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*Participatory Budgeting – the Case of the Slovak Republic*

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the issue of participatory budgeting as one of the newer tools of political participation. Its aim is to characterise the current situation in the Slovak Republic at two levels of territorial self-administration (self-governing regions and municipalities). To reach defined aims, it monitors the existence of legislative settings at the national level, the existence of individual settings at the observed levels and subsequently the practical application of the participatory budgeting itself. Procedures associated with the study of documents are used in article; the obtained data are summarized, described and compared mutually. In addition to laws and regulations issued by self-government units, the source of data is also the regional and local self-government units' official websites. In the absence of one universal definition of the participatory budgeting rules at the national level, the findings have shown that there are relatively extensive conditions for implementing participatory budgeting with its specific settings defined by self-administrations. In Slovakia, participatory budgeting is only gradually introduced into the internal rules, which reflects a relatively small number of municipalities or self-governing regions, which ultimately use it effectively.

**Key words:** participatory budgeting, political participation, Slovakia, self-governing regions, municipalities

## INTRODUCTION

Political participation currently takes an essential place in democratic societies. Without its existence, the conditions would not be created to legitimize the exercise of the political power of the people's representatives, which is ensured by the election, and at the same time, the decisions made would not be the result of the will of the people and responsive to the specific demands of the population. As noted by Pippa Norris [2002: 5], a large group of theorists believes that "mass participation is the lifeblood of representative democracy". However, political participation is not only about participation in elections, but there are other tools through which it is possible to participate in decision-making processes. There are several scholars in this field dealing with this topic in their publications [see: Van Deth 2001; Sekerák 2017; Bardovič 2015]. This article focuses on a relatively new tool of political participation, which is gradually getting into the consciousness of people (not only in Slovakia), in particular – the participatory budgeting. Its definition can be found, for example, in the World Bank publication as follows: "participatory budgeting represents a direct-democracy approach to budgeting. It offers citizens at large an opportunity to learn about government operations and to deliberate, debate, and influence the allocation of public resources. It is a tool for educating, engaging, and empowering citizens and strengthening demand for good governance" [Shaw 2007: 1].

As we can find in many other studies and publications [Santos 1998; Dias 2014; Minarik 2020], the first attempts to use a participatory budget date back to the 1980s, in the Latin American environment. The city of Porto Alegre was the first (in 1989) to try to involve its inhabitants in deciding on the part of its budget. Subsequently, this idea moved to other parts of the world. In Central Europe (including Slovakia), its implementation began with some delay. As a result, for example, in the case of the Slovak Republic, participatory budgeting appeared for the first time only in 2011. Despite its short application within Slovak self-governments, there are several studies [e.g. Gašpariková 2015; Džinić, Murray Svidroňová, Markowska-Bzducha 2016; Klimovský 2017], monitoring it concerning various attributes.

The aim of this paper is to characterize the legislative framework associated with the existence of a participatory budget in the Slovak Republic, to identify selected specifics of the settings of participatory budgets within two levels of territorial self-administration and to illustrate its functioning in specific cities and self-governing regions. In this context, the research questions are defined: What legislation exists in connection with Slovakia's participatory budget? To what extent do local governments use the participatory budget? Are there differences between individual self-governments concerning defined criteria? To achieve the aims and answer the research questions, the relevant legislation at the national level and individual rules approved by municipalities and self-governing regions are observed within this paper. Besides, data are collected from local and regional governments' official websites to identify those that use the participatory budget themselves. We focus on eight

self-governing regions, eight regional cities, city districts in the capital of Bratislava and Košice and other municipalities with city status. Mentioned self-government units are also objects in the used comparative method. The situation during 2019 is monitored in this study. Subsequently, a comparison is made, reflecting the division of the examined objects into these main categories: self-governing regions, regional cities, Bratislava and Košice city districts, other cities. This comparison aims to identify differences concerning the following criteria: implementation of participatory budgeting, total amount, maximum project amount, number of accepted projects, year of first implementation (self-governing regions); implementation of participatory budgeting, website with information on participatory budgeting, total amount, maximum project amount, number of accepted projects, year of first implementation (regional cities); number of city districts and number of city districts with participatory budgeting (Bratislava and Košice city districts); website with information on participatory budgeting, total amount, maximum project amount, number of accepted projects (other cities). Besides, the Trenčín self-governing region is monitored separately due to its most comprehensive implementation of the participatory budget at this level. Differences in its implementation concerning individual self-governing regions are also observed for cities.

