

# Bulletin

1 | 2018

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic



## Focus on:

- 20 Years of the Netherlands Chamber
- Interview with New Ambassador
- FDI from the Netherlands

## Events:

- Back to Work Business Cocktail
- Mussels and Fries Evening
- 20th Anniversary Celebration with Charity Fundraiser
- Patron's Dinner

# IN 192 COUNTRIES AND NEVER LOST IN TRANSLATION

## THERE'S MORE BEHIND THE STAR



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DAVINCI software s.r.o.



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**Marco Den Dekker**  
Membership  
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**Igor Mandryš**  
Director  
Cloetta Slovakia



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## Bulletin info

Bulletin is a magazine published quarterly by the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic

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Front cover:  
20 year of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce  
in the Slovak Republic

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# The President Speaks



**Jan Lamber Voortman**  
President of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce

Dear Members and Friends,

This bulletin in front of you, covers the busy part of 2017 at the Netherlands Chamber. We, and by this I mean the Netherlands Chamber and the Netherlands Embassy, teamed up at three events, two of which were added to the calendar last year.

First of all, we welcomed our new Ambassador H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast. We were delighted that the Back to Work Cocktail event was hosted at the residence of the new ambassador and we really appreciate this gesture. We also held the Patrons' Dinner at the residence. During this dinner, we discussed business topics with patron members and we had a deep dive into Slovak politics with Mr Gregorij Mesežnikov. We hope that this year's elections will see a higher turnout.

A new event was created - a women's soccer match was held in Senec in November, which had a great ambience and great food was served.

The Mussels and Fries event was again enjoyed by all. Our sponsors, mainly from Belgium, helped us organise a very enjoyable evening.

Some of the board members and Mirka went to Jasov to visit our charity project of last year. We got to see where the money was spent and we very glad to see that our charity money was put to good use. When you hear the story during the visit that a mother finally can live with her three kids again, which were taken into care in the past, then you really feel you have made a difference. Thanks again to the sponsors and auctioneers of last year for supporting this admirable activity.

The 20th year celebration dinner was held at Riverside Park. Many guests told me and other board members that this event was the best ever. We are very thankful for the hard work of the preparation committee (Mirka, Elena and Beatrix) and we raised EUR 10,000 for Aksen in Piešťany. We are glad that our Chamber has a stable track record and is still appreciated after twenty years.

We always appreciate hearing any ideas you would like to share with us, which will help to improve the Chamber. Please contact Mirka and we can schedule an appointment and discuss. For any business-related matters, I am available at [jlvoortman@me.com](mailto:jlvoortman@me.com).

Enjoy reading the new Bulletin and I hope to speak to you soon at the Chamber events,

Jan Lamber

# List of Members

## Patron Members:



## Corporate Members:

Advokátska kancelária Mgr. Štefan Rybovič, s.r.o.	HIC Slovakia s.r.o.	pro4CE s.r.o.
Aon Central and Eastern Europe	Hillbridges s.r.o.	Radisson BLU Carlton Hotel Bratislava
AS Trenčín a.s.	iCultura s.r.o.	Sheraton Bratislava Hotel
AspenStaff s.r.o.	ING Business Shared Services B.V.	SOCIA - Nadácia na podporu sociálnych zmien
BUSINESS LEASE SLOVAKIA s.r.o.	JUDr. Milan Žoldoš, advokát, s.r.o.	Start People s.r.o.
cargo-partner SR s.r.o.	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	Techo s.r.o.
Crowne Plaza Bratislava	Komerční banka a.s., pobočka zahraničnej banky	TheConcierge s.r.o.
Dolphin Slovakia s.r.o.	Koppert s.r.o.	TNT Express Worldwide s.r.o.
DOZEN s.r.o.	Larive Slovakia s.r.o.	Union poisťovňa a.s.
Euro Planit s.r.o.	LeasePlan Slovakia s.r.o.	VGD SLOVAKIA s.r.o.
Ewals Cargo Care s.r.o.	Lugera & Maklér s.r.o.	WorkSpace Europe
Falkensteiner Hotel Bratislava	Mazars Slovensko s.r.o.	
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GEMOR Fashion s.r.o.	NMH s.r.o.	
GHS Legal s.r.o.	Philips Slovakia s.r.o.	

## Individual members:

Robert Machalíček

## Honorary members:

Anton van Beek	Paul Verlinden
Emile Roest	Richard van Rijjzen
Miroslava Tvarog Michalková	Rob Swartbal

## Want to become a member?

Check the membership options on [www.netherlandschamber.sk](http://www.netherlandschamber.sk)

# Welcome New Members!



■ **JUDr. Erik Schwarcz**  
Attorney at Law



■ **JUDr. Pavol Horňák**  
Attorney at Law



■ **Ondrej Vilinovič**  
Director

## GHS Legal

We started GHS Legal based on our previous experience at a large Slovak law firm, where we came to believe that legal services can be provided less formally, allowing us to better understand a client's needs, as we can get closer to the client. Our approach to clients brought success and positive feedback from our clients and we are expanding as a law firm – the number of our employees has risen from 4 in 2011 to 20 in 2017 and this made it possible to open an office in Prague, Czech Republic.

Our clients are multinational and local companies that are leaders in their sectors.

Our team consists of young and progressive people, so we can bring a new fresh approach to our clients' work, and resolve their legal problems.

We have extensive project experience and bring added value, as we are lawyers who really understand our client's needs and issues. We focus on effective solutions from a legal and managerial point of view.



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[www.ghslegal.sk](http://www.ghslegal.sk)

## TheConcierge

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G&P is a leading provider of total quality management services to the automotive and aerospace industries. G&P provides independent inspection, rectification and technical services and has a deep understanding of the unique quality, efficiency and profitability requirements of customers.

Quality, knowledge and service are at the heart of G&P's value proposition and it strives via practical involvement and senior level interaction, to gain a deep understanding of clients' specific needs and requirements. This has resulted in strong, long standing client partnerships. G&P are proud holders of The Queens Award for Enterprise: Innovation 2016.



■ **Marco den Dekker**  
Director

# Welcome New Board Member



■ **Igor Mandryš**  
Director Cloetta Slovakia

On 1 August 2017, Igor Mandryš was appointed Manufacturing Director at Cloetta Slovakia in Levice. Igor Mandryš is Slovak and has worked in the brewery industry for 27 years. He has been working at Heineken since 1998. He has extensive experience in various supply chain positions in Slovakia and abroad. He has worked in Slovakia as a departmental manager in engineering (Nitra), packaging, logistics (Hurbanovo) and later on became a brewery and malting manager (Rimavská Sobota). In 2006, he continued his career abroad as a brewery manager in Hungary (Sopron) and the Czech Republic (Krušovice) and as a supply chain manager in Belarus, where he was also part of the country management team.

Igor has extensive experience with people and organization development, change management and continuous improvement programs (TPM)



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# 20 Years Timeline

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 20th anniversary. To mark this occasion, we look back at some of the achievements and visits we have undertaken as well as new members we have welcomed and highlights we have enjoyed.



1997 - establishment of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia

1997 - 2003

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Slovakia  
Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

## Revitalization of the Chamber activities



## New members

Bartošík and Šváby, PNO Consultants, Hrivis holding, Iura Edition, Otto Slovensko, UPC, Compaan, probugas, Ahold, Hotel Danube, CW Consulting, TNT Express Worldwide, Socia - Social Reform Foundation, YES Interim Management Solutions, Mazars, Gemor Fashion, Océ-Slovesnká republika, Grafton, Peterka and Partners, Lease Plan, Shell, Exact software, ASN Metal

2004

## Members:

Aegon Levensverzekering, ING Bank, Tatra banka, Business Lease Slovakia, JMučto, KPMG Slovensko, Symsite Research, TMF RERO, VGD Podzimek a Šuma, Q-Nova, Van Aarsen, Heineken Slovensko, Royal Brinkers Slovakia, Getronics, Peter Bartošík, Peter Bollardt, Šimon Meliš, Tepede Slovakia, Viena International, Dolphin Slovakia, Ewals Cargo Care, Royal Metaalunie



1994 - 1998  
H.E. Gajus Scheltema

1998 - 2002  
H.E. Henk Soeters

1997 - 2000  
H.E. Lubomír Kopaj

2000 - 2004  
H.E. Ján Kuderjavý

2005

1st issue of magazine of the Netherlands Chamber called Bulletin



H.E. Laurent Stokvis

## Key events

Opening of honorary consulate in Prešov

Culinary Mission



2nd Charity Gala dinner for handicapped children in Hnusta

€ 3,529



Cloetta

Union Poistovňa

## New members

PriceWaterhouseCoopers, ASB Slovakia, Union poisťovňa, Convoi, ABN Amro Bank, Larive Slovakia, Leaf Slovakia, Galik Gunis and Partners Law Firm, Advokátni Kancelar Polverini Strnad, Industrial Park Chemko

## Key events



Queen Beatrix arrived in Bratislava - first 3-day official visit to Slovakia - Bratislava and Košice

2006

## New members

Crowne Plaza Bratislava, AS Trenčín, Golf Development Sekule, Circle Investment Support Services (Slovakia), ISC Real, Exact Recruitment

€ 2,556

1st Charity Gala dinner collection for hospital in Spisska Nova Ves

H.E. Rob Swartbol - new ambassador to Slovakia

## Key event



€ 7,070

3rd Charity Gala dinner collection for St. Anna's project in Spisska Bela

Hans van Essen (ING bank)

Emile Roest (VMZ)

H.E. Rob Swartbol

H.E. Oksana Tomová



4th Charity Gala dinner collection for Barlicka in Presov  
**€ 13,467**



New Year Reception

**Key events**



Visit to Leaf (now Cloetta)



6th Charity Gala dinner collection for Naruc in Zilina  
**€ 16,000**



**New members**

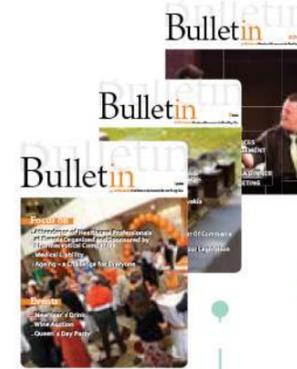
Licitor Group, Hoektransport, Hillbridges, Randstad, Start people, Sheraton, AspenStaff, DVSK

**Key events**

20 Year of Shell in Slovakia

1st Netherlands Chamber golf tournament in Hainburg, AT

20 years of ING in Slovakia



**€ 16,000**

**New members**

Conweco, Pinnacle Consulting & Investments

**2008**

**New members**

Crowne Plaza Bratislava, AS Trenčín, Golf Development Sekule, Circle Investment Support Services (Slovakia), ISC Real.



