



Integrated Country Strategy

Slovak Republic

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Approved: March 25, 2022

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

As Slovakia moves into its third decade of independence, it remains an important NATO Ally and EU member state. The current coalition government, in power since March 2020, remains the most pro-Transatlantic Slovak government in a generation. It is committed to modernizing its military and working to meet its Wales Pledge despite the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. Slovakia benefits from a robust civil society and a free media with a notable capacity for investigative reporting. Slovakia's export-oriented economy has allowed it to weather the pandemic better than expected and continues to grow as homegrown entrepreneurship remains a bright spot. With the goal of carbon neutral by 2050, the government and private sector are united in their efforts to achieve meaningful reductions in carbon emissions and to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

In recent years, however, Slovakia has faced quickly changing geopolitical, economic, and security landscapes. Central Europe has become a highly contested space increasingly under external pressure. Foreign disinformation, conventional and hybrid threats, and emerging disruptive technologies build on existing weaknesses in Slovakia's education system and a general lack of opportunities to threaten U.S. and European security in Europe and beyond. Russian efforts to undermine democratic institutions risk turning back the possibilities of Slovakia enacting needed anti-corruption reforms. Democratic backsliding has taken a toll regionally. In this context, Slovakia's dedication to democratic ideals and its Transatlantic identity is critically important in its near-neighborhood, as well as in the EU, NATO, and beyond.

Slovakia's standing as an important democratic exemplar, however, is itself under threat.

Disinformation outlets and online conspiracy theories have become the leading source of information for a sizeable portion of the Slovak populace. Recent polling shows that support for Slovakia's NATO membership is the lowest in the Alliance, with only 27 percent of Slovaks in favor. Ultranationalist and neo-Nazi extremist parties continue to grow their membership and would likely increase representation in Parliament in hypothetical elections. Despite the government's efforts to tackle corruption, it remains a key source of social dissatisfaction and economic stagnation. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the fragility of Slovakia's health infrastructure and has severely weakened the ruling coalition. Slovakia's democratic, security, economic, and societal achievements are all under threat of being rolled back or eroded by forces within the country and without.

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Slovakia finds itself at a geopolitical crossroads, possessing growing aspirations of becoming a central member of the Transatlantic community while facing a growing menace to the east that threatens to destabilize Europe and undermine our shared values. Since independence, Slovakia's opportunities and challenges have never been greater, and now is the time to support our Ally's efforts to meet its aspirations by strategically supplying our Embassy with the resources it needs.

With this historical moment in mind, our Mission strives to support, in all possible ways, Slovakia's efforts to be an increasingly strong partner and Ally in confronting global challenges, bolstering the rule of law, and becoming a regional bulwark against democratic backsliding and the pervasive malign influence of foreign adversaries. We can do this by supporting Slovakia's efforts to remain strong, stable, prosperous, and firmly in the Transatlantic fold. Our Integrated Country Strategy reflects these aims, but we need resources commensurate with such a task. Additional personnel are needed to support our shared values, democratic renewal, and human rights to effectively combat the growing threat of disinformation and hybrid warfare, and to sufficiently meet the administrative load of a growing Embassy.

Our first goal – **to expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation to strengthen regional and global security and stability and confront hybrid threats** – seeks to help Slovakia become a more active and capable partner in confronting the challenges facing the West. We will help our Ally modernize its military capabilities by getting rid of Soviet-era equipment so that it can ensure a Europe free, whole, and at peace. We will also help Slovakia implement a Defense Cooperation Agreement with the United States and facilitate U.S. European Command negotiations of Implementing Arrangements. In response to the dangers posed by increasing hybrid threats, including disinformation, cyber threats, and malign economic activities, we will help Slovakia marshal a whole-of-government response. To safeguard broader regional and global stability, we will partner with Slovakia in promoting Western interests in Europe and around the world, including by expanding the benefits of membership in the Western community of nations to emerging partners and allies.

Democracy and a commitment to its ideals are central in Slovakia's Transatlantic identity. As democratic backsliding increases in the region, however, its effects are felt in Slovak society. Trust in government, democracy, and the West continue to weaken. Our second goal – **to Strengthen Slovakia's resilience and the responsiveness of its democratic institutions** – aims to keep Slovakia as a stable partner and bulwark against the regional erosion of democratic ideals. We aim to continue to support Slovakia's efforts to tackle corruption and adhere to the rule of law through training law enforcement and the

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judiciary, and through exchange programs. In order to strengthen the capacity of Slovak media and civil society institutions, we will continue media training and English language exchanges and will develop programming to increase public awareness of the costs of corruption.

