

Bulletin ²|2020

The **Netherlands** Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic

Focus on:

- **Circular Economy as a Business Opportunity**
- **Plastic Free Danube**
- **Second Life for Textile**

Events:

- **Webinar: Cybersecurity**
- **Back to Life Business Cocktail**
- **Speed Business Meeting**

Theme:



Also in this issue:

Forward to even greener Bratislava

Henk Cor van der Kwast planting tulips together with Mayor Vallo

p. 8





**WHEN
YOU DRIVE
NEVER
DRINK**



NICO ROSBERG / 2016 FIA FORMULA 1® DRIVERS' WORLD CHAMPION

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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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Christmas Tree

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TMF
Global reach
Local knowledge

President speaks



Jan Lamber Voortman
President of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce

Dear Patron-members, Members and Friends,

First and foremost, we hope that you are healthy and safe with your family, these are uncertain times where we need each other more than ever. We are glad that we could help in particular situations, but if you still need help or support let us know.

It is almost Christmas, one of the most important family gatherings in Slovakia. It makes this year even more difficult when you cannot see each other as you might have wanted. Let's keep our spirits high and look for a better future to come and use this time to reflect.

With this reflection in mind, we also put our future as a topic of this bulletin. We believe that becoming sustainable and circular is the way to go forward. In this magazine, there are good experiences and educative articles of our Members told. Our Dutch embassy and H.E. Mr. ambassador van der Kwast and his team are very active in this field. They are not only talking but also making Bratislava greener with their actions! Together with the embassy and NCC, we were among the founders of Circular Slovakia; they will explain how circular a business opportunity can be. Do not forget to register for their nice webinar in January.

Another example of how circular a business opportunity can be is the article of our patron member Dolphin. Dolphin keeps on innovating in a sustainable way. Look also at their beautiful home dispenser, especially for home-working employees. KLM is working for years to be sustainable and is a major player in the DJSI index.

In the past few months, we organized a webinar Cybersecurity and we had even a life event "Back to life Business cocktail" in the garden of the ambassador. Looking back, we are grateful and thankful that we had an opportunity to meet each other also live this year. Thanks for your support of this event, Mr. ambassador. In the first week of December, we had an unusual event "Live Sax concert" initiated by our great board members responsible for events: Beatrix Šidová and Elena Májeková. We received so many warm feedbacks, amazing!

Let's stay strong and happy together and help each other in these times!

We will appreciate any ideas you would like to share with us which will help to improve the Chamber. Please, contact Adriana to schedule an appointment and discuss together. For any business-related matters, I am available at 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:

1to1 Administration s.r.o.	HIC Slovakia s.r.o.	Sheraton Bratislava Hotel
Advokátska kancelária Mgr. Štefan Rybovič, s.r.o.	Hillbridges s.r.o.	Signify Slovakia s.r.o.
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AspenStaff s.r.o.	Indalo Farma	Start Group s.r.o.
Belgicatessen	ING Business Shared Services B.V.	Študio 21 plus, s.r.o.
Business Lease Slovakia s.r.o.	JUDr. Milan Žoldoš, advokát, s.r.o.	Tec@work
Cargo-partner SR s.r.o.	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	Techo s.r.o.
Cesam s.r.o.	Komerční banka a.s., pobočka zahraničnej banky	UPSTUDIO
Crayonic	Koppert s.r.o.	VGD SLOVAKIA s.r.o.
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Crowne Plaza Bratislava	LeasePlan Slovakia s.r.o.	WorkSpace Europe
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GEMOR Fashion s.r.o.	Pontrain	
Graban, Torma & Partners s.r.o.	pro4CE s.r.o.	
HC Capital a.s.	Scaleup Marketing	

Honorary members:

Anton van Beek	Netherlands Royal Embassy in Bratislava	Rob Swartbol
Emile Roest	Paul Verlinden	
Miroslava Tvarog Michalková	Richard van Rijssen	

Individual member:

Paul Frankenhuizen	Robert Machalíček
Daniela Kmeťová	Frank Reijnen

Want to become a member?

Check the membership options on www.netherlandschamber.sk

Welcome new members!



Jurík family
Founders

Studio 21 plus

Studio 21 is a construction, design and consulting company with a history since 1993. However, we are mainly a family company that respects the principles of responsible business, quality, innovative solutions and emphasizes the protection of the environment. We like to work on projects that have a positive benefit for society.

We focus on projects of public places and represent several top producers. We are exclusive distributor of Dutch companies on Slovak market



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Become a member!

The Netherlands Chamber is the largest business platform connecting Dutch and Slovak companies, institutions and authorities and is led by a professional board.

As a member, you will have access to a wide range of seminars, network events and field trips to the most interesting companies in Slovakia. Members benefit from our contacts with local authorities, government and institutes, and our cooperation with foreign chambers and embassies.

We welcome individual entrepreneurs and companies of any nationality to become members and seek for business opportunities within the chamber.



PATRON MEMBERS

Patron members are the strongest supporters of the Chamber and enjoy the highest level of membership benefits and its promotional opportunities. The annual membership fee is EUR 1,500.



CORPORATE MEMBERS

Corporate membership is intended for companies and the annual fee is 830 Euro. We have special categories for small companies with less than 5 employees (annual membership fee is 500 Euro) and regional companies with company seat located further than 200 km from Bratislava (annual membership fee is 500 Euro).



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Individuals, who want to be in touch with the Dutch business community can apply for membership as well.

Contact us!

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The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic

non-profit civil association
est. 1997.

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

Membership Benefits

- 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

Become a member!

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

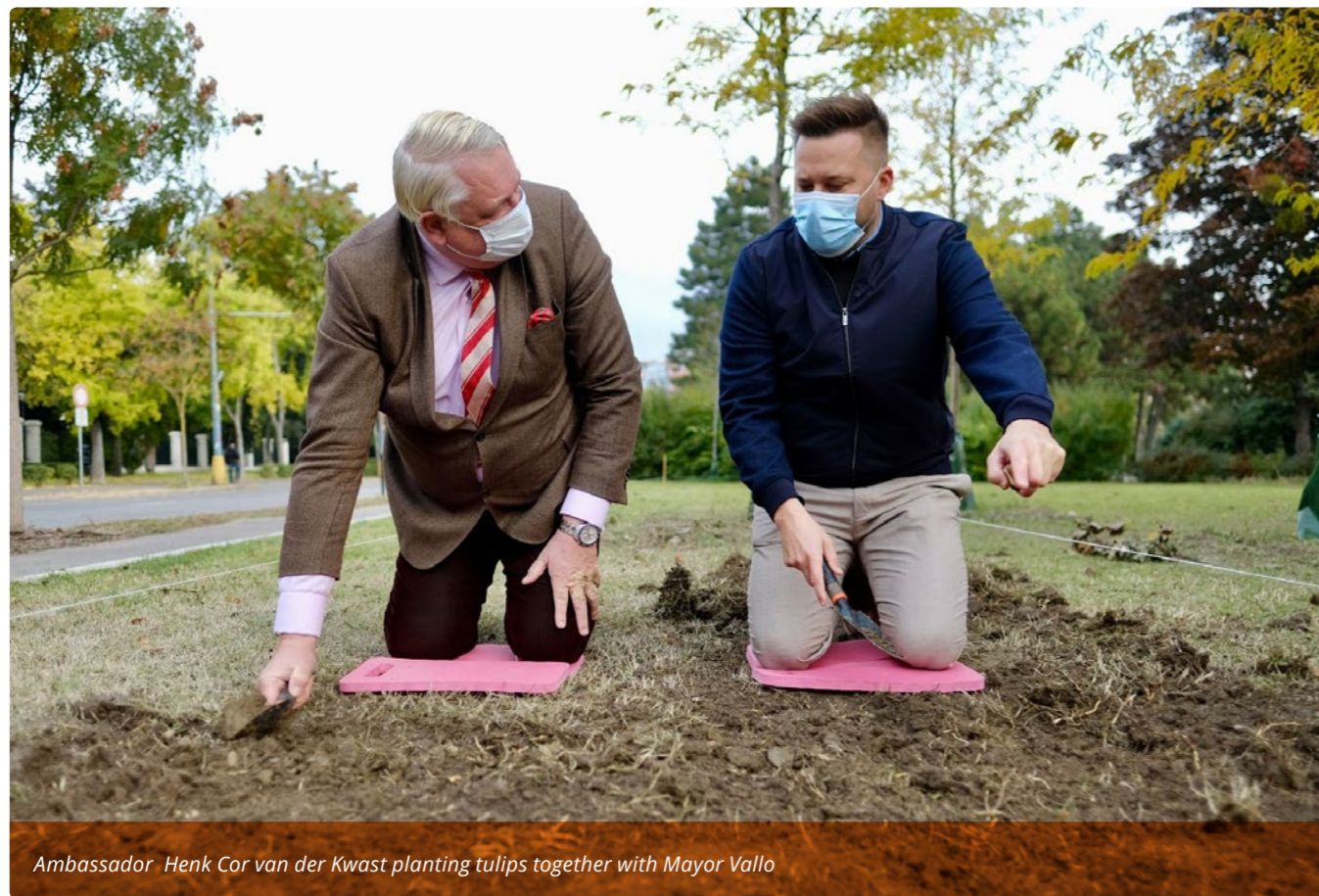
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Ambassador speaks: The courage to keep going forward and an even greener Bratislava

by:



Henk Cor van der Kwast
Ambassador



Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast planting tulips together with Mayor Vallo

In my last contribution, I expressed the hope that we would see and meet each other soon again in other and “normal” circumstances. Although we had a corona-proof meeting with a small group at the residence, circumstances are now developing in a direction that such a “normal meeting” might take more time. Although Slovakia made history with the testing of almost the whole population, pandemic mapping in Slovakia has given a clearer picture and the development of vaccines is progressing, we are still not there. Patience is needed and what is more

serious: for many companies’ economic perspectives are bleak and not improving.

