

# Dialogue



AmCham  
Slovenia



25 YEARS  
OF VALUES



**25**  
**LET** | *kliničnih  
raziskav  
v Sloveniji*

V 25 letih smo sponzorirali ali podprli 57 intervencijskih kliničnih raziskav, ki so gonilo razvoja in napredka v medicini, in s tem je več kot 780 bolnikov dobilo možnost inovativnega zdravljenja.

THE IDEA

Our guiding values for a successful business dialogue can be felt and experienced as trust, optimism, integrity, collaboration, and ambition.

Can you spot our values of dialogue in the word search puzzle?



AmCham  
Slovenia



25 YEARS  
OF VALUES

BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF  
THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

American Chamber of Commerce in  
Slovenia - AmCham Slovenia / Ameriška  
gospodarska zbornica v Sloveniji -  
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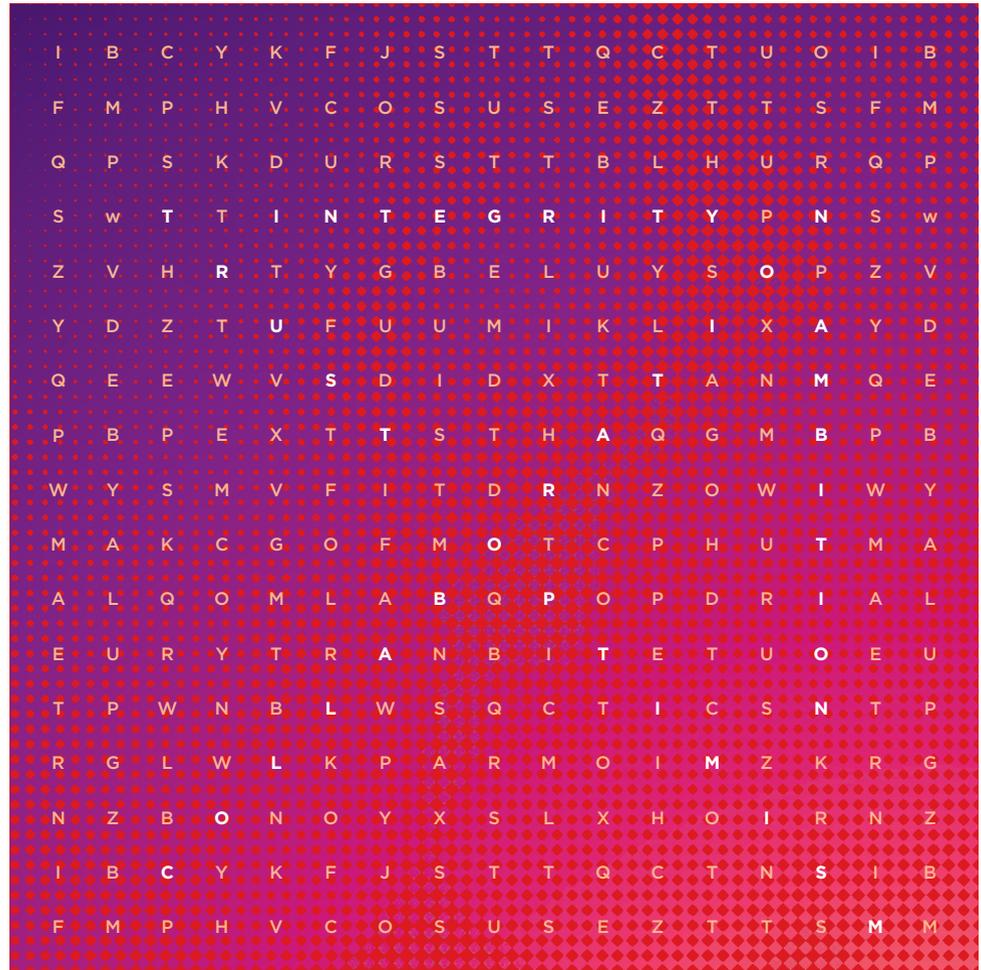
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*We must not  
take peace and  
prosperity for  
granted. Together,  
we are architects of  
a world where even  
the young can trust  
in the promise of  
the future.*

▲  
**Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc.**  
CEO of AmCham Slovenia  
and Chair of AmChams in  
Europe

# A JOURNEY OF MILESTONES: EMBRACING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The year 2024 marks a jubilee at AmCham Slovenia, celebrating 25 years of our business community's existence and 15 years of the enchanting magic known as AmCham YOUng. Anniversaries serve as compelling milestones, prompting reflection on the past, acknowledging accomplishments, recognizing mistakes, and embracing the lessons learned. Most importantly, they beckon us to gaze into the future with renewed passion and inspiration.

