

# Bulletin <sup>2</sup>|2023

The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic



## Talent Garden Program

The Talent Garden  
Traineeship Program  
for university  
students  
to be launched  
in Slovakia

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# Info

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# President speaks



Gijs van der Loo  
President of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you had the opportunity to spend quality time with your loved ones during the summer. Even better if you did this in the beautiful country of Slovakia, to support the local horeca owners that have been working hard at their businesses in a highly inflationary environment.

I had the opportunity this summer to see some of the Slovak countryside up close. I participated in the Od Tatier K Dunaju run in August, which was an absolutely fascinating experience. Besides seeing the beautiful countryside, I also met some amazing Slovaks who gave us tremendous support, which is exactly what the country will need in the upcoming period of uncertainty. The parliamentary elections are just around the corner and many of the possible outcomes will provide us with real challenges from a social and business perspective. We will discuss these challenges at our post-election event, where we will address in a selected group how we will use our joint power and network to guide the new government in the right direction. We have already teamed up with AmCham and other chambers to share our concerns with the relevant government stakeholders as the election nears.

Dutch companies and the Netherlands Chamber are also making a substantial effort to create a better business environment. As a follow-up to the Royal visit in the spring, four Dutch companies, with the support of the Dutch Embassy and Netherlands Chamber have developed a unique traineeship program called Talent Garden. This issue of the Bulletin will explain in detail what this traineeship is about. I am extremely proud and thankful to ING, NN, Union, and HEINEKEN that they had the courage and determination to undertake this and I am looking forward to meeting the first students that will take the traineeship. With this initiative, we hope to inspire students, other companies and the government to reverse the *brain drain* and retain the talented young generation in Slovakia to keep developing the country into what it deserves to be: a resourceful, innovative, and open country where people and business can thrive.

This issue of the Bulletin focuses on learning and development, and provides some very interesting perspectives from different members. I wish you happy reading of the Bulletin, a successful autumn and winter and I hope to see you at one of our future events.

Take care,  
Gijs



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# Word of Ambassador

## If you can't stand the heat...



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

*Summer is a time to slow down, relax and replenish energy for the second half of the year. I hope you all managed to do so, despite this summer being a particularly heated one, in more than one sense.*

It was, of course, literally a very hot summer. We saw unprecedented heatwaves and temperature records all over the world. While Slovakia still provides many opportunities to “cool down” in its beautiful countryside, towns around the country are becoming harder to live in during the summer, and apartments get overheated. We welcome all the measures implemented by towns to make them more liveable, by planting more greenery, providing drinking water

in public spaces and promoting green construction.

Adaptation of towns to climate change will remain a key issue for the well-being of citizens and, there will be a need to focus on large-scale measures to fight climate change. This became particularly evident from images from around the world – in June, we launched an exhibition “Climate stories – visualizing climate change”, showcasing the work of 11

talented photographers from Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, showing the effects of climate change “close to home”. The exhibition was seen in Bratislava and has just moved to Budapest, after which it will travel to Prague and Warsaw.

Sustainability was a core theme of Dutch participation in the ever popular Pohoda music festival. We again hosted a ‘Circular Zone, powered by the Netherlands’ where festival goers could try their hand at recycling materials, buy *cool* items made from recycled materials, see how bottle caps can be turned into useful items, or just *chill* out in our lounge space made of reused furniture showcasing projects by local circular organizations. I was particularly impressed by the festival that I visited for the first time this year; impressed with the exhibitors, the public art and performances and the participants. The organizers create an inclusive, friendly and engaging space and support important issues.

This summer was also heated for political reasons. The caretaker government, which was appointed in May, and the election campaign were in full swing during the summer. The early elections, which will take place on 30 September, will determine the future of Slovakia and its role in Europe for longer than the next four years. It will be crucial for establishing trust in the judiciary and



the rule of law, and for its approach towards the rights of all citizens, as well as for the continuation of reforms and investments, especially from the Recovery and Resilience Plan. From the business point of view, it will be important that measures to reduce the administrative burden continue and the business environment continues to improve. All this is occurring in an environment where disinformation is presenting an extra challenge for citizens to gain a clear view of what is happening around them.

Slovakia has many motivated people who want to move things forward and make it a better country to live in. The meetings I had in the last months with government officials, civil servants, NGOs, future diplomats and other people I met while travelling around the country, made this clear to me. An example of an excellent initiative is that of four Dutch companies which, in a follow up to discussions during the State Visit, started a joint traineeships program to give young people a chance to experience working in multinational companies and an incentive to stay in Slovakia after their studies. Slovakia needs its young people to remain here and continue to make this country a great place to live!

And lastly, I want to mention the activities we are preparing in our embassy ‘kitchen’ as regards the rule of law and fundamental rights. In November, we will launch “Orange the World”, an international campaign to combat gender-based violence. Over the spring and summer, we have also been actively working with LGBTIQ+ organizations in Slovakia, and we have continued the PersVeilig / BezpečnaZurnalistika initiative to help protect journalists during a time when hate speech and disinformation are giving rise to an overly heated atmosphere. So many things are going on, and it has to be said, not everything is going in the right direction – but you know the saying: if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen!

I wish you a beautiful, inspiring and productive autumn.

## In short

### Climate crisis through the eyes of young photographers from Central Europe

The climate crisis may well be the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. The consequences of climate change may be on a scale we are yet to grasp. For this reason, the Kingdom of The Netherlands, NOOR Foundation, Slovak Press Photo Foundation, Czech Photo, PAP.pl, and Herald Europe joined forces to create a space for photographers from Central Europe to come together to work, share and learn from one another. The exhibition “Climate stories:

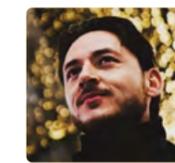
Visualising climate crisis” is the result of a workshop and mentoring process for photographers from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary guided by award-winning visual storytellers, Kadir van Lohuizen and Esther Horvath. The exhibition started in Bratislava and travels in 2023-2024 to Budapest, Prague and Warsaw. The project was also supported financially by the Embassy of The Netherlands and the Visegrad Fund.

### Pohoda festival puts the spotlight on climate change, LGBTI+ rights and Ukraine

This year's Pohoda festival presented the usual fantastic mix of music, culture and art, focused on support for Ukraine and Ukrainians, defence of the rights of LGBTI+ people and the fight against climate change. The Netherlands Embassy contributed by hosting a “circular zone” at the Pohoda Festival together with BAGBET, KOLO, People

on Earth, Umelohmotné and WakiVaky. The circular zone was a popular hotspot, where visitors could find about more about the circular economy, discover local circular brands and projects, attend workshops, repair their clothes, create new original accessories, or just chill in the “living room” furnished by KOLO.