At the embassy, we are trying to see how we can still contribute to strengthening our bilateral relations, help fellow-citizens and Slovak people who want to work with the Netherlands, and also how together with the Chamber we can still promote business and use the limited possibilities. I have to say that despite a second lockdown, working from home (which is not easy for



everybody) we are making progress thanks to our active team of colleagues, who are trying everything they know in this difficult situation.

The mayor of Bratislava, Mr. Vallo, launched his plan to make Bratislava greener and to create support for planting 10,000 trees. We welcome this effort and believe that greener cities are a better place to live. We want to support this plant with the help of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture. We offered 10,000 special tulips, the “Slovensko tulip” to the city. This special tulip was developed for 25 years of excellent relations between Slovakia and the Netherlands and was baptized as the “Slovensko tulip” by HE President Kiska in 2018. On October 21, with a facemask and on my knees I planted some of those tulips together with Mayor Vallo. In addition to this we promised to contribute 2,000 trees in the coming years. The first 1,000 have been donated and more will follow next year. We will also approach companies that have not been hit by the crisis to help us next year to reach this number of trees.

The team of the Spectator invited me to contribute to a podcast of ambassadors in Bratislava. It was a podcast about what ambassadors like about Bratislava, its culture, history and landmarks. My interview took place in Danubiana, because I wanted to underline the historic and cultural importance of Danubiana for Slovakia and the Netherlands. We also talked a lot about music. In my view Slovakia has a very rich music tradition and culture, a great treasure that deserves more attention in Slovakia and in other European countries. The podcast can be found on the Spectator website in the SPECTACULAR SLOVAKIA PODCAST section.

At the embassy, we are now more than ever active on the web. The growing practice of webinars was used to promote cooperation and economic development. Together with our embassy in Budapest, we did a webinar on green buildings and sustainable housing. Two Dutch experts, Yvette Govaart (COUP B.V.) and Bas van de Westerlo (C2C ExpoLAB), highlighted the value of circular principles in urban transformation and the need to act quickly and strongly to tackle climate change.

Another webinar was on smart mobility. It gave an overview of sustainable mobility strategies and plans in the Netherlands and Slovakia and of respective e-mobility markets in terms of trends and challenges. On Friday November 20, we participated in the jury for the Roma Spirit Awards. This is an important competition between companies, municipalities and NGO’s for good examples of Roma integration projects. By supporting good projects, we want to underline the importance of leading by example for better integration of the Roma. In December, we will be participating in the World Press Freedom conference.

Last but not least, together with Dutch Cycling Embassy, we will do a series on cycling next year. When possible, we will do real projects, when not possible we will hold webinars. In any case, the work goes on and we want to explore all possibilities. Of course, like you we hope that at some point we can return to real situations and real contacts.

In the meantime: do not hesitate to contact us with questions on rules and regulations. For companies and business people, our team is also ready to see where we can help if you have particular questions or problems.

Let us stand firm and carry on. I wish you all good luck and courage to go on.

Henk Cor van der Kwast
Ambassador

The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bratislava

Frana Krala 5, Bratislava
www.netherlandsandyou.nl



The circular economy as a business opportunity

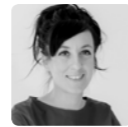
We are living on debt. This year, the Earth's capacity to regenerate its ecological resources and services was exceeded on August 22. Our production and consumption patterns as we know them today cannot be sustained in the long run, as our planet's resources are limited and are being depleted faster than they can be regenerated.

The final output of the linear economy is usually waste. In the circular economy, valuable materials are kept in the loop for as long as possible and waste is treated as a resource to be reintroduced into the economy.

by:



Denisa Rášová
Circular Slovakia



Petra Csefalvayová
Institute for Circular Economy

Seven key principles of circular economy:

1. Cooperation with suppliers and consumers
2. New business models
3. Product life cycle extension
4. Eco-design of products
5. Use of digital technologies
6. Waste as a resource
7. Use of renewable resources

7 circular principles that bring a boost to the economy

There are 7 key principles of the circular economy. To initiate a successful circular transition, we cannot concentrate only on the question of waste management - who will collect the waste and how it will be processed, rather we need to focus on the entire supply chain from raw material suppliers to the final consumer and waste. Treating waste as a resource, the application of digital technologies and new business models will play a crucial role in the transition to circularity. These principles are also a central part of the global sustainable agenda (SDG

12 Sustainable production and consumption) and the EU green agenda and are being translated into guidelines and gradually also into national legislation.

Implementing the New Action plan for the Circular Economy could increase GDP by 0.5 % by 2030, and create 700 thousand new jobs. The savings are also obvious. Today, 40% of expenditures at manufacturing companies are related to materials. By using closed cycles, companies can increase profitability and gain protection from fluctuations in raw material prices.

Key market segments and the circular economy

Electronics & ICT



Repairably, Slovak NGO certifying products that are designed for simple repair

Promoting longer product lifetimes for electronics and ICT, countering premature obsolescence, increasing the share of recycled materials and implementing the right to repair is the main focus of the EU's new circular economy agenda. Consumers will be given the opportunity to repair their broken products and buy spare parts at affordable prices. New business models such as "product as a service" and reuse of functional components will be preferred.

Textiles



Šumné, Rental of quality, local and sustainable clothing

It is estimated that less than 1% of all textiles worldwide are recycled into new textiles. Currently, textile collection and recycling are not legally binding in Slovakia. By 2025, sorting goals for textile waste streams will be introduced together with a decision on whether textiles will enter producer responsibility schemes, where producers bear the financial cost for collection and proper recycling of secondary materials.

Reuse and repair services and business models supporting access rather than ownership will be prioritized. Textile products will have to be suitable for circularity and sustainability as regards non-hazardous content and recycled content will become the backbone of the textile industry.

Plastics, food & packaging

Plastics have been and will continue to be one of the most closely watched topics. The recycling system for plastics will have to be linked to mandatory content of recycled materials



PANARA company together with a team of professor Alexy developed biodegradable plastics from renewable resources together with recycling infrastructure for closing the cycle.

in electronics, vehicles, construction materials and packaging. Biodegradable packaging will be standardized, and collection and recycling solutions will have to be tested rigorously before they are launched.

Construction & buildings



Project "Suť na park" is converting demolition waste to a park

The future of construction and buildings is modular buildings, material passports, compulsory separate collection and recycling at the construction site. Recycled content requirements for certain construction products will also need to be introduced.

Circular Slovakia as a network to boost collaborations

Circular Slovakia is an umbrella organization that seeks to accelerate transition to the circular economy. The platform creates a network of front-running companies and organizations in the circular economy to support collaborations and business opportunities, raise awareness, and advocate and exchange knowledge and know-how. This article is a summary of the webinar "The Circular Economy as a Business Opportunity" organized by the Circular Slovakia platform and its members - The Institute for the Circular Economy, the Slovak Business Agency and the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. A webinar recording is available on the Facebook page of Circular Slovakia.

They bet on quality and today they lead the market

Študio-21 plus, our new member, provides building, project design, and consultancy services for children's playgrounds, outdoor sports facilities, bicycle racks and smart solutions for cities.

by our member:



Miloslav Jurik
Studio 21 plus, s.r.o.



Founders of Študio-21 plus, Vladimír and Jana Jurik, with their sons, Miloslav and Juraj.

When Študio-21 plus was founded in 1993, when the environment, smart solutions for public spaces, and cycling in general were at the margin of society's interest. However, the founders (who are a married couple) believed that by their activity and implemented projects they would gradually succeed in convincing the public, cities, municipalities and developers

that these topics are worth looking into. Today, the family business (which now includes their sons, Miloslav and Juraj, who joined their parents at the firm in 2005) are market leaders thanks to the quality and comprehensive character of their solutions. They have also built a good reputation abroad, where they cooperate with renowned partners. "To us, the quality and



safety of our products and solutions matters very much. Our priority is therefore to select partners who are reliable, tested by time, but also innovative and who lead in terms of safety. We aren't into cheap low-quality solutions that are only designed to deliver revenue", emphasised Vladimír Jurík, Managing Director of Študio-21 plus. The comprehensive solutions they deliver include everything from consultancy, design, supply, installation and maintenance.

One of the principles of doing business in a responsible way is also reflected in the children's playgrounds designed and built by Študio-21 plus – there are now over 200 such playgrounds across Slovakia. They have been working on the safety of playgrounds for over 16 years. "We also pay attention to inclusion; all children are important" explained Vladimír Jurík. The company considers playgrounds to be a venue for communication and the socialising of all children, as well as a space for children to play and a facility to complement residential development.

They also emphasise design quality and functional public spaces. Their portfolio includes multi-purpose outdoor sports and workout facilities, innovative solutions for bike racks, bicycle parking and cycling transport in general. It also includes

urban street furniture and designs for sustainable public spaces. It is the philosophy of sustainable urban development that inspired the Jurík family to found the Smart Cities Club, a civic association promoting the latest trends for cities and municipalities providing a platform for communication with professionals at home and abroad and cooperation on projects for the adaptation of the urban environment to climate change.

Študio-21 plus, s.r.o.



