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NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR ARRIVES TO SLOVENIA

WELCOME RECEPTION IN HONOR OF NEWLY ACCREDITED US AMBASSADOR



WE WANT TO BECOME A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

ZDRAVKO POČIVALŠEK
Slovenian Minister for Economic Development and Technology



I ALREADY FEEL AT HOME

H.E. JURAJ CHMIEL
Ambassador of the Czech Republic



LAUNCH PARTY FOR THE 1ST ISSUE OF DIPLOMACY & COMMERCE SLOVENIA

BRITISH AMBASSADOR H.E. SOPHIE HONEY HOSTED A COCKTAIL RECEPTION



WE HIGHLY VALUE SLOVENIAN PEOPLE AND CULTURE

PETER HASSLACHER
Director of ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA for Slovenia, Albania & Kosovo



THE PRESENT COOPERATION INVITES US TO GO FURTHER

H.E. FLORENCE FERRARI
French Ambassador to Slovenia

FINNISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

H.E. MARKKU VIRRI
Ambassador of Finland



ALWAYS READY FOR AN EXTRA MILE

CEO OF AMCHAM SLOVENIA AND VICE-CHAIR OF AMCHAMS IN EUROPE





I Already **Feel at Home**

Slovenia charmed me with its richness in geography, tradition, culture and history. I see many opportunities to further built on our excellent bilateral relations by pursuing common positions in the international arena, when it comes to migration, security and defense, internal functioning of the EU and trade.

H.E. JURAJ CHMIEL,
Ambassador of the Czech Republic

 Even though he has been for a very short on the post of the Ambassador to Slovenia, H.E. Juraj Chmiel, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Republic of Slovenia has fond impressions about his new home. "My first impressions are overall very positive. I have been honoured to deliver my credentials to Mr President one day after my arrival and since then I have been welcomed warmly by many institutions, political, cultural and economic", says the ambassador. "Slovenia charmed me with its richness in geography, tradition, culture and history. Coming from the Central European countries, I have positively noticed many similarities and quite early began to feel home."

H.E. Chmiel have served in Somalia within UNOSOM mission during the civil war, later as Ambassador in Nigeria with accreditations to 6 other countries, in Australia also with concurrent 6 accreditations in the Pacific region and just recently in Hungary. "Each posting is a unique one, but the ones in this region are very specific because we share a common history and cultural heritage", says our interlocutor.

In which aspect the two countries have common interests in the international arena?

 **THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC SKY-ROCKETED AFTER THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, BUT THERE IS ALWAYS THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND NEW FIELDS TO WORK ON**

Both countries are smaller Central European states, have the experience with totalitarian past and belong to the family of younger members in the Euro-Atlantic organizations. In the NATO, we share the experience from Afghanistan and other missions. Our countries have quite a lot experience with sending military forces abroad into such a distant territories and therefore it is crucial for us to share experience, focus on interoperability and capacity building. Another important aspect is the migration. Our two states should

learn from the past mistakes and work together to avoid them in the future. Central Europe with its unique historical experience should be heard in the EU. I believe that in the EU we follow similar goals. The Czech Republic supports the idea of enlargement in the area of Western Balkans. The history teaches us that this is a way, how to mitigate conflicts and grievances and focus on the future challenges together. We are also cooperating in the negotiations for the Multi-annual financial framework and several other areas of interest. The collaboration in science, business, security and other areas is vital for our states to increase our voice and pursue our interests.

What are the possibilities for better cooperation with the Visegrad Group and the Austerlitz Format?

I believe that the cooperation with Visegrad successfully continues. The Slovenian President Borut Pahor has for example visited Prague in the early October as a part of the Czech Presidency in the V4. However, further deepening and widening of V4+Slovenia cooperation is possible. We would welcome, if Slovenia decides to support our goals and projects. Our current presidency in the V4 is titled "Reasonable Europe". The first set of priorities named "Reasonable Solutions" is focused on the deepening of the internal market, Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership. The second cluster of priorities, "Revolutionary Technologies", consists of research, development, innovations and digitalization. The third one, "Reconciling and Redeeming Approaches" is dealing with crucial points that test the unity of the EU – the Multi-annual financial framework and the Asylum policy.

