

Special Session of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) with the
Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic,
PhDr. Ján Oravec

Residence of Brazil, Bratislava, 18 August 2020, 1 pm

A Special Session of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) with the Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, PhDr. Ján Oravec, was held on 18 August 2020. The event was organized at the Residence of the Brazilian Embassy in Bratislava and had 21 participants, as presented below:

BSCC Members

Mr. Milan Cigán, President of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Eduardo Gradilone, Ambassador of Brazil to Slovakia
Mr. Daniel Sajták, ESKADA, CEO
Mr. Oldřich Holiš, Eurocoffee, CEO
Ms. Andrea Lopatka, Eurocoffee
Ms. Veronika Holišová, Eurocoffee
Mr. Peter Falis, Danube Capital Advisors
Ms. Jana Maričáková, Danube Capital Advisors
Mr. Peter Bak, Bak & Partners
Mr. Ricardo Maschietto Ayrosa, Embassy of Brazil, Deputy Head of Mission
Mr. Cícero Freitas, Embassy of Brazil
Mr. Rafael Alonso, Embassy of Brazil
Ms. Andrea Simančíkova, Embassy of Brazil
Ms. Alica Plašienkova, Embassy of Brazil

Guests

PhDr. Ján Oravec, Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy
Mr. Viktor Borecký, Director of Economic Diplomacy, MZV
Mr. Matej Jančošek, Department of Economic Diplomacy, MZV
Mr. Juraj Čajko, Chamber of Commerce Trnava Region / Euro-brew
Mr. Branislav Křocok, OFZ, Director
Mr. Stanislav Lencz, Innovatrics
Ms. Renata Megyesiova, IPM-Chirana

2. The President of the BSCC thanked the Ambassador of Brazil for hosting the event. He also thanked the Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy for being the special guest of the session and recalled his previous experiences.

3. The Ambassador of Brazil stressed that this was the second event held in collaboration with BSCC in the new Brazilian residence, which reflected Brazil's interest in engaging with the local business community. He mentioned having visited the Mayors of Košice and Spišská Nová Ves a few weeks before, when those authorities demonstrated great appreciation for the relationship with Brazil. He also

highlighted the visits he paid to the four Brazilian companies located in Spišská Nová Ves (Embraco, CRW, Rudolph Usinados and Microjuntas) and to Eskada, in Košice – all of them BSCC members – whose managers reported their efforts to overcome the difficulties imposed by the covid-19 outbreak and to avoid layoffs.

4. The Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy observed that Slovakia is going through a historic recession, with a double-digit economic downturn, due to measures that led to the suspension of commercial operations and a lack of industry supplies. He pointed out that Slovakia is vulnerable, as it is a small and open country, being subject, for example, to the resizing of local activities by companies based in larger countries. He noted that his Ministry has worked to ensure that the pandemic plan, recently approved by the government, adopts smart measures that do not stifle the economy. He cited the adoption of the economic support package (115 measures proposed by the Ministry and approved by the Parliament) and stated that his Ministry wishes to improve the business environment in the country. In this connection, he encouraged the participants to send suggestions to be considered in the elaboration of a second package of economic measures, and provided his direct e-mail address for this purpose (jan.oravec@mhsr.sk). He added that Slovakia is in a peculiar condition, as it has not yet exhausted the resources of the EU budget for the past seven years and should still receive transfers referring to the next multi-annual budget, in addition to the EU economic recovery package. Thus, the relevant questions are "where" and "how" to spend: in his view, the country should follow EU spending priorities, in combination with Slovakia's specific interests, and make a profound change in the way the money is distributed in the country.

5. Regarding bilateral relations, the Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy assessed that Brazil is Slovakia's most important economic and political partner in Latin America, but noted that there is broad potential to be tapped. He commended the attending entrepreneurs for their interest in stimulating bilateral economic relations. He recalled that the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation, signed in 2009 by the two countries, established a joint commission, whose inaugural meeting has not yet been convened. He stressed that, in case the business community pushes for it, the instrument could be implemented, and mentioned that he could lead the Slovak side in the mechanism.

6. A discussion on the topics ensued, with a number of questions from BSCC members and guests answered by the Secretary of State I of the Ministry of Economy. In the end, the president of the BSCC assessed that the event was productive for the discussion of ways to support the business community in Slovakia and the strengthening of ties with Brazil.