



NBS Monthly Bulletin

AUGUST 2016

Published by: © Národná banka Slovenska

Address: Národná banka Slovenska Imricha Karvaša 1, 813 25 Bratislava Slovakia

Contact: +421/2/5787 2146

http://www.nbs.sk

All rights reserved. Reproduction for educational and non-commercial purposes is permitted provided that the source is acknowledged.

ISSN 1337-9526 (online)



CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY	5	Chart 8	GDP growth estimate for the euro	
_		_		area in Q3 and Q4 2016	9
2	THE REAL ECONOMY	6	Chart 9	Germany – Ifo index and annual	
2.1	Flash estimate of euro area GDP	6		GDP growth	9
2.2	Flash estimate of Slovak GDP	6	Chart 10	Employment – sectoral contributions	
2.3	'Soft' leading indicators	8		to the three month-on-three month	
				rate of change	10
3	THE LABOUR MARKET	10	Chart 11	Employment according to the ESA	
				2010 methodology – trend and	
4	PRICES	13		forecast	10
			Chart 12	Indicator contributions to nowcast	
5	INDICATIVE IMPACT ON THE			of quarter-on-quarter employment	
	FORECAST	15		growth	10
			Chart 13	Contribution of foreigners to	
	RVIEW OF MAIN MACROECONOMIC			quarter-on-quarter employment	
INDI	CATORS FOR SLOVAKIA	17		growth in Slovakia	11
			Chart 14	Labour shortage in the Slovak	
	OF TABLES			economy	11
Table 1				Unemployment	11
	of projected and actual rates of			Number of unemployed	12
	change	13	Chart 17	Wage growth	12
Table 2	,		Chart 18	Wage developments in the	
	indicators for Slovakia	17		economy	12
			Chart 19	Annual HICP inflation and its	
	OF CHARTS			composition	13
Chart '	GDP – trend and NBS forecast	6	Chart 20	HICP inflation	13
Chart 2	GDP and accommodation sales	7		Demand-pull inflation	14
Chart 3	B Employment in tourism-related		Chart 22	HICP core inflation broken down	
	services and number of overnight			by price-change intervals	14
	stays registered by foreigners	7	Chart 23	Private consumption nowcast	15
Chart 4	Number of overnight stays in Slovakia	7	Chart 24	Nowcast for goods and services	
Chart !	5 Internet searches	8		exports	15
Chart 6	Economic sentiment indicators for		Chart 25	Employment nowcast	15
	Germany	8	Chart 26	Nowcast for GDP growth in Q3 2016	16
Chart 7	GDP growth estimate for Germany		Chart 27	GDP nowcast	16
	in Q3 and Q4 2016	9			



ABBREVIATIONS

CPI Consumer Price Index

EA euro area

ECB European Central Bank
EC European Commission
EMEs emerging market economies
EMU Economic and Monetary Union
EONIA euro overnight index average
ESA 2010 European System of Accounts 2010

EU European Union

EUR euro

EURIBOR euro interbank offered rate

Eurostat statistical office of the European Union

FDI foreign direct investment GDP gross domestic product

GNDI gross national disposable income

GNI gross national income

HICP Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices

IMF International Monetary Fund
MFI monetary financial institutions

MF SR Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic

MMF money market fund

MTF NBS's Medium-Term Forecast (published on a quarterly basis)

NARKS National Association of Real Estate Offices of Slovakia

NBS Národná banka Slovenska
NEER nominal effective exchange rate
NFC non-financial corporation

NPISHs Non-profit institutions serving households

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

p.a. per annum p.p. percentage point

PMI Purchasing Managers' Index

PPI Producer Price Index
REER real effective exchange rate

SASS Slovenská asociácia správcovských spoločností – Slovak Association of Asset

Management Companies

SME small and medium-sized enterprise
SO SR Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

ULC unit labour costs

ÚPSVR Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny – Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and

Family

USD US dollar VAT value-added tax

Symbols used in the tables

- . Data are not yet available.
- Data do not exist / data are not applicable.
- (p) Preliminary data



1 SUMMARY¹

Euro area real GDP increased by 0.3% quarter on quarter in the second quarter of 2016, after growing by 0.6% in the first quarter. All of the larger national economies of the euro area reported a slowdown in economic activity, with the exception of the Netherlands. The slower second quarter growth and weakening of short-term indicators represent a downside risk to the euro area GDP outlook for the year as a whole.

