



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
COURT OF AUDIT

# AUDIT REPORT

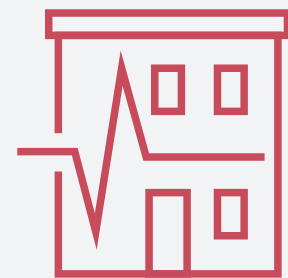
## Managing long-term sick leave

**Performance audit**

Audit period: 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020



# Managing long-term sick leave in 2020



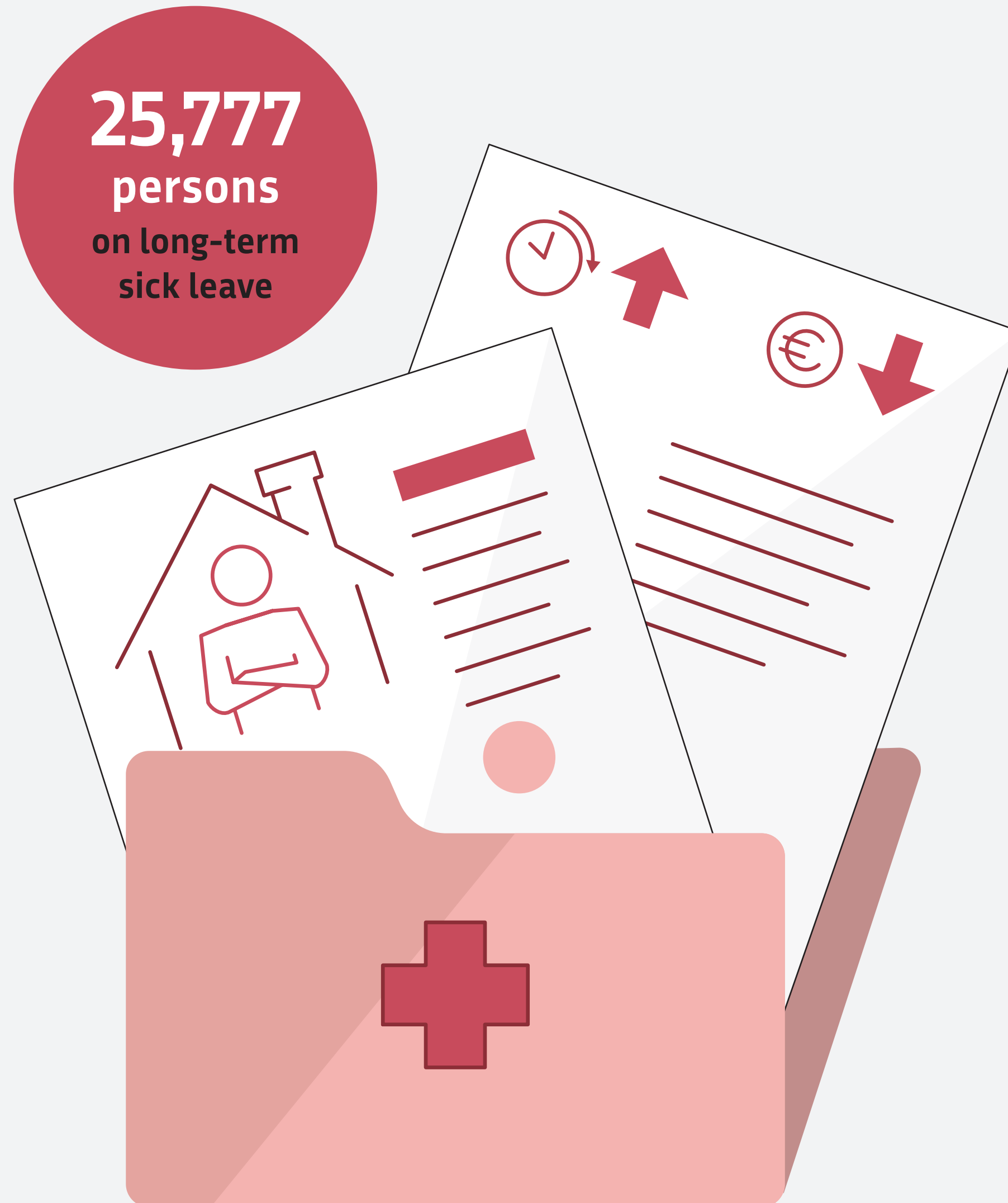
Ministry of Health

## What was audited

Was Ministry of Health efficient in managing long-term sick leave in 2020?