Chamber visits members in Košice and Prešov

**Key events**



**Economic crisis hits Slovakia**

**2009**



5th Charity Gala dinner collection for Majak in Zlate Moravce  
**€ 27,000**



**2010**

**New members**

Techo, TSR, Radisson, Cargo group, Lotos, Gemma, Havel & Holasek, HSBC, Class

Visit to Continental Automotive Systems, Witzemann Slovakia, Kuster, Evonik Fermas

1st Mussels & Fries Evening

**Key events**

Political party Speakers Series

**2011**



7th Charity Gala dinner collection for Majak (Lighthouse) in Sady nad Torysou  
**€ 18,500**

20th Anniversary of ING in Slovakia



2nd NL - Chamber golf tournament in Hainburg (AU)

**New members:**

Templar Metal, Carnogursky ULC, City Hotel Bratislava



Visit to Cemmac, Teleperformance Slovakia, Zumtobel

**Key events**

2007-2016 Emile Roest (VVMZ)

## Key events

Last Queen's Day celebration  
Blind wine tasting



Visits to: Gemor, Topvar brewery, Bischoff et Compagnons, Immopark, Faurecia, ETN, Sharkam catering, DCBA in Košice, Prešov, Bratislava

### New members:

Komerční banka, ETN, Goodwill magazine, Goodwill Realty and Invest

CEE The Opportunity Seminar Series

Hillbridges 5th anniversary



10th Charity Gala dinner collection for Navrat  
€ 30,000

Visits to: PSA (Peugeot Citroen), Inalfa roof systems, Wertheim, Spa Piestany, Schenker, Bohunice Nuclear Power Plant

## Key events



12th Charity Gala dinner collection for St. Norbert Social House in Jasov  
€ 15,000



TMF 25 years in Slovakia

## Key events

Goodbye to NL Ambassador Richard van Rijssen, and hello to new ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast



Visiting Cloetta in Levice



Trip to the East

### New members:

Winterpack, Pro4CE, NMH, TheConcierge, GHS Legal, G&P Quality Management, ING Business Shared Services

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

### New members:

Park Inn Danube Hotel, EWE, Dozen



Tax Seminar

Meeting the new Slovak president Mr. Kiska

1st King's Day Celebration

Visit to: Gebruder Weiss, Jungheinrich, NMH



Wine Experience

## Key events

### New members:

HIC Slovakia, Workspace Europe, Grand Hotel River Park, AK Štefan Rybovič



Slovakia and Netherlands chair the EU commission

The year of orange culture

Visits to: Koval systems, Mikrotech, Spanner, PLS, Scheidt & Bachmann, Immopark and ECCO

Goodbye to Emile Roest, and hello to Jan Lamberts as Chairman of the NL Chamber

## Key events



13th Charity Gala dinner collection for AkSen  
€ 10,000



### New members:

Falkensteiner Hotel, AON Central and Eastern Europe

€ 22,000  
9th Charity Gala dinner collection for Betania in Bratislava



2007-2016 Emile Roest (VVMZ)

Jan Lamber Voortman (DAVINCI)

H.E. Daphne Bergsma

H.E. Richard van Rijssen

Henk Cor van der Kwast

H.E. Jaroslav Chlebo

H.E. Roman Bužek

## Interview with Ambassador

## Henk Cor van der Kwast



Kingdom of the Netherlands

*On June 23rd, Dutch Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast started his new mission in Slovakia. Bulletin magazine asked about his first impressions, challenges and goals. Bulletin was invited for an exclusive interview in the impressive setting of the Ambassador's residence .*

**Bulletin:** You have had an impressive career so far, working on different continents and in cities such as New York, Bangkok, Geneva and Brussels. Why did you choose this position in Bratislava?

**Ambassador:** It was actually in my top 3 favourite locations to work next. After having been involved mainly in multilateral work for the last four years, it was my preference to do something bilateral again. I have been negotiating international treaties covering significant themes like human rights, disarmament and the European Union. This varied from monitoring acceding countries to the EU zone on conditions like human rights and corruption to developing and executing non-proliferation disarmament and security policies for countries like Iran and North Korea, where a nuclear threat is involved. But also more management oriented activities like trade negotiations and consular work in a large embassy like Bangkok, where I also worked closely with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce.

The position as ambassador in Slovakia however enables me to add a personal touch. It has more cultural involvement, with also a strong focus on European politics. I have three reasons why this was a preferable choice for me. I worked with Slovaks before in the UN and they always stand out due to their eager and good performance. Despite the fact that Slovakia is a relatively small country it has left its footprint. It is a young state that is eager to move forwards. Just look at the Declaration of Bratislava they produced during their Presidency of the EU, which is still considered the base of the current EU work in progress. Like the Netherlands, Slovakia was one of the NATO countries active in Afghanistan. Last, but not least, Central Europe has an increased importance for us due to its key location connected to the east. Slovakia is a key actor in the Visegrad 4. Also since the Netherlands are losing an important close partner due to Brexit, it is important for us to look for new partners. Cooperation with adjacent partners such as Belgium, Germany or France is obviously good, but things are now more complicated and challenging in Central Europe. The current position

taken by Putin and the developments in Ukraine require good EU cooperation.

Slovakia uses the Euro and takes a key position in this region. In the field of transparency there is work to do, but they are well ahead of some other countries. The Rule of Law has been well integrated and further strengthened. We, as Europe and the Netherlands, still have important work to do in this region and Slovakia can play an important role. As a young state they have the ambition to become a core player. When I handed him my credentials President Kiska said "For us, it's key to be a strong partner in the European core group". We, as one of the six founding partners of the EU, can only embrace such statements.

Slovakia is an important member of the V4 (Visegrad 4) and is performing very well from an economical perspective. With their constructive attitude, this is a valuable entrance into this important platform for the Netherlands. Topics of concern in the EU, like for instance immigration, are on the table for further discussions. We both take an active role in the United Nations. The Slovak Foreign Minister is the Chair of the General Assembly and the Netherlands is an incoming member of the Security Council (UNSC). Slovakia has been said to be "punching beyond their weight", proving their strong ambition here as well.

Let me conclude that I see many opportunities and look forward to working in and with Slovakia in this dynamic environment.

**B:** You have been here now for a few months. What are your first impressions?

**A:** I have to say really positive. First of all I found a great dynamic and enthusiast team of professionals at the Embassy. Their positive drive is infectious. I can tell you this is not self-evident, so I was glad to notice this.

Soon after my installation, I travelled the country and visited key cities like Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice. I talked with government officials, visited companies and Dutch entrepreneurs and explored the country. The countryside and historical cities are beautiful and Slovakia has a rich history. It is good to see many of the Dutch community are so well integrated from an economical perspective, but also culturally. The Danubiana museum by Gerard Meulensteen is a perfect example of this, and I have already visited it on several occasions.

**B:** What are your short and long term goals?

**A:** We are renovating the Embassy offices as we speak. I managed to keep us located in the existing offices, which are perfectly located near the city centre and add to the stature due to the beautiful historical building. It is the perfect setting to welcome guests and very representative and it was our preferred option ahead of relocating to a new modern building. Setting an example, we are reconstructing it as a so-called green embassy, recycling as much material as possible. Floors are constructed from recycled material, for instance. We consider this a signal of what we emphasize as important. The circular economy is the future and the Netherlands wants to lead in this field. We can show by example its importance and how it can be used as a competitive



Attending Women Soccer match. Senec, November 2017



Back to Work Business Cocktail at the Residence, September 13, 2017

edge. We will move back in in November and in January all work will be completed. In February, we will organize a reception for all members of the chamber and for Dutch citizens to have a look at the renovated Embassy.

In 2018 Slovakia celebrates its 25th anniversary and a lot of projects are at hand to celebrate this. It an even more special historical occasion, as Czechoslovakia was actually founded in 1918, exactly 100 years before. We are working on a documentary on 25 years of Slovak-Dutch relations and have planted a special tulip in the garden of the Presidential Palace.

For the longer term, we aim to strengthen the trade relationship between Slovakia and the Netherlands. Currently, Slovakia is ranked 37th on the list of trading partners and this can be improved. We will do this by promotional activities and visits, working with Chambers of commerce and, for example, the Slovak ambassador in the Netherlands. We plan speed-date meetings with Dutch companies and will be networking at the Ambassadors' conference, to name a few. We strive to intensify contacts with Dutch (related) enterprises in Slovakia and motivate and invite them to contact us if they have any questions or suggestions. We are currently updating our database and aim to soon complete a full listing of Dutch companies in Slovakia to support these goals.

We are aware the eastern part of Slovakia is of substantial importance for the further growth of the economy but also from a political and personal Slovak interest. In close cooperation with our Consul in Prešov, Matúš Murajda, we are investigating how we can best support this region.

Generally we focus on 4 core topics, where we as the Netherlands can provide added value being:

- Water management
- Automotive
- Circular economy
- Technology

Solutions for urban renewal and dual education are also topics in which we will get involved, as well as corporate social responsibility as we consider this an asset in which field the Netherlands might be still modest but actually shows a strong and perfect example.

