

CSR — connecting work life and personal life

by **Michal Liday**, President, Business Leaders Forum;
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BIOGRAPHY

Michal Liday graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Comenius University in Bratislava, majoring in mathematics and computer technology. He pursued postgraduate studies at the University of Economics in Bratislava where he specialized in Quantitative Methods in Economics. He completed study internships at Mankato State University in Minnesota (USA), City University London (UK) and Johannes Kepler University in Linz (Austria). In 2010 he completed the General Management Program at Harvard Business School in Boston (USA).

He began his professional life in 1992 at the University of Economics in Bratislava. In 1997 he started working for Tatra banka in the position of branch director. He became the director of the Department of Private Banking in 2000. Five years later he reoriented himself to retail banking. Since 2007 he has been a member of the Tatra banka Board responsible for retail banking. In 2015 he became Managing Director and Chairman of the Tatra banka Board.

We live in a time when a bank robbery resonates with society more than a breakthrough innovation or a visit by a Nobel Prize winner. The media have long adhered to the mantra that says "good news is bad news" and to the principle that a text which does not scare or upset anyone is not journalism but advertising. By choosing mostly negative topics, pessimism is becoming widespread. People then naturally feel that society is in a worse state than it actually is.

But news does not need to be strictly negative. The world is not just black and white. Besides tragedies, natural disasters and political scandals, there are lots of positive examples of human selflessness and innovations that move society towards the better. I dedicate my space in Connection magazine to topics which people do not write and talk about because they are exceptionally positive.

The Slovak banking sector has been a significant contributor to the well-being of the whole society for a long time. In the last year, banks have again contributed millions of euros to hundreds of useful projects. At the same time, the focus of non-profit activities of the individual banks and their foundations is varied and diverse. That said, what they have in common is their constant effort to contribute to a positive change in society.

Tatra banka has chosen to support artistic production, design and higher education — and since it established its foundation it has not only stayed on course with its decision but also remained strong in its determination.

We have been long-standing partners of important national cultural institutions and our foundation provides grants aimed at promoting arts and design. We have been awarding artists for almost twenty-five years and we are honored to be able to support talented artists and to create an environment that enables their further development.

The world is becoming "borderless". Young people discover the opportunities to find self-actualization outside Slovakia more and more often. However, at the same time, Slovakia needs experts, morally-stable and well-oriented people. That is also why we have directed our long-time support towards higher education. We support the quality of educational processes at universities, support institutions that are dedicated to education and to its improvement, and, of course, we support individual students.

Every year, we organize inspiring lectures by Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners that are free of charge and open to the general public. We believe that big things can be done in Slovakia. We also believe that people with international experience, good habits, know-how and values can contribute to a higher quality of life in our country.

However, inspired by the motto "if we want to change something, we need to start with ourselves", we see our employees as the most valuable essence of our company philanthropy. Charity and donations represent an inseparable part of our activities. We support smaller and larger

projects that are often initiated by our employees themselves.

All staff members have their own values and ambitions outside the world of work and subconsciously feel an inclination towards the work of various community organizations. It is right for staff members to support the activities of associations and organizations whose work is close to their values and beliefs while actually helping people, communities and the regions in which they live.

The more we dedicate ourselves to this topic, the more we are certain that charity has an important place in Tatra banka and that it has the potential to become an important part of our company culture.

That is why we increased the time allowance for volunteering from 1.5 days to two whole days that our employees can spend carrying out volunteering activities and for which they are entitled to full compensation of their salary. We see volunteering activities as a strong motivation and engagement factor for our employees.

I am proud to be surrounded by people who are passionate about these topics and that we can give them an opportunity to connect their work life with things they care about in their personal lives.

I believe that such a mindset can help us inspire other people and companies to also help make positive changes. People need hope — and especially young people long for an assurance that they live in a decent country and can positively influence its direction.