### The Netherlands Embassy in Bratislava welcomes new member

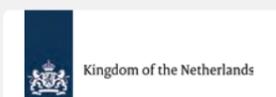


My name is Amir Levi. I arrived in Bratislava on 7 August with my partner Christine to join the Embassy team. I recently

completed the diplomatic training course of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, I worked for the Dutch Ministry of Finance on the Recovery and Resilience Facility and for the European Commission in Brussels. After living in The Hague, Brussels and Tel Aviv, I am excited to make Bratislava my new home for the next three years together with Christine.

I come from an entrepreneurial family. We own a small business selling furniture and decorative items and I have spent countless hours working there. Following these experiences, I have a personal affinity with many issues related to SMEs and trade.

I will be responsible for issues regarding cooperation with Slovakia in the EU and the rule of law. The Netherlands and the Slovak Republic already closely cooperate on these topics, but I am eager to help further enhance this cooperation as regards the business environment. I am looking forward to meeting members of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce and contributing to enhancing Dutch-Slovak trade relations and creating a thriving business climate for Dutch and Slovak companies.



The Royal Netherlands Embassy  
in Bratislava

Frana Krala 5, Bratislava  
[www.netherlandsandyou.nl](http://www.netherlandsandyou.nl)





# Talent Garden Program

by:  **Andrej Orogváni**  
ING

The Talent Garden Traineeship Program for university students in Bratislava to be launched by the Dutch companies HEINEKEN Slovensko, ING Hubs Slovakia, NN Slovensko and Union poisťovňa



One of the key outcomes from the SK-NL Business Forum held during the State Visit of HM the King and HM the Queen of the Netherlands to Slovakia is the launch of a unique traineeship program for university students in Slovakia, the Talent Garden Traineeship Program. The main goal is to give young people a chance to better prepare themselves for the job market and to retain talent in Slovakia.

The Dutch companies, HEINEKEN Slovensko, ING Hubs Slovakia, NN Slovensko and Union poisťovňa have created the innovative Talent Garden program that will provide university students in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years with a unique learning opportunity. In the pilot year, 10 – 12 students will rotate across all four companies in Bratislava, working on challenging assignments and receiving best-in-class management training.

Students can select one of the following learning journeys, or a combination:

- People and Marketing
- Data, Research & Process Improvement
- Technology and Automation

Here is an example of possible rotations:

### EXAMPLES OF THE TRAINEESHIP JOURNEYS

	Traineeship Stage 1	Traineeship Stage 2	Traineeship Stage 3	Traineeship Stage 4		
<b>PEOPLE &amp; MARKETING JOURNEY</b> 	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3		
	<b>DATA, RESEARCH &amp; PROCESS JOURNEY</b> 	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	
		<b>IT AND AUTOMATION JOURNEY</b> 	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3	 Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3

In addition to gaining valuable skills and knowledge, students will have a great opportunity to experience the unique Dutch corporate culture and learn how multinationals operate.

The program will be open for applications in September 2023 and the first students will join the program in January 2024.

The program is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic will be the program coordinator ([talentgarden@netherlandschamber.sk](mailto:talentgarden@netherlandschamber.sk)).

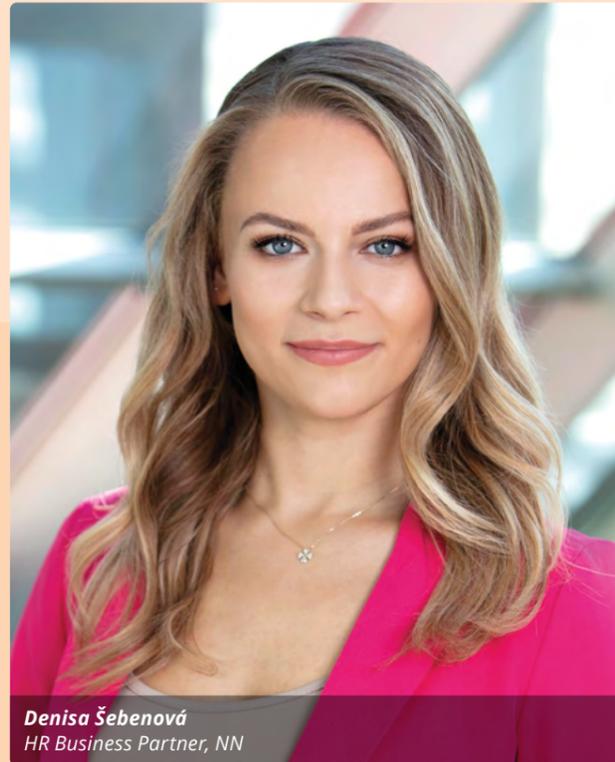
For more information, contact Andrej Orogváni: [andrej.orogvani@ing.com](mailto:andrej.orogvani@ing.com).



## Talent Garden companies answered our questions about the program:

### Denisa Šebenová, HR Business Partner, NN

*At NN, we are proud to be part of the Talent Garden program that will support young ambitious students. We believe that it is essential for Dutch companies in Slovakia to show unity by participating in this unique program. Maintaining a significant connection and fostering closer collaboration with Slovak universities is important for NN. We aim to show NN's company culture to young talents, for whom this may be their first working experience. Additionally, we recognize the significance of acquainting students with our brand.*

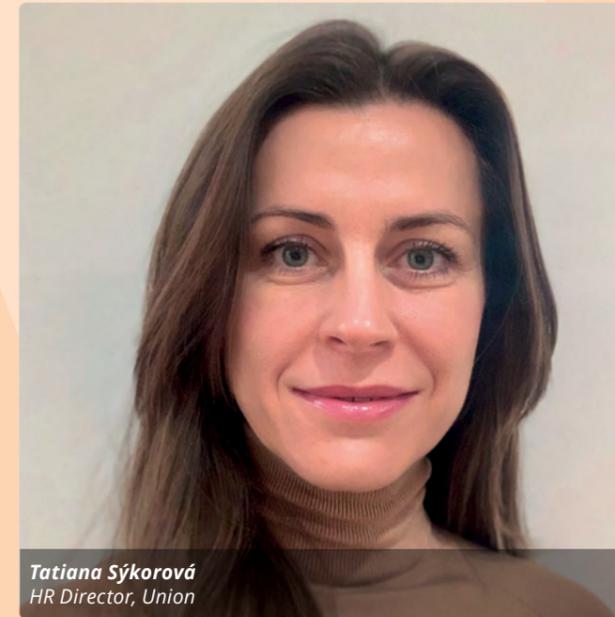
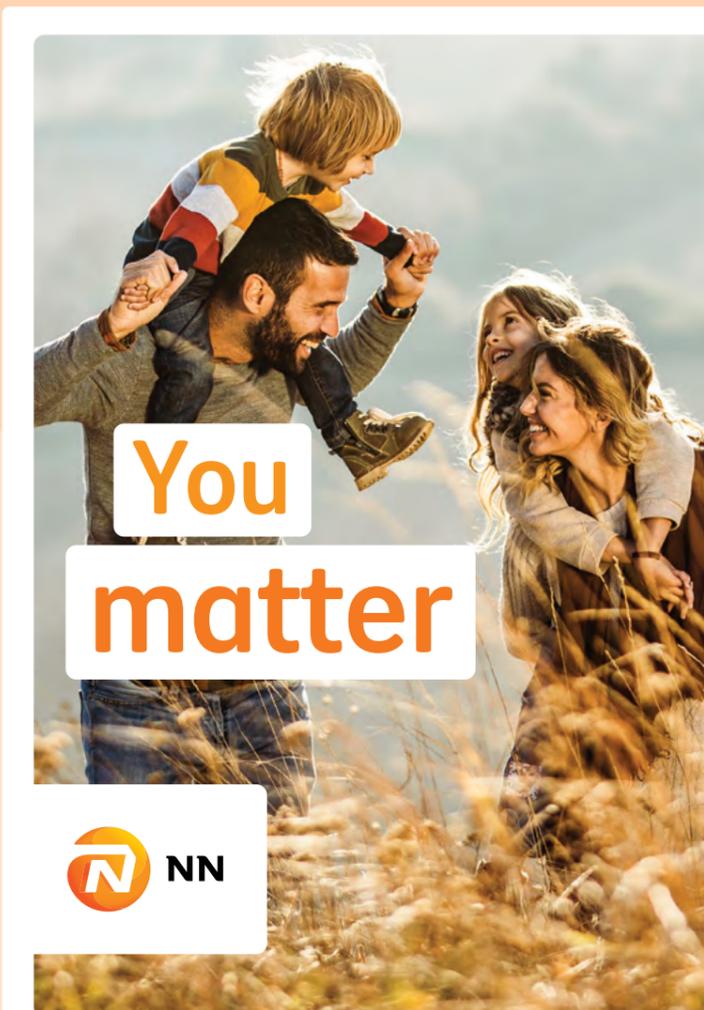


