

# AmCham Annual Report

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## Board of Directors

**Peter WEBER**  
Hewlett Packard  
Acting President and  
First Vice-President

**Raj AIREY**  
Pfizer H.C.P.  
Second Vice-President

**Boris KEKEŠI**  
IBM Slovensko  
Third Vice-President

**Michele LODI-FE**  
KPMG  
Vice-President of Finance

**Jake SLEGERS**  
Secretary  
AmCham Executive Director  
(ex officio)

## Balance of the Board

Ján BLAHO, Všeobecná úverová banka  
Vladimír KEŠJAR, Amslico AIG Life  
Christopher NAVETTA, U.S.Steel Košice  
Peter ŠKODNÝ, Accenture  
Walt GUY, ON Semiconductor  
Miroslav MAJOROŠ, Slovak Telecom  
Róbert ŠIMONČIČ, Microsoft Slovakia  
Igor THÁM, Citibank

## Chamber Secretariat

The American Chamber of Commerce  
in the Slovak Republic  
Hotel Danube, Rybné námestie 1  
813 38 Bratislava

Tel: (4212) 5464 0534  
Fax: (4212) 5934 0556  
Web: [www.amcham.sk](http://www.amcham.sk)

### Košice Office

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040 01 Košice  
Slovak Republic

Tel: (42155) 720 5218  
Fax: (4212) 5934 0556  
Web: [www.amcham.sk](http://www.amcham.sk)

Chamber Secretariat:  
Jake Slegers, Executive Director  
Jana Končeková, Director of Košice office  
Matej Stučka, Membership Policy Coordinator  
Zuzana Lysáková, PR & Marketing Coordinator  
Lenka Bačíková, Financial Coordinator  
Patrik Tomeš, Daniela Vančová, Part-time Employees

## AmCham - The most active Chamber in Slovakia

The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) was founded in 1993 in Bratislava as an independent and self-supporting organization, entirely dependent on contributions from its members. Currently, its membership has reached more than 250 international and Slovak companies, including many of the largest and important firms in Slovakia.

Its effort is to “build bridges” among businesses and help them fulfill their goals and missions much easier than on their own. AmCham contributes to the development of healthy business climate to improve conditions not only for its members, but also for other businesses operating in Slovakia. Its prestige, strong positions among other foreign chambers operating in Slovakia and the wide range of activities help all the AmCham members to become a vivid business partner at the Slovak market.

Throughout the last decade AmCham' activities have broaden and it has become more active in different areas of the political, legislative and economic happening in Slovakia. The evidence of the AmCham expansion is the opening of the Kosice office in September 2003 in order to help and assist the companies in the Eastern Slovakia.

*Come join us! We're making things happen!*

### AMCHAM'S THREE PILLARS

*Throughout the past year, AmCham Slovakia has frequently shown that it is dedicated to serving its members through the support of its three main pillars: contacts, information and advocacy.*

#### 1) Contacts

AmCham members appreciate the access to a great variety of local and foreign business partners, clients, Slovak and American politicians and even other expatriates as well. AmCham organizes numerous regularly scheduled events throughout the year, including monthly Business Cocktails, Business Breakfasts and Roundtable Luncheons. By attending these events, members have an opportunity to obtain important contacts to facilitate their business activities and become more visible in the business environment.

#### 2) Information

One of the most significant pillars of AmCham Slovakia is acting as a valuable, reliable and consistent source of a great variety of information. Our publications, including Connection magazine, the Membership Directory, Membership benefits and Opportunities, Slovak Brochure, Annual Report, and the web site, are just some of the ways we provide information to our members.

#### 3) Advocacy

The opportunity to be part of a powerful unified and representative voice is one of the advantages of AmCham membership. Through our committees, Task Forces and other advocacy efforts, AmCham members who share common interests, issues and challenges can approach the government or other appropriate authorities as a compelling, effective voice to support continual development of the business environment in Slovakia.

AmCham is supportive in the area of advocacy, particularly in:

- Lobbying
- Troubleshooting
- Networking, Research
- Cooperation with the Government on legislation drafting
- Consulting with the Government on problem solving
- Opportunity to work in Task Forces
- Addressing comments to drafts of legislations
- General and economic overviews
- Letters of recommendation for members
- Administrative and consulting services
- Contacts with the Government representatives and VIPs
- Customized mailings

## AmCham Expands! Grand Opening of the AmCham Office in Košice!

"Several years ago, the idea of establishing a Košice office was first conceived and today we are proud to announce that the idea has finally become a reality," said Jake Slegers, Executive Director of AmCham Slovakia, during the ribbon cutting ceremony of AmCham Slovakia's grand opening of its new Košice office.

The official opening of AmCham Slovakia's office in Košice was indeed an opportunity for reflection and looking ahead. The festive and historic daylong celebration kicked off with the ribbon cutting ceremony, was followed by a press conference and a luncheon, and wound up with a fun-filled cocktail party.

### The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

A small, but friendly crowd of local businesspersons and press gathered in front of the building located at Hlavna 6 for a brief ribbon cutting ceremony, symbolically opening AmCham's new office in Košice. After the ribbon was theatrically cut, those who gathered were treated to a brief tour of the new office, located on the second floor of the building.

