

# Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation

Slovakia's transition to a knowledge-based economy has been on the agenda of several successive governments. Two things are clear: it is a long-term project requiring solid commitment from the government and academia, but also the business sphere; its success is of crucial importance for the future of Slovak economy.

Education has always been among AmCham's key areas of focus and the establishment of the Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation in 2007 marks the beginning of its intensified involvement in this field. Some of the committee's major achievements as well as its current agenda are introduced by its Chair, František Jakab of Technical University of Košice.

## Leadership



**Marcel Rebroš,**  
Cisco Systems  
Executive Sponsor



**František Jakab,** Technical  
University of Košice  
Chair



**Milan Polča,**  
U. S. Steel Košice  
Deputy Chair

## Members



## BRIEF INTERVIEW



**FRANTIŠEK JAKAB**

Director Technical university  
of Košice UCITT

### What led to the creation of the Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation? What are its major achievements over the past few years?

The Committee was established in 2007 to contribute to the effective implementation of the education reform in Slovakia and foster regular dialogue with key decision makers. It also aimed to contribute to better conditions for R&D, innovation and technology transfer, provide a platform for sharing best practices among

AmCham members and to support entrepreneurship.

Over the years, we have developed a working relationship with the Ministry of Education. One of the examples of constructive cooperation was the participation of Committee members at the Advisory Committee on Education Law and Law on Vocational Education. The Committee members were the key subjects participating on commenting the Education Law and drafting of the Law on Vocational Education and 78% of the comments included in our position paper were accepted.

Another significant achievement was the initiative "2012 YEAR of EDUCATION". The initiative was a public discussion forum on the future of education in Slovakia. Its key objective was to link education with the needs of employers in order to boost the employment prospects of graduates in the Slovak labor market. More than 70 expert solutions grouped into 17 areas can be found in the brochure that was prepared as a result.

We have also launched and successfully run several programs connecting the academia with the business community. Mentor Network Program aims to provide students with an opportunity for

mentoring and career advisory by business leaders. Train the Trainer is designed for university teachers and lecturers to get an insight into the current business trends.

### What are currently the main issues and concerns addressed by this Committee?

Quality education and science are a priority of Slovak society and should therefore become also a priority of the Slovak government. A high quality educational system cannot be achieved through promoting quantity but only via setting up a quality strategy of modern education linked to the needs of the industrial and business spheres while providing substantial financial incentives.

We have identified the following as key issues that concern our members:

- effective connection of the education sector with the labor market requirements
- system of coordination of vocational education, especially diversification of the financing schemes, the motivation criteria and tax deductibility (specifically defined items provided as business support for education activities to be considered as tax deductible)

### What are the main goals this Committee has for the near future?

We want to contribute with concrete solutions and assist in their implementation in specific areas:

- effective investment into human resources and education;
- improvement of conditions for researchers in Slovakia, support of internationally competitive research and its adequate link to the business sector, public support of business expenditures on R&D
- promoting partnerships between schools and businesses and pushing for more business training in school curricula and contributing to better vocational education

We also plan to actively monitor and contribute to legislative framework concerning business-academic cooperation (e.g. tax regimes of companies supporting education and other).

We would also like to organize an event with high level government, corporate and academic sector participation connected to Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



More information  
can be found at  
[www.amcham.sk](http://www.amcham.sk)