Slovakia's quarter-on-quarter GDP growth in the second quarter was 0.9%, the highest rate in the euro area. Annual GDP growth was also robust, at 3.7%. Both total GDP and GDP growth were slightly higher than projected in NBS's current Medium-Term Forecast (MTF-2016Q2), published in June. The difference is likely to stem largely from net exports. Activity may also have been boosted by an increase in tourism in Slovakia.

The stronger economic growth had a positive impact on the labour market. Employment increased in the second quarter by 0.6% quarter

on quarter (or 2.3% year on year), thus exceeding the NBS projection. The strongest job growth was in the services and trade sectors. Wage growth in the sectors under review slowed to 3.6% in June, due to the fading of first-quarter effects that had been pushing wages up. The wage growth is expected to be supported by increasing demand for labour. The unemployment² rate maintained its downward path in July, falling to 9.4%. After two years of solid employment growth, employers are beginning to perceive labour shortages and are thus seeking to employ foreigners to a greater extent. Foreigners filled around 20% of the new jobs created in the second quarter.

The annual HICP inflation rate in July was more negative than expected (at -0.9%), owing to gas prices being reduced one month earlier than projected and to decreases in automotive fuel and food prices. With harvests again projected to be good, food prices are expected to continue having a negative impact on headline inflation.

All month-on-month and quarteron-quarter changes mentioned in the text have been seasonally adjusted using NBS internal models.

² The registered unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted; source: ÚPSVR).



2 THE REAL ECONOMY

2.1 FLASH ESTIMATE OF EURO AREA GDP

According to Eurostat's flash estimate³, **euro area GDP grew in the second quarter of 2016 by 0.3% quarter on quarter,** after increasing by 0.6% in the first quarter. The slowdown in economic activity growth was also evident from short-term indicators. Weaker activity growth in retail trade and declines in activity in manufacturing and construction activity suggest a softening of domestic demand in the euro area economy. Additional information available from national statistical offices points mainly to a positive contribution from net exports.

All but one of the larger national economies in the euro area reported a slowdown in economic activity. The exception was the Netherlands, where growth remained unchanged from the previous quarter (at 0.6%). Growth fell most sharply in France (by 0.7 percentage point) and in Italy (by 0.3 percentage point), with both economies stagnating in the quarter under review. Germany saw its GDP growth fall to 0.4%, but continued have a positive impact on the performance of the euro area economy as a whole. Spain's growth rate remained solid (at 0.7%), albeit slightly more moderate compared with the previous quarter. Slovakia's GDP growth in the second guarter was the highest in the euro area (0.9%), followed by Cyprus (0.7%).

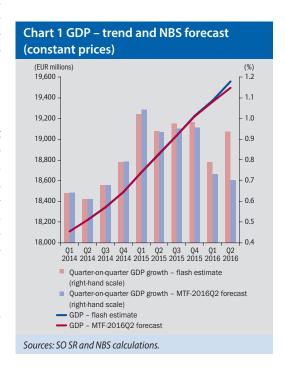
Germany's economic growth in the second quarter **slowed** to 0.4%, from 0.7% in the first quarter. According to preliminary figures, the growth was driven mainly by net exports, as a result of exports increasing and imports falling. Private and public consumptions also contributed positively to GDP growth. On other hand, declines in investment in machinery and equipment and in the construction sector had a negative impact on Germany's economic growth.

