



# WHO IS WHO?

ALMA HANC



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REAL ESTATE

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IBM

JTRE

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# WHO IS WHO?

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# ANDRIJANA ADÁMEK

CO-OWNER  
AND MANAGER  
ESB, S.R.O. AND APELYON



Andrijana Adámek, co-owner and manager of ESB, s.r.o. and APELYON line of business, addresses the company readiness to adopt AI in the current digital landscape. Despite the accelerated shift to online operations due to remote work, many organizations still struggle with fully embracing digital adoption. However, this has not deterred them from pushing forward with AI adoption, creating a delicate balance that needs to be managed effectively.

## HOW COMPANIES APPROACH AI ADOPTION?

What we see from the market, many companies are struggling to grasp AI adoption in a systematic way. Motivation to experiment and become pioneer is often overcoming sense for responsibility, security and systematic approach. The bigger the company is, more sensitive the topic becomes. There are several approaches to build AI adoption strategies and implementation plans. It heavily depends on the company's starting point, and here I don't only mean IT readiness, but also people readiness.

Finally, AI is only another software, and it will be just as purposeful, as we adopt it.

## WHAT APPEARS TO BE A GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR COMPANIES TO INCREASE AI ADOPTION PACE?

We see, that best practice is to divide the effort into several streams, which enable company to keep up pace with trends, and at the same time, work hard on basic pillars to create reliable environment.

My colleagues worked on some major international implementation of modern end-point management tools. It is painful, expensive and absolute imperative for those who mean digital and AI sincerely.

At the same time, we can see that the way how information is stored and shared in organisation is often challenging from access management point of view. Early attempts to launch Copilot were often reassessed due to insufficient control over who-sees-what.

Finally, let's not forget about people. Some companies have adopted agile way of working, and this can be especially useful from change management point of view, as people are engaged in creating changes that affect them. However, not every organisation is agile-ready and in this case, it is important not to underestimate change management.

Bringing organisation to reach their target level of digital, and at the same time support technophile pioneers with regards to security and data-leakage prevention.

## OFTEN ORGANISATION ADDRESS USECASES, HOWEVER IN APELYON YOU EMPHASISE PROCESSES... HOW YOU PERCEIVE THIS FROM AI ADOPTION POINT OF VIEW?

Use cases are units, which are easy to be grasped by IT development point of view. We emphasize, that companies do not work in isolate use-cases. Processes are to be considered in order to undertake change throughout the flow.

What often happens is, that company creates list of use cases, prioritise them and deliver according the agreed roadmap. This is completely valid approach, as long as it is balanced by business process point of view. It is crucial to ensure, that we avoid creating bottle necks unconsciously. Some might appear along the way, but we should not run AI adoption as walk down a lane full of surprises.

For example, let's talk about AI in lead generation. We create agents to filter database, chatbots to start initial conversations with potential clients. Leads are generated and ready to be taken over by sales. What happens is, that sales department capacities are not ready to address these leads. So, leads are getting colder, follow ups are lacking... reputation is affected.

This example can be applied in any other context. Once you boost productivity of certain use-case, do not underestimate surrounding process flow. IT success in delivering use-case should embrace business readiness to use its full potential.

## AI IS, AND ALSO IS NOT, JUST ANOTHER SOFTWARE. WHAT ARE MAIN DIFFERENCES?

Adopting and implementing AI requires all aspects of regular software implementation. In case of AI, omitting any aspect, can have greater impact, or even consequences. Therefore, if the organisation has rich experience with new technology implementation and adoption, they are more likely to manage it with ease. It will be more challenging for those, who were technology-proof by now, and they only start. You might be surprised how many businesses are naturally offline, and they start motivated by AI-era. Often, they lack full visibility of what it requires, but they want it badly. We enjoy accompanying also this type of client. As business motivation is often lacking in big IT projects.

## LET'S WRAP UP ON AI...

Corporates are indeed pushing for AI adoption despite the ongoing struggle with fully embracing digital transformation. The key to finding balance lies in polishing processes, understanding how people work with data, and ensuring seamless data exchange.

ESB, s.r.o. positions itself as a reliable ally in navigating business complexities, ensuring clients can confront daily paradoxes with assurance and strategic insight.

This approach aligns seamlessly with the values of AmCham Slovakia, which emphasizes the importance of fostering a transparent, fair, competitive, and innovation-driven business environment.



## WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING CHANGE CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Definitely the rise of AI. Tools like ChatGPT can now create complete development programs—timetables, handouts, case studies, role-play scripts, even facilitator manuals and PPT presentation. Sure, the output needs editing and fine-tuning, but about 90% of the heavy lifting is done. What used to take me 10+ hours five years ago, I can now do in 3—with some great ideas thrown in that I might not have thought of myself.

## SOME SAY COACHES WILL BE REPLACED BY AI. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

It reminds me of when video players came out and people said cinemas will be empty. Or when e-books were supposed to replace books. We still go to cinemas. We still read physical books. I think it'll be the same with coaching, mentoring, workshops, training sessions.

AI can definitely help with certain topics—especially quick, practical ones—and it's super accessible. But I don't believe AI can fully replace the kind of long-term, human connection managers need to grow. When it comes to tough, personal stuff, most people still prefer to talk to a real human.

## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT TRENDS IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT?

I'd break it down into three areas: money, content, and how learning actually happens.

**Financially**, I've been tracking about 200 service providers since 2008. These days, companies invest around €23 million a year into learning and development. The top 10% providers account over half of that. But there's also a steady rise in small providers making under €50,000 a year. I think that's great—it means development is becoming more accessible.

**In terms of content**, the hot topics haven't really changed in 30 years: teamwork, motivation, leadership, time management, performance reviews, running meetings, handling change, assertiveness, presentations, conflict resolution, and sales. That's because there's always a new wave of managers coming in who need to learn the basics.

**And process-wise**, a lot has shifted. Neuroscience, agility, and behavioral science have changed how we think about learning. Course formats have also changed. Back in the '90s, two- or even three-day sessions were normal. After the financial crisis, it shifted to one- and two-day workshops. Now it's often half-day or single-day sessions, with some video content added in.

But here's the big one: the challenge has always been getting people to actually do something differently after workshops, training sessions, coaching, mentoring. Even years ago, I asked myself: "What will really change in a manager's behavior after a good course?" The honest answer? For most—nothing. For some—a little. And only a few actually applied what they learned.

So the real question is: how should we design teaching and learning that leads to real change?

## WHAT WOULD A LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH REAL IMPACT LOOK LIKE?

I'd build it on three beliefs.

First: learning works best in short, regular bursts. Six hours a day for two days isn't the same as two hours a day for six days. It's better to learn in smaller chunks and have time to try things out in between. That's why I always end programs by helping people create an action plan—and schedule it into their calendars right away.

Second: the team environment matters. A manager's development doesn't happen in a vacuum. If a manager commits to a new habit—like chairing meeting a new way or doing one small talk a day with someone in the team—the team should know about it. That way, they can give honest feedback. If the manager follows through, great. If not, the team will call it out.

Third: action beats intention. It's not about what the manager wants to do, but what they'll actually do, and when. And how will they know it made a difference? I love the Spanish saying: "From saying to doing is a long way." My job is to help shorten that gap.

# PETER BENKOVIČ

CO-FOUNDER AND PARTNER  
MAXMAN CONSULTANTS,  
S.R.O.



His educational background is I/O psychology. Peter is a trainer, consultant, facilitator, coach, mentor for senior executives level to multinationals such as AON, AT&T, Brady Corporation, Cisco, CEMM THOME, HERO, Hewlett-Packard, Johnson Controls, Lasvit, Metro/Makro, Mondi Packaging, Oracle, Phoenix Contact, Porsche Engineering, Siemens, Sika, Soitron, VW, Whirlpool, Wurth and many others. His has delivered over 2 000 training sessions, 1 000 hours of coaching, facilitated over 100 corporate board meetings. Peter has attended several study projects abroad (the UK, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands). He has published over 35 articles on the development of managerial work, leadership development, coaching, assessment and development centers, teamwork. His life credo is: *No decision is better than action*. Peter is involved in Pro Bono activities for NGOs and in creating innovative educational environment.

# MATEJ BEŇUŠKA

MANAGING PARTNER  
PA MATTERS S R.O.



Matej leads PA Matters, a public affairs consultancy recognised for its competitive edge under his direction, securing multiple EMEA awards.

His own work gained international notice, particularly his contributions regarding ride-hailing policy across Central and Eastern Europe. Matej excels at guiding organisations through intricate regulatory environments, ensuring they remain well-informed and strategically positioned to navigate evolving challenges effectively. Known for his optimism and calm approach in high-pressure scenarios, Matej fosters a solutions-driven environment for clients and his team, focusing on achieving results amidst complexity.

## REGARDING SLOVAKIA'S STRENGTHS, COMPETITIVENESS, AND FUTURE READINESS

Slovakia certainly has foundational strengths – our central European location, membership in the Eurozone offering stability, and a workforce known for its technical skills and adaptability are definite assets. These factors have historically made Slovakia an attractive destination for investment. Furthermore, the availability of significant EU funds, especially through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, presents a crucial opportunity for driving modernization, boosting investment, and supporting necessary reforms.

However, we cannot afford complacency. Relying on these established advantages is no longer sufficient. Evidence indicates that Slovakia's economic convergence towards Western European standards has unfortunately stalled in recent years. International competitiveness rankings also reflect a concerning trend, suggesting we are losing ground compared to our peers. A major contributing factor is the economy's continued heavy dependence on the traditional automotive sector, leaving us exposed to global market fluctuations and the profound technological shifts underway. Critically, Slovakia faces persistent challenges in translating potential into performance, particularly in building a dynamic innovation ecosystem. We invest in R&D, but struggle significantly when it comes to converting research outcomes into successful commercial products, services, and globally competitive companies. This innovation gap is a serious bottleneck to future growth.

To build a truly future-ready Slovakia, we must address several strategic priorities with urgency and commitment:

### 1. Strengthening Institutions and the

**Rule of Law:** A stable, predictable, and fair environment is the bedrock of any thriving economy. Unfortunately, businesses in Slovakia often grapple with burdensome bureaucracy, inconsistencies in the application of regulations, and a judicial system perceived as slow and sometimes unreliable. Enhancing the rule of law is not just an abstract ideal; it means practical improvements like transparent policymaking, efficient administration, and dependable legal enforcement. Rebuilding trust in public institutions is vital for fostering both domestic enterprise and foreign investment.

### 2. Developing and Retaining Talent:

Our people are a key asset, but we face challenges. The education system requires modernization to better equip young Slovaks with the skills demanded by a rapidly evolving, digitally-focused economy. We need stronger pathways for continuous learning and upskilling to help the existing workforce adapt. Crucially, we must create more compelling reasons – better career opportunities, a higher quality of life, and an environment that values expertise – to retain our brightest talents and reverse the ongoing brain drain.

### 3. Fostering a Genuine Innovation

**Ecosystem:** We need to move beyond pockets of R&D activity towards a truly interconnected system. This requires breaking down silos between universities, research institutions, and the private sector. Startups and innovative SMEs need better access to funding, particularly venture capital, mentorship, and supportive regulations that don't stifle growth. Simplifying the process for bringing innovations to market is essential.

### 4. Accelerating Meaningful

**Digitalisation:** Digital transformation is key to productivity and competitiveness. Leveraging available funds, including EU resources, must focus on tangible outcomes: supporting SMEs in adopting advanced digital tools and processes, upgrading digital infrastructure, and significantly improving the digital skills of the population. Furthermore, the digitalisation of public services needs to accelerate, focusing on user-friendliness and genuine efficiency gains for citizens and businesses alike.

If one single change could profoundly improve Slovakia's prospects, it remains the establishment of **genuine, long-term stability and predictability in the legislative and regulatory framework**. Frequent, poorly communicated, or inadequately assessed changes to laws and regulations create significant uncertainty for businesses. This instability discourages long-term planning, hampers investment decisions, and ultimately limits economic growth. Providing a stable, transparent, and predictable environment, underpinned by a strong commitment to the rule of law, is the most critical foundation for building a prosperous and competitive future for Slovakia.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Although Slovakia's appeal as an attractive destination for foreign investors has been somewhat declining over the past years, Slovakia still offers many attributes which make it desirable and enticing for foreign investors. We have a strategic location in the center of Europe and stable macroeconomic climate – whilst budget deficits are relatively high, the gross debt to GDP ratio is significantly lower than the Euro area average (60.3% vs. 88.2%) and the use of Euro facilitates cross-border transactions.

Slovakia also stands out in the EU for its high share of clean, reliable, and domestically produced electricity, particularly through nuclear energy, which accounts for almost 62% of total electricity production (2023). PM Fico recently announced that the government is close to reaching a decision on the supplier of a new nuclear power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice, with expected installed capacity of at least 1200 MW, which would further cement our energy security and decrease wholesale electricity prices.

Slovakia also benefits from a skilled, cost-effective workforce, particularly in engineering, IT, and manufacturing, making it attractive for both production and technology investments, although recent performance of Slovak pupils in the international PISA tests do raise some serious concerns about the future capability of the Slovak labor force to remain competitive.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Many international experts firmly believe that AI is going to be the main driving force of the 21st century and has the potential to transform pretty much every aspect of our daily lives. We simply cannot afford to miss this opportunity. Whilst we may not be global leaders in research and development, we can still succeed by being quick to adopt and implement the most advanced technologies produced around the world, whether in our economy or governance.

Slovakia must also strive to be the voice of reason in the EU – whilst we certainly need to establish a sound technical, moral, and ethical framework, we should resist the temptation to overregulate AI. This sentiment has also been echoed on numerous occasions by President Pellegrini, who is a keen supporter

of AI development and recognizes its importance for the future of our economy.

Recent opinion polls revealed that over 9% of Slovaks use generative AI tools daily, outpacing counterparts in several other countries. For comparison, only 7% of U.S. respondents, 3% in Denmark, and 2% in the UK or France report the same, according to a Reuters Institute and Oxford survey. Among younger demographics, the popularity is even more striking. More than half of Slovaks aged 16 to 24 use AI at least weekly, with over a quarter engaging daily. The implications for policy-making are clear: despite its size and place on the map, Slovakia often has been – and must continue to be – a pioneer in adopting new technologies.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

The days when investors came to Slovakia just for cheap labor are long gone. We must come to understand that to continue maintaining our economic prosperity – so for things to remain the same – everything must change. We tend to put off problems until they become so acute that fixing them costs a fortune. And we're starving the one area that actually drives long-term growth: innovation.

Without it, the economy can't grow in a way that lets wages grow too. Last year, Slovakia ranked 59th out of 67 countries in the World Competitiveness Ranking by the International Institute for Management Development – that's six places worse than the year before.

We're investing less than 1% of GDP into research and development. That puts us at the bottom of the EU in patents and startups. On startups per million people, we're 24th out of 27 countries, ten times behind Estonia. We average about 50 new patents a year. Czechia, with twice our population, clocks over 440.

Similarly, since 2016, the number of robots per 10,000 employees in our manufacturing sector has gone up by only 16%, whilst Czechia managed 87% and global average increased by 104%.

Unfortunately, there's no single turnkey solution. We need a complex set of policies, ranging from education reform to real improvements in the business environment, the quality of public institutions, and how we fund and organize research and development.



Tomáš is a public affairs and government relations professional with 15+ years of experience, having led numerous successful projects for clients in ICT, New Technologies, Transportation & Logistics, Finance and Food sectors. Over the years, Tomáš has led multiple foreign market access strategies gaining a specific policy expertise and network of contacts at relevant ministries and regulatory authorities in Slovakia. Thanks to his strong grounding in political and economic relations, he can combine economics data and communications aspects in market access and public affairs activities. All this is based on effective market and regulatory intelligence as well as coalition building and stakeholder management supported by tailor-made public affairs, policy communications and media strategies.



# MARIA BIELIKOVA

DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
KEMPELEN INSTITUTE  
OF INTELLIGENT  
TECHNOLOGIES (KInIT)



Maria has developed the long-term vision and strategy for KInIT. She also conducts research focusing on machine learning for user modeling and personalization. Recently, she has been working on data analysis and modeling of antisocial behavior on the Web. Maria is active in discussions on trustworthy AI at the national and European levels.

She is the chairwoman of the Permanent Committee for Ethics and Regulation of AI established by the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization. She was a member of the European Commission Joint Research Center Board of Governors and High Level Expert Group on AI. Before her work at KInIT, Maria was a full professor at the Slovak University of Technology, former dean and lead of the PeWe research group (pewe.sk).

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Several strengths can be identified, such as Slovakia's strategic location in Europe and its robust industrial base. However, the most significant strength is talent. Slovakia continues to demonstrate its talent through numerous success stories, many of which occur internationally. Attracting and motivating professionals to move both into and out of Slovakia remains a crucial issue across all sectors.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR INSTITUTE IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Scaling up and establishing a sustainable model of innovation-driven academia-business linkages, KInIT has been successful in the prestigious Horizon Europe scheme - Teaming for Excellence with the IorAI (Low Resource Artificial Intelligence) proposal. This project focuses on elevating the Institute to a leading research institution in the region. The project spans six years, presenting a unique opportunity to enhance and expand our activities and processes across all units.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Not only have our scientific outputs been presented at top A\*/A ranked scientific venues, but we have also been engaged in 49 industry collaborations - 44 proof of concept/expert consultations, most

of them under Hopero European Digital Innovation Hub project and five long term industry collaborations. We also provided training on various AI topics to 100+ companies under Hopero. Moreover, in 2024, KInIT successfully organized several impactful events starting to bridge the academic and industrial sectors of the natural language processing (NLP) community. A significant milestone was the launch of the inaugural NLP School, designed to cultivate and support emerging talent in the field.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR INSTITUTE?

By excellent science, through connecting academia and industry as well as Slovakia and the world.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

Honest, open-minded, and respectful individuals who provide feedback that helps me understand the world, the meaning of life, and myself.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

I would enable those who have already proven that they can bring value with their hearts and minds to expand and scale their ideas. The message will spread and inspire more and more people to do the same. We should be bold in doing so.

**KInIT is an independent, non-profit research institute focusing on Artificial Intelligence.**

**KInIT's mission is to support scientific excellence and its transformation to responsible innovations by:**

- bridging the private and academic sectors
- encouraging knowledge sharing, talent development and circulation
- advocating for quality, ethics, and fairness including public policy advising

Web & User  
Data  
Processing



Green and  
Secure  
Environment



Natural  
Language  
Processing



Ethics &  
Human Values  
in Technology



KInIT has repeatedly proven its excellence and potential. In nearly five years of existence, it has more than doubled its staff, acquired funding from 15 international projects, engaged in industry collaborations with over 40 industry partners, started a PhD programme in computer science and in digital

law, and established active international cooperations with 120+ partners in more than 30+ countries. KInIT is gaining recognition for being a new institutional model for R&I in Slovakia, demonstrating that strategic priorities of the institute are in alignment with the European and Slovak strategies.



## COMPANY'S FINANCIAL HEALTH IN A DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

### THE CURRENT BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IS EXCEPTIONALLY DYNAMIC. HOW DOES THIS DYNAMISM REFLECT ON DR. MAX'S FINANCIAL HEALTH, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING EXPANSION AND INVESTMENTS IN NEW CONCEPTS LIKE SUPER DR. MAX?

The business environment is constantly evolving, which for us, as one of the fastest-growing retail companies in Slovakia, necessitates continuous optimization. Dr. Max's financial health is stable, enabling us to sustain our growth momentum and invest in strategic projects like our 'Super Dr. Max' pharmacies. These investments are crucial for us to ensure sustainability and deliver long-term value.

We prioritize investments year after year, implementing robotic systems and modern technologies in our pharmacies and warehouses. An example is the new ViaPharma SK distribution center in Senec, which, along with the modernization of the Košice center, represents investments exceeding 10.5 million euros. These steps are essential for faster distribution of medicines and goods. Financially, we are constantly seeking efficiency improvements to remain agile and lean despite our rapid growth. At the same time, we are trying to invest in AI to ensure our operations remain efficient in the future as well.

## SECTORAL CHALLENGES AND THE ROLE OF THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

### THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR FACES SPECIFIC CHALLENGES, SUCH AS A SCARCITY OF RESOURCES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. HOW DOES THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT PERCEIVE THESE CHALLENGES, AND HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR RESOLUTION, FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH DIGITALIZATION AND AUTOMATION?

These challenges are critical for Dr. Max and have a direct financial impact. The shortage of qualified personnel increases pressure on wage costs and reduces overall operational efficiency. The finance department allocates resources to attractive working conditions and invests in employee training and development. We believe the best professionals will only work for the best companies, so we support collaboration with universities and high schools.

Digitalization and automation are key to addressing both challenges. The

finance department actively champions these changes. Our new distribution centers are equipped with modern technologies, such as the 100-meter A-frame technology in Senec, capable of processing up to 10,000 medicine packs per hour. This automation mitigates the impact of labor shortages and enhances efficiency. In selected pharmacies, we are implementing dispensing robots. For instance, the Wallie robot in the Super Dr. Max pharmacy in Košice can store and dispense up to 24,000 packs, significantly saving pharmacists' time. These solutions improve efficiency and elevate the pharmacist's role to that of a specialized healthcare consultant, increasing the profession's attractiveness and helping us attract talented individuals. From a financial perspective, these are long-term investments expected to yield returns in increased productivity and improved service quality.

## IMPACT OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION

### IN SLOVAKIA, WE ARE WITNESSING LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, INCLUDING THE CONSOLIDATION PACKAGE, VAT ADJUSTMENTS, AND A NEW TRANSACTION TAX. HOW DO THESE CHANGES AFFECT DR. MAX'S FINANCIAL PLANNING AND OPERATIONS? AND HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION FROM A CFO'S PERSPECTIVE?

Constant legislative changes and an uncertain business environment undoubtedly impact our financial planning. The VAT reduction for certain categories of medicines from 10% to 5% is positive for patients, and Dr. Max responded by lowering prices. For other product categories, VAT was adjusted upwards, but we did not increase prices beyond the VAT change. We strive for our customers to feel our support during these challenging times.

The transaction tax, effective from April 1st with a rate of 0.4% on each business transaction, presents a significant challenge for us. As a company with over 400 legal entities, without adequate measures, this tax would cost us millions of euros annually. Therefore, we launched an internal project to optimize payments and minimize its impact. While we don't view this tax as fair or sound business practice, we must adapt to it.

As CFO, I focus on economic impacts and their influence on our business. Our primary goal is to provide quality services and care to all patients, regardless of their political convictions.

Dr.Max<sup>+</sup>

JURAJ  
BÓNA

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
DR.MAX HOLDING SK, A.S.



Juraj Bóna is a graduate of the University of Economics in Bratislava - Faculty of Economic Informatics. Since 1998, he held managerial positions at Ernst & Young. He worked at Slovak Telekom from 2003, in various positions in finance and marketing. Since 2016, he has also worked at Czech T-Mobile as Marketing Director and later as Country Manager. After his tenure at Alza as Director of B2B for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the EU, he joined Dr. Max Slovensko, the Slovak market leader in pharmacies, as CFO. He was a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in the UK (ACCA) and also served as a certified auditor of the Slovak Chamber of Auditors and Accountants (SKAU).

WWW.DRMAX.SK

across

# MIROSLAV BOUBLÍK

CEO  
ACROSS PRIVATE  
INVESTMENTS



Miroslav Boublík assumed the position of Chief Executive Officer at Across Private Investments in March 2024.

As an executive with international experience in private equity, venture capital, and large-scale banking, he has primarily worked in the financial services sector - from Silicon Valley to Singapore.