Fifteen years ago, when I joined AmCham, I thought I'd stay for maybe a year or two. Coming from the media, I thought it would be boring and expected limited challenges. Today, I can confidently say one must simply fall in love with everything we've co-created with you, our members, and partners. There are so many incredible events, delegations, initiatives, and, of course, rooted in my heart AmCham YOUng platform with all the fantastic young people, the Partnership for Change, the initiative which, from the start, breaks stereotypes, and, of course, the "I'm a teacher!" initiative, aiming to empower and elevate the reputation of the noblest profession that teaches us all.

I take pride in the enduring commitment of AmCham Slovenia, which has consistently operated under the mission statement of fostering a better business and life environment. This year, we've fortified this commitment with the values chosen by our members as guiding principles: Trust, Optimism, Collaboration, Integrity, and Ambition.

Anticipating continuing our collective journey, I eagerly await new shared and individual triumphs.

However, 2024 holds particular significance for me on a personal level. It marks a milestone as I embark on the journey illuminated by the power of the number 5, but you never ask a lady about her age. Right?! So, I feel inspired and fueled by the myriad challenges ahead.

It brings me great honor and joy that 49 AmChams across 47 countries have entrusted me with the role of Chairwoman of the umbrella organization AmChams in Europe. As we navigate the complexities of the global landscape, the paramount value of 2024, in my perspective, is undoubtedly trust.

We must not take peace and prosperity for granted. Together, we are architects of a world where even the young can trust in the promise of the future. As we move forward, let us build a foundation of trust—trust in our abilities, collective strength, and belief that goodness will prevail.



**Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc.**

CEO of AmCham Slovenia and Chair of AmChams in Europe

**W**hat should Europe and Slovenia do to increase appeal for investors?

**B.B.**— We should above all understand that it is necessary to restore the balance between value creation and rights and consequently to act in pursuit of targeted measures to boost competitiveness.

**Slovenia is often referred to as the green heart of Europe. Do you agree with this description? Is enough attention being paid to sustainable practices?**

**B.B.**— Two-thirds of Slovenia is covered by an expanding forest, the brown bear, wolf, lynx, and jackal populations are growing and once we replace the Šoštanj thermal power plant with facilities featuring comparable capacity for electricity production from renewable sources, we will be an exemplary model.

**At the Slovenia Business Bridge Conference™ you highlighted the exceptional successes of Slovenian athletes on a global scale. Where could we draw parallels between Slovenian sports and the economy?**

**B.B.**— In the mentality that we are capable of stepping onto the podium in our niches and in the ambition to actually do so.

**How do you see the role of a business leader, in the company and more broadly in society?**

**B.B.**— Like a beacon illuminating the destination and the path and eliminating obstacles on this path.

**You are proud of Slovenia. In your opinion, how can every business leader contribute to welfare of Slovenia and all Slovenians in the business world?**

**B.B.**— Through sincere patriotism and consistent action aimed at improving the business environment for our companies and the well-being of our households.

**Why is the culture of dialogue promoted by AmCham Slovenia important?**

**B.B.**— So that we are united on the key development goals, which we do not argue about, and so that we all work in unison towards their achievement.

**In recent years, artificial intelligence has become increasingly ubiquitous in the business world and also in everyday life. How do you see the use of artificial intelligence and what are the opportunities it offers, and the threats?**

**B.B.**— It is the next technological breakthrough, which will enable a radical increase in efficiency; however, it must be properly restricted through regulation and legislation, otherwise we are opening up space for abuses beyond imagination.

**What skills, knowledge, and competences will an individual need to be successful in the business world of the future?**

**B.B.**— Above all, an individual will have to be energetic, authentic, and extremely flexible. Average learners and diligent people learn everything, but the decisive factor will be the direction in which we direct our energy.