In **France**, **GDP remained flat** in the second quarter after increasing by 0.7% in the first quarter. Domestic demand exerted the main drag

on growth, as private consumption stagnated and investment fell (in contrast to its appreciable increase in the previous quarter). Only the government sector, with an unchanged growth rate, contributed positively to domestic demand. Net exports, too, had an upward impact on GDP growth, with imports falling more than exports. Changes in inventories made a negative contribution

2.2 FLASH ESTIMATE OF SLOVAK GDP

Slovakia's GDP **increased in the second quarter of 2016 by 0.9%** quarter on quarter, which was slightly higher than the first quarter rate (0.8%) and close to the strong growth rates recorded in 2015. But whereas the growth in that year was boosted by EU funds, the strongest growth-supporting factor this year is probably exports of goods and services (tourism). The latest quarterly GDP growth was higher than the MTF-2016Q2 projection (0.7%). Annual GDP growth in the second quarter was 3.7% in seasonally unadjusted terms, up from 3.4% in the first quarter.



³ Information on the composition of second-quarter GDP in the euro area and in Slovakia will be released on 6 September 2016.



Although the composition of GDP growth in the second quarter will not be known until September, monthly figures revealed significant export growth. The main drivers of that growth were the car industry and, to a lesser extent, other manufacturing industries. This in turn increased demand for imports of production inputs. Other imports, destined for meeting domestic demand, grew only slightly. A combination of robust exports and somewhat subdued imports ensured that net exports contributed positively to GDP growth.

Domestic demand, too, is expected to have had a positive impact, owing mainly to its consumption component, which in the second quarter was supported not only by the long-standing trends of low inflation, wage growth and rising employment, but also by other factors. The most notable were an acceleration of retail sale growth and an increase in the amount of card payments. There were also the one-off effects that earlier in the year resulted in a moderate increase in household income (including an increase in the minimum wage and rebates on household gas bills). While household consumption did not pick up in the first quarter, it is expected to have done so in the second. At the same time, the slowdown in household deposit growth may imply that households are

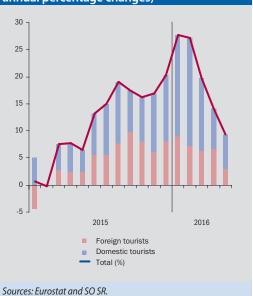
Chart 3 Employment in tourism-related services and number of overnight stays registered by foreigners (annual percentage changes)



Chart 2 GDP and accommodation sales (annual percentage changes, constant



Chart 4 Number of overnight stays in Slovakia (percentage point contributions to annual percentage changes)





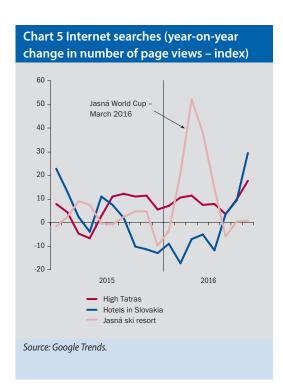
increasingly preferring to spend their labour income gains on goods and services than to save them in deposit accounts. Statistics showing a pick-up in tourism suggest that tourism services could be one area experiencing increased demand from the household sector.

The economy has been benefiting from an increase in tourism in Slovakia since the beginning of the year. Sales in the accommodation sector, after posting their first post-crisis double-digit growth in the first quarter, moderated slightly in the second quarter but remained in double digits. The number of foreign tourists to Slovakia also increased strongly, which was reflected in improved services exports. The pick-up in tourism was largely attributable to domestic tourists (accounting for 61% of the total number of tourists and for 65% of the total number of overnight stays). This may have partly caused the increase in household consumption of services.

The upturn in tourism was already having a positive impact on employment in the accommodation and restaurant industries at the start of the year, and it has since, with a slight lag, contributed to employment growth in the arts, entertainment and recreation industries.

