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The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic



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Ab Olde-Scheper
Board Member
Dolphin



Contents

Editorial	
President speaks	4
List of Members	5
Word of Ambassador	6
Focus on	
<i>Oliver Reguli</i> Difference between studying in the East and West of Slovakia	8
Meet the Official Interpreters Bridging the Dutch and Slovak Speaking Worlds in Slovakia	9
<i>Studying Dutch in Bratislava</i> Getting to know the unknown...	10
Talent Garden program officially launched	12
In short	13
<i>Welcome New Corporate Member – Dolphin</i> Simply the best water you can have	14
<i>Welcome New Board Member</i> <i>Ab Olde-Scheper</i>	14
<i>Welcome New Corporate Member – Mark Roffelsen</i> Always offer quality, reliability, and flexibility	15
<i>Welcome New Corporate Member – Rebeka van der Heiden</i> Culturally aligned outsourcing partnerships	16
Signify lights Bikoš	18
Cloetta Slovakia invests in streamlining packaging	20
The first Circular Summit 2024 was a huge success!	22
Facederma®	24
Dajana Rodriguez	25
Ambulance of the Fire and Rescue Service	26
10 Years of Giving Back: A Look at the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce's Charity Work	27
What keeps our members awake at night?	28
Rule of Law Initiative	30
Events	
Back to work	32
Patrons Dinner	33
Post-election Evaluation	34
Mussels and Fries	36
18 th Gala Charity Dinner	38
Annual General Meeting New Years Toast	42

Info

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President speaks

Dear Members,

In front of you is the spring Bulletin of 2024, this time with a special focus on the East of Slovakia. As there are many new initiatives being developed in the East and we are seeing more foreign and Dutch investments happening there, we found it logical to put this region in the spotlight. Not to focus on the differences, but to outline the opportunities we see in the country as a whole.



The Slovak presidential elections have just finished and our new president, Peter Pellegrini, will take office in June this year. The Slovak people have voted and the majority of the votes decided for the new president. The presidential campaign was a campaign of polarization, of fear and of separation. This is exactly the opposite of what I believe in, so my appeal to you is to do the opposite. We all live together in Slovakia and we will only have a successful future if we join forces, see the opportunities and unite ourselves. We will work with the Netherlands Embassy and the other Chambers of Commerce in Slovakia to promote these ideas with our government stakeholders to ensure a fertile environment for our current and future investors.

I would like to announce upcoming changes to the Board. Three of our current board members will be leaving the board. After 10 years of board membership, Beatrix Šidová will leave the board. She has been the driving force of our events strategy and has delivered many world-class gala events, that many of us attended. Marius Wijnen has accepted an opportunity at Arval in The Netherlands and will return to his home country later this spring. His fresh point of view and positive attitude has driven the growing the number of members of the Chamber. Finally, Henriette van Notten has accepted an amazing new opportunity back in The Hague and will leave the board in summer this year. Henriette has played a key role as a liaison with the embassy

and the motor behind many initiatives, with the Talent Garden being a recent key one. I would like to thank Beatrix, Marius and Henriette on behalf of all our members and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavours.

In the meantime, Ab Olde Scheper has joined us as a new board member after being voted in during the general assembly in February. Many of you will know Ab as a driven and creative entrepreneur and I am looking forward to working with him on a number of initiatives, also focusing on the east of our country. We are open to further Board members to support the further development of the Chamber. Please reach out to me if you are interested and we will discuss the opportunities.

I would like to wish you a successful spring and summer and hope to see you at one of our upcoming events.

Best regards, take care,
Gijs



List of Members 2024

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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
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|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
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|-------------------|------------------|---------------|

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A word from the Ambassador

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade

One of the great discoveries my family and I made when travelling around Slovakia, since our arrival here in summer 2021, is homemade lemonade. Obvious and sometimes also very unexpected combinations of fruits and herbs (I recommend uhorka-zázvor) with some perlivá or neperlivá voda, are available in any kaviareň or reštaurácia throughout the country. At any time of the year (including heated in the winter), they solve the dilemma of not wanting to drink alcohol and also the slight boredom associated with yet another glass of water.



Gabriella Sancisi
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

So the wise saying 'When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade', in Slovakia could be rephrased as 'When life gives you raspberries, ginger, cucumber or oranges, etc.'. And there exactly, lies the connection with our work at the Embassy. In the past period, a lot has happened in Slovakia, politically, following the parliamentary elections and European elections are just around the corner. As I write this, we have just seen the outcome of the Presidential elections and are waiting to see how future President Peter Pellegrini will shape his presidency. But also in our Dutch circles and particularly in the follow up to our successful State Visit a lot has happened: a traineeship involving 4 Dutch companies that hopes to counter the brain drain from Slovakia has been launched. Intense cooperation between the Slovak Childrens Oncological Hospital and the Princess Maxima Center in the Netherlands has started. And we are working closely with Slovak organisations on media freedom and the protection of journalists, on the rights of LGBTIQ+ people and on combatting gender-based violence.

The bilateral relations between our two countries are.

Every embassy in the world is working every day on making this kind of lemonade, with varying levels of intensity, and based on various ingredients. And so does our direct counterpart, the Slovak Embassy in The Hague, with the recently arrived Ambassador Juraj Podhorský and his team. Recently, Ambassador

Podhorský and I paid a visit to my hometown Groningen, and together with Slovak Honorary Consul Denisa Kasová, we visited the Groningen Welcome centre for expats and businesses, with Deputy Mayor Mirjam Wijnja and Rector Magnificus of Groningen University Jacquélien Scherpen.

This was a unique occasion where two ambassadors, who spend their days



You may ask, what is the connecting factor in all this? What's the lemonade?



working on two different sides of the same coin, teamed up, joined forces and showed in practice that the cooperation between our countries and our embassies is efficient, effective and cordial.

The highlight of our visit was a meeting with 30 of the 200 Slovak students who study in Groningen. The students shared many insights with us on their thoughts on coming to the Netherlands to study, on what they find important for their study, on what they value about life in Slovakia and what they like about living in the Netherlands. There were many insights to learn from and knowledge that will help further develop and expand the traineeship and job fair in the Netherlands planned for this autumn.

But more than anything, this meeting and the following meeting with several Slovaks who have chosen to spend important years of their working life in the Netherlands, made one thing clear - the people we met that day in Groningen, as well as the many Dutch-Slovak families or individuals we encounter during activities here in Slovakia, they are all ambassadors for our two countries, every day of the week, every month of the year. They are the ones who connect the dots between our countries. They are the ones who make the lemonade. Na zdravie!

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Oliver Reguli

Difference between studying in the East and West of Slovakia

Going out of my comfort zone has always given me new experiences and broadened my horizons. I quickly realised that life is about choices, and one must decide where you want to go in life and set their priorities. That is why I decided to change my environment and move from Prešov to Bratislava to pursue my studies in economics.