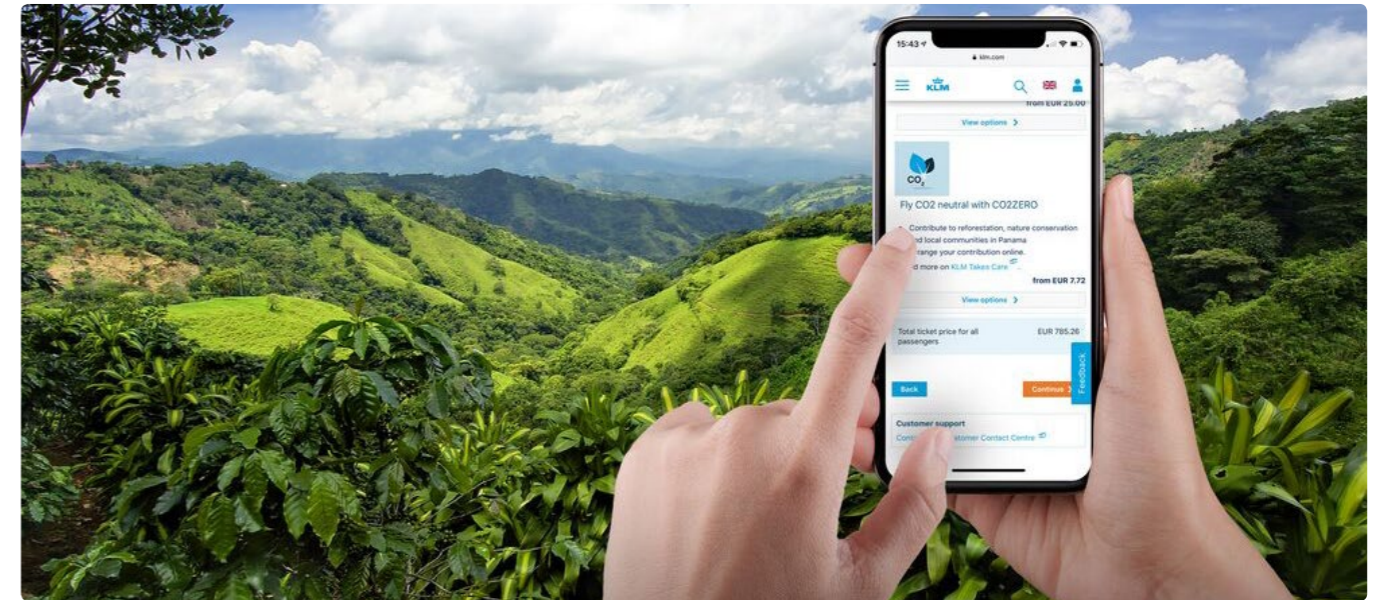
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Air France-KLM Group is a major player on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI)

Air France-KLM Group is proud to maintain its presence on the DJSI World and DJSI Europe Indices for the sixteenth consecutive year.

by our member: 



Air France-KLM remains an industry leader, recognized for its sustainable commitments, with the highest score on environment in 2020.

It has been a permanent fixture on the World and Europe DJSI indices for 16 years, and this significant accomplishment acknowledges the Air France-KLM Group's continuous commitment to improving its long-term sustainability policies and to transparently disclosing its performance.

Every year, the DJSI publishes a ranking of the most sustainable listed companies based on sustainability practices and performance regarding governance and environmental and social responsibility, in different categories. Having previously been ranked first in the airline industry category on the DJSI World Index, this year Air France-KLM was overtaken by All Nippon Airways (ANA); however, Air France-KLM maintains its leadership position amongst its European peers.

Being recognized as an environmental leader for the airline industry category reflects the Group's efforts on the subject, and its goal of being recognized as a leader in the sustainable transition of the airline industry.


The Air France-KLM Group has committed to reduce its environmental footprint and global CO2 emissions / pax / km by 50% by 2030 (compared to 2005):

- By modernizing and renewing its fleet with the latest generation of aircraft, which will bring lower fuel consumption and CO2 emissions (Boeing 787, Airbus A350 and A220, Embraer 195-E2), and by phasing out older aircraft (Airbus A380 and A340, Boeing 747)
- By contributing to the development of the bio-fuel sector: since 2008, Air France-KLM has been actively involved in the development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and has contributed to several programs that facilitate the use of SAF

More than ever, during this unprecedented crisis, the Air France-KLM Group is committed to accelerate its sustainability drive.



In addition to environmental responsibility, the Group has committed to a broader social and societal responsibility. It employs 83,000 people in 118 countries, and has a global presence with over 300 destinations served in 2019:

- By renewing its social rights and ethics charter "AFKL Principles", signed by the CEOs of Air France-KLM, Air France, and KLM in 2020, the Group reaffirmed its commitment to create a work environment where all employees can flourish and are able to contribute to Group performance. Those principles are the foundation for the social, economic and cultural cohesion at each company and at Air France-KLM Group.
- By helping local development, the Group and its employees support various projects. For example, 70 million Flying Blue miles (worth 1,653 tickets) were donated to NGOs through Flying Blue, in 2019.



AIR FRANCE KLM DELTA Slovakia

www.airfrance.com
www.klm.com

How Dolphin supports move towards a Circular Slovakia

Since its inception, Dolphin has focused on eco-friendly solutions and has always been looking for an environmentally friendly alternative. Dolphin is known as an industry innovator providing new concepts and sustainable solutions.

Delivering their products and services to the point of consumption, handling and packaging waste is minimized. Offering reusable bottles, paper cups and durable water coolers support Dolphin's circular ambitions. By choosing Eko-label products Dolphin customers can opt to minimize their carbon footprint and make a balanced environmental friendly purchase decision.

by our member: ▶

Ab Olde Scheper
Dolphin Central Europe s.r.o.





Energy saving water reservoir

Safe energy!

Saving energy is not always a visible choice. For many office appliances it is not clear what is the energy consumption, and certainly this is the case with many water coolers supplied by our competitors. Dolphin water dispensers are equipped with an economical cooling system that saves energy. Integrated cooling probes in insulated tanks and integrated thermostat standby functions are some of our solutions saving both energy and costs!

A unique eco friendly filter system

Filter coolers are the most sustainable environmental solution for the future. They eliminate transport, packaging, and supply high quality drinking water straight from the mains water supply. It is important however to consider the filter treatment method to prevent unneeded energy use and waste.

Traditional methods of cleaning water, including treating water with chlorine prior adding it to the mains, generally result in an unpopular taste and quality. Onsite filter coolers can be a solution but not by using disposable, plastic housed filters. 6 million of these plastic filters are thrown away every year, Resulting in over 1,000 tonnes of non-biodegradable plastic being sent to landfill!

The Dolphin green filter system is a patented reusable system, The only part that needs to be discarded is the biodegradable filter media. All of the other parts can be reused over and over again, This results in two main benefits:

- Filter replacement cost is far lower than with traditional plastic filters
- Minimal environmental impact

Cradle to Cradle

Dolphin takes into account the environmental impact of its processes throughout the chain, managing water production and supply from source to point of consumption. Suppliers are selected on the basis of their eco-friendly approach and the materials used in order to promote recycling and reduce packaging.

Dolphin fills its spring water directly from the certified source and controls the minimal use of natural resources, transportation and waste disposal.



A unique eco friendly filter system

Storage in recycled plastic

The Dolphin bottle storage racks are a revolutionary logistics system for storing and transporting bottles from the production line to the end customer, and are an invention of Dolphin. Made from 100% recycled plastic, the crates optimize logistics, storage and distribution, saving energy and material. It is a more economical solution for manufacturers and distributors.



Professional Eco solutions

Dolphin has a line of professional filter coolers ideal for large consumption areas. They are also the most eco-friendly solution for any dining environment. Restaurants, hotels and catering units can reduce waste from small PET bottles while reducing their expenses, filling high quality drinking water on site! Personalized bottles can also help communicate their eco-friendly policy to their customers.

Green technology

Today our water-coolers are designed using as much recyclable material as possible and are equipped with energy saving devices to reduce energy consumption. But above all we offer models from the first manufacturer on the world market to use the totally natural refrigerant gas R290. A choice with great foresight and quality which has given our customers the option of choosing a product with zero impact on global warming, whilst still obtaining an energy saving of around 15% and higher overall performance of the refrigerator.

Thanks to the use of a natural refrigerant we supply the

only cooler in the world listed in the Greenpeace "Cooler Technology Report"

"Cool Technologies: work without HFCs - 2010" is the title of the annual Greenpeace report which lists companies which have distinguished themselves, around the world, for their use of refrigerating technology which does not use hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), which are the main contributors to "global warming". Dolphin is incredibly proud to represent the only water cooler manufacturer mentioned in this report, proving coherence to our respect for the environment.



Eco-facts

- The annual consumption of 12 billion liters of PET bottled water requires - just for the production of bottles - 350 thousand tons of polyethylene plastics (PET), 665 thousand tons of oil and the release of approximately 910 thousand tons of CO2 equivalent of greenhouse gases!
- By bottling in re-usable and 100% recyclable Polycarbonate bottles Dolphin offers an eco friendly alternative.
- Only one third of the plastic bottles used for mineral water are collected for recycling, while the remaining two thirds are exported to a landfill or incinerator.
- All bottles delivered by Dolphin are returned and refilled for a minimum of 70 cycles after which they are recycled.
- Plastic bottles have become a regular part of our daily lives and have replaced glass bottles due to their lower weight and easy handling. However, our comfort is becoming a serious problem for the environment; PET bottles that are not recycled (most, in fact) are exported to landfill and take almost a thousand years to decompose naturally.

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Textile recycling and insulation

Using recycled textiles and giving textile a second life is an easy way to avoid the creation of new mountains of waste, and to protect fields, forests and the countryside, which is the vital impact of the circular economy

SK-TEX, s.r.o. was founded in 1997 as a trading company to purchase and sell raw materials for the textile industry with a focus on Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as well as the sale of floor coverings in these territories. It now also recycles textiles, using the machinery of Tatrašvit Socks a.s., and its own lines.

