MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM

2021-2028

between

THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY,

hereinafter referred to as “Norway”

and

THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC,

hereinafter referred to as the “Beneficiary State”

together hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”,

WHEREAS the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 establishes a financial mechanism (hereinafter referred to as the "Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028") through which Norway will contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area;

WHEREAS the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 aims to strengthen relations between Norway and the Beneficiary State to the mutual benefit of their peoples;

WHEREAS the enhanced co-operation between Norway and the Beneficiary State will contribute to securing a stable, peaceful and prosperous Europe, based on good governance, democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights and sustainable development;

WHEREAS the Parties agree to establish a framework for cooperation in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028;

HAVE AGREED on the following:

Article 1
Objectives

1. The overall objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States through financial contributions to promote the thematic priorities listed in paragraph 2. Accordingly, the Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding shall select programmes for funding that aim to contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

2. The financial contributions shall be available in the following thematic priorities:

(a) European green transition;

(b) Democracy, rule of law and human rights;

(c) Social inclusion and resilience.

Article 2
Legal Framework

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be read in conjunction with the following documents which, together with this Memorandum of Understanding, constitute the legal framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028:

(a) the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 (hereinafter referred to as "the Agreement");

(b) the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 (hereinafter referred to as the "Regulation") issued by Norway in accordance with Article 9.4 of the Agreement;

(c) the programme agreements that will be concluded for each programme; and

(d) any guidelines adopted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter referred to as "NMFA") in accordance with the Regulation.

Article 3
Financial Framework

1. In accordance with Article 2 of the Agreement, the total amount of the financial contribution is € 1463 million in annual tranches of € 209 million over the period running from 01 May 2021 to 30 April 2028, inclusive.

2. In accordance with Article 6 of the Agreement, a total of € 57,316,142 shall be made available to the Beneficiary State over the period referred to in Paragraph 1.

3. In accordance with Article 9.7 of the Agreement and Article 1.9 of the Regulation, the management costs of Norway shall be covered by the overall amount referred to above. Further provisions to this effect are set out in the Regulation. The net amount of the allocation to be made available to the Beneficiary State is € 53,304,012.

Article 4
Roles and responsibilities

1. Norway shall make funds available in support of eligible programmes proposed by the Beneficiary State and agreed on by the NMFA within the priority sectors listed in Article 3.1 of the Agreement and the programme areas listed in the Annex to the Agreement. Norway and the Beneficiary State shall cooperate on the preparation of concept notes defining the scope and planned results for each programme.

2. The Beneficiary State shall assure the full co-financing of programmes that benefit from support from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 in accordance with Annex B and the programme agreements.

3.The Beneficiary State shall ensure an enabling environment for the unimpeded implementation of the Civil Society Fund in the Beneficiary State and shall refrain from taking any measures that might prevent Fund Operators from independently exercising their role.

4. The NMFA shall manage the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 and take decisions on the granting of financial assistance in accordance with the Regulation.

5. The NFMA shall be assisted by the Financial Mechanism Office (hereinafter referred to as the "FMO"). The FMO shall serve as a contact point for the Beneficiary State for the day-to-day operations of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

Article 5
Designation of authorities

The Beneficiary State has authorised a National Focal Point to act on its behalf. The National Focal Point shall have the overall responsibility for reaching the objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 as well as for the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 in the Beneficiary State in accordance with the Regulation. In accordance with Article 5.2 of the Regulation, the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority are designated in Annex A.

Article 6
Multi-annual Programming Framework

1. In accordance with Article 2.5 of the Regulation, the Parties have agreed on an implementation framework consisting of the following financial and substantive parameters:

(a) a list of agreed programmes, the financial contribution from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 and from the Beneficiary State;

(b) identification of programmes, their objective(s), the Programme Operators, the grant amount and amount of co-financing by programme, the bilateral ambitions as well as any specific concerns relating to the implementation of the programmes;

(c) conditions and/or specific concerns at Beneficiary State level relating to target groups, geographical areas or other issues;

(d) identification of Donor Programme Partners, as appropriate;

(e) identification of International Partner Organisations, as appropriate; and

(f) identification of pre-defined projects to be included in relevant programmes.