Does Ministry of Health use a strategy to efficiently manage long-term sick leave?

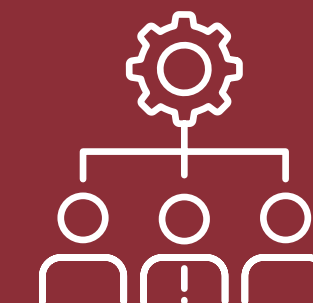
Has Ministry of Health implemented activities that reduce the scope of long-term sick leave?



Long-term sick leave represents a direct cost for the State



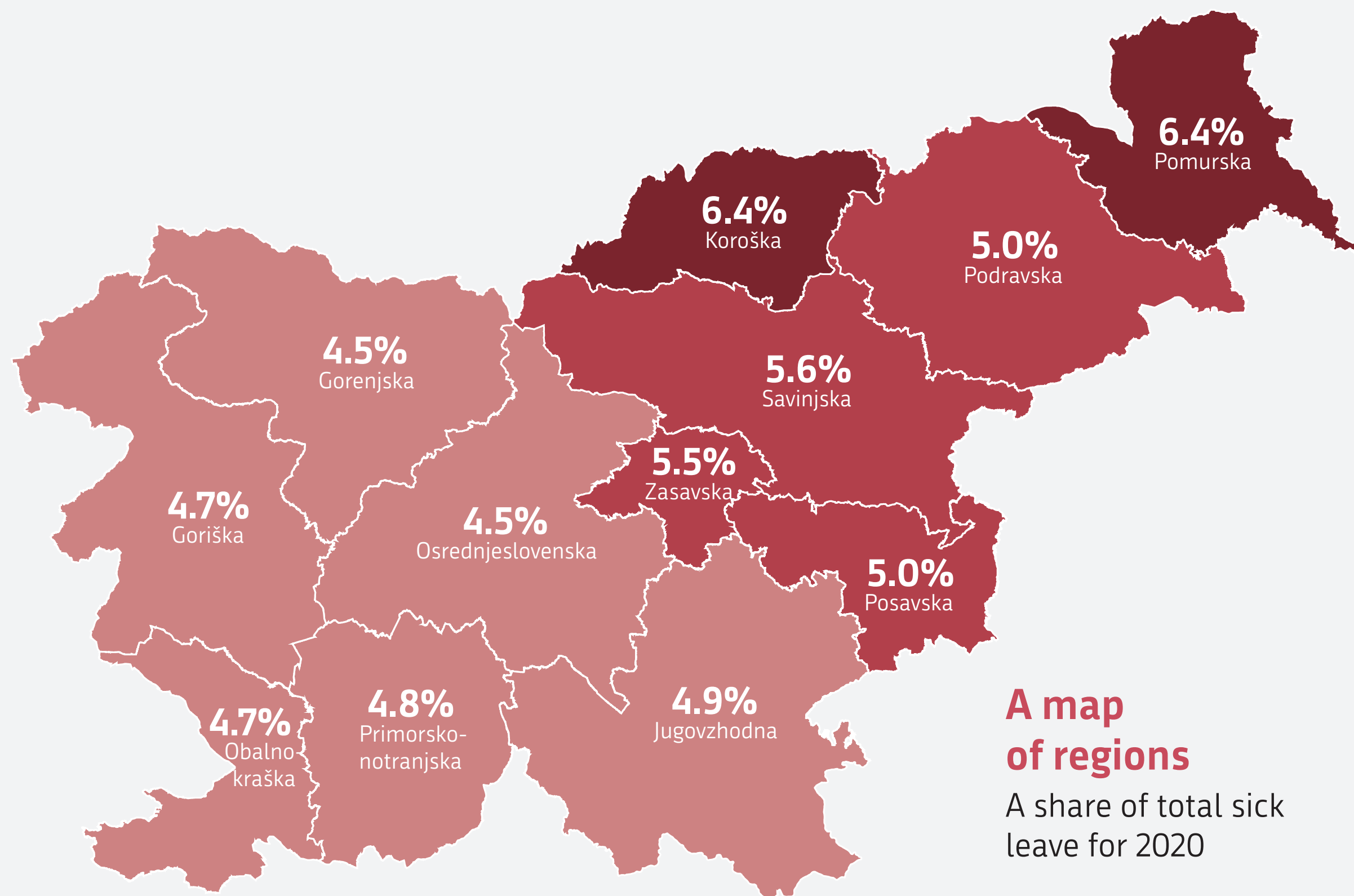
The longer the absence, the lesser possibility for a person to return to work or to the labour market



