Dear President Pellegrini
President Peter Pellegrini
Office of the President of the Slovak Republic
Štefánikova 2
811 05 Bratislava
Slovakia

I am writing to express my deep concern about Parliamentary Bill No. 1471, commonly referred to as the “No School, No Benefits” legislation, recently adopted by the Slovak Parliament. The legislation broadens the grounds on which a municipality may be designated as a third-party recipient of child allowance payment. It also empowers authorities to suspend payments altogether where specified circumstances persist, including school absenteeism and other failures to comply with statutory obligations concerning children's education and upbringing.

According to the government's own estimates, 5,350 children in 3,670 families could be affected by the suspension of child allowance payments. The proposed changes also affect payments provided under other social protection schemes and risk further depriving families of resources needed to afford food, housing and other basic necessities and essential services.

These punitive and discriminatory measures risk disproportionately affecting Roma children, who already face systemic discrimination, poverty and segregation in education and children belonging to other disadvantaged groups. Children should not be penalised for their family's circumstances or face the loss of essential support as a means of enforcing school attendance. Instead, the authorities should provide children and their families with the support they need to overcome barriers to education and ensure regular school attendance. Slovakia is obliged under international human rights law to guarantee children's rights to social security, an adequate standard of living and education without discrimination. These rights are interdependent and must be guaranteed together.

I therefore urge you to exercise your constitutional power to return the legislation to Parliament with comments, calling for the removal of the punitive provisions that threaten children's access to essential social protection. You have an important opportunity to prevent further hardship for vulnerable children and families and ensure that their rights are protected.

Yours sincerely,