

AMCHAM SLOVAKIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION 2015

Just two hours before the official beginning of the annual Independence Day Celebration the sky over the venue at Divoká Voda darkened and a summer storm with strong wind followed. However, even before the arrival of the first guests, the sky was clear again and everything was set for another edition of AmCham's biggest and most popular outdoor event of the year. Once again, families with kids were the first to arrive and check out this year's attractions and be among the first to try all the delicious food. While the adults were looking forward to meeting friends and familiar faces from the business sphere, the kids were delighted to be greeted by the oversized Snoopy.

Thanks to the earlier rain, the weather wasn't too hot to move around which made the sports activities much more popular than in previous years. The small soccer field held several improvised barefoot matches and the lacrosse players were busy demonstrating their beloved sport until it was too dark to see the ball. The popular mechanical bull was also very busy and it managed to add many new names to its growing list of victims.

The official welcome took place at 7PM and included a flag ceremony performed by US marines, as well as the Slovak and American anthems. As usual, the speeches were brief and much more talking was done informally with a glass of beer, wine or whiskey in hand. The Independence Day offers

a unique opportunity to meet business partners and colleagues in a completely relaxed setting without the customary suit and tie.

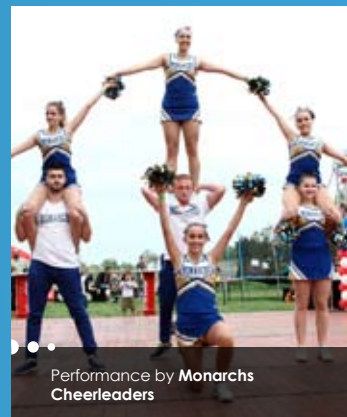
As for the musical program, this year had a very distinct rock feel thanks to the main performer The Business Leaders Band. Business representatives from several AmCham member companies accompanied by a few professional musicians demonstrated their musical skills on the stage and put on a genuine rock show. To make things even better, they invited AmCham's President Igor Kottman and the Executive Director Jake Slegers to the stage for a couple of songs. The visitors thus had a unique chance to see Igor Kottman playing the bass or Jake Slegers singing Elvis. The Business Leaders Band performed two sets of rock anthems and especially their second appearance after the fireworks had a real rock concert atmosphere.

Jake Slegers traditionally plays several roles during the evening. Besides welcoming the guests and moderating the event, he also appeared on the stage as a surprise guest singer for The Business Leaders Band. However, his most memorable Independence Day role involves cowboy boots and lively country music. And just like every year, his line dancing lesson brought most people to their feet. The more courageous filled the dance floor while the shy ones joined in beyond the stage lights.



From left: **Mario Valdez**, General Manager, Mellife; **Jake Slegers**, Executive Director of AmCham Slovakia; and **Igor Kottman**, President of AmCham Slovakia

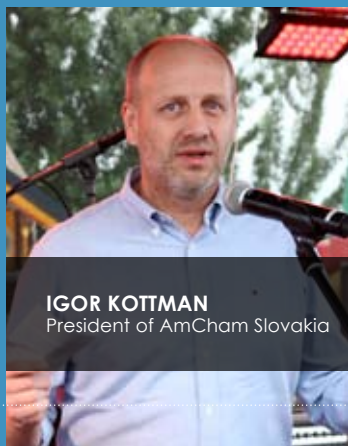
There was one more highlight that everyone looked forward to. Those who stayed until the late hours were rewarded by a memorable sight of truly amazing fireworks lighting up the sky above Divoká Voda. The five minute show turned all heads upwards and received well-deserved ovations. The fun continued well past midnight as there was still enough to drink and eat with the funky tunes of the DJ providing the ideal background.



Performance by **Monarchs Cheerleaders**



More pictures can be found at www.amcham.sk



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President of AmCham Slovakia



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