I am currently doing my Bachelor's degree and throughout my studies I have taken advantage of many opportunities. For example, I studied for one semester at the oldest university in the world in Bologna and had an opportunity to participate

in the Central Europe Connect program, which exposes you to current problems that countries such as Slovakia, Poland and Austria are facing. It is never an easy choice to go out of your comfort zone, sometimes it is an uncomfortable one. That is why I am participating in the Talent Garden program, which offers a unique opportunity of rotation among four Dutch companies. I strongly believe that being exposed to a diverse range of experiences in a relatively short period of time will be beneficial for all the participants.

While growing up in Prešov, I encountered many bright students with great potential who decided to leave their home town and study in Bratislava or abroad. There are a number of reasons for this. Some wanted to become more independent, pursue their dreams of studying at renowned universities or because of a lack of job opportunities. However, the situation is steadily changing. Now, I hear more often about people returning home after having completed their studies and finding a job in the eastern part of the country. When I was working at Tatra Banka, I realised that more responsibility was being transferred to the subsidy in Prešov which, in return, created new job offers and improved living in the region. We have also seen other foreign direct investments, such as Volvo near Košice, and Bosch. I am currently studying in Bratislava, which is a great student city. One of the most notable advantages of living here is networking, since students from all over the country come here to study. In addition, one can easily find a part time job and gain experience quickly. However, moving abroad could be beneficial in many other areas and therefore I am keeping an open mind about my future. I envision working in a dynamic environment that utilizes my talents and allows me to contribute meaningfully to the society.

I strongly believe that Slovakia will become a country which provides young people with a stronger educational system, creates entrepreneurial opportunities, and become a better developed and attractive country in the European Union.

Meet the Official Interpreters

Bridging the Dutch and Slovak Speaking Worlds in Slovakia

In Slovakia, for official interpreting services, we rely on sworn interpreters listed by the Ministry of Justice. Currently, only three sworn interpreters work on the Dutch-Slovak language pair in this country.

Their role goes beyond governmental agencies. They also assist Slovak state authorities such as the police, prosecutor's office, and courts, while also providing crucial support to international bodies such as investigation teams, Eurojust, and the European Labour Agency in Bratislava. They also offer language assistance to businesses, expatriates, and Dutch-speaking citizens in Slovakia, assisting in life situations such as marriage ceremonies, notary visits, legal consultations, etc. However, with such a small number of interpreters scattered widely, collaboration and a robust network become essential, both nationally and internationally, as they connect with colleagues worldwide. That's where the NVVT-NEM comes into play. This network, focusing on Dutch language translation and interpreting, officially launched in September 2023 during a Dutch-language session at the TIC conference in Bratislava, aims to elevate the skills and professionalism of Dutch translators and interpreters globally. This idea came from the Dutch Studies Department at Comenius University in Bratislava, led by Marketa Štefková. Recognizing



Marketa Štefková
based in Bratislava
Western Slovakia



Lucia Matejková
based in Bojnice
Central Slovakia



Rudolf Kooijman
based in Lučenec
Eastern Slovakia

the need for better support for translators and interpreters working with Dutch, especially outside Dutch-speaking regions, they embarked on this journey. Supported by the Language Union (Taalunie), this endeavour sought to enhance infrastructure, training, and collaboration. The network's initial step involved conducting a field study in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, to understand the world of professional translators and interpreters working with Dutch. This study shed light on client needs, work types, challenges, and future prospects, particularly in light of emerging technologies such as machine translation and generative AI. NVVT-NEM is gearing up to tackle these challenges head-on. Stay tuned to their website, nvvtnem.eu, for updates on their progress, research findings, and upcoming activities. As language bridges the gap between businesses and cultures, NVVT-NEM stands at the forefront of connecting professionals and fostering collaboration in the world of translation and interpreting with the working language of Dutch.



Studying Dutch in Bratislava

Getting to know the unknown...

The Department of Dutch Studies at Comenius University in Bratislava was founded in 1992 and is part of the Chair for German Studies and Scandinavian Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy.

by:



Markéta Štefková

The department provides students with a dynamic and stimulating environment in which they are encouraged to develop their passion for the Dutch language and culture. The study of Dutch is combined with another foreign language, usually German, English or French, but there are also students who took Arabic and Latin as a second language in their curriculum. Department head is Marketa Štefková, who is assisted by Petra Milošovičová, Benjamin Bossaert and Riske Sophia Vellinga.

Members of the Department of Dutch Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava with guest professor Franco Paris from the University of Naples. From left to right: Benjamin Bossaert, Petra Milošovičová, Franco Paris, Rinsophie Vellinga, Marketa Štefková.

In this unique place for lovers of the Dutch language and culture, we focus on education and research on translation, interpreting, business and intercultural communication. Every two years, new students begin studying Dutch here. There are currently 10 second year and 4 third year bachelor students, 7 first-year master students and 1 PhD student. Working in a small group allows for project-based learning, focusing on major events in history, the cultural canon, and the corporate culture of multinationals, which prepares students for work in companies in need of Dutch-speaking employees.



Photo: Benjamin Bossaert archive



When I started my studies, it was not a dream of mine to learn Dutch, but gradually Dutch has become a reality during this study. Because studying Dutch in Slovakia is out of the ordinary, I believe it will be easier for us to build a career. Natalia, 2nd year of bachelor Dutch – English course

We regularly organize excursions, not only in the cultural field, but also visits to companies and institutions to explore the future labour market. Most of our students find a job after their studies in one of the many international companies in Bratislava. Their language skills, Slovak and at least two foreign languages at B2-C1 level, make them desirable candidates for a career in business. Native speakers Rinsophie Vellinga from the Netherlands and Benjamin Bossaert from Belgium are in charge of the language affiliated subjects.

As a "lecturer-native speaker" I was affiliated with the State University in Moscow for five years and now - since September

2023 - I have been working in Bratislava at the Department for Dutch Studies, which I greatly enjoy. What makes the work as a language teacher extra interesting are the close contacts we maintain with other Departments of Dutch language studies in Central and Eastern Europe. We regularly receive guest teachers from the Netherlands, Belgium, and other countries: writers, translators, expats and scholars, giving students contact with different aspects of culture, language, business and research.

We also encourage them to actively participate in discussions and projects that help them improve their language skills and gain a better understanding of the cultural and social context in which the Dutch language is used. In the third year of the bachelor's degree, many students take advantage of the opportunity to study in Belgium for one or two semesters. In this way, they can experience the language and culture in practice, by immersing themselves in the diversity of the Dutch-speaking world. Rinsophie Vellinga, Dutch lecturer

Talent Garden program officially launched

In February, we officially welcomed the first ever cohort of Talent Garden interns at a reception hosted by Ambassador Gabriella Sancsi. Talent Garden is a unique project created by four Dutch companies, Heineken, ING Hubs, NN and Union in cooperation with Embassy of the Netherlands, Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia and the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic. The project is a result of discussions started during the State Visit of HM the King to Slovakia last year.

by:  **Lenka Loučková**
Educating and inspiring young climate leaders



Eleven students selected for the program will work at all four companies during the year, and get a chance to experience different work cultures, an international environment, diverse tasks and build relationships beneficial for their future career. The main aim is to give them a taste of what working for a large international company is like, show them the opportunities and provide them with important skills for the job market. It was great to get to know this motivated young group and we wish them every success with their internship!