At present, it processes approximately 2,500 tons of secondary raw materials per year and employs more than 23 people at its plant in Senica. In 2004, it started developing and producing modified secondary fiber raw materials for the automotive industry – using non-flammable, water-repellent, antifungal treatments.



Ing. Miroslav Futrikanič
SK-TEX s.r.o.

SK-TEX is mainly focused on exports to EU countries and exports over 90% of its production. The company's main partners are engaged in the production of insulation materials for the automotive, construction and furniture industries.

The use of treated fibers has led to the development of thermal and acoustic insulation based on recycled textile fibers. Experience from cooperation with partners from the automotive industry was used in this development, where recycled textiles are widely used in insulation due to their excellent acoustic parameters.

EKOSEN insulation started to be developed in 2008 in cooperation with Juta a.s. and Canabest s.r.o. Due to the required amount of investment in technology and the

production and sales processes, we decided to proceed in the same way as in the first project and produce insulation materials on foreign technological equipment. At present, they cooperate in the production with renowned manufacturers of insulation for cars, RETEX a.s. and JUTA a.s., which are also our customers for recycled textile fibers.

A significant impetus for the development of textile insulation and other products was also the fact that households are a significant source of textile waste - their annual production is about 10 kg per person per year. In Slovakia, this represents approx. 50,000 t, of textiles discarded from households. On average, up to 70% of such textiles ends up in landfills, incinerators, or as fuel in cement plants. These textiles, when used correctly, do not lose their basic function, i.e. protection against cold and heat, acoustic parameters and water absorption.

From 1,000 kg of textile, it is possible to produce up to 40 m³ of insulation, which is the volume of insulation in the average house. At the end of its life, this material is again 100% recyclable and thus does not burden the environment.

In terms of overall size, SK-TEX s.r.o. is a relatively small business. However, in its specific business area, it is one of the largest companies in the Central European region and is the largest in Slovakia,

At present, we focus on customers who value quality over price. In accordance with the current trend of using dry construction systems and the annual increase in the share of prefabricated houses and wooden buildings, we see strong potential in the application of insulation to acoustic partitions, floors and ceilings.

The company cooperates with PR Krajné s.r.o., Euroakustik s.r.o., STU Bratislava, Zvolen University, the Agricultural University of Nitra, ADMAS Brno technological workplace, CEIT s.r.o. and others in the development of thermal and acoustic insulation and systems.

SK-TEX s.r.o. has prepared a project for the recovery of textile waste into secondary raw material usable in the production of thermal insulation materials for construction purposes and the production of parts for the automotive industry.

After the investment in another large-capacity line, it is planned to increase production in 2021-2022 by another 220% to a total volume of approximately 7,900 t of recycled fibers, from which the company's own consumption will increase to 2,500 t / year.

The aim is not only to increase capacity, but also to reduce the risk in production from the possibility of a stand-by and reduce the use of capacity from the current 100% to 75-80% to create a safety margin. We also plan to streamline production and reduce downtime when changing the range.

Textile waste is recovered for textile pulp on so-called tearing lines, where after cutting the textile (used clothing) and balancing the properties of such input raw material in the mixing chamber, the torn needle rollers loosen the textile waste into individual fibers, which can be further supplied to

customers after packaging on a packaging press and used as raw material during processing into nonwovens and yarns.

This torn textile is spray-treated on the tear line using a preparation developed by SK-TEX s.r.o. to improve fire resistance and which includes biocidal treatment.

In the second stage, this modified torn textile will also be used as an input raw material in the production of textile fleece using AIR-LAY technology for EKOSEN thermal and sound insulation, which serves as an ecological and easily recyclable alternative to the currently used insulation material.

The technology behind the production of insulation boards is based on the thermal connection of aerodynamically laid fleece using bicomponent fibers. The output of the line consists of thermal and sound insulation boards with a size of 120x60 cm, a thickness of 4 to 16 cm and a density of 20 to 80 kg / m³. The input raw material is a mixture of textile fibers obtained by pulping old clothing waste mixed on the tear line with a bicomponent fiber in a ratio of 90 ÷ 85% textile tear and 10 ÷ 15% BICO, which is then sprayed to reduce flammability and increase resistance to pests and fungi.

SK-TEX s.r.o. produces technological equipment of the very highest quality and is amongst the most economical in the world.

Thermal and sound insulation is made from our fibers from processed textile waste in the form of EKOSEN and SENIZOL fleece or boards. These are flexible insulation boards made of textile fibers connected by special adhesive fibers in the required thicknesses, and basis weights.

EKOSEN insulation has excellent heat insulating properties. Thermal conductivity λ is in the range of 0.032-0.039 [W / m.K]. It has excellent thermal properties and especially good heat-accumulation and hydro-regulation ability, which is significantly higher than for basalt or glass fiber.

These properties are due to the ability of a substantial part of the fibers, which bind excess moisture from the environment and release it at elevated temperatures, which significantly improve the thermal attenuation of the building structure. Thermal effects of water binding and release are an important component of the accumulation and control properties of EKOSEN insulation.

The EKOSEN range of insulation materials is suitable for:

- roof structures
- prefabricated houses
- thermal and sound insulation of parts of buildings, perimeter walls, ceilings, floors
- constructions of light walls and partitions, attics, apartment cores, garages, light constructions
- acoustic wall and ceiling tiles
- embedded insulation of transport equipment: trailers, vehicles, wagons, ships

- blown insulation into building cavities of roofs, building structures
- sound insulation of partitions
- soundproofing elements for interior and exterior acoustics solutions

The main advantage of textile insulations over most standard insulations is their acoustic parameters, which are significantly better with regard to the weight of the insulation and their use allows a significantly increase in home and work comfort with lower consumption.

With the same weight parameters, textile insulations provide higher heat capacity than most conventional insulation, which phase-shifts the insulation overheating time and reduces the cost of cooling buildings, which is in line with the requirement to adapt buildings to climate change and increase energy efficiency of buildings.

High potential water absorption, which is often considered a disadvantage of textile, can be effectively used in green roof constructions systems and our product, SENIZOL Green, is effectively used as water retention layer on roofs and parking places.

SK - TEX, s.r.o.

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Innovation and VR at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

by our member: 

Industries are increasingly turning to innovation, as they get ready for the new reality of the post-pandemic world. The aviation sector is no exception. Last year, KLM introduced the Flying V, the aircraft of the future. This year, KLM is bringing the future closer by taking Virtual Reality (VR) to the next level. From cleaning crews to cabin attendants, baggage handlers to pilots and engine technicians to tug-drivers, VR technology has changed the way KLM employees are trained to do their job.

KLM's pioneering spirit is deeply rooted in the company's DNA. It enables the airline to invest continuously in improving products, services and processes, for customers and employees alike.

VR is one of the technologies used to achieve this. It is primarily used for training purposes. Why is VR so effective for teaching employees? Research shows that people learn faster when using VR, and they are more confident in applying what they've been taught, as they are more emotionally connected to VR content. VR learners are more focused and VR learning is more cost-effective at scale.

At KLM, VR is used to solve business issues. Employees can be trained more effectively in a way that is flexible and answers their educational needs. A lot of training, for example, moving an aircraft on the ground or attaching a passenger bridge, used to require the physical presence of an aircraft. But airlines want their aircraft to be up in the air as much as possible. With VR, the time needed in an aircraft (or simulator) is used more efficiently, while maintaining the quality of training. At KLM, safety is, of course, paramount.



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Learn more:



Plastics in Danube

Plastics have brought many benefits to society, but today the problem is that the current methods of their production and use and the disposal of plastic waste is creating a global environmental disaster. If we do not change this, some scientists believe that by 2050, it is possible there will be more plastic waste in the oceans than fish by weight.

by:



Mária Omastová
Polymer Institute SAS



The PlasticFreeDanube project focuses on macroplastic waste (> 5 mm) in and along the River Danube and its riparian area from the metropolitan areas of Vienna and Bratislava to the Gabčíkovo hydropower plant (SK).

The project has the following main objectives:

- Create methodologies, data and a manual for assessment and monitoring of plastic pollution in fluvial ecosystems
- Develop an action plan for the management of plastic waste and implementation of pilot measures to reduce plastic pollution in the Danube
- Raise the awareness of the general public and stakeholders about plastic litter pollution in rivers

Plastic collection and analysis of sorted waste

Plastics are collected on the banks of the Danube. Groups of ten to fifty people take part in the collections. We work with volunteers and high school students. They are instructed about collection, and then receive gloves and bags and the collection begins. The project researchers have developed a protocol for waste collection and sorting, which helps when comparing the results. The pandemic situation in 2020 has limited these activities.

Austrian colleagues have prepared special networks that will be transported on a crane arm to the middle of the river. Everything that enters the networks is collected, sorted

and statistically processed. We take photos of plastics, the composition of which we cannot identify, and small pieces of such plastic is analysed at the Polymers Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. We use infrared spectroscopy and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy and other methodologies for analysis.

2,000 kg of plastic waste has already been collected by the PlasticFreeDanube project. Waste from the Donauinsel island in Vienna mainly comprised sanitary waste (especially wet wipes) and packaging in the rakes of the Freudenu power plant, and large quantities of plastics from households, sports and leisure activities were found, as well as waste from shipping (ropes, buoys). At the Gabčíkovo hydropower plant, various medical plastics, household plastics, and also various ship plastics and large plastic car components were found.

Further from the shore, we found a significantly higher proportion of plastic bottles and plastics foams. Of this, 30% to 50% were PET bottles. Plastics in the form of foams, i.e. polystyrene, polyurethane and others, were also found.

