

# MATEJ BEŇUŠKA

MANAGING PARTNER  
PA MATTERS S R.O.



Matej leads PA Matters, a public affairs consultancy advising organisations in complex regulatory and stakeholder environments. Under his direction, PA Matters has built a strong market position and received several EMEA-level recognitions. His work has gained international attention, particularly in relation to ride-hailing policy and regulatory developments across Central and Eastern Europe. Matej focuses on regulatory intelligence, stakeholder engagement and practical policy input, helping clients understand evolving rules, anticipate risks and engage with public institutions responsibly. Known for his calm approach in high-pressure situations, he works with clients to navigate complexity and find practical, sustainable solutions.

## IN THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE, WHAT SHOULD SLOVAKIA PRIORITIZE TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE WITHIN THE EU AND GLOBALLY?

Slovakia still has important advantages: its central European location, Eurozone membership, industrial base and technically skilled workforce. However, these strengths are no longer enough. The country's economic model, built heavily on industrial production, cost competitiveness and automotive manufacturing, is under growing pressure.

The outlook should be assessed realistically. Recent forecasts point to subdued growth rather than a strong convergence story. The OECD expects Slovakia's real GDP to grow by only 1.1% in 2026 and 1.8% in 2027, with sluggish trade, fiscal consolidation and uncertainty weighing on investment. The National Bank of Slovakia also expects public debt to reach around 63% of GDP in 2026 and, without further consolidation, exceed 65% of GDP in 2028. In April 2026, S&P downgraded Slovakia to A, citing elevated fiscal deficits and projecting the general government deficit to average 4.8% of GDP between 2026 and 2029.

This does not mean Slovakia lacks potential. It means the margin for error is smaller. Slovakia must focus on productivity, institutional quality, predictable regulation, innovation, education and talent retention. Without these, the country risks remaining a production base rather than becoming a higher-value economy.

## IF YOU COULD DEFINE ONE BOLD REFORM OR STRATEGIC SHIFT THAT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE SLOVAKIA'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

The most important shift would be long-term stability and predictability in legislation and regulation. Businesses can adapt to stricter rules, higher costs or changing market conditions. What they struggle with is frequent legislative change, weak impact assessment and inconsistent implementation.

A stable and predictable regulatory framework is one of the most important foundations of competitiveness. If companies do not know how rules will change, how they will be interpreted or whether they will be enforced consistently, they become more cautious. That affects investment, hiring and innovation.

For Slovakia, improving predictability is not an abstract legal issue. It is a practical economic priority. In a low-growth environment, uncertainty becomes even more expensive.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST STRATEGIC CHALLENGE YOUR COMPANY IS CURRENTLY NAVIGATING?

Public affairs in Slovakia is becoming more important, but also more closely watched. This is a natural development. Companies, public institutions and stakeholders all need clearer, more transparent and more professional dialogue.

Slovakia is currently preparing new lobbying legislation, which will be an important development for the public affairs sector. We are curious to see how the law will be applied in practice and hope it will contribute to more transparency, clearer rules and greater professionalisation of dialogue between business, public institutions and other stakeholders.

For PA Matters, the challenge is to continue building trust in public affairs as a legitimate professional discipline. Good public affairs is not about avoiding regulation. It is about making regulation smarter, more predictable and more workable. Our role is to help clients understand the environment, bring practical input into policy discussions and engage with public institutions responsibly.

## WHAT LEADERSHIP QUALITY DO YOU BELIEVE IS MOST ESSENTIAL IN TODAY'S COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT?

Calm judgment. Leaders today operate in an environment shaped by political uncertainty, regulatory pressure, technological change and public scrutiny. In such conditions, speed is important, but reaction without perspective can create more risk than value.

Good leadership requires the ability to separate noise from substance, understand different stakeholder interests and make decisions that are both practical and responsible. In public affairs, this is especially important. The best solutions are rarely created through pressure or confrontation. They are created through preparation, credibility, timing and a clear understanding of how institutions and people actually work.