2.3 'SOFT' LEADING INDICATORS

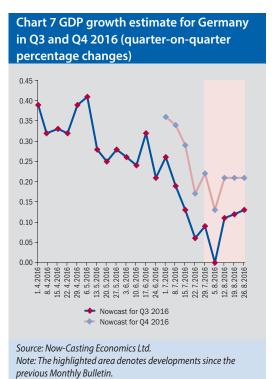
The European Commission's **Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI)** for the euro area deteriorated in August, as did the ESI for Germany. As for the **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** measure of economic activity, the PMI for the euro area remained unchanged in August, while the PMI for Germany fell. The **Ifo Business Climate Index** for Germany continued to decline. Also for Germany, the **ZEW economic sentiment index** rose in August but, after falling sharply in the previous month, remained below its long-run average (24.2).





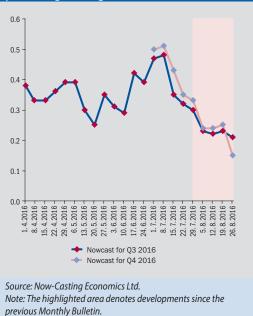












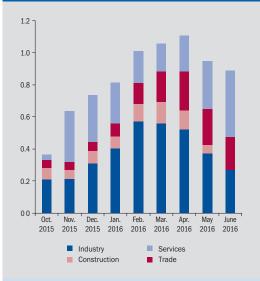
Leading indicators for the euro area imply that, subject to a downward risk, its economic growth will be similar in the third quarter to the second-quarter rate. Germany's economic growth is expected to slow slightly.



3 THE LABOUR MARKET

Employment in the Slovak economy increased in the second quarter of 2016 by 0.6% quarter on quarter, more than projected in the

Chart 10 Employment – sectoral contributions to the three month-on-three month rate of change (moving average; percentage point contributions)

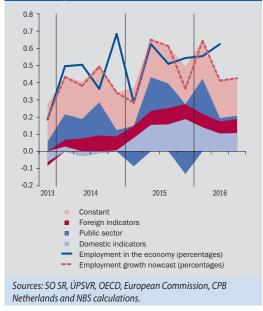


Sources: SO SR and NBS calculations. Note: The contribution of employment in trade and services does not include the impact of a methodological change in January 2016.

Chart 11 Employment according to the ESA 2010 methodology – trend and forecast (percentages)



Chart 12 Indicator contributions to nowcast of quarter-on-quarter employment growth (percentage point contributions; percentages)

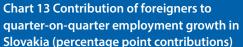


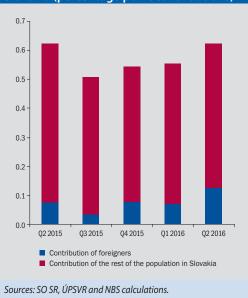
MTF-2016Q2 forecast (0.4%). In year-on-year terms, employment growth was 2.3% in the second quarter, slightly higher than in the first quarter. As for employment developments in the sectors under review, the only details currently available are from monthly data. On that basis, job growth is expected to be slightly weaker in the second quarter than in the first. There may also be an upside risk to the employment forecast in the form of the continuance of job-creating projects, for example in the public sector, for the long-term unemployed, and in other sectors. Such schemes added around 7,000 people to the employment figures in the second quarter⁴.

After two years of solid employment growth, employers are beginning to perceive labour shortages and, as second-quarter data indicate, they are thus seeking to employ foreigners to a greater extent. Nevertheless, the perception of labour shortages persists, and could have an upward impact on wages in the subsequent period.

4 Source: ÚPSVR.



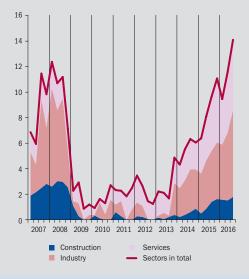




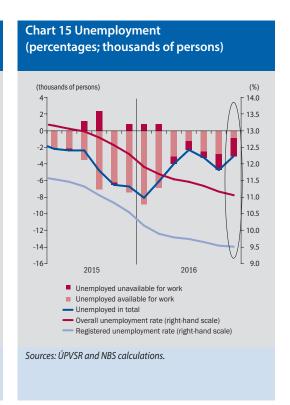
The unemployment figures for July indicate that the favourable labour market trend may continue in the third quarter. The number of unemployed people fell by around 3,100, in seasonally adjusted terms, bringing the unemployment rate down to 11.06%⁵. The decrease in the number of unemployed available for work was moderated by job seekers ending participation in training schemes and in labour activation and voluntary work schemes (this factor is not expected to have a real impact on the quarterly employment and unemployment figures).

