

## **Meeting of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) Hybrid format**

### Minutes of the meeting

The Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) held a hybrid format meeting on 30 June 2021, at the Brazilian Embassy in Bratislava and on the online platform Zoom. The meeting had 27 participants, as presented below:

#### First section - BSCC members only

Mr. Milan Cigáň, President of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Eduardo Gradilone, Ambassador of Brazil to Slovakia  
Mr. Daniel Sajták, ESKADA  
Mr. Oldřich Holíš, Eurocoffee  
Ms. Andrea Lopatka, Eurocoffee  
Mr. Dalibor Cucor, SES Tlmace (online)  
Mr. Marcus Mucciolo, Microjuntas (online)  
Mr. Peter Falis, Danube Capital Advisors (online)  
Mr. Ricardo Maschietto Ayrosa, Embassy of Brazil  
Mr. Rafael Alonso, Embassy of Brazil  
Ms. Andrea Simančíkova, Embassy of Brazil

#### Second section – additional guests

Ms. Ingrid Brocková, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (video)  
Ms. Andrea Krajčíková, Director-general for Foreign Trade Policy and European Affairs of the Ministry of Economy (online)  
Mr. Juraj Siváček, Extraordinary Ambassador for Economic Diplomacy Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (online)  
Mr. Hélio Caldas, Head of the Division of Europe II, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (online)  
Mr. Lukáš Parížek, Chairman of the Council of Slovak Exporters  
Mr. Luciano Giugliano, President of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce in São Paulo (online)  
Mr. Juraj Čajko, Chamber of Commerce Trnava Region / Euro-brew  
Ms. Andréia Karch Vaz, Kavazbrazil  
Mr. Lukas Karch, Kavazbrazil  
Mr. Martin Fogo Halasz, Frutas  
Ms. Renata Megyesiova, IPM-Chirana  
Ms. Nicole Naelova, IPM-Chirana  
Ms. Dominika Horská, SARIO (online)  
Ms. Dana Stopková, Brazilex (online)  
Ms. Daniela Mihaldová, Bubo (online)  
Mr. Marian Bukoven, Lumacol (online)

2. The President of the BSCC thanked the Ambassador of Brazil for hosting the event and thanked guests for their attendance either at the Embassy or online. He invited members for a restart of the Chamber's activities, as Slovakia and the world come to a more favorable situation for the resumption of meetings and events.

3. The Ambassador of Brazil, Mr. Eduardo Gradilone, conveyed his expectation that bilateral transactions will consolidate its recovery trend as the most critical phase of the pandemic is overcome. He highlighted the increasingly visible presence of Brazilian products in common Slovak stores, as well as the better knowledge about Brazil among the population.

4. As a member-at-large of the Board of Directors, Ambassador Gradilone launched the process of election of the President and the Vice-President of the BSCC for the next two years. By decision of the Assembly members, Mr. Milan Cigáň and Mr. Levy Campos were reelected as President and Vice-President, respectively. President Cigáň thanked members for their trust on his capacity to fulfill his important task.

5. President Cigáň proposed the reduction of the Chamber's annual fee, from €350 to €200, due to the impact of the pandemic on the companies. Mr. Sajták proposed that €200 could be set as the minimum fee, but members willing to pay €350 or more, especially those less affected by the pandemic, should be welcome to do so. He was seconded by Mr. Holiš. By decision of the Assembly members, it was established that the minimal annual fee will be set at €200, but members are welcome to pay higher amounts in case they wish to further contribute to the Chamber's activities.

6. Mr. Sajták proposed that BSCC should bear the name of Mr. Peter Paulíček, given the latter's contribution for bilateral relations. President Cigáň informed that he would check BSCC's Bylaws regarding the possible change of the Chamber's name before any further discussion on the matter.

7. After a coffee break, President Cigáň opened the second section of the meeting, which included Slovak government authorities and other guests. The first part of the second section was specially dedicated to the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both Mercosur and the Visegrad Group, which were founded in 1991.