**What are the other main trends and challenges that accompany the business environment in Slovenia?**

**B.B.**— Involvement in international trade in connection with the historic shift of supply chains brings unimaginable opportunities, but to address them we need to respond very quickly with stimulating measures to increase competitiveness. Unfortunately, in the last year and a half, measures have been taken to reduce it, and that will have long-term negative consequences.

**AmCham Slovenia will celebrate its 25th anniversary. What does tradition mean and how do you see the future?**

**B.B.**— Tradition represents the anchor and loyalty to the noble idea of the island of normalcy. Sooner or later, it is necessary to return to the basic principles of common sense, which eventually prevail, and that is why I am a great optimist when it comes to Slovenia and its people in the long term. ✕





**INTERVIEW  
WITH THE  
PRESIDENT  
OF AMCHAM  
SLOVENIA  
BLAŽ  
BRODNJAK**



# 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**C**ongratulations to AmCham in Slovenia on your 25th anniversary. In these past 25 years, Slovenia has built an economic success story, one to be proud of and to build upon.

This past year we faced significant challenges — in Slovenia, America, and around the world. Life is not static, so resiliency and working collectively for our mutual prosperity is essential. The healthier the connections between our countries, the more predictable our markets and the greater the investments. With trust and fair play as our foundations, we are optimistic about the potential for robust economic growth between our countries.

During the two years that I have been Ambassador to Slovenia, I have traveled this amazing country to meet with people from all walks of life to learn about history, culture, successes, and potential. I have seen first-hand the stellar and unique talents in this country, particularly in emerging technologies.

In 2023, we engaged Slovenian business interests in several ways. To support innovative research in Slovenia, the Embassy created a study trip where participants learned how to convert their world-class scientific research into real-world solutions. We also offer a U.S. consulting service to Slovenian energy companies to support transition to clean power generation.

Through the U.S. Commercial Service, we supported more than 50 U.S. companies seeking to enter the Slovenian market by providing market research, due diligence, matchmaking, and company promotion events, and through the State Department's Direct Line program, we connected over 75 U.S. businesses with Slovenian emerging technology business owners.

The Embassy worked with AmCham and the Ministry of Economy, Tourism, and Sport to send Slovenian delegations to Texas and Colorado, and we also supported AmCham's Business Bridge Conference where representatives from five U.S. states participated.

We invested in the Academy of Women Entrepreneurs — the State Department's global program to ensure women have the capabilities and resources to participate in the economy — to support over 100 Slovenian women last year. And for the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative — the State Department's flagship program for emerging entrepreneurs in Europe — we held the first alumni summit in Ljubljana with over 100 participants from Europe.

Together we have boundless opportunities. Our doors are open to Slovenia and the members of AmCham. We look forward to another 25 years of productive collaboration with AmCham.

**H.E. Jamie Lindler Harpootlian**  
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia

# AMCHAM BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**What is the value of the AmCham network and the relationships it creates?**



## Optimism

Optimism is a powerful mindset that motivates individuals to overcome challenges, adapt to change, and seize opportunities, leading to personal growth and success. It enables individuals to maintain a positive attitude, find creative solutions, and inspire others to do the same.

— **BARBARA KRAMAR**  
AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2023, CGT Process Expert, Novartis in Slovenia



## Collaboration

I choose Collaboration since it's a cornerstone of any flourishing society and not valued enough in Slovenia. Only when we join forces, combining our unique skills and perspectives, do we unlock the door to innovation and growth. Collaboration is not just the concept but the heartbeat of our shared journey, resonating with the rhythm of interconnected aspirations and collective goals.

— **ENZO SMREKAR**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, Group Vice President for Savoury spreads, Donat Mg, and international expansion, Atlantic Grupa and CEO, Atlantic Droga Kolinska



## Trust

My choice is trust. I see it as a fundamental value of man, humanity, and human relationships and interactions be they personal or professional. It involves having confidence and faith in someone's reliability, honesty, and integrity. It is built through consistent, transparent, and ethical behavior, and open communication. It is a crucial component of healthy relationships.

— **NEVENKA ČREŠNAR PERGAR**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, Director, NP Consulting



## Integrity

Integrity (which encompasses Trust) is core to forming long-lasting productive business relationships with customers, suppliers, regulators, and shareholders. Many rules try to push companies to have integrity and be honest, but it is better if companies embrace these values for the benefits they bring.