Based on current monthly indicators in Slovakia and abroad, employment in the Slovak economy is expected to increase in the third quarter by around 0.4%, more than the rate projected in the MTF-2016Q2 forecast.

Chart 14 Labour shortage in the Slovak economy (percentage of respondents perceiving a shortage)

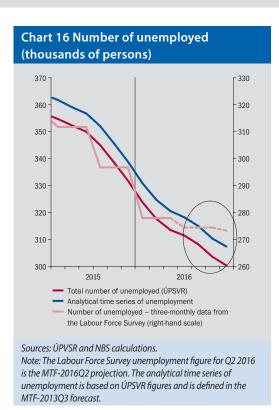


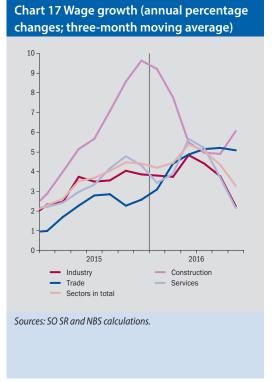
Sources: European Commission, NBS calculations. Note: The time series 'Sectors in total' represents a weighted average of the different sectors based on the level of employment in each of them.



5 In seasonally-unadjusted terms, the registered unemployment rate decreased month-on-month by 0.01 percentage point, to 9.44%, and the unemployment rate based on the total number of job seekers fell by 0.06 percentage point, to 10.96%.

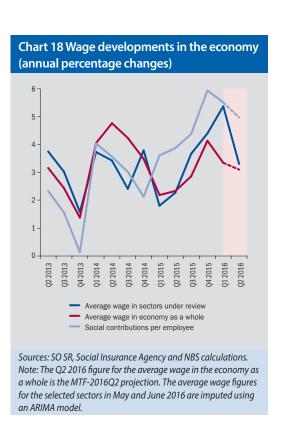






Average annual wage growth across the sectors under review was 3.6% in June, the same as in May. In the second guarter as a whole, wages grew more slowly than they did in the first quarter (5.4%). This was due to the fading of one-off effects that boosted wage growth in the earlier period, namely the calendar effects of Easter falling in March and the leap day. The slowdown was most pronounced in industry and services, while in the trade and construction sectors wage growth remained above 5%. The main supporting element for wage growth is the increase in demand for labour. On the other hand, labour productivity growth is relatively modest and inflation is subdued. An upside risk to the wage growth outlook is the indicator of social contributions per employee, which, despite its current slowdown, suggests that wage growth is stronger than indicated by official statistics. It cannot be ruled out that this higher growth will, with a lag, be reflected in the official figures.

Taking the above risk into account, wage developments in the second quarter are expected to be in line with the MTF-2016Q2 projections.



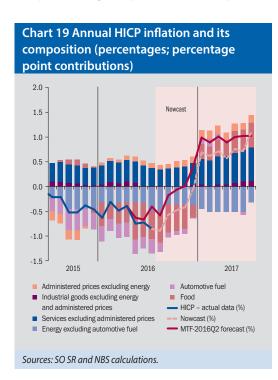


4 PRICES

The annual HICP inflation rate for Slovakia was more negative in July (-0.9%) than in June (-0.7%). In month-on-month terms, the price level fell by 0.4% owing mainly to a reduction in gas prices, a decrease in automotive fuel prices, and a seasonal drop in food prices.

The upward trend in Brent oil prices stalled in July. Following the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union and fundamental reports on oil stocks, oil prices came down. The pass-through to petrol and diesel prices in Slovakia was relatively quick, as they fell in July and consequently undershot the MTF-2016Q2 projection. Gas prices were reduced in July by 4.87%, after the MTF-2016Q2 forecast had assumed they would come down in August. This earlier cut accounted for most of the overall error in the inflation forecast, which will correct in the following month.