Our third goal – **to strengthen and grow the foundation of Slovakia’s economy to support its political independence and democracy, advance commercial opportunities, and increase Slovakia’s capability and resilience as a U.S. global partner**, and thereby help ensure Slovakia’s continued prosperity. We will prioritize increasing U.S. exports to Slovakia and mutual investment activities to further develop the deep commercial bonds between our countries. Increasing trade and investment requires a better business climate, including reforms to the legislative process, labor market, and education and healthcare systems, so that businesses have the predictability, transparency, and human resources to grow. Support to entrepreneurs, improved, sustainable development, and investment in innovation, clean technology, and energy efficiency will also help diversify and strengthen Slovakia’s economic base. At the same time, we will work with Slovakia to protect the inputs of its economy and its energy security by encouraging further diversification of supplies, routes, and sources to reduce vulnerability to Russian energy blackmail. We will also support Slovakia in its efforts to achieve its ambitious climate goals and highlight its regional leadership on green topics.

Finally, we will **engage the Slovak public to build support for shared values and endeavor to reinforce Slovakia’s commitment to the West and our common Transatlantic identity**. Significant segments of Slovak society do not identify their country as fully anchored in the West, increasing Slovakia’s vulnerability to the Russian government’s efforts to erode support for Slovakia’s Western orientation and democratic institutions. We will apply all our instruments of soft power to highlight Slovakia’s place in the West and its longstanding Transatlantic ties. We will increase official and people-to-people engagement and encourage greater participation in exchange programs among Slovak youth. We will also support efforts to practice our shared values and advance the rights of minorities and vulnerable communities, helping Slovakia unlock the full potential of all its citizens, and preventing extremists from abusing these issues to promote their hate-based ideologies and anti-Western, pro-Russian messages.

Within the Embassy compound, we will redouble our efforts to make our property meet the safety and representational needs of our staff and visitors while appropriately representing the U.S. Mission in one of the city’s most prominent central squares. This will require completing an eight-year-old project to fix the Embassy’s crumbling façade and replacing the perimeter fence with something that more appropriately matches the Embassy’s location in a historic part of the city. At the same time, we will

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continue efforts to relocate to a new embassy compound that meets our safety, operational, and functional needs. We will work to ensure that our workforce is diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible in order both to achieve better work outcomes and to highlight American diversity as a tool to promote greater cultural, democratic, and linguistic engagement with the Slovak public.

As a country team we will continue to review progress on our strategy semi-annually. We will use these discussions to adjust our approach in light of new challenges and opportunities, and to respond to the continually evolving efforts of our adversaries.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation to strengthen regional and global security and stability and confront hybrid threats.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Slovakia strengthens its military capability and demonstrates its commitment to a free and peaceful Europe by making progress toward meeting the Wales Pledge and channeling increased defense spending into modernizing its military, expanding its defense capacity, and increasing military readiness and interoperability with U.S./NATO forces.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Slovakia supports the EU, NATO, and other U.S. allies in our shared non-military efforts to confront threats to regional and global security and stability while aiding the development of aspiring alliance partners.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Slovakia adopts and implements a whole-of-government approach to addressing its vulnerability to hybrid threats, including disinformation, cyber threats, and malign economic activities.

Mission Goal 2: Strengthen Slovakia's resilience and the responsiveness of its democratic institutions.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Slovakia strengthens the rule of law and develops its political culture to fight corruption, combat disinformation, and increase public trust in democratic institutions.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Slovakia sustains a free and vibrant press and strengthens the ability of Slovak media and civil society institutions to improve transparency and promote good governance.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen and grow the foundation of Slovakia's economy to support its political independence and democracy, advance commercial

opportunities, and increase Slovakia's capability and resilience as a U.S. global partner.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Grow bilateral import and exports volume, and help improve the business climate, healthcare, and education to support a diversified, entrepreneurial, and sustainable economy across the whole country.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Improve Slovakia's energy security, sustainability, and decarbonization through diversification of suppliers, routes, sources, and breakthrough technologies.
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Support Slovakia's climate ambitions and, where appropriate, support U.S. commercial solutions for climate-related modernizations.