**Denisa Šebenová**  
HR Business Partner, NN

This unique initiative will benefit students and is of great importance to us as a participating company. Its significance lies in the acquisition of fresh and new perspectives, nurturing a talent pipeline, and promoting the Dutch mindset of innovation. Alignment with our strategic goals has four aspects:

- **Learning and Development** – at NN, we focus on upskilling and reskilling our employees. To offer internships to young talents is a tangible way to invest in the growth of potential future employees. On the other hand, the experience gained by the interns will enrich their skills, making them a valuable asset wherever they go.
- **Innovation and adaptation** – A diverse range of students will expose us to different ideas, work, methods and cultural perspectives. This encourages a culture of innovation and adaptation, which is critical for staying ahead in an ever-evolving market.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – By including students in different projects, we will gain an insight from a new generation that will dictate the work market in the future. It will also let us find out what their priorities and mindset are, so we will be able to prepare our working environment as a culturally and age diverse company.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility** – The contribution to the education and professional development of young people will give back to the community in a meaningful way.

We are looking forward to the new opportunities and collaborations that Talent Garden will bring us, not only as regards the students, but also with the other Dutch companies that are part of the project.



**Tatiana Sýkorová**  
HR Director, Union

### Tatiana Sýkorová, HR Director, Union

The idea for the Talent Garden program was conceived during the visit of the King of the Netherlands in March 2023. It is proof that when there a desire to see things through,

a great project can be created. We met other companies who also liked the idea and found a way to take the idea further. Regular brainstorming meetings pushed us forward and active participation in solving tasks and taking responsibility from colleagues from the participating companies allowed us to create solutions quickly. We created a team of HR and marketing professionals, and potential competitors became “colleagues” looking for solutions, with the courage to do something new. The program is unique and will allow students to experience Dutch culture at four different companies, deepen their knowledge, and gain experience. It will be a very valuable experience for them and will help them in their careers. The pilot year of the programme will give us information to allow us to develop the programme further.

#### Why is this important to us?

Young people entering the labour market are very valuable to any company. It is important to retain graduates in the Slovak Republic and I think we will contribute to this with this programme. We want to prepare students for the labour market, to enable them to link their theoretical knowledge acquired through their studies with business practice and to help them launch their careers. Promoting diversity is an integral part of our HR strategy at Union. Working with students supports our strategy, and we see that diversity fosters better solutions and moves everyone forward. That's why I'm very excited to be part of this unique project and look forward to welcoming everyone to the program.



### Andrea Kožuchová, People Director, HEINEKEN Slovakia

#### Why is the program important and how does it fit your HR strategy?

For HEINEKEN, young talent is a part of our strategy in two areas – hiring new talent, and inclusion and diversity. We are a stable employer with low turnover rates, which needs to attract talent in the current difficult labour market conditions, and this is crucial for the success of the company. This program gives us a great opportunity to attract students and it will be a great experience for them at an early stage of their career.

#### What are you looking forward to the most?

I am already enjoying the cross-company cooperation during the preparation of the program. This is something completely new, and all of us can offer added value. I'm looking forward to the realization part of course, as what gives me the most energy is seeing people growing, and this is our goal for the students on the program.



**Andrea Kožuchová**  
People Director, HEINEKEN Slovakia



# LGBTI+ Business Forum 2023

On 26 June 2023, in the newly-renovated representative areas of the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual LGBTI+ Business Forum was held. This year's event took place under the patronage of many prominent personalities and organisations, including the President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová, who, together with the European Parliament, took over the patronage of the event.



**Marek Novotný**  
Chairperson  
Diversity Pro



This year we sought to raise awareness of workplace diversity and inclusion and promote diversity visibility and leadership. Our vision is for LGBTI+ people in Slovakia to have equal opportunities and be treated equally in the workplace by improving the business community's approach to diversity. The theme of this year's LGBTI+ Business Forum was "Education – the way to go".

We consider education to be a key element in the development of employee care at a company. In this way, we hope to enable decision makers to apply best practises by informing them about the needs and sensitivities of diversity groups, which will also help develop individual's leadership skills.

With this in mind, we put together a program of workshops and lectures for our audience on a variety of education-related

topics. Simultaneous interpretation was available for all the programme.

The event was opened on behalf of the organisers by the President of Diversity Pro, Mr. Marek Novotný, and the co-organiser of the event, Mr Vladimír Šucha, from the Representation of the European Commission in Slovakia.

The moderator of the main body of the event was Roman Samotný. The first block was dedicated to the topic "Why people fall for misinformation" and was led by Vladimír Šnidl from Denník N, who was introduced by Mr Robert Sermek from the Office of the European Parliament in Slovakia (event patron).

The second panel was led by Ms. Zlatica Maarová from the Association of Parents and Friends of LGBTI+ people on the topic "How we (How to) support parents of LGBTI+ children", which was introduced by H.E. Gabriella Sancisi, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Slovakia (event partner).

The third workshop was entitled "How to support LGBTIQ+ people / employees as allies" led by Diversity Pro member, Katarina Zerzan, and the opening speech was given by Marijn Pijnenburg from IBM (event partner).

The final panel was devoted to an open game on "Trust and a safe workplace environment", led by Michal Šoltés and introduced by Mr Gerd-Uwe Weller from the European Investment Bank (event partner).

