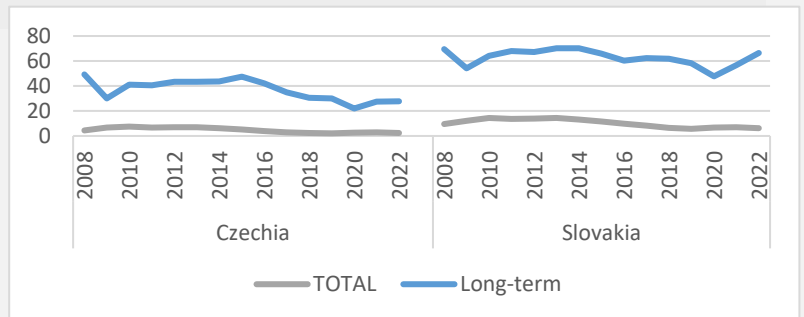


Social Dialogue in Defence of Vulnerable Groups in Post-COVID-19 Labour Markets (VS/2021/0196)

Summary of findings for Czechia and Slovakia

- Pandemic-induced constraints prolonged job searches, leading to extended periods of unemployment, exceeding a year (see Figure)
- HORECA, culture, free time activities, and logistics were the sectors most economically impacted by job losses during the pandemic
- Both countries saw job losses primarily among the low-educated and those aged up to 25, with Slovakia experiencing a higher susceptibility to job losses

Figure: Unemployment and long-term unemployment in Czechia and Slovakia



COVID-19 and vulnerable groups

- People with disabilities (both CZ and SK)
- Foreigners in low-paid positions (mostly CZ)
- Roma minority (presence of latent discrimination through artificially increasing the requirements for a position to exclude Roma applicants, disrupted access to the labour market because of the closed settlements) (mostly SK)
- Single mothers (both CZ and SK)
- COVID-19 vulnerabilities stemmed mainly from job loss due to workplace closures.
- Difficulty in securing jobs for individuals with disabilities or from Roma communities persisted amid a labor market marked by shortages.
- Workers with unstable contracts (e.g., work agreements, short-term contracts, agency workers, bogus self-employed), as well as migrant and Roma populations, faced severe impacts from pandemic-related workplace closures

Social dialogue in defence of vulnerable groups

- Neither Czechia nor Slovakia introduced measures to specifically protect vulnerable groups; all COVID-19 related state measures were broadly aimed at the protection of the employment level, mostly focused on full-time employees
- Social partners prioritized full-time employees with the short-term work scheme, neglecting other vulnerable labour market groups
- NGOs conveyed observations and survey results through media, influencing supportive measures for vulnerable groups
- Vulnerable workers were excluded from established channels of influence involving social partners

Policy relevance

- Both employers and unions agreed on the need of health protection at the workplace and the need for compensation measures to protect employment
- Social partners pressured the government for interactive bargaining with policymakers
- Social partners sought interaction beyond tripartite committees, leading to uncoordinated efforts and mutual competition
- Social partners saw improved legitimacy and role perception in COVID-19 decision-making, but neutral impact on long-term dialogue and bargaining structures in both countries

Further information

Project details: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/projects/social-dialogue-defence-vulnerable-groups/about>, contact: Central European Labour Studies Institute (simona.brunnerova@celsi.sk)