

PECULIARITIES OF LEGAL REGULATION OF WORK OF ADOLESCENT EMPLOYEES

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Annotation: The involvement of adolescents in labor relations is one of the globally relevant issues. Early engagement in work can have positive effects such as developing responsibility, gaining practical experience, and better social adaptation. However, without proper legal and social regulation, adolescent labor can negatively impact their health, education, and personal development. Therefore, countries like Slovakia and Uzbekistan have established specific legal frameworks to regulate adolescent labor.

Key words: Adolescent labor, legal regulation, minimum working age, occupational safety, working conditions, youth employment, working hours, protection of minors, employment contracts, vocational training.

This article analyzes the legal regulation of adolescent employment in both countries, with particular focus on the new edition of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023).

The new Labor Code of Uzbekistan, which came into force on April 30, 2023, represents a significant step in aligning national labor legislation with international standards, including conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This code comprehensively protects the labor of adolescents and sets out basic rules. Persons under the age of eighteen are guaranteed employment in reserve jobs based on the minimum number of jobs determined in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Employment of the Population" with the referral of local labor authorities.

In accordance with Article 412 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan work in which the use of child labor is prohibited:

- It is prohibited to employ persons under the age of eighteen in work with harmful and (or) dangerous working conditions, in underground work, as well as in work that may harm their life and health, safety and moral development (in night cafes and clubs, in the production, transportation and sale of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, narcotic and psychotropic substances, toxic drugs, etc.).
- It is prohibited for employees under the age of eighteen to lift and carry loads exceeding the maximum permissible standards established for them.
- Work in which the use of the labor of employees under the age of eighteen is prohibited and the performance of which may harm the health and moral development of minors.

As a member of the European Union, Slovakia aligns its labor laws with EU directives and international labor standards. The Slovak Labor Code outlines strict protections for minors.

According to Section 175 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Slovakia, the employment of minors is prohibited in the following cases:

(1) An adolescent employee may not be employed for work underground in the extraction of minerals or drilling of tunnels and passages.

(2) An adolescent employee may not be employed for work which, taking into account the anatomic, physiological and mental individualities at this age, is inappropriate, or dangerous for them or damaging to their health.

(3) Lists of work and workplaces that are prohibited to an adolescent employee shall be established by a Government regulation.

(4) An employer may employ adolescent employees neither for work at which they are exposed to an increased risk of accident nor the performance of which could seriously endanger the safety and health of co-employees or other persons

In accordance with Article 414 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, persons under the age of eighteen are admitted to work only after undergoing an initial mandatory medical examination, and subsequently must undergo a mandatory medical examination every year until they reach the age of eighteen.

In Uzbekistan, the working hours of adolescents are set at no more than 36 hours per week for employees aged 16 to 18 years, and at no more than 24 hours per week for persons aged 15 to 16 years.

In Slovakia, the maximum weekly working time of an adolescent employee under 16 years of age shall be 30 hours per week, even when working for several employers. Maximum weekly working time of an adolescent employee over 16 years of age shall be 37 and 1/2 hours even when working for several employers. The working time of an adolescent employee may not exceed 8 hours in the course of 24 hours.

It is prohibited to send employees under the age of eighteen on business trips, engage them in overtime work, night work, and work on weekends and public holidays.

In accordance with Article 418 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, employees under the age of eighteen are granted annual leave of at least 30 calendar days, and they may use this leave at any time of the year convenient for them. If the working year for which annual leave is granted covers the periods during which the employee reaches the age of eighteen and after it, the duration of the leave is calculated in proportion to the time worked by the employee before reaching the age of eighteen and after reaching the age of eighteen. It is not allowed to recall employees under the age of eighteen from annual leave.

In Uzbekistan, adolescents often work in sectors such as light industry, agriculture, services, or internships. Programs like "Youth – Our Future" support youth employment and career development initiatives across the country.

Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Differences of Slovak and Uzbek Labour Law

Similarities:

- Minimum employment age - 15 years old
- Prohibition of heavy and dangerous work
- Restricted working hours - 24–36 hrs/week)
- Night work prohibited

- Education protection
- Parental consent required

Differences:

- Approach: In Slovakia, adolescent employment is usually temporary and experience-based, while in Uzbekistan it may be more long-term and sometimes income-driven.
- Legal framework: Uzbekistan relies on its updated national Labor Code, while Slovakia operates under both national and EU legislation.
- Supervision: Slovakia has a more developed inspection and enforcement system, whereas Uzbekistan is still improving its mechanisms.

In conclusion, both Uzbekistan and Slovakia have developed systems to protect adolescent workers' rights, ensuring that employment does not harm their health, education, or development. Uzbekistan's new Labor Code has established a stronger legal foundation for youth employment, reflecting global standards. Slovakia, in turn, emphasizes safe, short-term work experiences within the framework of EU regulations. In the future, both countries can further enhance protections for young workers, ensuring their labor participation is a path to empowerment, not exploitation.

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