An environment of low food commodity prices in global markets is expected to contribute to keeping food price inflation subdued until the



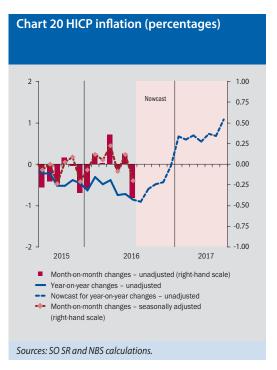


Table 1 HICP components – comparison of projected and actual rates of change (annual percentage changes; percentage point contributions)											
			Non-energy industrial goods	Energy	Food	Services	HICP	Net inflation excluding fuel			
Year-on-year changes		June 2016 – actual figure	0.2	-3.7	-2.8	1.5	-0.7	0.8			
	Α	July 2016 – forecast	0.3	-3.7	-1.6	1.5	-0.4	0.9			
	В	July 2016 – actual figure	0.2	-5.2	-2.2	1.3	-0.9	0.7			
	B-A	July – actual figure minus forecast	-0.1	-1.5	-0.6	-0.2	-0.45	-0.2			
	(B-A) * weight	Contribution to overall forecast error (percentage point) ¹	-0.03	-0.24	-0.14	-0.06	-0.45	-0.09			
Sources: SO SR and NBS calculations. 1) Projections taken from NBS's Medium-Term Forecast (MTF-2016Q2).											

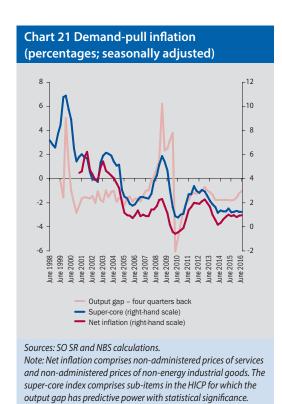


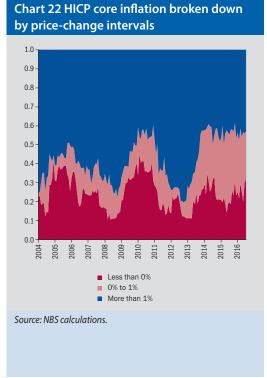
CHAPTER 4

year-end. The USDA⁶ reports that this year's growth in global grain stocks is expected to be higher than previously projected and that global grain harvests should be good.

Low services price inflation and import price inflation are contributing to the muted level of net inflation excluding automotive fuel. Demand-pull inflation is as yet not commensurate with sales growth in the retail and services sectors.

Average annual inflation in 2016 is expected to be negative, reflecting mainly the impact of imported prices. The average headline rate is expected to be slightly more negative than that envisaged in the MTF-2016Q2 forecast. It is assumed that inflation will reach 0% at the turn of next year, before climbing to 0.7% in the first quarter of 2017. Irrespective of external effects, the low inflation environment is expected to persist.



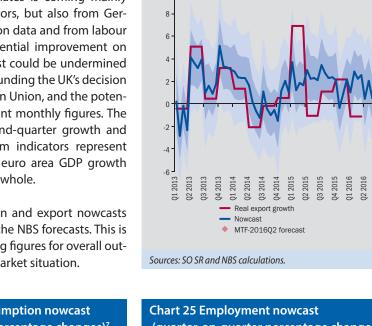




5 Indicative impact on the forecast

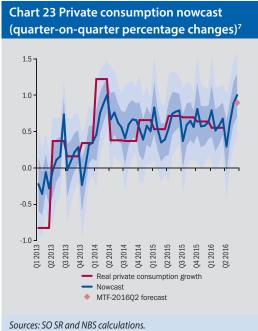
Nowcasts for GDP and employment in the third quarter are pointing to more favourable developments than those projected in NBS's current Medium-Term Forecast (MTF-2016Q2). The upward pressure on estimates is coming mainly from confidence indicators, but also from German industrial production data and from labour market figures. The potential improvement on the third-quarter forecast could be undermined by the uncertainty surrounding the UK's decision to the leave the European Union, and the potential impact on subsequent monthly figures. The euro area's slower second-quarter growth and weakening of short-term indicators represent a downside risk to the euro area GDP growth outlook for the year as a whole.