8. The Secretary of State of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Ingrid Brocková, stated that Brazil is Slovakia's most important political and economic partner in Latin America. She assessed that one of the main instruments for deepening bi-regional cooperation is the Trade Agreement between the EU and Mercosur. In this connection, she assured Slovakia's support for the conclusion of the agreement as quickly as possible, stressing that its main benefit for Slovak and Brazilian business entities would be the opening of markets. She mentioned that Slovak companies have started cooperation in Brazil regarding pulmonary ventilation solutions and nanotechnology research. She stated that the Foreign Ministry is ready to help BSCC and its members.

9. The Extraordinary Ambassador for Economic Diplomacy Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Juraj Siváček, noted that the crisis caused by the pandemic significantly affected bilateral trade in 2020, with a 13.8% drop in Slovak exports and a 26.5% drop in its imports from Brazil compared to 2019. He highlighted that Brazilian fruits and nuts are becoming more present in the Slovak market. He underscored Brazilian investments in Slovakia, such as those from Microjuntas, CRW Plásticos and Rudolph Usinados, and mentioned the success story of the Slovak company Eurocoffee, which sells Brazilian coffee, or companies in the field of energy, water management and IT technologies that have been operating in the Latin American region for a long time. He assured that the Slovak economic diplomacy is determined to develop cooperation with the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce regarding challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

10. The Director-General for Foreign Trade Policy and European Affairs of the Ministry of Economy, Ms. Andrea Krajčíková, said that SARIO conducted this year a survey among businesspeople and identified Brazil as a country that arouses great interest. She asserted that the EU wants to diversify its agreements and that Latin America would fit into this strategy, while Slovakia has always been in favor of the agreement with Mercosur. She stated that her country sees Brazil as a potential partner in issues of growing economic importance, such as biodiversity and the use of hydrogen. She mentioned SME support and digital economy as matters of particular attention. She stressed her Department's willingness to cooperate with BSCC.

11. The Head of the Economic Sector of the Brazilian Embassy, Mr. Rafael Alonso, made an overview of recent developments in the Brazilian economy. He noted that the percentage of people who had already received the first covid-19 vaccine dose in Brazil, at 35%, was very close to Slovakia's, and informed that everyone over 18 years old must have received their first dose until September if they wish. He noted that the drop in Brazilian GDP in 2020 was the smallest among the largest Latin American economies and that forecasts for this year have been revised to above 5%, meanwhile public debt has dropped. He highlighted recent measures that favor the attraction of investments, such as the Central Bank independence and Eletrobrás privatization laws, in addition to the expected conclusion of the Norte-Sul Railway works.

12. The Chairman of the Council of Slovak Exporters, Mr. Lukáš Parížek, recalled the official trip he made to Brasília, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in October 2018, as Secretary of State of the Foreign Ministry, during which he was surprised by the country's dynamism. He assessed that export promotion can also be linked to an increase in imports, so that the Slovak Exporters Council could support Slovak companies either interested in exporting or importing to/from Brazil and added that Brazilian companies can also join it. The Council currently has 75 members, ten of which are non-Slovak. He said the Council can support companies in three ways: i) standard support, as a collective platform; ii) individual support, as members can contact them at any time; and c) information support, with a non-overwhelming provision of specific data about the region of interest.

13. The President of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce in São Paulo, Mr. Luciano Giugliano, who is also the Honorary Consul of Slovakia in that city, said he was supporting Slovak companies BioTech and OMS in the development of activities in Brazil. He alluded to the negotiations of the Memorandum of Understanding between Inmetro (Brazilian Institute of Metrology Standardization and Industrial Quality) and UNMS, which he believes could be signed soon. He added that he hopes to be able to visit Slovakia soon after the pandemic subsides, possibly accompanying the President of Inmetro, Mr. Marcos Heleno Guerson Júnior.

14. The Head of the Division of Europe II of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hélio Caldas, evaluated the meeting as an important event to connect government representatives and businesspeople from both countries and to explore possibilities of cooperation. He said he is at BSCC disposal to help promote bilateral relations.

15. President Cigáň reported his participation, on June 28, in a meeting between Prime Minister Eduard Heger and the presidents of international Chambers of Commerce in Slovakia, during which he had the opportunity to share the views of BSCC companies. It was the first time such a meeting had been organized, but there are plans to repeat it every three months.

16. Having all items in the agenda been addressed, the meeting was adjourned.

Milan Cigáň  
President of the Brazilian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce

Bratislava, 30 June 2021