#### LEGISLATIVE BASIS

The conditions for the formation of territorial self-administration in the Slovak Republic were created after 1989 when the option for the beginning of democratization of society was opened. As pointed out by Martin Švikruha [2018: 192–193], in the previous totalitarian system, the organization of administration at the various levels of the state was built on the existence of a system of national committees. However, it was not possible to talk about the application of “self-government” in this particular case. It was not until the early 1990s that this period was associated with the formation of the first level of territorial self-administration, namely communal self-government. As a result, the state’s decentralization has begun with the formation of directly elected bodies at this level, which subsequently decided about territorial development within the limits set out in the Slovak legislation. Voters were able to vote their representatives for the first time in 1990 in municipalities. The second level in the form of self-governing regions was subsequently added to the existing system only in 2001.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, the first elections to their bodies were held as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Discussion about the form of the regional level has been ongoing for longer period, with several possible models. The resulting decision on the existence of 8 self-governing regions can be described in some respects as rather political [for the presented models of the organization of territorial self-administration at the regional level, see Machyniak 2018: 27–35].

The basic framework of the existence and functioning of self-governing regions and communal self-government in the case of the Slovak Republic is defined in the fourth chapter of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic [Act. No. 460/1992 Coll.]. Article 64 of the Constitution explicitly states: “The basis element of territorial self-administration is the municipality. Territorial self-administration consists of a municipality and a self-governing region”. Based on this statement, it can be stated that the two-level principle applies here, and their mutual relationship is not based on the principle of “superiority and inferiority”. The specific functioning is subsequently regulated by several other laws while differentiating whether they are self-governing regions or municipalities. In the case of self-governing regions, Act No. 302/2001 Coll. on the Self-government of Upper-tier Territorial Units (The Act on Self-Governing Regions) as amended can be identified as the principal. In the case of municipalities, we can then mention Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on the Municipal System as amended. Two cities have a specific position, more specifically the capital of Bratislava and the city of Košice. Additional separate laws regulate their functioning. Bratislava is affected by Act No. 377/1990 Coll. on the Capital of the Slovak Republic Bratislava, and in case of Košice, it is Act No. 401/1990 Coll. about Košice. These cities also differ from the others as they consist of city districts that represent another level of territorial self-administration with directly elected authorities. As a result, the residents of these two cities elect their representatives (except of the national authorities) to the bodies of city district, city and self-governing region.

As mentioned above, the essential tool of the political participation within the territorial self-administration in Slovakia is the participation in elections held at regular intervals every four years.<sup>2</sup> These elections are regulated by one common Act No. 180/2014 Coll. on the conditions for the exercise of the right to vote, which complements Act No. 181/2014 Coll. on the Election Campaign and on the amendment of Act No. 85/2005 Coll. on political parties and political movements, as amended since 2014.

Residents of territorial self-administration also have other options outside the elections, regarding the way in which they can participate in decision-making processes or influence them in certain way. It is appropriate to emphasize that the Slovak legislation regulating the functioning of territorial self-administration (we mean: Act No. 369/1990 Coll. and Act No. 302/2001 Coll.) does not directly recognize the term “participation” (and thus also “political participation”, “civic participation” and other similar terms). Despite this terminological absence, we can identify several tools. Directly in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic [Act. No. 460/1992 Coll.],

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<sup>2</sup> An exception to the length of their term of office is the election in 2017, which elected deputies and presidents of self-governing regions for a 5-year period [Act. No. 44/2017 Coll.]. This one-off extension of office by one year was supposed to create conditions for joining elections to bodies for both levels of territorial self-administration. As a result, in 2022, voters should decide on their representatives for self-governing regions, as well as communal self-government with a term of office again in both cases for 4 years.

the right to participate in the assembly of the inhabitants of the municipality, the right to vote representative bodies and the referendum for both levels of territorial self-administration are established. Besides, a resident of a self-governing region has the right, for example, to attend council meetings as well as to contact one of his representatives in council or other representatives of the region with his suggestions and complaints [Act. No. 302/2001 Coll.]. In the case of municipalities, tools such as participation in council meetings, submitting the suggestions as well as complaints to the competent authorities of the municipality [Act. No. 369/1990 Coll.] are added to the rights defined by the Constitution. However, it is not an overall summary of how a resident can participate in their functioning. Several tools are based on other national legislation, such as initiating or signing a petition, organizing protests and demonstrations, participating in the creation of strategic documents, participating in committees, etc. Also, territorial self-administration units themselves have the conditions to create rules within their internal regulations for the participation of citizens (or residents) in a specific form or with a specific focus. An example of this is participatory budgeting, the existence of which is not defined by national legislation. As a result, the decision to implement it as well as how the process will look like and what part of its budget will be allocated to it is entirely within the competence of a particular municipality or self-governing region.