He began his career in the United States, where he worked, among other roles, at the renowned consulting firm McKinsey. After relocating to Europe, he was part of the senior leadership of large banking institutions such as BNP Paribas in Ukraine and Russia. For four years, he was a member of the Home Credit International team, part of the PPF Group, where, among other things, he served as Managing Partner for Corporate Venture Capital.

ACROSS.SK

## **YOU'VE BEEN LEADING ACROSS FOR A YEAR. YOU'VE WORKED AT COMPANIES ALL OVER THE WORLD - FROM SILICON VALLEY TO SINGAPORE. WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO COME TO SLOVAKIA?**

During my time working for major financial institutions around the world, I gained valuable experience. However, I've always tried to live by the principle of "giving back" - here that means contributing my experience to my home country or region. Although I'm Czech, Slovakia is very close to my heart. So when the offer came to work in Slovakia, it was an opportunity to apply best practices practically at home. If we truly care about our homeland and about Europe, we must also give something back.

## **WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?**

When I joined Across, we set ambitious goals, but these would not have been achievable without a strong team of experts. We therefore strengthened the team with experienced professionals. We entrusted the strategy to Marek Šupa, who has extensive experience not only in strategic management but also in implementing digital solutions in several Slovak banks. Martin Fuchs, with his experience in personal banking and capital markets, has strengthened the business as Head of Global Sales. Our team has also expanded with Martin Moravčík, who ran his own securities business, and Matthew Dougherty, an experienced private equity investor with a background as an advisor to major financial institutions, including the ECB. So, I am proud that in a relatively short time we have built one of the strongest professional teams in Slovakia's financial services sector.

## **WHERE IS ACROSS PRIVATE INVESTMENTS HEADING UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP?**

My goal is to make our company one of the leading wealth management companies in Central Europe. We began working toward that already in 2024. In addition to our traditional high net worth clients, who remain a priority for us, we want to democratize wealth management and make our services accessible to clients who are not yet private banking clients but have the potential to become so. We're working on a digital transformation of the company and also focusing on gradually expanding Across Private Investments beyond the borders of Slovakia. Our long-term priority remains a responsible and respectful approach - toward clients, employees, and business partners alike.

## **WHERE DO YOU SEE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INVESTORS IN THE U.S. AND THOSE IN SLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC?**

American investors are generally more willing to invest in venture capital and higher-risk assets, fully aware of the correlation between risk and return. Slovak and Czech investors tend to be more cautious and conservative. They prefer to invest in safer assets - such as bonds or real estate - but it's precisely riskier investments that could improve the performance of their portfolios. Of course, risk needs to be properly managed and ideally diversified.

## **TO WHAT EXTENT DOES SLOVAKIA ITSELF OFFER INTERESTING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES, E.G. IN PRIVATE EQUITY?**

Compared to mature private equity geographies, the Slovak market will be ripe with potential smaller sized deals. We see a significant potential in the ongoing generational change - this could result in a significant investment opportunity in the future, provided the country creates a supportive small business and financial transactions ecosystem. We would like to contribute to the creation of such opportunities. Our goal is to act as an accelerator of innovation.

## **WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?**

I'm inspired by working both with clients and with our team. It brings me joy to see people grow - both personally and professionally - and how the company grows along with them. Another big motivation for me is that together we're able to create and deliver innovative products that are unique in the market and provide real value.

## **WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?**

Slovakia's business environment would benefit greatly from more stable tax legislation, along with simplified administrative processes and reduced bureaucracy. There is noteworthy progress in certain areas of business, for example in ESOP legislation, which is more in line with Silicon Valley practices and more flexible than in the Czech Republic.

# TOMÁŠ BÚRY

PARTNER  
ALLEN OVERY SHEARMAN  
STERLING S.R.O.

## HOW DO YOU PLAN TO LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE BOTH THE EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY OF LEGAL SERVICES OFFERED BY YOUR FIRM?

As a pioneer in the legal industry, A&O Shearman innovation teams provide technology, resourcing and end-to-end solutions for our clients. From Fuse, our tech incubator, to our Markets Innovation Group, a team dedicated to developing innovative solutions, we push the limits of what a law firm can do. Besides our most used AI tool Harvey, we often use ContractMatrix, the most advanced AI-powered contract drafting and negotiation tool on the market today. Thanks to this tool, our in-house legal and compliance teams are saving hundreds of hours and create more consistent documents.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

As a partner focused on M&A, for me it's the dynamic nature of dealmaking. Every transaction is unique - different industries, different stakeholders, different challenges - and that variety keeps the work intellectually engaging. I'm particularly energized by the strategic

thinking required to structure deals that not only make commercial sense but also stand up to legal scrutiny. There's also real satisfaction in helping clients achieve transformative outcomes, whether it's expanding into new markets, securing investment, or successfully exiting a business. And on a personal level, I find great motivation in mentoring younger lawyers and seeing them grow into confident, trusted advisors in their own right.

## WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR COMPANY CULTURE DO YOU BELIEVE MOST DIRECTLY FUELS TALENT AMONG YOUR TEAM?

We are committed to trust and autonomy from an early stage. We don't just train lawyers to execute tasks - we encourage them to think critically, take ownership, and engage directly with clients. This sense of responsibility, combined with close mentorship and an open-door culture, creates an environment where talented individuals thrive. We value sharp minds, but we also value collaboration, and that balance allows our team to grow not just as legal technicians, but as well-rounded advisors. It's that mix of high standards and genuine support that, in my view, brings out the best in our people.



Tomáš has significant experience in all aspects of M&A and corporate law. He has a proven track record of successfully managing both cross-border and domestic transactions, including private and competitive acquisitions, disposals, corporate reorganisations, and joint ventures. In recent years, Tomáš has advised clients on a number of high-profile M&A transactions on Slovak and CEE market, in particular in the sectors of energy and infrastructure, technology, financial institutions, industrials, and private capital clients.

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# PETER ČAPKOVIČ

CEO  
WAGENOW, S.R.O.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Slovakia has a real opportunity to move from traditional industry toward high-value innovation, particularly in smart mobility. Our automotive legacy is a strength, but the future lies in electric vehicles, battery systems, and embedded artificial intelligence. With the right investments and strategic partnerships, Slovakia can establish itself as a recognized leader in the European green mobility value chain.

An even greater opportunity lies in rethinking how businesses access capital. In the United States, over 60 percent of business cash flow is financed through non-bank channels. In Slovakia, nearly 90 percent still relies on traditional banks. This dependence limits agility and slows growth, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. Slovakia could become a regional leader in fintech, especially in embedded lending, real-time payroll, and digital cash flow tools designed for modern businesses.

This is exactly the problem we are addressing with WageNow. We provide businesses with a way to unlock capital that would otherwise be frozen in monthly payroll cycles. By enabling real-time access to earned wages, we improve liquidity for both companies and employees. It's a win-win system: employers manage working capital more efficiently, while employees are no longer forced to wait weeks for what they've already earned. Slovakia's small size is actually a strength. With a diverse economy and adaptable business environment, Slovakia is the perfect testing ground for scalable solutions. If we treat innovation as a national strategy, not a buzzword, we can shift from being just an industrial supplier to becoming a launchpad for the next wave of European business innovation.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST? WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

We're proud that we managed to build a solution that opens access to capital for both employers and employees. A system where employees no longer have to act as short-term creditors to their

employers, waiting weeks to receive what they've already earned. At the same time, it's a solution that allows businesses to manage capital more efficiently, freeing up funds that would otherwise need to be disbursed on a fixed date each month.

What excites us even more is the shift we've seen among our clients. Dozens of businesses have already changed the way they think about payroll and liquidity thanks to WageNow. We're not just solving a technical problem. We're helping reshape how financial flexibility is viewed in the workplace.

The biggest challenge we face is not tax policy or regulation alone, but the broader strategic focus of the country. Slovakia has heavily oriented itself toward foreign direct investment and industrial output. Meanwhile, support for innovation has taken a back seat. The Baltic states have shown that it is possible to build an economy around innovation. Slovakia would benefit greatly from investing in a modern innovation economy as a way to diversify beyond automotive and outsourcing. This is not just about supporting startups, it is about securing long-term economic resilience.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Slovakia needs a mindset shift toward openness and curiosity. Too often, new ideas are met with hesitation instead of support. But beyond mindset, we need structural help.

One concrete improvement would be a dedicated government office for innovation. Similar to the NBS Fintech Hub, but broader in scope, it should help startups navigate regulation, connect with the right authorities, and speed up approvals.

When we built WageNow, we had to deal with nearly ten different state institutions to align on guidance. That process was time-consuming and fragmented. A single point of contact with real coordination power would make a huge difference, not just for us, but for many Slovak innovators.

Innovation should not be blocked by complexity. It should be enabled by the system.

Veteran finance executive with 13 years experience at JPMorgan. Led multiple fixed income trading books and spearheaded Chase Bank data asset initiative for JPMorgan Asset Management. Built analytics systems for retail banking transactions across checking accounts and card services. Former professional tennis player. Graduate of Princeton University. Combines financial markets expertise with data analytics leadership.



# ELIZABETH CAPON

GENERAL MANAGER  
ROCHE SLOVENSKO, S.R.O.



Elizabeth Capon, the General Manager of Roche Slovensko since November 2024, brings over 24 years of pharmaceutical industry experience spanning Europe, the UK, and Slovakia. Her background includes roles in Marketing, Analytics, Project Management, and Leadership.

Throughout her career, Elizabeth has focused on developing innovative solutions to benefit patients and building collaborative relationships with stakeholders.

Driven by her experiences and a growth-oriented approach, she is passionate about cultivating a collaborative work environment. She aims to improve healthcare outcomes by facilitating teamwork in bringing innovative treatments forward.

WWW.ROCHE.SK

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Joining a remarkable team at Roche Slovakia, composed of passionate and highly skilled individuals who are deeply committed to helping patients, is a personally fulfilling experience.

The Roche team has achieved significant success in introducing and continuously developing strategies to make several groundbreaking therapies accessible to patients. These innovative treatments address critical unmet medical needs and demonstrably improve the lives of patients and their families who are facing a wide range of life-altering or life-threatening conditions.

Our work at Roche has a profound impact across multiple disease areas, including Oncology, Neurology (Multiple Sclerosis & Spinal Muscular Atrophy), Ophthalmology, and Haemophilia & Haematological cancers, bringing hope and tangible benefits to those who need it most.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Patients in Slovakia have had access to innovative therapies since 2022 via a reimbursement system that, despite its imperfections, facilitated the availability of medicines, leading to increased life expectancy and economic benefits. However, the legislation enabling this access is now under threat.

The current reimbursement environment in Slovakia is uncertain, with numerous new proposals seeking to limit access to crucial treatments being considered.

While Roche acknowledges the necessity for an independent mechanism to manage national resources and objectively assess the societal value of medicines, this must be implemented sustainably for the healthcare system, pharmaceutical companies, and, most importantly, patients.

These proposed changes represent not just a challenge for our company and industry but also a significant potential risk to the health and well-being of patients in Slovakia.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

Two things: our people and our products.

Working together with others is incredibly powerful – it lets us do so much more than we could alone. When we team up, we can tackle tough challenges and find new possibilities that wouldn't happen if we worked solo. And when we're all on the same page, we can really make a difference.

In healthcare, this is huge. It's awesome to collaborate with smart people who all want to help people get better. When we combine this teamwork with great, new treatments, we can actually change lives.

It's so motivating to see how our work helps people feel healthier and have a better future. Hearing their stories reminds me why I'm doing what I'm doing. Knowing that our work, even the little bits, helps patients and their families is what keeps me going and makes it all feel worthwhile.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

We must recognise that healthcare and innovative medicines represent an investment, not a cost.

In the coming decade, both current and future treatments hold the promise to revolutionise our approach to managing chronic diseases and tackling increasing productivity and economic challenges. Healthcare and innovative medicines are crucial for extending life and improving health, leading to significant increases in global life expectancy over the last century.

However, the rising burden of chronic diseases, driven by aging populations and the growing prevalence of non-communicable diseases within a fluctuating economic environment, presents significant challenges for governments and healthcare systems.

A healthy and productive population is fundamental to strong economic growth, and evidence increasingly demonstrates the substantial contribution of improved health.

Innovative medicines play a vital role in maintaining a healthy workforce and fostering societal contribution, which is essential for a sustainable future, and reducing the strain on healthcare services through healthy aging. Therefore, healthcare and innovative medicines should be viewed as investments rather than costs to support sustainable economic growth.

# LUCIA ČIŠKOVÁ

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
BUSINESS LEASE  
SLOVAKIA, S.R.O.



Lucia Čiškova joined Business Lease Slovakia as a Commercial Director in August 2013 and was promoted to Managing Director in January 2018. She is a people oriented leader able to engage the team to reach extraordinary business results. Lucia led the company through a Digital Transformation, implementing a new group ERP system while overseeing a process mapping project. In 2024, Lucia advised on the definition of a CX strategy, aiming to embed customer centricity throughout the organization as a key competitive advantage. In 2022, the company was recognized by Arcet Global, winning the Customer Centricity World Series Award. That same year, Lucia led a partnership project, resulting in Business Lease Slovakia strategic partnership with VUB Bank. The company is supporting the e-mobility topic via the E-mobility Ecosystem Consortium.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

The year 2024, which was a year of transformation and stabilization for the company, ended successfully for Business Lease. The company achieved its planned financial goals and is ready for further growth. We managed to implement two key projects: a project focused on mapping and optimizing processes and human resources, and a CX project (customer experience). After implementing a new ERP system in the summer of 2023, the company underwent digital transformation last year, which required mapping processes across the organization, and this was successfully accomplished. Many processes at Business Lease have accelerated, allowing us to reduce the number of employees by 15% and optimize indirect costs. The biggest advantage of the new system is that it will allow the company to grow further without the need to increase human resources in back-office positions. Digital transformation was not easy. I am proud of our team and the involvement of colleagues who got on board and are driving changes forward. It can be said that change is a new attribute in our culture.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

In my opinion, the biggest challenge is the ability to lead and manage change. The external environment, including the economic and political situation, industry consolidation, digital transformation, and AI implementation, puts high pressure on leaders to handle all these factors efficiently and humanely. I feel responsible for guiding my team through these changes in a way that makes them perceive change as the best thing that has happened to them.

In 2024, we decided on a growth strategy. To create a positive atmosphere that supports growth, we regularly appreciate our employees, either through small gifts or by ringing our internal chime, which hangs in the middle of our office. Whenever one of our employees receives a compliment from a client or colleague, they ring the chime. This way, everyone in the company knows that something positive has happened. I have to say that after few months, we have an excellent atmosphere in the team which is driving the success forward.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Customer experience is becoming an increasingly important element that helps companies differentiate themselves

from the competition. I was impressed by the CX methodology already in 2019 and started to use it as an INNOVATION ENGINE. During years we learned well how to create and work with customer journey. As a source for innovations we are using one2one interviews which our customers. CX plays a key role in building customer loyalty and satisfaction. Last year, we focused on defining a new CX strategy, enhancing internal know-how in updating the customer journey, and implementing the design thinking on three specific prototypes.

The biggest success of our work is the new client service called Personal Assistant, which we launched in January 2025. The new service is the result of a systematic approach to innovation and a focus on customer needs. This initiative is not just a technical solution, but a demonstration of how design thinking and CX strategy can elevate customer care to a higher level. The "Personal Assistant" service represents a significant step in service personalization and reflects the company's long-term vision of providing exceptional experiences for its clients. In practice, we are approaching our customers always after they experience a difficult moment on the road. Customers love this new service which is aligned with our CX strategy: "We help people in difficult moments connected with mobility!"

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

Last year, when I turned 40, I decided to attend business immersion trips to world-famous hubs of innovation. Last year, I visited Singapore, and this year, it was New York and Boston. Next year, I plan to visit South Africa. These immersion trips last 7 – 10 days, during which approximately 15 C-level executives visit different local businesses on various topics such as digitalization, customer experience, AI, business models, product diversification, and company culture. I found this kind of development very motivational as it enables me to get inspiration from the best and bring it home to my company.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

One of my core values is business ethics. I personally believe that this value is one of the crucial ones to do a successful, efficient and sustainable business within Slovakia.





GRAND HOTEL  
RIVER PARK  
BRATISLAVA

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

The biggest challenge for Grand Hotel River Park in the near future lies in maintaining our position as the leader in the luxury hotel market in Bratislava while continuously enhancing the guest experience. The hospitality industry is evolving at an incredible pace, and we must stay ahead of the curve, particularly when it comes to sustainability, personalization of services, and operational efficiency. Guests' expectations are growing not only in terms of luxury but also regarding environmental responsibility and innovation. As a part of The Luxury Collection under Marriott International, we are committed to exceeding these expectations by not just offering five-star services but truly unforgettable experiences. However, with this responsibility comes the need to ensure that every department remains agile and responsive to market trends. Balancing innovation with maintaining the high standards our guests expect is something we must continually address.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation at Grand Hotel River Park stems from a deep understanding of our guests' evolving needs and expectations. With over 25 years in the hospitality industry, I've learned that true innovation doesn't always mean revolutionary change—it often means consistently improving the details that matter most to our guests. We look beyond traditional hotel standards and closely follow trends in wellness, sustainability, gastronomy, and digital experience.

Personally, I believe that inspiration comes from continuous learning, so I travel often and observe best practices in leading international markets. This helps us apply relevant, tailored innovations in our Bratislava setting. For example, in our spa area, we've responded to the growing popularity of cold exposure therapies, such as ice baths, by expanding our wellness offering accordingly. We're also investing in the fitness center to meet the needs of both casual visitors and professional athletes, offering a wider range of equipment and training options.

Equally important is the constant innovation of our products. We recently reimagined our popular Sunday brunch into a new concept – Grand Brunch a Wine Affair – which pairs the refined cuisine of our Executive Chef Jaroslav Židek with top-tier wines from distinguished wineries.

## WHAT PARTS OF YOUR WORK CONSISTENTLY EXCITE AND MOTIVATE YOU?

What excites me most about my work is the opportunity to create unforgettable experiences for our guests. Whether it's a VIP requiring personalized attention or a family looking for the perfect vacation, I find immense satisfaction in ensuring their needs are not just met, but exceeded. The hotel business is dynamic, and no two days are ever the same. We constantly interact with a diverse range of people from all over the world, which brings new challenges and opportunities.

Working with the talented team at Grand Hotel River Park is another great source of motivation. I'm particularly passionate about nurturing young talent. Seeing people grow within the hotel industry, supporting them in reaching their career goals, and witnessing their development is something that truly drives me. I'm deeply committed to creating an environment where people are encouraged to learn, grow, and push themselves to new heights.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I could suggest one change to improve the business climate in Slovakia, it would be to simplify bureaucratic processes for businesses—especially in the hospitality and tourism sectors. While Slovakia has made significant progress in recent years, streamlining administrative tasks and reducing red tape would make it much easier to attract international investment, particularly in industries like luxury hospitality. Supporting local businesses through tax incentives or other initiatives could also foster a more competitive environment, allowing Slovak companies to grow and thrive on the global stage.

Improving infrastructure—both physical and digital—would also enhance the ease of doing business. Slovakia has tremendous potential, but ensuring smooth access for international partners and tourists, and creating an environment that encourages innovation, would undoubtedly elevate the country's standing as a business destination.

# LEO CYRZYK

GENERAL MANAGER  
GRAND HOTEL RIVER PARK, A  
LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL  
IN BRATISLAVA



Leo Cyrzyk is the General Manager of Grand Hotel River Park, a Luxury Collection Hotel in Bratislava. With over 25 years of international hospitality experience, he has held leadership roles in prestigious properties. His career includes more than two decades with the Hilton hotel chain, where he managed operations in Vienna, Warsaw, and Prague. Known for his dynamic leadership style and focus on guest experience, Leo is committed to elevating service quality and embracing sustainability. He brings a deep understanding of both corporate hotel structures and independent boutique hospitality. At Grand Hotel River Park, his vision is to strengthen the hotel's position as a flagship of luxury in Slovakia while fostering team development and delivering personalized, memorable guest experiences.

WWW.GRANDRIVERPARK.COM

# RADOSLAV DANILÁK

CEO  
TACHYUM S.R.O.



Dr. Radoslav Danilak, founder and CEO of Tachyum, has over 25 years of experience in the semiconductor industry and 141 patents for designing state-of-the-art processing systems.

In 2016, he founded Tachyum to disrupt markets by solving the performance plateau of nanometer class processors. Dr. Danilak was the founder and CEO of Skyera, a supplier of ultra-dense solid-state storage systems, acquired by HGST/WD. At Wave Computing, he architected the 10GHz Processing Element of their deep learning DPU. He was co-founder and CTO of SandForce, acquired by LSI, where he pioneered MLC flash controllers and solved MLC flash endurance limited by device physics. He was a chipset and GPU architect at NVIDIA, a CPU architect at Nishan Systems and Toshiba, and chief architect of their 64-bit x86 CPU at Gizmo Tech.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS? WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Slovakia has a favourable geographic location in the heart of Europe and a skilled workforce. Also, it has relatively low labour costs, but I don't think this is a great advantage. Slovakia should focus on creating conditions to attract higher value-added investments. Tachyum has previously offered assistance to the Slovak government in adjusting the legal and legislative environment in Slovakia to remove barriers that still hinder the arrival of the most advanced technologies, their development and production. Since 2024, Tachyum has started to ramp up hiring to support the company's growth. Our demand for talented engineers has exceeded the labor market in Slovakia, and Tachyum expanded to the Czech Republic. A few years ago, we talked about how Slovakia needs to choose one domain where it can set the tone. A domain where everyone starts on the same point, and that could be artificial intelligence (AI). Advanced technologies such as AI, the Internet of Things (IoT) and cloud computing represent the backbone of a digital society with the potential to further increase productivity, efficiency and bring new opportunities with positive effects on jobs, quality of life, and brain gain rather than brain drain.

A huge AI boom is here. For AI growth, available energy is the key thing. The biggest growing demand for energy comes from AI data centers. Europe and Germany have energy problems. If a country can produce plenty of energy, a new AI data center might naturally be located there. Among Slovakia's strategic priorities should be a focus on "future ready" and ensuring sustainable economic growth. A continually growing energy infrastructure would be a major advantage for Slovakia. If the country has plenty of energy, it can be an AI data center haven for Europe.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

First, we stay intellectually honest with ourselves — that's the only way to truly understand where we stand. Second, we focus on hiring the best talent and creating an environment where the strongest ideas and results rise to the top.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

It is pushing technology forward, for humanity, for all people. For example, at Tachyum, we work on democratizing AI for everyone. Our view on new innovative AI models like DeepSeek is highly positive. The huge contribution of DeepSeek to humanity is making next-generation models 10x more efficient at similar resources and costs of today's models instead of being 10x more costly.

DeepSeek models run on NVIDIA GPUs but can run on other hardware, including Tachyum's Prodigy platform. We are porting DeepSeek on our hardware. DeepSeek has used FP8 (8-bit floating point) data formats instead of BF16 (a shortened floating point data type) for training. Tachyum supports FP8 and takes a similar approach to DeepSeek. Tachyum FP8 matrix multiply-add operates at a higher precision than NVIDIA FP8, which should produce even better results for DeepSeek. Tachyum hardware provides superior support for FP4 (4-bit floating point) data type. If DeepSeek and/or the industry masters FP4 training, Tachyum's Prodigy hardware will be the superior platform for it.

DeepSeek is open source, and all AI developers can adopt these efficient approaches. In my opinion, U.S. companies will try to catch up to DeepSeek's software technology, which will result in more cost and power-efficient AI throughout the world.





