



*AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC*

2013  
year of  
regional  
development

# Business & Academia: Bridging the Gap

## AmCham Slovakia's Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation

Established in December 2007 to contribute to the reform of the Slovak education system and to foster stronger cooperation between schools and businesses, this committee currently includes more than 25 AmCham member companies which actively comment on legislation and offer various education-related projects. The Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation is one of the most active and productive committees of AmCham Slovakia.



**The Key to Success**

## COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS-ACADEMIC COOPERATION strives to:

- Contribute to **effective implementation of Education Reform** in Slovakia
- Foster **regular dialogue with key decision-makers** (the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Government Office, Universities and Research Institutions)
- Contribute to better conditions for **R&D, innovation and technology transfer**
- Provide a platform for **sharing best practices** among AmCham members
- **Support entrepreneurship** for enhancing Slovakia's competitiveness in the long-term
- Contribute to **better vocational education** and thus contribute to preparation of a qualified labor force

## COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP:



**Marcel Rebroš**, Cisco Systems  
Board Executive Sponsor

*"I believe there is a strong correlation between the investment into education, innovation and technology and the country's competitiveness. Business-Academic Committee has been instrumental in leading a dialogue with the government and business leaders to advocate for transformation of education, technology transfer, best practice sharing and the promotion of digital society."*



**František Jakab**, Cisco Systems  
Committee Chair

*"I'm really glad that activities of Business-Academic Cooperation Committee, which aim to contribute to the reform of our education system, open a public debate on these issues and find solutions, were taken into consideration by the highest representatives of the Ministry of Education and received broad support from the professional community. I believe that our specific proposals contributed to education reform and will help in its implementation."*



**Milan Polča**, U. S. Steel Košice  
Committee Vice-Chair

*"Business-Academic Committee is a very well functioning platform for mutual dialogue and cooperation among employers and representatives of government and education sector in the area of forming effective education system and legislation."*



## 2012: YEAR OF EDUCATION

The initiative of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic titled "2012: Year of Education" was conceived based on the long-standing cooperation among the members of the Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation and a group of experts from elementary and secondary schools as well as universities. Its single key objective was to actively contribute to improving the quality of education and to link education with the needs of employers – leading to greater quality and better employment prospects of school graduates in the Slovak labor market.

*"Education as such is my life motto. It brings the highest value to a person's life. An educated person is free and only such people can move the society further ahead, while pursuing their own personal happiness."*

Beáta Brestenská,  
AmCham Leader of 2012: Year of  
Education and President of API



The initiative "2012: Year of Education" received official support by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Within this initiative, the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic

*"I believe that in order for a graduate to succeed in life and at work, one of the key things is the ability to cooperate and communicate well with others, showing initiative and having an entrepreneurial spirit. School will provide them with knowledge and skills in the given scientific field – graduates acquire professional competence etc. but schools are often unprepared to develop the above-mentioned competences that, I believe, are of key relevance and in the end, they have the most powerful influence on the quality of the graduate's life in general."*

František Jakab,  
AmCham Leader of 2012: Year of  
Education, Chair of AmCham Business-  
Academic Cooperation Committee and  
CISCO Networking Academy Program  
Manager



provided a platform that enabled member companies, representatives of elementary and secondary schools, "gymnasiums", universities and industry associations to look for common solutions of the practical problems that arise when the world of education and the world of business interact.

*"During my many years as Executive Director of AmCham Slovakia, I have felt that it is extremely important to focus on the issues connected to education as truly the best way to further advance the competitiveness of Slovakia. I believe that AmChams' various initiatives are evidence of that. I am indeed very pleased with the "2012 Year of Education" initiative, and would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who participated in this effort. Without you this would never happen. Thank you."*

Jake Slegers,  
Executive Director  
of AmCham Slovakia





## MENTOR NETWORK PROGRAM:

The Mentor Network Program aims to provide students with an opportunity for mentoring and career advice by business sector representatives and the best CEOs on the Slovak market. MNP seeks to retain

**Honorary Chairman,  
Sponsor and Founder:**  
Martin Kardoš  
of CSI Leasing Slovakia



**Main Partners:**



TRAIN THE TRAINER

## TRAIN THE TRAINER:

The Train the Trainer Program is aimed at professors, deans and teaching assistants of Slovak universities. This course introduces the teachers to the topics,

analyses, and approaches which are absent in the education background of Slovakia's graduates according to AmCham companies. The course also introduces

best practices, soft skills and methods for making time spent in classroom generally more interesting.



## JOB FAIR:



The AmCham Job Fair opens doors for recruiting efforts across Slovakia. For companies looking to fill their recruiting needs, AmCham brings in the talent,

providing access to qualified applicants looking for work. The Job Fair has an impact on more than 1300 students who participate in this important event which

is organized also in central and eastern Slovakia. More information can be found on [www.amcham-jobfair.sk](http://www.amcham-jobfair.sk).

Level 3:	Level 2:	Level 1:



## EDUCATION CONFERENCE:

Improving the state of Slovak education is considered a crucial step within AmCham's FDI Strategy, so that Slovakia becomes an attractive, favored investment destination in Europe by 2020. Keeping this in mind,

Sponsored by:



the recommendations of the "2012: Year of Education" initiative, were presented at the

October Conference titled "The Future of Education in Slovakia."



## AMCHAM COURSES:

AmCham Slovakia, in cooperation with the University of Economics' Center for North-American Studies, annually prepares the accredited American Business Culture and Ethics Course led by a variety



of AmCham member representatives. Another accredited course organized by AmCham Slovakia together with the Center for North American Studies at the University of Economics in Bratislava, is



called "HR in Practice". It provides an in-depth look at key roles which HR plays in large companies.



## OTHER PROJECTS:

AmCham supports very intensely its member companies which organize projects related to education. In 2012, we successfully organized QSI Career Day for QSI International and a Field Trip for City University of Seattle. Also, for many years AmCham members have been actively involved in the Advisory Committee on Education Law, and Law on Vocational Education. In 2009, seven out of nine AmCham comments were incorporated into the Education Law.

Committee members still regularly provide comments on the Higher Education Act, Law on Vocational Education and other legislation. AmCham has continually supported various Slovak governments in promoting research and development and innovation. For instance, AmCham organized "Innovation Policy and Technology Transfer" Conference in 2010 and "Innovation Imperative: Slovakia's Future" Conference in 2013.

Each year AmCham hosts a Business Lunch with academia and industry representatives as part of ICETA conference to discuss current issues in the Business-Academic cooperation. AmCham supports eSkills Week – an EU campaign to raise awareness of job opportunities in the field of ICT.



Partners:

## SHARING BEST PRACTICES BETWEEN SLOVAKIA AND THE UNITED STATES:

AmCham co-organized an official visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Ján Mikolaj, to the United States in April 2009 with the following goals:

- Cooperation between private and public institutions in the area of transfer of technologies
- Establishing contacts between Slovak and U.S. Education institutions

### University visits:

- University of California Berkeley Office of Intellectual Property and Industry Research Alliances
- University of Minnesota
- Alice Seagren, Minnesota Commissioner for Education
- Normandale Community College, Minnesota
- Southwest Minnesota State University
- Stanford University

### Memorandums of Understanding signed:

- Between the Technical University in Košice and Stanford University
- Between the Plug and Play Tech Center and Comenius University
- Between Robert Morris University and Slovak Ministry of Education



### Company visits:

- Microsoft Corporation, EBC Redmont, Washington
- IBM Almaden Research Center, California
- Hewlett Packard, HP Labs Overview, Silicon Valley, California
- Cisco Systems Headquarters, Silicon Valley, California

### The American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic

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