### The Press Conference

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, a press conference attended by a significant amount of local, regional and national press took place at the Economic Development Center in Košice. AmCham was grateful to have in attendance, among others, His Excellency Ronald Weiser, U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia. Weiser remarked that AmCham could not find a better location than Košice, saying, "The more time I spend here, the more business opportunities I discover in this part of the country." He continued by stating that the Košice region also boasts important banking and economic center and that the Košice region's particularly strategic location, including its short distances to the borders of Poland, Hungary, and the Ukraine, makes it a natural location for manufacturing and investment to reach an expanding customer base.

President of U.S. Steel Košice, Christopher Navetta, stated that the mission of AmCham is to protect and promote commerce, "And U.S. Steel is proof of its mission," he stressed. Mr. Navetta also expressed U.S. Steel Košice's willingness to assist the AmCham Košice office in any way possible.

Vice-mayor of Košice, František Knapík, welcomed the opening of the Košice office as a great opportunity for the entire business community in the region, stating that he believed that the office will operate as a valuable information center as well as a center for cooperation among business entities. The Director of the AmCham Košice office, Jana Končeková, said she is ready and willing to assist and be of service to the Košice business community.

### The Luncheon

For the Košice-area business community, a catered luncheon was offered for approximately 60 invited guests mostly businesspersons, mayors of the Košice region cities and towns, AmCham members and other potential AmCham members at the attractive and prestigious venues of the East Slovak Museum (Východoslovenské múzeum).

The keynote speaker of the luncheon, US Ambassador Ronald Weiser, again emphasized the potential of the Košice region for U.S. investment, pointing out the attractiveness of the Košice region, specifically the potential government incentives resulting from the region's high level of employment. The Ambassador also touched on the large number of highly qualified workers and the potential cooperation with U.S. Steel Košice and other large manufacturers established by foreign investors within the region. In addition, one key component for attracting foreign direct investment into a country is the existence of industrial parks with the infrastructure and defined rules, suitable for a green-field investment. "In response to the Industrial Act, the municipalities of Eastern Slovakia are working on plans for suitable zones around the region," said the Ambassador.

### The Cocktail

The Grand Opening of the AmCham office in Košice ended with the office's first official AmCham Business Cocktail. Jake Slegers, Executive Director of AmCham; D. Ronald Surbey, President of AmCham; and Jana Končeková, the Director of AmCham's Košice office, all expressed their sincere joy over the opening of the Košice office. The Košice cocktail wasn't lacking in entertainment and maybe offered even more than usual. Attendees enjoyed the wonderful singing of Karolína Majerníková a participant of the U.S. Steel Košice Talent night 2003 and the Swing Band of Mr. Hreha and the JKR band.



## AmCham Slovakia Provides Chair of ECACC

One very important development over the summer for AmCham Slovakia was the election of a member of our Board of Directors, Róbert Šimončíč, of Microsoft Slovakia, as the new chair of the European Council of American Chambers of Commerce (ECACC). From a number of nominations, Šimončíč was chosen to lead this important and influential pan-European organization.

“The ECACC is an influential organization. It acts an umbrella body of American chambers of commerce; meaning it has been developing common principles, identifying common needs and goals that it is then trying to put in place through activities carried out by respective national chambers,” said Róbert Šimončíč for the September issue of Connection.

“It plays a key role in coordinating and defining common policies for the relationships between chambers in the EU and the US. The ECACC also cooperates with the EU Committee of AmCham in Belgium, which has a special role in working with the EU. It was a great honor and recognition for the Slovak AmCham to have its representative voted the chairman of the association, which includes countries like France, Germany or Great Britain where AmCham membership figures reach the thousands. No doubt, this will help the AmCham in Slovakia be better seen and recognized.”

As EU accession draws closer, it is absolutely critical for all countries involved to develop and foster meaningful and constructive mutually beneficial cooperation. The strength of ECACC is of great importance to all AmChams in Europe. AmCham Slovakia is proud and honored to have one of its own as head of this prestigious and important body.

Concerning the work as a Board member Šimončíč said: “I recognize AmCham as a very important player in Slovakia as well as in other European countries. I am bringing years of experience in working on both American and European markets in the consulting, strategy building and information technologies industry. My experience and acquaintance with the Slovak market can lead to a better recognition of AmCham and also to an expansion and enforcement of certain particular roles AmCham has played. To illustrate my point here, let me give an example of one area in which I am engaged at Microsoft. It is the EU accession process of the eleven European countries. A positive influence on the whole process ultimately helps AmCham meet its goals in terms of improving commercial relationships between US and Slovak companies as well as between companies operating in Western Europe and in Slovakia. I have extensive experience in working with governmental organizations and I can also help in the further development of AmCham's good practice in legislative work.”



### What is ECACC ?

Founded in 1965, the EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (ECACC) today represents the corporate interests of some 17.000 American and European companies. Encompassing 32 countries and some 20 million employees. ECACC's member companies account for more than \$ 1.1 billion in investment on both sides of the Atlantic. Member Chambers of the Council are voluntary associations supported entirely by membership dues. In addition, all Member Chambers are members of the U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, and work closely with its International Division to coordinate policy and strategy.