Awareness raising and action plan

Raising awareness regarding plastic waste in nature in general and specifically in rivers is key to sustainable behaviour change. Therefore, project information events and workshops were organized, and information materials for schools and other educational institutions were created. All documents can be downloaded on the digital communication information platform. In addition, based on the results of the project and workshops with various stakeholders and authorities, an action plan for the management of plastic waste was created.

We believe that the results of the project will significantly contribute to a reduction of the amount of plastic waste and its negative impact on the River Danube, which is one of the most important transnational ecological corridors in Europe. Findings from the international project will certainly find application in other river systems.

find application in other river systems.



Sampling for plastic analysis

Project facts:

Title: Macro plastic waste in and along the Danube (PlasticFreeDanube)

Interreg V-A Slovak Republic – Austria, INTERREG V-A SK-AT/2017/ TP/01

Duration: 1 October 2017 – 31 March 2021

Budget: EUR 1.23 Mil. EU-Funding (ERDF): EUR 1.05 Mil.

The bilateral project PlasticFreeDanube is implemented by 5 partners from Austria and Slovakia and 18 strategic partners.

Project Leader : University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU), Austria

via Donau – Austrian Waterway Company, Austria

RepaNet o.z., Slovakia

Polymer Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia

Donau-Auen National Park, Austria

PlasticFreeDanube

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ELWIS Slovak Waste Management Solution Project Helps Local Authorities

From next year, towns and municipalities are likely to again increase their prices for municipal waste collection. There is an option for local authorities to keep fees at the current level – by correct sorting of the waste that today ends up in waste bins. The less waste is sorted by cities and municipalities, the higher their landfill charges for mixed municipal waste. Our physical waste analyses show 80% of waste that could be recycled ends up in landfills.

by:  **Paulína Kuricová**
JRK Slovensko



Most waste is biowaste that ends up in waste bins in urban areas and in the country, where people have gardens and could easily recover the waste by home composting. "Such waste makes up 40% to 60% of the total, and it rots and smells. Eventually, it is taken to a landfill where it decomposes anaerobically and generates methane, the most significant greenhouse gas," said Martina Gaislová, director of JRK Slovakia. Methane contributes to the greenhouse effect significantly more than carbon dioxide. The constant increase in gas concentrations in the atmosphere leads to adverse climate changes. Local authorities can eliminate negative consequences by sorting and subsequent treatment of biodegradable waste.

Legally, local authorities must collect biodegradable waste separately. From the beginning of 2021, municipalities will have to start sorting the last part of biowaste – the waste from our kitchens. Only local authorities who can show all biowaste is composted in bins in their area will not have to collect this waste.

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Convenient Sorting in the Kitchen

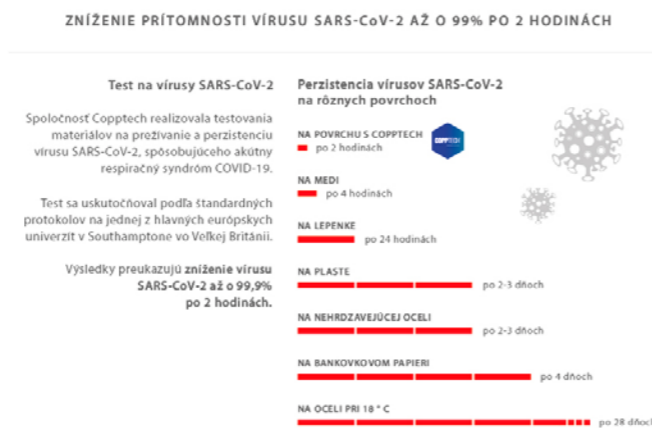
If a local authority wishes to sort kitchen waste effectively, every household should be provided with a ventilated bin with a compostable bag. These bins are intended for leftovers, residual rotten or expired foodstuffs, and wastes of plant or animal origin. "Then, kitchen waste ends up in a biogas plant or in a composting facility which is equipped with a hygienization device, such as a hygienization CSC container. A quality fertilizer is produced at the end of the biowaste treatment process," said Martina Gaislová.

There are two significant steps in the implementation of the household kitchen waste collection. Step one is to choose a convenient and effective collection system. Step two is to select a place where biowaste is turned into a resource, for example, a natural compost. A well-organized system includes suitably selected containers meeting all household hygienic standards. They can be used for the disposal of leftovers, residual spoil

or expired foodstuffs and waste of plant or animal origins. Containers suitable for kitchen waste collection have an antibacterial treatment.

All handles are made of materials with this kind of protection, as it is these parts that the users touch most often. This special protective treatment can also be used on all kitchen waste collection bins. "The survival and reproduction of harmful microorganisms on the surface is prevented. The patented protection eliminates as much as 99.9% of E. coli, listeria, and MRSA bacteria," explained Martina Gaislová. What JRK Slovakia brings to our market is a unique solution that reduces the presence of a virus within two hours. If you want to prevent its spread and destroy as much as 99% of coronavirus, it is sufficient to use containers made by JRK Slovakia with a certified surface treatment.

During the implementation of separate kitchen waste collection, households must be supplied with appropriate infrastructure. Best of all is to use a 10 litre container. Compostable bags are



inserted into them, which – if they are certified – are accepted by industrial composting facilities. In the bins, there are sufficiently large openings to ensure biowaste ventilation. “Evaporation of water means the total weight and volume of biowaste is reduced. The selection of a suitable vessel can result in a volume reduction of as much as 30%,” said Martina Gaislová. The bins eliminate unpleasant odours and prevent the reproduction of fruit flies and other insects.

Turning Biowaste into Fertilizer

Local authorities need facilities for the treatment of sorted biologically-degradable municipal waste, so that the sorting process is not a waste of time. These facilities should be located within the shortest possible distances from local authority localities. “If everyone sorted wastes perfectly, we would not have sufficient treatment plant capacity. However, practical examples have shown that we can sort 65 – 70% of waste, as some people will never behave responsibly,” said Martina Gaislová, a municipal waste expert from the menejodpadu.sk (less waste) portal.

The problem in Slovakia is that the distribution of biowaste treatment facilities is uneven. So local authorities have to arrange for the transport of waste, which makes the system more expensive.

Map of biodegradable waste recovery plants



This could be solved by equipping the current green waste composting facilities, which are also located in smaller towns, with hygienization technology. In this way, local authorities can meet statutory obligations and avoid high costs. “If local authorities do not have such equipment, nothing is lost. They must prove to the Ministry of Environment that they are taking the necessary steps for the implementation of kitchen waste collection. Experts from JRK Slovakia can prepare a modern composting facility construction project for them and they can avoid sanctions in this way,” explained Martina Gaislová. Funds

for building composting facilities have also been promised by the State. The Ministry of Environment has confirmed that local authorities will be able to obtain funds from the European Union Recovery Fund.

However, biowaste need not only end up in a composting facility. Slovakia also has a network of biogas plants of which several are ready to process kitchen waste from households, or will be able to be readied for this if needed.

European Objectives and Standards

The compost made from biowaste helps reduce the amount of chemical fertilizers in agriculture. We are obliged by the “From Farm to Fork” common European strategy to reduce their amount in the soil. This will increase the demand for natural fertilizers. As a Member State of the Union, we must achieve a 50% reduction in the use of chemical pesticides and at least a quarter of agricultural land should be treated using organic fertilizers by 2030. Complying with EU obligations can also be facilitated by kitchen waste sorting in Slovak households, which must be implemented by local authorities from January 2021.

A Modern Smart System Rewarding Citizens for Waste Sorting

Every time a system is changed, it is important to inform and motivate people, so they accept the change and become aware of its benefits. Many Slovak local authorities already use the ELWIS system to support and motivate the sorting of not only kitchen waste but also other wastes, with the goal of landfill waste reduction.

Thanks to the Electronic Waste Record System, local authorities will have an overview of waste production and sorting in every household. Under this system, each bin and waste bag has an original identifier (an RFID or QR code), which identifies a specific household. Upon collection, data is recorded in the smart system. Local authorities then know exactly how much waste there is in each collection. This is a modern managerial tool for waste management. In addition to, it motivates households to behave responsibly, as towns and municipalities can apply



the PAYT (pay-as-you-throw) principle. For example in Košeca village, locals have reduced their annual fee by 56% in this way.

JRK Slovakia was awarded the prestigious Via Bona Slovakia 2019 – Green Company responsible entrepreneurship award for this system. Another prize was awarded to Košeca village which was competitive on the global stage and won The Innovation in Politics Awards 2020 in the digitalization category. The village has been using this system for almost two years now.

About JRK

JRK was established in 2010, with the mission to improve waste management by the reduction of mixed municipal waste, preventing its generation and increasing the sorting rate. It has emphasised complex cooperation with local authorities since the beginning. Today, JRK is a stable waste management partner of Slovak local authorities. During its 10-year existence, JRK has worked its way up from the prevention of waste generation by home composting to complex waste management solutions. The company has developed ELWIS, a Slovak electronic waste record system. It brings a convenient and effective kitchen waste sorting system, already tried and tested in many European cities, to Slovakia which helps adoption of the “pay-as-you-throw” model.

To meet the goals of reducing the volume of landfill waste and implement kitchen waste sorting, JRK brings professional technologies and equipment for biodegradable waste recovery

in the form of industrial composting plants and facilities for mechanical and biological waste treatment. All solutions include an implementation and communication campaign aimed at the public to maximize the success of local authority measures.

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How a “dating site” for secondary materials can advance the circular economy agenda

The Excess Materials Exchange acts as a “dating site” for secondary materials and waste. Using their tools, barriers can be overcome that would otherwise inhibit the circular economy transition.