The list of topics is highly overlapping with the priorities of your government and therefore we welcome Slovenia to cooperate both on the high-level participation and on working level via political institutions, academic organizations or private companies. When our Foreign Minister Tomáš Petříček visited Slovenia in May 2018, he invited Slovenia to participate in the Slavkov 3+ Format. I am sure that Slavkov is a very useful platform and does not duplicate the EU or V4. Slavkov uses the bottom-up approach and endorses the various business and cultural activities.

What are your priorities when it comes to the bilateral relations?

In the bilateral sphere, I am happy to build on a very good relationship. My main areas of interest are the V4, security, economic di-



THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVENIA IN THE AVIATION IS ALSO STARTING TO BE MORE AND MORE INTERESTING AND I HOPE WE CAN PUSH IT FORWARD.

plomacy and regional cooperation. The V4 is very important, because it enables the Central European states to vocalize their interest and cooperate in their pursuit. The Czech Republic as well as Slovenia may achieve much greater impact in the international arena, when we speak with one voice. The V4 is a platform, where we can reach common stances. The security is obviously crucial, especially with the new challenges like global terrorism, regional instability, hybrid warfare, cyber-security, migration, etc. Economic cooperation became one of the cornerstones of modern diplomacy. Both our countries share a similar business culture focused on precision, quality, reliability and tradition. The current collaboration between the Czech and Slovene companies proves that both partners have a lot to offer. I will therefore try to facilitate further cooperation, to introduce

Czech companies on the Slovene market, to link together scientific research and business and to promote mutual projects. Concerning the regional cooperation, I call it a "people to people" diplomacy. In the regions, we are able to put together local companies, folklore, museums or students and bring the Czech Republic closer to Slovenian people and vice versa.

The Czech Republic provided the police and military aid to Slovenia in the years 2015 and 2016 when the Europe's migration crisis was at its peak. In which other areas related to security do you cooperate?

The Czech Republic is proud to be the only country that provided also military assistance. Unresolved migration is a serious threat to our security, demography and social coherence. The countries on the Schengen borders are bearing the

heaviest burden and I am convinced that the other EU Member States should be prepared to provide all the necessary aid. However, there are other areas of security cooperation – in the exchange of know-how and lessons learned, in the military and police exercises as well as in the defense industry. The collaboration in the aviation is also starting to be more and more interesting and I hope we can push it forward. The Embassy of the Czech Republic is preparing an exhibition of the Czech defense industry for the next year, where we would like to present the Czech companies as leaders in the field with notable tradition, high quality and NATO inter-operability.

How do you estimate economic cooperation between two countries?

The economic cooperation between Slovenia and the Czech Republic sky-rocketed after the economic crisis. We have reached in the overall sum of economic exchange in 2018 the sum of 1.5 billion Euro and the Czech Republic became the 9th biggest Slovenian trade partner. The economic growth has been very steady in the last year and the numbers for 2019 seem to topple even the last very successful year. Nevertheless, there is always a space for further improvement. I have personally spoken with many companies from the Czech Republic and they have shown a remarkable interest in the Slovenian market. We value your economic openness, qualified labour force, transparency and good infrastructure. Besides our current collaboration, there are many great Czech companies focused on defense industry, new technologies, green technologies, digitalization or infrastructure, which I would really like to see successfully operating here in Slovenia. 

I AM PROMOTING THE COLLABORATION IN THE FILM INDUSTRY, THEATRE, FINE ARTS OR LITERATURE

There are so many areas where we share cultural traits that it is very hard to pick the most important. We lived in a common state for hundreds of years. The Bohemian king Ottokar II even ruled part of Slovenia, while Barbara of Cilli married the Czech king Sigismund. Lot of famous artists from the old Czechia used to spend in 19th and the first half of the 20th century few months during the summer period and later also in the winter time in Slovenia and valuable friendships between intellectuals of both countries have been established. Our politicians cooperated in the Austrian monarchy, we fought together in the First World War and our engineers like Josef Ressel spent significant part of their careers in

Slovenia. From the long common past, we have inherited similar language, cuisine, folklore and even a sense of humour. I value highly the works of Plečnik and other great figures, but I also try to discover less known, yet important cultural ties. I am promoting the collaboration in the film industry, theatre, fine arts or literature. I was happy to find streets named after a great Czech teacher and inventor of the modern teaching method, who is nicknamed "Teacher of the Nations" - Jan Ámos Komenský. The Embassy is supporting a whole palette of various festivals and cultural projects in Slovenia and we are always trying to encourage Czech artists to visit Slovenia, to perform here and to join your festivities and art activities.