At the end of the program, there was an unofficial program event – informal networking for event participants.

The Diversity Pro team is already looking forward to the next edition of the LGBTI+ Business Forum, together!

# NL CEO Roundtable

by:



**Henriette van Notten**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
The Royal Netherlands  
Embassy in Bratislava

CEOs and business leaders from the largest Dutch companies in Slovakia met on 16 August for the third time under the leadership of State Secretary for the Economy, Peter Svec to launch the Talent Garden Program. This paid traineeship program offers Slovak students the unique possibility to work for four Dutch multinational companies (Heineken, ING, NN and UNION) for a year as part of their studies. The Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) and the Research and Innovation Authority (VAIA) presented their initiatives also aimed at improving education and the Slovak talent pipeline.



The CEOs also committed to explore ways to increase the participation of women in the labour force. The aim is to support new mothers and families returning to work by providing affordable, high-quality childcare. The CEOs also support increasing the number of part-time job contracts (including zero-hour work contracts) within their organizations and allowing mothers with young children up to 10 to opt out of shift work without negative consequences for their careers and contracts.

If your company is interested in joining the working group on increasing the participation of women in the workforce, please contact: Lenka Louckova from the NL Embassy – [lenka.louckova@minbuza.nl](mailto:lenka.louckova@minbuza.nl)

NB text on women is inspired by the Communique of 8 March. →

# COMMUNIQUÉ

## CEO Round Table Discussion at the occasion of the Dutch Royal Couple's visit to Slovakia for the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Republic

A consortium of Netherlands-based multinationals met at a CEO Round Table organized on the occasion of the Dutch Royal Couple's visit to Slovakia by the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Slovak Republic to discuss the further promotion and growth of Dutch-based companies in the country.



The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic recognizes the contribution of the Netherlands-based companies and investors to the stability and development of the Slovak economy. In order to proceed in the established cooperation three main topics were discussed:

- Improving the female labor force participation rate
- Improving education and the Slovak talent pipeline
- Reducing barriers to business operations and expansion

### Public-Private Partnerships to encourage greater female participation in the Slovak workforce

PwC's most recent Women in Work study ranked Slovakia 25<sup>th</sup> out of 33 OECD countries in terms of female labor force participation. The study further showed that increasing

by:



**Henriette van Notten**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
The Royal Netherlands  
Embassy in Bratislava

Slovakia's female labor force participation rate to be equal to that of Sweden (81%) could increase GDP by as much as 7.8%<sup>1</sup>. The most important factor contributing to these low figures, the report concludes, is "insufficient employer flexibility."

The Dutch-based multinationals – including ING, Heineken, Union, Koppert, Neways, Action, Philips, CTP, and NN – the Embassy of The Netherlands, the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic and the Office of the President of the Slovak Republic therefore agreed to pursue further a partnership and cooperation aimed at increasing the female workforce participation rate in Slovakia through various initiatives.

The proposed public-private partnership will first aim to support new mothers and families to balance returning to work with affordable and high-quality childcare. Furthermore, the participants support the proposal to actively encourage part-time job contracts (including zero-hour work contracts) within their organizations and allow mothers with young children up to age of 10 to opt out of shift work without negative consequences to their careers or contracts. This new partnership will help increase female labor force participation rates across industries and sectors and contribute to a more prosperous economy for Slovakia overall.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pwc.com/sk/en/current-press-releases/women-in-work-index-2020.html>



### The Slovak Talent Pipeline

As part of a 2022 campaign by the Slovak bank Slovenská Sporiteľ'na, the bank estimated that over 300,000 young people have left Slovakia in the last 15 years – few with the intention of returning. They leave with the hope of better education, greater career opportunities and broader horizons. What draws these young people back to their home country most often is family. With their international experience, career ambitions and talent, these returning Slovaks are an incredible source of plug-and-play talent for Dutch companies in every sector. Participating stakeholders, especially VAIA (the Research and Innovation Authority in Slovakia), the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, and SARIO (the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency), agreed that they will work together in partnership with Dutch companies operating within Slovakia to attract this group back home and, perhaps more importantly, convince them to stay in the first place.

To reduce the number of young people leaving Slovakia in the first place, the consortium has also proposed initiating a Slovak National Trainee Development Program. Through greater cooperation with The Slovak Ministry of Education and universities, the program will select yearly a cohort of talented, ambitious Slovak young adults in their last year of university to participate in both specific classroom trainings aimed at arming them with the skills and capabilities firms are truly in need of as well as practical internship rotations at the Dutch-based companies. The director of SARIO, Mr. Šimončíč, offered to

extend his organization's platform to facilitate this connection and fast track the development of such a program. Graduates of the program will have direct relevant experience and immediate access to the Dutch firms upon graduation.

### Business Barrier Reduction

Finally, all companies at the Roundtable agreed that convincing head office stakeholders to expand operations and further invest in Slovakia would be far easier were the legal and regulatory landscape to become simpler and more predictable. To this end, Mr. Kiralvarga of the National Union of Employers suggested comparing the Dutch and Slovak labor laws to share best practices and simplify the Slovak labor code further. This will be an ongoing dialogue between the Dutch business community, the National Union of Employees and The Ministry.

The Ministry of Economy's long-term priority is the improvement of the business environment in Slovakia. The Ministry of Economy invites the Dutch companies to submit suggestions and proposals of regulatory changes in areas of particular relevance or importance to the consortium. This will be an ongoing dialogue between the Dutch business community and the Ministry of Economy.

All parties agreed that the conversations taking place were collaborative and productive with the clear goal continuing a fruitful partnership between The Netherlands business community and the Slovak Republic.

# Interview with minister Milan Chrenko



**Richard Kellner**  
Vice president NL Chamber  
/ KB Banka

*Over the last few years, scientists have reported an increased level of global warming and we see glaciers retreating in the nearby Alps. This year, the northern hemisphere has experienced record temperatures in China, across Europe and North America. In Slovakia, we have not yet seen such extremes (although July was the warmest in history), and perhaps that is also why many people here are not convinced about global warming and its dangers. What is your view on this? How acute is this issue?*

Well, scientists who follow the topic have created several scenarios of possible developments and now it looks as if the reality is closer to the scenarios that were on the more negative side. The deterioration seems not to be linear, but more variable. Unfortunately, in Europe we are seeing more effects of global warming than in other places around the world.

*Often, the discussions about being more environment friendly (and pay the extra costs) leads to statement such as "Why should we do that if the competition from less environmental countries are not obliged to do that, and can win our customers with lower prices". What is your view on this and how should this be tackled at the EU level?*

There are several angles to this. Firstly, Europe can motivate and lead other parts of the world towards change. Secondly, in countries like China, climate change is starting to be perceived more urgently, so it is likely they will follow Europe in many initiatives and the discrepancies in many business policies should narrow (e.g. the EU target is carbon neutrality by 2050, and China only 10 years later). With respect to certain products, the EU is now implementing a carbon tax that should create a level playing field. But most important of all, this is a global problem that concerns all of us, that must be addressed by all. That is why incentives and measures are needed on several fronts, e.g. financial incentives (producers with sustainable processes will be rewarded, and vice versa those who do not take the environmental impact of their production into account will have difficulties seeking external financing).