The EME does this by giving waste streams an identity using a resources passport. It uses artificial technology to find high value matches and uses the blockchain to provide quality assurance and control. One of their flagship projects is with the Dutch railway network company, ProRail.

by:  Excess Materials Exchange BV



A Case Study: Railway tracks

ProRail replaces between 200-300 kilometers of railway tracks every year. Currently, approximately 90% of all tracks are sold to Asia or Turkey for a scrap price of roughly €7,500-8,000 per kilometer. This is not only a waste from an impact point of view, but it also leads to valuable materials leaving Europe. EME has identified several high-value reuse solutions for ProRail railway tracks which include:

- Reuse as railway tracks (where the technical requirements are lower);
- Reuse as construction elements in buildings
- Reuse railway tracks to support quay side walls canals;
- Reusing railway tracks in structures such as bike racks.

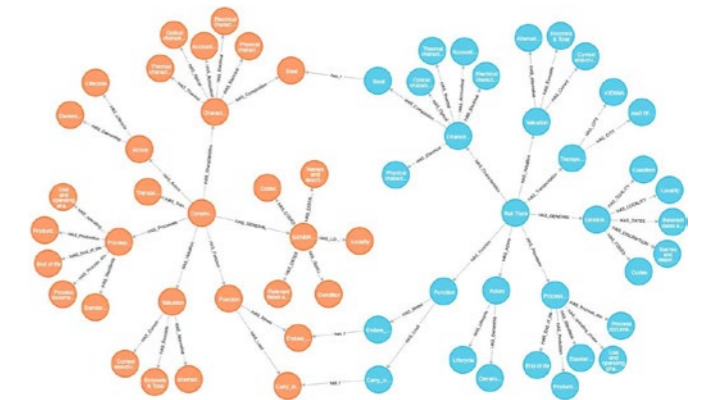


Figure 2: EME's semantic web structure is used to find high value next uses for railroad tracks

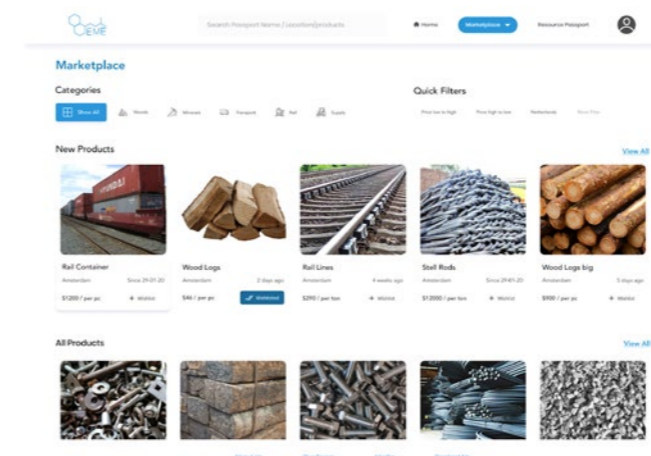


Figure 1: EME platform's dashboard presents the latest uploaded products available for reuse.

EME's matchmaking analysis showcased a high potential for new revenues, and a significant carbon emission reduction (80% reduction, compared to melting it down in China/Turkey). Based on these results, ProRail is now working to integrate and optimize the reuse of railway assets internally by using EME's platform. The "ProTrade" platform is a white label marketplace, where ProRail can register excess and waste streams and exchange them internally and externally.

"EME's ability to connect demand and supply for secondary materials and the fact that it reaches across multiple industries were two important reasons for ProRail to come on board". - ProRail


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CLEAR RIVERS introduces a new solution to plastic litter in the Danube

by:  Excess Materials Exchange BV

The Plastic Problem

Plastic waste is a major problem for the global environment due to its resistance to degradation. Exposure to the sun and water currents fragments plastics into smaller pieces, called microplastics. These particles enter the food chain via fish and other animals. Plastic is cheap, durable, lightweight and strong. The main sources of marine plastics, both macro and micro, are fisheries, and domestic and industrial waste.

Plastic waste is a threat to the marine habitat and can enter the human food chain, creating health problems. Animals can get entangled in plastics, or ingest microplastics, forming a huge threat to natural environments. Unfortunately, the production of plastic has rapidly increased in recent decades, from 1.5 million tons in 1950 to 299 million tons in 2013 (LI, et al. 2016).

Plastic pollution increases each year by 8% worldwide. Most plastic produced is single-use plastic, which is thrown away immediately. The majority is plastic bags, which are used on average for just 15 minutes. Some countries are already trying to combat this by banning plastic bags or by making customers pay for them. Given the lack of proper waste management systems and the large quantities of plastic waste entering rivers, the importance and urgency of a project in these areas is clear (Plastic Soup Foundation, 2018).

Plastic waste in the environment is a global threat. It has many harmful effects, such as ecosystem degradation, pollution and wildlife decrease. 80% of plastic waste in the oceans is transported there via rivers, canals and waterways.

The Black Sea is also contaminated with plastic. Every hour, each of the rivers flowing into the Black Sea brings between 6 and 50 pieces of litter into the sea. On average, some 85% of the litter found in the Black Sea is plastic. Of the most common types of litter carried into the Black Sea from rivers, around 20% are plastic bottles, while plastic bags and containers account for 10% and 9% respectively.

The litter flowing into the Black Sea, studied by EMBLAS, comes from four major rivers: the Danube (which flows through several European countries, including Slovakia and Hungary in the Eastern Neighbourhood region), the Don (Russia), the Dniester (Moldova and Ukraine) and the Rioni, which flows through Georgia.

The Danube

The Danube is Europe's second longest river and flows through Central and Eastern Europe.

This river flows through 10 countries, more than any other river in the world. Rising in Germany, the Danube flows southeast for 2,850 km, passing through or bordering Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine. Because of its long route, the river collects plastics from all these countries, and carries them on to the Black Sea.

CLEAR RIVERS is introducing a new solution to marine litter in the Danube River starting in Budapest. In the spring of 2021, the first litter trap will be placed in the Danube River to retrieve floating debris 24/7. The litter trap is a floating device which

captures plastic litter in the river. CLEAR RIVERS makes a circular approach a crucial element of its strategy, and the litter traps are almost entirely made from recycled plastic.

The device is placed in the opposite direction to the river current, making our product both cost efficient and autonomous as regards energy. Plastic debris is carried towards the opening of the litter trap by the current and the wind, and the system does not require additional energy to function. Once the litter is trapped inside, it cannot escape even if the current changes direction, thanks to an innovative semi-closed-door system. Neither the installation of the trap, nor its operation causes harm to the environment. CLEAR RIVERS have designed openings to create escape routes for fish and other animals. Birds can also fly through the open part of the trap. This is a great way to retrieve plastic litter without causing harm to aquatic organisms.

The litter trap will be most efficient given large-scale deployment. Multiple litter traps placed up- and downstream will increase effectiveness and the amount of litter retrieved. CLEAR RIVERS is looking for additional locations along the Danube River in the various countries it runs through

Clear Rivers

CLEAR RIVERS was established in 2014 to find an active approach to the worldwide plastic pollution in open waters. CLEAR RIVERS works to retrieve debris in rivers and estuaries, introduce sustainable reuse of plastics, organize clean ups, and create awareness via education.

The letters of CLEAR stand for the five elements of an all-inclusive approach to marine litter:

Clean ups are organized to remove plastic litter from rivers (and riverbanks) and to involve the local population and organizations.

Litter traps have been installed in the Port of Rotterdam, the Port of Brussels and in Ambon Indonesia. CLEAR RIVERS is currently working on a fast international approach to retrieve marine litter in rivers before it reaches the seas and oceans.

Education about plastic pollution, its causes and the needed

approach, is given at all levels of the educational system. Preventing plastic litter in the long term and educating the next group of professionals to resolve this issue in the coming decade(s).

Awareness is increased among the local population and organization to help achieve plastic-free rivers.

Recycling is used to give new value to the plastic litter and prevent plastics returning to rivers. Together, this creates an all-inclusive approach to marine litter in the short and long term.

CLEAR RIVERS benefits from six years' experience in plastic retrieval, recycling and education. In Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Brussels (Belgium) and Ambon (Indonesia) successful projects are already ongoing with litter trap implementations and education and a range of durable recycled products have been developed such as litter traps, a floating park, furniture and building materials.

The projects are collaborations between like-minded organizations such as governmental institutions, NGO's, educational institutions and recyclers. Through an international and multi-disciplinary collaboration, an effective and long-lasting approach is guaranteed.