Mission Goal 4: Engage the Slovak public and maximize participation in cultural and exchange programs to build support for shared values.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Encourage the Slovak public to identify as part of the Trans-Atlantic community, internalize democratic values, improve media literacy, and reject hate-based extremist ideologies.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Support Slovak government and civil society efforts to advance the rights of minorities and vulnerable communities; promote gender equality; fight discrimination and prejudice; and encourage the full integration of minorities into Slovak society.

Management Objective 1: Ensure Mission Slovakia's physical spaces reflect the United States in a positive light.

Management Objective 2: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, accessible, resilient, and dynamic workforce with a greater emphasis on workplace mobility.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation to strengthen regional and global security and stability and confront hybrid threats.

Description | We seek an active partnership with our Slovak allies in defending the West while expanding the benefits of membership in our community of nations to new partners.

Objective 1.1 | Slovakia strengthens its military capability and demonstrates its commitment to a free and peaceful Europe by making progress toward meeting the Wales Pledge and channeling increased defense spending into modernizing its military, expanding its defense capacity, and increasing military readiness and interoperability with U.S./NATO forces.

- **Justification** | Slovakia is a reliable NATO Ally that contributes to out-of-area security operations as well as efforts to strengthen regional security. Its ability to contribute more to the achievement of shared security goals is limited by a lack of capacity in its Armed Forces, persistent difficulties in maintaining military readiness, and a continued reliance on obsolete Soviet-era equipment. Slovakia is taking steps to address these limiting factors through increased defense spending and a major military modernization program. Considering these factors and the evolving security situation in Europe, the Embassy aims to assist Slovakia become a more capable and active Ally. To that end, we will focus our engagement on building Slovakia's military capacity through available security cooperation and security assistance programs, facilitating increased interaction between Slovak forces and U.S. and NATO counterparts, and promoting U.S. solutions to Slovak modernization needs.
- **Linkages** |
 - Interim NSSG: pg. 9: "Lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rules."
 - JSP: Goal 1 and Objectives 3.1 and 3.2

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- Draft JRS: Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 4.3, and 4.4
- U.S. European Command Country Plan – Slovakia Country goals 2a and 2b
- **Risks |** Nationalism, far-right extremism, and Russian disinformation undermine public support for Slovakia’s Western orientation and its membership in the EU, NATO, and other Trans-Atlantic institutions. These factors have combined with the challenges resulting from COVID-related economic retractions to cause a majority of the Slovak population to question whether Slovakia should increase defense spending. Similarly, limited government funding for public education and health care in the midst of a pandemic raise the question of whether to divert funding from defense spending.

Objective 1.2 | Slovakia supports the EU, NATO, and other U.S. allies in our shared non-military efforts to confront threats to regional and global security and stability while aiding the development of aspiring alliance partners and protecting U.S. citizens.

- **Justification |** Slovakia is a key partner and ally in confronting shared challenges to security, stability, and democratic principles around the globe. As a NATO Ally and EU Member State, Slovakia’s voice is influential in shaping the West’s response to increasing strategic competition. Slovakia can use its unique experience as a relatively newly independent country and its relatively recent accession to NATO and the EU, as well as its focused efforts on countering corruption and supporting the rule of law, to assist EU and NATO aspirants.
- **Linkages |**
 - JSP: Goals 1.4, 3.1, and 5.1
 - Draft JRS: Objective 1.2
 - Interim NSSG: p 10 “... we will reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world.” “For decades, our allies have stood by our side against common threats and adversaries and worked hand-in-hand to advance our shared interests and values. They are a tremendous source of strength and a unique American advantage, helping to shoulder the responsibilities required to keep our nation safe and our people prosperous.”

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- **Risks |** A failure to uphold and advocate for key Transatlantic values in regional organizations and in domestic actions would damage Slovakia's international standing; Slovakia would be grouped with other backsliding V4 members and viewed as a block on EU progress in key democratization and rule of law issues. Not achieving this objective would make it difficult to provide for the welfare of U.S. citizens in Slovakia.

Objective 1.3 | Slovakia adopts and implements a whole-of-government approach to addressing its vulnerability to hybrid threats, including disinformation, cyber threats, and malign economic activities.

- **Justification |** Although Slovak civil society has been actively engaged in identifying and countering Russian disinformation and the Slovak government has established offices to take a more proactive role in combatting cyber threats, the government still lacks the capacity to effectively protect against hybrid threats. Efforts remain understaffed and have limited participation from government agencies. There is no consensus across the Slovak political spectrum, nor among the Slovak electorate, on the hybrid threats posed by Russia, China, and other potential rivals. To increase Slovak resilience to hybrid threats, we will engage our Slovak counterparts and assist in coordinating a holistic response to the full range of Slovakia's vulnerabilities.
- **Linkages |**
 - JSP: Goals 1.4 and 3.3
 - Draft JRS: Objective 2.3 and 4.3
- **Risks |** Without concrete steps to mitigate the impact of hybrid threats, including disinformation, Slovak opposition will, in concert with international forces, continue to undermine public confidence in Slovak institutions and weaken the Slovak government by discrediting western values and the Trans-Atlantic alliance.

