



Press conference, 22 July 2026, Bratislava

Thank you, Minister Migal, for the invitation to join this press conference about such an important topic. The Norway Grants in Slovakia has had a Domestic and Gender-Based Violence component for more than a decade. It will continue under the new Social Programme of the grants, and open calls to apply for support have been launched.

Before speaking about the programme, I would like to address the issue of domestic and gender-based violence.

The recent murder of teacher Zuzana from Gelnica deeply affected me. I can only say how profoundly sorry I am that her life could not be saved. My thoughts are with her family, friends, colleagues, and everyone who loved her. Tragedies like this remind us in the most painful way that violence against women is not an abstract issue. It has devastating consequences for individuals, families, and entire communities. This unlawful attack with a tragic ending is sadly not an exception. This is why it is our duty to do our utmost to end attacks on women.

Domestic and gender-based violence remains one of the most serious human rights challenges in our societies. Behind every statistic is a person whose safety, health, dignity, and future have been affected. This is why continued investment in prevention, protection, and support services is necessary.

The launch of the Norway Grants calls represents an important milestone. It is a clear demonstration of the shared commitment of Norway and Slovakia to protecting human dignity, advancing



gender equality, and ensuring that women and girls can live free from violence, free from fear.

The Social Programme builds on the achievements of our previous cooperation. Through the newly launched calls, organisations and institutions will have the opportunity to develop projects that prevent and combat domestic and gender-based violence. The projects should also strengthen support systems for victims, and contribute to lasting systemic change.

One new and important objective is the establishment of the first Sexual Assault Centres in Slovakia, providing survivors of sexual violence with specialised, coordinated, and victim-centred support at the moment when they need it most.

However, we are not only talking about funding opportunities. We are talking about creating safer communities, improving access to essential services, strengthening institutions, and ensuring that victims receive the support, protection, and justice they deserve.

The programme also creates valuable opportunities for Slovak and Norwegian experts, institutions, and organisations to work together, exchange knowledge and experience, and develop solutions that make a real and tangible difference in people's lives. I am particularly pleased that the Norwegian Directorate of Health and other Norwegian institutions are actively engaged in the programme and stand ready to share their expertise.

I encourage all eligible organisations and institutions to make full use of these opportunities and to submit their project proposals.



I look forward to seeing the positive results that will emerge from these calls. We need not only individual projects, but also lasting and sustainable systemic change.

Every woman and every girl should be able to live a life free from violence, fear, and discrimination. Together, we can help make that ambition a reality.

Thank you for your attention.