As mentioned, education has our special attention as well. We are getting in touch with Slovak students that studied in the Netherlands to discuss educational topics. We find they have a good bond with NL and are important in the network discussing this topic. We aim to exchange programs and we reintroduced the so called "Cleveringa Lectures". Cleveringa was a professor from the Leiden University who defended the interest of Jewish colleagues during the war. Professor Dr Veraart from the Netherlands gave a lecture and a workshop on the Rule of Law in Trnava last November. As round lecture, we had meetings with

the State Secretary of Justice, Maria Kalikova, and a group of prominent judges and lawyers.

The last topic we have to mention is defence politics. We aim for strong partnerships to exchange point of views and knowledge and intensify relationships in this field, and considering the strategic position of Slovakia, this is also a field of potential cooperation.

**B: Is there a certain strategy you implement to achieve these goals?**

**A:** We have a skilled team and historical experience obviously but we use, for example, culture and arts as a way to strengthen relationships. Good examples are the organization of the film festival "One-world" and the workshop organized by Dutch filmmaker Hans Busstra for Slovak movie and TV producers.

The increased cooperation with the Dutch chamber is also an important tool for us. From my personal experience in Africa and also in Thailand, where we even worked from a shared office building, I am aware of the positive effects of such a partnership. We look forward to exchanging data and experience and working together on topics and projects where we have a shared interest. The strong Dutch Chamber is a great partner for us.



## Bio

Name: Henk Cor van der Kwast  
 Nationality: Dutch  
 Date of birth: 5th of January 1959  
 Married, three children

### Professional Experience

Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Disarmament Ambassador at large, Geneva

Deputy Head of Mission/Head Economic and Political Department Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Bangkok

Head Non-Proliferation, Disarmament, Arms Control and Export Control Policy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Chairman of the non-proliferation working group of the European Nuclear Energy Platform (ENEF). Deputy Head Political Department Western Europe / Section Head Southern Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Netherlands Commissioner for the Benelux.

Counsellor Political affairs Netherlands Permanent Representation to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva  
 Chairman of the local Geneva group

Senior policy maker European Commission Brussels.  
 Counsellor for Democratisation programmes with OSCE and UN programmes

Senior policy advisor International Organisation Department, Legal and Social Affairs (UN, EU, OSCE and Council of Europe) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Taskforce Prepcom OPCW  
 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Hague MFA. Representing the Netherlands in the Prepcom OPCW.

H.M. Embassy in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Secretary of Embassy and Deputy Chief of Mission

Policy advisor Western Hemisphere Department.



### Education

Diplomatic Training

Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Bologna, Italy

Groningen University Contemporary History and International Law

### Rewards

"Chevalier dans l'Ordre de Mérite" France (contributions to Franco-Dutch cooperation 2006).

### Languages

Dutch native speaker.  
 Fluent in English, French and German.

# Greetings from the Ambassadors

to the 20th Anniversary of The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Over the years, we have had the honour of collaborating on many occasions with the Dutch and Slovak embassies. This has always been a positive experience and our close and effective cooperation continues.

In this special edition of Bulletin magazine, we look back and ahead at the work of Dutch entrepreneurs in Slovakia.

We asked ambassadors to Slovakia and the Netherlands who have served in the Slovak Republic or in the Netherlands over the last 25 years to share their view of Slovak-Dutch relations with us. We asked the ambassadors 3 questions in short interviews.

by:



1

What is your experience of the relationship between the Netherlands and Slovakia?

2

How have Dutch companies developed in Slovakia and what would be your advice to them for the future?

3

How do you view the Netherlands Chamber and its close cooperation with the Netherlands Embassy and what would you wish them on this special occasion - their 20th anniversary?



## H.E. Gajus Scheltema

1994 - 1998 Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Slovakia

I had the pleasure and honor to establish the first diplomatic relations between our two countries in 1994, a year after the split between Slovakia and the Czech Republic. I remember arriving at Hotel Danube on my own, and leaving the country four years later, with a fully functional embassy and 12 staff!

Those were exciting times, for Slovakia, searching for its new identity, and for us at the embassy. I realized very quickly that your country should not be underestimated and the rapid economic development has proved that point. Slovakia can be very proud of its achievements over the last twenty five years.

Dutch companies were more hesitant to enter the Slovak market than the other Visegrad countries in the beginning, as the country was less known and the market relatively small. But we managed to convince many big players to come, and

I remember Heineken buying Zlaty Bazant relatively early on and investing heavily into that plant. But the main interest in Slovakia grew after a few years of wait and see. Today, Dutch investments rely largely, if not completely, on local expertise and management, which makes much more sense. And having the euro is a definite asset!

Chambers, when well run like yours, can be a tremendous asset in terms of know-how, negotiating power, visibility and advice. They allow the Dutch business community to meet and exchange views on the market and local government policies. The embassy can and should assist in this process by bringing their own added value and network. I wish the Chamber all the best in future and a continual important role in the Slovak market!



## H.E. Laurent Stokvis

2002 - 2006 Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Slovakia.

I was asked to write about my experiences with investment and trade between the Slovak Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the Netherlands ambassador to the Slovak Republic from 2002-2006. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations for all that the Chamber accomplished during those years under the inspiring leadership of Mr Hans Jacobus van Essen, the General Manager of ING and NN in Slovakia. These were formative years, as the Slovak Republic was getting ready

to become a member of the European Union and succeeded in becoming a member at the same time as nine other countries on 1 May 2004, having made up for lost time earlier during the previous years of preparations.

Dutch enterprises realized early on the possibilities that Slovakia offered and had already made important investments in the country at a time that accession to the European Union was

a distant prospect and foreign investments were much needed to smooth the transition from a state-led to a market economy. Heineken, ING and Nationale Nederlanden were among the pioneers with smaller companies, some of which sold out to larger entities once they had successfully introduced modern manufacturing and management techniques at the companies they had acquired. Other companies replaced them, stayed and developed successfully. The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce helped them practically and by being a point of contact where members could exchange ideas.

- The embassy strongly supported the Chamber in its efforts to increase investment and trade links between Slovakia and the Netherlands. The Chamber was also a useful conduit for information from the embassy to the Dutch business community on accession negotiations. At the same time, the embassy also benefited from interaction with the Chamber and the Dutch business community in its work regarding the accession negotiations, both from the perspective of frequent fruitful contacts with different parts of the Slovak government and as input for the Netherlands position in the accession negotiations.

- This interaction with the Chamber contributed to the embassy's conviction that the country would be ready to assume the responsibilities of membership of the European Union at the

same time as the other nine candidate countries, even though it had made a late start in the necessary preparations. Since then, the Slovak Republic has become a valued, responsible and successful member of the European Union, a country that has developed considerably since 1989, 1993 and 2004. Even though many eyes are now turning to new opportunities worldwide and in particular in the Far East, let's not forget the considerable opportunities our mutual investment and trade between Dutch and Slovak businesses offer. I encourage the Chamber and the Netherlands Embassy in their important task of highlighting these opportunities to the mutual benefit of the Dutch and Slovak peoples. During my stay in Slovakia, I saw tremendous change and progress, but the work is never finished and Dutch companies will be a part of helping Slovakia to progress even further.



## H.E. Oksana Tomová

*2006 - 2011 Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands*

- The relationship between the Netherlands and Slovakia was always positive and between 2006 and 2011 it improved even further in all areas of our mutual cooperation. The state visit of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix to Slovakia in 2007 was a milestone for the existing bilateral ties and opened doors for a closer cooperation in trade and culture and paved the way for a successful collaboration in the military field (NATO/ISAF in Afghanistan). We also received very valuable know-how from the Dutch before joining the eurozone in January 2009.

- At that time, there were only a few Dutch companies with a presence in Slovakia (including Shell, Heineken, ING). It was very important for us to develop contacts at regional and municipal levels to provide opportunities for SMEs. We established contacts that still exist today and that led to a number of significant

initiatives. The Netherlands has been an inspiration for Slovakia in the area of innovation and new technology in particular, and today it is a sector with significant opportunities for further growth and benefit for both countries.

- Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on this special occasion. The Netherlands Chamber has helped to develop the relationship between our countries and continues to promote new projects to strengthen our bilateral cooperation. I wish the Chamber a very productive and challenging future and excellent partnership with the Slovak Embassy and other partners.



## H.E. Daphne Bergsma

*2009 - 2013 Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Slovakia.*

- How nice and what an honor to be asked for a contribution to the booklet celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia.

It is almost five years ago that I left Bratislava, but I think regularly about the good times I enjoyed in this lovely country where I made many friends. Our bilateral relations were strong; we still had both Slovak and Dutch soldiers cooperating in Afghanistan. The Slovak soldiers guarding ours in Camp Holland. A heavy responsibility, which was performed in an excellent way! This cooperation laid a solid base for relations. We do not always agree but the basic trust in each other is there and helps us in understanding each other.

- Dutch companies were finding their way to the Slovak Republic, but not yet enough of them. The country was unfortunately not known well enough among Dutch entrepreneurs. A pity, because the successful Slovak automotive industry offered, and offers, them excellent business opportunities. I still remember my visits to automobile industries, every time realizing how exceptional the production of cars was: more cars per head produced than anywhere else in the world!

Every time I meet Dutch businesspersons, and I do so travelling around Europe in my new position as director of the Europe

Department, I tell them to try the Slovak market, explaining that the country being in the Eurozone has so many advantages.