Mission Goal 2 | Strengthen Slovakia's resilience and the responsiveness of its democratic institutions.

Description | Resilient, responsive democratic institutions are the foundation of the Transatlantic order. Our shared values connect the United States and Slovakia.

Objective 2.1 | Slovakia strengthens the rule of law and develops its political culture to fight corruption, combat disinformation, and increase public trust in democratic institutions.

- **Justification** | Slovakia and the United States agree on the need for democratic renewal, both at home and abroad. Corruption and disinformation hollow out democratic institutions, rendering them vulnerable to external political and criminal influences and reducing the public's trust in government, the free market, and democracy itself. To fight corruption, promote rule of law reforms, and create greater resilience in the face of disinformation, our Embassy will continue to prioritize these issues in our diplomatic engagement with Slovak officials, civil society, media, like-minded embassies, and the public. We will support efforts to develop and implement meaningful reforms that shrink the space for corruption and hold corrupt actors accountable to promote democratic resilience. We will encourage the consolidation of a representative, results-oriented political culture that builds the political will to respond to the public's demands for efficient and honest government. To fully build on Slovakia's progress on these issues, the Embassy needs an additional Political Officer to exclusively cover internal politics, rule of law, human rights, and democracy. Post has a single Political Officer covering all of those issues in addition to a busy external political agenda, with intensive focus on Russian influence and disinformation, Chinese influence, Slovakia's participation in multilateral organizations and more.
- **Linkages** |
 - JSP: Goals 3.1 and 3.3
 - Draft JRS: Objective 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 4.3
 - Interim NSSG: Pg. 9 "Lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rules."

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- **Risks** | An inability to create resilient democratic institutions and reforms that fight corruption and increase public trust will bolster authoritarian and extremist political movements and make Slovakia more susceptible to external influences.

Objective 2.2 | Slovakia sustains a free and vibrant press and strengthens the ability of Slovak media and civil society institutions to improve transparency and promote good governance.

- **Justification** | An informed public is the foundation of a modern, resilient, and responsive democracy. Media and civil society can play an important role in informing the public by uncovering wrongdoing, calling for greater accountability, and promoting good governance. To support Slovak media and civil society in fulfilling this watchdog role, the Embassy will work to build its capacity through training and professional development opportunities, exchanges, and deepening ties with media and civil society contacts.
- **Linkages** |
 - JSP: Goals 1.3, 1.4, and 3.3
 - Draft JRS: Objective 2.2, 2.4
- **Risks** | Failure to protect the vital role of the media and civil society could degrade democracy, promote public apathy, and empower anti-Western forces. Further consolidation of the media sector poses a potential challenge to editorial independence, while libel lawsuits, intimidation, physical violence, and allegations of foreign manipulation would threaten full journalistic and civil society freedom.

Mission Goal 3 | Strengthen and grow the foundation of Slovakia's economy to support its political independence and democracy, advance commercial opportunities, and increase Slovakia's capability and resilience as a U.S. global partner.

Description | Promoting American and Allied prosperity is key to our economic engagement overseas. Strengthening the foundations of Slovakia's economy will require energy

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diversification and reforms addressing persistent demographic, rule of law, business-environment, educational, and structural issues.

Objective 3.1 | Grow bilateral import and exports volume, and help improve the business climate, healthcare, and education to support a diversified, entrepreneurial, and sustainable economy across the whole country.