2. The implementation framework is outlined in Annex B.

Article 7
Fund for bilateral relations

In accordance with Article 4.6.1 of the Regulation the Beneficiary State shall set aside funds to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary State. The agreed amount is reflected in Annex B and is allocated to the funds for bilateral relations at national and programme level. The National Focal Point shall manage the use of the fund for bilateral relations at national level and shall establish a Joint Committee for the Bilateral Fund in accordance with Article 4.9.1 of the Regulation. The Programme Operators shall manage the use of the funds for bilateral relations allocated to their programmes. For donor partnership programmes, decisions on the use of the funds for bilateral relations in the programme shall be taken by consensus between the Programme Operator and the Donor Programme Partner(s).

Article 8
Country Report

In accordance with Article 2.6 of the Regulation, the National Focal Point shall submit to the NFMA an Annual Country Report on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 in the Beneficiary State. The Country Report shall be submitted to the FMC no later than 10 March each year.

Article 9
Annual meetings

In accordance with Article 2.7 of the Regulation an annual meeting shall be held between the NMFA and the National Focal Point. The annual meeting shall allow the NMFA and the National Focal Point to examine progress achieved over the previous reporting periods, discuss risks and agree on any necessary measures to be taken. The annual meeting shall provide a forum for discussion of issues of bilateral interest.

Article 10
Modification of the MoU

1. Annex A and B may be amended through an exchange of letters between the NMFA and the National Focal Point.
2. Cumulative transfers up to 10% of the total eligible expenditure of a programme may be made between programmes without a modification of the Annexes to this Memorandum of Understanding, provided that the change has been agreed by the NMFA through modifications of the relevant Programme Agreements.
3. In addition, cost savings and amounts not committed to projects may be transferred to the funds for bilateral relations without a modification of the Annexes to this Memorandum of Understanding or the approval of the NMFA, provided that the transfer has been the subject of prior consultation with

the Cooperation Committee of the concerned programme. Any such transfer of funds from a programme shall not affect the objectives or outcomes of the Programme. The National Focal Point shall notify the FMC of such transfers without delay and the NMFA shall update the concerned Programme Agreements and the Bilateral Funds Agreement, as relevant.

4. All transfers made in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 shall not affect any specific concerns, conditions, objectives or other priorities referred to in this Memorandum of Understanding and shall be in accordance with the provisions of the legal framework.

Article 11
Control and Access to Information

The NMFA, the Office of the Auditor General of Norway and their representatives have the right to carry out any technical or financial mission or review they consider necessary to follow the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects as well as the use of funds. The Beneficiary State shall provide all necessary assistance, information and documentation.

Article 12
Governing Principles

1. The implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding shall in all aspects be governed by the Regulation and subsequent amendments thereof.

2. The objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 shall be pursued in a framework of close co-operation between Norway and the Beneficiary State, respecting the common values and principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The Parties agree to apply the highest degree of transparency, accountability and cost efficiency as well as the principles of good governance, partnership and multi-level governance, sustainable development, gender equality and non-discrimination in all implementation phases of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

3. All programmes and activities funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 shall be consistent with respect for these values and principles and abstain from supporting operations that may fail to do so. Their implementation shall comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

4. The Beneficiary State shall take proactive steps in order to ensure adherence to these values and principles at all levels involved in the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

Article 13
Entry into Force

This Memorandum of Understanding shall enter into force on the day after the date of its last signature.

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This Memorandum of Understanding is signed in four originals in the English Language.

For the Kingdom of Norway	For the Slovak Republic
Signed in Trenčín on 05/06/2025	Signed in Trenčín on 05/06/2025

.....	.....
Kingdom of Norway	Slovak Republic

ANNEX A

National management and control structures

1. National Focal Point

The Department of EEA and Norway Grants and Swiss Contribution (hereinafter referred to as "the Department") within the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development, and Informatization of the Slovak Republic shall act as the National Focal Point.
The Department operates under the Section of European Territorial Cooperation. The Director General of the Section of European Territorial Cooperation, reporting to the State Secretary, holds the position of Head of the National Focal Point.
The roles and responsibilities of the National Focal Point are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Article 5.3 thereof.
In addition, the National Focal Point shall act as the Programme Operator for all programmes agreed in the Annex B of this Memorandum.
The roles and responsibilities of the National Focal Point and those of the Programme Operator shall be performed by different units within the Department to ensure the appropriate separation of tasks.