Educating and inspiring young climate leaders

In February, the Embassy of the Netherlands was part of Young Climate Leaders Academy organized by President Zuzana Čaputová. As part of a week full of inspiring discussions, we spent an amazing day together with climate experts and 25 future climate leaders at the Netherlands Embassy. A day full of insights, lectures, experience and knowledge sharing and discussions covered various spheres.



The group was welcomed by Deputy Head of Mission Henriette van Notten who explained the roles of an embassy. The concept of a green embassy and the work done towards this goal was presented by Policy Officer Lenka Loučková. Wim van Doorn from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands gave an insider's perspective on climate diplomacy and EU Green Deal negotiations. Two Dutch

business approaches to sustainability were presented by Peter Kover of ING Bank and Helena Windisch of Heineken. The discussions were concluded by a fascinating and inspiring success story from Kristína Smiešková, student at the Wageningen University and alumna of 2023 Young Climate Leaders Academy. It was also great to meet this enthusiastic

and motivated young group and listen to their insights during the informal reception hosted by the Ambassador. We wish them every success in their studies and we believe the new contacts and friendships made during this academy will strengthen their interest in the fight against climate change and their interest in the future of Slovakia.



Photo credit: Jakub Šimoňák

Cultivating relations in Eastern Slovakia

In January, an extraordinary performance took place at Štátna Filharmónia Košice led by conductor Sander Teepen and featuring a beautiful new piece by Slovak composer Ľubica Čekovská. On this occasion, the Embassy hosted a dinner and a fruitful discussion about the excellent relations between the Netherlands and Slovakia and on the extensive potential of Eastern Slovakia. The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce presented an ambitious plan to focus more on the region and extended an open call to everyone to be part of this. The ambassador took the opportunity to visit the Dutch company, CTP, an ambitious growing business and took particular interest in their extensive community outreach and deep commitment to sustainability. The ambassador also visited SZŠ Kukučínova, one of the schools that participated in our Orange the world campaign aimed at combating gender-based violence. We had a great meeting with school management and a discussion with the students on their views and the challenges they see for the young generation.

Introducing new embassy colleague

My name is Zuzana Kepplová and until recently I wrote commentaries for the daily SME. This year I will be finishing a two-year course in diplomacy at Comenius University, so I was delighted to join the team at the Dutch Embassy.



I will continue to follow the Slovak political scene and put events into perspective for my colleagues. I firmly believe this will help mutual understanding and cooperation between our countries. My portfolio includes the cultural agenda, Roma and refugee issues, and I will also be responsible for liaisons with Dutch studies at Comenius University. I will strive to increase our presence in the regions of Slovakia and help Dutch colleagues gain insights into Slovak politics. In addition to my work as a commentator, I have also written prose. Two of my books have been in the top ten of the Anasoft Litera award. I am also interested in reportage, and I have a book about the democratic tradition in the Tvarožek family coming out later this year published by Absynt. I like museums and aimless walks and yoga is ok. But I prefer beer and a proper Central European diet.

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Dolphin is a reliable and trustworthy partner, and a tier-1 brand in the ever-evolving water and cooler market and a leader in quality and sustainability. Dolphin is simply the best water you can have, delivered to the most convenient location and served cold, hot or sparkling, just the way you like it.

Dolphin is quality you can rely on and a service you can trust. Water straight from nature, bottled at source at our certified plants. Delivery is undertaken by our dedicated highly trained staff. A lot has happened since our first dispenser was installed and our vision became our mission. Dolphin is now Europe's leading water supplier. In Slovakia alone, our customers drink more than 5 million litres of the highest quality water annually at more than 2,500 businesses. This keeps them healthy and productive, and we are proud to serve them.



Welcome New Board Member

Ab Olde-Scheper

The visionary behind Dolphin, has led the company in revolutionizing workplace hydration over the last 25 years. From its inception in Mierlo, the Netherlands, in 1997, Dolphin expanded into Slovakia, and supplies over 6 million litres of high-quality spring water annually to Slovak companies. Ab Olde-Scheper's journey began with a simple yet profound mission: to ensure that every worker has access to the best quality water. This ambition was rooted in the belief that hydration is not just a luxury but a fundamental aspect of health and comfort in the workplace. In the early days, the concept of having water dispensers in the office was considered a novelty, but Dolphin set a new standard. They were pioneers in promoting the importance of hydration, gradually gaining the trust of their clients by demonstrating the tangible benefits of having accessible, fresh water in the office. This initiative led to a noticeable improvement in employee well-being and performance, making Dolphin a key player in the market.

Dolphin Central Europe, s. r. o.
Nádražná 1958
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www.dolphin.sk



Welcome New Corporate Member **Mark Roffelsen** Always offer quality, reliability, and flexibility



I'm **Mark Roffelsen**, owner of Roffelsen Plastics. The Roffelsen company goes back to 1977, and the business has passed from father to son. Our guiding principles have always been: "Always offer quality, reliability, and flexibility." These core values are important to us and have been the foundation of our family business for three generations.

We started with the production of clotheslines, and over the years, thanks to our family's commitment, we've expanded our product range. We continue to look for ways to improve and innovate. Almost from the beginning Roffelsen used recycled materials for the production of its products. Our years of experience in recycling is proving very helpful in a market where it is becoming the new standard.

Beyond growing our product range, we're also focused on learning, gaining experience, and reaching out to new customers and suppliers. This approach has helped us become a respected manufacturer of plastic products and a specialist in extrusion technology.

Currently, Roffelsen Plastics has two locations. Our headquarters are in the Netherlands, and we handle manufacturing in Slovakia. Via our network of distributors, our products are available to customers worldwide, serving various markets and customers of all sizes.

I'm looking forward to connecting with you all from the Dutch Slovak Chamber of Commerce and exploring potential collaborations.



Thanks for taking the time to learn a bit about us. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions, or would like more information.

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www.roffelsen.com



Welcome New Corporate Member

Rebeka van der Heiden

Culturally aligned outsourcing partnerships

Peoply is a dedicated recruitment partner for companies seeking IT talent in Central Europe. With our people-centred approach, we provide customized hiring solutions tailored to your specific needs. Recognizing the alignment between Central Europe and the Netherlands, we specialize in offering nearshore solutions, bridging the gap between exceptional talent and companies seeking cost-effective, culturally aligned outsourcing partnerships.