The participatory budget is a relatively new phenomenon in the Slovak Republic. It appears for the first time in 2011 in the capital of Bratislava, but it has gradually expanded to other locations and also to self-governing regions, which we will discuss in the next sections of this paper.

#### BUDGET CONDITIONALITY

An important element related to the existence of territorial self-administration is the issue of funding and ultimately, the rules and principles of its financial management. Under the Constitution, self-governing regions, as well as municipalities, are “legal persons who, under the conditions laid down by law, manage their property and their financial resources” [Act. No. 460/1992 Coll.]. The current configuration in this area is the result of a longer-term process. Fiscal decentralization played an important role in this process. Its implementation can be divided into two phases. The first phase, which took place in 2001–2004, addressed the issue of the “expenditure sphere” of local and regional authorities. In the following second phase after 2005, the focus was paid to the area of the “income sphere” [more on the funding of territorial self-administration as well as its financial dependence, see Horváth, Cibík, Švikruha 2018].

According to Act No. 369/1990 Coll. and Act No. 302/2001 Coll., “the basis of their financial management is the budget, which is prepared for one calendar year”. Specific compilation rules are regulated by other laws, such as Act No. 583/2004 Coll. on budgetary rules of territorial self-government, Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on

budgetary rules of public administration, Constitutional Act No. 493/2011 Coll. on budgetary responsibility, etc.

An important fact about application of participatory budget is that Slovak legislation does not explicitly define its existence (whether mandatory or optional) at the national level and hence neither the basic rules nor even the proposed model within which it should operate. As a result, the decision on its use, as well as the definition of specific rules, remains with the bodies of the relevant self-government (within the limits defined for budgeting and handling the funds of the local self-government). Considering the currently applied participatory budget settings, we can identify several differences. These are reflected in the following aspects: the length of the process itself (from the whole process in one year to a two-year cycle), what the thematic focus of the projects can be (e.g. only one thematic focus – such as environmental themes or more thematic focuses – from social themes through cultural, sports, enhancement of common areas, etc.), who and how can submit projects, how many types of projects can be implemented (from the existence of only one type to the existence of one “small” task and one “large” task), what funds can be given out for these projects, i.e. what is the total amount defined for participatory budgeting, or who can vote (the differences include, for example: defined minimum age of participant; obligation of permanent or temporary residence; whether the setting allows students to participate; whether there is only electronic voting, personal voting or combination of both alternatives, that could also be supported by deliberation) and the weight of the individual parts of the vote.

#### PARTICIPATORY BUDGET IN PRACTICE (THE SLOVAK CASE)

As mentioned above, under the conditions of the Slovak Republic, the participatory budget is only gradually becoming more widely known. Primacy in this area belongs to the capital and one of its city district, Bratislava-Nové Mesto. In the following text of the article, we focus on both levels of territorial self-government; first of all, we will introduce the application of participatory budget in self-governing regions, then in regional cities and in the cases of Bratislava and Košice, also their city districts. Finally, we will summarize the same aspect for other cities (i.e. municipalities with status of a town).

Currently, the participatory budget is used in four out of eight self-governing regions, specifically, in the Bratislava Region, Trnava Region, Trenčín Region and Žilina Region. In 2017, the Trenčín Region was the first to allow its residents to decide on the part of the budget spent at this level of territorial self-administration. In the following year, the Bratislava Region joined it. In 2019, with its first version of the participatory budget, the Trnava Region and Žilina Region joined, too. To date, exactly half of the self-governing regions do not apply it, namely the Nitra Region, Banská Bystrica Region, Košice Region and Prešov Region.

As we can find in Table 1, among the four self-governing regions that decided to use the participatory budget for 2019, the most significant amount was spent by the Bratislava Region (EUR 255,880). A slightly lower amount of EUR 250,000 was planned for this purpose by the Trnava Region, followed by the Trenčín Region, with total amount of EUR 200,000. The smallest amount was reserved for participatory budget by the Žilina Region – EUR 140,000. In all four cases, the self-governing region has determined the maximum amount that can be spent per project. The amount ranged from EUR 2,200 in the Trenčín Region to EUR 5,000 in the Trnava Region. The common characteristic of all four participatory budgets is that the self-government regions did not set rules for the whole territory, but the actual design and voting took place according to individual districts in regions. With this setting, the regions partially eliminated their “size” and hence the issue of “distance” of the project. However, we believe that when applying a participatory budget at the regional level, even when structured concerning districts, the question arises as to how it can be “sensitive” to the needs of even the smallest parts of regions and districts in them if there are involved the larger group of people in the decision-making process.