#### What are the objectives of ECACC?

- Promote commercial, financial and industrial relations between the United States and the host countries;
- Present the views of the business community operating in the areas of the member chambers to agencies and organizations in the United States;
- Represent, when appropriate, the views and aims of the member's interests to representatives of host country governments and other regional intergovernmental organization.
- From its inception, the ECACC has been the voice of international business in Europe. It is recognized both in Europe and the United States as a opinion-forming body actively engaged in fostering two-way trade and investment between its host countries and the United States.

## AMCHAM EVENTS

*AmCham provide a great number of events throughout the year. The most frequent Business Breakfasts and Business Cocktails. In addition, we offer our members opportunities to participate in specially organized seminars and conferences covering a great variety of topics. AmCham Slovakia also holds special events Job and Internship Fairs, Slovak Ministers Speakers Series, EU Business Briefing Series, Roundtable Discussions with the U.S. Embassy, just to name a few. Moreover, AmCham is well known for organizing festive seasonal events, such as the last Annual 4th of July/Independence Day Celebration, the Annual Thanksgiving Gala Dinner and the Annual Spring Ball.*

## REGULAR EVENTS

### Business Breakfasts

*Business Breakfasts are held at least once or twice a month. The aim of AmCham Business Breakfasts is to provide an opportunity for our members to meet and discuss current topics connected to the business environment with business specialists, government representatives, VIP's, special guests etc. Business Breakfasts usually start with a presentation of the invited speaker, followed by an opportunity for the attendees to ask questions. Attendance reaches 70-120 people, depending on the topic. Breakfast usually starts between 8:15 and 8:30 and lasts until 10:00 a.m.*

Those regular Business Breakfasts (not including the "Speaker Series" Breakfasts and the "EU Business Briefing Series") held during the last year are:

### Regular Business Breakfasts

**May 30, 2003**

in cooperation with Squire, Sanders & Dempsey, "Practical Considerations of EU Accession", Hotel Danube

**September 10, 2003**

In cooperation with Squire Sanders & Dempsey, "Implementation of the Labor Law"

**December 3, 2003**

sponsored by Ness Slovakia, "Alignment to the Central Loan Register", Hotel Danube

**January 29, 2004**

in cooperation with Pontis Foundation and Citibank, "Business in Charity", Hotel Danube

**February 3, 2004**

"Business Breakfast" with Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of SR, TeleDom, Košice

**February 10, 2004**

in cooperation with Pontis Foundation and Citibank, "Chariry in Business", TeleDom, Košice



## AmCham SPEAKER SERIES

### Slovak Ministers Speakers Series: “Reforms Ready. Are We Ready?”

*Taking into account the success of last year's project “Slovak Elections Political Party Speakers Series”, AmCham Slovakia is continuing this initiative by inviting Slovak Ministers for speaking engagements and offering AmCham members an opportunity to discuss the key issues concerning their business activities.*

*This Speaker Series features the latest government reforms prepared for this year. AmCham has chosen to host the most prominent Slovak ministers. The selection was based on the importance and expected consequences of the reforms relevant to the ministers. In addition, the reason for taking such an initiative is to strengthen the relationships between AmCham and the Slovak Government representatives. We believe that the open and intense communication with the Slovak ministers is beneficial for presenting AmCham's positions, opinions, visions and perspectives.*

*With this initiative, AmCham Slovakia is striving to create a forum for progressive and proactive discussion with sufficient feedback from both sides. The Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Mikuláš Dzurinda, has called the new government “The Government of Reforms”.*

*As publicly stated by the Prime Minister, the priorities of the government for the year 2003 are: Integration and accession to EU and NATO, Reforms, and Enhancement of the environment*

*Prime Minister Dzurinda stressed that the most efficient key to achieve these goals is open and intense communication. AmCham welcomes this challenge and is offering Slovak ministers ample opportunity for dialogue with AmCham members, therefore facilitating the exchange of ideas about the prepared reforms for this year. In addition, this initiative should help the government to better understand the needs and requests of the business community.*

**May 13, 2003**

with Vladimír Palko, Minister of Internal Affairs of SR, Hotel Danube

**June 24, 2003**

with Pavol Prokopovič, Minister of Transportation, Posts and Telecommunications of SR, Radisson SAS Carlton Hotel

**October 23, 2003**

with Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of SR, Radisson SAS Carlton Hotel

**December 2, 2003**

with Pavol Rusko, Minister of Economy of SR, Hotel Danube

**February 5, 2004**

with Daniel Lipšic, Minister of Justice of SR, Hotel Danube

## EU BUSINESS BRIEFING SERIES

in cooperation with Delegation of the European Commission in SR

**October 16, 2003**

with H.E. Eric van der Linden, Head of Delegation of the European Commission in SR and Daniela Kerestěšová, EC Delegation, Task Manager, Hotel Danube

**October 30, 2003**

with Dušan Dobrovodský, EC Delegation and representatives of Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of SR

**January 15, 2004**

with Monika Hanzelová, Task Manager, Delegation of the European Commission in SR, Mária Šebová, National Labour Office of SR and Ivan Hromada, Ministry of Education of SRm Hotel Danube