Peoply is the result of a decade-long journey that commenced after completing my business economics degree at the University of Amsterdam and delving into the world of IT by joining Infosys, a renowned IT consulting company. It soon became evident that many projects encountered challenges due to insufficient workforce solutions. When I relocated to Slovakia and transitioned to HR, it became apparent to me that traditional recruitment agencies often fell short in meeting the needs of companies and job seekers due to common malpractices: misrepresentation of job roles, lack of transparency about job requirements or company culture, and inadequate candidate screening processes. Peoply was founded in 2018 to revolutionize recruitment as an agency uniquely focusing on placing people rather than processes. Peoply offers companies insights into candidates beyond resume qualifications and adopts a personalized approach with each individual and company it collaborates with to prioritise transparency in recruitment.

Building on my Slovak roots and strong Dutch family and professional ties, Peoply bridges the gap between these two vibrant cultures. We assist Dutch companies in finding suitable matches on the Slovak employee market, while empowering Slovak candidates to advance their careers within the dynamic, tech-savvy professional landscape of the Netherlands.

We create value through nearshoring, offering cost-effective solutions with cultural alignment for your projects. Specializing

in creating and delivering fully-functional teams, we serve as your on-location partner to ensure seamless communication and collaboration. Our advantages include cost savings without compromising quality, access to skilled professionals, geographic proximity for enhanced management, market expansion opportunities, and alignment with the EU legal system. However, we're not limited to just nearshoring. We are also available to create local teams tailored to your needs, or deliver specialized individuals to fulfil specific roles or acquire skill sets, ensuring flexibility and adaptability to your unique requirements. To secure exceptional results, we bring together a team with a mix of global experience, fostering a warm and inclusive company culture, and keeping our team IT-certified and updated on the latest IT and HR trends.

Our goal is to solidify our presence in the Dutch market by fostering collaboration and talent exchange between Slovakia and the Netherlands. We are delighted to be a part of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, as it allows us to further reinforce our commitment to bridging the gap between these two vibrant cultures and economies.

peoply s.r.o.
Štúrova 11, 811 02 Bratislava
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Signify lights Bikoš, the first Slovak motorway tunnel fitted with efficient LED lighting, maximizing safety and sustainability.

Signify has raised the bar for safe and sustainable tunnel lighting in Slovakia with the tunnel lighting in the newly opened Bikoš tunnel, which forms part of the key R4 Prešov-Northern Bypass (Stage I). The first Slovak tunnel with environmentally friendly LED lights is equipped with full stainless steel tunnel lighting. A smooth lighting transition between outside and inside the tunnel ensures traffic safety with advanced control system and adaptive lighting. Signify supplied all the lighting systems with controllable Philips LED luminaires in the new tunnel and the entry roads to the tunnels.



Martina Vargaštoková
Signify MarCom Lead,
Central Europe

FACTS:

Investor

Národná Diaľničná Spoločnosť /
National Motorway Company

Location

Prešov, Slovakia

Opening date

25 September 2023

Partner

PPA Controll (Contractor-engineering services)
Tucon (Construction company)

In summer 2019, Národná Diaľničná Spoločnosť (NDS) began construction of the northern bypass of Prešov on the R4 motorway across Slovakia. As part of Via Carpathia, a transnational highway network connecting Lithuania with Greece, R4 is a strategic European corridor.

The first stage of the bypass, which includes the newly opened 1.2 km long two-tube Bikoš tunnel, was intended to significantly relieve the city of Prešov from traffic in the centre. The traffic volume is estimated to be 15 000 cars per day and the bypass saves drivers ten minutes of driving time.

Signify supplied the complete lighting system for the tunnel with 436 Philips FlowStar Gen2 full stainless-steel LED tunnel luminaires. Their build is suitable for the highly demanding and corrosive environments of tunnels, while LED technology significantly reduces energy consumption. The objective of the project was to build a traffic-safe tunnel with state-of-the-art lighting that is sustainable, energy- and cost-efficient, and has low maintenance costs. "The tunnel lighting is on 24 hours a day, around 8,760 hours a year. As the Philips FlowStar luminaires have a service lifetime of at least 100,000 hours, we avoid lamp replacement costs and only need to clean the luminaires once every year," said Eva Žgravčáková, NDS spokesperson.



Signify also supplied the Philips TunneLogic lighting control system, which was integrated with Bikoš's tunnel monitoring system, and was also responsible for programming, commissioning, and testing.

An advanced control system and adaptive lighting adjusts the lighting according to outside conditions, providing a natural transition between outside and tunnel light.

Signify Slovakia
BC Apollo II, Prievozská 4/B
821 09 Bratislava, Slovakia



Cloetta Slovakia invests in streamlining packaging

Cloetta Slovakia in Levice is the largest and most complex plant of Cloetta (Swedish company producing confectionary). The complexity relates to the number of production technologies and the number of candies produced with these technologies and the number of different types and sizes of packaging for our candies.

by:  **Marek Čukovič**
Production Manager
Cloetta Slovakia

Our Levice plant was established by concentrating the production of lines from a number of smaller plants of the company. This meant a high number of packaging lines specialised for one type and package size with relatively low performance parameters. With today's trend of rapidly changing demands

as regards consumer attractiveness of packaging and process efficiency requirements, this meant we had to address a conceptual change for our premium packaging – boxes.

The vision was clear, to replace the 4 current packaging lines and the box

formats produced on them with one high-speed line able to produce all box formats. We needed a modern line, but we also wanted to harmonize the total number of secondary types of packaging (displays) with the goal of reducing material consumption. Such a packaging harmonisation also



significantly contributes to the reduction of our environmental impact, as we use less packaging materials and further reduce the overall carbon footprint of our products by reducing the number of material transports.

The complex line was supplied by 4 companies from Italy and Slovakia. The line can pack at a speed of up to 300 boxes per minute at different box sizes and weights and load the boxes into different variants of the final displays. This flexibility offers new possibilities to satisfy our customers and we can continue to make our portfolio more attractive.

The new line also represents a significant streamlining of the box packaging process. The high level of line automation has resulted in significantly lower demands on the number of operators compared to the original packaging lines. The level of safety and work ergonomics on the new line is a very important factor increasing the satisfaction of our employees.



This machine type is also very much needed when we look to the future of our workforce, where manufacturing will only be attractive to employees if the machines are modern, safe and demand a certain skill level from the operator.

At Cloetta Slovakia, we have an excellent team of passionate people from production, maintenance, quality and innovation, who collaborated on the

project, installation and start-up of the line and I believe that together we will bring a new level of service to our customers.

Cloetta Slovakia s.r.o.
Ul. Zeppelina 5
934 01 Levice
www.cloetta.sk





The first Circular Summit 2024 was a huge success!

The first Circular Summit in Slovakia, a unique event of its type focused on the circular economy, was organised by Circular Slovakia, and ING Bank as general partner, implementing partners and other sponsors. The new format of the event exceeded the expectations of the organizers. From over 400 registered candidates, the organizers selected more than 200 candidates primarily from micro, small and medium enterprises from Slovakia and from abroad. The day-long event consisted of panel discussions, workshops and outreach activities.