My first official visit, after going to the ministry of Foreign Affairs, was of course to the Dutch Chamber of Commerce to meet Mr Emiel Roest. He explained to me the ins and outs of doing business in the Slovak Republic, which helped me a lot on my visits throughout the country looking for business opportunities. Together with the Chamber we organised seminars on corporate social responsibility and environmental issues. We also found each other on social events: we closely cooperated in organizing "Koninginnedag" (our national day celebrating the Queen's, now the King's birthday) and Sinterklaas (the Dutch St Nicolaus which we celebrate on December 5.) By doing this we created a bit of Dutch culture and Dutch 'gezelligheid' in Bratislava.

- I wish the Chamber all the best and success in getting more and more Dutch businessmen and women to invest and start their business in this 'small' (just a little bit bigger than the Netherlands) wonderful country which has so much to offer! GOOD LUCK!



## H.E. Jaroslav Chlebo

*2011 - 2015 Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands*

- There is no history to our relationship, nor do we have a sea, which is a very important element of Dutch identity, but on the other hand, we also do not have any "open issues". Having served recently as the Ambassador of my country to the King-

dom of the Netherlands, I would welcome more intensive communication, between the political establishments in particular, but also people-to-people contact, the same can be said about entrepreneurial activities. And here the relationship is much

richer. There are some differences between us, but there are far more commonalities, so there is a lot of room to cooperate.

● The initial search for new opportunities by Dutch companies is over. They are carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages of activities in Slovakia. For Slovak companies, I have only one simple piece of advice – to overcome hesitancy due to the distance of over 1 000 kilometres and be more active on the Dutch market.



## H.E. Roman Bužek

*From 2015 Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands*

● The relations between our two countries have been excellent since a long time ago. Co-operation has been progressively developing in all spheres. We are happy to see increasing numbers of people visiting the other country. At the same time, I think that there is still a big potential for Dutch tourists to discover Slovakia, its unique location and history, its touristic attractions and Slovak hospitality. Business cooperation has been developing in a very satisfactory manner as well. As Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to The Netherlands I am truly glad that there has been a huge trade surplus on the Slovak side for a long time. I hope that the “Good Idea Slovakia” campaign will attract even more Dutch interests and businesses to our country.

● The companies on both sides are now firmly established on the market and have very positive results. However, we have to keep in mind that today’s world and business are full of challenges and issues to deal with. Still I am confident for the future as both our countries are performing economically very well, they have strong economies and a firm position in the European Union and the eurozone. Both the balanced bilateral affairs as well as sound relations and constructive cooperation

● I appreciate it very much. I had a chance to benefit from it. We have organized a series of activities for various Dutch entrepreneurs with an excellent response from them. It is an invaluable asset to have a partner like this. I wish you lots of persistence and entrepreneurial creativity.

of our countries within the European Union are a key basis for the progressive and constructive future in business. I believe that close cooperation and smart combination of the potential of our two countries in different fields can be the incentive for even more successful Dutch-Slovak business cooperation in the near future.

● Chambers of Commerce generally play a very important and irreplaceable role in the development of all sorts of business co-operation between the countries, and more specifically they link people together. The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia has been doing this for a long time. Firstly, I would like to congratulate your predecessors for their decision to establish the Chamber twenty years ago in a completely different situation, my country was not then a member of the EU. But it turned out to be a smart and truly strategic decision, especially since my country joined the EU in 2004 and subsequently introduced the common currency in 2009. So let me wish the Chamber and its distinguished members another 20 very successful years with many smart business decisions.



# The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic

non-profit civil association  
est. 1997.

## Membership Benefits

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce is a meeting place for people looking to conduct successful business in the Slovak Republic or the Netherlands and a place to exchange information.

The main purpose of the Chamber is to provide extensive support for commercial and other relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic and to support and protect the common interests of its members, primarily:

- to assist members with networking and lobbying
- to promote Dutch and Slovak businesses, particularly those of our members
- to support the exchange of information, know-how and experience among the members
- to promote investments and trade with Slovakia

- Chamber members are invited to all business events to network and socialize
- Members can attend most Chamber events free of charge
- Enjoy priority over non-members at all events organized by the Chamber
- Promote your company in The Bulletin, on the website and via other channels
- Receive the Chamber’s quarterly magazine – The Bulletin

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact us at:

Moskovská 13, 81108 Bratislava  
Tel.: +421 944 308 441  
e-mail: [director@netherlandschamber.sk](mailto:director@netherlandschamber.sk)  
[www.netherlandschamber.sk](http://www.netherlandschamber.sk)

# Foreign Direct Investments from the Netherlands

Foreign direct investments (FDI) from the Netherlands to the Slovak Republic are at a record high. According to the latest statistics of the National Bank of Slovakia they have reached almost EUR 10.3 billion, which is one quarter of total FDI in Slovakia. Although not all of these investments are of Dutch origin, they leave a significant footprint on the Slovak economy.



The structure of inbound investments of Dutch companies in Slovakia has a broad range. The most common investments are industrial manufacturing, finance and insurance, sales centres and logistics. The investments in industrial production were in various sectors, i.e. automotive, plastic production, electrical, and mechanical and construction engineering. The largest employers are Cloetta, Semecs, Heineken, ING Bank, Inalfa Roof Systems and Rademaker in Western Slovakia. However, Dutch companies also have a significant presence in Eastern Slova-

kia, which was one of the reasons for establishing a Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the third largest city of Slovakia - Prešov. As regards the size of companies, SMEs such as Fiberstruct are also exploring the potential of Slovakia and have chosen it as one of their next locations in addition to the Netherlands.

From 2002 to 2016, the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) assisted 12 investment projects by Dutch

companies that were expected to create more than 2 000 new jobs in total and saw investments of approx. EUR 188 mil. In 2017, SARIO continued to liaise with potential investors from the Netherlands and provide them with assistance for site selection, tailor-made labour market analyses, investment incentives and R&D support consultancies, as well as sourcing opportunities and other activities.

We see great potential in new investments as well as expansions from Benelux countries including the Netherlands. Established companies are particularly aware of the business environment and benefits that Slovakia offers, i.e. strategic location, proximity and chance to penetrate new markets and the highest growth in added value in manufacturing among OECD countries. In addition, Slovakia is the CEE leader in transferring new technology from FDI to the host country (Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017). This ability is, inter alia, due to the labour force which has the highest productivity in the CEE, and competitive costs are on average three times lower than in the Netherlands. Slovakia has potential not only in the expansion of existing activities, but also as regards starting new operations with higher added value and moving up the value chain. An example is ING bank, which has been active in Slovakia since the early 90s and has located one of its two main ING shared service centres in

Bratislava to support ING banks with their banking processes worldwide.

Potential segments that Dutch and Slovak companies could further explore mutually are not only traditional industrial sectors but also other prospective areas like ICT, eco-mobility, water management, renewable energy sources, agriculture, services and R&D. One in three companies in Slovakia undertake innovation activities, either via a technology centre, or as support to their parent companies and subsidiaries abroad. Slovak companies are also innovating by developing globally competitive products and services in various segments and are often closely linked with the automotive industry, i.e. software development, mechanical and electrical engineering, industrial automation and material research.

Investments in R&D, application of environmental processes, corporate social responsibility and openness to continual improvements are characteristic features of Dutch companies. The implementation of new technologies and transfer of know-how, which is assisted by FDIs from the Netherlands, significantly contributes to the Slovak economy, supports growth in innovation activities and strengthens cooperation between the countries.



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Focus on

# Higher EUR,

## Higher EZ Rates in 2018

While the euro and EZ rates should take a pause for breath in coming months, we expect both to rise meaningfully around the summer next year as the ECB will be approaching the end of the QE programme and forward-looking markets start pricing in an eventual deposit rate increase.

by:



**Petr Krpata,**  
Chief EMEA FX and IR  
Strategist



With the European event of the quarter (the October ECB meeting) behind us and President Draghi yet again working his magic (by making the QE tapering announcement a non-event and in fact pushing the euro and euro zone yields lower) we expect EUR/USD to take a pause for a breath. The cross should stay in the 1.15-1.20 range over coming months. This is because (1) it is clear that the ECB asset purchases will stay with us at least until Q3 2018; (2) Italian elections likely in March 2018 should limit the upside to bund yields.

Equally, with Jerome Powell being picked as the nominee as next Fed Chair, the likely resulting continuity of the current Fed stance (cautious gradualism in policy tightening) also suggests fairly limited scope for any dollar rally. Hence our expectation of upcoming range-trading in EUR/USD. As for EZ rates and yields, the "lower for longer" ECB QE suggests a very limited upside to local rates, at least over the coming months and until the Italian elections in March 2018.

While pausing for breath now, we look for EUR/USD to record the second discrete jump higher around mid-2018 once Italian election risk is out of the way and the full ending of ECB QE is closer. Moreover, we also expect forward looking market participants to start pre-positioning for a normalisation of the ECB de-

posit rate towards zero (currently at -0.40%) in H2 2018. Indeed, in the same way FX markets pre-positioned for the upcoming ECB QE tapering already this summer and well before the event actually happens, we expect the same pattern to recur, with expectations of eventual ECB deposit rate increases. This should drive EUR higher and above the EUR/USD 1.25 level next year.

The upcoming ECB monetary policy normalization and its exit from the ultra-loose unorthodox stance also suggests a non-negligible increase in EZ yields and rates next year. Firstly, we expect long-term yields to rise in response to the anticipated end of the QE programme. Then, and with some lag, it should be the short-term financing costs that are likely to rise as the market starts pricing in eventually higher ECB deposit rates.

As for the spillover into emerging market currencies, the anticipated higher EUR/USD means that the Central and Eastern European currencies (CZK, PLN, HUF and RON) should continue outperforming the rest of the EM FX segment as this is the only EM region which neatly and directly benefits from higher EUR/USD. This has been very clear on CEE FX gains against USD so far this year. Needless to say, we expect CZK and PLN to appreciate against EUR given the strong fundamentals both currencies exhibit.