# KRZYSZTOF DANILEWICZ

REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
SII



Krzysztof Danilewicz was born in 1973 in northern Greater Poland. He graduated from the International Business at the University of Economics in Poznań. For many years, he has been professionally associated with management and sales. In 2012, Krzysztof joined Sii, and since 2014, he has been responsible for the establishment and development of the Katowice branch of Sii. Together with the team, he has built a five-hundred-specialist site and a solid business relationship with a large group of clients. Currently, he manages the Sii branch in Katowice and business in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Privately, he is passionate about the Beskid Mountains and MTB. He is a happy husband, father of four, and grandfather. Having traded long-distance running for long walks with his dog.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

In the past 12 months, Sii Poland achieved a lot: we opened a new office in Pune, India; gained over 80 new clients; expanded our offer; hired 1 200+ new Workers; received the Legend status from the Great Place to Work Institute, and more. One of our honorable moments was winning the Top IT Outsourcing Services Partner in Central and Eastern Europe award.

This recognition confirms our position as leading technology consulting, digital transformation, engineering, and business services provider. With over 7 500 experts, we deliver end-to-end IT services such as software development, cloud solutions, cybersecurity, business intelligence, IT infrastructure, embedded systems, and enterprise software implementations. These are just some of the examples. Together, we support 200+ customers, including global brands like Puma, Worldline, Qiagen, and Alstom.

Independent awards like this matter. They reflect the real impact of our projects and the trust our clients place in us. Whether in finance, healthcare, retail, or high-tech, our team consistently delivers high-quality results, bringing expertise, engagement, and passion to every project. Being recognized for that work proves the value we bring to the table.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation at Sii Poland is driven by our structure, partnerships, and culture. We follow a simple, customer-centric approach based on effective competence management. In practice, this means we organize expert teams into 20 area-oriented Competency Centers, specializing in technologies such as cloud, cybersecurity, engineering, embedded systems, and more. We continuously expand our service portfolio – just in the past year, we introduced new solutions in the area of artificial intelligence.

We also drive innovation through strong partnerships. Our close collaboration with leading technology providers, including Microsoft, Salesforce, SAP, Atlassian, and ServiceNow, gives us early access to the latest tools and best practices. Being a recognized partner (for example, Microsoft Cloud Solutions Partner of the Year) allows us to deliver advanced solutions aligned with the latest industry trends.

Finally, we foster a culture where new ideas are welcome at every level. Our Workers can share feedback through the Ideas and Improvement App, annual evaluations, satisfaction surveys, and regular meetings with our CEO. This combination of structured expertise, strategic partnerships, and an empowered team, combined with financial stability and an agile mindset, allows us to respond quickly to client needs and keep innovation alive across the company.

## HOW ARE YOU USING AI TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS INSIDE YOUR OWN COMPANY?

We developed the Worker Allocation Planner – an AI-powered tool that helps us match Workers to projects more precisely and efficiently. In IT outsourcing, finding the right person for the right project is critical, not only for client satisfaction but also for controlling costs and maintaining employee engagement.

Our new tool matches specialists with projects based on key parameters like experience, skills, location, and availability. What used to take multiple steps can now be done with just a few clicks.

Thanks to this system, we've significantly improved bench management, minimized hiring managers' manual workload, and supported employment continuity for many Workers. We also introduced predictive BI reports, which give us insight into current and future trends and help us act proactively.

The tool was developed fully in-house. It's a strong example of how we use our own expertise to solve internal challenges – efficiently and at scale.



# PETER DOBRÝ

CEO  
VEOLIA ENERGIA  
SLOVENSKO GROUP



Peter Dobrý has been with the Veolia Group since 2006. Among other things, he was responsible for the economic and financial area, and later he was also in charge of the commercial policy and business development of the Veolia division in Slovakia. Since October 2016, he has held the position of Chief Commercial Officer of the Veolia Energia Slovensko Group and since 2017 he has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Veolia Energia Slovensko Group.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

As CEO of Veolia Energia Slovensko, I see how Slovakia's unique position makes it attractive for energy investments. Our central location puts us at the heart of European energy flows, supported by robust infrastructure across nuclear, hydro and thermal power generation. A well-developed gas infrastructure has ensured that Slovakia has significantly reduced its consumption of coal for energy production in the past – a process that is currently being undertaken by several European countries.

The government's clear commitment to modernisation, backed by an EU-aligned regulatory framework, provides investors with long-term vision. Our operational costs remain competitive compared to other European countries, while our interconnected grid ensures reliable energy distribution. The expanding potential in renewable energy sources – notably solar, hydrogen and biomass – perfectly complements our conventional energy portfolio, and we find this especially promising. This balanced approach to energy security and diversification makes Slovakia an increasingly attractive market for international investors.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Based on my experience leading Veolia Energia Slovensko, I believe Slovakia should prioritise specific areas where we have natural advantages and growth potential. Energy efficiency technologies for industry stand out as an immediate opportunity – we have the expertise and industrial base to excel here. Smart grid development and energy storage solutions are also crucial, especially given our central position in Europe's energy networks. While nuclear and high-efficient flexible gas technology remains important, we should expand as well into proven fields like waste-to-energy and biomass solutions, where we see untapped potential.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

At Veolia Energia Slovensko, we see several essential priorities that Slovakia should address. First, we should continue to modernise our energy infrastructure. We are on the right track and should continue, particularly in district heating systems and power distribution networks. This isn't just about maintenance – it's about integrating renewable energy

sources and making our systems smarter and more efficient. Second, we need to invest in workforce development. The energy transition requires new skills and expertise, from digital technologies to renewable energy systems. Third, we need to strengthen and focus on energy security through diversification and maintaining affordability for consumers at the same time. This means developing a balanced mix of energy sources, from renewables to efficient conventional systems, while implementing innovative solutions for energy storage and distribution.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I had to choose one key element, legislative predictability and stability are crucial for energy sector investments due to several reasons. Stable legislation could help companies accurately forecast investment and make informed decisions. Also, regulatory certainty can reduce investment risks, leading to lower financing costs and more competitive energy prices and predictable legislation enables better long-term planning for infrastructure development and grid modernisation. It creates a trustworthy environment that attracts both domestic and foreign investors, fostering sector growth and innovation.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I'm particularly proud of several significant achievements at Veolia. We successfully accelerated our district heating modernisation initiatives, increasing energy efficiency and implementing new technologies while maintaining stable and reliable electricity production and heat supply for our customers – proving that innovation and economic sustainability can go hand in hand.

During 2024, we built a photovoltaic power plant on a former ash and slag disposal site in Žiar nad Hronom. This project demonstrates our commitment to creative environmental solutions – transforming an unused industrial area into a clean energy facility. We had also launched a pilot project for renewable energy sharing. The first client of this unique service is the Bratislava-Petržalka district, our long-term strategic partner in energy production and supply. The project aims to enhance electricity supply efficiency to different consumption points and optimise costs. For this purpose we use synergies by operating several photovoltaic sources on the roofs of the schools.

The aforementioned projects demonstrate how we can achieve significant environmental improvements while ensuring affordable energy and professional services for our customers.

# KATARÍNA DOVINOVÁ

HR & BUSINESS MANAGER  
EPF GROUP, A.S.



Katarína Dovinová is a trained psychologist with over 17 years of experience in human resources. She has worked across various sectors – from telecommunication and automotive to leading HR teams in healthcare (where worked during the challenging COVID-19 period). She has a strong background in managing HR teams, recruitment at all levels (including Headhunting and Assessment centers) and in setting up and optimizing key HR processes such as onboarding, compensation, performance evaluation and more. Within the healthcare sector, she also worked as a project manager for the implementation of SAP SuccessFactors. Katarína joined europersonal at the beginning of 2024, where she currently holds the position of HR & Business Manager, responsible primarily for identifying new business opportunities and maintaining relationships with existing clients.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

It is primarily Slovakia's strategic location in the heart of Europe and the fact that the country is the world leader in the number of cars produced per capita. Manufacturing plants of companies such as Volkswagen, KIA, Stellantis and Jaguar Land Rover are located here. Slovakia also benefits from a relatively high level of technical education and professional qualifications among workers as well as a growing IT sector.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

As a country, we certainly have room for improvement in several areas. These include the modernization of the education system with a greater focus on STEM fields, the digitization of public administration and reduction of bureaucracy, as well as improvements in infrastructure and increased investment in roads and railways. It is equally important to strengthen trust in the judiciary, eliminate corruption, create stable and predictable conditions for doing business, including support for the development of startups. From our perspective as a recruitment agency, one of the key priorities is making Slovakia more attractive for skilled foreign workers, streamlining the process of granting work permits for both qualified and unqualified employees from non-EU countries, and supporting integration programs to help these workers adapt more easily to their teams.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

In 2024, we reaffirmed our position as a reliable partner in workplace recruitment, flexibility and adaptation of newly hired employees. We significantly strengthened our onboarding efforts through the launch of our comprehensive AfterCare+ platform, which supports smooth integration of employees into both the workplace and the social environment. Thanks to the trust of our long-term clients, we successfully expanded our operations into new regions and sectors, including HORECA, transportation and the food industry.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

One of the key challenges remains ensuring a sufficient number of workers from third countries. The administrative complexity and duration of the entire process are currently insufficient to meet the needs of employers. Another challenge, one we are fully prepared to handle within our company is the integration of these workers not only into individual teams, but also into society as a whole. In certain sectors, we still perceive a level of fear or prejudice among employers when it comes to hiring non-EU workers. We are working to overcome these concerns, although the most effective way to do so is by demonstrating real, positive experiences. Last but not least, we continuously monitor the evolving expectations of our clients and work on improving the quality of our services accordingly.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

What motivates us most in our work is the opportunity to build and deepen relationships with clients we've been collaborating with for many years. This long-term trust from their side confirms that we do makes sense and brings real value. We enjoy finding tailored solutions, understanding the specifics of different industries and connecting the right talents with the needs of companies. Another strong source of motivation is our amazing team of colleagues, where everyone plays an irreplaceable role. Thanks to this, we deliver high quality services and we are a reliable partner for our clients.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

One key change that could make Slovakia a better place for business is definitely the simplification of the tax and contribution system. Currently, the tax burden and administrative complexity are often discouraging, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. A more understandable, stable and less bureaucratic tax system would reduce the cost of doing business, attract more investment, and support the business environment as well as innovation.



# MATÚŠ DURKÁČ

DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER  
SERVICE CENTERS  
AT&T GLOBAL NETWORK  
SERVICES SLOVAKIA, S.R.O.



Matúš Durkáč leads Customer Service Centers at AT&T, managing diverse, geographically distributed teams focused on delivering exceptional customer experiences and continuous improvement. With a strong foundation in telecom and service delivery, he is passionate about driving operational transformation, elevating customer experience, and developing high-performing empowered teams in fast-paced, complex environments. Beyond his corporate role, he serves as a Board of Directors Member and 3rd Vice President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia, where he helps shape the business agenda with a focus on digitalization, talent development, and long-term competitiveness. He believes the best results come when you combine clear vision with consistent action – and when you invest in people every step of the way.

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## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia offers a solid mix of advantages for investors. Its central location in Europe is a logistical benefit, especially for companies looking to serve the broader EU market. We're part of key European structures—the EU, Eurozone, and Schengen—which brings certain level of predictability and ease of movement.

As someone who works in a global company, I see every day what makes Slovakia an appealing destination. Beyond our central location and EU membership, what really stands out is the talent. We have many smart and adaptable people who are hungry to prove themselves on the international stage. That's a big reason why global companies continue to invest here.

To stay competitive long-term, Slovakia needs to move up the value chain—towards innovation, digital technologies, and sustainability. Digital services and AI are emerging sectors where we have a lot of untapped potential. If we support startups, research, and education in those areas, we could be well positioned to strive in future-oriented industries.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

If we want to prepare Slovakia for the future, we need to focus on three big areas: education, digital transformation, and infrastructure.

First, education is the long game. We need to align our education system more closely with what the job market actually needs—especially in IT, engineering, and science. That means investing in teachers, modernizing the curriculum, and giving students more practical experience.

Second, digital transformation has to reach every corner of society—from government services to small businesses. We should be making it easier for companies to innovate and for public services to become more efficient and transparent.

And finally, infrastructure. We need to improve both physical infrastructure, like roads and railways, and digital infrastructure, like high-speed internet in all regions. A more connected Slovakia is a more competitive Slovakia.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

At AT&T, innovation is part of how we work

every day. It's not just something that happens in a lab—it's something we build into our teams, our projects, and how we solve problems for customers.

We support innovation by creating space for people to experiment and share ideas, even if they don't have all the answers yet. That's how we stay ahead in a fast-changing industry. We also collaborate closely with partners—startups, universities, and technology experts.

Personally, I try to lead by example—by encouraging curiosity, open communication, and a willingness to challenge the usual way of doing things. The goal is always the same: to bring real value to our customers and to improve the way we work.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

What keeps me motivated is the opportunity to lead people and to help them grow. I work with teams across different cultures and backgrounds, and every day brings new challenges. That's something I really enjoy.

I also love solving problems—especially the ones that don't have obvious solutions. Whether it's improving a customer experience, rethinking a process, or introducing a new tool, I get a lot of satisfaction from seeing ideas turn into real outcomes.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I had to pick one change, I'd focus on making the business environment more efficient and more open—both in terms of processes and mindset. One area that really needs attention is how we support companies through public services and regulation. Right now, starting or growing a business often involves unnecessary bureaucracy and complications. Streamlining these processes, increasing transparency, and making better use of digital tools would remove a lot of friction.

But there's another piece to this: talent. If we want to stay competitive, we need to be open and attractive not only to investors but also to people. That means creating conditions where talented professionals from other countries feel welcome and are able to join our workforce without jumping through endless hoops. Simplifying immigration and work permit procedures—especially for highly skilled workers—is essential. Talent knows no borders, and if Slovakia wants to grow and innovate, we have to make sure we're not putting up walls where bridges should be.





## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS (WITH REGARDS TO EDUCATION)?

A single change that could significantly improve Slovakia's business environment with regard to education would be to strengthen the alignment between the education system and industry needs. This could be achieved by fostering closer partnerships between schools and businesses. A specific approach could include:

### 1. Internships and Apprenticeships:

Encourage companies to offer more internship and apprenticeship opportunities, which would provide students with real-world experience and businesses with a pipeline of skilled workers. This can help reduce the skills gap that many industries face.

### 2. Industry Collaboration:

Establish strong collaboration between educational institutions and businesses to ensure that the educational output matches the demands of the workforce.

By making this shift, Slovakia could cultivate a workforce that is not only academically strong but also highly adaptable to the demands of a rapidly changing business environment, boosting productivity and attracting foreign investment.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Within Nord Anglia Education (NAE), we are committed to "growing our own". This is the recognition of talents and skills and how we are able to enhance these to allow our teachers to grow and develop with us. With 88 schools worldwide, there are always opportunities for our NAE teachers to transfer and develop within the group. There is a very wide selection of training courses – self-paced or group, on our own platform Nord Anglia University (NAU), and also bespoke training programmes for middle and senior leaders and aspiring principals. Through NAU, our staff can select courses tailored to their interests and aspirations, fostering a culture of continual learning and collaboration.

Each month, we introduce new courses to keep our educators engaged and equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. Recent additions include cutting-

edge topics such as AI, metacognition, neuroscience, cultivating growth mindsets, and innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching physics. At NAE, we are dedicated to providing enriching opportunities for all our educators, empowering them to excel and inspire excellence in classrooms worldwide.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK AS A SCHOOL THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

The following aspects all contribute to my ongoing sense of purpose and excitement in the work I do within a school.

- **Student Growth and Achievement:** Seeing students progress, whether it's in their academic skills, personal development, or simply growing in confidence, is a major motivator for me as a school leader. Being a part of a student's "aha" moment or witnessing their hard work pay off is incredibly rewarding.
- **Creative Problem Solving:** Education often requires thinking on your feet and finding new, innovative ways to engage students or solve problems. The challenge of making learning exciting and accessible for every student can keep the work fresh and energizing.
- **Building Relationships:** Forming connections with students, their families, and fellow staff members can be incredibly fulfilling. Helping students feel seen, heard, and supported creates a positive, motivating environment for both them and me as an educator.
- **Collaborating with Colleagues:** Working as part of a team with fellow teachers and staff members can be a source of inspiration. Collaborating on new teaching strategies or sharing successes helps maintain a positive and driven atmosphere within the school.
- **Making a Difference in the Community:** Education has the power to change lives. The thought that what I do can have a lasting impact on not just the individual student but their families and the broader community would be a significant source of motivation.

# KAREN EASTWOOD

PRINCIPAL  
BRITISH INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL BRATISLAVA



Karen is the Principal of The British International School Bratislava, which she joined in January 2014. The school, which was established in 1997, is part of the Nord Anglia Education Group (NAE), which has 88 schools worldwide.

Karen has had an international educational career working in HCMC Vietnam, Shanghai China, Berlin Germany and of course, the UK, from which she originates.

She manages a school of over 830 students from more than 40 nationalities. She is an experienced IBDP and IGCSE Biology teacher and even though she manages the school, she still enjoys being in the classroom teaching.

# PETER FECKO

REGIONAL CEO  
GRAYLING CEE



Peter has been active in the communication industry for over 24 years, working originally as a journalist for business media in Slovakia and later joining Grayling and establishing its office in Slovakia. He has been leading Grayling's Slovak office since 2000, later on also managing other operations of the agency in CEE, including multi-market coordination of key clients.

During his time at Grayling, Peter has led a number of complex communication campaigns focused on M&A, FDI and companies' entry to the CEE markets. He has advised and implemented campaigns for a number of leading international companies including IBM, Google, Lenovo, Intel, ITAS, SES ASTRA, Dell and others, including companies in nuclear industry.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

One of the key areas is more investment into R&D, innovation and knowledge economy in general. This creates related priorities such as focus on development of education system on all levels, better cooperation between academic and business sectors and also more funding for the scientific research in the country. Realistically Slovakia is unlikely to have absolute lead on major R&D advancement, but the knowledge economy should focus on areas that can serve as support functions for the key global R&D areas such as robotics, automation, AI and others.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Despite the challenging economic and geopolitical / political environment, we have succeeded in growing significantly in the CEE region. This was achieved through constant analysis of developments / trends and adapting to rapid changes in the region, but also Slovak market on its own. There has been major focus internally on innovating our services offer, positioning and approach and it has paid its dividends. This will continue to be our focus also going forward as we do not expect the future to be less dynamic than 2024.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Geopolitical and economic developments within the region but also globally, mainly their unpredictability, is probably the biggest challenge any business faces during past months and we are

no exception. Having said that, such unstable times make companies even more focused on predicting the risks and preparing for them (as well as facing them when they come) and as this is one part of the services we offer to our clients, such uncertainty creates business opportunity for us in the areas such as risk assessment, crisis communication or public affairs to name the few.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

We benefit from being an international corporation so there are number of leading global experts in their respective fields that work within Grayling and that are involved in proposing new innovations to our global business model. And this global approach is always combined with local market insights so we empower also our in-country teams to be part of the discussion and planning when we discuss what innovative elements could be implemented in specific markets or regions. So, this constant collaboration and discussion within Grayling that is not limited by seniority or place of work is what drives our innovation as a constant process – exchange of ideas between markets, cultures and experiences result in innovative ideas that are very unique.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

At this point of time economic and business environment stability is key for the market – while all businesses recognize need to consolidate, it should be done in a more strategic way, after a thorough discussion between business, political representatives and experts with the Government clearly structuring the results of this discussion into a long-term vision and plan in this area.

GRAYLING

**GLOBAL AGENCY  
WITH LOCAL KNOW-HOW**

### WHAT IS THE MOST IMPACTFUL INNOVATION CURRENTLY SHAPING YOUR INDUSTRY?

Innovation in professional services is no longer optional – It's a strategic imperative. Over the past year, the adoption of generative AI, advanced automation, and data-driven intelligence has rapidly evolved from theoretical exploration to business-critical execution.

At KPMG, we're focused on embedding these technologies where they deliver the most impact – enhancing decision-making, enabling smarter transformation, and accelerating delivery with precision. Generative AI, in particular, is redefining how we analyze data, develop insights, and support clients through complex change agendas. The key is combining these digital tools with experienced human judgment to deliver outcomes that are not only efficient but also responsible, secure, and value-driven.

### WHERE DO YOU SEE THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN SLOVAKIA?

Slovakia is at an inflection point. Over the past 12 months, we've seen more companies actively recalibrating their operating models to adapt to shifting global dynamics – from geopolitical instability to technological disruption.

The Business Services sector remains a critical growth engine, and we're witnessing a significant move up the value chain. Organizations are building high-value, capability-rich hubs in Slovakia that are no longer focused solely on efficiency but on innovation, strategic enablement, and cross-border integration. Centers of Excellence in Finance, Digital, and HR are creating new pathways for upskilling talent and unlocking productivity.

Beyond this, sectors such as green technologies, AI/analytics services, and supply chain resilience are becoming increasingly important. To remain competitive, Slovakia must continue strengthening its talent pipeline, aligning education with emerging business needs, and creating an innovation-friendly environment.

### WHAT HAS CHANGED IN YOUR ROLE – AND WHAT DRIVES YOU TODAY?

Over the past year, my role has evolved to reflect the growing needs of our clients and the ambitions of our firm. In addition to leading our Business Transformation services, I now head KPMG's Clients & Markets function in Slovakia, with a clear focus on growth, client experience, and strategic partnerships – for me also particularly across the US markets.

This expanded remit allows me to work at the intersection of business development and delivery, ensuring our teams are not only meeting client needs but anticipating them – with the right capabilities, insights, and execution models.

What motivates me is the ability to help our clients turn complexity into clarity – to navigate uncertainty, transform with confidence, and position themselves for long-term growth. And none of this would be possible without our exceptional people. My priority is building teams that are deeply connected to client outcomes and empowered to lead.

### WHAT VALUE DOES AMCHAM BRING TO YOUR BUSINESS?

AmCham continues to be a vital strategic partner. It creates a platform for constructive dialogue between business, government, and civil society – and helps shape a more resilient, investment-friendly Slovakia.

Its advocacy around rule of law, talent development, innovation, and regional competitiveness aligns closely with the challenges our clients face and the priorities of our firm. It also reflects the broader business mindset we must foster – one that looks beyond short-term gains and toward long-term sustainable growth.



# LYGIA FULLBROOK

PARTNER  
KPMG IN SLOVAKIA



Lygia Fullbrook leads KPMG's Talent Solutions services in Slovakia and is a sector leader for Shared Service Centers. At the same time, she oversees our Clients & Markets function, with a primary focus on nurturing relationships and expanding our business development endeavors with our partners, as well as with existing and potential clients across US and UK markets. A cornerstone of Lygia's skill set lies in her ability to guide clients through periods of transformation and change, providing them top-tier talent from the Big4 to help them with the execution of strategic projects. Prior to joining KPMG in 2006, Lygia held a position in London at a global risk management consultancy firm, where she supervised Corporate Intelligence projects in Central Europe.

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# LUCIA GRÖNEOVÁ

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
& HR HEAD  
SWISS RE SLOVAKIA



Lucia has more than 20 years of experience in senior positions in multinational companies within high-tech and financial sector. Since joining Swiss Re in 2019, as HR director in Slovakia, she played a key role in strategic HR initiatives that prioritize both business objectives and employee well-being.