Creating business through circular design

The goal of the event was to answer the questions that every beginner company on its circular journey asks. The event featured 1 keynote lecture, 5 panel discussions and 4 workshops to answer the why, how, for what, with whom and for how much as regards kick-starting circular processes. Representatives of the Dutch Embassy, Dutch experts who brought transformation tools such as CIRCO, the Slovak Business Agency and Circular

by:



Pamela Palková
Assistant
Circular Slovakia



Circular Slovakia,
Karadžičova 7773/2
Bratislava
info@circular-slovakia.sk
www.circular-slovakia.sk



Slovakia signed a memorandum of cooperation on stage to commit to actively supporting the implementation of effective tools among SME representatives in Slovakia.

CIRCO inspires and facilitates companies to create a circular business, using circular design. During three intensive workshop days, ten companies sought new opportunities and learnt how to start up a circular business using a circular design approach. "At the end of the CIRCO Track, the companies have a concrete implementation plan for a circular product, service and/or business model. Up to two thirds of companies get their idea to market," said Pieter van Os, CIRCO International Program Manager.

From theory to practice thanks to the circular exhibition

The summit addressed biotechnology, repairable circular design, new building materials and linking innovation with social entrepreneurship and included a circular exhibition, which attracted considerable interest from the audience and linked theory with the practical implementation of circular business models. "What made the exhibition unique were tangible examples of various applications of the circular economy. You could handle the exhibits, examine them, some could even be smelt or sat on," said Denisa Rášová, the President of Circular

Slovakia. The exhibition brought together 30 products and digital solutions from more than 20 exhibiting organizations from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

What was the feedback from the participants and what next?

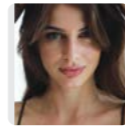
The event was highly appreciated by its participants. 63% of respondents stated that they had established a potentially useful contact thanks to the summit. 42% of respondents declared that they obtained a lot of new knowledge, 38% reacquainted themselves with knowledge already acquired and the remaining 21% plan to apply the acquired knowledge to their business in the short- (<1 year) or long-term (>1 year). Cooperation, inspiration and motivation were the most commonly cited words as regards what the respondents felt about the summit. Together, we laid a solid foundation on which to build a tradition of impactful Circular Summits with an international outreach, following the wider vision of the Circular Slovakia platform - to setup a new circular economy paradigm and the foundation for a more resilient business environment.

For further details, study materials and photos, see: <https://circular-summit.eu/aky-bol-circular-summit/> and the section "How was the Summit".



Facederma®

by:



Patrícia Rybárová
Marketing Manager
Facederma s.r.o.



Dear Muses,

At the core of our creation, each one of you inspires us. Our founder, Vierka Ondříková, a dedicated dermatocosmetologist, has always been captivated by the unique characteristics of European skin — its delicate nature, sensitivity, tendency towards dehydration, and susceptibility to redness. These distinct traits guided us when crafting FACEDERMA®, a brand that diligently caters to the specific needs of this skin type, while being influenced by the gentle transitions of temperate climates, where the beauty of the four seasons is most vivid.

Our skin, in the moderate climate zone, faces challenges brought on by the changing of the four seasons. Just as the seasons change, so do our skin issues. Winter brings the cold weather and indoor heating, summer is marked by intense UV radiation from the sun and air conditioning, and then there are the demanding transitional seasons of spring and autumn, when the skin has to work hardest to adjust to unexpected weather changes. Understanding the skin's natural cycle and crafting a complete skincare routine in harmony with it can be daunting, which is why we've done it for you at FACEDERMA®.



For instance, FACEDERMA® Facial Cream with Pearls and Alpine Rose Stem Cells is recommended for use during the day in winter months and at night during summer, thanks to its rich texture and high oil content that promotes regeneration. Conversely, FACEDERMA® Facial Cream with Silk and Comfrey Stem Cells is for use during the day in summer and at night in winter, due to its light, silky consistency and hydrating properties.

Facederma, s.r.o.
Líštie nivy 9
821 08 Bratislava
www.facederma.sk

FACEDERMA®



Dajana Rodriguez

is more than just a brand, it's the story of a young Slovak woman with Cuban roots who dared to dream and transformed her aspirations into reality. Over the last decade, Dajana Rodriguez has evolved into a leader in crafting handbags, backpacks, and fashion accessories. Let yourself be inspired by our unique pieces, which are not just fashion statements, but proud expressions of your individual style.

FACEDERMA® is born from an understanding that skincare must be as unique as the user, especially for European skin and all its nuances. Our products are not just formulations, but a tribute to the individual beauty of each person, offering targeted solutions that enhance and protect. We recognize the delicate balance required to nurture this skin type, and have developed our line with a profound respect for nature, cutting-edge science, and the particular dermatological needs of sensitive, thin skin.

Your skin's well-being is our priority, and we see you as our muse in this journey, guiding our hand in every product we develop. It is this focused approach that sets FACEDERMA® apart — we are not just creating skincare; we are creating a personalized experience that honours the individuality and specific needs of European skin types.

Embark with us on a journey where each season brings its own beauty and challenges, and your skin remains luminous, hydrated, and soothed, regardless of the seasonal changes.



Dajana Rodriguez
Vítazná 181/42
958 04 Partizánske - Veľké Bielice
www.dajanarodriguez.sk

DAJANA RODRIGUEZ

Ambulance of the Fire and Rescue Service

Professional services are established under the jurisdiction of the Fire and Rescue Service, which include engine service, anti-gas service, connection service, flood rescue service and fire rescue service.

Fire rescue services are provided by specialized ambulances in the specialized field of emergency medicine under the jurisdiction of the Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire and Rescue Service has eight specialized ambulances, which are located in all regional capitals of the Slovak Republic: Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Trenčín, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice. Fire ambulances were first operated when firemen in the 1920s established their own ambulances.



In modern times, the establishment of the health service department within the Municipal Fire Department in Bratislava dates to 1 January 1994. The service was placed under the technical squad. The Fire and Rescue Service was established on 1 April 2002 by Act No. 315/2001 Coll. on the Fire and Rescue Service, and the ambulance system began to develop dynamically into its present form. Currently, paramedics assigned to specialized ambulances in the specialized field of emergency medicine under the jurisdiction of the Fire and Rescue Service undertake, in addition to medical interventions, liquidation in the event of fires, technical interventions, ecological

interventions, floods, windstorms, calamities, etc.



The current ambulance of the fire rescue service is a modern fully equipped fire truck which, in addition to medical equipment, also contains firefighting technical equipment, which includes: thermal imaging camera for detecting heat radiation with a flat screen, battery-powered extrication tools - scissors, an opener, autonomous breathing apparatus, evacuation / extrication masks, fire axe, steel crowbar, lever scissors, throwing bag, climbing rucksack, static rope, evacuation scarf, fall arrester, aluminium carabiner, steel carabiner and other climbing equipment.

by:



pplk. Ing. Juraj Klátik
Vedúci oddelenia operatívneho riadenia – odbor riadenia hasičských jednotiek
Prezídium Hasičského a záchranného zboru



The automatic CPR resuscitator is used for external chest compressions as part of resuscitation and supports medical personnel during patient resuscitation in emergency medical service conditions.



