

Inter-country adoption - Slovakia



Hague Adoption Convention Country? YES

Child Profile

- Children who are adoptable upon the court's decision.
- Children where it was not possible to find a suitable non-institutional solution in Slovakia at least for 6 months.
- In majority children are mainly from 1 year of the age (most of them are about 4-5 years old), mostly Roma ethnic. The children in general are healthy; they usually have delays in psychomotor development or a little health complication.
- Around 30% of these children are children with special needs. As children with special needs we consider all children with some handicap or other health problems (mostly ADHD, FAS), children older than 6 years and larger groups of siblings (3 or more children).

Waiting time for a match

- The length of the process from the view of PAP's is very individual as children are not assigned to the PAP's in order in which their application is received, but parents are always chosen for the specific child, as considered in the Commission.
- This means that some of the PAP's can receive a proposal within a few months, some of them in 3-4 years. In general, the approximate waiting period is 2 years.
- In general, it depends on the limitations of a married couple. If the expectations on the child are brighter there is a chance that the couple is considered in accordance to more children. (Example: when PAP's are able to accept only a girl in the age only up to 2 years without special needs, they are considered in much less matching procedures than PAP's who are able to accept a child up to 5 years eventually with slight psychomotor delays).

Prospective Adoptive Parent Profile

- Married heterosexual couples or occasionally single PAP if it is in the best interest of the child.
- There is no age limitation. However, the age difference between the child and the PAP's has to be appropriate.

Process

1. Attend an adoptions preparatory course organised by an accredited adoptions agency.
2. Compile the Home Study Report together with the social worker. Attend a psychological assessment carried out by a competent psychologist.

3. Apply with the Maltese Central Authority and Adoptions Board to be found eligible to adopt. The following **original** documentation shall be prepared and transmitted to the Adoptions Board:

- Birth certificate of the wife
- Birth certificate of the husband
- Marriage certificate of the couple
- Police detailed and basic certificate of the wife
- Police detailed and basic certificate of the husband (and other relatives living with the family)
- Medical certificates of the wife, husband and any relatives living in the household including tests for HIV, Hepatitis and Tuberculosis
- FS3 wife
- FS3 husband
- Photos/welcome book
- Home study report
- Psychological reports

The PAPs shall also confirm with the Agency their intention to adopt from Slovakia, the number of siblings they would like to adopt and if they are considering adopting special needs children.

4. Once the couple is approved by the Adoptions Board the secretary will inform the Agency with the decision of the board. The Adoptions Board shall also prepare the necessary CA documents. The secretary will then contact the Agency to pick up the CA documents, the board's approval and the original documents listed above who will then forward to the PAPs.

5. Preparation of the dossier with all the information as described below.

- Birth certificate of the wife
- Birth certificate of the husband
- Marriage certificate of the couple
- Police detailed and basic certificate of the wife, dated no earlier than 3 months
- Police detailed and basic certificate of the husband (and other relatives living with the family), dated no earlier than 3 months
- Medical certificates of the wife, husband and any relatives living in the household including tests for HIV, Hepatitis and Tuberculosis, dated no earlier than 3 months
- Statements of employers of the applicants regarding their annual income
- Extracts from the tax register
- Photographs, video and sound recording on DVD of the applicants and their family environment, made no earlier than 6 months
- Copies of the applicants' passports
- A comprehensive and up-to-date home study report drawn up by the accredited body, dated no earlier than 6 months
- The decision pursuant to Article 15 of the Convention, where the department states that the applicants are suitable to adopt a child from abroad
- Completed and signed questionnaire for applicants for adoption of a child from the Slovak Republic
- Form signed by the applicants giving their consent to the processing of their personal data for the purpose of mediation of inter-country adoption, including the drafting of pre-adoptive and post-adoptive reports.

- Declaration of designated body of receiving state of designated social welfare office responsible for delivering pre-adoptive and post-adoptive reports.
6. Translate the entire dossier into Slovakian. NB: Only licensed translators can be used for this task.
 7. Translated dossier will be transferred to CA Slovakia to initiate the matching process.
 8. Matching procedure includes 3 steps:
 - I. Pre-selection by the team of specialist from a children's home, from an office of labour, social affairs and family, and from the Central authority.
 - II. Petition on the first, second and third best suitable PAP's by the "Commission for the inter-country adoptions" (5 persons, internal and external – lawyer, psychologist, judicial expert, expert from the NGO , expert from the central social services)
 - III. Confirmation of the petition by the director of the Central authority.
 9. The first best suitable PAP's receives proposal on the child with the whole dossier of information (medical, social, psychological reports, DVD, pictures). If they do not agree, the second best suitable PAP's receives the proposal, if the second best suitable PAP's do not agree, the third PAP's will receive the proposal.
 10. INTERACTION (meeting in person with the child)

A date is set up at the beginning of the interaction only after Slovakia CA receives the date of the court hearing = the interaction begins 2 or 3 weeks before the court hearing (depending on the age of the child). After the court hearing, the PAP's can usually leave Slovakia with the child, the court decision and passports just few days after the court hearing and issuance of all necessary documents. This means that the PAP's stay in Slovakia could be cca 1 month.
 11. Organization of the interaction is up to the children's home and is always individual – it depends on how the child reacts. The PAP's meet the child for the first time in the children's home. Usually, next days, they spend time together in children's home or they organize some program out of the children's home together with translator and psychologist if needed (ZOO, trip, playground...) After few days, when everything goes well, they can take care of the child in the rented apartment and the social workers come to visit them to check if everything goes well. The translator and also the social workers are ready to help if needed. Sometimes children's home decides that the child can stay with the PAP's from the first day, but this is not usual. It is up to the children's home, if the PAP's and professional parents meet in person or not. Sometimes it is in best interest of the child and the Professional parent can significantly help to adapt on PAP's and accept the PAP's positively.
 12. COSTS

the Centre offers legal assistance free of charge;
the offices of labour, social affairs and family and children's homes provide social consultation services free of charge;

court proceedings in inter-country adoption matters are free of the court fees.
The PAP's shall pay for accommodation, lawyer and translator.

13. ACCOMODATION

The PAP's rent an apartment or some suitable premises in the distance of max 30-40 kilometers from the children's home for the duration of the interaction or their stay in Slovakia.

14. LAWYER

The PAP's have to hire a lawyer from a list provided by Agenzija Tama who in turn would have received it from the Slovak authority who will be entrusted by them to file a petition on the court. These lawyers form part of the Slovak Bar Association which manages the list of lawyers who specialize in family law.

15. TRANSLATOR

The couple needs to hire a translator, who will be available during the interaction.

16. COURT HEARING AND DECISION

1. After the successful interaction, the competent Slovak court decides that the child is entrusted to the pre-adoptive care of the PAP's. They are obliged to take care of the child in person (in the receiving country) and decide for him/her in common issues.

2. After at least 9 months of pre-adoptive care the PAP's can decide, if they are willing to file petition for the final decision on the competent court in Slovakia or competent court in receiving country.

17. PASSPORT

The children's home organizes the issuance of the child's passport and the PAP's will receive it together with the other documents (health insurance card etc.) after the court decision on the pre-adoptive care before they leave Slovakia.