In 2024 she was appointed Managing Director of Swiss Re Slovakia and in this expanded role, she is driving locations strategy, overseeing operations & talent retention, and last but not least, building meaningful partnerships.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

I believe that making education the highest priority is crucial. By linking educational institutions and their curricula with the needs of employers, we can create a more dynamic and responsive educational system. Investing in teachers and supporting their reputation is vital too, as they are the backbone of our educational framework. Additionally, enabling the inflow of talented people from abroad and stopping the brain drain will further strengthen our economic growth and enhance innovation.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Reflecting on the achievements from 2024, I am particularly proud of our continued growth, which saw a 7% year-on-year increase in our size as an employer. Moreover, the diversification of job roles in Slovakia has been a significant milestone, showcasing our adaptability and commitment to creating varied opportunities within the workforce.

In 2024, we also introduced full Pay transparency for both employees and job seekers as one of the first companies in Slovakia, thanks to which we have become an inspiration for many other companies. Internally, we finetuned our Health and Wellbeing program to make it even more accessible and focus on prevention rather than one-off activities.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

I find satisfaction in creating business solutions that have a positive impact on people, problem-solving with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, as it brings together different perspectives and ideas. Furthermore, managing stakeholders and liaising between Swiss Re in Slovakia and colleagues from other parts of the world is a source of constant inspiration and drive for me.

## Make new connections

Join one of the communities in Bratislava and contribute to our vision to make the world more resilient.



# SAMUEL HOLLIS

COUNTRY PRESIDENT  
NOVARTIS



Samuel Hollis serves as Country President at Novartis, the largest pharmaceutical company in Slovakia and Europe, where he leads efforts to reimagine medicine. With experience spanning the US, Switzerland, and the UK, Samuel has held both global and local roles across marketing, sales, market access, and medical functions within the pharmaceutical industry. Now based in Central Europe, he leads his Novartis team in pioneering purpose-led partnerships in Slovakia, working to create a sustainable healthcare system and bringing innovations to address some of the most pressing healthcare challenges facing society today.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Firstly, life expectancy in Slovakia is currently 77.2 years, which is 3.5 years below the EU average. Additionally, there is a significant demographic shift towards an aging population. Over the past two decades, the proportion of individuals aged 65 and over has increased from 11% in 2000 to 17% in 2020, and this figure is projected to rise to 29% by 2050. This trend will inevitably lead to higher healthcare expenditures unless investments are made smartly and sustainably in healthcare, particularly in screening (such as breast cancer mammography) and prevention strategies.

Currently, Slovakia ranks among the bottom countries in Europe in terms of overall healthcare spending as a percentage of GDP. With the current emphasis on consolidation, there is a significant risk that the situation could worsen rather than improve, especially when progress is urgently needed. For instance, cancer mortality rates in Slovakia remain the highest in Europe. Instead, Slovakia should leverage some positive momentum gained since 2022 in helping patients access innovations to change this trend.

To be prepared for the future, medicines and healthcare should be regarded not merely as expenses but as investments in society and the economy. Short-term investments in medicines and enhanced patient pathways can lead to substantial financial savings in the medium and long term. Furthermore, these investments can aid in patient recovery, enabling patients to return as productive members of society, thereby acting as a catalyst for economic growth.

## WHAT ROLE DOES NOVARTIS SEE ITSELF PLAYING IN PRESERVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE EUROPEAN LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR?

To remain competitive, the EU and each of the countries including Slovakia, must prioritize innovative technologies and industries, such as life sciences, that bring substantial economic and social value. The life sciences industry is a major contributor to the European economy, directly employing 900,000 people and many millions indirectly. The

medical innovations developed by the industry improve the lives of millions of Europeans, contributing directly to better healthcare outcomes and consequent societal benefits.

After many decades as an innovation powerhouse, Europe is now at a crossroads. The global landscape is shifting with increased geo-competition, protectionism, and the technological evolution. Europe is currently losing its competitiveness in life sciences, lagging behind the US, China, and Japan. The consequences in Europe include lower investment in R&D, a smaller share of global clinical trials, and longer approval times for new medicines, which frustrates healthcare professionals and ultimately impacts patients.

For the better health of EU citizens in the future, Europe must establish the right conditions for innovation to flourish over time and keep health as a social and economic priority. This applies to Slovakia and all countries across Europe.

Novartis is reimagining medicine and is committed to delivering new treatments that extend and improve lives. We are proud innovators who have delivered a therapeutic revolution for every decade of our company's history, from preventing organ transplant rejection in the 1980s to targeted therapy for leukaemia in the 2000s, cell and gene therapies in the 2010s, and radioligand therapy today. We wish to continue serving European patients for decades to come.

However, we do expect to see health and life sciences prioritized at both the EU and country level, considering the value and growth stimulated by the industry and Novartis.

As one of the leading life science companies in Slovakia and Europe, Novartis is committed to reshaping perceptions and highlighting the value of the life sciences industry. To enable the prioritization needed, it remains evident that the public and other stakeholders would greatly benefit from a deeper understanding of the contributions the industry makes daily to patients, healthcare professionals, and the economy. To achieve this in Slovakia and across Europe, the industry must continue to act with integrity and build trust, becoming valued partners with governments, academia, healthcare systems, and patient groups to achieve shared goals.

# NORBERT HOVANČÁK

MEMBER OF THE BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS  
SLOVENSKÁ SPORITEĽŇA



He is a graduate of the Faculty of Business Economics of the University of Economics in Bratislava, Philosophical Faculty of the Prešov University and he also studied financial law at the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. His professional career is linked to the largest Slovak bank where he has been working since 1998; beginning as a branch advisor in Prešov. He continually tried out various job positions in the retail and corporate sector and also in the area of risk management. He has been the Head of Corporate Banking since 2018. From October 1, 2019, he became a member of the Board of Directors of Slovenská sporiteľňa, responsible for corporate banking and financial markets.

## TRADE WARS? SLOVAKIA DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A VICTIM

Behaving as a PR guru, US President Donald Trump is waging a trade war with essentially the whole world as part of his #makeamericagreatagain project. Three was an instant response, illustrated very clearly by falls on world stock markets. However, I am convinced that instead of worrying about protectionist measures, we should – just like with defence policy – look at how Europe, including Slovak companies, can make use of the situation to their advantage. Of course, with the unpredictability of the long-term partner and their “trial and error” approach to controlling international trade, it is not quite easy to develop a crisis plan and set a new direction. One very good example is the introduction and subsequent abolition of tariffs, or other compromises. Another one is tariffs on “unusual” goods, such as films shot abroad that are about to be subject to a 100% rate. All of these decisions are a strong signal for a transformation that can be successful. We just need to avoid being scared.

Our steel and aluminium industries are already adapted to cycles and changes. The second target impacted by the US tariffs is the automotive sector, but there have also been some rate modifications and exemptions for some manufacturers. As a key player in the automotive industry, Slovakia has experience, background and know-how that are valuable on an international scale. However, Slovakia is also a small and open economy, and the free trade zone is what makes us a strong and wealthy partner, and we should thus work on changes even harder. After years of membership in the European Union,

we have become too accustomed to that and taken for granted this advantage towards our stable partners, including the USA. While we are still able to enjoy this great benefit in relation to Canada or the Mercosur countries, we should start looking at other developing parts of the world, such as the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Banks are ready to support investments that aim to find new markets and partners and diversify customers as well as those focused on more efficient technologies or cleaner processing of raw materials. Because the future lies in sustainable, efficient business across multiple markets. The times when financing considerations were based merely on spreadsheets and clearly predictable graph curves are gone. Today, banks are trying to understand the strategy, vision and innovativeness of companies, look a few steps ahead with them and mitigate even risks that used to be unimaginable, but seem rather possible today.

Those prepared to adapt and seek opportunities will get funding and support. In this situation, the European Union can not only understand how strong it can be, but also brace up and get even more resilient. We know from our history that Slovakia can grow when facing external challenges. The sooner companies focus on connecting in the European space and on joint innovation, automation and export diversification, the stronger they will become on a global scale. Slovakia does not have to be a victim of the trade war. It can become a winner again.







SHERATON

Bratislava Hotel

# MARTIN HURBAN

GENERAL MANAGER  
SHERATON BRATISLAVA  
HOTEL



Martin Hurban is the General Manager of Sheraton Bratislava Hotel, bringing over 20 years of international hospitality experience. He began his career at Radisson SAS in Bratislava, initially in IT and later in financial controlling. His journey progressed through operational roles, including Operations Manager and Executive Assistant Manager. Hurban's international experience includes leadership positions in Russia and Kazakhstan, where he managed Radisson hotels in Moscow and oversaw the pre-opening of the Radisson Blu in Rostov-on-Don. In 2020, he returned to Slovakia to lead the pre-opening of the AC Hotel by Marriott Bratislava Old Town. In May 2024, he assumed his current role at the Sheraton Bratislava Hotel, focusing on delivering exceptional guest experiences and leading a dedicated team.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

In 2024, one of the achievements I am most proud of is the continued success and growth of Sheraton Bratislava Hotel in the face of evolving market conditions. We have been able to adapt and refine our service offerings to meet the changing needs of our guests, particularly with the emergence of a new generation of travellers. A significant highlight for me was our team's ability to seamlessly integrate digital and physical experiences, ensuring both convenience and personalization. This has been pivotal in enhancing guest satisfaction, driving loyalty, and improving overall financial performance.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

One of the biggest challenges we face is navigating the rapidly changing landscape of travel and hospitality. The pandemic has accelerated shifts in consumer behaviour, with guests increasingly seeking personalized, seamless experiences across both physical and digital platforms. This means we must be agile and forward-thinking in adapting our offerings to match these expectations.

At the same time, labor shortages in the hospitality industry remain a global issue. Retaining talent and consistently delivering exceptional guest experiences in a competitive market requires ongoing innovation, training, and investment in our people.

Finally, sustainability continues to be a key challenge. Guests are more conscious than ever about the environmental impact of their choices. As a company, we need to ensure our operations are sustainable while maintaining high service standards. This will involve further investment in practices like energy efficiency and waste management, and adapting our services to align with these values.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation is at the core of our strategy at Sheraton Bratislava Hotel. We drive it by fostering a culture that encourages creativity, collaboration, and forward-

thinking. I believe in empowering our team to be part of the solution, giving them the autonomy to bring new ideas forward. This is supported by continuous training and development, where team members are taught not just the operational basics, but also encouraged to innovate in their roles.

Technology plays a significant role in our innovation efforts. For instance, we've integrated advanced digital tools to enhance the guest experience—such as seamless check-ins, personalized offers, and AI-powered concierge services. We also explore ways to streamline operations, improve energy efficiency, and reduce our carbon footprint through smart building systems and sustainable practices.

Moreover, we focus on tailoring the guest experience to reflect evolving expectations. We actively engage with guests for feedback and track industry trends to ensure our hotel evolves with the needs of today's global traveler.

## WHAT PARTS OF YOUR WORK CONSISTENTLY EXCITE AND MOTIVATE YOU?

What excites me most is the opportunity to shape the future of our hotel and contribute to the evolution of the hospitality industry. With over 20 years of international experience, I take pride in leading Sheraton Bratislava Hotel through times of change and growth, helping us stay ahead of trends while maintaining our standards of excellence.

Working with my team and witnessing their growth is a constant source of motivation. Mentoring and empowering individuals who are passionate about hospitality is incredibly rewarding. Seeing their professional development and pride in their work gives me a deep sense of fulfillment.

Lastly, delivering memorable experiences for our guests is always exciting. Every interaction is an opportunity to exceed expectations and create lasting impressions. That's what keeps me motivated every single day.

# MARTIN JACKO

ATTORNEY-AT-LAW AND  
MANAGING PARTNER  
LANSKY, GANZGER,  
JACKO & PARTNER, S. R. O.



Martin Jacko has been involved with LGP for 17 years since its very beginning. He has been the managing partner of the law firm since 2015. Martin focuses on strategic advisory, crisis management, corporate acquisitions, large construction and infrastructure projects at national and international level (including FIDIC contracts) and cybersecurity. Apart of being an attorney at law, Martin acts also as a bankruptcy and restructuring trustee and an active member of the Council of the Antimonopoly Office of the Slovak Republic. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the SCC (Slovak Compliance Circle). As a founding member of SCC Martin focuses on developing and implementing standards and legal aspects of compliance. Martin is connected to the public / state sector participates also in the legislation process.

WWW.LANSKY.SK

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Based on my experience with investors, Slovakia should focus on building an innovative, predictable business environment emphasizing quality education, digitalization, and R&D support.

Slovakia has also big gap in digitalization. Accelerating administrative processes, efficient court proceedings, and simplified access to information directly impact investors' decisions and confidence.

Crucial for attracting of investments is transparency and legislative predictability but also law enforcement which enhance legal certainty.

A reform of the education system is essential for increasing competitiveness. Slovakia must better connect academia with industry. Creating conditions where talent wants to stay will increase competitiveness and overall attractiveness.

To achieve for sustainable future growth, Slovakia should prioritize human capital development, technological transformation, and institutional trust-focusing on its people, institutions, and adaptability.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

One of the biggest challenges we expect soon is to keep pace with the rapid development of AI, while ensuring that we harness its full potential in a way that enhances, not replaces, the human aspect of legal work.

At Lansky, Ganzger, Jacko & Partner, we don't see AI as a threat, but as a strategic tool that helps us deliver faster and more consistent results - allowing our lawyers to focus on the high-value, strategic advice our clients really need.

The legal market is rapidly evolving, and we need to evolve too - not just to keep up, but to be leaders.

Our goal is to stay at the forefront of legal innovation, combining the best of AI-driven efficiency with the deep expertise and judgment that define our practice. This is how we plan to deliver truly future-proof legal services in an increasingly digital and complex world.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

In my work, I am constantly excited and motivated by the opportunity to

solve complex challenges where the solution is not obvious - situations where things don't work the way they should, and it takes strategic thinking, creativity and collaboration with experts in various sectors to find the right way forward. There is something uniquely stimulating about bringing together different expertise and perspectives to create complex solutions that no single individual could create alone. The more complex the challenge is, the more involved I become in the process of solving it and even enjoy it more.

What completes this cycle of motivation for me is the moment of reflection when the project is successfully completed. Seeing the client's satisfaction with our solution provides external validation, but just as important is the internal sense of accomplishment - knowing that we have turned a challenging situation into a working system or process.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I could make one single change to improve the business environment in Slovakia, it would be to introduce a culture of accountability and performance into the public sector - starting with measurable and enforced key performance indicators (KPIs) for employees and leadership in every state institution.

In Slovakia, there is some form of performance evaluation in state administration, but a comprehensive and consistently applied system of KPIs has not yet been implemented across the board to the extent it could be.

Imagine if public offices were led by experienced professionals with international exposure, no local ties or political obligations, and a clear mandate to deliver result - and if their success was measured transparently through well-defined performance indicators. In some countries, state institutions already use KPIs tied to processing times, user satisfaction, or transparency metrics. For example, Estonia has built a world-class digital government by holding public servants to high performance standards, while also enabling them with the right tools and autonomy. While it may sound idealistic, I truly believe that introducing merit-based leadership and performance-driven management in public administration would be the most transformative step toward making Slovakia a more attractive, efficient, and predictable place to do business.

# VLADIMÍR JANÍK

CO-FOUNDER & PARTNER  
MENITY

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

In a market saturated by speed and visibility, the real challenge is staying intentionally selective. At Menity, growth is not the goal — it's the outcome of staying true to our principles. As executive search becomes increasingly commoditized, our responsibility is to protect what sets us apart: precision, discretion, and the ability to align not only competencies but values and leadership essence.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

By going deeper, not broader. Innovation, for us, doesn't mean novelty — it means relevance. We revisit how we assess leadership potential, create space for trust, and present talent in a way that resonates. We refine rather than reinvent. Innovation shows up in how thoughtfully we match people and roles, in how we design experience, and in how we sustain long-term partnerships.

## WHAT PARTS OF YOUR WORK CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

Meaningful conversations. The quiet, clear moments when a leader sees a new path — or when a company feels clarity about who they need. I'm most drawn to the precision of alignment — when the right person meets the right moment. These are not headline moments, but they shift trajectories.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

This year brought us the privilege of advising on several CEO and VP-level appointments in complex, competitive markets — all closed with 98% success. However, what matters most to me is not who we placed but how we did it: discreetly, personally, and with full trust on both sides. We've deepened advisory relationships with leaders who see us not as vendors but as long-term partners in decisions that matter.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If Slovakia is to be seen as a credible partner in innovation and long-term investment, predictability, trust in institutions, and clarity of direction matter just as much as incentives or costs. Sustainable progress doesn't grow from division—it grows from alignment. The more we focus on what connects us—competence, integrity, and shared purpose—the stronger and more resilient our business environment becomes.

### ABOUT MENITY:

Menity is an international boutique Executive Search and Leadership Advisory.



Vladimír is a trusted advisor to senior executives and co-founder of Menity, a boutique executive search and leadership advisory firm operating across five European markets. With more than 27 years of experience in aviation, banking, telecom, and executive search, he helps organizations make confident, wellinformed decisions when selecting their top leaders. Since co-founding Menity, he has helped the firm deliver hundreds of executive search projects across Europe, focusing on precision, discretion, and long-term value. Vladimír works closely with boards and CEOs in complex environments, helping them identify and appoint culturally and strategically aligned leaders. His approach is analytical, calm, and shaped by long-term trust. He holds a Master's degree in Aeronautics.





# RICHARD KELLNER

COUNTRY MANAGER  
& EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KOMERČNÍ BANKA, A.S., POBOČKA  
ZAHRAŇIČNEJ BANKY



Since graduating from the University of Amsterdam in 2000, Richard has held various positions in the banking industry both abroad and in Slovakia. After 9 years in Amsterdam, he moved back to Slovakia in 2008 while continuing to work for ING Bank. At the beginning of 2013 he joined Komerční banka Slovakia as Corporate Banking Director, focusing on the bank's commercial activities. In June 2025 he was appointed Country Manager & Executive Director. In addition to his role at Komerční banka, Richard is also the President of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia and a member of the Supervisory Board of Circular Slovakia.

WWW.KB.SK

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia offers a strategic location at the heart of Europe with access to both Western and Eastern markets. We have a skilled, educated workforce, strong industrial foundations—especially in automotive and electronics—and a growing innovation and tech ecosystem. Membership in the EU and Eurozone provides additional economic stability and investors' confidence.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Slovakia could greatly benefit from focusing on green technologies and sustainable innovation. With its industrial base, the transition to green manufacturing and circular economy solutions would not only attract forward-looking investors but also position Slovakia as a responsible and competitive player in global value chains.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Investment in education, sustainability, and increase of attractiveness of business conditions must be top priorities. We need to better connect education with market needs, support start-ups and innovation hubs, promote green transition, and through the reforms ensure that Slovakia is an attractive country for investors and employees.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

In 2024, we had a strong business performance and participated in several high-profile transactions. Once again, we were able to confirm our ability to meet our clients' expectations.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Externally, we will continue to face turbulence and challenges in 2025, not only from international developments, but also from the impact of local fiscal measures. Internally, balancing rapid digital transformation with maintaining a human, customer-centric approach will remain a key challenge.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation in our company is largely driven by listening – to employees, customers and communities. We foster a culture of open communication and cross-functional collaboration, and we're not afraid to experiment with new formats, whether in communications, internal culture, or service design.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

Accompanying our clients on their various business journeys. As a bank, we work with clients from different sectors, and each of our clients is unique. This makes our job very interesting because we have opportunities to learn something new all the time.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Making the public administration more efficient, transparent, reliable, and business-friendly.

## THE FUTURE LINKS US TOGETHER

### Corporate banking

We are always able to find new solutions for clients in our wide range of services.

kb.sk

## JOZEF KLEIN

CEO  
ASSECO INTERNATIONAL,  
ASSECO CENTRAL EUROPE

### WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia has long benefited from a highly skilled workforce and a strong technology base. Our people are smart, motivated and willing to work on themselves - in my opinion, this is one of the main reasons why investors have chosen us in the past. We also have the advantage of a strategic geographic location in the heart of Europe and an increasingly strong innovation potential, especially in the IT sector.

On the other hand, we have to admit that we have lost some of this attractiveness. The growing gap between rich and poor, coupled with unpredictable political developments, is reducing confidence. Added to this is the fact that other countries - Poland, for example - are able to use EU funds more efficiently and have more favourable conditions in terms of cost parity and return on investment.

### WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

I think Slovakia has great potential in areas such as Industry 4.0, artificial intelligence and automation. That is why, for example, we have joined CEIT, a company dedicated to innovation in industry and the digitalisation of production processes. These are sectors where we can be competitive not only in the region, but also on a global level.

### WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Clearly education, promoting innovation and creating conditions for start-ups. I believe that if we want to be successful, we need to show young people that it makes sense to stay at home, do business here and change the country.

As a large Slovak company, with the international headquarters of Asseco International right in Bratislava, we are aware that our success is closely linked to the success of the country in which we operate. Slovakia is not just a place of business for us - it is our homeland, for which we feel a responsibility. That's why we have long supported projects that have a real impact on the future - including our incubator UpSteer, which helps young people start their own businesses, develop innovative ideas and contribute to the development of the domestic startup scene.

### WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

In 2024, I am most proud of the fact that we managed to get back on the trajectory of development and economic growth of Asseco in Slovakia. I am looking forward to the managerial staff stabilisation in the company. I also appreciate that our investments in innovation are starting to yield concrete results. I am pleased that our financial indicators are approaching the expected standards of the Asseco Group comparable to those of other countries.

### WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

At Asseco we are growing organically but also through acquisitions. Acquisitions naturally bring with them a certain amount of risk. But we are therefore managers to manage these risks. I constantly remind my colleagues that we want to differentiate ourselves from the cocurrency by the fact that we have created Asseco in the past, that we continue to develop it, we continue to grow and we want to continue to grow. We should humbly but confidently stick to the quote, 'Great people do great things precisely because they are great'. I am also inspired by working with young people and entrepreneurs who have an idea and the desire to build something. When I can help someone turn a vision into reality, it's a huge motivation for me. Seeing something that started as an idea turn into a working product or service is amazing.

### WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

I dream of at least a partial convergence of the different opposite poles of the political spectrum in society. More dedicated to building together than antagonistic political destruction and spreading demagoguery and hatred.

Political stability, social cohesion, quality education, and predictable, economically attractive business environment conditions are the basis for economic development and future prosperity in Slovakia. If we succeed in setting these pillars, Slovakia has a chance to be attractive to investors again and able to compete with the best.



Jozef Klein is CEO of Asseco International and Asseco Central Europe, a major IT solutions provider in Central and Eastern Europe. It implements demanding projects for commercial sector, as well as for public sector and central and local governments. Asseco CE has longterm experience with extensive projects with strong emphasis on supporting the strategic goals of its customers. Under his leadership, the company has transformed from a local company to an international group with more than 1,600 employees. In 2016, he was awarded the prestigious EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award for his entrepreneurial spirit, innovative approach and contribution to the development of the IT sector in the region.

# MIROSLAVA KLIMANTOVÁ

SALES DIRECTOR  
HEINEKEN SLOVENSKO, A.S.



Miroslava Klimantová assumed the role of Sales Director at HEINEKEN Slovakia at the end of last year. An accomplished manager with over a decade of experience in senior leadership positions across Central Europe, she now heads the commercial department and is also a member of the company's management board. Her ambition is to strengthen HEINEKEN Slovakia's position in the domestic market. She can leverage her experience from Unilever Slovakia, where under her leadership, the team became the fastest-growing in Europe for two consecutive years. She believes that her philosophy of motivation, courage, and joy in life aligns well with Heineken's values and will help them succeed.