It allows the user easy access to the patient's chest at any time, while diagnosis and treatment can be performed during resuscitation. The device is of great help to members of the Fire and Rescue Service and paramedics, for example, in the event of fires in apartment buildings, traffic accidents, events with a large number of injured people, and especially where many rescuers are needed at one time and in one place.

10 Years of Giving Back: A Look at the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce's Charity Work

In addition to the commitment the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce has to improve the business environment for Dutch companies in Slovakia, it also has a strong commitment to giving back to those in need. Over the years the Chamber has organized numerous charity events and has raised over EUR 250,000 of donations.

For 8 years, Beatrix Sidova has played a pivotal role in shaping the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce's (NCC) commitment to charitable causes in the Slovak Republic. As the Board Member responsible for Professional and Leisure Events and Charity, Beatrix has overseen a successful program of events that not only fosters connections within the business community but also leaves a lasting impact on those in need.



by:



Beatrix Šidová
Board Member for Events and Charity
Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia

The NCC hosts a variety of well-attended events, receiving positive feedback from members and guests. Two highlights include the vibrant Kings Day Celebration and the prestigious Annual Charity Gala Dinner. The Gala is a much-anticipated evening, offering top-notch entertainment, exquisite food, and fine wines. But the true heart of the event lies in its fundraising efforts.

Through the combined support of generous sponsors, members, and friends, the NCC has made a significant difference in the lives of people and organizations across Slovakia. Recent beneficiaries include:

- **De Paul:** Providing vital assistance to homeless individuals.
- **The Food Bank of Slovakia:** Fighting hunger and food insecurity.
- **Bring Back Life to Bela River by WWF:** A crucial environmental project promoting river restoration.
- **Slovak Fire Brigades:** Equipping them with a life-saving heart massage device.
- The selection process for choosing beneficiaries is rigorous. It is always of great importance to find the right projects – those that truly make a difference. Witnessing the positive impact on these organizations and the joy it brings is my greatest reward.

A Legacy of Giving Back

Regarding stepping down as Board member, Beatrix said: "My 10-year commitment is a testament to the NCC's dedication to social responsibility. By combining engaging events with impactful charity work, the Chamber fosters a vibrant business community while making a positive difference in Slovakia. Here's to many more years of the NCC's successful charitable endeavours, continuing to bring help and hope to those who need it most."

The Chamber and all its members are extremely grateful for all the work she has done and wishes her all the best in her future personal and business endeavours.

What keeps our members awake at night?

During March 2024, the Chamber again surveyed its members regarding the biggest challenges facing their businesses in Slovakia in the upcoming 12 months. The outcomes will allow the Chamber to prioritize its activities and sharpen its focus. The outcomes have shifted towards worries about the political situation.

by:

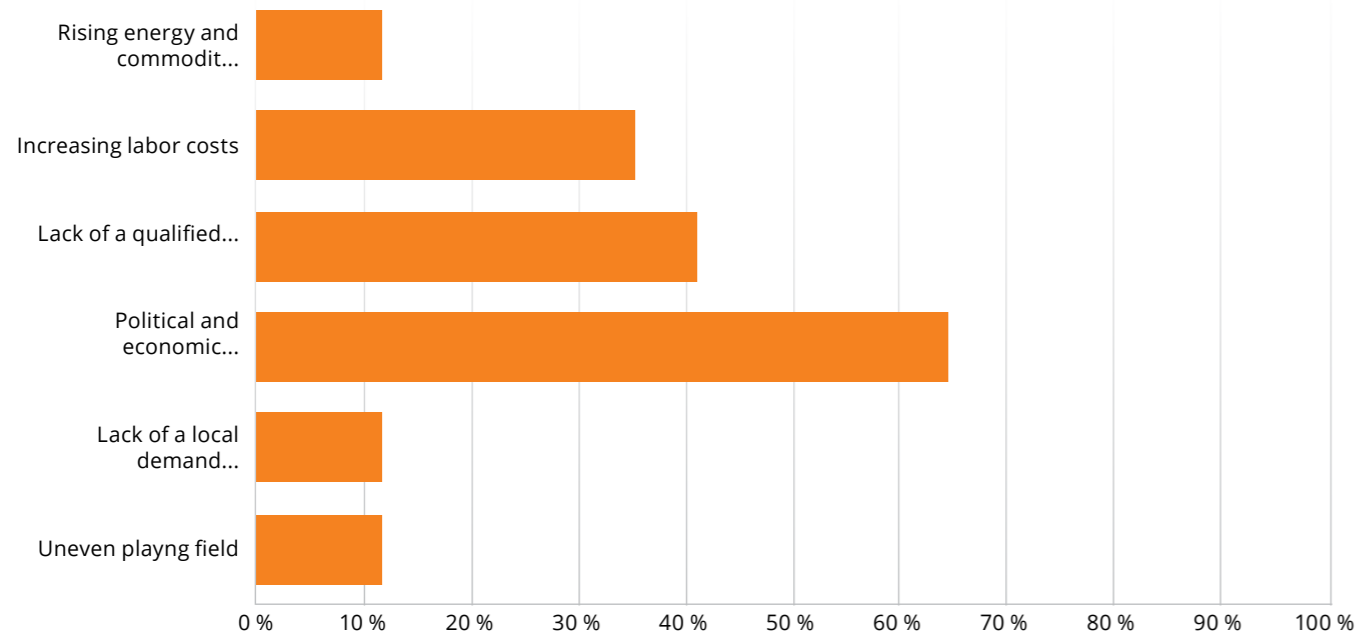


Gijs Van der Loo
President
Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia

Biggest challenges in the next 12 months

The first question our survey asked was, "What do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing your company in Slovakia in the next 12 months?" The war just over the eastern border, global energy and commodity price spikes, and the volatile political situation in Slovakia, all impact the business climate. The most common concerns expressed by members relate to political and economic conditions, with this answer being selected in 65% (+4%) of the responses. This outcome is confirmed by other chambers in Slovakia, and by recent

discussions that took place during the Patron's Dinner. A lack of qualified staff is of less concern for our members, scoring 41% (-13%). The slowdown of energy inflation has triggered a steep decrease in the challenge of rising energy and commodity prices to 12% (-19%). Increasing labour costs - 35% (-4%) and a lack of local demand for our products 12% (+4%) are at similar levels. An uneven playing field was mentioned for the first time by 12% (+12%) of the respondents, which is a knock-on effect of the political situation.



Our members made it clear that the outcome of the governmental and presidential elections have increased the level of uncertainty and trust in the political situation. Several members also indicated they expect the level of corruption to increase, which will hinder them in running a fair business in Slovakia.



Business outlook in 2024

Our second question asked members to rate business conditions in Slovakia in 2024 out of 5, with 1 being the worst, 3 satisfactory and 5 very good. The outcome of this rating is 2.94, which is below satisfactory. Business conditions in Slovakia in 2024 have worsened for the second year in a row (-0.2 compared to 2023).