**March 26, 2004**

in cooperation with Foreign Affairs Committee of SR, "Slovakia After EU Accession", with Ján Figeľ, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of SR and the Future EU Commissioner to the European Commission, Hotel Forum

## Business Cocktails

*AmCham Slovakia's Business Cocktails are regular monthly events for the general membership, business partners, as well as for other potential member contact. These rather festive events offer our members an opportunity to enjoy time with their business partners in a relaxed atmosphere. It is an excellent place for meeting new people, socializing and obtaining new contacts.*

*AmCham Business Cocktails are one of the most popular AmCham events. They are usually held at different venues in order to present different places and different styles of refreshments. The venue can be also chosen according to the preference of the sponsor. Attendance reaches 120-150 people.*

*Business Cocktail is sponsored by one or more member companies that can present their products, services, and management structure during a short presentation.*

The Business Cocktails held during the past year are:

**May 7, 2003**

sponsored by Accenture, Luxor Business Club

**May 22, 2003**

sponsored by U.S.Steel Košice and Molex, Nebo/Peklo Bar, Košice

**May 29, 2003**

sponsored by Squire Sanders, Restaurant "u Mamičky"

**June 26, 2003**

sponsored by KPMG, Romeo Giulietta Ristorante

**September 4, 2003**

sponsored by Target "Welcome Back Business Cocktail", Ship Žilina

**September 18, 2003**

"Grand Opening of the AmCham office in Košice", Procesná automatizácia

**September 25, 2003**

sponsored by Philip Morris and E-S Partners, Café De Zwaan

**November 6, 2003**

sponsored by Amslico, Panorama Slavín

**December 11, 2003**

sponsored by TTC Telecom, Košice

**February 6, 2004**

sponsored by City University, Pizzeria Ristorante Giuliano

**February 26, 2004**

sponsored by Richardo, Richardo Arabic Restaurant & Grill

**March 18, 2004**

sponsored by Tronet, Golden Royal Restaurant, Košice

**March 25, 2004**

sponsored by Immorent, Aucafe



MEMBERS DECEMBER	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Corporate PATRONS	10	14	18	23	38
Corporate PERMANENT	38	49	50	50	47
Corporate ACTIVE	47	59	104	127	135
Non-profit Institutions	14	17	20	23	21
Individuals	13	17	15	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>251</b>

## Seminars and Conferences

*Seminars and Conferences are focused on specific issues and topics for a specific audience. The speakers are usually international visitors, politicians, businesspersons, government representatives, diplomats, etc. Seminars and Conferences are organized on an irregular basis according to the schedule of the visiting guest or the requests of the sponsor or co-organizer.*

The Seminars and Conferences held in the last year are:

**June 24, 2003**

with CMC Graduate School of Business “Executive MBA in International Management“, Radisson SAS Hotel Carlton

**October 22, 2003**

with KNO Slovensko, “Strategic Human Resource Investment“, Hotel Danube

**December 9, 2003**

with CMC Graduate School of Business “Executive MBA in International Management“, Hotel Danube

**February 24, 2004**

with CMC Graduate School of Business “Executive MBA in International Management“, Hotel Danube

**February 26, 2004**

in cooperation with the Chamber of Chambers, Seminar on "The Flat Tax and New Commercial Register Act", Hotel Danube

## SPECIAL EVENTS

*Besides the Regular Events, AmCham Slovakia organizes many special events. The major special events are Thanksgiving Gala Dinner, 4th of July Independence Day Celebration, Job and Internship Fair, Spring Ball. In addition, there are smaller special events that are held for a special occasion, for example the Patron's Luncheon, Tours & Trips, Sports Day, Trade Missions, the Thanksgiving Charity Drive, Government Reforms Speaker Series etc.*

**May 15, 2003,**

AmCham 2003 General Assembly

**June 9, 2003,**

Phare project “Corruption Sucks our Blood!!“ together with European Commission Delegation in Bratislava, Conference “How to Eliminate Corruption from the Slovak Business Environment?“

**June 10-12, 2003,**

Slovakia Business and Investment Opportunities Conference

**July 11, 2003,**

AmCham Lunch with Steve Forbes, Media Magnate and Past President Candidate in the U.S., Radisson SAS Hotel Carlton

**September 18, 2003**

“Grand Opening of the AmCham office in Košice“, Celebratory Luncheon and Festive Cocktail sponsored by Accenture, Citibank, Hewlett Packard, IBM, KPMG, S & T Slovakia, Slovak Telecom, Tatra banka, U.S.Steel Košice, Microsoft

**September 30, 2003**

“Business Tour in Piešťany“ in cooperation with Avent, ON Semiconductor and Hotel Sergio Piešťany

## MAJOR EVENTS

*Seasonal events are the most appreciated and colorful of all the AmCham events. One of the largest and most anticipated casual events (with many surprises) is the Annual 4th of July/Independence Day Celebration. The Annual Thanksgiving Gala Dinner is the most festive event, full of delicious food, beautiful outfits and musical performances. The Annual Spring Ball attracts those in formal dress and ready for an evening of dancing and entertainment. Moreover, AmCham participates in other events such as Sports Day and the UNICEF Garden Party, which are organized together with other Chambers of Commerce operating in the Slovak Republic. In addition, AmCham organizes events orientated to the job market, such as the Job and Internship Fair (spring).*