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# Proposed Changes to Slovak Tax Laws as of January 2018

As of 1st of January 2018, new taxation rules will come into force following amendments to the Income Tax Act (SITA) and VAT Act.

by our member:



**Branislav Kováč,**  
Tax Partner



## CHANGES IN SITA

### EXIT TAX

One of the most significant changes to SITA is the introduction of an exit tax. The obligation to implement rules for exit taxation stem from Article 5 of the EU Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD).

The aim of exit taxation is to ensure taxation of capital gains when a taxpayer moves its assets or its tax residence to a different state than the state in which the gains were created, even though this gain is unrealised at the time of the exit. Based on the proposed rules, taxpayers will be subject to tax at an amount equal to the market value of the transferred assets at the time of the exit of the assets, less their value for tax purposes.

Exit tax will be payable immediately, or in instalments over a five-year period (deferral option with interest). Payment in instalments will only be possible where the company moves its activity to another EU Member State, to a country in the European Economic Area, or a state with which there is an agreement on mutual assistance in the recovery of tax claims. The payment of exit tax in instalments will not be possible where a serious risk of non-recovery exists.

### SUPPORT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Amendments to SITA will introduce changes to the preferential regimes which the Slovak tax system offers to tax subjects undertaking R&D. The goal is to enhance and support R&D in Slovakia. Accordingly, the patent box allows exemption from corporate income tax for revenues from licence fees for the provision of intangible property developed in Slovakia, up to 50% of these revenues.

The exemption according to the amendment will apply to revenues (licence fees) from the provision of discoveries protected by a patent registered in SR and EU, technical solutions protected by a utility model, which are the result of own R&D, and software subject to copyright, which is the result of own activity of the company claiming the exemption.

The exemption can also be applied under the same conditions to a portion of revenues from the sale of products. The only condition is that the intangible property owned by a company claiming an exemption was used during the production stage.

In both cases, if the company claims an exemption, it is obliged to keep records of related costs and submit them at the request of the tax administrator within 8 days.

Amendments to SITA change the super deduction rule. Based on

the new rules, the company can claim a deduction of up to 100% of R&D costs.

## CHANGES TO THE VAT ACT

The first draft amendments to the VAT Act were withdrawn in September 2017 and were followed by new draft amendments introducing the following changes:

- Obligation to provide a guarantee/collateral for persons with tax arrears of EUR 1 000 or more. This rule applies to both individuals and legal persons.
- Amendments set out conditions for VAT representation, i.e. a foreign person does not have the obligation to register for VAT purposes if it is represented by a tax representative.
- Change to conditions for triangular transactions for the first supplier, which may not be established in the Member State of a second supplier.
- The amendments allow for all taxable persons, i.e. domestic and foreign, execution of a summary invoice for rent and supply of electricity, gas, water and heat for 12 calendar months.

•Data on the purchase of used motor vehicles from another EU Member States must be reported by a VAT payer in a standardized form, which will be published on the portal of the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic.

•For control purposes, amendments to the VAT Act impose on taxpayers the obligation to report separately in their records goods that are supplied free of charge for humanitarian and charitable purposes.



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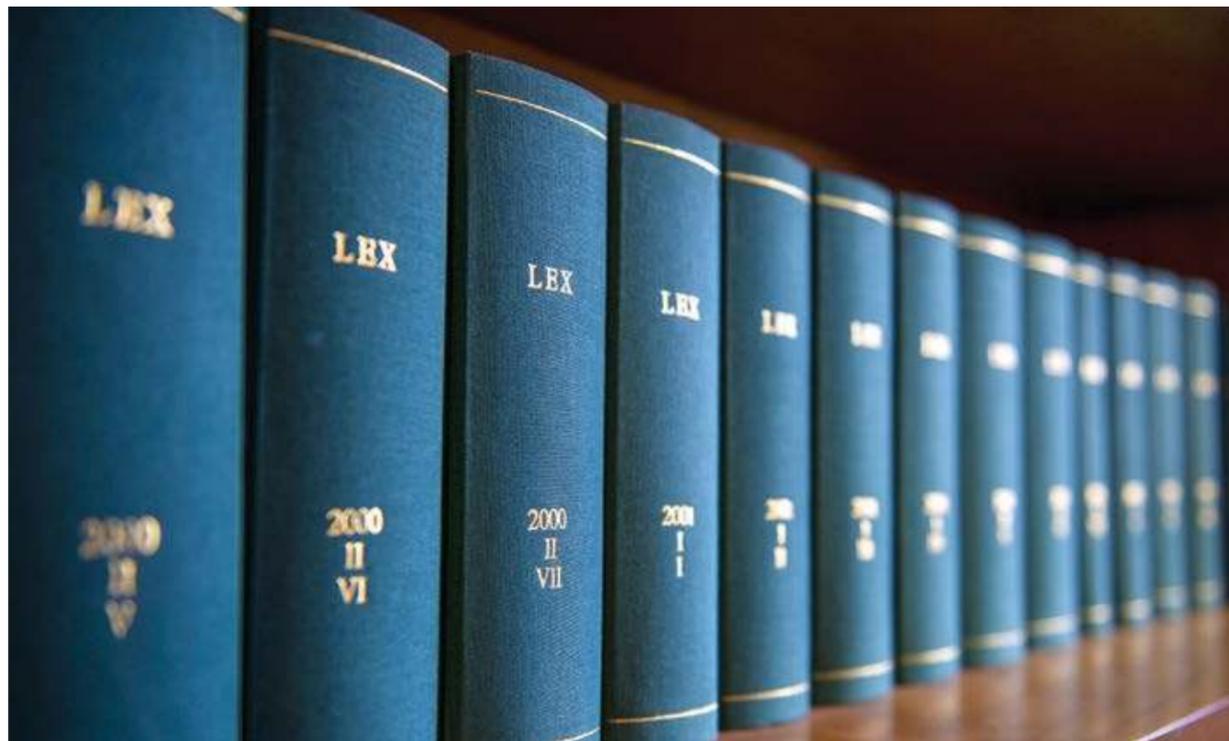
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Prague 410 km	Vienna 260 km

# Legal Update

Q3, 2017

by our member:



Parliament approved a **substantive amendment to the Commercial Code**, which will be effective as of 1 January 2018, while provisions on merger restrictions will have immediate effect from publication.

One of the aims of the above amendment is **to combat fraudulent mergers and fraudulent transfers of companies**, by which businesses avoid due liquidation, and the company's creditor suffer damage. In particular, transfers and mergers of companies will be restricted if a company is in liquidation, bankruptcy or being dissolved. In addition for mergers, an independent auditor will have to con-

firm that the surviving company will not have negative equity due to the merger.

The amendment also introduces several measures which may **increase the liability of companies towards their creditors**. For instance, if a parent company caused the insolvency of its subsidiary, the parent company may become directly liable towards creditors of its subsidiary.

The concept of **direct liability of shadow management** is also introduced. Under certain circumstances this may apply when a manager of a parent company influences the business of a subsidiary without formally being part of the subsidiary's management.

Under the amendment, a person with **debts to the Social Insurance Company** will no longer be able to establish a new company or transfer ownership interest in an existing company.

**Distribution of other capital funds** to shareholders will be subject to a **60-day notification in the Commercial Bulletin**, in which the amount of the distribution must be published.

To unify rules governing public projects, companies registered as **public sector partners** will have to pay their **sub-contractors within 30 days** of the delivery of goods or services by the subcontractor **when working on a public project**.

More severe **penalties for a breach of duty to file for bankruptcy** are introduced if a director fails to timely proceed with a company bankruptcy. The director may be liable up to the amount not satisfied in bankruptcy proceedings.

As of 1 January 2018, an amendment to the **Patent Act** significantly reforms its **employee invention regime**. The changes include clarification of **the right to register a patent that belongs exclusively to the employer**, and an employee's duty to notify the employer of such an invention.

To encourage entrepreneurs to invest in **R&D**, a government proposal for an **amendment to the Income Tax Act** introduces the concept of a Patent Box in the form of **tax exemptions from income generated by the use of Intellectual Property**, including granted and registered patents, utility models and software created by the taxpayer.

The Income Tax Act amendment also implements EU **anti-tax avoidance practices** that directly affect the functioning of the internal market, in the form of **exit tax policy**. Under certain circumstances, when transferring business, assets or activities from Slovakia, a tax of 21% on

the economic value of all capital gains generated in Slovakia (presumed amount if there was no actual gain) will be due.

The Ministry of Justice introduced new measures regarding the **Freedom of Information Act**. The main aim of the amendment **is to extend the scope of public authorities and public companies obliged to provide information regarding their decision-making** to the public.

A draft of the new Act on Property Seizure **facilitates seizure of property originating from criminal activities**. Under the proposal, authorities may seize property even before formal criminal charges are filed, so the charged person cannot transfer or hide their property. The proposal also amends the Criminal Code and introduces **a new criminal offence of obstructing the administration of tax**. Such an offence has a broad definition and it may under certain circumstances be committed by failing to notify or by providing false data to the Slovak Financial Administration.

As of 1 January 2018, **employers will have 7 days to register new employees with the Social Insurance Company**. Under the previous regime, even a slight delay was

considered as illegal employment with severe consequences to employers.

**A new criminal offence of Unfair Company Liquidation** will be introduced to combat "straw man" practices, i.e. situations where the ownership (or directorship) of a company is transferred to another person ("straw man") to prevent due liquidation, and thus harming the company's creditors.

The Parliament approved the new **Personal Data Protection Act**. The new Act will harmonize Slovak legislation with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which will be directly enforceable in all EU member states from **May 2018**. One of the Act's benefits will be **a reduction of the administrative burden**, i.e. by reducing the documentation needed for SMEs (i.e. companies with up to 250 employees).