## WHAT ROLE DOES HEINEKEN SLOVAKIA PLAY IN THE BREWING SECTOR?

HEINEKEN Slovakia is one of the largest breweries in the country and significantly influences the Slovak brewing sector. Our company directly employs over 600 individuals and supports thousands of additional jobs throughout the supply chain. Brewing is the fourth largest sector of the food industry in Slovakia, and we play a key role in its development.

## WHAT IS THE SECRET TO THE UNIQUENESS OF SLOVAK BEER?

Slovak beer has a unique benefit – its origin. We brew it from high-quality Slovak barley and artesian water sourced directly beneath our brewery in Hurbanovo. We work closely with local farmers to select the best barley varieties and maintain a strong tradition. This combination of local ingredients and modern technology results in a product that authentically reflects the story of Slovakia.

## HOW DO YOU COMBINE TRADITIONAL SLOVAK BREWING WITH MODERN INNOVATIONS?

Our strategy is not only to preserve tradition but also to actively foster its evolution. We invest in the development of new recipes, sustainability initiatives, and the digitalization of production, enabling us to continuously enhance our products. A great example of this is our flagship brand, Zlatý Bažant, which has been brewed since 1969. In 2023, we innovated its recipe to better align with the current taste preferences of our consumers.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

I am inspired by the opportunity to drive growth and innovation while staying true to our Slovak heritage. Helping to shape the future of HEINEKEN Slovakia, whether through improving our product offerings like Zlatý Bažant or supporting local farmers, is a constant source of motivation. I am also passionate about fostering a culture of collaboration, where every team member has the chance to grow and contribute to our collective success. Ultimately, the chance to integrate tradition with innovation and to have a positive impact on our community and the environment keeps me energized and motivated on a daily basis.

## HOW DOES THE COMPANY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY AND LABOR MARKET?

Beyond the direct creation of jobs within our brewery, we actively support Slovak suppliers and local production capacities. This impact on employment is well above the market average, underlining the important role of breweries within the Slovak economy.

## HOW DO YOU VIEW THE ROLE OF SLOVAK EXPORTS IN BUILDING THE REPUTATION OF SLOVAK BEER ABROAD?

Barley from Hurbanovo is an integral part of beers produced in breweries across 12 countries in Central and Southern Europe. Our international customers are not only experiencing our beer but also a taste of Slovakia. Export is therefore not merely an economic activity but also a means of promoting the esteemed reputation of Slovak beer.

## DO YOU THINK SLOVAKIA IS AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINABLE BREWING?

Slovakia is exceptional in numerous aspects, ranging from the quality of its raw materials to its energy efficiency and commitment to leadership in circular economy principles. Sustainability is a fundamental value for us, and we are confident that our practices can serve as an inspiration for other companies within the brewing industry and beyond.

## HOW DOES HEINEKEN SLOVAKIA SUPPORT THE HORECA SECTOR IN ADAPTING TO NEW TRENDS AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES?

HEINEKEN Slovakia is a long-term partner of the Slovak gastro sector, helping establishments adapt to new trends such as a focus on quality and unique experiences. We have also been there during times of crisis, offering economic measures, expert advice, and support through the HORECA Academy portal. Our digital platform, Eazle, accelerates the purchasing process and contributes to business sustainability. All these initiatives are built on our strong Slovak tradition, quality beer, and innovation. Our Business Developers are not only intermediaries but also expert advisors who help Slovak establishments thrive. We believe that quality Slovak beer is key to the success of every business in the gastro sector.



## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

As a legal practitioner for over twenty years, I have worked with clients from different corners of the world and with local clients, and I can say that Slovakia was a great place for investment. Two facts are especially worth mentioning: first, our membership in the European Union (EU) and the Eurozone.

Geographically well-situated in Europe, Slovakia is an excellent location for gaining access to major markets. Furthermore, as a result of its strategic location, enterprises operating in the areas of logistics and manufacturing will benefit greatly. Add to this the technically competent workforce in Slovakia, especially in fields like engineering and IT. Even as wages are rising, they are competitive compared to those in Western Europe.

In our law firm, we see an increasing interest in Slovakia in PPP projects (public-private partnerships), especially in infrastructure and transport. The government is showing more willingness to cooperate with the private sector through particular well-defined PPP structures. If things keep going in the same direction, Slovakia may establish itself as a significant player in the PPP area.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

In my view, Slovakia should not try to be everything for everyone. We should focus on areas where we already have a strong foundation and where we can realistically lead—not just catch up. That means high-value manufacturing connected with R&D, the green economy, and smart digital services.

Given our strong automotive sector, electromobility and battery technologies come to mind. But we should also support our growing tech and innovation ecosystem. In my legal practice, I have seen increasing interest in IT, fintech, and SaaS businesses setting up here. This could be a true growth area if we create the right conditions, especially from a legal and tax perspective.

Positioning Slovakia as a country where the rule of law works and where public governance is solid would also help our competitiveness. That may sound less "sexy" than AI or innovation, but in practice, it's what investors notice very quickly.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Initially, the emphasis should primarily be on acquiring education and lifelong learning. The pace of change in the world is too rapid, and we require people with the skills to change and adapt, not just in IT but also across all sectors. Education slogans alone are not enough; genuine reform is required.

Furthermore, in addition to the above, we need to foster innovation and research, not only through subsidies but also by creating an ecosystem where companies, universities, and the state work better together more naturally and efficiently. Our economy will only remain competitive if we produce more value-added products; thus, we must work on it.

Another problem we need to tackle is the efficiency and integrity of the public sector. If we digitalize public services, better plan public investments, and become transparent in our decision-making, these steps would not only enable the business environment to thrive better but also help rebuild trust.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I were to select only one change, it would be consistency of legal rules and regulations in terms of their quality and predictability. Both foreign and domestic investors should know that the rules will not be changed the next day and that their rights will be respected and executed within a reasonable timeframe.

The improvement does not imply that tax reduction is mandatory or that substantial reforms must be initiated yearly. More precise wordings of laws, more communication with the stakeholders and a more professional and stable administration are a way to go. Businesses can thrive in countries with reliable contracts, predictable bureaucracy, and trustworthy institutions.

One way to improve the business climate and living conditions is to increase the importance of the rule of law and create an environment that encourages long-term business and financial planning. That way, Slovakia would not just become economically better but also a better place to live.

# MARTIN KLUCH

PARTNER  
HKV LAW FIRM S.R.O.



Before establishing law firm HKV, Martin worked as a senior associate for White & Case in Bratislava and Prague. He obtained extensive experience in the areas of real estate, M&A, corporate, employment, and foreign direct investment by participating in many large-scale privatizations, real estate and corporate acquisitions as well as commercial transactions. Martin's practice focuses primarily on buy- and sell-side mergers and acquisitions, private equity transactions, joint ventures, general corporate matters including corporate governance matters and employment law.

# PETRA KOTULIAKOVÁ

CEO  
AJ TY V IT



Petra is the founder and CEO of Aj Ty v IT, an NGO supporting women in IT since 2012. She chairs the DiversIT Charter Working Group at the European Council of Professional Informatics Societies and is a board member of the American Chamber of Commerce Slovakia. Recognized as Female Role Model of the Year 2018 by CESA and a Women in TECH Inclusion Award 2020 laureate, she inspires girls and women to pursue careers in tech. In 2023, she was named among the TOP100 Women in Europe Social Enterprises. Her organization has trained over 60,000 women, increasing female participation in IT from 3% to 17%. Petra holds a PhD from the University of Economics in Bratislava and studied at Université Pierre Mendès France and Institut des Études Politiques Paris, advocating for women's education and inclusion in technology.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia has a highly educated workforce, which gives the country a strong advantage for businesses. This strength is further supported by organizations like Aj Ty v IT, which help people gain new digital and IT skills through upskilling and reskilling. By opening more opportunities—especially for women—to enter tech jobs, we help make Slovakia more competitive and better prepared for the future.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Slovakia should focus on reskilling and upskilling its workforce—a key niche that represents our biggest, and perhaps only, true competitive advantage. By investing in people and equipping them with the digital and tech skills needed for the future, we can stay ahead in the global economy.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Among the key priorities are education reform with a strong emphasis on STEM, reducing regional disparities, supporting research and innovation, digitizing public administration, and driving the ecological transformation of industry. Equally important is motivating young people to remain in the country by creating high-quality, high value-added jobs. Improvements to workforce legislation and transport infrastructure are also essential to support these goals and ensure sustainable economic development.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

We are proudest when we receive feedback like this: "During my maternity leave, I completed the Woman Tester Academy, Basics of Cypress Testing, Woman IT Academy, and SQL Academy. On Monday, I'm starting a new job as a junior software tester!" Moments like these show that we're not only helping shape brighter futures for women, but also bringing them the joy and confidence that comes with entering the world of IT.

Girl's Day is also one of our major highlights, giving over 1,000 girls from across Slovakia a firsthand look at careers in IT at top tech companies. The experience often shapes their career choices early on and helps break down gender stereotypes in tech. As one participant put it, *"What I liked most was the idea that stereotypes are just stereotypes – and you shouldn't be afraid to follow your path."*

Last but not least, a standout highlight is the Slovak Women in Tech conference—a unique event in the IT world where we celebrate the achievements of women in tech and proudly recognize the support of our male allies.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

What consistently excites and motivates us in our work is seeing more young girls and adult women recognizing IT as a viable and exciting career path—one that offers not only excellent opportunities and financial stability but also a space for creativity, innovation, and personal growth. It's incredibly rewarding to witness this shift and to know that we're helping to open doors for the female tech talent.

**Aj Ty v IT** is a leading Slovak NGO committed to giving girls and women equal access to tech education and helping them succeed in the IT job market and in other fields where digital skills are essential.

We focus on three key groups: girls aged 8–14, teens aged 15–19, and women 19+, including students, while also working closely with professionals and teachers. For younger girls, we run fun, hands-on coding workshops that build creativity and

confidence. High schoolers dig deeper through workshops, gaining hands-on experience, while we offer them a real-life sneak peek into tech universities and IT companies. For adult women, we offer digital skill-building, upskilling, and reskilling through practical, long-term programs that prepare them for specific roles in IT. Whether they're just starting out or making a career change, we're here to support and guide them into the world of tech.

### WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

There's a lot I enjoy about my work, but what truly inspires me is the human side of it – selecting jewellery and watches, meeting clients in person, and really getting to know them. I pay attention to their style, mood, personality... and try to find a piece that resonates with them not only on the outside but also within. A piece that feels truly theirs.

Teamwork also matters deeply to me. When we feel that what we're doing has meaning – that we're creating something with quality, beauty, and soul – it's incredibly fulfilling.

And it's moments like these that remind me why I love what I do.

### WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

After so many years on the market, I believe that our actions speak louder than words. I'm proud that SHERON has been able to maintain the trust of our clients – not with grand gestures, but with genuine care and quality.

After 34 years, it's our loyal clients, long-term partnerships, and the daily efforts of our team that say it all.

I don't often stop to reflect, but I'm grateful for the journey. That I've stayed true to myself, and that I've grown together with our brand. And I'm especially happy that through our work, we can remind women of how exceptional they truly are.

### WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I could make one change, I would wish for more love, kindness, and mutual respect in everything we do. It's sad how often we forget these basic values – yet love has the power to change so much for the better.

If we listened more, judged less, tried to understand one another, and appreciated what we have, I truly believe this country could move forward – heart to heart. And I believe that's where it all begins.

### HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

At SHERON, we don't see innovation as a trend, but as a natural part of growth. We're constantly looking for new ways to create extraordinary experiences for our clients – whether it's through our collections, digital presence, personalised service, or the stories our jewellery tells.

We stay attuned to developments in the world of watches and fine jewellery, collaborate with prestigious brands that push boundaries, and – just as importantly – listen to our clients.

For us, innovation means having the courage to do things differently – with care, intention, and soul.

### WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Our biggest challenge is staying true to who we are – to our style, values, and personal approach – while keeping pace with a fast-changing world.

Luxury today isn't just about material value; it's about experience, authenticity, and emotion. The challenge is balancing tradition with innovation, craftsmanship with technology, quiet elegance with digital presence – all while staying deeply connected to the love we have for our work.

We want to grow, but not at the cost of losing what makes SHERON unique – our personality, attention to detail, and the power of storytelling.

It's not just about beautiful jewellery or precision timepieces. It's about the emotions and relationships behind them.

To me, SHERON has never been just a brand. It's a space where women are invited to shine – not to prove anything to anyone, but to remind themselves of how special they are. Because jewellery isn't just an accessory. It's a quiet expression of their inner strength and personal style.

# HELENA KRASŇANSKÁ

FOUNDER  
SHERON / PASSO, A.S.



Helena Krasňanská, founder of jewelry store SHERON, has been a prominent figure in Slovakia's luxury business landscape for over three decades. Since 1991, she has been building a brand that combines world-class quality with a personal touch. For Helena, fine jewellery is not simply about selling beautiful pieces – it's about the intersection of aesthetics, craftsmanship, and human stories. With a keen eye for detail and an ability to understand each client's individuality, she helps people find jewellery that reflects not only their outward appearance but also their inner self. Under her leadership, SHERON has become an exclusive partner of brands such as Rolex, Chopard, and Pomellato, establishing itself as a symbol of elegance and trust. Helena believes that true luxury is born where quality meets emotion and a human touch – and that's the philosophy she lives every day with her team.



# STANISLAV KUBALA

AUDIT PARTNER  
BDO AUDIT, SPOL. S R. O.



Stanislav became Partner of BDO's Audit division in 2024, bringing over 18 years of experience in audit and advisory across banking, insurance, manufacturing, trading, telecom, healthcare and real estate sectors in Slovakia and Central and Eastern Europe. Throughout his career, he has worked on a wide range of projects, including audit services, regulatory advisory, IFRS implementation (9, 15, 16, 17), transition to IFRS, acquisition accounting, due diligence, restructuring, reporting, trainings and risk management consulting. Stanislav is a member of the Slovak Chamber of Auditors (SKAU), a certified statutory auditor in the Slovak Republic and a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA). In 2019 he completed his MBA in finance studies at Wirtschaftsuniversität in Vienna.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

One of the proudest moments in 2024 was the opening of our new, larger office in Košice, located in the Business Centre Košice. This move reflects our long-term commitment to the region and to building a modern, inspiring workspace for our growing team.

At the same time, we introduced a new model of internal collaboration across our audit division. Instead of the traditional delegation-based structure, we've embraced a more team-oriented, inclusive approach where everyone contributes, learns, and grows together. This cultural shift has already started to show results: stronger team spirit, more ownership at all levels, and greater impact on every project we deliver. It's been a transformative year – both symbolically and practically – and I'm genuinely proud of how we've made it happen.

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO LEAD THE AUDIT TEAM?

It's a role that requires full dedication, continuous learning, and a highly flexible approach. In this profession, you are cooperating on a daily basis with professionals who share their knowledge and experience, which is extremely motivating and pushes me to stay sharp and fully engaged.

What truly motivates me is the responsibility that comes with leadership – not only in delivering results, but in creating an environment where people feel trusted, supported, and proud of the work we do together. I believe in leading by example and building a team culture where development is mutual – not assigned from the top but nurtured through shared effort and growth.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

We're operating in an environment that's constantly changing – whether it's regulation, technology, or client expectations. That creates real challenges but also brings opportunities. Clients today expect more than just technical competence; they're looking for insights, perspective, and support in navigating the uncertainty. That means we as advisors need to continuously evolve, not only in terms of our technical

knowledge but also in how we think and communicate. Retaining and developing talent that can deliver on that expectation is key. At BDO, we're investing heavily into this – because it's not just about keeping up, it's about setting the pace.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation, for us, doesn't only mean new tools – though we do actively integrate advanced analytics and automation. True innovation comes from creating an environment where people are encouraged to speak up, challenge existing ways of working, and try something new – without fear of failing. I strongly believe that good ideas don't follow a hierarchy. Some of our most effective improvements in process and client communication have come from younger colleagues. Our role as leaders is to listen, support, and create the space for these ideas to grow.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

It's always about the people. Every project brings new dynamics – a different team, a different client, a new challenge to solve together. What excites me is that I'm constantly learning – even after all these years – and to share that learning with the others. Mentoring younger colleagues, seeing them develop their confidence and build strong client relationships – that's one of the most rewarding parts of what I do. And of course, knowing that our work has a real impact on the trust and stability of the financial ecosystem keeps me motivated.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I could choose one, it would be improving the predictability and transparency of the economic and legislative environment. Businesses thrive when they can plan ahead with confidence. Entrepreneurs and investors aren't asking for shortcuts – they're asking for stability and clarity. Simplifying processes and reducing administrative burdens would also help channel more time and energy into value creation, innovation, and growth. The talent is here. The potential is here. We just need the right framework to unlock it.

# JUSTIN LANE

CEO  
CULTUREPULSE, INC.  
& CULTUREPULSE S.R.O.



Justin Lane is a cognitive scientist, AI entrepreneur, and CEO of CulturePulse. With a PhD from Oxford in cognitive anthropology and over a decade of experience using AI to understand and predict human behavior in conflict zones, Dr. Lane co-founded CulturePulse to bring psychology-first AI to governments, NGOs, and corporates tackling complex global risks.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia sits at the intersection of East and West, not just geographically but intellectually. It boasts a highly educated and technical, multilingual workforce and strong institutional ties to both EU and NATO structures. It is included in the EURO but has high quality of life with low cost of living relative to other EU countries. For tech innovators like CulturePulse, its strategic position within the EU and NATO makes it a perfect launchpad for AI solutions targeting emerging risks.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Slovakia should champion itself as the "Silicon Shield of Central Europe"—a hub for advanced, applied AI in the domains of peace, security, and strategic communication. With institutions like the Slovak Academy of Sciences and an agile tech sector, and an energy infrastructure that can support large data centers, the country is uniquely positioned to develop responsible dual-use technologies that serve both defense and democracy.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Strategically, Slovakia needs to address social cohesion and national identity. Without a strong cohesive population, it risks fracturing and being unable to cooperate to solve the daunting issues of its own future. Beyond this, Slovakia should double down on supporting cross-sector innovation between academia, government, and startups. CulturePulse is a case in point: our AI platforms are used from Bratislava to Ramallah, helping decision-makers act wisely in high-stakes environments.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Our proudest moment came when our AI platform ARES helped UN agencies assess social cohesion during the peak of the Israel-Gaza crisis, all powered by a team based in Slovakia. Simultaneously, our collaboration with top universities

and the Slovak Academy of Sciences is bringing world-class analytics to national priorities.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

The key challenge is shortening sales cycles in a market where our value—though proven in conflict zones and top scientific journals—is still underappreciated. Decision-makers are often overwhelmed by "AI hype" and unaware that validated, ethical, psychology-first technology that outperforms traditional sentiment analysis or political risk tools is available today.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

We drive innovation by integrating real-world behavioral data with rigorous AI methodologies. Our platforms don't just analyze text—they reconstruct the psychological states of online communities in real time. We blend anthropology, cognitive psychology, and computational modeling, and our ethical AI framework is aligned with EU principles.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

It's deeply motivating to know that our work helps our NGOs build peace in the real world, governments forecast unrest, and companies de-risk supply chains—all through better cultural insight and mapping the "human terrain". As a CEO, seeing academic theory become actionable intelligence in high-stakes settings is a daily inspiration.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Streamlining the public procurement process and enhancing collaboration between government agencies and Slovak startups would immediately unlock new potential. By accelerating contracts with homegrown innovation firms, Slovakia could become not just a tech hub—but a solutions hub for Europe. To do that, firms need to know their 5-year forecast assumptions are just as good in 2030 as they are in 2025.

# IVANA LORENCOVÍČOVÁ

MANAGING PARTNER  
DELOITTE



Ivana Lorencovičová is the Managing Partner of Deloitte Czech & Slovak Republic. She is also the WorldImpact Leader for Deloitte Central Europe promoting initiatives focused on creating a more sustainable and more equitable corporate environment. Ivana has over 20 years of experience in transaction advisory and manages projects for strategic and financial investors in various sectors, including advisory on M&A, company sales, restructuring, refinancing and business valuations. She is a Fellow Member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA) in the UK.

## **WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?**

Slovakia has developed a reputation as a reliable and attractive destination for foreign investment. Our key strengths lie in a combination of geographic, economic, and institutional advantages. Primarily, our location at the heart of Central Europe offers easy access to major markets in Western and Eastern Europe. With its developed and growing transport infrastructure, including highways, railways, and proximity to major EU capitals, Slovakia is a prime logistics and manufacturing hub.

One of our key assets is a robust industrial base, particularly in the automotive sector. Slovakia is the world's largest car producer per capita and is home to major global automakers such as Volkswagen, Kia, Stellantis, and Jaguar Land Rover. With a strong manufacturing tradition supported by a skilled and cost-effective workforce, Slovakia's industrial production remains competitive. Additionally, stable institutions, EU and Eurozone membership, and a predictable regulatory framework boost investor confidence.

Despite current geopolitical and political challenges, I remain confident Slovakia will continue to demonstrate its ability to adapt, reform, and respond constructively. Maintaining a business-friendly environment is crucial for our open economy. Only by strengthening our engagement within the EU and Eurozone can Slovakia remain an attractive and competitive investment destination going forward.

## **WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?**

Looking ahead, I believe that Slovakia cannot rely solely on its traditional strengths. As the global economic landscape is rapidly evolving due to digitalization, decarbonization, and demographic shifts, to remain competitive, we should focus on developing niche sectors aligned with these trends. Given its automotive legacy, Slovakia has the potential to become a regional leader in electric mobility. By attracting investment in electric vehicle (EV) production, battery manufacturing, and related supply chains, Slovakia can future-proof its core industrial sector.

Another area with high growth potential is digital innovation. Slovakia boasts a growing tech ecosystem, with numerous startups and innovation hubs emerging in recent years. However, more support is needed to scale up these initiatives. Focusing on AI, cybersecurity,

software development, and automation technologies can help diversify the economy and create high-value jobs. We should also leverage scientific institutions and universities to advance research and development in clean energy, biotechnology, and smart manufacturing.

## **WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

To be future-ready and ensure sustainable economic growth, we need a forward-looking and comprehensive strategy. First, education and skills development must be central to our priorities. Reforming the education system to align with labor market needs, investing in STEM and vocational education, and fostering digital literacy from an early age are crucial. Expanding lifelong learning and reskilling programs will help workers adapt to structural economic changes.

Second, we must significantly boost investment in research, development, and innovation. Both public and private R&D spending are below the EU average. A strategic focus on increasing R&D funding, fostering cooperation between universities and industry, and creating incentives for innovation will enhance productivity and competitiveness.

Third, transitioning to a low-carbon economy presents both challenges and opportunities. We should accelerate efforts to decarbonize the energy sector, promote energy efficiency, and invest in renewable sources such as solar and wind. A just transition strategy is essential to support regions and workers affected by the shift away from fossil fuels.

Fourth, improving infrastructure—both physical and digital—is also crucial. Enhancing transport connectivity, upgrading regional road and rail networks, and expanding high-speed internet access, particularly in rural areas will support balanced regional development and make Slovakia more attractive to investors.

In summary, Slovakia's strong fundamentals make it an attractive investment destination, particularly in manufacturing and logistics. However, to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving global economy, it must focus on future-oriented niche sectors like electric mobility and digital innovation. Strategic priorities like education reform, R&D investment, infrastructure development are essential for Slovakia's sustainable and inclusive growth in the years ahead.



## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Our greatest achievement in 2024 was the successful opening of Váš Lekár Polyclinic with 24 specialized outpatient clinics. Since its launch in January 2024, we have welcomed over 15,000 patients, a testament to both the demand for high-quality outpatient care and the trust we've managed to build in such a short time. Our goal was to offer comprehensive, accessible, and preventive healthcare under one roof, and we are proud that the concept has quickly proven effective.