*Many CO2 reducing activities do not depend on state support, but others continue to be dependent on bureaucracy and obtaining permissions (e.g. EIA). Are there initiatives to speed up these processes?*

We are conscious of the need for improvements, and currently there are ongoing discussions about proposals to speed up investments in renewables projects (wind, solar, and geothermal).

*In addition to direct reduction of CO2, waste is also a focus, as if we were able to circulate materials, we will decrease demand for primary resources. MoE SR is a founding member of Circular Slovakia, a public-private platform which promotes the circular economy. Why did MoE join this platform and what are your expectations regarding this platform going forward?*

There are several reasons MoE decided to participate in this platform. Firstly, it gives us an opportunity to hear feedback from stakeholders and the business community, which can then be taken into account in discussions and negotiations in Brussels. The platform also provides a space for information to flow from the Ministry to the stakeholder community represented by other members of Circular Slovakia. The platform also promotes circularity, which must include civil society as well as state and private businesses. Last but not



least, it is beneficial to bring similarly-minded companies together, so we can jointly promote activities (and Slovakia) when these topics are discussed in Brussels.

*The recent visit of the Dutch royal couple to Slovakia included a visit to a deposit return scheme for beverage packaging (DRS). Is the MoE SR satisfied with the scheme in its current form? Do you see room for its further expansion?*

We are satisfied with the DRS – it works well and many smaller retail outlets (below the size threshold defined by law) have adopted the scheme. They have recognized the business benefits – retail customers are adjusting their shopping habits and prefer shops where they can return empty bottles. The scheme implemented in Slovakia also attracted interest from other EU countries who are interested to hear our experience. In September 2023, we plan to share our expertise (with the Czech Republic and Austria) at a workshop in Brussels.

*Landfills are a big issue in Slovakia. What progress is being made in this respect? Is there anything Slovakia can learn from the Netherlands?*

This is a major problem, but not only in Slovakia. Experience from other countries shows that the most effective way to deal with landfills is to increase landfill fees, but this is very sensitive politically.

*What kind of skills should businesses develop as regards their employees to be able to capitalize on these opportunities (and avoid risks)? Do you think we have enough people with these skills in Slovakia?*

This is definitely an issue Slovakia faces. We believe that the universities should adjust their curriculum to address green developments. But we also need to look abroad and, in line with the initiative already announced, do our best to attract qualified Slovaks and persuade them to return.

*In your previous position at the European Environmental Agency in Copenhagen, you had the opportunity to discuss many issues with colleagues from other EU member countries. Where do you think Slovakia is doing well, and where do you think we can learn (and from who)?*

From what I have seen, in Slovakia we are doing well in many areas. We are able to collect a lot of data. Where we have room for improvement is what to do with the data, and how to use it. We should seek to make decisions supported by the best available and properly analysed data and knowledge. Today science is moving fast, and Slovakia should utilize new technologies that are becoming available (e.g. Copernicus Programme, digitalisation and AI).

*Where do you see potential for increased cooperation between Slovak and Dutch businesses as regards the environment and circular economy?*

I think cooperation has begun well and it received an additional boost during the Dutch royal couples' visit that was accompanied by a Dutch business delegation. This initiative should be continued. Wherever there are opportunities, Dutch companies should be welcomed to present their solutions and expertise. The business opportunities will be a strong driver of change and support for green transition.

## Minister of the Environment of the Slovak Republic

Milan Chrenko was appointed as Minister of the Environment on 15 May 2023 by the President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová. Mr. Chrenko studied landscape ecology, environmental management and environmental policy at Comenius University in Bratislava and also at Lund University in Sweden and the University of Oslo. Between 1999 and 2003, he worked as a project manager at the Regional Environmental Center REC Slovakia. In 2007, he started working in Copenhagen as a project manager at the European Environment Agency, an expert institution of the European Union, which analyses environmental data and promotes sustainable development. He became director-general at the Ministry of the Environment, where he participated in the coordination of the Slovak presidency of the Council of the European Union and the establishment of the public-private platform, Circular Slovakia, which supports the circular economy and coordinates activities as regards the EU and international organizations. He then returned to the European Environment Agency, where he became the director of the Department for Cooperation with EU Member States and institutions and focuses on international cooperation on environmental policies.

# Dutch Lectorate at Comenius University

*In March, on the occasion of the State Visit of H.M. King Willem-Alexander and H.M. Queen Maxima, an agreement was signed between De Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union) and the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic to establish a Dutch Lectorate at the Comenius University in Bratislava.*

The Department of German, Dutch and Scandinavian studies at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University offers bachelor and master's degrees in translation and interpretation studies in the Dutch language and culture and specialises in translation for specific purposes, public service translation and interpretation and intercultural management. Last year, 26 students applied and there is increasing interest in Dutch studies. From September 2023, the new lecturer for Dutch language acquisition, Rinsophie Vellinga, will join the current three-member team, consisting of doc. Marketa Štefková (translation studies), doc. Petra Milošovičová (intercultural management) and dr. Benjamin Bossaert (literary studies). Below, our new lecturer, Rinsophie, introduces herself to Bulletin readers:

"I grew up in the small, windy seaport of Harlingen in the north of the Netherlands. During my youth, I never went any further than the beautiful islands of Vlieland and Terschelling and ever since I have a predilection for seas and harbours. Unfortunately,



there is no sea in Bratislava, but it does have the beautiful Danube that flows right past my apartment. After studying Russian Studies and Business Administration in Amsterdam, I expanded my horizons and lived in different countries. Although I have mainly worked in commercial positions (for the longest period as a tender manager), I also gained experience as a Dutch language teacher in the Netherlands and in the US (University of Florida). I completed a master's degree in linguistics and a training course to become an NT2 teacher. From 2017 to 2022, I worked as a Dutch lecturer at Moscow State University."

For more information about Dutch studies:

**Benjamin Bossaert, senior lecturer**  
Katedra germanistiky, nederlandistiky a škandinavistiky  
Filozofická fakulta, Gondova 2, 812 02 Bratislava  
Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave  
[benjamin.bossaert@uniba.sk](mailto:benjamin.bossaert@uniba.sk)

## New Individual Member – Peter Steiner

I was with the Chamber of Commerce for 15 years first with Davinci, and later as an Ohpen member. Since the start, I was involved in operational management, site leadership and business development. I attended many fantastic events during that time and met many amazing people. These helped me with developing business and creating more opportunities for our company. I left Ohpen after 15 years and am now helping a smaller local software company to grow and stabilise. However, I realized that I missed the Dutch "inspiration" which I was getting in the past, so I decided to re-join the Chamber to reconnect with their amazing events and their inspirational members.