# Start Up: Makan

## Indonesian restaurant, with a Dutch twist!

Indonesian cuisine is inseparable from Dutch cuisine. Everyone in the Netherlands is familiar with meals such as Sate, Nasi-Goreng and ingredients such as Ketjap and Sambal. And in supermarkets all over Holland you will find large sections devoted to Indonesian cuisine. Bulletin was therefore happily surprised that Bratislava is the first city in Central Europe to welcome an authentic Indonesian restaurant. Bulletin enjoyed a great meal and asked the owner of this start-up, Andi Wilian, among other things about his relationship with the Dutch.



**Bulletin:** Tell us a little about yourself.

**Andi:** I am from Indonesia, I was born in Sumatra. However, I lived in Sydney, Australia for more than a decade and that's where I learned to cook and started to have a passion for food.

**B:** How did you end up in Bratislava and what made you decide to open a restau-

rant here?

**A:** For the same reason as many expats that decide to stay here; I met a Slovak girl. I met her in Sydney and decided to come back with her to Slovakia and explore this "unknown" country. When I first arrived seven years ago, there were few opportunities to taste the Asian cuisine here. After a while, I started to miss the

food I grew up with and the idea was born to start my own Indonesian restaurant.

**B:** We see on the menu the familiar Dutch word "rijsttafel". Can you tell our readers about it?

**A:** Well, literally translated into English it means "rice table", but it also includes the traditional Indonesian "Padang food"



which combines 8-12 different dishes. The Dutch took to it, it is a perfect experience combining the many variations of Indonesian cuisine into one meal. We want to introduce this tradition to the locals here.

**B:** What is the connection between you, your restaurant and The Netherlands and the Dutch community in Bratislava?

**A:** The Dutch have eaten Indonesian food for many decades and among my guests I am happy to meet many of them at my restaurant. I often welcome NL-Embassy staff, for example, and I am proud to serve them a taste of back home. I also support the Dutch economy, as most of my fresh ingredients are imported from The Netherlands - this is still the only place to buy Indonesian food supplies in Europe.

**B:** How is the taste of your food experienced by Dutch and Slovaks?

**A:** For Slovaks, we are trying very hard to balance the Indonesian taste experience to their expectations. This is a daily challenge, as some spices are new to them and very unlike the taste of traditional Slovak food. For the Dutch, there is no need for this balance, as they are used to the food. However, since food from Sumatra (where I come from) is a bit more spicy than, for example, food from Bali (more

common to the Dutch), I do sometimes ask them what level of spiciness they prefer.

**B:** How do you decide on your menu?

**A:** According to local tradition, we offer a complete lunch meal which varies every day of the week and includes a soup. In the evenings, we welcome a wider audience and have also started to offer an international selection of wines. We will soon start with a live music night and will start to do catering events. We have a terrace and a separate dining room for special occasions and we can be flexible if guests have any special requests.

*Makan is open every day of the week and we recommend eating here to experience the tasty variations of the excellent freshly-prepared meals they offer!*



**Address:**  
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# Back to Work

## Business Cocktail

*When:* September 13, 2017

*Where:* Ambassador's residence, Bratislava

**We would like to thank our generous partners:**



*H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast (Netherlands Embassy), Beatrix Šidová (ING Bank) and H.E. Willem Van de Voorde (Belgian Embassy)*

The first networking event after the summer holiday was the traditional Back to Work Business Cocktail. Chamber members opened the autumn working season with this traditional event. The get-together and opening of the busy autumn season was

hosted by H. E. Henk Cor van der Kwast at his residence in Bratislava. It was a successful and pleasant evening in a great atmosphere.



*The host of the event, H.E. Mr. van der Kwast, receiving the guests*



*Beatrix Šidová, Netherlands Chamber board member, opening the event*



*Marian Tatar (ING Bank), Joppe Jansen (Merck) and Ján Šeliga (TMF Services Slovakia)*



*Štefan Rybovič, AK Rybovič and Lenka Lauková, Netherlands Embassy*



*Roelof Winter and Katka Winter from WIPA and Laurens de Man from Pro4CE*



Odin Goedhart, Heineken



Coffee by Dallmayr



Great wines from Fine Wines



Marian Volent (US Embassy), Wouter Siemes (EuroPlanit), H.E. Adam Sterling (US Ambassador), Erik Heidema (Pro4CE)



M. Čajko (Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and L. Piršel (Green Building Council)



Ondrej and Michal Viliňovič from TheConcierge received by H.E. Mr. van der Kwast



Kamila Pudišová, TMF Services Slovakia, Dino Ajanović, TNT Express, Mirka Michalková, NL Chamber



B. Šidová, M. Tatár, T. Lehocká (ING Business Shared Centre) and Igor Mandryš (Cloetta)

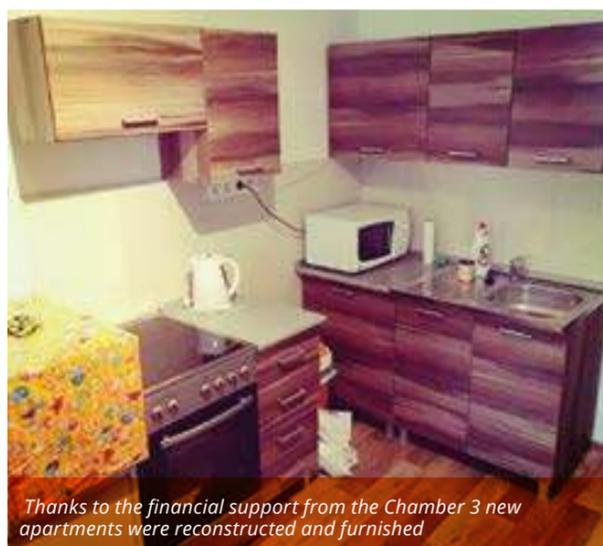


# Visiting Jasov

## Mission Accomplished

*When:* September 20, 2017

*Where:* St. Norbert Social House in Jasov



*Thanks to the financial support from the Chamber 3 new apartments were reconstructed and furnished*



*The great result would not be possible without the support of the members of the Chamber*



*Representatives from Usmev ako dar and the Chamber with sweet gift from Cloetta*

Mission accomplished! The 12th Annual Charity Gala Dinner 2016 supported the reconstruction of St. Norbert Social House in Jasov. On September 20, we visited Jasov and we are happy to report that the reconstruction has been a success and we wish

the residents all the best. We would like to thank all our members for supporting the Chamber's charity activities.



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# Speed Business Meeting

## After Summer Edition

*When:* September 27, 2017

*Where:* Austria Trend Hotel Bratislava



The end of September meeting had the theme of new business contacts and there was a Speed Business Meeting. This networking event is a unique platform to present company products and a great opportunity to create new business part-

nerships. But it wasn't all about work – after this event there were business cocktails.



# Sport's Day 2017

When: September 30, 2017

Where: Sport Center Pavla Gleska, Bratislava

We would like to thank our generous partners and sponsors:



Sometimes it's not just about business meetings, seminars, conferences, but about competition between teams of foreign chambers. The Foreign Chambers Sport's Day has a long tradition and each year this event brings various chambers and their members together for friendly competition and a good time.

This year was a success for the Chamber, thanks to the relay-race winners from UNION. Everybody gave their best and contributed to the great atmosphere. Thank you Union, ING Bank, TMF Services and DAVINCI for representing the Netherlands Chamber during Sport's Day 2017.



Runners from ING bank



WINNERS! Fastest runners from UNION!





DAVINCI team



TMF Services Slovakia team warming up before the start



# Business Ladies Day

*When:* October 12, 2017

*Where:* Hotel Altes Kloster, Hainburg



On 12 October 2017, Hotel Altes Kloster in Hainburg was full of successful, hard-working business ladies. After the welcome drink, the ladies revealed their secrets to success at a panel discussion. Then the event continued with training sessions and

lectures on all kinds of topics. Workshops and presentations were also part of a rich and motivational program. We hope that every business lady found something that will contribute to their career progress.



*Maria Berithova, president of the Austrian Chamber, opening the event*



*Ladies from Lugera*



*Vera Wisterová, host of the event*



*Z. Komorechova, owner of Kompava, and Kamila Pudišová, Client Services Director of TMF Services Slovakia*





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# Speed Business Meeting in Košice

When: October 18, 2017

Where: Doubletree by Hilton, Košice



A successful event to gain new business contacts was held in mid-October in Košice. This event provided an opportunity to present the companies of participants and talk to others. This

event creates a great environment to establish new partnerships and drinks were served in a relaxed atmosphere.



# Mussels and Fries Evening

*When:* October 19, 2017

*Where:* Sheraton Bratislava Hotel

*We would like to thank our generous partners and sponsors:*



Mussels and fries is a special delicacy which is very popular in Belgium and Holland. We wanted to give our Dutch and Belgians members a taste of home and introduce this delicacy to Slovak members for the 8th time, due to the great popularity in last years. Our members again enjoyed various delicious

food and drinks on this beautiful October evening. There were mussels from Netherlands, fresh fries, coffee, tea, and traditional Belgian beer and wines. There was also something sweet for everyone in the Belgian pralines selection. Thank you to all those who participated.