June 29, 2003

### ANNUAL 4th OF JULY INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

The last Saturday in June was again dedicated to AmCham's annual Independence Day Celebration, which took place at the Bratislava Castle grounds. The traditional, Old West atmosphere was introduced by the "Welcome to AmCham City!" gate at the entrance to the festivities. Recreating a bit of Americana in Slovakia, AmCham City, a western town with authentic-looking facades, an Indian teepee, and a festive atmosphere featured traditional American food and drinks and musical performances full of American flair. Moreover, kids enjoyed the jumping castle and face paintings and had an opportunity to see up close animals from the Bratislava Zoo. This year's event was seen by many as the biggest and the most successful throughout AmCham history. Except the food and drinks, the attendees could enjoy the country music played by Country Plus Band and traditional dances performed by the Country Line Dance Club of Bratislava, the Association of Country and Historical Dances and the Niagara Dance Group from the Nádej Orphanage in Bernolákovo. The American styled parade was led off by a contingent of US Marines bearing the flag and seal of the United States. The colorful Kleopatra Majorettes followed. Former Slovak President Michal Kováč with his wife Emília had the honor of riding in the horse-drawn carriage, followed by a motorcade of historical cars with VIP guests as passengers, and much more. The program also included public addresses from AmCham President D. Ronald Surbey, U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia Ronald Weiser, U.S. Steel Košice President Christopher Navetta and Slovak Minister of Interior Vladimír Palko. Approximately 800 people attended this year's celebration. The highlight of the evening was a magnificent display of fireworks, supported by rousing renditions of classic American music. The celebration lasted until late at night. AmCham sincerely thanks the main sponsor U.S. Steel Košice, and other sponsors, for their generous contributions!



November 28, 2003  
**ANNUAL THANKSGIVING GALA DINNER**

On Friday, November 28, 2004, Incheba welcomed over 600 guests invited to enjoy the 10th Annual AmCham Thanksgiving Gala Dinner, one of the biggest and most festive events organized by the American Chamber of Commerce. The attendees gathered to celebrate Thanksgiving Day, bringing closer the tradition from the U.S. to those Americans who now live and work in Slovakia. After the welcome reception, all guests were addressed with opening presentation, followed by Pastor Paul Hanson's blessing and AmCham President Ron Surbey's introduction on how to carve the turkey. A delicious dinner of roast turkey, tasty stuffing, cream corn, steamed broccoli, mashed potatoes was served. Around 11 p.m. the guests were treated to the fantastic prizes of the tombola. The highlight of the evening program was the performance of Bratislava Hot Serenaders with the "Hulla Girls"



**AmCham Thanksgiving Charity Drive 2003**

In 2003, AmCham Slovakia raised the highest amount of money 835 000 SKK- in the nine year history of the AmCham Thanksgiving Charity Drive. The AmCham members contributed to the charity project with the amount of 708 000 SKK and during the tombola at the 10th Annual AmCham Thanksgiving Gala Dinner AmCham collected 127 000 SKK.

Jake Slegers, Executive Director of AmCham, together with Daniela Vančová, project coordinator, presented the pledge certificates to thirteen charities from all over Slovakia on November 27, 2003, during the press conference in Hotel Danube. "Form all the activities and projects that AmCham does, the AmCham Charity Drive is closest to my heart," said Jake Slegers at the press conference. "We are pleased that every year there is a bigger interest from our members to contribute to this project. This also shows that our activities are not only oriented on business, but we also try to help those that are in urgent need."

In 2003, the Board of Directors identified thirteen projects that have a remarkable impact on the living conditions of many people in this society.

AmCham is proud to support the following organizations:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Retirement Home NÁDEJ in Zlaté Moravce</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>100,000 Sk</b>                                     |
| Home for the retired and elderly; provides a healthy living environment; they need financial support for kitchen equipment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                       |
| <b>Civil Association ŠŤASTIE SITY in Prievidza</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>35,000 Sk</b>                                      |
| Providing care of people with mental disabilities. Their activities are also focused on explaining the problems of mental health to the public.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                       |
| <b>Civil Association RODINKA.SK in Bratislava</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>A printer in the value of 9,000 Sk + 35,000 Sk</b> |
| Center providing assistance for all mothers who want to participate in the education of their children; advisory service to those mothers who want to have a baby, who want to find a job after maternity leave, who face job discrimination or who are in difficult social situations; they would appreciate assistance in the form of a computer with software, a printer and a sewing machine. |                                                       |
| <b>Institute of Capuchin Nuns of the Holy Heart of Jesus in Rohožník (Malacky area)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>60,000 Sk</b>                                      |
| Shelter for abandoned and destitute children; provides assistance and education; they request donations for reconstruction of the building or purchase of equipment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                       |
| <b>Municipal Office in Čičava (Prešov area)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>35,000 Sk</b>                                      |
| Represents the elementary school in Čičava for mostly Roma families living in poor conditions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                       |
| <b>Civil Association BRIEŽDENIE in Valča (Martin area)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>100,000 Sk</b>                                     |
| Provides educational, cultural and social activities for youth; providing help for abused women and children by running a home for mothers with children "Peace" Center.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                       |

**Civil Association “Hlas knižnice” in Levice Copy machine and printer in the value of 40,000 Sk + 30,000 Sk**  
 Supporting education of children and youth, offering cultural and mental development of people by running project for realization of the multimedia library for mentally ill as well as normal children to 15 years of age (courses to learn how to work with PC, about PC, fields of use, etc.).