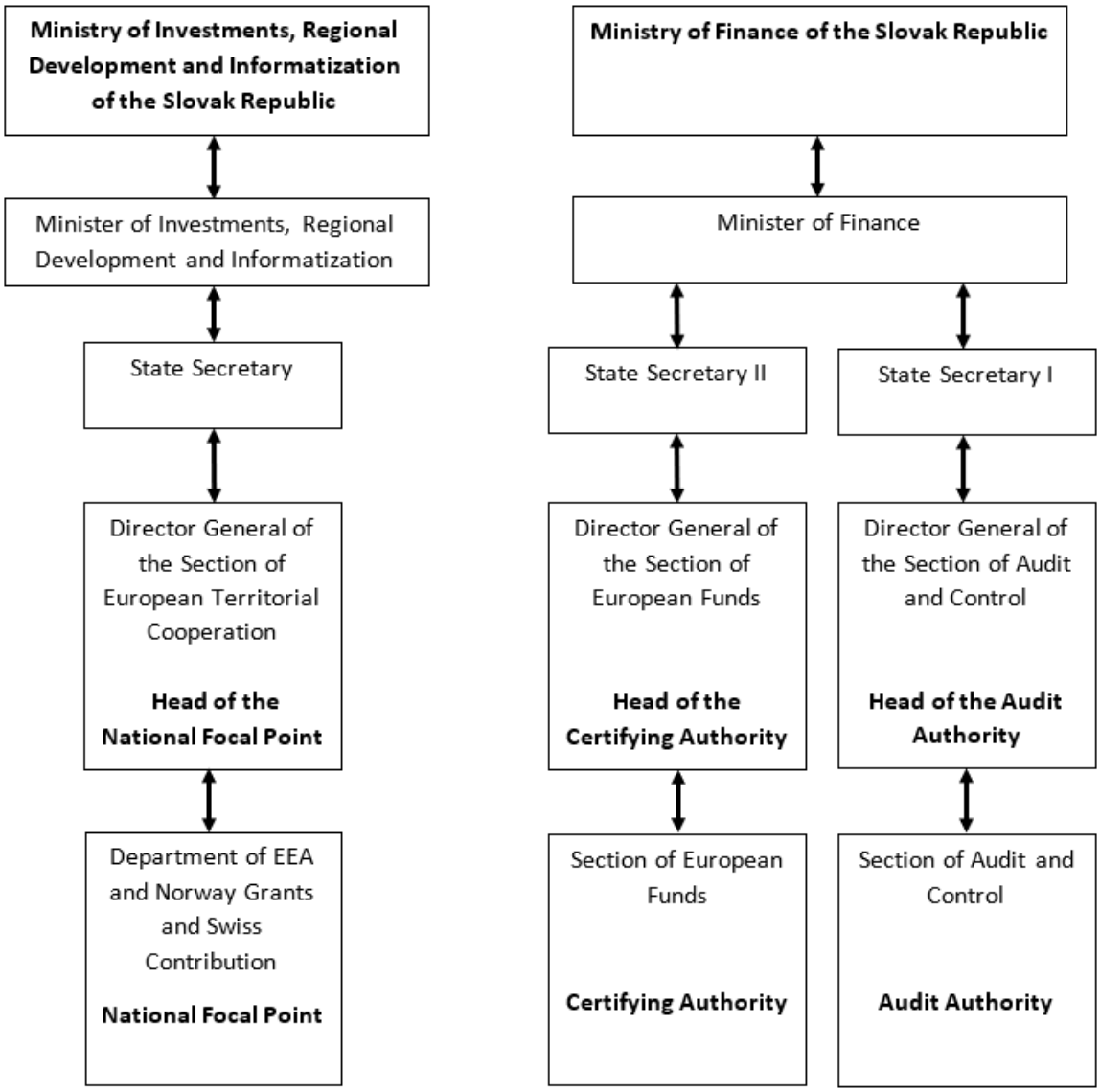
2. Certifying Authority

The Section of European Funds of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic shall act as the Certifying Authority.
The Director General of the Section of European Funds, reporting directly to State Secretary II., holds the position of Head of the Certifying Authority.
The roles and responsibilities of the Certifying Authority are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Article 5.4 thereof.
In addition, the Certifying Authority, the Section of European Funds of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, shall be responsible for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports.

