre   |
| <a href="http://www.lekom.sk">www.lekom.sk</a>                   | Slovak Medical Chamber   |
| <a href="http://www.skzlsk.sk">www.skzlsk.sk</a>                 | Slovak Chamber of Dentists   |
| <a href="http://www.kvlsr.sk">www.kvlsr.sk</a>                   | Slovak Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons                                |
| <a href="http://www.sksapa.sk">www.sksapa.sk</a>                 | Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives                                |
| <a href="http://www.slek.sk">www.slek.sk</a>                     | Slovak Chamber of Pharmacists  |
| <a href="http://www.komarch.sk">www.komarch.sk</a>               | Slovak Chamber of Architects   |
| <a href="http://www.sksi.sk">www.sksi.sk</a>                     | Slovak Chamber of Civil Engineers                                    |
| <a href="http://www.sak.sk">www.sak.sk</a>                       | Slovak Bar Association   |
| <a href="http://migracia.euroiuris.sk">migracia.euroiuris.sk</a> | EUROIURIS – European Legal Centre                                    |



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