*Ab Olde Scheper (Dolphin Slovakia) and Tomáš Michálek (AspenStaff)*



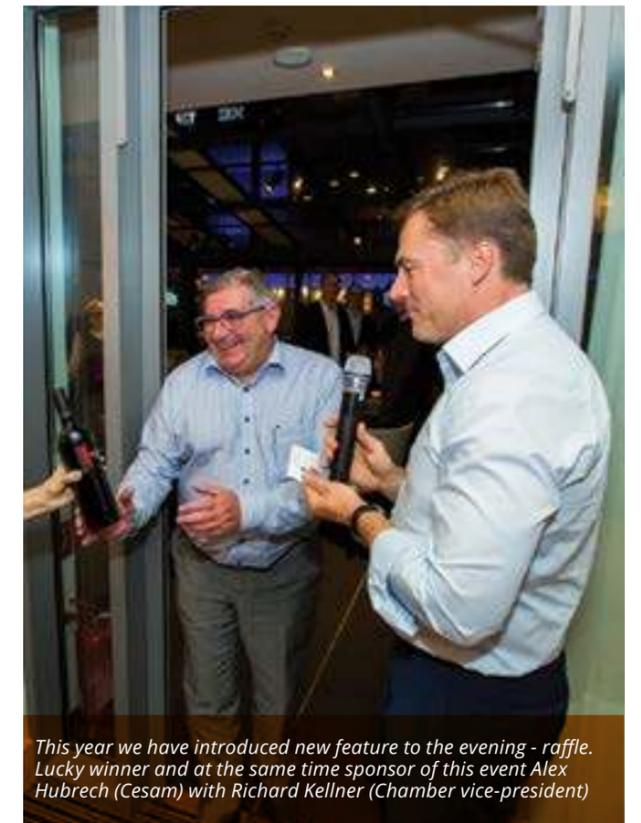
*Odin Goedhart (Heineken) with guests*



*Belgian beer tasting by Belgicatessen*



*Guests from TNT Express Worldwide*



*This year we have introduced new feature to the evening - raffle. Lucky winner and at the same time sponsor of this event Alex Hubrech (Cesam) with Richard Kellner (Chamber vice-president)*



*Lucky raffle winner Erik Heidema (Pro4CE)*





Wall it table



Martijn Lambarts (Netherlands Embassy) with Dino Ajanović and his spouse (TNT Express Worldwide)



Belgian chocolate tasting



Ján Šeliga with spouse Beáta (TMF Services Slovakia) and Nora Jendeková (ING bank)



Chantal te Pas, Rianne van Daalen and Martina Stančíková (Europlanit)



Reinhold Hofmann (HIC Slovakia and Fine Wines) sponsoring the wine tasting



# 20th Anniversary

## Celebration with Charity Fundraiser

When: November 11, 2017

Where: Grand Hotel River Park, Bratislava



The best part of the evening!

The year 2017 was very special for the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber celebrated its 20th anniversary and the main celebration of its 20th Anniversary was held at the Grand Hotel River Park in Bratislava at the beginning of November.

Many of our members and special guests celebrated with us during this great evening. We were honoured by the presence of H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Slovakia, who made the introductory address. The festive menu was prepared by well-known chef – Jaroslav Židek. We enjoyed an amazing performance from the American singer, Lillie Nicole McCloud and her band, who filled the dance floor.

The Netherlands Chamber has become well known for its charity activities over the last 12 years. The Chamber continued this

tradition and this celebration also had a charitable character. The evening program included a charity auction. Thanks to our generous members who donated 2% and guests who participated in the auction and raffle, Chamber President, Jan Lamber Voortman, was able to hand over a check for €10 000 to AkSen. AkSen ensures seniors are integrated into society and provides special programs. This amount will support art and music therapy for seniors in the Piešťany region.

We would like to thank all our sponsors, partners and guests for helping to make this evening happen, for the generous charity donations and the great atmosphere!



H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast had a fabulous presentation covering the last 20 years



Bruno Ciberej, host of the evening



Ladies from AkSen explaining how the support from the Netherlands Chamber will help the seniors in Slovakia



Fantastic Lillie Nicole McCloud entertained our guests the whole evening



Jan Lamber Voortman (president of the Netherlands Chamber) thanks all who supported the event



Branislav Kačkovič (Grand Hotel River Park) welcomed the guests for the first time celebrating the gala event at the Grand Hotel



Zuzana and Marco den Dekker (G&P Quality Management) and Jaroslav Packa (Acaimania), who became the most generous auctioneer during the evening



Paraolympic winner Jakub Krako with spouse and Zuzana Bartošovičová (Hillbridges) with partner



Ockert Loubser (Wall it) with his auction item



Richard Kellner (Komerční banka) during the auction



Elena Májektivá (Union) with son Juraj



Lucky raffle winner Jarmila Gurská (Shell)



Gabriela Turazová (ING Bank) and her lucky ticket



Alex Hubrech (Cesam) with spouse





Everybody danced



Jakub Fekiač from Lugera receives Oscar for supporting the event and charity activities of the Chamber



Mr. Szoke with spouse, Zuzana and Peter Steiner (davinci software)



Paul van Dongen (NMH) with spouse



Štefan Rybovič (AK Rybovič) with partner and Janka Kleinerterová (Larive)



In action during the auction



Guests dancing on the stage with the american star



Birthday cake



Beatrix Šidová (ING Bank) received a special Netherlands Chamber Award for ING Bank for extensive support to the Chamber in last 20 years



Bart Waterloos (VGD) with spouse Agáta



Top supporters of the event with their Oscars: Jakub Fekiač (Lugera), Branislav Kačkovič (Grand Hotel River Park) and Beatrix Šidová (ING bank). Jan Lamber Voortman is holding an Oscar for Heineken Slovensko.



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1997 - 2017

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# Speed Business Meeting

## Autumn Edition

*When:* November 13, 2017

*Where:* Radisson Blu Carlton Hotel Bratislava



The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, the French-Slovak Chamber of Commerce, the British Chamber of Commerce, the Italian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce, the Swiss-Slovak Chamber of Commerce and the German-Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry invited their members to attend a unique networking event – Speed Business Meeting.

This type of meeting offers participants a special meeting place for the presentation of products and services of their companies during a 10-minute face-to-face meeting, and the opportunity to discuss potential cooperation. One-to-one meetings were followed by a business cocktail. We believe that this event will be the start of many new business collaborations.



# Business Breakfast with ING Bank

## Current Challenges of the Slovak Economy

When: November 14, 2017

Where: Sheraton Bratislava Hotel

We would like to thank the ING Bank for organising and hosting such a special event for our members.



We are pleased to introduce the new MEMBERS TO MEMBERS INITIATIVE. The main goal of this initiative is to hold special events for our member as an extraordinary member service.

The first event organised as part of this initiative was hosted by our member, ING BANK. A business breakfast on the topic: Current Challenges of the Slovak Economy took place on 14 November 2017. Peter Harvan from the Institute for Financial Policy was the event's main speaker. Peter Harvan discussed

three main areas – schools, unemployment and healthcare. The participants had great questions and the discussion was very productive. Thank you for your contribution and attendance!

If you are interested in organising a special event for our members, please contact the Chamber director for more details.

We would like to thank the ING Bank for organising and hosting such a special event for our members.



Marian Tatár, ING Bank



Peter Harvan, Institut for Financial Policy



# Netherlands - Slovakia

## Women Soccer Match

*When:* November 24, 2017

*Where:* National Training Centre, Senec

**We would like to thank our generous partner:**



The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic and the Netherlands Embassy held a unique sport and social event for our members. The Dutch women soccer team are European champions and competed with the Slovakia A Women

Team at the National Training Centre in Senec. The Dutch team won 5-0 and confirmed that they are rightful champions. There was a great atmosphere at the event and we wish Dutch and Slovak women soccer players all the best.



Welcome by H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast and Jozef Klimnt, general secretary of the Slovak Football Association



# Visiting Companies

## in Nitra Region

When: November 28, 2017

Where: Nitra region



Chamber members and members from the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, the Italian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce and the Slovak-Austrian Chamber of Commerce travelled to the Nitra region, where they visited member companies of our Chamber. They found out how they work and learnt

about their everyday routine. They visited EUROPEAN FRUIT GROUP, Hörle Wire, Brovedani Slovakia and D-One Solution. We really appreciate that they shared their knowledge with all the participants.

# What's new at Union?

Union has recently undergone big changes – a new way of work will be introduced and employees will move to new premises. Just a few days ago, the board members of our parent company, Achmea, visited UnionX to celebrate together important anniversaries of our insurance companies.



Left to right: Tibor Bôrik (former CEO of Union), Willem van Duin (CEO of Achmea), Michal Špaňár (CEO of Union).



### Best wishes, Union!

Union Commercial celebrated the 25th and Union Health the 10th anniversary of their foundation. Board members of Achmea, the Dutch shareholder of Union, positively evaluated their operation on the market and expressed their optimistic expectations for further growth. Tibor Bôrik, the establishing member of Union companies, stated that the client has always been and always will be in first place. *“Even now, in the digital age, there is always a person on the other side of the computer or the mobile phone and care for his needs from insurance companies should be in the first place,”* he said.

### More space and more comfort

In December, all employees at the Bratislava Headquarters will be moving. After ten years of operation in the building on Bajkalská street, Union needs more space. The new building on Karadžičova street meets even the highest requirements. The premises will be supported by five basic values: they will be modern, friendly to employees and guests, healthy, flexible and supportive of innovation. Great attention has been paid to modern elements, higher flexibility and particularly support of cooperation across the company.

### Agile work

The development of processes and the delivery of higher quality services to clients requires a new method of work. We decided to apply the “agile” method and we have great expectations. We believe it will allow us to speed up the process of product and service development and it will positively influence the motivation of employees and help us create an inspirational and innovative environment.

The agile work method is based on the creation of autonomous multi-disciplinary teams, weakening standard hierarchies, strengthening transparency and continual improvement. The teams work in short intervals (sprints) on a limited number of tasks, enabling them to regularly deliver value to the market, which is appreciated by customers. *“The current experience is very positive. Colleagues from these teams appreciate that they can influence the result of their work and they enjoy their work more and have less obstacles to the realization of changes,”* explained the coordinator of the Agile project, Andrej Orogváni.

# Patron's Dinner

*When:* November 28, 2017

*Where:* Ambassador's residence, Bratislava



On 28 November, H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast hosted a dinner at his residence. Patron members of the Netherlands Chamber were invited to this special dinner. Guest of honour was Mr Gregorij Mesežnikov, President of the Institute of Public Affairs

(IVO). Mr. Mesežnikov gave a detailed political analysis of regional elections in Slovakia and led a discussion about the current political situation in Slovakia. We would like to thank H. E. Henk Cor van der Kwast for his hospitality.