Long-term sick leave causes employers problems in work organisation

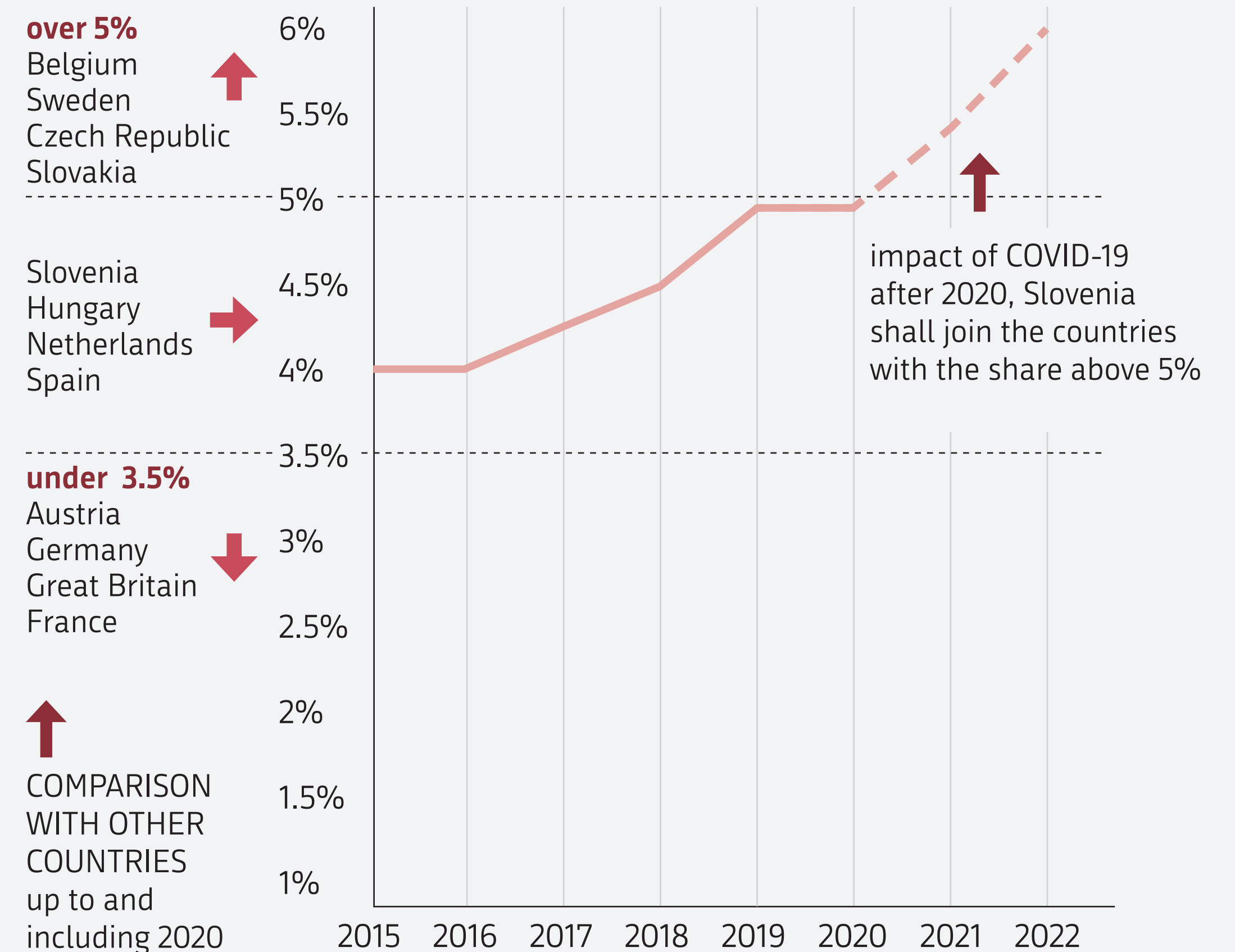
# Data on sick leave

highest monthly payment	the longest period of continuous sick leave
€ 21,494	11.5 years



**A map of regions**  
A share of total sick leave for 2020

## Growth of sick leave in Slovenia according to the share of lost calendar days per year



# Analyses of long-term sick leave

Ministry of Health provided only the data on total sick leave.



## Data on total sick leave:



Depending on gender, age, health-care and statistical region, health reason, economic activity



Lost days per employee as one continuous absence



## Lack of data:



Correlation between **long-term sick leave** and (non)availability of health services



Impact of the amount and duration of sickness payment on **long-term sick leave**



The State does not have the data on the share of the lost days due to **long-term sick leave**



Ministry of Health did not provide the data and analyses to determine most common circumstances of long-term sick leave and characteristics of a person on long-term sick leave

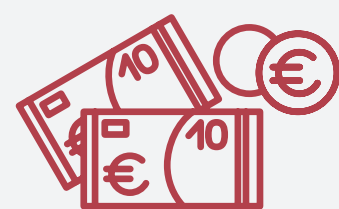


At State level, there are no appropriate data nor analyses, which could provide the means for efficient management of long-term sick leave



### Duration of sick leave

Duration of sick leave is also affected by **economic and social factors**

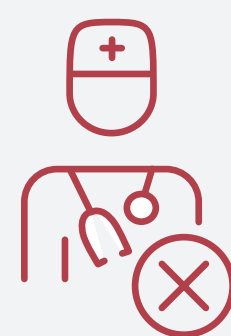


### Amount and duration of sickness payment

- ! Among the EU countries the least restrictive
- ! The amount of sickness payment increases with the duration of sick leave
- ! The duration of sickness payment is not limited
- ! The difference between the amount of sickness payment and other social transfers