— **GREG MEIER**  
Ex-Officio AmCham Slovenia, Political, Economic and Commercial Counselor, U.S. Embassy



## Ambition

Because it is associated with a level of energy, which is channeled into a specific action. The other four are hygienic prerequisites to keep ambition within the limits of acceptable and achieve the right goals and results.

— **BLAŽ BRODNJAK**  
President of AmCham Slovenia, CEO & President of the Board NLB d.d.



## Integrity

To live with integrity requires us to have a clear understanding of what we want to achieve and the principles and values we hold most important. It necessitates maintaining harmony between these objectives, values, and our decisions and actions, ultimately fostering a sense of wholeness in one's character and life.

— **EVA MCLELLAN**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, General Manager, Roche Slovenia



## Ambition

I choose ambition, because in Slovenia ambition is often lacking and this term too often has a negative connotation. Ambition is a key value in any healthy business environment, as it promotes innovation, stimulates growth, creates jobs, and leads to success. Only with an ambitious approach can we advance as a society and improve our well-being.

— **SAMO KUMAR**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, Country Leader, IBM Slovenia



### **Ambition**

We live in challenging times, in a world full of uncertainty and unpredictability, yet also a time of extraordinary opportunities. It is important that we maintain high ambitions for the benefit of us all. At the same time, let's strongly encourage a genuine dialogue to find common ways to realize these ambitions.

— **BENO CEGLAR**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, General Manager, NIL



### **Trust**

Trust is the invisible fabric which connects society and creates an environment in which people can interact, collaborate, and thrive, fostering a sense of security, stability, and shared purpose. This is crucial especially for young countries, such as Slovenia, where trust is essential on the path towards greater prosperity.

— **LUKA PODLOGAR**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, CEO at NLB Asset Management, Slovenia



### **Integrity**

Integrity: commitment to high norms and values, saying what you think, and doing what you say. Simply to walk the talk! And there is no trust without integrity. Neither in personal nor in professional life. However, genuine success is only possible when there is a high level of trust among participants.

— **DAMJAN KRALJ**  
Second Vice President of AmCham Slovenia, CEO, BTC



### **Optimism**

Optimism is a guiding light that fuels a positive outlook even in the face of challenges. It instills resilience, fostering the belief that setbacks are opportunities for growth and improvement.

— **BORUT ČEH**  
Governor of AmCham Slovenia, Co-Owner and Managing Director, Labena



### **Ambition**

My value is ambition, as it encourages individuals to go past their current limits, and inspires the pursuit of above-average goals and personal growth. It is important to face new challenges with confidence in one's career and to constantly acquire new knowledge and experience. Only in this way can we progress and realize the common good and progress.

— **ALEŠA MIŽIGOJ**  
First Vice President of AmCham Slovenia, CEO & Owner, Medex



### **Integrity**

In my opinion, integrity combines all other values, and it is also enriched with love for what we are and what we do as well as humility with respect to all the opportunities we have been given and everything we have achieved.

— **AJŠA VODNIK**  
CEO, AmCham Slovenija, Chair, AmChams in Europe

# AMCHAM DREAM TEAM



▲  
**Vida Dolenc Pogačnik**  
COO & International  
Cooperation Director



▲  
**Kristjan Pahor**  
Project Manager



▲  
**Tanja Petakovič**  
Office Manager



▲  
**Gregor Močevar**  
Membership Manager



▲  
**Lara Luznar**  
Project Manager



▲  
**Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc.**  
CEO, AmCham Slovenia,  
Chair, AmChams in Europe

▲  
**Helena Vrtnjak**  
AmCham YOUng  
Platform Leader

▲  
**Lea Arnaut**  
Junior Communication  
Manager

▲  
**Mojka Mišič, M.Sc.**  
Advocacy and  
Communications Director

▲  
**Kris Čuček Meršol**  
Project Manager

G L W L K V A L U E S P Z K R G  
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# WHERE TO? FOLLOWING THE COMPASS OF VALUES AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

BY **Kristijan Musek Lešnik, Ph.D.**



▲  
**Kristijan Musek Lešnik, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Faculty of  
Mathematics, Natural Sciences  
and Information Technologies,  
University of Primorska



**I**n your doctorate you address the issue of values. How are values formed? Are they formed in childhood to be carried with us our whole life or are our values constantly changing and transforming?