- **Justification** | An economically stable Slovakia provides commercial opportunities for U.S. workers and businesses, and a stronger footing with which Slovakia can engage in NATO and regional organizations. A dynamic and growing Slovak economy with a strong business climate creates firms that import U.S. goods and services, partner with U.S. companies, and invest into the U.S. market. Spurring entrepreneurial growth is important for Slovakia, as it can open non-traditional fields, attract additional investments, and encourage youth to stay in or return to Slovakia. Improved healthcare will allow for economic activity to occur more predictably and allow Slovak companies to recruit more external talent. An education system that develops critical thinking skills will improve the quality of the local workforce for knowledge-based sectors of the country, while also reducing the impact of disinformation.
- **Linkages** |
 - Interim NSSG: pg. 15: “Economic security is national security. [...] We will ensure that the growth we promote through our international commercial, trade, and investment policies is durable and equitable.” pg. 20: “We will coordinate the use of economic tools, leveraging our collective strength to advance common interests,” “We will join with like-minded democracies to develop and defend trusted critical supply chains,” “We will work with like-minded nations to advance an international trading system that promotes a global transition to clean energy.”
 - JSP: Goals 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3, and 3.5
 - Draft JRS: Objective 3.1, 3.3, 4.2

- **Risks** | Failure to achieve future economic growth in an economically sustainable fashion, which supports investment and trade, will hasten brain drain, skew Slovakia's demography in way that exponentially increases its structural debt, and make the country more vulnerable to external economic pressures.

Objective 3.2 | Improve Slovakia's energy security, sustainability, and decarbonization through diversification of suppliers, routes, sources, and breakthrough technologies.

- **Justification** | Dependence on a single supplier, route, or energy source is an economic and security vulnerability. Slovakia is overly reliant on Russia as a single source for nuclear fuel, oil, and gas imports. The promotion of alternative fuel sources can help reduce this dependence. Slovakia needs to increase its climate-friendly energy sources beyond the existing nuclear and hydro, exploring promising potential in other renewables, while avoiding market-distorting high energy prices resulting from over-regulation.
- **Linkages** |
 - JSP: Goals 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, and 3.1
 - Draft JRS: Objective 3.2, 3.4
- **Risks** | Slovak policy makers refuse to consider changes in energy sourcing that increase costs, citing that they are not acceptable to voters, particularly following the energy price squeeze of 2021-2022. If Central and Eastern Europe are unable to complete and enhance North-South gas pipelines, they will be stuck with further reliance on East-West infrastructure that creates dependence on single energy suppliers.

Objective 3.3 | Support Slovakia's climate ambitions and, where appropriate, support U.S. commercial solutions for climate-related modernizations.

- **Justification** | Slovakia and the United States agree that working to secure climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes in support of the Paris Agreement is central to maintaining global peace and security. While Slovakia is on pace to achieve its climate ambitions, the United States can help by sharing scientific and policy best practices, and by facilitating commercial access to U.S. green technology. The Embassy will also

support Slovakia's regional leadership in renewables by highlighting its successful transition away from the use of coal.

- **Linkages |**

- Interim NSSG: pg 17 "Clean energy is central to the NSS agenda and will spark and sustain America's innovative edge; [The US] will support the accelerated growth in renewable energy deployment, invest in climate-friendly infrastructure, build resilience to climate change, modernize our energy grid, and provide the international leadership required to encourage countries around the world to do the same."
- JSP: Goals 1.2, 2.3, and 2.4
- Draft JRS: Objective 4.1
- **Risks |** The current Slovak government is widely expected to achieve its climate goals, so a failure to do so would contribute to political instability. This political instability would degrade democracy, promote public apathy, and empower anti-Western forces.

Mission Goal 4 | Engage the Slovak public and maximize participation in cultural and exchange programs to build support for shared values.

Description | Slovak public support for shared values increases the long-term resilience of our partnership in the face of adversaries' efforts to divide us.

Objective 4.1 | Encourage the Slovak public to identify as part of the Trans-Atlantic community, internalize democratic values, improve media literacy, and reject hate-based extremist ideologies.

- **Justification |** Significant segments of Slovak society, particularly outside of Bratislava, do not identify Slovakia as part of the Western, Trans-Atlantic community of nations, but rather place Slovakia somewhere between East and West, threatening its long-term commitment to the West. Vulnerable populations, particularly young people in economically depressed areas, do not fully support democratic values and increasingly accept hate-based extremist ideologies. Many politicians feel they must publicly

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distance themselves from NATO and the United States to appease voters. Foreign governments consistently exploit these vulnerabilities to erode support for a pro-Western foreign policy and democratic institutions. The Embassy will seek to increase official and people-to-people engagement with vulnerable populations, promote increased travel and participation in exchange programs among Slovak youth, and highlight Slovakia's place in the West and longstanding Trans-Atlantic ties.

- **Linkages |**
 - JSP: Goals 1.3 and 3.3
 - Draft JRS: Objective 2.1, 4.3
- **Risks |** A failure to improve public perceptions of Slovakia's place in the Trans-Atlantic community of democracies could result in decreased Slovak support for Western policy objectives.