The private consumption and export nowcasts are slightly higher than the NBS forecasts. This is in line with strengthening figures for overall output and for the labour market situation.



changes)7

10



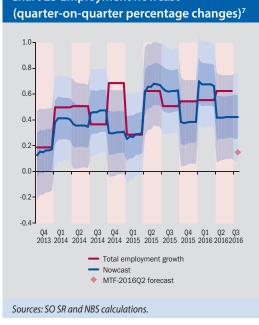


Chart 24 Nowcast for goods and services

exports (quarter-on-quarter percentage

7 The band around the point estimate denotes +/- 1 and 2 times the root mean square error. Nowcasts are calculated using OLS time series models based on selected sets of monthly indicators (for employment, a factor model is used). Nowcasts provide a current estimate of future developments using available monthly figures from the current quarter, their future values forecast with ARIMA models, and their lagged values. The individual model projections are independent of each other and therefore forecastina error in a past quarter cannot affect current projections. Further details are available in the commentaries on the GDP nowcasts, private consumption nowcasts, export nowcasts and employment nowcasts.

CHAPTER 5

Chart 26 Nowcast for GDP growth in Q3 2016 (quarter-on-quarter percentage changes)

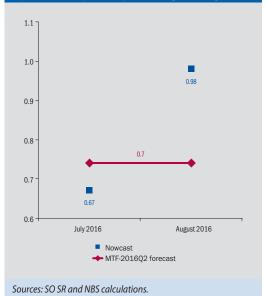
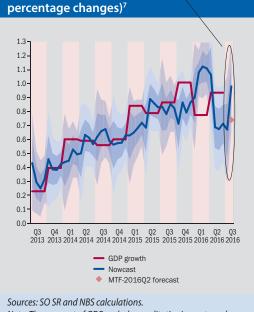


Chart 27 GDP nowcast (quarter-on-quarter



Sources: SO SR and NBS calculations. Note: The nowcast of GDP excludes qualitative impacts and oneoff effects (e.g. EU funds).



Overview of main macroeconomic indicators for Slovakia

Table 2 Selected economic and monetary indicators for Slovakia

(annual percentage changes, unless otherwise indicated)