# Posting of Workers Conference

When: December 5, 2017

Where: Pálffyho palác, Bratislava



On December 5, an event was held on the new Directive of Posting of Workers at Pálffyho Palac. The directive will introduce the same wage for the same work at the same workplace and in the future EU employees should get not only the same minimal wage, but also the same valid wage tariff, if they work in another EU country. We discussed this topic with several experts -

Federico Pancaldi, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission, Branislav Ondruš, State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and Jozef Stieranka, Manager, Deloitte.



# in short:

## Members' News:

### Hurbanovo brewery - the most successful in Slovakia



The HEINEKEN Slovensko Company won eight beer crowns, four of which were gold in the main beer categories, in the Slovak Beer Crown 2017 competition. Another success was winning the Personality of Slovak Brewing and Malting, which went to Milan Slávik, the company's production and technical manager.

### Hurbanovo – capital city of slovak beers for 50 years



In 2017, the HEINEKEN Company Hurbanovo malt house celebrated a half-century since its establishment. Since 9 October 1967, more than 3.3 million tons of malt have been produced in Hurbanovo, with about 85% destined for export. The malt from Hurbanovo is sent to 16 breweries in eight European countries and, under 35 various brands, a total volume of 7 million hectolitres of beer is produced from it annually. Every year, the Hurbanovo malt house processes about 140,000 tons of malt

barley. Primary producers – farmers supply about 70% of Hurbanovo's malt barley. Thanks to its quality and large-scale production, the Hurbanovo malt house is the largest malt house in Central Europe and the 3rd largest in the HEINEKEN concern worldwide.

By **Heineken**

### Mazaras introduced new brand communication concept



Mazaras has broken away from the seriousness and formality of a consulting firm and introduced a new brand communication concept - the informal "U" (you). To show our expertise and our professionalism in audit, tax, accounting, payroll & HR and consulting services, U represents our spirit, friendly approach, our focus on clients and interest in our employees. The claim "SOME HAVE AUDITORS, U HAVE US" defines who we are.

Our refurbished office evokes visitors and employees' creative flow with a playful, modish and lively style of meeting rooms, a living area, and working space.

By **Mazaras**

### Rapid E-Learning New Documentation

E-Learning is being used more every day. However, to be successful in passing on content, modern, rapid e-learning needs to be more than .ppt slides converted to .pdf. We are pleased to be able to share our project results with you.

### Methodology and Guide V2.0 available

We have now reached the end of our project and are happy to finally present the new version of our Rapid E-Learning documentation. One of the improvement areas is a major reworked chapter on gamification – as well as a case study presenting Moodle (as a corporate learning environment).

- Methodology V 2.0 (Languages: English, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian)

- Guide V 2.0 (Languages: English, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian)

The current versions can be obtained in .pdf format from: [office@hic.sk](mailto:office@hic.sk)

By **HIC Slovakia**

### Dolphin water now from the heart of Slovakia



Dolphin Slovakia announced their new water source located in the fantastic Low Tatra mountains.

This exceptional water is filtered for thousands of years through the rocky mineral containing layers of the Low Tatra's and purified by nature to be now bottled and served to Dolphin's customers.

„It took us some time to discover this source, but we are simply not easily satisfied. We needed to secure the best quality water as well as a high quality bottling facility as well. The bottling plant is the first ever in Slovakia to be NSF ,WE and SWCA certified and approved and meets the same standards as our

previous plant.“ – says Ab Olde Scheper, CEO and founder of Dolphin Slovakia s.r.o.

By **Dolphin Slovakia**

### New BPO Director at VGD Slovakia



To keep up with global trends, on December 1 VGD Slovakia combined its accounting and payroll services and created an integrated Business Process Outsourcing Department. Ing. Juraj Turcek was appointed director of the new department, where he will be in charge of 60 employees. Previously, Juraj was manager of the payroll department, where he oversaw the optimisation of processes and the introduction of new management approaches.

Bart Waterloos, who was partner for accounting services up to the end of November, welcomed the move: "The integrated department will allow us to respond faster to new trends and the requirements of our clients. It will enable us to roll out our IT platform and portal and to integrate these two main business processes. It will also allow me to devote more time to international business. I was recently elected to the NEXIA EMEA Board and I will also be busy with activities as honorary consul for the Kingdom of Belgium".

By **VGD Slovakia**

### Netherlands Embassy in Slovakia

[www.facebook.com/the.dutch.embassy.bratislava](https://www.facebook.com/the.dutch.embassy.bratislava)

### UN Security Council

As of 1 January 2018, the Netherlands is part of the United Nations Security Council and has been granted

responsibility to coordinate all declarations and resolutions on Afghanistan in 2018, from development and humanitarian aid to human rights.

This opportunity offers the Netherlands possibility to strengthen peace, justice and security all over the world.

### Dutch & Flemish Literature



The Comenius university hosted a reception on Dutch and Flemish Literature in Slovakia, which was attended by staff of the Dutch Embassy.

During this interactive exhibition, students of Nederlandistiek presented their research project which provided an overview of Dutch and Flemish literature that is translated to Slovak. This list can be found on <https://www.kgns.info/recepcianl>. They also spoke about the different translators that have contributed to making Dutch literature accessible in Slovakia. In addition, the students conducted a study to how often Dutch literature, such as Anne Frank's diary, is read throughout Slovakia.

During the presentation, two students provided attendants with perfect simultaneous Slovak to Dutch translation

### Doing business in NL

A new website for those who want to do business in the Netherlands was launched offering information on business sectors, finding a business partner and trade and investments in the Netherlands. Learn more on [www.netherlandsandyou.nl](http://www.netherlandsandyou.nl)

### Netherlands Embassy in Czech Republic

[www.facebook.com/AmbassadePraag](https://www.facebook.com/AmbassadePraag)

### Czech National Gallery art collection online

Can't get enough of the Czech National Gallery? You can now easily access the collection online. Národní galerie v Praze recently uploaded many paintings in high quality onto their website. Explore their huge collection, including famous Dutch painters Vincent van Gogh and Rembrandt van Rijn: <http://sbirky.ngprague.cz/>

### The Netherlands, a good country!

The Netherlands rank number 1 in the Good Country Index 2017! Simon Anholt, the initiator of the survey, tried to discover to what extent countries serve



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## The Slovak Spectator

[www.spectator.sme.sk](http://www.spectator.sme.sk)

### Tension between Kiska and Smer continues.

Tension between the ruling Smer and President Andrej Kiska continues also in 2018. In an interview for the Vasarnap weekly, Kiska stated that Interior Minister Robert Kaliňák is abusing the National Criminal Agency by attempting to discredit him. The minister, however, rebuffed the president's claims and said Kiska is only trying to cover up his own mistakes.

### New Chargers for E-cars in the Slovaks capital city.



The Greenway company launched a new charger for e-cars in Bratislava. It is the only one of its kind in central and eastern Europe. The technology is available in two 50kW quick charging stations supported by a battery that can store 52kW of energy with a capacity of 60kW, and as result, this charge can better utilize local network capacities. Take a look at other possibilities to recharge your e-car in the city too.

### IOM launches free Slovak language courses for foreigners 3. Jan 2018

The international centre will again open in 2018 free Slovak courses for foreigners outside the EU, both for beginners and advanced learners.

The Migration Information Centre (MIC)

of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Slovakia will this year re-open Open Slovak Language Courses for Foreigners from countries outside the European Union.

The free lessons start in Bratislava on January 15, and are meant for beginners as well as advanced students, the TASR newswire wrote on January 3.

In the courses, students will meet in the afternoon and early evening hours, beginners on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the advanced on Mondays and Wednesdays, at the C.S. Lewis Secondary Grammar School in Bratislava-Petržalka.

"The courses are free and open for all age categories, without any registration or admission tests," the Slovak branch of IOM informs on its website.

### Samsung may scrap production in Slovakia due to lack of employees



The company rejects speculation that it will leave Slovakia, but does not rule out limiting production or closing down one of its plants.

The South-Korean company, Samsung, may be one of the first firms to fall victim to the tense situation in the Slovak labour market. Employers have been pointing to the lack of workers for a long time. In the case of Samsung, the situation has caused them to consider whether to continue their enterprise in Slovakia or move production abroad.

### Automotive industry keeps growing 2. Jan 2018



The arrival of the fourth carmaker and its suppliers deepens the shortage of a qualified labour force in Slovakia.

Since the arrival of the German carmaker Volkswagen in 1991 the automotive industry has been given many names, like a pillar of Slovakia's economy or the engine of its growth.

The three major carmakers and their subcontractors account for about 12 percent of gross domestic product and produce more than one million cars annually. The car production will increase significantly in the coming years as the British carmaker Jaguar Land Rover is planning to launch production in its brand new plant in Nitra in late 2018. On the other hand, the arrival of the fourth carmaker and its suppliers deepens the shortage of a qualified labour force in Slovakia.

### Finance minister plans to start taxing bitcoin 8. Jan 2018



Providers of services via digital platforms are now obliged to pay taxes in Slovakia and Finance Minister Peter Kažimír also wants to tax cryptocurrencies.

Companies like Uber, Airbnb and Booking.com are required to pay taxes in Slovakia on their income arising from services on the country's territory, the Finance Ministry ensured through an amendment to the Income Tax Act.

"These companies will now have to register as a permanent operation in Slovakia if they provide their services repeatedly in the form of mediation of transport and accommodation," said Finance Minister Peter Kažimír, as quoted by the Denník N daily.

"All these measures have been taken to prevent the outflow of profits outside Slovakia, and it should be said that Slovakia is one of the first countries that has decided to deal with the taxation of this modern business form," Kažimír said, as quoted by TASR.



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