**Orphanage in Žakarovce (Košice area) 100,000 Sk**  
 Home for 42 orphaned children; they need a financial gift for purchase of a minivan for school children.

**Home of Social Services in Prakovce (Košice area) 100,000 Sk**  
 Home for approximately 100 mentally and physically handicapped children; they would appreciate assistance for reconstruction of the home to accommodate children in wheelchairs.

**Elementary School with Dormitory for Deaf and Hearing Handicapped Children in Bratislava 90,000 Sk**  
 School provides education for approximately one hundred 3-17 year old children with hearing disabilities; organizes out-of-school activities. They would appreciate to buy a sound system that creates sound vibrations to help deaf children with comprehension.

**Civil Association DUNAJ in Štúrovo Copy machine and printer in the value of 40,000 Sk**  
 Service for mentally and physically handicapped children and parents, providing information and advisory on Civil Law.

**Home of Social Services “Dom Svitania” in Jakubov (Malacky area) 45,000 Sk**  
 Family type center providing social services for disabled clients (education, care, rehabilitation). There are children more than 3 years old, who use the center as a kindergarten. On the other hand, there are young people, who cannot get a job because of their disability. The center provides them a job with a special help of the professionals.

**Mother Theresa Missionaries of Charity in Bratislava**  
 “Soup kitchen” providing assistance for homeless people, single mothers and other poor and lonely people; also providing shelter and preparing meals six times a week.

**Amount distributed in Charity Drive (in Sk):**

1998	350 000 Sk
1999	360 000 Sk
2000	505 000 Sk
2001	577 500 Sk
2002	680 000 Sk
2003	835 000 Sk

March 3, 2004 - Bratislava  
 March 17, 2004 - Košice  
**JOB AND INTERNSHIP FAIR**

Around 800 university students came to the 5th annual Job and Internship Fair, which took place at Hotel Danube on March 3, 2004. Moreover, AmCham organized the same event for the first time in Košice on March 17, 2004. More than 500 students attended the event. "This is the 5th time in Bratislava AmCham is providing the university students and the graduates an opportunity to network, get the first contacts to the companies as well as have the possibility to apply for particular job on the spot," said Jake Slegers, Executive Director of AmCham. The goal of the Job and Internship Fair is to help the students to enter the job market, display their qualifications to companies and to learn how to obtain the needed information. In addition, the companies and firms have a unique opportunity to enrich their database of young and talented job seekers as well as to promote and market themselves among prospective employees. This year 18 companies participated at the Job and Internship Fair in Bratislava and 13 companies were in Košice.



# CONNECTION MAGAZINE

The AmCham Connection magazine is one of the most appreciated services that AmCham members regularly use. According to the Membership survey 2003, Connection ran away with the top evaluation with a surprising 96% readership (the top two readership categories include 50% who read Connection frequently and 36.7% who identify themselves as reading it from time to time). Only 4% of members stated they do not read the magazine at all.



## General information and readership

The AmCham magazine “Connection” is the official monthly news publication of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic. It is distributed free of charge throughout Slovakia to over 240 AmCham members, affiliated companies, NGOs, government and governmental organizations, VIPs, economic, political and diplomatic authorities, foreign companies and organizations and all embassies in Slovakia. Connection is also circulated in the business community, both Slovak and foreign, including foreign chambers of commerce in Slovakia, sister chambers of commerce in Europe and the headquarters of the American Chamber of Commerce in Washington. Some copies of each issue are sent to the Slovak Embassy in the USA and US political representatives as well. Besides other recipients, both members and non-members, include attendees of all AmCham events.

## Content

This full color, business-oriented publication in English language, with a professional layout, was first published in 1996. It has gradually become a respected and highly regarded source of information for top managers, decision-makers, and economic, political and diplomatic elites, and VIPs, due to its focus on topics that are of crucial interest to this community.

Since November 2003 AmCham has extended the magazine to 40 pages (from 36) and since January 2004 it has started with new layout and graphics.

The total print run is 850 to 900 copies. Every issue focuses on one basic topic/cover story. The topics covered in the last year include Agriculture, Corruption and Business ethics, the Slovak Parliamentary elections, Human Resources, Foreign Direct Investment, Regional Development, Euro-Atlantic integration of Slovakia, Government reforms, Industrial parks, and more. The magazine features crucial aspects of business life in Slovakia, especially the mutual commercial relations between Slovakia and U.S. Articles on international and domestic economic topics are prepared by specialists on economic, political, legislative, social issues, providing a deep insight and respectful views and opinions. The magazine also includes the reports from the events organized by the AmCham office in Bratislava and the AmCham office in Košice.