Another key milestone was the expansion of our pharmacy network. In 2024, we opened three new pharmacies, bringing essential healthcare services even closer to our clients. We are committed to strengthening the role of pharmacies as frontline healthcare providers—offering not only medications but also basic consultations, which can often eliminate the need for a doctor's visit. This is especially important in addressing the challenges of healthcare accessibility in various regions.

We also became the first healthcare provider in the Visegrád Four region to offer services under the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS) for employees of European Union institutions. This step required meeting strict international standards and positioned us on the European healthcare map as a trusted partner for institutional clients.

In May, we opened Lab28, an innovative and multifunctional space with a unique panoramic city view on the 28th floor of Nivy Tower. Lab28 was designed to connect communities from within and outside the healthcare sector, providing a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation. It hosts professional events, expert discussions, and networking opportunities that foster new partnerships and support the development of modern healthcare solutions.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Our biggest challenge in the near future will be sustaining the rapid growth of our patient base while ensuring consistent quality of care. With every new client comes the responsibility to maintain individualized attention, patient satisfaction, and strong medical outcomes.

We are also focusing on raising public awareness about the importance of early prevention. Preventive care remains one of the most effective strategies for tackling chronic diseases, yet it is still underutilized. Through education, screening programs, and outreach, we aim to encourage people to take proactive steps toward their health.

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Another strategic priority is strengthening the perception of pharmacies as the most accessible point of care. Pharmacists are often the first health professionals people turn to, especially for everyday health concerns. By expanding the range of services offered in pharmacies—such as consultations, screenings, and advice—we can help reduce pressure on general practitioners and improve overall access to care. This shift is not only practical but necessary in addressing systemic challenges such as overcrowded clinics and long waiting times.

Ultimately, our mission is to build a modern healthcare system that is prevention-focused, patient-centered, and accessible to all. This requires continued investment in innovation, people, and education—but we believe it is the right path toward a healthier future.

# PAVOL MARCINKO

CEO  
VÁŠ LEKÁR



Pavol Marcinko is the CEO of Váš Lekár, a company reshaping how people in Slovakia approach their health. Under his leadership, the first prevention-focused polyclinic in Slovakia was opened, along with a network of modern pharmacies with diagnostic centers, emphasizing prevention, accessibility, and a personal approach to clients.

He focuses on healthcare innovation, improving outpatient care, and creating more effective connections between specialist services and the needs of everyday patients. He believes that early prevention and removing barriers to accessing healthcare are key to building a healthier society.

## KATARÍNA MATULNÍKOVÁ

MANAGING PARTNER  
WOLF THEISS BRATISLAVA



Katarína has been the Managing Partner and the Head of the Employment Team of Wolf Theiss Bratislava since April 2023. With over two decades of experience with employment and labour law, she advises large national and multinational companies on issues ranging from employment restructurings, international assignments, employee transfers and redundancies to benefit / incentive schemes, employment aspects of acquisitions, and data protection regulations. She is an experienced litigator, an avid supporter of the speak-up culture and whistleblowing, and a highly sought-after legal advisor to employers conducting internal company investigations or reviewing complaints.

She frequently represents clients in collective negotiations and labour law disputes. Katarína is a member of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of AmCham Slovakia and also a member of the European Employment Lawyers Association.

### WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

To paraphrase Ms Jane Austen, it is a truth universally acknowledged, that a business in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a great team.

In 2024, my single proudest achievement as Managing Partner was building and cultivating a cohesive, high-performing team that not only delivered exceptional results for our clients but also propelled us into one of the leading legal directories' rankings (in "Banking & Finance" and "Employment" category) for the first time.

In Wolf Theiss we have always focused on prioritising collective effort, professional development, and, above all, a supportive firm culture. I believe this is the main reason why we have been able to attract talent and foster an environment where everyone can thrive. Being recognised externally is a true testament to our team's dedication, expertise, and shared vision for excellence. This milestone has energised us to aim even higher in the near future.

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IN WOLF THEISS WE  
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CULTURE.”

### HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation in our line of work is absolutely essential. Legal profession is often viewed as a more "traditional" service and therefore, it is crucial to be as flexible and dynamic as possible. Therefore, our approach to innovation is centered on culture, technology, and client focus.

We cultivate a culture that embraces change and fosters creative problem-solving combined with a strong focus on technology. We promote open communication and continuous

learning across all levels of Wolf Theiss – thus encouraging idea-sharing and experimenting with new tools and approaches without fear of failure.

On the technology side, we regularly invest in legal tech tools, and we actively embrace data-driven decision-making by leveraging analytics. This helps us to streamline workflows and enhance client service, because innovation should first and foremost align with client needs and expectations.

By combining a forward-thinking culture with smart technology adoption, and making it a strategic priority, we have created an environment where innovation delivers real value to both our team and clients.

### WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Personally, I believe that the single most impactful change to make Slovakia a better place to do business would be to significantly build and restore trust. There is a palpable lack of confidence and reliance in all aspects of life – between people, businesses and, perhaps most notably, there has been virtually no trust in public institutions for quite some time.

The current level of bad-faith behaviour undermines public engagement and complicates the implementation of reforms critical for innovation, digitalisation, and economic growth. By enhancing transparency and ensuring fairness in governance, Slovakia could strengthen institutional integrity and create a more reliable and, by extension, more attractive business environment.

Increased trust would also boost investor confidence, encourage collaboration, and create a motivational atmosphere that supports sustainable competitiveness and economic development. Rebuilding cultural and institutional trust is essential for improving Slovakia's overall ease of doing business any hope of long-term prosperity.



### **WHAT MAKES SLOVAKIA AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR INVESTORS?**

Slovakia holds a few solid cards that make it appealing. Its central location in Europe, membership in the EU and eurozone—these are all big pluses when it comes to trade and currency stability. We also have a technically skilled workforce, which is a strong advantage not only in construction, development, or manufacturing, but across various industries. The country has a long tradition in automotive, electrical, and engineering sectors, and lately there's been more movement in IT and innovation. From our point of view as a local company, we can offer investors quality, local know-how, and a fair approach. That counts for a lot.

### **WHAT SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE BETTER PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE AND GROW SUSTAINABLY?**

We need to work on things that will make us more resilient and competitive. A big part of that is backing science, research, and innovation—especially in green tech and digital solutions.

What we see daily confirms that the education system needs an overhaul, with more focus on critical thinking, technical skills, and lifelong learning. On top of that, we should invest in modern transport and digital infrastructure, cut unnecessary red tape, and create a stable environment where both local and foreign businesses know what to expect.

### **WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF FROM 2024?**

Time will tell whether it was the right move, but I'm proud that I stepped out of my comfort zone and took on a new challenge. After years of working on the construction side, I started this year in a new role as Sales Director at DYNAMIK. I'm also proud of our team. We managed to prepare several acquisitions with clear strategic goals. These weren't simple tasks—but that's where our strength lies: in being able to tackle complex projects and come up with full-package solutions. That's something we're good at, and something we want to build on.

### **WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY RIGHT NOW?**

The big one ahead of us is getting a strong foothold in the Czech market. That's key to our future expansion. At the same time, we need a clear plan for how to grow and enter new markets in a way that makes us more competitive internationally.

But we can't lose focus at home, either. Staying among the top players in Slovak construction means sticking to high quality and pushing innovation. That's what will keep us moving forward.

### **HOW DO YOU APPROACH INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?**

We're a family business that's been around for 35 years, and over that time, we've always moved forward by staying open, trusting our people, and keeping things human.

For us, innovation isn't about chasing the latest buzzword—it's about doing things smarter and better. Sure, we use digital tools and tech solutions, but we also value simple ideas from within the team. Whether it's a smarter way to distribute materials or streamlining a process on-site, small improvements add up.

### **WHAT PARTS OF YOUR JOB KEEP YOU MOTIVATED?**

It's the constant change and variety. No two days are the same, and each project brings something new. That keeps me on my toes. I enjoy learning and adapting. Every new challenge is a chance to grow, and I see that as a big part of what makes the job meaningful—not just professionally, but personally too.

### **WHAT ONE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?**

It's hard to pick just one, but if I had to, I'd say more transparency and predictability in how decisions are made. When rules change overnight or feel unclear, it's tough for companies to plan ahead—and that puts us at a disadvantage. If we could bring more stability into the system, it would make a big difference for businesses and investors alike.

## **BORIS MIKLOVIČ**

SALES DIRECTOR  
DYNAMIK CONSTRUCTION



Boris Miklovič has been part of DYNAMIK for 15 years. He began his journey in technical roles within construction production and gradually moved up through the positions of Deputy Production Director and later Production Director. Today, he holds the role of Sales Director, where he brings his deep understanding of the business and hands-on experience into building strong partnerships and strategic growth.

As he puts it, "DYNAMIK gave me everything—opportunities, great challenges, stability, and even a family." His career reflects the values of the company: long-term commitment, trust, and continuous development. He remains closely connected to the core of the business and sees people as the key to success.





Amrop

# LADISLAVA MOLNÁROVÁ

PARTNER, HEAD OF THE  
CONSUMER & RETAIL AND THE HR  
PRACTICE GROUP  
AMROP SLOVAKIA



Ladislava Molnárová is a Partner at Amrop in Bratislava, where she leads By-Role Practices – a cross-functional coordination platform focused on delivering executive search and leadership advisory projects for key corporate functions. Since joining the firm in 2007, she has built a strong track record of success in placing senior executives across Central and Eastern Europe, with a particular focus on the Consumer & Retail, Healthcare, Tourism, Media, and Advertising sectors. She actively promotes diversity and inclusion, with a strong focus on women in leadership, leads corporate volunteering and represents Amrop in Slovakia's HR and business community. Prior to Amrop, Ladislava served as Human Resources Manager for one of the world's largest global retailers, overseeing HR and training strategies in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

## HOW HAS THE HUMAN ROLE DOMAIN EVOLVED OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS?

Over the last decade, the human capital domain has transformed from an administrative function to a strategic and value-creating force at the boardroom table. What was once "HR" has evolved into "People & Culture", "Employee Experience", and "Human Capital Strategy".

The biggest shift lies in mindset. The CHRO is no longer a back-office operator but a strategic architect of organizational agility, culture, and talent transformation. HR now shapes business resilience in volatile times, from pandemic-induced disruptions to geopolitical shifts. HR leaders today must master not just compliance and talent pipelines, but also topics like workforce well-being, DEI, hybrid work, skills intelligence, and employer brand reputation. **They are expected to be fluent in data, digital tools, and to integrate ESG thinking into workforce strategies.**

The rise of Gen Z and changing career priorities have also made human-centric leadership a board-level concern. The role of HR now carries a dual mandate: enabling performance and fostering belonging. In short, the function is no longer reactive—it has become a proactive co-pilot of business transformation.

## HOW ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CHRO AND OTHER C-SUITE ROLES EVOLVING?

The modern CHRO must act as a cross-functional integrator. The strongest partnerships emerge between the CHRO and the CEO, CFO, and increasingly, the CTO/COO.

The **CEO-CHRO alliance** is now seen as a litmus test for resilient leadership. CEOs rely on CHROs not just for talent insights, but for cultural navigation during transformations, M&As, and digital reinvention. The CHRO is often the CEO's sparring partner on topics like succession, leadership effectiveness, and stakeholder engagement.

Meanwhile, the **CHRO-CFO relationship** is growing closer, especially as both roles face pressure to tie people strategies to business value. Discussions now span workforce ROI, productivity analytics, and strategic workforce planning.

In the age of AI and automation, the **CHRO-CTO/COO bond** has also deepened. Together, they align on the future of work, digital upskilling, and ethical data use in employee decision-making.

These evolving dynamics demand a new breed of CHRO—one with business fluency, political savvy, and the courage

to influence enterprise-wide decisions. Today, the CHRO must be both a unifier and a challenger.

## HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS HIRE THE FITTEST CHRO FOR WHAT'S NEXT?

Finding the right CHRO for the next chapter of your organization requires a shift in search lens—from operational excellence to strategic foresight, adaptability, and cultural impact. At the executive search level, the most successful placements are not those with the longest HR tenure, but those with **multi-context agility-leaders** who can pivot between growth, crisis, and transformation.

Here's what leading organizations look for when hiring a next-generation CHRO:

- **Future-focus over experience:** It's not about what they've done—it's about what they can lead your organization through next (digital reinvention, generational change, AI readiness).
- **Enterprise mindset:** Top CHROs see beyond HR. They think like a general manager, speak the language of the CFO, and connect deeply with the CEO's vision.
- **Data and tech literacy:** They don't just tolerate HR tech—they drive its adoption, understand how to use people analytics strategically, and partner on digital transformation.
- **Authenticity and empathy:** Culture is shaped at the top. Candidates must embody the values you want to scale—this is more important than ever in talent-scarce, trust-fragile environments.
- **Credibility and courage:** The best CHROs have the gravitas to speak truth to power, to challenge, and to drive uncomfortable but necessary change.



ULTIMATELY, HIRING THE RIGHT CHRO IS NOT ABOUT "FILLING THE ROLE"—IT'S ABOUT AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF YOUR PEOPLE AT THE LEADERSHIP TABLE. AT A TIME WHEN EMPLOYEE TRUST, EXPERIENCE, AND TRANSFORMATION CAPACITY ARE YOUR STRONGEST CURRENCY, THE CHRO IS YOUR GREATEST UNTAPPED STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE.

# VILIAM MYŠIČKA

MANAGING PARTNER  
KINSTELLAR



Viliam Myšička is a Partner in the international law firm Kinstellar. He leads the firm's M&A practice in Slovakia as well as the firm-wide Restructuring & Insolvency team in CEE. With more than 20 years of legal experience, Viliam has worked on a broad spectrum of domestic, cross-border and distressed M&As. He has served as chairman of AmCham Slovakia's Restructuring & Insolvency Committee since 2022. In terms of sector specialisation, Viliam focuses on technology and has led Kinstellar's firm-wide TMT sector since 2017.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia may not always be the loudest voice in the region, but that's part of its strength – we deliver quietly, consistently, and with quality. Our geographic location puts us at the heart of Europe, with great access to both western and eastern markets. Add to that a stable currency, solid infrastructure, and EU and Schengen membership, and you've got a reliable base for regional operations. What really stands out is the talent. Slovak professionals are skilled, adaptable, and increasingly fluent in both technology and languages. We also have a strong industrial tradition – especially in automotive and manufacturing – supported by networks of suppliers, technical schools, and experience. For companies looking for a mix of competence, cost-effectiveness, and EU access, Slovakia is a smart choice.

## WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Slovakia already has strong foundations in manufacturing, especially in automotive and machinery. But to stay competitive in the long term, we need to move toward smart specialization. Our niche lies in intelligent, high-value-added manufacturing and technology services – where engineering meets innovation. That includes R&D in automotive tech, automation, green technologies, and IT solutions that support traditional industries. We already have the talent and infrastructure. With the right support for education, innovation hubs, and business-academic cooperation, we can turn existing strengths into long-term advantages.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

If Slovakia wants to be future-ready, it needs to think long-term and act with purpose. Three priorities stand out: education, innovation, and institutional quality. Education must modernize to reflect today's needs – promoting digital skills, critical thinking, and stronger

links between schools and the private sector. Innovation should be more than a buzzword – we need real incentives for applied research and fewer obstacles for high-growth sectors. And finally, strong institutions are key: predictable rules and effective

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

Looking back at 2024, one standout moment was helping a long-term client navigate a complex, multi-jurisdictional financing transaction. It required precision, coordination across time zones, and a calm approach under pressure. We weren't just executing documents – we were part of the strategic thinking from day one. Reaching signing on time, with everyone aligned and satisfied, felt like a real success. And yes, our coffee reserves held up too.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

I genuinely enjoy solving complex problems – especially when the path forward isn't obvious. Every deal brings a new puzzle involving legal, commercial, and human dynamics. Beyond that, it's the people that motivate me: clients who trust us, colleagues who make collaboration meaningful, and the sense that our work has real impact. I like being the calm, practical voice in high-pressure moments. And I admit – there's real satisfaction in writing a clean clause or untangling a tricky contractual issue. It keeps the mind sharp.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I could change one thing, it would be to improve predictability in how rules are made and applied. It's not about rewriting everything – it's about making the system more consistent and efficient. Businesses need to feel that decisions are reliable and that processes won't drag on indefinitely. Transparency, timeliness, and trust in institutions would go a long way. And a bit less paperwork wouldn't hurt either.

# TOMÁŠ NÉMETHY

MANAGING PARTNER  
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD  
SLOVENSKO



Since 2023, Tomáš has been the Country Head of Cushman & Wakefield Slovakia, overseeing business operations and team growth. He joined the company in 2019 to establish and lead the Valuation & Advisory department, building it into respected valuation & advisory team on the local market.

With nearly 15 years of experience in real estate, he has held roles across financing, investment, and valuation. Before joining Cushman & Wakefield, Tomáš worked on major real estate projects, commercial transactions, and delivered tailored valuations and feasibility studies. He enjoys building teams and fostering a collaborative and people-driven culture.

## WHAT MAKES SLOVAKIA ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia has a skilled workforce for industrial production and the advantage of being fully integrated in international supply chains and western institutions including the eurozone. Due to its size, it has proven in the past its quick capacity to reinvent itself and attract international investments.

International investors remain interested, especially in logistics, shared services, and sustainable development. As advisors, our role is to guide them through the complexity of the local environment with clarity and confidence. The market is full of opportunities that are sometimes very country specific.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Slovakia needs long-term strategy coupled with regulation predictability. The key focus should be in education, digitalization, infrastructure building and improvement of efficiency of institutions. Businesses thrive when rules are clear and future focused. At Cushman & Wakefield Slovakia, we invest in people and data to support informed decisions for sustainable success. To be future-ready, Slovakia must empower the next generation with digital skills and foster innovation that attracts long-term investment.

Lean business friendly environment should be at the backbone of the strategy for the future.

## WHAT DRIVES GROWTH AT CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD SLOVAKIA?

Over the past few years, Cushman & Wakefield Slovakia has been steadily strengthening its position in the local market, doubling in size since 2022. This growth has been driven by strategic new hires and the development of an ambitious people-focused culture, creating a strong foundation for further expansion in the years ahead.

In the past 12 months, we have made significant strides in office leasing and capital markets while further cementing our leadership in valuation. Looking ahead to 2025, our growth will be driven by the expansion of project management, property management and retail leasing services, as we take over the management of five new shopping centers.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Our biggest challenge is staying ahead of expectations in a fast-evolving market. Adopting innovation while fostering an attractive workspace and a progressive approach to talent is essential to making us future-proof and ready to anticipate future trends and the evolving needs of our clients.

Our long-term ambition is to become an inspirational leader in the Slovak market, not only through market share but through the distinctive approach of our people. Every day, we focus on making an impact, pushing boundaries, and moving the market forward while enjoying what we do.

## REAL ESTATE DRIVING BETTER BUSINESS.

We help our clients make confident, informed real estate decisions.

Better never settles



## WHAT PARTS OF YOUR WORK CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

What keeps me motivated is the trust clients place in us – often in their most difficult, high-stakes moments. They turn to us not just for legal answers, but for clarity, strategy, and judgment. That trust brings both responsibility and meaning.

The work often becomes personal. That can be a strength – it helps us understand the people, dynamics and nuances behind every decision. But it also requires discipline: knowing when to step back and preserve objectivity. Balancing empathy with distance is part of what makes this profession human and challenging.

Personally, I find real joy in mentoring younger colleagues. Seeing them grow into confident professionals and shape their legal thinking, watching them find their own voice is one of the most rewarding parts of my role.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I had to choose one, it would be predictability. A stable and transparent legal environment is the foundation of healthy business climate. Entrepreneurs can handle challenges – taxes, bureaucracy – but what makes it difficult is when the rules shift mid-game.

We need clear legislation, consistent enforcement, and long-term thinking in policymaking. Change is inevitable – but it should be thoughtful, well-communicated, and built through dialogue with the legal and business communities.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

To be truly future-ready, I believe Slovakia must invest in three pillars: education, innovation, and values.

Education, because no transformation is possible without people equipped to lead it. We need bold reforms that prioritize critical and interdisciplinary thinking and digital literacy.

Innovation, because we can no longer compete on low costs. We need an economy of ideas – supported by research, startups, and legal frameworks that enable change, not hinder it.

And values, because trust and ethics will define the next generation of leadership. Transparency, integrity, and a culture of respect are foundations of modern society.

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation in our firm is rooted in our curiosity and the courage to rethink how legal work is done. Personally, I lead our legal tech initiative, focused on identifying and implementing tools – especially AI – that simplify workflows and increase value for clients.

A key advantage is that we develop many tools in-house. We've created custom tools that extract structured data, automate repetitive tasks reducing human errors – giving our team more space for strategy and creativity while effectively handling clients' requests.

We believe lawyers should embrace AI, not resist it, but within clear ethical boundaries – ensuring transparency, fairness, and human oversight.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

The biggest challenge – and perhaps the most exciting – is redefining what it means to be a lawyer in the age of AI.

We're in a fast-changing world where clients expect not only legal accuracy, but also speed, clarity, and insight. Meanwhile, our tools evolve quickly. AI can draft, analyze, even predict – but it can't weigh risk, build trust and weigh in personal experience.

Our task is to integrate AI meaningfully, without compromising our core values. That means setting internal ethical standards for its use – prioritizing explainability, accountability, and informed judgment. We must foster a culture where technology supports and amplifies the practice of law – not substitutes it.

Legal education and early training are changing, too. Tasks that used to sharpen legal instincts – like hours of research or document review – are now often automated. That brings efficiency, but also a new responsibility: to think carefully about how young lawyers can still develop the judgment, critical thinking, and depth they'll need.

It's not a one-way street. The younger generation of lawyers bring fresh perspectives, technical fluency, and a different way of thinking about the law. What we aim to offer in return is context, structure, and the kind of experience that helps connect rules to real-life decisions. What we learn from each other will define the lawyers we become – and the legal profession we leave behind.

# VERONIKA PÁZMÁNYOVÁ

PARTNER  
GLATZOVÁ & CO.



Veronika Pázmányová is the head of the Slovak office of Glatzová & Co., where she has served as partner since 2020. Her practice focuses on corporate and commercial law, with a strong track record in M&A, cross-border transactions, and business restructurings. She is recognised for her strategic approach, negotiation skills, and close client relationships.

Veronika is also a respected expert in data protection and employment law, and increasingly represents clients in complex disputes, both in court and in high-stakes settlement negotiations.

Her clients include major Slovak and international companies, investment funds, and high-net-worth individuals. She is regularly ranked by IFLR1000, Chambers Europe and Legal500 for her work in corporate and M&A matters.

# CARLOS GARRIDO PEDRAZ

HEAD OF HOLCIM EBS  
(EUROPEAN BUSINESS  
SERVICES)



Building on his engineering & financial education, Carlos has almost 25 years of international experience in the fields of Business Leadership & Transformation, Project & Performance Management, Analytics & Data Systems and Global Business Services.

For the last 3 years, he is the Head of the Holcim Business Centre in Europe, providing a wide range of services (finance, commercial, procurement, HR administration, RPA, etc) for 23 countries in the region. Prior to that, Carlos led several transformation projects at big scale, notably setting up new Global Centres of Excellence for Analytics and Automation.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENTS ARE YOUR PROUD OF IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

One of my proudest achievements over the past year has been the remarkable progress we've made at Holcim EBS in Košice. Since joining, my focus has been on elevating the profile of our team—now more than 350 strong—while ensuring we consistently deliver exceptional VALUE to our internal stakeholders. Together, we rolled out a comprehensive strategy rooted in high performance and inclusivity. I'm proud to say the results speak for themselves. In 2024, we reached record-breaking outcomes in finance, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement—ranking among the top across Holcim's 70 global entities. What's equally rewarding is that our collective effort and commitment have also been recognized externally, with the team receiving several awards for excellence in talent management, culture and performance. It's a true testament to the dedication, collaboration, and spirit of our people.

## WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Technology is fundamentally transforming the shared services industry, with artificial intelligence, automation, and data analytics leading a significant shift in how we create and deliver value. At Holcim, one of the most exciting developments is the rise of generative AI. This technology has the power to revolutionize our operations by automating complex tasks with unprecedented speed and efficiency. However, the true potential of generative AI lies not just in automation, but in applying it responsibly, securely, and in alignment with human values. The greatest impact will come from blending advanced technologies with human insight to develop smarter, more effective solutions. At Holcim EBS, we're at the early stages of this journey, already launching several promising pilot projects. It's an inspiring and dynamic time, full of opportunity and innovation.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT STILL EXCITE YOU AND GIVE YOU MOTIVATION?

I feel really lucky that my work continues to inspire and energize me every single day. I genuinely enjoy the dynamic mix of strategic thinking and hands-on problem-solving that my role demands. What motivates me most—especially here in Košice—is the incredible energy, curiosity, and passion of the young team around me. Their eagerness to grow not only fuels our collective success but also challenges me to keep evolving and learning alongside them. I see my role not just as a leader, but as a mentor and collaborator. Building an environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute, grow, and thrive is what drives me—and it's a journey we're all on together.

## WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Looking ahead, one of the most vital goals for the Slovak economy should be equipping the next generation to succeed in an increasingly globalized and fast-changing world. This begins with fostering critical thinking, encouraging open, fact-based dialogue, and cultivating a mindset that embraces global perspectives while staying rooted in local values. At the same time, we must preserve and strengthen the core qualities that define us—generosity, empathy, and a strong national identity. From a strategic standpoint, it's essential to diversify our economy by investing in innovation, emerging technologies, and research & development. Equally important is our commitment to sustainability. Slovakia's natural beauty and resources are not only national treasures but also critical to our long-term resilience. We must protect them—for our future and for generations to come.



## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

In early 2025, we learned that we were part of the winning team in a project that required long hours, sleepless nights, and relentless effort throughout 2024. This was the international arbitration case where Squire Patton Boggs secured a significant victory for the Slovak Republic. The case, involving Discovery Global LLC, sought up to USD 133.1 million in compensation for alleged losses related to oil and gas exploration. As the legal team representing Slovakia, we successfully defended the state, proving that the Slovak authorities' actions did not constitute expropriation or discriminatory treatment, as the claimant had argued.

The arbitration tribunal ruled in Slovakia's favor, confirming that the suspension of the project was caused by the claimant's own inaction, not any fault of the Slovak government. This decision not only dismissed all claims but also ordered Discovery Global to pay 75% of Slovakia's legal costs, totaling EUR 2.3 million. This victory was especially significant because it reinforced Slovakia's status as one of the few countries that has never lost an international investment arbitration case.

This achievement highlights the strength of our team's strategy, legal expertise, and commitment to protecting our client's interests. It also underscores the importance of maintaining a strong defense in international disputes, ensuring that Slovakia's reputation in investment arbitration remains intact. I take immense pride in our role in this landmark victory (our fourth won case for Slovakia), knowing it will have a lasting impact on Slovakia's international relations and future arbitration cases.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

One significant change that has already improved Slovakia as a place to do business is the introduction of the New Construction Act, which came into force on April 1, 2025. This long-awaited reform replaced a law that had been in place for almost 50 years, bringing a much-needed modernization to the construction sector.

The New Construction Act introduces several key improvements that aim to streamline the construction process. Most notably, it should simplify permitting procedures and introduces digitalization, which should make it easier and faster for businesses to obtain necessary permits for construction projects. This change

aims to reduce administrative delays, which have historically been a barrier to growth, especially for companies involved in real estate, strategic investors and infrastructure companies.

New standards for design documentation also provide clearer guidelines, helping businesses better plan and execute their projects.

With these changes, Slovakia has created a more efficient and business-friendly environment, particularly for those in construction and related industries. The New Construction Act should not only accelerate development but also make Slovakia more attractive for both domestic and international investors. Naturally, every major reform takes some time to settle in practice and few years will be required for all players in the field as well as for the public institutions to adapt.

As Chair of the AmCham Construction Law Task Force, I'm looking forward to discussing how these changes will impact the industry.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

One of the biggest challenges for the legal industry in the near future will be adapting to rapid technological advancements, particularly in areas like artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and legal tech. While these technologies offer tremendous opportunities for efficiency and innovation, they also present challenges in terms of ensuring ethical use, data privacy, and the potential impact on traditional roles within law firms.

As AI and automation begin to take over more routine tasks such as document review, legal research, and contract analysis, there will be a shift in the types of skills required from legal professionals. Lawyers will need to embrace new technologies and develop expertise in managing these tools while maintaining a strong focus on the human elements of law, such as client relationships, strategic thinking, and complex legal analysis.

Additionally, with the growing use of AI in legal practice, questions around data security and confidentiality become increasingly important. Law firms must invest in robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive client information while ensuring compliance with evolving regulations, such as data protection laws, which vary across jurisdictions.

# TATIANA PROKOPOVÁ

MANAGING PARTNER  
SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS S.R.O.



Tatiana Prokopová, the Bratislava office managing partner and a prominent figure in real estate, boasts an impressive portfolio and remarkable negotiation skills for high-stakes projects. She is sought-after for her expertise in complex transactions and litigation disputes. With a friendly yet highly professional demeanor, Tatiana is admired for her client-centric approach and active engagement in the social community. She is recognized as a thought leader, often invited to speak at real estate and construction conferences and seminars. Tatiana has been honored as a Leading Individual for Dispute Resolution and Real Estate by The Legal 500 EMEA 2025, and ranked for Real Estate by Chambers Europe 2025. In 2021, she was named among the TOP 100 Women of the Czech and Slovak Legal Business by info.cz.



# DAVID REILLY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR /  
BRATISLAVA SSC SITE LEADER  
LENOVO SLOVAKIA S.R.O.



David Reilly, from Glasgow, Scotland has 26 years' experience in the IT industry. David joined IBM in Scotland in 1999, becoming a Lenovo employee in 2005 following Lenovo's acquisition of IBM's PC Division. David has wide Global Experience, having lived and worked in Europe (Scotland and Slovakia), Australia and the US, holding leadership positions in Finance, Supply Chain & Operations. As part of the original leadership team when Lenovo first opened its SSC in Bratislava in 2006, David has seen Lenovo Bratislava grow to become being an integral part of Lenovo's success, with over 1,100 employees across functions like HR, Finance, Operations, Supply Chain and Services.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

The biggest challenge and also biggest opportunity for Lenovo is how to leverage the opportunities that AI is bringing not just to our industry but to the world.

Lenovo is leading the industry with innovative and responsible AI solutions, support and services to accelerate AI transformation.

We're confident we can find a solution that suits everybody. Our comprehensive AI services are tailored for personal, enterprise, and public use.

With complete end-to-end security from ThinkShield, years of investment in AI services, global deployment and future-proofing through TrusScale and Cyber Security as-a-service, combined with design and offerings all from our zero-trust supply chain makes Lenovo the partner of choice for our customers

## HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Innovation is part of our DNA in Lenovo. One of our philosophies in Lenovo is that we behave as a "company of owners" – each employee is encouraged and empowered to drive improvements in their daily role. Through our Lenovo Gigs program, we also encourage cross-functional participation in projects, which allows us to leverage different employee inputs and perspectives when addressing business challenges and opportunities.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

Helping colleagues build and develop their careers is the single most rewarding part of my job. Since we established the Bratislava Shared Service Centre in 2006 I have had the pleasure of watching hundreds of Lenovo employees grow their skills and careers. Over 50% of the management team in Lenovo was promoted internally, proving that Lenovo is a company that can match the career ambitions of our employees.

Lenovo has a framework to support employee growth no matter what the career stage. Early career employees are provided with trainings on tools and application like Excel, Visual Basic and SQL, while more experienced employees will join courses on Negotiation, Cultural Awareness and Advanced Presentation Techniques.

Lenovo also has a strong mentoring network, which provides a great opportunity for employees to benefit from advice and guidance from senior leaders based both in Bratislava and across the world.

People are foundational to our success, and by investing in our people, we allow them to grow and succeed on a personal level as Lenovo continues to lead, win and grow in the market place.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT ARE YOU PROUDEST OF IN 2024?

Lenovo has several Employee Resource Groups, where employees give up their time to drive programs and initiatives for the benefit of other Lenovo employees (Sports, Social Committees) and also the wider community (Charity and Philanthropy Groups). It's truly humbling for me to see the impact that Lenovo employees can have on the lives of those less fortunate in our community. With our partnerships with organizations like St. Vincent DePaul & Notabene to support the fight against homelessness, or with Srvcia School for visually impaired children, we give our employees the chance to make a vital and welcome contribution to the community around us.

## WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

In the Shared Service Centre Industry – Efficiency and Value are our key strengths. Slovakia is highly competitive in labor costs, but unless you deliver a quality service to customers (both internal and external), then you do not have a strong value proposition long term. Next year, we will celebrate 20 years since the Lenovo Shared Service Centre was established in Bratislava. As I like to tell people – Lenovo may have come to Slovakia because of cost – but we stay in Slovakia because of value.

## WHAT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BE FUTURE-READY AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Generally, Slovakia's drive for competitiveness has lagged in recent years, as evident from comparisons with our neighbors and other EU Member States. Therefore, multiple priorities must be addressed, including improvements in education, research, and healthcare. In healthcare—an area I am actively involved in—we see a general stagnation, including delays in introducing innovative treatments and medicines already standard across much of the EU. This further deepens the long-standing underperformance of our healthcare system, which in turn becomes a serious obstacle to national competitiveness. Without ensuring at least average EU-level healthcare standards, we cannot attract top talent, secure investments, as well as stop the brain drain of young professionals.

However, I would like to focus on one priority of paramount importance—the modernization of our employment market and regulatory environment. It is increasingly evident that the current regulation of the employment sphere is not achieving the desired purpose of protecting employees and the public interest. At the same time, it places a substantial burden on employers, ultimately making our country less competitive. This concern is frequently echoed by AmCham Slovakia members, who report increased difficulty in securing or retaining positions within their corporate groups as a result.

As part of my work on the Board of Directors of AmCham, and in cooperation with the leadership of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee and AmCham's management, we have initiated discussions with our partners at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family regarding partial improvements to existing employment regulations. Encouragingly, our initiative has been met with an open and positive response, and we are optimistic about further discussing concrete changes soon.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Staying within the area of employment regulation, we believe that electronization of processes under the Labor Code can serve as a "quick win"—both feasible and highly beneficial, particularly for employers such as business service centers and other white-collar organizations.

A comparative study we conducted showed that Slovakia remains among the most restrictive countries in the region regarding the use of electronic document delivery (in particular in matters relating to termination) and e-signatures in employment relations. To address this, AmCham has adopted a policy paper proposing targeted changes. These include:

- (i) clearer guidelines on when electronic signing is permissible in employment relationships, and
- (ii) simplified and more flexible rules for document delivery, especially through the use of secure electronic formats.

These proposals could be a small but important step toward a more flexible and modern employment regulatory framework.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Despite turbulent times, I am proud of several accomplishments.

Within AmCham, as a Board Member, I take pride in our continued commitment to the values of rule of law and democracy, and in our ongoing advocacy efforts in this area.

As an attorney and a member of the Advokácia+ initiative, I was pleased to join forces with like-minded legal professionals to propose reforms to our bar association, aimed at transforming it into a modern, democratic institution that is not a part of the political discourse but upholds the principles of the rule of law. I was proud to see our initiative gain significant support in the primary elections and remain hopeful it will succeed in the final vote on June 6.

At ČECHOVÁ & PARTNERS law firm, there are also many reasons for pride. We are celebrating 35 years of dedicated service to our clients—an impressive milestone. Despite our maturity, the firm remains dynamic, youthful, and steadily growing. For example, in the last financial year our consolidated turnover approached almost EUR 3 million, we recently opened and are expanding our office in Košice, and we continue to attract talented young professionals. Personally, I am especially proud of achieving a Top Tier ranking for the employment practice I lead as well as the recognition of our life sciences practice. The firm also maintains rankings in all key practice areas—an achievement in itself. Last but not least, I take pride in our exceptional team and the shared values that guide us.

# TOMÁŠ RYBÁR

PARTNER  
ČECHOVÁ & PARTNERS  
S. R. O.



Tomáš is a partner at Čechová & Partners, a leading independent Slovak law firm with a 35-year history. His practice focuses primarily on employment, general commercial and corporate matters, and pharmaceutical law. He leads the firm's labor and employment practice group, which, under his leadership, was ranked Tier 1 in The Legal 500 EMEA 2025. Tomáš is also a top-ranked expert in this field by major international directories. In addition, he is a recognized authority in pharmaceutical law, advising numerous pharmaceutical and healthcare companies operating in Slovakia. From 2022 to 2024 Tomáš served as Secretary General of AIJA—one of the largest international organizations of lawyers—becoming the first Slovak attorney to serve in such a top-level international role. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of AmCham Slovakia.

# MARTA SLOVÁKOVÁ

CEO  
JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT  
SLOVAKIA



Marta Slovákova, is the CEO of Junior Achievement Slovakia, a non-profit organization that focuses on education in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, including digital skills and preparing students for the job market. In addition to her professional activities, she is a passionate supporter of social responsibility and transparent business. Marta focuses on connecting education and business and emphasizes promoting equal opportunity in her work. Her goal is to shape a better future through education and talent development.

WWW.JASLOVENSKO.SK

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

In 2024, we had a number of exceptional moments at JA Slovakia, but I am most proud of how we managed to connect schools, students and the business community across the country. A powerful example was the November conference Connecting Education with Business in Zvolen, where we brought inspiring success stories, practical advice and opened the floor for discussion about the future of education to nearly 200 participants from teachers, students, companies and the public sector.

The keynote speaker was Thomas Archer Bata, great-grandson of Tomas Bata, who brought Junior Achievement's education programmes to Slovakia as early as 1992, and introduced participants to the connection between history and the future in the context of education and entrepreneurship. The inspirational Lucia Janičová, the first Slovak woman to climb Mount Everest, shared her story of determination and perseverance, stressing the importance of having a goal and not giving up even in the most challenging moments.

At the same time, we also managed to support young people at the European level - the student company DEVEcol from the Secondary Industrial School of Electrical Engineering on Hálova Street in Bratislava represented us at the Gen-E finals in Catania, Italy, where they received a special award from the UniCredit Foundation for social impact and sustainability. Their project combined eco-friendly solutions and entrepreneurial thinking with an emphasis on accessibility for all.

These moments show that our system works - when we give young people the space, confidence and support, they can not only succeed, but also positively impact their surroundings.

That's why we're taking this line further - we're planning a similar conference in Košice in November 2025, specifically focused on the needs and future of Generation Z, with the aim of supporting their confidence, ambition and ability to navigate the changing world of work.

## WHAT PARTS OF YOUR WORK DO YOU FIND CONSISTENTLY EXCITING AND A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION?

I feel most fulfilled by the direct impact of our work - that we are helping young people discover their strengths, develop entrepreneurship, life skills and belief in their own abilities. When I see students who come in timid and after a few months

present their ideas with determination and confidence, I know that our mission is meaningful.

Or when I see a young person realize their own potential through one of our programs, it reinforces my belief that we are doing meaningful work. I am especially inspired when former students return as volunteers, mentors, or even partners. It creates a powerful cycle of giving back and building for the future.

Talking to teachers who are finding new ways to teach inspiringly despite the challenges in education is also a huge source of motivation for me. I'm equally delighted when companies and institutions want to work together because they realise that an investment in education is an investment in the future.

I like to build bridges - between schools and business, between people from different backgrounds. In such collaboration, innovations, new opportunities and solutions are created that we would not have come up with on our own.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

If I had to choose one fundamental change, it would be the systematic support of linking education with practice from primary school onwards, which I promote myself and in Junior Achievement Slovakia we declare through our practical education and linking to the business world.

We need young people to understand from an early age how the world of work works, what their job opportunities are, and to develop skills such as cooperation, problem solving, financial literacy and entrepreneurship. And, of course, to know themselves and know what their talents are and what they are capable of doing with them.

Creating a space where schools, businesses and institutions become partners would not only help young people to better prepare for the future, but also the business environment - we would be getting motivated, creative and adaptable people ready to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

Such a change would not only be an improvement for business, but also an investment in a society that is innovative, inclusive and competitive.

Not involved in supporting Junior Achievement and interested? I would be happy to meet and talk to you.



## CITI IN SLOVAKIA: 30 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP, PROGRESS, AND GLOBAL INSIGHT

### CITI IS CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN SLOVAKIA. WHAT DOES THIS MILESTONE MEAN TO YOU, AND HOW HAS YOUR PRESENCE EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

In 2025, Citi marks three decades of continuous presence in Slovakia. Over the years, we've built a strong reputation as a trusted financial partner for corporations, institutions, and government. This milestone reflects our long-term commitment to the country and the success of our approach – combining global expertise with local insight to help our clients navigate change and seize opportunity.

Citi operates in 94 markets and serves clients in over 180 countries and jurisdictions. This global reach allows us to connect trends across geographies and offer solutions that are both innovative and practical. Throughout economic cycles and geopolitical shifts, we've remained focused on supporting clients with resilience, flexibility, and deep market knowledge.

### FROM CITI'S PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS AS A BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT DESTINATION?

Slovakia offers several advantages that are important to global investors and businesses. Its EU and NATO memberships provide a foundation of political stability and security. The country also benefits from CO<sub>2</sub>-friendly electricity generation, which is an increasingly critical factor for companies committed to sustainability.

Another key strength is Slovakia's skilled and hardworking labor force, particularly in technical and engineering fields. This talent pool supports a strong industrial base and positions Slovakia well to attract investment in high value added sectors.

### LOOKING AHEAD, WHAT SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO STAY COMPETITIVE AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

To strengthen its long-term competitiveness, Slovakia should continue moving toward higher value-added industries, particularly in areas like IT and advanced technology. Creating a dynamic, competitive business environment – one that attracts foreign direct investment and skilled talent, including the one from abroad – will be essential, especially given adverse long-term demographic trends.

Supporting entrepreneurship and building confidence among young people is another priority. Through initiatives like our long-standing partnership with Junior Achievement Slovakia, we help nurture the next generation of business leaders. Encouraging startup ecosystems and building active angel investor communities can also play a key role in driving innovation and economic diversification of our country. Consolidation of public finance is necessary for the stability of macro environment, which businesses need. However, consolidating public finances must not come at the expense of undermining business competitiveness. The companies will make investments in Slovakia and create new jobs only when the environment, including regulatory one, will be stable and predictable.

At Citi, we believe in enabling growth and progress – not only for our clients, but for the communities where we operate. We're proud of our 30-year journey in Slovakia and remain committed to supporting the country's economic transformation. With a century-long history of Citi in Europe, 18,000 employees across 24 countries, and a truly global network, Citi continues to be a trusted advisor helping Slovak businesses navigate complexity, embrace opportunity, and build for what's next.



## PETER SOBOTKA

CITI COMMERCIAL BANK  
HEAD SLOVAKIA



Peter Sobotka has been leading Citi Commercial Bank in Slovakia since 2013. A seasoned banker with 23 years at Citi, he has held various senior roles across Citi Slovakia and Citi Russia, and also served as Consumer Industry Lead at the EMEA level. Earlier in his career, he worked as an Investment Associate with the Slovak American Enterprise Fund in Bratislava. Since 2024, Peter has served as First Vice President on the Board of Directors of AmCham Slovakia. He is actively involved in talent development at Citi and supports financial education initiatives, particularly those focused on youth entrepreneurship. Peter holds an MBA from the University of Southern Mississippi (2001) and a Master's degree in Finance, Banking and Investments from the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia (2000). He was a CFA charterholder from 2005 to 2012.

[WWW.CITIGROUP.COM](http://WWW.CITIGROUP.COM)

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**citi**  
*for the love of*  
**moving businesses forward.**  
*for the love of progress<sup>SM</sup>*

Speak to our local team to see how we connect regional insight and global financial expertise for Slovak businesses.

**30 Years in Slovakia**

# PETER ŠOLTÉS

CEO  
PROMISEO



Peter is the founder and CEO of Promiseo – a fully digital marketing and communications company, as well as an event agency, founded in Košice, Slovakia. Today, Promiseo supports many AmCham members across the country and beyond. Peter serves as Chairman of Business Košice and is a board member of Košice IT Valley, where he actively contributes to regional development and economic strategy. He regularly lectures on topics related to communication, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship.

The year 2024 marked a milestone for us – Promiseo celebrated its 15th anniversary. More important than the number is what it stands for: that many of our earliest clients are still with us, and that new ones – often with more and more complex needs – continue to join us. Promiseo is the marketing, communication and event agency with clients ranging from start-up to 8 out of 50 biggest Slovak companies. Member of ADMA and CEEDA.

## WHAT SHOULD SLOVAKIA SUPPORT TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE?

Slovakia urgently needs a second growth engine. The first – foreign investment – is extremely important and should be cared about. But the second must be systematic support for local companies ideally the ones with export ambitions, intellectual property or the ones creating jobs in the regions. This isn't about replacing multinationals, but complementing them. A resilient economy cannot rely solely on labor cost or geography – it must build on ideas and local companies.

## HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO REGIONS?

Promiseo was founded in Košice. Today, much of our client work happens in Bratislava or abroad, but our foundation remains regional. The future of Slovakia lies in decentralizing opportunity. Cities

like Košice are full of talent and ambition. What's missing is access – to capital, to trust, to visibility and infrastructure. Innovation concentrated in one city isn't sustainable and is not a good idea for the future of the country.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD IMPROVE THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVAKIA?

We need less bureaucracy and more smart capital. We must stop treating top founders and students as export products. Slovakia should become a place where the most ambitious ideas are built, scaled, and reinvested. And are welcomed. A country with exceptional talent shouldn't be forcing its entrepreneurs and experts to go elsewhere to succeed, but make them feel welcome.

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN YOUR WORK?

Seeing the long-term impact of our work. After 15 years, Promiseo handles more complex and strategic projects than ever. Many of our original clients are still with us, and new ones bring bigger challenges and higher expectations. This trust combined with the instant growth and change in this field is what drives me. We plan to be here for next 15 years as well, so quality and growth in this constantly changing environment is a must.



# MARTIN ŠRAMKO

CEO  
IMMOCAP



Martin has been ImmoCap CEO since 2014. Before that, he was financial and investment director of ImmoCap. He studied at the University of Economics in Bratislava and the University of Reading in Real Estate Investment & Finance. Martin started in Deloitte gaining skills in due diligence, financial analysis, and real estate transactions.

## IMMOCAP IS MEMBER OF AMCHAM FOR 2 YEARS. HOW DO YOU EVALUATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

AmCham is the right platform for building long-term relationships. Being present among like-minded companies, sharing experiences and approach to business is inspiring and beneficial for ImmoCap. Although two years is a relatively short period, I can already say that AmCham is a good partner for ImmoCap.

## 2024 WAS FULL OF CHALLENGES IN BUSINESS, WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE BIGGEST SUCCESS?

Our newest office building, The Mill, which won the Building of the Year 2024 award. Our headquarters situated here won the CBRE Office of the Year award. We are happy to welcome the whole Henkel employee team by August this year, which proves the quality of the project. The Mill also received a nomination for the most prestigious award for architecture in Slovakia - CE ZA AR. There were of course other achievements connected to different projects or permitting processes. At this point I must thank our entire ImmoCap team for their fantastic work and commitment.