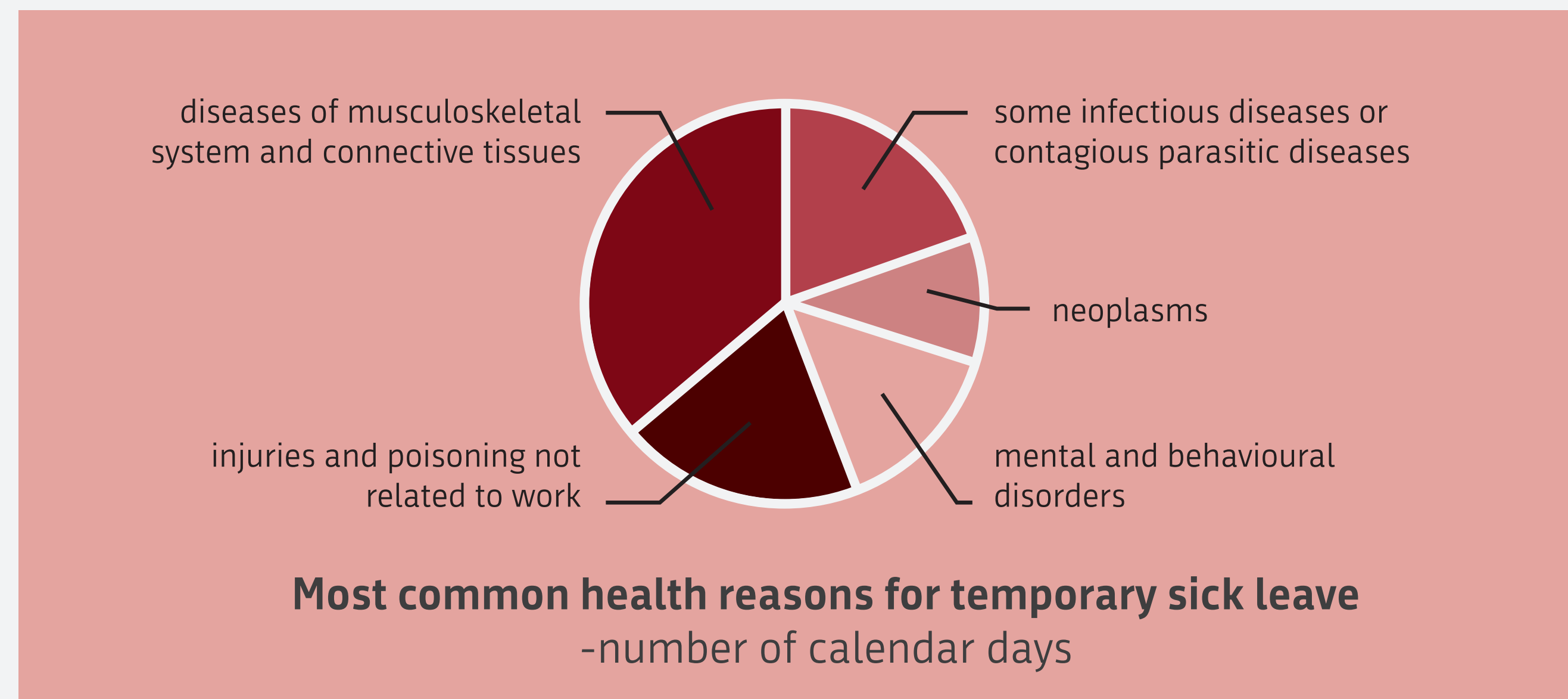
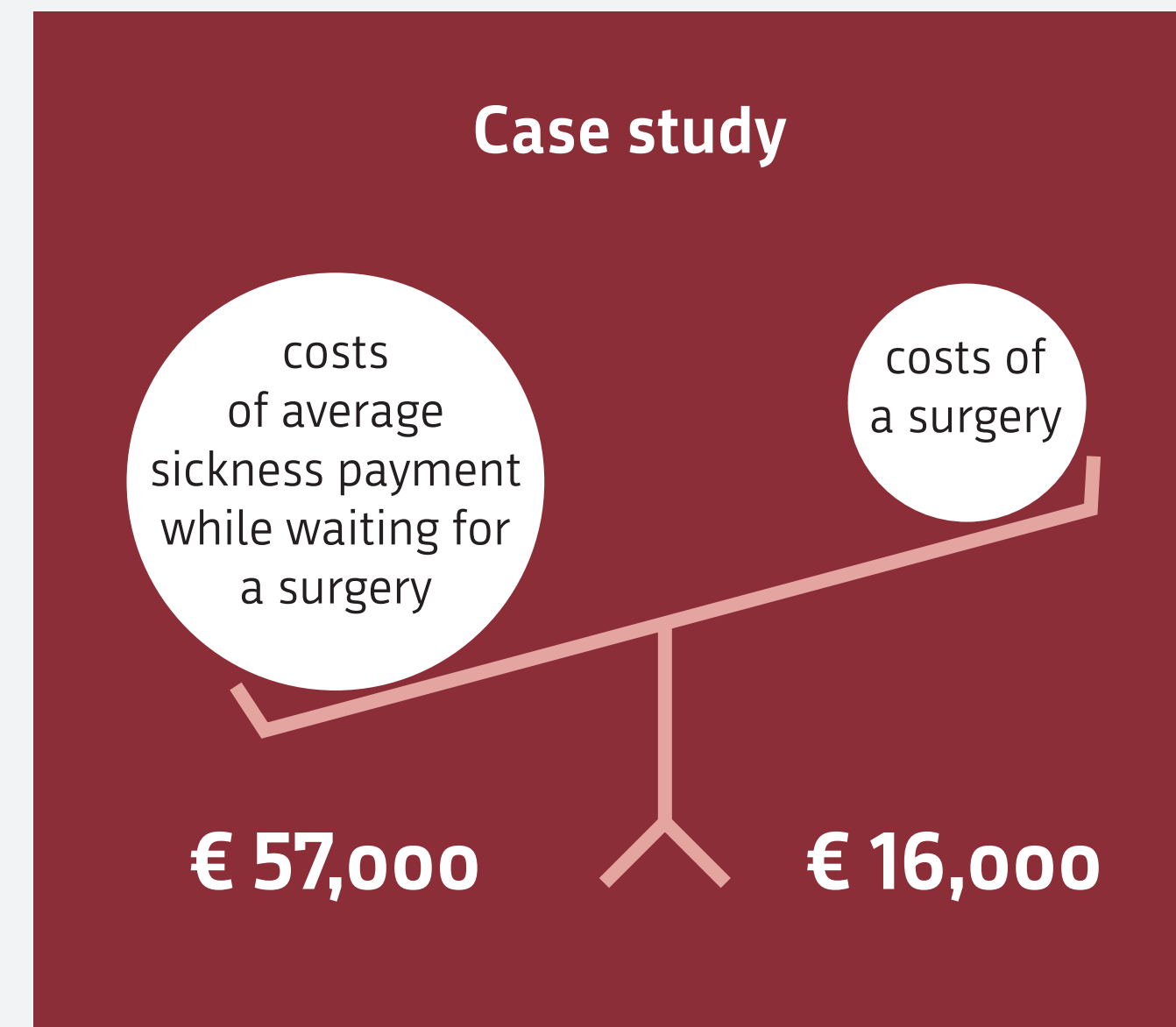