# Individual Member Ivana Pylypovova

*Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia student member, Ivana Pylypovova, moved from Bratislava to Tilburg in the Netherlands, to study International Business Administration at Tilburg University. In addition to her studies, she has developed an active social and professional life. She has set up a company which organises recruitment and educational events and is also a board member of the Rotaract Club Tilburg and 180 Degrees Consulting Tilburg. She gave us her view on learning through the eyes of a Slovak GenZ student, living in the Netherlands.*

Looking back at my time in Slovakia, little did I know where curiosity and a genuine desire to learn can lead. At the time, my English was far from perfect, which I became more aware of when dealing with foreign content. This is one of the reasons which motivated me to move abroad – to engage more with the outside world and be able to expand the learning resources I could use in order to develop knowledge. I enjoy understanding how things work and utilising this in new ideas. Leveraging high-quality information to deep dive into a subject is crucial. The schools I attended in Slovakia were very good in providing extensive theoretical knowledge, which was important, but the link to the practical world could have been stronger in my opinion. It was important to comprehend how concepts work in a complex environment – the real environment. I am a big believer in learning through doing. That became even more important in the field in which I wanted to make a career. I could not find the thorough studies of business I was looking for in Slovakia, so finding a program in the Netherlands involving all the main business fields with an international perspective while focusing on practical cases and real projects was a game changer.

Tilburg University's research is well-established, and learning research skills were a significant part of our studies. Emphasis in the curriculum is placed on real business projects. The theoretical side is also excellent as regards information sources, and data collection and processing background. With ChatGPT and extensive data-driven analyses becoming more important, these skills are essential, and the critical viewpoint taught by the university gives real-life benefits.

Moving abroad introduced me to new perspectives on cultural aspects. Dutch people have a reputation for being straightforward and individualistic. Personally, I find this to be very fruitful for work interactions, as it quickly removes hierarchal barriers. The flat hierarchy here opens many doors, allowing people to stand out based on their ideas and drive. Networking is vital to me as well as active involvement in projects that provide learning and development opportunities,



including projects for companies from the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and Singapore.

Another great opportunity arising from this was close cooperation with Professor of Practice and Founder of the Philips Foundation, Ronald de Jong, who hosted a number of events that we organised, inviting speakers such as the Chairman of McKinsey Global Institute and the ex-CEO of Shell. I did not expect to meet such distinguished figures during my university studies. The support in the Netherlands is very extensive and during my time abroad people have actively helped me and provided opportunities in the form of interesting ideas, ambition, and vision. Your background is of no importance here, you only need to be motivated, determined and ready to progress via learning by trying. It's great to see young people keen to 'get their hands dirty' – this is exactly what education should be all about.

If I return to Slovakia, I would hope for more opportunities of this kind, based on an active inclusive approach prioritising people's drive to learn the knowledge and skills that are essential in today's fast-paced rapidly evolving world.

# Henriette van Notten

## Bratislava is one of the most pleasant places to live

*In what other capital in the world can you live next to a forest teeming with wildlife and have a world class symphony and opera within 15 minutes' drive? Bratislava is known amongst diplomats as one of the most pleasant places to live.*

by: 

**Henriette van Notten**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
The Royal Netherlands  
Embassy in Bratislava

There is everything one could want as regards nature, culture, music festivals, international schools, easy access to airports and of course, 'interesting' politics 😊. We were told that it might not be easy to get to know Slovaks, but we discovered the opposite to be true. We were made to feel very welcome, first by our neighbours and colleagues in Bratislava, and also while travelling. At both Christmas and Easter, we were invited into the homes of Slovaks to share these celebrations with their families in Bratislava and Orava. This is not something that happened in the other countries where we lived before, including my own. I must say this is very heart-warming. My husband owns an old convertible Alfa Romeo and we get more thumbs-ups here than in Italy. People are not envious, but rather generous in their appreciation. When our car broke down near Banska Stiavnica, the parents of my Slovak teacher, with whom we do not have a common language, lent us their car so we could complete our tour and then drove us back to Bratislava.

What strikes us the most, is how difficult Slovaks find it to be proud of their country! It takes getting used to, apparently. Of course, they value its natural beauty. But we have also found many instances where Slovakia proved to be sophisticated in many areas: the quality of life: restaurants, museums, traffic, public transport, film, music, golf courses, sports stadiums, gardening, general civility and the robust public discourse on politics.

And we learnt that Slovakia and the Low Countries share more history and culture than meets the eye. For instance, during the Days of Early Music Festival in June, a Dutch ensemble came to perform in St Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava. They sang vocal music from the Low Countries from song sheets that have been kept in St Martin's Cathedral since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

As we approach the mid-point of our stay in Slovakia, we are becoming ever more curious about Slovakia and its people. Long may it continue.



# Marius Wijnen

## Life in Slovakia – what have I learned?

*Taking on the role of CEO at the Arval Competence Center in Bratislava, Slovakia, has been an enriching experience for me over the past two and a half years. I was welcomed into an international team of more than 20 nationalities, speaking more than 10 different languages, and witnessed the dedicated and loyal work culture of Slovakia – my time here has been nothing short of exceptional.*

by: 

**Marius Wijnen**  
Arval

### International Environment

One of the highlights of my work thus far has been working with a diverse and talented team. The warm welcome I received from colleagues of various nationalities reflects the inclusive and multicultural environment Bratislava has to offer. Collaborating with individuals from different backgrounds has broadened my understanding of various cultures, work styles, and perspectives, leading to better problem-solving and decision-making processes.

### Work-life Balance

An aspect of the Slovak labour culture that impressed me greatly is the unwavering commitment to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. In Slovakia, employees understand the importance of prioritizing their families and personal lives alongside their professional responsibilities. This balanced approach contributes to a more motivated and fulfilled workforce, ultimately enhancing productivity and job satisfaction.

### Challenging Traditions

Slovak organizations traditionally operate in a hierarchical structure, and business plans are driven by top-down decision-making. As a Dutch leader, I have found it crucial to encourage changing this mindset, challenge the status quo, and empower teams with trust and ownership. Gradually, we have witnessed a shift in mindset among Slovak employees, with an increasing number embracing a more proactive and innovative approach. This transition has improved our overall performance as an organization and fostered a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration.

### Discovering Slovakia's Hidden Gems

Beyond the professional growth and cultural diversity, I have also fallen in love with the natural beauty and cultural treasures that Slovakia has to offer. From picturesque landscapes to historic landmarks, this country has something for everyone. Additionally, the wine production, often overlooked, is a true hidden gem. I highly recommend seeking guidance from the locals to discover the hidden spots and savour the authentic Slovak experience.

### Conclusion

My experience as the CEO of Arval Competence Center in Bratislava, Slovakia, has been incredibly rewarding. The warmth and diversity of the international team, coupled with the loyal and hardworking culture, have provided a strong foundation for success. By challenging traditional norms and fostering a changed mindset, we are collectively shaping the future of Slovak organizations. In addition, the plethora of natural wonders and cultural treasures make Slovakia a truly enchanting place to build a successful business and enjoy a fulfilling personal life.