3. Audit Authority

The Section of Audit and Control of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic shall act as the Audit Authority. The Director General of the Section of Audit and Control, reporting directly to the State Secretary I, holds the position of Head of the Audit Authority.
The roles and responsibilities of the Audit Authority are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Article 5.5 thereof.
The Audit Authority shall be functionally independent of the National Focal Point and the Certifying Authority.

4. Organigram


Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic
Minister of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization
State Secretary
Director General of the Section of European Territorial Cooperation
Head of the National Focal Point
Department of EEA and Norway Grants and Swiss Contribution
National Focal Point
Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic
Minister of Finance
State Secretary II
State Secretary I
Director General of the Section of European Funds
Head of the Certifying Authority
Director General of the Section of Audit and Control
Head of the Audit Authority
Section of European Funds
Certifying Authority
Section of Audit and Control
Audit Authority

ANNEX B

Implementation framework

In accordance with Article 2.5 of the Regulation, the Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding have agreed on an implementation framework outlined in this annex.

1. Financial parameters of the implementation framework

	Slovakia	**Norway Grants contribution**	**National contribution**
	Programmes		
1	Green Transition	€ 26,700,000	€ 4,711,766
2	Social	€ 23,400,000	€ 4,129,412
	Other allocations		
	Technical Assistance to the Beneficiary states (Art. 1.10)	€ 1,304,012	N/A
	Funds for bilateral relations at national level (Art. 4.7)	€ 1,300,000	N/A
	Reserve for completing projects under FM 2014-2021	N/A	N/A
	Funds for bilateral relations at programme level (Art. 4.10)	€ 600,000	N/A
	Net allocation to Slovakia	**€ 53,304,012**	**€ 8,841,178**

2. Conditions

3. Specific concerns

The amount of funds for bilateral relations allocated to each programme shall be included in the respective programme agreements.

The agreed allocations to the programmes and bilateral funds include the Norwegian Financial Mechanism contribution to Slovakia related to the challenges experienced as a result of the invasion of Ukraine, which amounts to € 3,251,727. The funding shall primarily be made available to support projects under the Green Transition and the Social programmes and the use of these funds shall be described in the concept notes for the programmes. Reporting on the use of the contribution related to the challenges experienced as a result of the invasion of Ukraine shall be included in the country reports and the final programme reports.

In accordance with Article 8.11.4 of the Regulation, the allocation to technical assistance is set at 2.28% further to the request of the National Focal Point and the submission of justifications. The National Focal Point shall ensure that the entire allocation is necessary for the performance of the tasks of the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority.

Gender equality and digitalization will be mainstreamed and form part of all relevant programme areas. The concept notes shall describe how this shall be achieved.

4. Substantive parameters of the implementation framework

The programmes described below are to be implemented subject to the approval of the NMFA, in accordance with Article 6.3 of the Regulation.

A. Programme Green Transition

Programme objective:	Acceleration of the green transition towards a more sustainable society and improved disaster resilience.
Programme grant:	€ 26,700,000
Programme co-financing:	€ 4,711,766
Programme Operator:	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic
Donor Programme Partners(s):	Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE)

Programme area(s):

Green transition

Disaster prevention and preparedness

Programme specific concerns:

Indicative allocation to programme areas is in line with the following guiding principles: approximately 80% to the programme area "Green Transition" and approximately 20% to the programme area "Disaster Prevention and Preparedness". The final allocations shall be agreed and set in the programme agreement.

The financial allocation to the programme area Green Transition shall contribute to climate change adaptation, including measures to address extreme weather events, with a focus on application of innovative Nature Based Solutions.