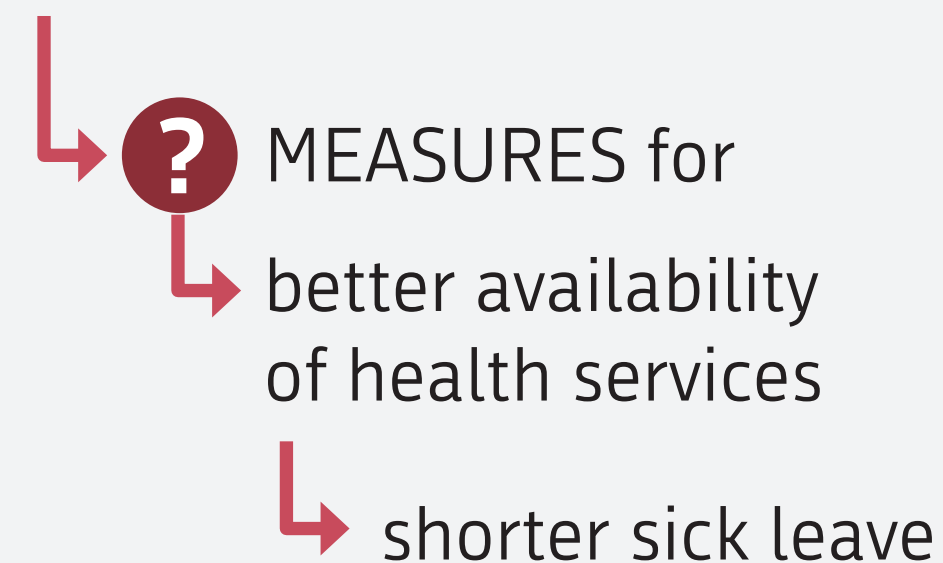