Members' input to the Chamber - what can we do?

Finally, the survey gave space for members to express their opinion on what the Chamber could do to help improve the business climate in Slovakia for its members in the current business environment.

The answers to the open question on what we should be focusing on suggests 3 directions. Direction number 1 relates to collaboration with other chambers. The Chamber has been strengthening its relationships with other chambers via rule of law initiatives. The Chamber will organize a joint company visit with the Austrian Chamber later this spring. Collaboration between chambers is a priority for a number of chambers and will remain so. The next direction is the focus on rule of law, which after the outcome of the recent elections has become even more evident. The Chamber together with the embassy will be fighting strongly against any initiatives that would harm the rule of law. The third suggested focus point was setting up additional thematic content events, i.e. ESG, innovation, legislation, and mobility. The Chamber will reach out to its members to organize these events, starting with an event on ESG reporting later this spring.

The Chamber would like thank all of you for your responses and looks forward to working on these priorities together with you.





Rule of Law Initiative

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce is active in a number of areas, representing its members and seeking to improve the business climate, so that it benefits existing and new companies doing business in Slovakia.



Richard Kellner
Vice-President
Komerční banka, a. s.

One of the initiatives is the Rule of Law (www.pravnystat.sk). NedCham joined other organizations such as Business Alliance of Slovakia, National Union of Employers, Slovak Banking Association, Slovak Compliance Circle, Slovak Banking Association, Slovak Association of Finance and Treasury, and many chambers of commerce including American, French, German, or Austrian.

In 2014, 14 organizations came together (today 17) to work on raising issues related to rule of law in Slovakia and on engaging in dialogue with the related public authorities. The discussions include matters such as corruption, transparency and predictability of the legislative process, and transparent and efficient enforcement of law.

In December 2023, the initiative published a document that identified 7 problematic issues in connection with the legislative process as well as transparent and independent governance of public authorities. This document was delivered to the chairman of the Slovak parliament



and to the Slovak Prime Minister together with proposals for improvements. The initiative also prepared a similar document focused on young talent retention and on what could be done in order to improve deterioration on the labour market for young professionals.

We believe that all these are topic very relevant to the members of our chamber and that is very important that they are part of these discussions. Therefore, we will remain involved and keep you updated on any material developments related to this initiative.



Back to work

When: 28 September 2023
Where: The Ambassador's Residence

by:



Katarina Miklošová
 Executive Director
 Netherlands Chamber
 of Commerce in Slovakia

After the summer break and holiday season, we had the honour of hosting our annual welcome event for members and friends of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Dutch Embassy. Our host was the Dutch ambassador H.E. Gabriella Sancisi, who warmly welcomed us to her residence. She addressed us with her traditional speech, and then the President of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Gijs van der Loo, welcomed our guests.

In addition to the welcome speech from the ambassador and the president of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, we also presented our new Talent Garden project, which was the main topic of the last edition of the Bulletin. Four member companies participated in the Talent Garden project: Heineken, NN, ING Hubs and Union, which enables 12 student talents to get to know the functioning of these companies during a 12-month rotation cycle.

We also enjoyed the wonderful sunny September weather and the great atmosphere, which the well-known Dutch DJ André enhanced with his music. In addition, we had the opportunity to taste culinary vegetarian delicacies that were served throughout the event.



Patrons Dinner

When: 3 October 2023
Where: Baroza Restaurant, Bratislava

by:



Katarina Miklošová
 Executive Director
 Netherlands Chamber
 of Commerce in Slovakia

We held our exclusive private dinner for our patron members at Baroza, an interesting restaurant outside the centre of Bratislava, so our patron members could meet and discuss interesting topics in privacy, without disturbance. The ambassador accepted our invitation and attended the dinner, where she enriched the atmosphere with her positive energy. We thoroughly enjoyed this private dinner, with smiles on the faces of our guests as they enjoyed quality food and stimulating discussion.



Post-election Evaluation

When: 10 October, 2023
Where: Sheraton Hotel, Bratislava



Richard Kellner
 Vice-President
 Komerční banka, a. s.

On 10th October, the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia hosted sociologist, Mr. Michal Vašečka. He analysed the results of the recent parliamentary elections in Slovakia and our members obtained an in-depth insight into the election results and likely developments. We would like to thank Mr. Vašečka for a very interesting evening and enriching discussion.



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Risk & Regulatory in Slovakia

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Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG)

Finance of the Future

The Academy – PwC’s Educational Institute

Tax Services

Automated tax compliance

PwC Legal

Managed Services

Investments, R&D and innovation support in Slovakia

Workforce

Deals – Transaction services

Operational Excellence

Corporate Management Consulting

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Mussels and Fries: A Culinary Evening by the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce

As the proud organizers of the traditional Mussels and Fries event, the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic welcomed guests to an unforgettable evening on 19th October 2023 at the trendy Liquid Factory in Bratislava. Our mission? To celebrate the rich culinary heritage of the Netherlands and Belgium while fostering meaningful connections among business professionals.

When: 19. 10. 2023
Where: Liquid Factory, Bratislava



A Feast for the Senses

The venue buzzed with anticipation as attendees stepped into a transformed space. The air carried the tantalizing aroma of freshly cooked mussels, and the clinking of glasses signalled the start of an extraordinary gastronomic journey. The cook prepared a great dinner featuring Dutch mussels (yes, we know, the quantities could have been larger), accompanied by a delightful selection of Belgian beers and international wines, and of course a lot of fries with mayonnaise! The Liquid Factory's historical Art-deco ambiance provided the perfect backdrop for this culinary adventure.

Networking with Flavour

For us, this event was more than just a feast-it was an opportunity for networking, collaboration, and camaraderie, as many return year after year. Business leaders, entrepreneurs, diplomats, friends, Belgians, Dutch and Slovaks, all mingled, sharing stories and insights. The clatter of mussel shells became the soundtrack to new partnerships forming, ideas sparking, and friendships blooming. As the night unfolded, we witnessed the magic that happens when diverse minds converge over a shared love for good food.

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce remains committed to creating meaningful experiences for our members and the broader business community. We would also like to thank Indalo for sponsoring this event. The Indalo company delighted our guests with its delicious Belgian chocolates and traditional Belgian beer.



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INDEPENDENT NETWORK MEMBER

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Web
union.sk/union-dusevne-zdravie, is where you can find an overview of all our activities.

Facebook group and instagram profile
Union pre zdravú dušu (Union for a Healthy Soul), is regularly updated with interesting content for you to enjoy.

Podcast
Zdravá duša (Healthy Soul), in which you can listen to conversations with experts on pressing topics.

Brochure
Kompas Sprievodca duševným zdravím (Compass Guide to Mental Health), is a one-stop resource for all the information you need, presented in the form of infographics.