Objective 4.2 | Support Slovak government and civil society efforts to advance the rights of minorities and vulnerable communities; promote gender equality; fight discrimination and prejudice; and encourage the full integration of minorities into Slovak society.

- **Justification |** Support for minority rights is relatively low in Slovakia, a largely homogenous and relatively conservative country. Refugees, migrants, and Roma face widespread discrimination, and official efforts to integrate these individuals are minimal. LGBTQI+ persons and women also face significant discrimination in Slovakia. Although the government has taken positive steps toward increasing inclusion and accessibility of minority and other vulnerable groups within Slovak society, additional efforts are needed. Surveys show domestic violence and sexual harassment is widespread and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, although there is little public discussion of how to address these problems. The Embassy will work to build greater public and political support for minority and women's rights in Slovakia through partnership with civil society organizations working in these areas, as well as through its own public outreach and engagement efforts.
- **Linkages |**

- JSP: Goals 3.2, 3.3, and 3.5
- Draft JRS: Objective 2.1 and Management Objective 4
- Interim NSSG: Pg. 20 “We will defend and protect human rights and address discrimination, inequity, and marginalization in all its forms.”
- **Risks** | A failure to achieve better integration of minorities and women into Slovak society could prevent Slovakia from reaching its full economic potential, increase disaffection with democracy among vulnerable populations, and strengthen the position of extremist groups promoting hate-based ideologies and anti-Western messages.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Ensure Mission Slovakia’s physical spaces reflect the United States in a positive light.

- **Justification** | Embassy Bratislava is currently housed in two adjacent buildings, both of which date back to the mid-19th century and bring with them a host of security and infrastructure challenges. Completion of a New Embassy Compound (NEC) project is still 8-10 years away from completion. The façade of the Annex building needs to be completely renovated and repaired by the landlord in order to address a longstanding safety issue as well as better showcase the Embassy’s historical and important presence in the center of Bratislava. The public and office spaces of the Chancery and Annex buildings have been neglected over the years due to the impending move to the NEC. Renovating some of these spaces will not only create a better work environment for Embassy staff but provide a positive and more welcoming space for visitors to the Embassy. The fence around the current Embassy site does not meet security standards and is unsightly. A new, modernized and visually permeable fence should be constructed to meet security standards as well as improve the public perception of the Embassy’s current location.
- **Linkages** |
 - JSP: Goal 4.3

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- Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999 (SECCA)
- 12 FAM 300 Physical Security Programs
- **Risks** | Acquiring the parcels for the NEC requires cooperation and agreement with multiple private and public entities, including the City of Bratislava. Refurbishing the crumbling façade of the Annex requires action and funding by the landlord. Replacing the fence requires funding and prioritization by OBO and approval of the City of Bratislava. Failing to meet these goals would reflect poorly on the Embassy, depress staff morale, and cause unnecessary friction with the local and national governments.

Management Objective 2 | Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, accessible, resilient, and dynamic workforce with a greater emphasis on workplace mobility.

- **Justification** | The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in Mission Bratislava embracing mobile technologies to continue to meet Mission goals while keeping Embassy personnel safe. Mission Bratislava has also seen a large turnover of locally employed staff since 2020. In order to increase interest in vacant positions at the Embassy, Post should utilize new and modern technologies to reach the public. Post needs to increase inclusivity and resiliency of the current workforce in order to retain high performers for the long-term as well as promote a stable and positive work environment. To meet staffing objectives in an environment of ever-increasing priorities, Mission Bratislava needs additional human resources professionals. Workload for human resources staff has increased substantially in recent years, with double the volume of vacancy announcements, new and updated computer applications, new policies requiring more frequent classifications of positions, and ongoing changes in local laws and regulations. The triple-hatted Management Officer – the sole officer covering management, human resources, and financial management – requires additional support to increase efficiency, focus on strategic planning, and properly oversee all management controls.
- **Linkages:**
 - JSP: Goals 4.1 and 4.2

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- Draft JRS: Management Objectives 1, 3, and 4
- **Risks |** Funding is required for technology acquisition and support. We have seen fewer applicants for position openings during the pandemic, likely reflecting worldwide trends in lower recruitment numbers. Another risk in recruitment is a stagnant salary scale at the embassy. Post is working with GTM to ensure our salaries and benefits are as competitive as possible, within Department funding restrictions. To ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce, Post will work closely with the DEIA council to adopt best practices in recruiting and onboarding.