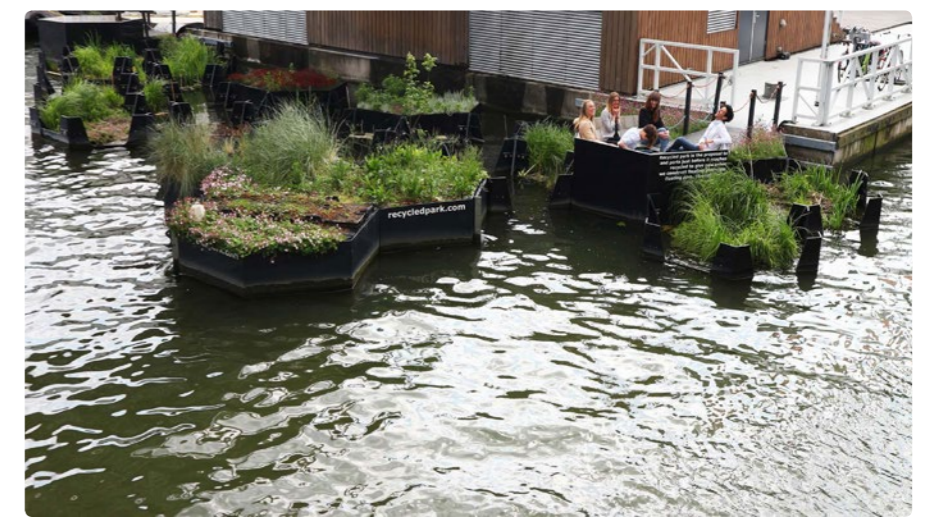
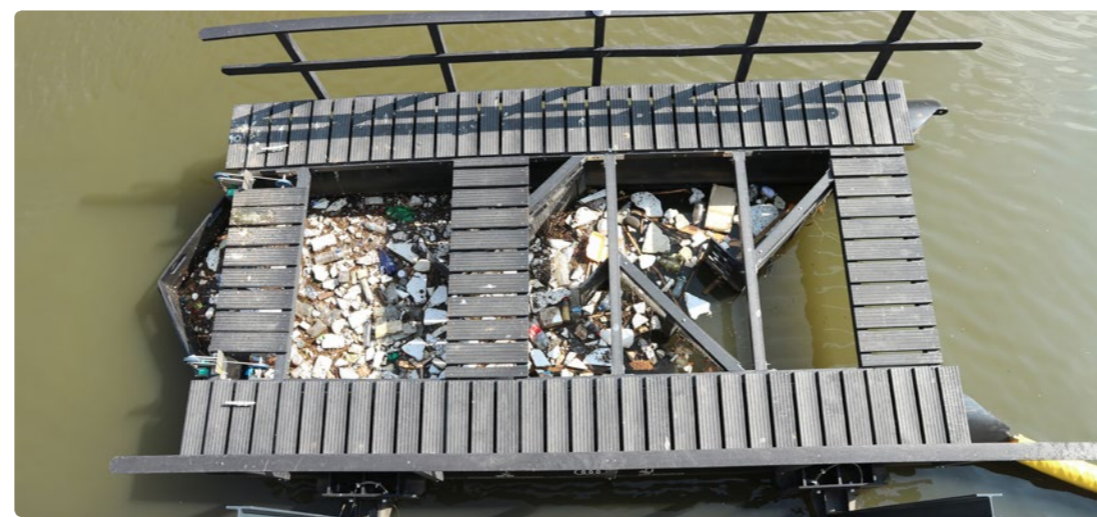
CLEAR RIVERS is a brand name of the Recycled Island Foundation, a registered non-profit organization in the Netherlands.

CLEAR RIVERS

CLEARRIVERS

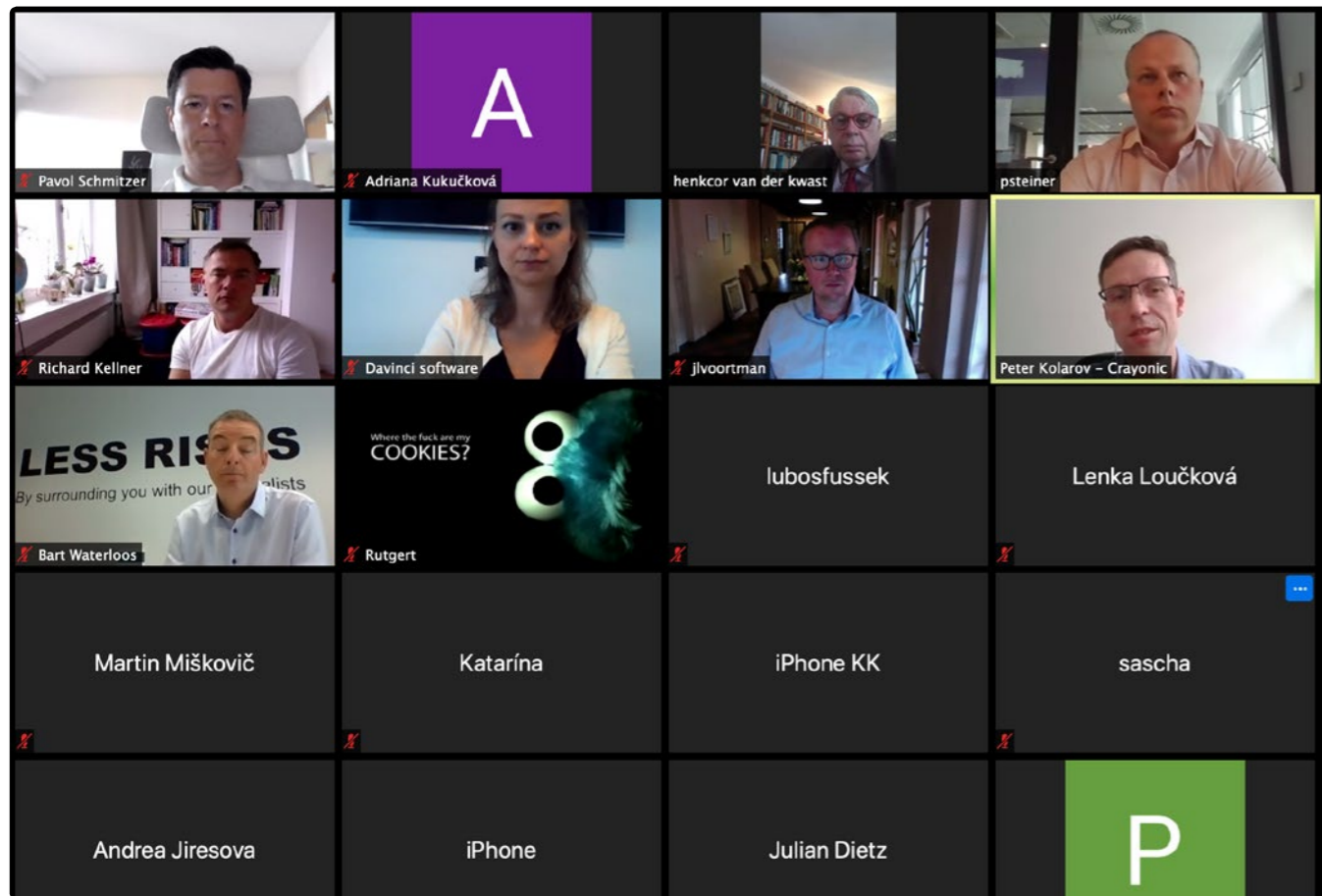
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3032CK Rotterdam, the Netherlands

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www.clearrivers.eu



Webinar Coronavirus: Cybersecurity threats and responses

When: June 9, 2020
Where: online via Zoom



COVID-19 has had a profound effect on how criminals are attacking us and our companies and, on the ways, we can defend ourselves. In these incredibly difficult and fast-changing times, when people want to feel connected and be productive, we decided to organize a webinar focused on cybersecurity threats and responses. In this Q&A webinar our speakers Peter Steiner (Davinci Software Slovakia), Bart Waterloos (VGD Slovakia), Richard Kellner (Komerční banka Slovakia) and Peter Kolárov (Crayonic) covered the challenges of working from home, cyber security and data protection and discussed the impact of this pandemic on our business. Webinar was hosted by the Netherlands chamber president, Jan Lamber Voortman.



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www.netherlandsworldwide.nl - Useful site with important links for Dutch living abroad.

www.profesia.sk - The largest recruitment platform online in Slovakia

www.orsr.sk - The official business register online. Find out who you are dealing with and who are the authorized directors and owners of every Slovak company here.

www.finstat.sk - Annual closing figures of all Slovak companies including relevant parameters and historical performance can be found on this website, which displays the official deposited tax statements of all Slovak companies.

www.platy.sk - Helpfull website to compare salaries with industry standards and average payments in Slovakia regions and neighbor countries.

www.greenpages.spectator.sk - From cleaning services to sports facilities, education to legal services, health or real estate... the green pages offer the links.

Become a member!

Contact us:
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Back to Life Business Cocktail

When: August 13, 2020

Where: Ambassador's residence, Bratislava

We would like to thank for hosting this event



H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast during his welcoming speech

Our tradition of opening the busy autumn working season with the Back to Work Business Cocktail has been disrupted by COVID-19. Although the public events were cancelled for several months, we were able to prepare a small event in August, when the numbers were not so high and there were not too many restrictions in Slovakia. Anyway, it was necessary to have limited number of invitees and guests were asked to follow the safety rules. Invitation only event Back to Life Business Cocktail was hosted by H. E. Henk Cor van der Kwast at his residence in Bratislava. It was a successful and very pleasant evening with a great atmosphere and perfect company.



Zuzana Č. Bartošovičová (Hillbridges)



The Ambassador welcoming Bart Waterloos (VGD Slovakia)





Jan Lamber Voortman, President of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia



H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast, Beatrix Šidová and Marian Tatár from ING Bank



Ab Olde-Scheper (Dolphin), Bart Waterloos (VGD Slovakia) and Erik Heidema (Pro4CE)



Dolphin Superb Touch Free



Compact, powerful, beautifully designed and now more versatile and safer than ever, thanks to Touch Free technology.

Speed Business Meeting

When: September 9, 2020

Where: Lindner Hotel Gallery Central Bratislava



Due to continued success this unique networking event is organized multiple times a year in cooperation with other foreign chambers of commerce in Slovakia. Again, the number of participants was great allowing for a good atmosphere and successful meetings with new prospects. The concept is simple, pitch your company's products and services in 10 minutes to a number of new businessman and woman matched randomly. It's exciting and effective. Participants build a network of new contacts in an informal and joyful surrounding.

If you couldn't attend, make sure to watch the calendar and register next time!



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Live Sax Concert with Dutch Chamber

When: December 4, 2020

Where: YouTube Live



Although we were not able to organize and enjoy a traditional Gala Charity Dinner with our members and friends this year, we have decided to support the culture and offer you a unique saxophone concert with Saxana Sapietová and her DJ. Thanks to this live concert we could recall a great atmosphere from last year's Gala dinner where she performed. For those who were not able to join the live event, we took a record and uploaded it on our website and youtube profile.

