Children in conflict with the law in Slovakia

Three distinct pathways — with different legal bases and safeguards

PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

(8 facilities)

Juveniles accused of offences.

Presumption of innocence.

Restrictions must be individually justified.

AFTER CONVICTION

(1 specialised institution for sentenced juveniles — Sučany (24 designated juvenile places

Juveniles serving custodial sentences.

Education, rehabilitation and preparation for release are central.

*14y age of criminal liability

OTHER SETTINGS

Re-education and protective education may overlap with offending behaviour — but are not automatically criminal detention.

Monitoring responsibilities: Public Defender of Rights and Commissioner for Children

What preventive monitoring has revealed

Facility-specific findings — not a national prevalence estimate

KOŠICE Remand prison - 2024

Interviews with juveniles raised allegations of physical and verbal violence and fears of retaliation.

- Targeting mainly juveniles from specific ethnic group

The NPM sought corrective and preventive actions

- GP informed
- Follow up in 2025 and 2026 – correction, dedicated specialized staff for juveniles

Other remand prisons 2025-2026

Monitoring examined meaningful daily activities, mental-health support and whether children could use complaints mechanisms with confidence.

- No other allegations of physical violence
- Lack of specialized and meaningful activities
- Placement with adults possible (consent required)!
- Standard and moderate regime also apply to juveniles
- Prison staff declared challenging work with juveniles (verbal conflicts among inmates, lack of interest and motivation)

Key question: are safeguards effective in the daily reality of remand?

Imprisonment must support rehabilitation

The aims of a custodial sentence cannot be reduced to security and control

EDUCATION

Access to schooling, vocational learning and meaningful daily activities.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Psychological care, individual sentence planning and age-sensitive treatment.

REINTEGRATION

Family contact, preparation for release and continuity of community support.

Sučany: specialised juvenile custodial capacity; institutional information is not an NPM assessment.

Re-education centres: a different legal pathway

Not every child placed in a re-education centre is in conflict with criminal law

LEGAL DISTINCTION

Placement can follow educational, child-protection or court-ordered measures.

The legal basis must be assessed for each child.

COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN

Monitoring has raised issues of children's participation in individual plans and continuity of support after placement (e.g. Levoča and Čerenčany).

Preventive focus: restrictions on liberty, participation, independent oversight and review.

Restorative justice and alternatives to detention

National project: “Restorative and Alternative Justice for Everyone”

ALTERNATIVES

Develop probation, restorative interventions and community-based responses where appropriate.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Encourage responsibility for harm, rehabilitation and restorative approaches, including mediation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strengthen specialist probation and mediation capacity and structured programmes.

Protecting children also means preventing unnecessary deprivation of liberty.