	Gross domestic product	HICP	Industrial producer prices	Employ- ment ESA	Unem- ployment rate	Industrial production index	Total sales of sec-	Economic Sentiment Indicator	M3 (for analyti- cal use) ²⁾	Loans to non- financial	Loans to house- holds	State budget balance	General govern- ment	General govern- ment	Current account (% of	Balance of trade (% of	USD/EUR exchange rate
				2010			tors ¹⁾	(long-term average=100)		corpora- tions		(EUR mil.)	balance (% of GDP)	gross debt (% of GDP)	GDP)	GDP)	for the period)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2008	5.7	3.9	6.1	3.2	9.6	2.9	-	99.3	4.9	15.3	25.3	-704.0	-2.3	28.2	-6.2	-1.8	1.4708
2009	-5.5	0.9	-2.6	-2.0	12.1	-15.5	-16.6	77.3	-2.8	-3.3	11.0	-2,791.3	-7.9	36.0	-3.5	0.4	1.3948
2010	5.1	0.7	-2.7	-1.5	14.4	8.2	8.2	98.7	7.8	1.6	12.5	-4,436.1	-7.5	40.8	-4.7	-0.1	1.3257
2011	2.8	4.1	2.7	1.8	13.6	5.2	6.2	98.8	2.9	7.6	11.1	-3,275.7	-4.1	43.3	-5.0	-0.1	1.3920
2012	1.5	3.7	3.9	0.1	14.0	8.0	4.4	94.0	8.8	-2.3	10.3	-3,810.7	-4.3	52.4	0.9	3.5	1.2848
2013	1.4	1.5	-0.1	-0.8	14.2	3.8	1.7	90.4	6.4	1.7	10.2	-2,023.3	-2.7	55.0	2.0	4.1	1.3281
2014	2.5	-0.1	-3.5	1.4	13.2	8.6	2.5	100.4	2.5	1.2	13.1	-2,923.4	-2.7	53.9	0.1	3.8	1.3285
2015	3.6	-0.3	-4.2	2.0	11.5	7.0	7.4	99.7	11.5	6.8	13.0	-1,932.6	-3.0	52.9	-1.3	2.4	1.1095
2015 Q3	3.7	-0.3	-4.5	2.2	11.3	6.0	9.8	98.0	10.4	2.6	13.5	-	-1.6	53.9	-3.8	0.8	1.1117
2015 Q4	4.3	-0.5	-4.8	2.0	11.0	5.0	8.5	99.0	11.5	6.8	13.0	-	-5.2	52.9	-1.1	0.8	1.0953
2016 Q1	3.4	-0.5	-5.3	2.2	10.4	2.1	6.1	102.6	10.1	3.1	12.8	-	-1.9	52.2	-0.8	4.2	1.1020
2016 Q2	3.73)	-0.6	-5.2	2.33)		5.1	7.0	98.7	9.7	0.7	13.4	-					1.1292
2015 Aug.	-	-0.2	-4.1	-	11.3	-0.3	0.7	99.9	9.2	0.8	13.6	105.8	-	-	-	-	1.1139
2015 Sep.	-	-0.5	-5.2	-	11.4	7.1	10.8	98.3	10.4	2.6	13.5	-96.0	-	-	-	-	1.1221
2015 Oct.	-	-0.5	-5.0	-	11.0	1.1	4.8	104.0	10.2	2.9	13.3	-29.1	-	-	-	-	1.1235
2015 Nov.	-	-0.4	-5.0	-	10.8	8.2	11.3	96.8	10.4	5.1	13.5	24.1	-	-	-	-	1.0736
2015 Dec.	-	-0.5	-4.5	-	10.6	6.0	9.0	96.3	11.5	6.8	13.0	-751.2	-	-	-	-	1.0877
2016 Jan.	-	-0.6	-5.2	-	10.4	1.7	2.2	102.5	11.3	4.4	12.9	8.6	-	-	-	-	1.0860
2016 Feb.	-	-0.3	-4.7	-	10.1	7.0	3.8	102.6	10.5	2.8	12.6	-842.7	-	-	-	-	1.1093
2016 Mar.	-	-0.5	-5.9	-	9.9	-1.9	5.0	102.8	10.1	3.1	12.8	-44.8	-	-	-	-	1.1100
2016 Apr.	-	-0.4	-5.6	-	9.6	7.7	12.2	99.6	10.9	3.3	12.9	232.8	-	-	-	-	1.1339
2016 May	-	-0.7	-5.6	-	9.5	5.7	8.5	98.0	10.8	1.5	13.3	-465.4	-	-	-	-	1.1311
2016 June	-	-0.7	-4.5	-	9.5	2.2	4.3	98.6	9.7	0.7	13.4	375.1	-	-	-	-	1.1229
2016 July	-	-0.9		-	9.4			103.9				112.2	-	-	-	-	1.1069
2016 Aug.	-			-				99.9					-	-	-	-	

Sources: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, MF SR, the European Commission and NBS.

More detailed time series for selected macroeconomic indicators http://www.nbs.sk/_img/Documents/_MonthlyBulletin/2016/StatisticsMB0816.xls

¹⁾ Constant prices (seasonally adjusted).

²⁾ Currency in circulation in M3 refers to money held by the public (according to methodology in place prior to 2008).

³⁾ Flash estimate of the SO SR.