## THE REAL ESTATE MARKET IS UNDERGOING CHANGES, MANY OF THEM RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE. IS IT A DRIVER FOR YOU IN THE FUTURE?

At ImmoCap, we view climate change and our role in environmental improvement as the most pressing one. Our civilization is confronted with numerous challenges, and it is no longer sufficient to merely respond with flexibility — we must proactively plan for the future and be well-prepared. Reducing the carbon footprint and enhancing energy efficiency of our projects are key priorities emerging from our ImmoCap co.re approach. The implementation of our approach can be witnessed in our projects such as: the carbon neutral EON headquarters, to be delivered in 2027, residential project Kvarter, delivery 2026, or Istropolis, delivery 2031. Our team of highly specialized experts design buildings to minimize carbon emissions while incorporating energy-efficient solutions. We are guided by two core principles: the needs of the end user and the protection of the environment. Developing projects that support sustainability while optimizing the use of resources is a goal we are passionate about.

## EARLIER THIS YEAR IMMOCAP PRESENTED THE NEW ISTROPOLIS PROJECT, WHICH WILL PROVIDE A NEW CULTURAL VENUE. WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT UNIQUE?

The whole concept of Istropolis is special, most of all of course the unique multi-functional hall with a capacity of 3,000 seats and top variability. The cultural venue in Istropolis will be suitable not only for concerts, conferences, exhibitions, but also for corporate events or city markets. It is not easy to find a space in Bratislava today that would suit a variety of events. Venues are often either too large or do not have the necessary technology to implement more modern or technically demanding events. Istropolis will finally change this situation. It will offer flexible solutions that will allow organizers to adapt the layout to the capacity and nature of the event. The undeniable quality of the project has already been proved by interested tenants, we are happy DELL decided to move their HQ to Istropolis.

## EVERYTHING INDICATES THAT IMMOCAP PORTFOLIO IS GROWING. HOW MANY NEW PROJECTS DO YOU HAVE IN THE PIPELINE?

We have evolved as a company, significantly also by broadening our portfolio and entering the residential market. Our expertise from creating flexible and innovative office spaces helps us in the residential area. We are able to bring energy efficient and technologically innovative solutions that save money for our clients, but also protect the environment. Last year, we started the construction of the Millhaus on Mlynské nivy Boulevard, Záhradnícka, and Kvarter on Jégého Street. This year we are starting the construction of first buildings of the Istropolis project and also the residential project on Bottova street. We also have a project by lake Kuchajda and several other interesting developments in preparation. ImmoCap is aiming to deliver 100,000 sqm of office space and 2,000 flats in the next 10 years in total value of 1 billion EUR.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY DAILY ROUTINE THAT HELPS YOU FOCUS ON AVERAGE WORKDAYS?

It's not exactly a daily routine, but according to the weather I do sports, skiing or cycling. If work opportunities allow, I like to ride my road bike around Bratislava and the Slovak-Austrian-Hungarian border region, which is perfect for cycling. These are moments of relaxation, when I have space for deeper reflection, and at work, I can draw energy from these moments.





FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT  
Comenius University  
Bratislava

# PETER ŠTARCHOŇ

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF  
MANAGEMENT  
COMENIUS UNIVERSITY  
BRATISLAVA



In his academic work, he actively promotes interactive teaching methods and aims to conceptually link theory with current business practices and the latest trends. He regularly organizes workshops and lectures featuring industry professionals and representatives from selected institutions. His research focuses on emerging trends in marketing, with an emphasis on banking marketing, the use of social media, and new information and communication technologies in marketing and marketing communication. He also explores selected aspects of international marketing, particularly regarding branding and consumer behavior.

WWW.FM.UNIBA.SK

## THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT IS RANKED AND WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS AN EXCELLENT BUSINESS SCHOOL.

### WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

We successfully obtained accreditation for our study programs. In addition, we accredited a Double Degree Master's Program in Management and International Commerce in partnership with the University of Bordeaux, France (taught in English). This expands our portfolio of English-language programs, which are increasingly popular—even among Slovak students.

The Faculty of Management also offers an interdisciplinary English-taught program in cooperation with the Faculty of Law at Comenius University Bratislava, titled Management and Law.

The growing number of international students enrolled in English programs, along with a high volume of Erasmus+ exchange students, contributes to a distinctly international, multicultural, open, and welcoming environment at our faculty.

In 2024, we also introduced a new course called Volunteering, expanding our practical collaborations to include the non-profit sector. Even in its first year, the course has enabled several successful partnerships, confirming that we are on the right path.

### WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR FACULTY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

We need to accelerate our digital transformation. Currently, we are working on integrating Business Intelligence tools into our internal processes to ensure we have access to relevant, data-driven insights for managerial decision-making.

In research, we are actively responding to emerging challenges related to agentic automation, artificial intelligence, agility, flexibility, and ESG principles. In teaching, we are updating our offering of specializations and elective courses to reflect these global trends. These innovations are being co-developed with our partners and our network of successful alumni, with whom we maintain close ties and value their input for continuous improvement.

### HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION AT YOUR INSTITUTION?

We encourage new ideas through international partnerships, support for mobility programs for both academic and administrative staff, and listing of dissertation topics aligned with cutting-edge themes. Internal PhD students have the opportunity to thoroughly engage with these subjects.

To further support research and project activities, we have established an internal grant scheme aimed at fostering innovative work.

Comenius University has also launched the Doctoral School of Comenius University as part of broader efforts to enhance the quality of doctoral education. This school organizes various activities—including seminars, workshops, courses, and mentoring—to support PhD students in their academic development.

We are a member of the ENLIGHT consortium—an alliance of ten European universities supported by the European Commission's European Universities initiative. This partnership facilitates mobility of students and staff among member institutions, allows shared use of educational resources and quality assurance systems, strengthens the international profile of its members, and supports global engagement, talent attraction, and joint research infrastructure development.

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN STRENGTHS OF THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT?

The faculty integrates academic education with practical experience, preparing students to meet the complex demands of modern business. We cultivate creativity, global perspectives, entrepreneurial thinking, and social responsibility in a multicultural setting.

Throughout our history, the faculty has prioritized developing students' creativity and adaptability—skills essential for their competitiveness and long-term success. Equally, we emphasize strong language competencies, particularly in English, as well as in other major languages.

Our faculty members are highly qualified and capable of teaching in multiple global languages. In addition to full English-language degree programs, we offer selected courses in German and French under our International Management program.

The Faculty of Management is ranked and widely recognized as an excellent business school in the Eduniversal ranking. Based on the evaluation of scientific outcomes of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development, and Youth of the Slovak Republic, we are ranked second best among all social science faculties in Slovakia for scientific excellence.

### WHAT ARE SLOVAKIA'S KEY STRENGTHS OR ASSETS THAT MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS?

Slovakia offers investors a significant advantage through its highly skilled, well-educated, and cost-effective workforce, with particular strengths in engineering, IT, and manufacturing.

Key employment sectors include services, industry (especially automotive), wholesale and retail trade, public administration, education, healthcare, and construction.

Strategically located in the heart of Europe, Slovakia provides direct access to major European markets, making it an ideal base for business expansion and investment.

### WHAT NICHE SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO BOOST ITS COMPETITIVENESS?

Slovakia should increasingly focus on roles and industries with high added value. While the country is still widely recognized as a manufacturing hub, it possesses potential to create a sustainable and competitive economy. Key niche areas for strategic development include information technology (IT), research and development (R&D), and innovation-driven industries. By investing in digitalization, advanced manufacturing technologies, software development, artificial intelligence, automotive innovation (especially electric and autonomous vehicles), and green technologies, Slovakia can diversify its economy and secure a more resilient and future-proof position in the European and global markets.

### WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

We have successfully completed our first year operating under the new brand and are proud to have received positive feedback from clients, candidates, and employees – a strong endorsement given the scale of the transition from a well-established legacy brand.

Over the past year, we have serviced an average of 620 temporary workers per day and achieved the significant milestone of placing at least one candidate in a permanent position every single day.

Additionally, we have expanded our client portfolio, strengthened relationships with key partners, and improved operational efficiency through enhanced digital tools and internal processes. These results reflect not only the commitment of our team but also our ability to adapt, grow, and deliver consistent value in a dynamic market environment.

### WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Our current biggest challenge is the ongoing economic crisis, which is destabilizing the labour market. Many employers are postponing projects, scaling back operations, or even releasing employees, leading to increased uncertainty across industries.

Additionally, the newly introduced transaction tax, effective from April 1st, is further complicating the situation, as it applies to salaries and directly increases labour costs for companies.

This combination of economic pressure and rising operational costs may impact both hiring volumes and client investment decisions. To address these challenges, we are focusing on maintaining flexibility, supporting clients with tailored workforce solutions, and continuously improving operational efficiency to protect our competitiveness in a shifting market environment.

### HOW DO YOU DRIVE INNOVATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

Despite operating in a highly regulated industry, we drive innovation by integrating AI and automation to enhance efficiency and compliance. We have also expanded our services to include accounting, allowing us to offer broader, value-added solutions to our clients while maintaining agility and fostering continuous improvement.

### WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF YOUR WORK THAT CONSISTENTLY EXCITE YOU AND ARE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR YOU?

The dynamic nature of our sector, where no two days are alike, consistently fuels my motivation.

I am driven by the constant evolution of client and market needs, the opportunity to build impactful relationships, and the ability to deliver tailored solutions that create real value for both individuals and businesses.

### WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Lower taxation would make Slovakia a more competitive and attractive destination for business.

Reducing the tax burden would stimulate investment, support growth, and enhance the country's long-term economic resilience.

## Talent Solutions

# IVANA HERETIK VAČOKOVÁ

CEO  
TALENT SOLUTIONS  
SLOVAKIA



Expert in recruitment services and experienced manager, with over 18 years' experience on agency side including international exposure (Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, Czech Republic). Specialties: people management, interim management, project management, process implementation, performance management, green field projects, foreign direct investment consultancy, tendering process, training & development, SSC, RPO, HR consultancy. As an all-rounder, I am passionate about driving business success through strategic planning, effective leadership, and fostering a culture of innovation.

WWW.TALENT-SOLUTIONS.SK

# KATARÍNA VRÁBOVÁ

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ADIENT SLOVAKIA S.R.O.



Katarína Vrábová serves as the Executive Finance Director for Adient's Global Business Services (GBS), Bratislava Site Lead, and Managing Director for Adient Slovakia s.r.o., appointed in January 2025. She leads Adient's global GBS operations across Bratislava and Monterrey, overseeing comprehensive finance functions (PTP, OTC, RTR, Compliance, Global Process Improvement). Key focuses include driving process enhancements, efficiencies, simplifications, automations, strengthening compliance, and fostering talent development. This role follows significant tenure as Finance Director RTR, where she led the department through key transformations, delivering targeted process optimization and managing strategic transitions. She recently completed the Adient Accelerate leadership program at Michigan Ross University. Her career reflects consistent progression through finance leadership within and outside of GBS.

Adient, a global leader in automotive seating that improves the experience of a world in motion, maintains a substantial footprint in Slovakia, solidifying its role as a key player in the nation's vital automotive sector. Its operations include manufacturing plants in Lučenec (foam, metal components) and Žilina (complete seating systems), a crucial engineering and testing center in Trenčín focused on product innovation, and a major Shared Service Center (SSC) in Bratislava. This SSC employs around 700 people, providing global support in Finance, IT, HR, Purchasing, and other functions, complementing the hundreds employed at the manufacturing and technical sites.

## SLOVAKIA'S BUSINESS CLIMATE: ASSETS AND IMPERATIVES

**Attracting Investment:** Slovakia continues to draw investors with core strengths. Its strategic location in Central Europe offers prime export access. As a Eurozone member, it provides crucial currency stability unlike some regional neighbors. The country benefits from a skilled, educated, and cost-effective workforce, achieving high value-added per employee compared to CEE peers. A strong tradition in automotive and electronics manufacturing further strengthens its appeal.

**Boosting Competitiveness:** To enhance its competitive edge, Slovakia must pivot from traditional manufacturing towards innovation and R&D. Given the automotive industry's significance, supporting the transition to electromobility, connected vehicles, and sustainable technologies is paramount. Cultivating niches in related high-tech fields and improving the path from innovation to market success are vital for future growth.

**Future-Ready Priorities:** Ensuring sustainable economic growth requires focus. Creating a transparent, predictable, and stable business environment through consistent regulations and competitive tax policies is fundamental. Secondly, Slovakia needs robust support mechanisms for R&D and innovation, fostering collaboration between industry and research. Thirdly, comprehensive education reform is essential to equip the workforce with digital and green skills. Addressing potential labor shortages through strategic policies and effectively utilizing EU funding (like the Recovery and Resilience Facility) for green and digital transitions are also key priorities.

## THE ADIENT PERSPECTIVE: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATION

**Near-Term Challenges:** Like others in the sector, Adient faces challenges in Slovakia. Rising operational costs and recent tax changes potentially impacting Slovakia's regional competitiveness are significant concerns. Navigating the complex transition to electric vehicles requires ongoing adaptation in production and supply chains. Securing and retaining skilled labor remains critical. Additionally, meeting ambitious global sustainability targets and new reporting standards (like CSRD) demands considerable focus and investment.

**Driving Innovation:** Adient actively drives innovation through its global and local R&D network, including the Trenčín technical center. The company explores future mobility needs, developing concepts for autonomous vehicle seating solutions. Sustainability is a core innovation driver, focusing on using recycled/recyclable materials and reducing product carbon footprints. Operational excellence, enhanced by automation and AI, and strategic partnerships further bolster innovation. The Bratislava SSC also contributes, particularly through process improvements and automation.

**Improving the Business Environment:** From an industry standpoint, the single most impactful change would be enhancing the predictability and competitiveness of Slovakia's business environment. This means ensuring stable regulations and a competitive tax framework compared to neighboring countries. Coupled with this, consistent, long-term government support for R&D and meaningful education reform would directly address the critical need to move up the value chain and secure the talent pipeline for advanced industries.

Adient's continued investment highlights Slovakia's inherent advantages. However, ensuring future prosperity for both the company and the country requires a concerted effort by Slovakia to foster an environment where innovation thrives, talent flourishes, and businesses can operate with stability and confidence. Addressing these strategic priorities is crucial for navigating future challenges and capitalizing on growth opportunities.



# BART WATERLOOS

MANAGING PARTNER  
CLA SLOVAKIA S.R.O.



Bart Waterloos is currently the Managing Partner of CLA Slovakia. He started his career more than 25 years ago at VGD Belgium and then moved in 1999 to the Prague office of VGD to become there responsible for 4 years as the audit manager. In 2004 he moved permanently to Slovakia, where through mergers, acquisitions and the cooperation with his Slovak partners, he developed VGD Slovakia into a top player among the audit and advisory companies in Slovakia. Currently their more than 150 experts focus on the larger family owned SME entrepreneurs. Bart is currently responsible for the overall management, with still a particular attention for international clients in both consulting, audit and recently also ESG advice.

With 25 years of experience in the region, I'm often asked why an investor should select Slovakia as the destination for their next investment. During a recent lunch meeting with a group of Belgian entrepreneurs here in Bratislava, I explained that **Slovakia's key strength** is certainly the fact that it **has adopted the Euro**. This clearly gives it a competitive advantage over the neighbouring countries like Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland, who have not adopted the common currency. For private businesses, where we as advisors have our key focus, the fact that they don't have to worry about a potential currency issue, is for sure something that helps them in keeping their ease of mind in this challenging entrepreneurial time.

Further Slovakia has sufficient space available for future expansion and can accommodate investors who are encountering limits on their space, which is certainly in Belgium and the Netherlands, limited.

There is no **single change** that would make Slovakia an even better place to invest in, but if I have to name one, I would hope for a more transparent legislative process and for (tax) laws that are discussed beforehand with a wider audience, so that the business environment can prepare for the changes.

When talking to entrepreneurs, we should also name the potential risks. And here I see **the shortage of the workforce** as one of the **top priorities** that should be handled. In certain regions there is an almost full employment, but at the same time the workforce is ageing, with too many bright young people leaving for a foreign adventure. Creating an environment in which these young people are encouraged to stay in Slovakia, or return home, is certainly a strategic priority that would need a combined effort of the government, the private sector and the overall society.

Even though we are currently ourselves not impacted directly by this decline in the workforce, it is certainly on our radar. Each year we see that there are less and less students who choose an economic orientation, so the pool of talents we can select from is shrinking. Certainly, a big **challenge** is that the profiles we need is changing and that the speed of these changes is accelerating. On the one hand we need more IT literate staff and persons who can analyse data, on the other hand we also need good communicators who can translate the findings from those data into real insights and information for our clients. Because that is the best part of our job and **what excites me** in my job until today: making sure that we support our clients with their administration, explain to them their pain-points, so that they can make balanced decisions and grow their business.

As per 1st of January 2025 we have successfully completed our **re-branding to CLA Slovakia** and that is certainly one of the **major achievements** we realised over the past year. It took a lot of effort from all teams involved, from HR over IT and Marketing. But foremost from our fantastic staff, as I see that they have embraced this change with open hands. Step by step we are finding our way in the CLA Global network as it became the 15th largest global accounting network in the survey by the IAB. One of the recent formed internal groups is fully dedicated to Technology and Innovation and this will help us drive our growth by implementing smart technology solutions that in turn drive innovation. By sharing know-how, resources and experience with the entire network, we will be able to fuel our growth and thus also support our clients in their growth. Over the last year we have implemented our first AI agents that will accelerate how we search for our knowledge and many more projects are in the pipeline for the next 12 months.

As an entrepreneur, you're constantly navigating changes and challenges in various aspects of your business. We take care of these tasks for you, so you can focus on what truly matters – growing your core business and achieving success.

We are a Slovak company with an international reach. For more than 23 years, we've grown into one of the leading consulting firms in the country. Internationally, we are part of CLA Global – a prominent global network of independent accounting and advisory firms.

We provide our clients with expert services in accounting, taxation, audit, transaction advisory, digital transformation, and consulting on grants and subsidies. Our clients are primarily entrepreneurs and owner-managed small and medium-sized enterprises.

With more than 200 specialists across our offices in Bratislava, Piešťany, and Banská Bystrica, we offer comprehensive support across a wide range of industries.



DEUTSCHE TELEKOM IT SOLUTIONS

# L'UBOR ŽATKO

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
DEUTSCHE TELEKOM IT  
SOLUTIONS SLOVAKIA



Since 2009, L'ubor has worked at Deutsche Telekom Group, specifically at Slovak Telekom, a.s., where he and his team designed and implemented numerous strategic and transformational projects. In 2016, he was appointed Director of Network Development and Construction at Slovak Telekom and T-Mobile Czech Republic, overseeing improvements and roll-out in mobile and fixed networks. Since 2019, he has served as Chief Technology and IT Officer at Magyar Telekom, the largest mobile operator in Hungary. As a member of the company's top executive management, he was responsible for strategy, efficiency, and implementation of new products and innovations, as well as for leading the organization in the areas of IT systems and infrastructure, mobile and fixed networks. He has extensive experience in major companies in the telecommunications and banking sectors.

## WHAT SINGLE CHANGE WOULD MAKE SLOVAKIA A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS?

Slovakia must pursue bold, pro-growth economic reforms that unshackle rather than constrain enterprise. Currently, our fully loaded labor costs are a significant disadvantage to surrounding countries. Businesses thrive where there is efficiency, clarity, and support for long-term development. As someone who has worked across various European markets, I believe Slovakia has the talent, location, and ambition to become a leader in digital transformation—but only if supported by a business-friendly, innovation-driven ecosystem.

Another point is that improving the enforceability of the law would significantly transform Slovakia's business environment. We need a legal and regulatory framework that is predictable, fair, and transparent—where companies operate with confidence and integrity is rewarded. Such a foundation is essential for attracting investment, fostering innovation, and enabling economic reform.

## WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOUR COMPANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

As the largest IT employer in Slovakia, DT ITSÖ SK is navigating several critical challenges on the road ahead:

- **The macroeconomic environment** remains uncertain, influenced by inflation, energy costs, and abrupt global and local decrees. This puts pressure on competitiveness, business continuity, investments, and customer behavior.
- **Competitive global IT market** – As companies continue to reduce their IT spending, there is increasing pressure to deliver high-quality solutions at a lower cost and highest quality. To remain competitive, we must transform ourselves.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is perhaps the most defining challenge—and opportunity—of our time. We are seeing a shift from theoretical debate to concrete applications. AI has become a central tool for business efficiency, automation, and transformation. Constant dynamic re-skilling and identification of attractive skills of the future are becoming absolute must for companies in our segment.

At DT ITSÖ SK, we embrace these challenges with a clear strategy: invest in innovation, focus on quality and customer value, and build a resilient organization

with strong leadership and deep technical expertise.

## WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2024 ARE YOU PROUD OF THE MOST?

In 2024, we were honored to be named *Najzamestnávateľ* (Top Employer) in the *IT and Telecommunications* category. This recognition goes far beyond a title—it reflects our long-standing commitment to building a resilient, people-first organization, even in the face of global economic uncertainty. It is a strong affirmation of our culture, values, and the joint effort of every colleague who contributes to our shared success.

While others in our industry responded to market pressures with large-scale downsizing, we maintained organizational stability and refocused on high-value roles. We strengthened our presence in software development, cloud, AI, and business intelligence solutions thanks to strategic transformation and expanding our global portfolio. We also launched new offerings like Open Sovereign Cloud and extended our finance and controlling services to new international clients.

Our internal culture continues to evolve. In 2024, we invested over 117 000 hours into employee training, with 70% of our team completing foundational AI education and delivering over 1 300 training sessions. Our dual education program now supports 83 students, and more than 200 of its alumni have joined our workforce, reinforcing our position as a talent incubator. Initiatives like EU Telework, mental well-being coaching, and the Shares2You employee investment program further reflect our commitment to holistic support and modern flexibility.

But our pride extends beyond business. In 2024, we made measurable contributions to the environment—donating over 1 100 refurbished IT devices, reducing 3.2 tons of e-waste and 200 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, and organizing numerous employee-led volunteer activities across Slovakia. Our efforts in sustainability and social responsibility underline our belief that success means building a company that delivers value to clients and society at large.

Ultimately, this award represents the strength of our values—growth, trust, innovation, and integrity. It confirms that Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions Slovakia isn't just a top employer but a vibrant community that empowers people to grow and change the world through technology.

# 7 GOOD REASONS TO JOIN AMCHAM SLOVAKIA



## REPUTATION

AmCham is a respected organization and progressive & tech savvy platform for the local business community to push the transformation of the Slovak economy for better competitiveness.



## NETWORKING

AmCham provides the **highest quality events**, not only in the physical but also digital space.



## COMMUNITY

AmCham is a good place where **investors and business partners** meet.



## VISIBILITY

AmCham provides **increased visibility** in the business community and inspires our leaders to drive strategic initiatives.



## IMPACT

Powerful and direct **legislative impact** in Slovakia, supporting the continuous improvement of business environment. Key policy pillars:



**INSTITUTIONS**  
#ruleoflaw



**PEOPLE**  
#skills4future



**INNOVATIONS**  
#InnovativeSlovakia



**REGIONS**  
#eastinnovation



## INFORMATION

Members can enjoy **increased media exposure** through quotes, articles, interviews in major media outlets.



## INNOVATIONS

AmCham brings **new topics** to the table with true visionary thinking.



AlslovakIA