# Michal Špaňár

## How is a life in Slovakia from my point of view?

*It is great here – me and my family have very much enjoyed Slovakia since the first day we came. My case is quite specific – I always liked Slovakia since my childhood – it is a different type of foreign country for me as a Czech person than for other foreigners, even more as I am from a Czechoslovak family. So my perception is different compared to any other foreign nationalities.*

by: 

**Michal Špaňár**  
Union



But I still believe that people from other countries also see many positive aspects of living in Slovakia and in general they like it a lot. However, it is no paradise either. As for any other country, Slovakia has its strengths, as well its challenges. I believe the positive aspects prevail by far – great people, beautiful countryside with amazing mountains. It is a very safe country with warm-hearted people. It is fairly traditional and family-oriented, mentality-wise closer to southern countries – which to me is also a positive. However, there are also challenges for decades ahead and that is why it is so sad to see the great potential of the country is only being unlocked slowly. Slovakia has long-term challenges as regards transforming various key areas to modern western standards: whether it is the school system, health area, or a modern and pro-citizen civil service. There is still a strong bureaucracy, which complicates almost everything and is generally very slow-working and an inadequate judicial system, which needs to be improved to ensure correct law enforcement and the rule of law.

Corruption is still widespread and will take time to eliminate. However, the biggest challenge of the country has been for

many years the politics and the way the country is governed – because every serious transformation must go from top to the bottom. Slovakia is not immune to populist politics, as is, regretfully, the case in most countries today. This type of politics affects almost every aspect of almost every business activity – and obviously not only business, it is a major general problem for the whole population which creates a lot of anxiety and demotivates rational and positive people. In addition, there is a surprisingly strong influence of different conspiracy theories which fuels further distrust towards government, EU and western structures, which complicates the situation further. This creates a lot of frustration and disillusion for a large part of population. That is why there is a great expectation for visionary, honest politicians to guide the country into the future. And I am sure they will come, sooner or later, and then the true potential of Slovakia will emerge and the country will flourish.



# Branislav Kováč

## Why did we choose the name HEDVIGA?

*At VGD SLOVAKIA, we know that in addition to our people, the most important factor for the company is the knowledge we have accumulated over the years from our work and professional development, which can only be ensured by the continuous education of each individual in a team. We say that for consulting services – knowledge is the family's silver, that needs to be treated accordingly.*

by: 

**Branislav Kováč**  
Partner  
VGD Slovakia s.r.o.

But how to achieve this goal? After all, it is not ideal to impose on employees that they must attend a certain number of training sessions and seminars a year. Initially, we introduced a robust learning platform developed for medium and large businesses. We believed that the more robust the tool we used, the more popular it would be with colleagues. But a year after the tool was implemented, its usability among colleagues was very far from what was wanted. The reasons for this were difficulties with its use and operation, as well as problems with inserting seminars and training in the form of videos into the tool. Therefore, the internal working group in charge of knowledge management and internal education decided on a big change.

Since we have very skilled in-house IT staff, we decided to create the educational platform internally to ensure it was exactly tailored to our needs. It had to meet the following two conditions in particular:

- Would be adopted by a large majority of colleagues
- Easy-to-use with intuitive insertion of learning content for trainers

With these two factors in mind, we began the creation of a new platform and we continuously verified the fulfilment of these two conditions within the working group. In three months, our IT colleagues created a platform which allowed us to transfer our company's existing educational content, as well as inserting new training material into it. During the year, we organized 15 training sessions of varying lengths in various areas covering various topics for all employees. These are company-wide trainings and are held as in-person seminars and can also be joined online via MS Teams. Company-wide training sessions are uploaded as videos and these, along with all other training materials (such as presentations), are stored as content on our new learning platform. This is built under Power Apps in an MS 365 environment.

To ensure colleagues identify with the new platform and for it to be widely accepted and used, we decided to choose a name by vote among colleagues. At a full company meeting, we proposed four different names to our colleagues, HEDVIGA, which was an owl in Harry Potter representing wisdom and knowledge, received the most votes. This name has taken hold, everyone knows the platform as HEDVIGA.

In our opinion, the learning platform must fulfil another task, which is to help managers of individual departments monitor and evaluate the professional development of their department colleagues. Managers must know how much internal and external training their subordinates have received. This is also important so managers can prepare for annual interviews with subordinates.

In addition to this function, the learning platform must also provide an evaluation of how successful each course is and what courses are most preferred by colleagues. In addition, it is also of benefit to evaluate which of the trainers is the most popular among colleagues. For this purpose, we developed business intelligence (BI) reports for the Hedviga platform, also based on MS 365, which can provide all these functionalities.

We regularly update our platform with new functionalities and improvements. It is becoming a favourite for our employees, without which they can no longer imagine their professional development. We are happy that this platform is being widely used and that our managers also benefit from it.

Our colleagues have expressed their appreciation for this in our regular annual employee satisfaction surveys. Their personal professional growth is extremely important to them according to these surveys. Our approach is unique and we want to keep it this way in the future. This experience shows us that sometimes there is a need for a radical change and to start things anew with a new "drive".

# Is Slovakia circular?

## Circularity in practice

Slovakia ranks below average as regards circularity, secondary material use, recycling and green policy – in 25<sup>th</sup> place for EU Member States in 2021. Circular material use is below 10% in comparison with 34% in the Netherlands. The recycling rate of municipal waste is 50%, only 5% below the EU target, but the 40% landfill rate remains high.



**Pamela Palková**  
Assistant  
Circular Slovakia

### What drives and hinders the development of the circular economy in Slovakia?

Circular Slovakia, Institute for Circular Economy and Barney Studio recently published the brochure “Cirkulárne Slovensko 2022”, which provides new data about the state of the circular economy in Slovakia, and a variety of business models in different sectors.

According to the SWOT analysis, increasing political and public support is one of the strengths driving circular performance in Slovakia. On the other hand, a high landfill rate and a low rate of reuse and recycling are clear weaknesses. Education and awareness raising need to be a greater priority, as well as investments in eco-innovation and digitalisation of waste management. The main weak points are a lack of cooperation among ministries, and relatively low financial and personal capacities.



### Where can circular principles be applied? Get to know inspiring circular businesses, NGOs and municipalities!

The brochure looks at 17 private companies, NGOs and municipalities who have adopted circular practices without being legislatively obliged to. These examples cover all stages of value creation, including ecodesign, manufacturing, reuse, repair and closing the material loop. Selected examples are given below.

Ecodesign aims to minimize the environmental impacts of a product during its life cycle. An example is **Corplex Slovakia**, which designs and manufactures custom-made polypropylene packaging solutions from up to 100% recycled material. They also provide a buy-back service to recycle these boxes at the end of their life cycle.