Zdravotná poisťovňa

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You matter



18th Gala Charity Dinner

When: 11 November 2023
Where: Grand Hotel River Park, Bratislava

by:  **Katarína Miklošová**
Executive Director
Netherlands Chamber
of Commerce in Slovakia

One of the most important events of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce is its charity evening. We have already had the honour of organizing this evening 18 times and have received significant financial support for those who need it most. This year, we decided to focus on helping save lives and supported the Fire Brigades of the Slovak Republic by purchasing a portable device providing automatic chest compressions that will help in the most critical situations. We want to express a huge thank you to our sponsors, members and friends who joined forces and were willing to help those who need it most.

As in the past, we again held an online auction before the charity evening, where our members and friends could bid on exclusive stays, gifts and vouchers, and in this way support our project. Sponsors of the online auction included Dajana Rodriguez, Chef Parade, Arval, Face Derma, Sulinka, Jub Holland, Raj zdravia, Palawi, Albrecht's house, Tour4U, Hillbridges and the Hairless salon.



Throughout the evening, we were accompanied by the wonderful moderator, Lucia Šipošová, who with her charm and energy contributed to the success of the live auction, during which we raised a significant amount of funds. The sponsors of the live auction were KLM, Spin Bar, Dolphin Central Europe and the Fire Brigade of the Slovak Republic. After the auction, there was a raffle, where guests could win attractive prizes. Raffle sponsors were Sojka Resort, Ivana Matejková, Tour4U-DMC, Cloetta, VGD, Jub Holland, Heineken, Sulinka, Dolphin Central Europe, BRNDS, BRNDS & NL Chamber, Arval and VGD.





Our main goal, to raise enough funds to purchase a life-saving device, was accomplished and we ended the official part of the program by handing over a cheque. The President of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, Gijs van der Loo, had the honour for the first time during his tenure to hand over the cheque and device to the representative of the Fire Brigade of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Lt. Col. Ing. Juraj Klátik.

After the end of the official part of the charity evening, dinner was served, which was prepared for our special guests by the renowned chef, Mr. Židek. Guests could choose from a large selection of quality wines from sponsor, Reinhold Hofman and the HIC Company. The atmosphere of the evening was enhanced by the wonderful singer, Ivana Regešová, with her wonderful singing and energy. Ivana prepared a great surprise for the Dutch guests and honoured them with a song in their native language. The guests had fun until the late hours of the morning, which was a positive response for us.

A huge thanks goes to our financial sponsors: CTP, ING Hubs, PWC, Philips, Arval, ING, KB banka, Hairless, VGD, Union, Heineken, NN and NL Embassy, without whom we would not be able to organize this type of event.

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Annual General Meeting New Years Toast

When: 7 February 2024
Where: Sheraton Hotel, Bratislava

by:



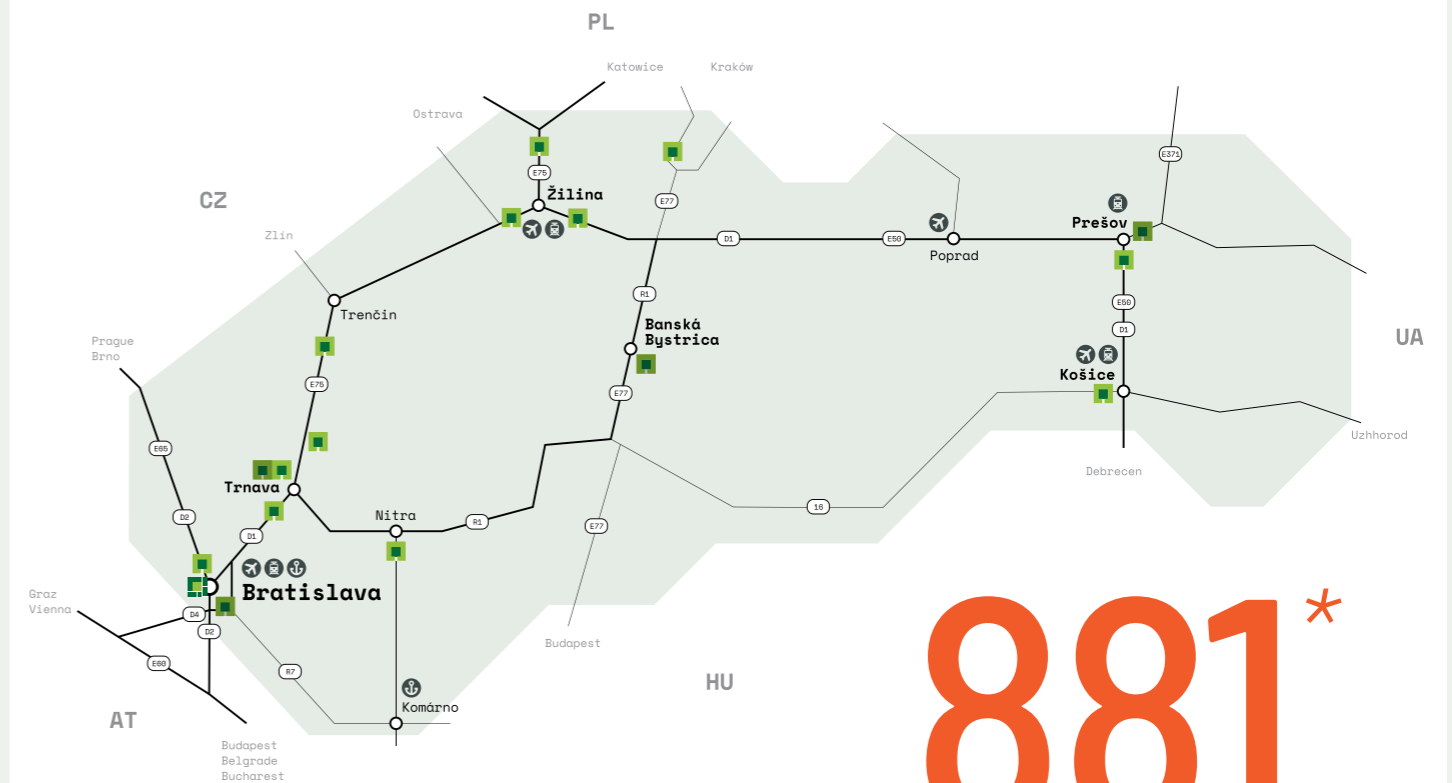
Katarína Miklošová
Executive Director
Netherlands Chamber
of Commerce in Slovakia



The annual AGM took place on 7 February 2024 at the Sheraton Hotel. We shared an overview of the chamber's activities from the previous year with attending members. Members also had the chance to vote on the re-election of Beatrix Sidová to the board, in addition to welcoming new board member, Ab Olde-Scheper. After the meeting, we enjoyed New Year's drinks, and there was a fantastic turnout of attendees at the celebration.



CTParks Slovakia



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* as at 31. 12. 2023



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Water Retention



Zero waste initiative



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ing.jobs/sk



HAVE A
NICE DAY