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in short:

Members' News:

www.tmf-group.com

Everest Group names TMF Group Star Performer and Leader in its Multi-country Payroll Solutions PEAK Matrix® Assessment 2020

TMF Group is the only global payroll provider to have been identified as both a 'Leader' and a 'Star Performer' by Everest Group. TMF Group was named Leader for its share of active deals by country coverage, as well as its market share of deals by buyer size, across each of the small, medium and large-market segments.

Adele Ewing, Global Head of HRP at TMF Group, added: "I'm proud that TMF Group received the dual award of being named both a 'Leader' and a 'Star Performer'. This achievement reflects the continued hard work of our 1500-strong team of HRP professionals."

www.crayonic.com

Crayonic raised seed round funding from private investors

Crayonic, a leader in the development of highly secure digital identity solutions, announced it has raised seed round funding totaling 1.3M USD from private investors.

Crayonic offers enterprise solutions for user authentication, digital asset storage, and electronic signatures protecting users against cyberattacks. Their core product, the Crayonic KeyVault, uses advanced cryptography and biometrics to enable fully passwordless logins to enterprise systems, mobile banking apps, and private cloud accounts.

This equity round included European angel investors from the Finance and

Healthcare sectors, which are two target markets for Crayonic solutions. This financing will enable Crayonic to fund the marketing, manufacturing and further development of their core KeyVault product.

The Slovak Spectator:

www.spectator.sme.sk

The slovak spectator publishes "The largest in Business 2020"



The Largest in Business rankings include 50 different categories, created in cooperation with the SME daily and the Finstat company. The key parameter for these rankings was revenue, but in some categories, it was a combination of several criteria (e.g. turnover, number of employees, etc.). Within the financial sector, the ranking was typically based on asset value. The publication is now available in the online shop of the Slovak Spectator.

A preview:

Largest shared service centres

1. IBM
2. AT&T
3. Deutsche Telekom – Košice
4. Dell
5. Johnson Controls

Largest banks

1. Slovenská sporiteľňa
2. Všeobecná úverová banka (VÚB)
3. Tatra banka

Largest in leasing

1. ČSOB Leasing
2. UniCredit Leasing
3. VÚB Leasing

Largest insurance companies

1. Allianz
2. Kooperatíva
3. MetLife

Largest in audit

1. PwC
2. KPMG
3. Deloitte

Largest in taxes

1. PwC
2. EY
3. Deloitte

Largest in accounting

1. VGD
2. Accace
3. TPA Slovakia

Largest in business consulting

1. PwC
2. gd – Team
3. EY

Largest law firms

1. SOUKENÍK – ŠTRPKA
2. RELEVANS
3. Allen & Overy

Sulík introduces another package of anti-bureaucratic measures



Altogether, there are almost 500 proposals which aim to cut some of the nonsense that has to be dealt with in business. There will now be consultations with companies, social partners and other ministries

The new measures have three aims: they will help entrepreneurs, they will cause almost zero loss to the state budget and they can be rolled out quickly.

Among the 469 measures, there are six that were nominated by Bureaucratic Nonsense 2020. One of them is the obligation of traders to sell or throw away hard cheese 48 hours after opening despite its long durability.

Another nonsense, the ministry claims, is that relatives can help in family companies without a contract but only if they are one-person companies and they are a member of the public. Among the measures is also a proposal that would allow 15-year-old students to have a part-time job during the summer. Young people older than 16 could also be self-employed.

The new package of the measures also includes the cancellation of the obligatory rate for home products when promoting groceries, the elimination of 1 and 2 cent coins, the cancellation of the minimum period for cleaning windows in the workplace, increasing the extent of the working week of students from

20 to 40 hours, the cancellation of the concurrence of benefit fees for holidays and weekends and lowering tax on cryptocurrencies amongst others.

Foreign trade breaks 10-year record



Machinery and transport equipment contributed to good numbers the most. Foreign trade was a positive surprise compared to October 2020. The value of exports and the balance of foreign trade reached the highest value in the last 10 years. Imports were below last year's values for the eighth consecutive month, according to data published by the Statistics Office.

Exports from Slovakia were above last year's levels for the fifth month in a row, although the growth rate slowed in October. They amounted to €7.9 billion, up by 0.6 percent year-on-year. The total imports of goods decreased by 5.7 percent y-o-y, to €7.1 billion.

COVID-19 has let home office genie out of the bottle

After the novel coronavirus and anti-pandemic measures hit Slovakia earlier this year, home office has become the new norm for those with jobs that can be done outside of their offices. The government has responded to the new situation with a so-called small revision to

the Labour Code, redefining the institute of working from home, the rights and duties of employers and employees as well as the self-employed while working from home.

Parliament advanced the draft revision to the Labour Code to the second reading on November 26. The proposed changes modernise the legislation in terms of domestic work and telework in order to reflect the latest trends in digitisation. If adopted, the changes should become effective as of March 1, 2021.

New government promises a new era in state IT

State IT to become more effective, bringing better services for citizens and businesses.

No matter how many millions the state poured into its information systems, it always resulted in slow, inefficient, and uncooperative IT services for individuals and businesses. Weak cooperation between individual ministries and state organisations, and information asymmetry when state administration lacked IT experts to assess the quality of proposed and supplied IT solutions, were marked as the most frequent culprits.

The government of Igor Matovič, with a declared strong anti-corruption focus, has resolved to change that. It transformed the office of the vice-prime minister for investments and informatisation into the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation (Investment Ministry).

Its ambition is to make digitisation and informatisation more effective. To achieve the goal of creating cheaper, more modern and more flexible state IT systems, the ministry launched a new state software house. It officially kicked off its operation in Košice on September 11.

New rules for tax havens and other changes to income tax

The parliament has passed a vast number of amendments to income tax law.

Income tax rules will change in Slovakia. Some of the major changes are aimed at fighting tax avoidance and exporting income to tax havens.

MPs passed a vast number of amendments to the income tax law, including a number of amending proposals, on December 2. Apart from changing rules for natural persons doing business with tax havens, the amendment also widens benefits for taxpayers and changes the rules for tax bonuses and the 13th and 14th month salaries.

The parliament has also passed new rules for natural persons who are considered controlled foreign companies (CFC), to prevent them shipping their profits to tax havens in order to avoid paying taxes in Slovakia.

Slovak economy predicted to fall by more than 6 percent



OECD December prognosis expects the economy to grow again next year.

Slovakia's economy might contract by 6.3 percent this year. The situation is expected to improve though, and the economy is projected to grow at 2.7 percent in 2021, and by 4.3 percent in 2022.

This stems from the recent OECD Economic Outlook.

The OECD predicts that consumption in Slovakia will gradually recover thanks to higher disposable income, improved conditions at the labour market and the increased household confidence as an effective vaccine is rolled out.

Investment growth will be limited by high uncertainty, weakened corporate balance sheet and low capacity utilisation.

Unemployment is set to fall gradually, but will remain above pre-crisis levels until the end of 2022, the report reads.

The OECD forecasts that the unemployment rate in Slovakia will stand at 6.8 percent, while it will increase to 7.4 percent in 2021, and then fall back to 6.8 percent in 2022. The figure will be still higher than the 5.8 percent seen in 2018, before the pandemic broke out.

Inflation will remain subdued given the considerable economic drop. The OECD expects harmonised inflation at 1.9 percent this year. In 2021, it should fall to 0.9 percent and then increase to 1.4 percent a year later.

Dutch Embassy news

CAS 2021 (Climate Adaptation Summit 2021) - Call for registration !

Our planet is getting warmer, with growing impact on our societies and economies. The need to adapt to new climate extremes is driving actions that connect challenges with solutions.

At the online international Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS) 2021 starting 25 January, hosted by the Netherlands, global leaders will launch a comprehensive Adaptation Action Agenda, with clear commitments to deliver concrete new endeavours and partnerships to make our world more resilient to the effects of climate change.

Over the course of 24 hours, a range of online events from all time zones will

inspire change and support tangible solutions to the problems of a warming world, showing how we can achieve a climate-resilient future.

Information and registration: www.cas2021.com

Plant based products in Slovakia



Plantbased products and meat alternatives are gaining more and more attention worldwide and Slovakia is no exception. If you are interested in learning about consumer trends and opportunities in this growing sector, don't miss out the newly published report!

Download the report at:

<https://www.agroberichtenbuitenland.nl/landeninformatie/slowakije/nieuws>

Transparency International Slovensko launched a new portal


" Open Prosecutor's Office ", which was created thanks to our support as part of a long-term project aimed at strengthening the rule of law and greater transparency of the prosecution.

More info at:

<https://www.facebook.com/transparencysk/>



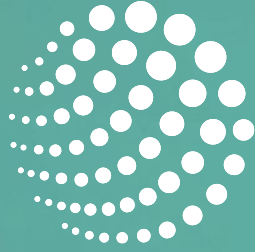
Event Calendar 2021

<p>January 19th</p>  <p>Webinar: Circular Economy as a Business Opportunity</p> <p>Registration deadline: January 18th Venue: Online</p>	<p>January 28th</p>  <p>Annual General Meeting & New Year's Drink</p> <p>Registration deadline: January 25th Venue: Online</p>	<p>February, date to be announced</p>  <p>Tax seminar</p> <p>Registration deadline: to be announced Venue: Online</p>
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Webinar
CIRCULAR ECONOMY AS A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
 January 19th, 2021
 13:00 - 14:00
Speakers:
 Denisa Rášová
Holland Circular Platform
 Freek Van Eijk
Holland Circular Hotspot
 Bálint Horváth
NL Embassy

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