

LABOUR LAW AS A GUARANTOR OF DECENT WORK – RETROSPECTIVE AND OUTLOOK (BRATISLAVA, 20 NOVEMBER 2025)

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On the 20th of November 2025, a scientific conference titled "*Labour Law as a Guarantor of Decent Work – Retrospective and Outlook*" was held at the Faculty of Law of Comenius University in Bratislava. The conference was organised by the Department of Labour Law and Social Security Law of the Faculty of Law of Comenius University Bratislava (hereinafter the "**Department**") on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of its establishment and the adoption of the Labour Code. The event represented an important professional platform for reflecting on the historical development of labour law and social security law, as well as for discussing current trends and future perspectives in this field of law. The main objective of the conference was to evaluate the department's activities to date while also reviewing the development of labour law regulation from the adoption of the Labour Code up to the present day. The expert contributions focused on the analysis of historical contexts and the evolution of individual labour law institutes, with particular attention devoted to the transformation in the context of social, economic, and technological changes. The discussion also reflected the legal, ethical, and social aspects of the protection of decent work and the challenges brought by the modern labour market. The conference created a space for the exchange of expert opinions among the academic community, representatives of legal practice, and public institutions. Several prominent figures active in the field of labour law and social security law delivered presentations at the event, offering not only scholarly reflections but also practical perspectives on the future direction of labour law regulation in contemporary society.

The conference was opened by the Head of the Department doc. JUDr. Lenka Freel, PhD. In her opening address, she emphasised in particular the significance of the Department's 60th anniversary, as well as its activities in recent years. At the same time, she thanked all those present for their participation, as it was an exceptional gathering of conference participants - from former heads of the Department to its current members, distinguished academics from other faculties of law, practitioners, and representatives of public institutions.

After the opening remarks, the first section was opened, consisting of commemorative contributions by members of the Department. The first speaker was doc. JUDr. Ján Matlák, CSc., who read a letter on behalf of prof. JUDr. Helena Barancová, DrSc. of Trnava University, as she was unable to attend the conference in person. In the letter, prof. Barancová described her work at the Department as a matter close to her heart and devoted particular attention to the period after 1989, which required great effort to quickly respond to extensive social and legislative changes, including through the preparation of new teaching materials. She emphasised the development of international cooperation in the early 1990s, when the Department gained growing recognition within the wider academic community for organising several international conferences.

Following the remarks of prof. JUDr. Helena Barancová, DrSc., reflections were also shared by the member of the Department doc. JUDr. Ján Matlák, CSc., by the former member of the Department JUDr. Mikuláš Trstenský, CSc. and former Head of Department prof. JUDr. Juraj Hamulák, PhD. who recalled their professional experiences and long-standing involvement with the Department.

After the break, the scientific part of the conference was opened by prof. JUDr. Juraj Hamulák, PhD. with a presentation entitled *Termination of Employment – Stable and Current Judicial Decision-Making*. In his contribution, he addressed the legal framework and judicial practice concerning the termination of employment for organisational reasons under Slovak labour law, with particular emphasis on recent developments in the case law of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic. The presentation analysed the normative basis arising from § 63 of the Labour Code, the substantive and formal requirements for the valid termination of employment, as well as the established and disputed lines of judicial decision-making. Particular attention was devoted to the employer's obligation to offer the employee alternative suitable work, the prohibition of abusing organisational changes, and the application of the principle of good morals. The contribution also examined the interconnection between domestic legislation and EU law, together with international labour standards, which significantly influence the decision-making practice of Slovak courts.

The scientific section of the conference continued with a presentation by prof. JUDr. Martin Štefko, Ph.D., DSc. from Charles University in Prague, entitled *Probable Earnings*. In his contribution, he focused on an analysis of the Czech legal institute of probable earnings, including a historical excursus on the period of its origin. He also compared the development of this institute in the Slovak legal environment and examined whether Slovak legislation could provide impulses for amending the Czech legal regulation in order to improve the efficiency of calculating probable earnings. Particular attention was paid to the research question concerning the calculation of probable earnings in the case of part-time employment.

The topic of remuneration was subsequently followed by doc. JUDr. Marcel Dolobáč, PhD. from the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice with a presentation entitled *Transparent and Fair Remuneration*. In his contribution, he addressed current issues of application practice in the field of remuneration, placing them in the context of forthcoming changes arising from the new Directive on equal and transparent pay. He

also highlighted its potential impact on legal practice and the need to adapt existing labour law mechanisms to new requirements of transparency and equality in remuneration.

Within the next contribution entitled *Dependent Work Between Tradition and Innovation: Legal Challenges of the Coming Years*, doc. JUDr. Lenka Freel, PhD. focused on the concept of dependent work and its development in Slovak labour law. Particular attention was paid to the legal definition, as introduced in 2007, and to its subsequent development, including the latest amendment effective from January 2026. Doc. JUDr. Lenka Freel, PhD. highlighted the gradual departure from the traditional understanding of dependent work, typically connected with a fixed workplace and/or fixed working time to the era of the changing labour markets and the emergence of more diverse and flexible forms of work. She discussed the need to balance two important objectives: adequate protection of employees and sufficient flexibility for modern forms of work organisation, which is particularly important in connection with new arising challenges such as platform work or economically dependent self-employed persons.

The following contribution *Legal Status of Professional E-sport Players* by JUDr. Jozef Greguš, PhD., LL.M. of the Institute of State and Law of the Slovak Academy of Sciences addressed a topic increasingly relevant in the light of the rapid development of the e-sports and digital platforms. This development raises several legal questions, such as whether the e-sports may be treated as sports in the legal sense or whether the activity of professional players (particularly players in team-based e-sports clubs) may show the characteristics of dependent work under Slovak labour law. These aspects were confronted with several selected foreign and Slovak judicial decisions. It was emphasised that the assessment of the legal status always depends on the specific circumstances, including the nature of the tournament or league or the terms set by the operator of the relevant digital platform.

At the conclusion of the discussion on the presented papers, prof. JUDr. Juraj Hamulák, PhD. and doc. JUDr. Lenka Freel, PhD. extended their gratitude to all participants for their inspiring and scientifically valuable contributions. They also expressed their hope for future opportunities to meet again at upcoming scientific conferences and scholarly events.

The conference, organised on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Department of Labour Law and Social Security Law under the title "*Labour Law as a Guarantor of Decent Work – Retrospective and Outlook*", created an important space for reflection on the historical development of selected legal institutes, as well as on the development of labour law as a whole. At the same time, the conference underlined that although further development and modernisation of legal regulation are essential for future progress, reflection on historical developments may provide valuable insights. One of the significant contributions of the conference was also the connection of several generations of academics, who had the opportunity to discuss current issues from different perspectives. This intergenerational exchange enriched the discussions and offered a more comprehensive view of topics that may be further developed in the future. For younger participants, including the authors of this report, the conference also represented a valuable opportunity to meet former members of the Department whose academic work and professional contribution have been particularly inspiring.