Table 1. Self-governing regions and participatory budget for 2019

Self-governing region	Population	2019				Year of implementation
		PB	Total amount	Maximum project amount	No. of accepted projects	
Bratislava	659,598	✓	EUR 255,880	EUR 3,500	81	2018
Trnava	563,591	✓	EUR 250,000	EUR 5,000	56	2019
Nitra	676,672			X		
Trenčín	585,882	✓	EUR 200,000	EUR 2,200	78	2017
Žilina	691,368	✓	EUR 140,000	EUR 3,100	38	2019
Banská Bystrica	647,874			X		
Prešov	825,022			X		
Košice	800,414			X		

PB – participatory budget

Source: Authors' own study, based on the official websites of self-governing regions, their official documents and Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Given the relatively most extended history (compared to other self-governing regions) of the implementation of the participatory budget in the Trenčín self-governing region, Table 2 shows the basic parameters of its setting in the form of funds spent and subsequently the total number of supported projects since 2017 when it was applied for the first time. As we can see, the total amount has doubled since the initial introduction, from the original EUR 99,000 to EUR 200,000 in 2019. The number of supported projects has also increased. For example, in 2018, the Trenčín Region initially supported 41 projects. However, they were added by 18 other projects



because of their “uniqueness” and “originality”. On the contrary, this year’s increased budget created conditions for all 78 submitted projects to be implemented with the support of the self-governing region.

Table 2. Participatory budget in the Trenčín self-governing region since 2017

	2017	2018	2019
Total amount for participatory budget	EUR 99,000	EUR 124,000	EUR 200,000
No. of supported projects	28	41 + 18	78

Source: Authors’ own study, based on the official websites of self-governing region and its official documents.

The next part of the article is devoted to the municipal level, specifically the local governments, with the status of the city or town. There are currently 140 of them in Slovakia. Table 3 shows the current state of affairs related to participatory budget and its use in eight regional cities. Even this case shows a similar score as in self-governing regions, half of the regional cities use the participatory budget and the other half does not. We cannot say that a citizen who has the opportunity to participate in a part of the participatory budget of a self-governing region also has such a possibility in the regional city. At the same time, only residents of Bratislava and Trnava can participate in the participatory budget at both levels of self-government. On the contrary, the inhabitants of eastern Slovak towns (Košice and Prešov) are not allowed to participate in the creation of part of the participatory budget either within the city or within the self-governing region. The other regional cities where the participatory budget is still applied are towns of Nitra and Banská Bystrica.

For the longest period, the participatory budget has been implemented in the capital city of Bratislava since 2011. However, city representatives have chosen a different name. Since 2014, they have used the term “civic budget” [see more: Horváth, Machyniak 2018].<sup>3</sup> Participatory budget was also introduced by the second regional city (Banská Bystrica) in 2014, followed by Trnava in 2016 and Nitra in 2018.

In these regional cities, there can be found several specific settings for participatory budgeting. The most significant difference is identified in Trnava, which distinguishes two types of civic ideas for implementation, projects with a maximum budget of up to EUR 5,000 and investment assignments, where a budget of up to EUR 50,000 can be planned. The planned amount, which has been set up for this

<sup>3</sup> We believe that the use of the term “civic budget” at both levels of territorial self-administration in the case of the Slovak Republic opens the space for discussion whether it is a suitably chosen term. We assume that the Slovak legislation does not operate with the term “citizen of the municipality” but “the inhabitant of the municipality”. The principle of citizenship is thus used only for disposing of certain political rights with regard to the national level – for example, elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the President of the Slovak Republic and so on. Thus, in such a setting, the designation “civic budget” may evoke the exclusion of a certain group, which in fact has the right to participate in its formation. Therefore, we consider the term “participatory budget”, or its equivalents avoiding referring to “citizenship” (for example, community budget) more appropriate in this case.



purpose, also derives from the mentioned selection based on two categories (EUR 50,000 for projects and EUR 150,000 for investment assignments). The total amount for participatory budgeting in Trnava is EUR 200,000. Other cities are considering much lower amounts. For example, Nitra has defined the amount of EUR 80,000, Bratislava declared EUR 50,000 and Banská Bystrica – EUR 40,000.