Reuse and repair are important aspects of a circular model to prevent waste and pollution. **AfB Slovakia** is the largest non-profit company in Europe specialising in the repair of obsolete IT hardware so it can be reused. Thanks to hardware renovation, a significant amount of iron, energy and water is saved. In addition, half of its staff are disabled, which makes it not only enviro-friendly, but also a socially inclusive enterprise.

**Ecobutt** annually recycles more than 10 million cigarette butts. This recycling project installs cigarette waste collection bins in places with frequent smoking activity. Cigarette leftovers are transformed into a granulate that can be mixed into asphalt to replace more valuable cellulose.



Municipalities have the opportunity to be circular as well! 57 municipalities in the Nitra region belong to **Ponitrianske združenie obcí**. The main goal of this association is ecological waste management via composting sites, waste recovery and recycling, so there is a decreased need for waste collection. To find out more about the circular economy in Slovakia, read the full brochure “Cirkulárne Slovensko 2022” in Slovak here: <https://circular-slovakia.sk/brozury/>



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**Policy Talk "Rule of law and Human Capital"**

Jurkovičova tepláreň  
(cooperation with Amcham)



**Economic Forum**

Falkensteiner Hotel,  
Bratislava (ChamCham)



**Golftrophy 2023**

Sedin Golf resort,  
Nové Osady 110, Veľké Uľany  
(ChamCham)



**Patrons dinner**

Baroza Restaurant,  
Bratislava



**After Election Discussion**

Sheraton Hotel,  
Bratislava



**Speed Business Meeting**

Hotel Lindner  
(ChamCham)



**Mussels and Fries**

Liquid Factory,  
Bratislava



**Business Ladies Day**

Penati Club  
(ChamCham)



**Koppert Bumblebee Factory Visit**

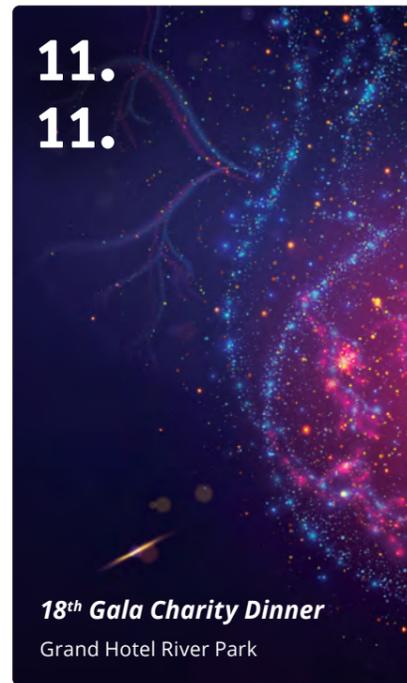
More information coming soon



**Every Wednesday of the month**

**Monthly Dutch Borrel**

Spin Bar,  
Bratislava



**18<sup>th</sup> Gala Charity Dinner**

Grand Hotel River Park

On 11 November 2023, we will welcome our members, diplomats, representatives from international companies and special guests to celebrate the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Gala Dinner with us. This event has become a prestigious tradition for the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce. Over 100 guests will be invited to take part in this festive celebration. The evening's program will include great music, dance, entertainment, a raffle and live auction, and superb food prepared by top chefs.

Every year, the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce selects a unique project to support people in need.

The Chamber has been helping people in need for almost 20 years and has donated more than EUR 250 000 to support a number of projects and will continue to support people in need. In 2022, we supported the environmental project - "Bring Back Life to the Bela River", which was coordinated by WWF Slovakia.

This year, our focus will shift towards a life-saving mission and we will assist the project, "Life-saving heart machines" to help fire brigades save the lives of those in immediate need of help.

# Patrons Dinner

*When:* 12 April

*Where:* The Residence of the Ambassador

by:



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

The spring Patron's Dinner was hosted by Ambassador H.E. Gabriella Sancisi at her residence. During the dinner, we said goodbye to Jan Lamber Voortman as President of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, who held this position for the last 8 years. After this long period, Jan Lamber Voortman has decided to hand over the reins and his successor is Gijs van der Loo. We would like to thank Jan Lamber Voortman for the many years of hard work, commitment, patience, and diligence that he put into his work and the functioning of the Chamber of Commerce. We are certain Gijs van der Loo will bring the same degree of determination as president of the Chamber of Commerce. Gijs van der Loo brought his positive energy and mood to all the guests during the evening. During the dinner, the guests enjoyed delicious vegetarian food, a favourite of Ambassador H.E. Gabriella Sancisi. The guests stayed late into the evening at the ambassador's residence to discuss the topics of the day.



# King's Day

**When:** 27 April  
**Where:** Al Faro, Bratislava

One of the most special events on our calendar is the celebration of the birthday of the Dutch King Willem-Alexander. The Dutch Chamber of Commerce organized a celebration of the King's birthday, to which all Chamber of Commerce members, friends, family, and all Dutch people living in Slovakia were invited. This time the event was held at one of the best restaurants in Bratislava – Al Faro, where guests were served delicious food. The Orange Party birthday celebration was opened by our new chamber president, Gijs van der Loo, who gave a speech, as did Ambassador H.E. Gabriella Sancisi. Throughout the evening, special alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails were prepared for the guests in the orange colour of the Netherlands. We would like to thank our Board member, Nick Barends and his company Gin 1689, for the cocktails. We would also like to thank our member company, Cloetta, who sponsored our evening and provided our guests with tasty candies, which our guests could take home with them. During the evening saxophonist, Deesaxx, and the DJ created the perfect atmosphere through their music, which featured Deesaxx's compositions and international hits, and saw our guests fill the dance floor. Many thanks to our financial sponsors who support us and helped us make this wonderful evening happen – ING Hubs, ING, Philips, Heineken, Arval, and NN.



by:



**Katarina Miklošová**  
Executive Director  
Netherlands Chamber  
of Commerce in Slovakia



**NL Chamber Board** (from left): **Bart Waterloos** (VGD), **Marius Wijnen** (Arval), **Beatrix Šidová** (ING), **Henriette van Notten** (NL Embassy), **Gijs van der Loo** (NL Chamber president / Heineken), **Nick Barends** (BRNDS), **Katarina Miklošová** (NL Chamber Director), **Michal Špaňár** (Union)

# Dutch Borrel

*When:* Second Wednesday of every month, 7 pm  
*Where:* Spin Bar, Bratislava

by:



**Nick Barends**  
Professional and Leisure  
Events, Charity  
BRNDS Intermediary



The Dutch Borrel in Bratislava is an event organized by The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic in collaboration with Spin Bar (Bratislava). The event is held at 7 pm on the second Wednesday of every month and includes a free welcome drink for all attendees. The aim of the event is to strengthen the Dutch expat community by providing an informal setting in which we can all relax and share our stories, experiences, make new friendships and strengthen existing ones, while enjoying high quality drinks and a great atmosphere in the heart of Bratislava's Old Town – all in the spirit of the Dutch BORREL.

We look forward to seeing you at the next monthly Dutch Borrel – newcomers are always welcome. Help us spread the word about our event and let's grow our community together, one Borrel at a time!



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