The editorial content also includes many other sections and special interest columns - up-to-date Member News, list of new and current AmCham members, Letter to Members, Success in Slovakia, Member Profile, Interviews with politicians, economists or other experts, Outlook Slovakia, Outlook USA, Profiles, Legislative focus, Questionnaires among members on different topics, etc.

# DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS

The 2003 General Assembly was the perfect occasion for publishing the upgraded Annual DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS 2003. The improvements concern not only the layout of the Directory, but also the content of this publication. The main purpose for publishing the Directory of Members 2003 is to further increase membership benefits through providing our members more complex and detailed information. This will hopefully enhance networking opportunities within AmCham membership as well as improving their image within membership as well. Moreover, the better image our members have, the better the position for AmCham.

The most significant changes in comparison in the last updated publication are in presenting detailed descriptions of the main business activities of all member organizations and individuals. Our members had an opportunity to write a brief (up to 100 words) description of their core business activities together with contact information. In addition, the company profile may contain the history of a company, its industry strength, objectives and future plans. The presentation space of every member company will include the present address, telephone and fax number, email and name(s) of the contact person(s). Another very significant change is that all Corporate Patrons will, besides their company profile, have their logos published as Patrons



- Comprehensive listing of AmCham Members
- Contact information, contact persons, description of business activities of member companies
- Information on AmCham Slovakia
- Contact information for AmChams in Europe
- General information, basic economic and statistic data on Slovakia
- Listing of representation of Slovakia in USA and USA in Slovakia
- Free to all members of AmCham Slovakia

## WEB SITE

AmCham Slovakia launched its first website about five years ago. The growth of information technologies and usage of the Internet led to major changes on our website, [www.amcham.sk](http://www.amcham.sk). In addition to the information service that it provides, AmCham has also changed its website into a marketing and promotional tool. AmCham continuously improves its website: [www.amcham.sk](http://www.amcham.sk).

The major changes are:

- Daily update of news related to economic and political events, foreign direct investments, statistical data etc. (source- SITA online service)
- Adhoc updates of the AmCham calendar
- Monthly update of the three major articles from the newly released Connection magazine
- Quarterly update of the publication "Road to Brussels" - Since September 2003, Working Group experts on EU accession in the American Chambers of Commerce in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have jointly produced a quarterly "Road to Brussels" report, which address the practical impact of the accession processes and the relevant legislative changes in Slovakia in specialized articles. Providing a regional perspective, the articles are a collaborative effort of all three contributing AmChams. The bulletin also contains general information focused on the most important enlargement related issues, a calendar of upcoming EU related events, and information regarding EU policy changes.
- Adhoc updates of all the speakers presentations from events organized by AmCham
- Updates of the section called "How to start a business" information is provided by Allen & Overy
- A newly created section called "Advertisement" contains information and a price list for advertisements in Connection magazine, banners on the web site and advertisements in the Directory of Members
- A newly created section called "Opportunities", which contains: Trade Opportunities (with space for AmCham members and non-member companies to promote their business, products, services etc.) and Job positions (providing space for companies to look for new employees)

The ongoing changes that AmCham is still working on concern the Membership section. The Membership section includes information about membership, benefits, criteria for becoming an AmCham member etc. The section also includes a list of all AmCham member companies. In May 2004, the AmCham office will send to all AmCham members a login name and password in order to be able to open the information concerning the "Members Area Only". The password will allow any of the AmCham members to access information about AmCham companies, complete committee reports etc.

If you have any questions concerning the official AmCham website or you are interested in promoting your company on [www.amcham.sk](http://www.amcham.sk), please, contact Zuzana Lysáková, AmCham PR & Marketing Coordinator via phone: 00421-2-54 64 0535 or send e-mail to [zuzana@amcham.sk](mailto:zuzana@amcham.sk).

## TASK FORCES AND COMMITTEES

*AmCham's committees, working groups and task forces are the "backbone" of AmCham's real activities. AmCham's committees monitor legislative, business, social and other issues in the Slovak Republic, collecting comments and concerns of the members of AmCham Slovakia to these issues, summarizing and formulating them into the official position of AmCham Slovakia and delivering and presenting it to the institutions and organization that have the ability to influence given issues.*

### **EU Accession Working Group**

The American Chamber of Commerce in SR, within larger initiative of the American Chambers of Commerce in other Central European Countries that are candidates for EU accession, established the EU Accession Working Group (EUAWG) in June 2003. Mr. Andrew Sandor of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey, was elected as chairman of this Working Group, which seeks to contribute to the successful integration of the Slovak Republic into the European Union by monitoring and assessing economic and commercial impact of accession and reporting those findings to companies and, if necessary, relevant governments.

The working group quickly moved to establish contact with similar Working Groups in neighboring AmChams and began exchanging important information and preparation of common reports and positions. In October 2003, the working group produced an EU Structural Funds document that was distributed to all AmCham members. EUAWG has also joined AmCham Czech Republic and Hungary in preparation of a quarterly Bulletin called "Road to Brussels". The last issue for the year 2003 was prepared by AmCham Hungary and focused on state aid and intellectual property with special regard to trade marks.