The programme shall include activities aimed at capacity building related to hydrology.

The public institution(s) in the Slovak Republic in charge of the relevant policy areas, including the Ministry of Environment, shall be actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the programme, specifically as member(s) of the Cooperation Committee.

Consultation with relevant stakeholders shall be carried out during the development of the concept note

Bilateral ambitions:

The programme aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation by fostering institutional partnerships, joint capacity-building, and knowledge transfer, thereby enhancing resilience and preparedness for environmental and civil protection challenges on both national and international levels.

Pre-defined projects:

A pre-defined project with the OECD with a grant from the programme of at least € 1.6 million that contributes to the area of support "Green governance" shall be developed in the concept note.

Name of project:	Triglav: Strengthen the fight against CBRN threats
Description:	Measures to address disaster prevention and civil protection related to the detection of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials
Project-Promoter:	Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
Donor Project Partner:	Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (DSA)
Maximum-grant amount:	€ 4,000,000

Name of project:	Disaster prevention and civil protection at local level
Description:	Civil protection, with a particular focus on disaster management at local level
Project-Promoter:	Slovak Ministry of Interior or Slovak Association of Towns and Municipalities
Donor Project Partner:	TBD

Maximum-grant amount:	€ 2,000,000
Name of project:	Educational centre Dropie
Description:	Climate education including an infrastructure component extending the educational centre for additional students
Project-Promoter:	Slovak Environment Agency
Donor Project Partner:	TBD
Maximum-grant amount:	€ 4,000,000

B. Programme Social

Programme objective:	Prevention and combatting of domestic and gender-based violence in line with international and European human rights standards. Enhanced inclusion and empowerment of Roma
Programme grant:	€ 23,400,000
Programme co-financing:	€ 4,129,412
Programme Operator:	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic
Donor Programme Partners(s):	Norwegian Directorate of Health (HDIR)
International Partner Organisation(s):	Council of Europe (CoE) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
Programme area(s):	Domestic and gender-based violence Roma inclusion and empowerment
Programme specific concerns:	Indicative allocation to programme areas is in line with the following guiding principles: approximately 50% to the programme area "Domestic and gender-based violence"; approximately 50% to the programme area "Roma inclusion and empowerment". The final allocations shall be agreed and set in the programme agreement. The programme shall support the social inclusion and empowerment of Roma living in marginalised Roma communities with particular emphasis on empowering Roma women and youth. The programme shall support an integrated approach to improve access to education, employment, healthcare, and housing and to combat antigypsyism and discrimination. This shall be carried out through local partnerships between municipalities, community centres, social field workers, Roma leaders and civil society organisations, educational institutions and specialised service providers. The programme shall give special attention to women, children, and victims from marginalised or socially excluded communities who may require specialised support such as Roma.

The public institution(s) in the Slovak Republic in charge of the relevant policy areas, including the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities shall be actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the programme, specifically as member(s) of the Cooperation Committee.

The maximum level of funding for investment in infrastructure (hard measures) shall be 50%.

Consultation with relevant stakeholders shall be carried out during the development of the concept note.

Bilateral ambitions:

The bilateral ambitions focus on strengthening institutional cooperation and knowledge transfer between Norway and Slovakia. Key areas include improving responses to sexual violence, enhancing social inclusion via support for minorities and initiatives in the field of cyber violence affecting children and adolescents.

Pre-defined projects:

A grant from the programme of € 1.8 million shall be made available for the establishment of centre(s) for victims of sexual violence. The concept note shall describe how this will be implemented. The possibility of pre-defining a project promoting inclusive school environments to improve educational outcomes in marginalised Roma communities with the European Wergeland Centre with a maximum grant from the programme of € 2,000,000 shall be explored when developing the concept note.

Name of project:	Enhancing the quality and scope of combatting violence against women and domestic violence
Description:	Support intersectional cooperation, research on links between poverty, exclusion, and violence in Roma communities, and activities of the Coordination and Methodology Centre
Project-Promoter:	Institute for Labour and Family Research
Donor Project Partner:	TBD
Maximum-grant amount:	€ 2,650,000