**The current arrangement does not support the workers to return to work as soon as possible**



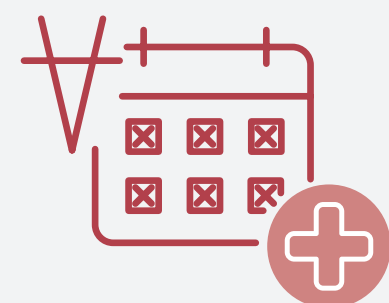
### Non-availability of health services

No data on how many insured persons are waiting for health service when on sick leave



## Main exposed problems

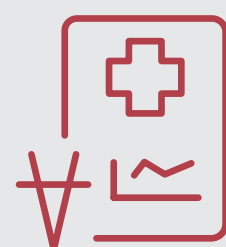
## Demanded measures



No data on long-term sick leave

Monitoring the data and developing analyses in order to identify factors **affecting long-term sick leave** (age, gender, region of residence, economic activity of employer)

Ministry already implemented some measures



No analyses of correlation between the amount and duration of sickness payment and the scope of long-term sick leave

Monitoring the data and developing analyses in order to provide **the basis for monitoring appropriate measures**

reducing long-term sick leave



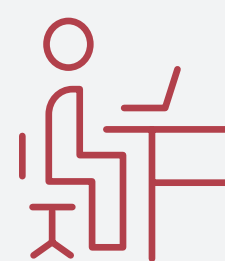
Main health reasons for long-term sick leave not known

Monitoring the data and developing analyses in order to provide the basis for **monitoring appropriate measures** concerning **health disorders**



Not known, if and to what extent the duration of long-term sick leave depends on (non)availability of health services

Monitoring the data and developing analyses in order to support those measures, which **increase availability of health services** that have the biggest impact on long-term sick leave



Existing arrangements do not support faster return of employees to work

**Regulating integrated care of patients** and injured persons in the process of faster return to work

## Other problems

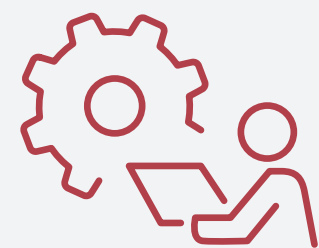
## Recommended measures



**No expert guidance for doctors**

**Expert guidance/recommendations for doctors:** a tool for doctors when deciding on appropriate duration of long-term sick leave related to medical diagnosis

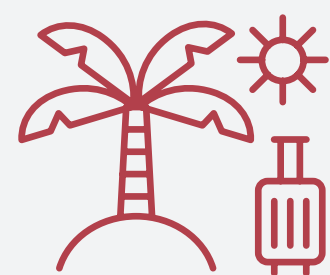
Reducing **differences in the duration of sick leave for the same medical diagnosis**



**Dilemmas of employers**

The basis for timely **informing employers about expected duration of employee's absence** and about possibility for shorter working time or other necessary adjustments of work process

Reducing **problems of employers in organising work and work processes**



**Poor instructions on permitted conduct during long-term sick leave**

- to provide the bases for developing appropriate, exact and **clear doctor's instructions on recommended conduct** during sick leave
- **unifying** recommended conduct considering types of medical diagnoses
- providing **bases for penalising breaches** of recommended conduct during sick leave

**Clear** and unambiguous **instructions of permitted conduct** during sick leave



**Non-harmonised criteria for assessing temporary and permanent incapability to work**

- providing optimal time dynamics for (re)assessing, whether improvement of health condition is expected or to direct the patient to Invalidity Committee
- **unifying criteria for assessing** temporary or permanent incapability to work

**Faster procedure of assessing** temporary or permanent **incapability to work**

# OPINION OF THE COURT OF AUDIT

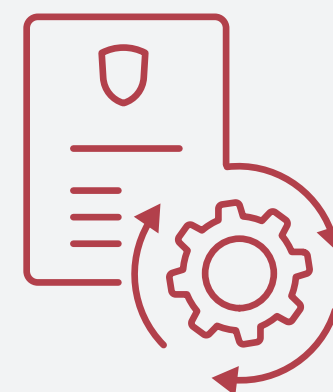
- **Ministry of Health was inefficient in managing long-term sick leave in 2020**

Ministry must submit to the Court of Audit a response report.

**It must prepare activity plans necessary for more efficient managing of long-term sick leave.**

**Ministry was proposed several recommendations.**

- ✓ **After the audit period, Ministry of Health implemented some activities to reduce the scope of long-term sick leave.**



- **analysis of health absenteeism**
- **proposal of the act** on urgent measures in the field of health care which introduced **more restrictive arrangements related to payments** – already **in legislative procedure**
- **there are no visible results (yet)**