

The Need for a Future Employment Plan

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Throughout history, economies have adapted to technologies while accelerating their development. Companies that managed to combine these two areas have always succeeded. Those that did not, became defunct. Today, we are standing at the threshold of widespread change, the extent of which is difficult to imagine, yet it is our obligation to be prepared. Digitalization and Industry 4.0 will revolutionize the world of work and children at school today will work in professions that do not exist today. The role of EU and national politicians will be to facilitate the acquisition of skills needed for working in the future labor market. Fundamental reform of the education process is needed. Information will no longer be so important, as internet access becomes universal. The ability to separate, process and compare information will become a crucial skill and how fast these skills can be taught will be vital. Education can no longer be a closed system that we enter and leave after a few years with an academic degree. Society is evolving so rapidly that lifetime learning of new skills will be a necessity.

The governments of some EU countries already understand this and are making the necessary changes. Unfortunately, others are still following a century-old system. The Slovak Republic alone lacks more than 10,000 experts, IT and ITC specialists and in the EU; the total lacking is around a million. This is an alarming state of affairs and needs to be addressed rapidly.

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Today, we are standing at the threshold of widespread change, the extent of which is difficult to imagine, yet it is our obligation to be prepared. Digitalization and Industry 4.0 will revolutionize the world of work and children at school today will work in professions that do not exist today.

Moreover, when we have people able to work with modern technologies, we need to ensure there is enough work. Industry 4.0 will not need “coal and steel”, but fast internet infrastructure, free data flows and a market without barriers. While our competitors on the global scene, China and India, have already solved these problems, the EU is still a union of 28 different markets with different rules. One of our aims is to remove and eliminate these rules and complete the creation of the Digital Single Market. When the Digital Single Market is finished, it is estimated that EU GDP will benefit to the

tune of approx. €415 million, and, while administration costs will be reduced by about 80%, productivity will increase. It will create new opportunities for European companies, especially SMEs, as well as millions of new jobs.

We have already removed geoblocking on the Internet, which broadens access to electronic services in the EU, and we have cancelled roaming charges and harmonized Internet frequency bands. In the future, we need to support the building of fast 5G networks in more remote areas and unify legislation that will facilitate and simplify the flow of data and improve consumer protection. We, of course, cannot forget about the security of personal and corporate data and protection against industrial and political espionage and hacking. For this purpose, we have created rapid-response systems in every member state that can localize attacks and prevent damage.

In the future, the production of large and complex machines and objects will be much more diversified than today. Therefore, governments should consider increasing assistance for SMEs, especially those involved in innovation and start-ups. We must also not forget entrepreneurs who may be harmed by digitalization. SMEs need to be given enough information to be able to find their feet in this new and rapidly changing environment. The EU, and especially the national states, must create an environment in which SMEs are able to adapt to this new trend and fully integrate into the digitalized economy.

BIOGRAPHY

- Project Manager, Považské Engineering Works, Považská Bystrica (1983-1991)
- Branch Director, Ernst & Young CS Consulting (1992-1993)
- CFO, CEO of Coca Cola Beverages Slovakia (1994-2004)
- Governmental Plenipotentiary for the Introduction of the Euro, Government of the Slovak Republic (2004-2006)

OFFICES HELD IN A POLITICAL PARTY

- Member of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party (EPP) (2005-2014)
- Vice Chairman of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party for Economic and European Affairs (2012-2014)

OFFICES HELD IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

- Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (2006-2014)
- Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Affairs (2010-2012)
- Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Affairs (2012-2014)