On October 16th, 2003, AmCham Slovakia and the Delegation of the European Commission in the Slovak Republic hosted the first session of the EU Business Briefing Series, which was opened by Eric Van der Linden, the Head of Delegation of the European Commission in the Slovak Republic. Focus was on pre-accession funds of the EU that Slovakia has available before it becomes a member of the European Union. The second briefing, held on October 30, 2003, focused on Regional and Local Development Strategies. The third session of the Series was held in January 2004, focusing on the PHARE Grand Scheme on Human Resources Development.

Since we anticipate many new, difficult issues to arise for companies in Slovakia even after May 1<sup>st</sup>, the EUAWG is planning to be active also after Slovakia's accession into the EU.

### **Health Care Committee**

Throughout the past year the Health Care Committee, chaired by Mr. Raj Airey of Pfizer, was intensively active in analyzing and commenting on the new draft of the Health Care Law, which was approved by the National Council of SR in March 2003 and had met with rather negative feedback from major AmCham pharmaceutical companies. The Committee addressed the President of SR, expressing the position of AmCham Slovakia on the newly approved Health Care Code. The draft of the Health Care Law of the Slovak Republic was not signed by the president of the Slovak Republic and was returned to the Parliament National Council of SR (of SR). Taking into consideration the legislative procedure of the Slovak Republic, position letters were addressed to the Health Care Committee and Social Affairs and Housing Committee of the National Council, as well as to the leaders of the political parties represented in the National Council of SR.

Other important areas addressed by the committee were data protection retroactivity, discrimination and transparency issues as well as pricing and reimbursement legislation in context of international trade. At the beginning of 2004, the Slovak Local Area Working Group (LAWG) of the International Pharma Association was established in cooperation with AmCham's Health Care Committee. As it was agreed, this Working Group would maintain in a close link with AmCham and remain under the umbrella of AmCham but firmly linked to the Pharma Association. One of the pilot projects of the working group is to establish a reform dialog with the Ministry of Health. AmCham succeeded in scheduling a Roundtable meeting with the Minister of Health, Mr. Rudolf Zajac, scheduled for May 4, 2004.

# TASK FORCES AND COMMITTEES

## Human Resource Committee

The initial meeting of the recently reactivated committee was devoted to setting up the main focus of the committee. Committee members presented and discussed basic ideas for the next Job Fair and suggested to shift organizing of this event for more convenient time, perhaps in the second part of February. The committee agreed to support three broad areas: assisting in organizing AmCham's Job Fairs and HR Conferences, play an HR advisory role to businesses, and provide HR legislative support. Mr. Donald Bauza of The Wexford Group International was elected as chair of the committee. In terms of its advisory activities, the Committee agreed to develop an informational brochure/handbook that will provide useful information on establishing or maintaining business operations in Slovakia. The brochure will include general information on attaining short and long term working permits, licensing and registration requirements, insurance, health services, and employing personnel.

In cooperation with the US Embassy, the Committee would also like to propose legislative activities intended to reduce nonessential bureaucratic requirements placed on foreigners operating businesses or otherwise employed in the Slovak Republic.

## The Legislative Task Force

AmCham's Legislative Committee seeks to have an important influence on the lobbying activities of AmCham Slovakia, as well as the operation of its current and future committees. Kenneth D. Johnson, Head of Practice of Weinhold Legal, v.o.s. is chairman of the Committee.

Each member of Legislative Committee has designated responsibilities for monitoring a specific industrial sector and for proposing possible targets for LC efforts within that sector. The committee chose the sectors of Banking and Insurance, Manufacturing, T/IP and HR/education as the ones to which most attention would be paid. The Legislative Committee initiated activities to discuss the major issues concerning the proposed Act on Insolvency. AmCham Slovakia executed a small survey and contacted most of the AmChams in Europe to receive information about operation of similar working groups in other European Countries. AmCham Slovakia received many responses from, eg., Hungary, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxemburg, Croatia, and others. The other brief survey sought suggestions from AmCham membership concerning preferential areas of legislative focus for the committee. The Legislative Committee will soon prepare further positions on legislative issues in the Slovak Republic.

## Tax Committee

The Tax Committee of the AmCham was reactivated in November 2003. This committee seeks to address a number of tax related issues facing a great variety of businesses in Slovakia in connection with the innovative tax reforms effective 1 January 2004. Another area of focus is the affects of EU accession and its relevant impact on the business environment for AmCham members. Mr. Mark Gibbins of KPMG is the chair of the committee.

Following its initial meeting in November, the Committee informed members about its establishment and encouraged them to identify major tax issues relevant for their business. A number of tax issues were proposed by the Tax Committee members themselves. Most of these issues were to be sent to the representatives of the Ministry of Finance, who were expected to react to these either immediately or later as guest speakers at a Business Breakfast for AmCam members. It was more or less expected that most of such sessions would be based on the questions and issues arising from the new Income Tax Act and the new draft VAT Act expected to be effective from 1 May 2004.

The committee also decided to contribute to the content of each issue of AmCham "Connection" magazine by regular articles related to the main focus of the issue.

The Committee has also established contact with similar AmCham tax committees in Hungary and the Czech Republic and discovered that almost identical items are being discussed in their committees. We hope this contact will continue and potentially develop into further cooperation.

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