In some of the mentioned cities, the important element is to set up a separate website dedicated to this issue which provides residents with crucial information about what this tool of political participation means, how individuals or groups can participate if they want to improve their surroundings, and how they can decide and vote on submitted projects. Despite this, however, the question is whether these cities are sufficiently engaged in promoting the participatory budget. For example, in Trnava, which had 54,375 registered voters (i.e. residents aged 18 and above) for election held in 2018 [*Definitívne výsledky hlasovania 2018*], a total of 2,041 people voted in two possible forms (traditional voting – 1,115 and via an online form – 926 people) [*V hlasovaní Participatívneho rozpočtu pre Trnavu 2019 bodovalo trinásť projektov občanov 2019*]. However, it should be noted that the group of voters is incomplete since the statute also allows persons under the age of 18 to participate in it, and in particular cases it is lowered to 15 [*Pravidlá Participatívneho rozpočtu pre Trnavu 2018*].

Table 3. Regional cities and participatory budget

City	2019					Year of implementation
	Implementation	Website containing information on PB	Total amount	Maximum project amount	No. of accepted projects	
Bratislava	✓	X	EUR 50,000	Not defined in rules	6	2011
Trnava	✓	✓ / pr.trnava.sk	EUR 50,000 + EUR 150,000*	EUR 5,000 / project EUR 50,000 / investment assignments	13**	2016
Nitra	✓	✓ / mmm2019. hlasobcanov.sk	EUR 80,000	EUR 4,000	21	2018
Trenčín	X					
Žilina	X					
Banská Bystrica	✓	✓ / pr.banskabystrica. sk***	EUR 40,000	Not defined in rules	4 + 1****	2014
Prešov	X					
Košice	X					

\* EUR 50,000 earmarked for projects and EUR 150,000 for investment assignments

\*\* 13 projects (results on investment assignments not currently reported)

\*\*\* redirect to the utopia.sk webpage

\*\*\*\* "+1" refers to a project whose implementation would mean exceeding the budget. There is no definitive procedure for resolving the situation arisen.

Source: Authors' own study, based on the official websites of regional cities and their official documents.

Two regional cities from the above are made up of city districts, namely the capital city of Bratislava and the city of Košice. The existence of an additional level of territorial self-administration within them creates the conditions for the individual implementation of participatory budgeting relatively independently of the approach taken by the city itself. As a result, it is used in 6 (out of 17) city districts in Bratislava, and in 2013–2015, it was also used in the largest city district – Petržalka. On the contrary, the absence of a participatory budget at the level of the self-governing region and also of the city was probably reflected in the level of Košice city districts. Currently, participatory budget is not used in any of the 22 of the city districts of Košice. One of them is currently promoting its implementation shortly. It is a district of Košice-Západ. Under the approved rules, it defines two forms of projects: “small” with a maximum funding of EUR 1,699.99 and “large” with a maximum subsidy of EUR 10,000 [*Pravidlá participatívneho rozpočtu mestskej časti Košice-Západ* 2019] (Table 4).

Table 4. Participatory budget in Bratislava and Košice city districts

	No. of city districts	No. of city districts with PB
Bratislava	17	5 + 1* + 1**
Košice	22	0 + 1***

\* in 2013–2015, it was also applied in the Petržalka district

\*\* the city district of Záhorská Bystrica says that it uses participatory budgeting, but the official website lacks more information. The budget of this city district is also unavailable

\*\*\* in Kosice, it is currently the only city district that plans to launch participatory budgeting shortly

Source: Authors' own study, based on the official websites of city districts and their official documents.

In addition to regional cities, the status of the city or town in Slovakia has a further 132 territorial self-administration units. The following Table 5 summarizes the number of cities with a participatory budget, taking into account the individual self-governing regions. As we can see, the highest number of them are located within the Trenčín Region and also the Prešov Region. It is worth noting that the table does not take into account participatory budgets and their application in the Bratislava city districts. In such a case, the order of frequency would change and the Bratislava Region would move to the first rank. Negative leadership with the lowest number of cities with a participatory budget is recorded in the Košice Region and Žilina Region, which are closely followed by the Banská Bystrica Region and Nitra Region. Overall, Slovak residents are allowed to participate in the decision-making process on part of the participatory budget in 31 cities.

Table 5. Use of participatory budgets in cities in 2019

Self-governing region	No. of cities with PB*
Bratislava	3 + 1
Trnava	3 + 1
Trenčín	7 + 0
Nitra	2 + 1
Žilina	2 + 0**
Banská Bystrica	2 + 1
Prešov	6 + 0
Košice	2 + 0
Total	31

\* the first number represents all the cities of the region with participatory budget except the regional cities; these cities are listed separately after the “+” sign

\*\* in the past, it was also used in Ružomberok

Source: Authors’ own study, based on the official websites of cities and their official documents.

Table 6 summarizes the cities (except the regional cities) where we identify the presence of a participatory budget in 2019. As we can see, the weakness is the availability of relevant information on the official website. This can act as a negative factor in transparency, as it is a process which aims at encouraging the inhabitants of local governments to actively participate in deciding on the part of their budget.

Table 6. Cities with participatory budget in 2019

City	Website with information on PB	Total amount	Maximum project amount	No. of accepted projects
Modra	✓	EUR 20,000	EUR 5,000	0 (used for the first time)
Pezinok	✓	EUR 12,000	EUR 1,000	12
Svätý Jur	X	EUR 30,000 (not more than 1% of current revenue of city from the previous financial year)	unpublished	unpublished
Hlohovec	X	EUR 20,000	EUR 5,000	5 (2018/2019)
Piešťany	X	EUR 20,000	at least 5 small projects to EUR 2,000 and at least 2 large projects to EUR 5,000	1
Senica	X	EUR 21,000 (EUR 1 per resident)	not defined	10
Ilava	X	unpublished	unpublished	unpublished
Nové Mesto nad Váhom	X	EUR 15,000 (it is in competence of city council – not exactly defined in status of PB)	EUR 1,500	11
Stará Turá	X	EUR 15,000	EUR 2,500	
Partizánske	X	EUR 20,000 (defined by budget Article 1.1.7 <i>Komunitné projekty</i> – in English: Community projects)	EUR 2,000	10

City	Website with information on PB	Total amount	Maximum project amount	No. of accepted projects
Považská Bystrica	X	EUR 12,000	EUR 1,500	8 + 1 (one project was funded additionally from unspent resources of projects )
Prievidza	X	EUR 45,000	unpublished	unpublished
Púchov	X	unpublished	EUR 2,000	unpublished
Šaľa	X	EUR 6,000	unpublished	unpublished
Topoľčany	X	unpublished	unpublished	unpublished
Krásno nad Kysucou	X	EUR 5,000	unpublished	unpublished
Liptovský Mikuláš	X	EUR 25,000	EUR 3,000	16
Lučenec	X	Defined by current city budget (2019 city budget did not define this item)	EUR 5,000	unpublished
Poltár	X	EUR 10,000	EUR 2,500	5
Veľký Šariš	X	EUR 29,995	EUR 4,285	10
Kežmarok	X	EUR 15,000	unpublished	unpublished (information available only for 2017)
Spišská Belá	X	EUR 5,000	maximum project amount: EUR 1,000 / minimum amount: EUR 300	unpublished
Vysoké Tatry	X	EUR 54,879	maximum amount: EUR 5,000 / minimum amount EUR 500	29
Svidník	X / facebook page	EUR 5,000	unpublished	7
Vranov nad Topľou	X	EUR 20,000	EUR 300	45
Rožňava	X	EUR 30,000	extended project max. EUR 5,000 / "small" project max. EUR 1,000	7
Trebišov	✓	EUR 50,000	EUR 10,000	5

Source: Authors' own study, based on the official websites of cities and their official documents.

## CONCLUSIONS

The participatory budget can be described in the Slovak Republic as a tool of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as it appears for the first time within the territorial self-administration in 2011. This idea was implemented by the capital city of Bratislava and its city district Bratislava-Nové Mesto. Slowly, other towns are joining it. Participatory budgeting is currently used in 31 cities out of 140 (four out of those 31 are regional cities –

Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, and Banská Bystrica). The participatory budget has been implemented at the level of self-governing regions as well. It was first used in 2017 by the Trenčín Region, followed by the Bratislava Region (since 2018), the Trnava Region and the Žilina Region (both since 2019).

The mechanism of participatory budgeting differs in Slovakia, as we do not find national regulation in this regard. As a result, the cities themselves decide on such aspects as the phases of the participatory budget, the conditions for submitting projects, voting, as well as the question of who can participate and what funds can be spent on the planned projects.

Considering the above findings, it seems that there is still considerable possible area for implementation of direct democracy represented by participatory budgeting, and also that those territorial governments that have decided to use it have an open space to improve it.

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