**K.M.L.**— Values are one of those things that we are not born with. They are formed during childhood and later, when children gradually internalize values, beliefs and principles from their immediate environment, first primarily from family and the closest cultural environment. After that, the circle of people, groups and institutions from which the growing person draws values becomes ever wider. Thus, towards the end of adolescence and on the brink of adulthood, the values of an individual are already for the most part formed, the fundamental ones at least. Of course, this does not mean that they are rigid and cemented forever. Values in a person develop all the time, as new environment, new people, and new life circumstances are always a source of new experiences that can lead to change and formation of new values. It is not so much a case of complete shift in values, although such is also possible in exceptional circumstances. The natural process of developing values in mature years is much better described as occasional changes in the hierarchy

of values due to the various challenges we face in different periods of life. However, the core of values that we internalize at a relatively early age remains with us as an internal compass of some kind that guides us and our decisions when we find ourselves at a crossroads in life and before important decisions.

**Is it possible for a person to have different values in personal and business life or is such distinction impossible?**

**K.M.L.**— In principle, mature, healthy, stable people have a solid internal compass. Still, it is true that different values come to the fore in different environments and roles. This does not mean that in one role a person can disregard and throw away all the values that are important to them in another “compartment” of life. Admittedly, from time to time we come across people who give exactly such an impression: that at a certain moment they behave in complete contradiction to the values they otherwise vehemently defend. It should be mentioned again that values are the internalized internal compass that we carry within us – therefore, an individual’s actions and decisions usually say more about an individual’s values than words do. The late Dr. Vid Pečjak used to refer to values as a “conscience-clearing soap”. People often emphasize values approved by society, not necessarily what is really at the center of their own

essence and attitude towards people and the world.

To summarize, our individual values are our central inner signposts, along with views and beliefs. This is where their strength lies. At the same time, this is where the Achilles' heel can be found. Since values are so internal and deeply instilled, they are the tool that skillful manipulators have misused countless times in history to mobilize and direct the masses.

**Where do you see the possibility of improvement in the Slovenian school system?**

**K.M.L.**— It is clear that those who designed our school system were primarily concerned with the question of what information should children be supplied at school. Of course, this does not mean that the multiplication table and literacy are not important. But I think that in the future we should shift the focus from what a young person should know and memorize when leaving school to who this person should be and what interests him or her. I therefore think it is important to switch from providing fragmented information to teaching life skills.

**Leadership is one of the areas you specialize in. What actually defines the concept of leadership ability? What personal characteristics are we talking about?**

**K.M.L.**— I think the fundamental elements of successful leadership are responsibility, empathy, perseverance, critical thinking, and many more. Leaders in today's dynamic environment certainly possess skills such as social skills, relationship building and conflict management, flexibility and adaptability, innovation and creativity, decision making and negotiation skills. Also worth mentioning is the skill of motivating colleagues and employees. Personal charisma certainly helps.

**The success of a leader definitely also**



**THE ESSENTIAL "ADDED VALUE" OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IS NOT THE PURSUIT OF CONSTANT HAPPINESS AND LAUGHTER, RATHER THE OPPOSITE: THE STRENGTHENING OF THOSE LIFE SKILLS, CONTENTMENT, HOPE, OPTIMISM, HUMOR, RESILIENCE, AND MORE, WHICH CAN HELP US OVERCOME, WITH FEWER PSYCHOLOGICAL SCRAPES AND BRUISES, THE NOT SO PLEASANT AND PAINFUL MOMENTS WHEN THEY OCCUR.**

**depends on the individuals that he or she leads. How can a leader ensure that these individuals will give their best, that they will be loyal, motivated, satisfied with leadership, etc.?**

**K.M.L.**— We humans have a strong need for what we do to be meaningful and important. I think that leaders

could make much greater use of the PERMA model of Martin Seligman, who many people know is one of the founders of positive psychology, while it is much less known that he is also one of the fathers of cognitive behavioral therapy. People do not need a lot to feel that "life is good", but there are a few things

that are crucial for job satisfaction: team relations, as many opportunities as possible to experience positive feelings at work, organizing work so that one finds it satisfying and meaningful, and of course opportunities for reflection that I/we are doing well. It seems to me that all of the above is in itself a good basis for planning successful leadership strategies.

**In your experience, what are the working environments and relationships between employees in Slovenian companies like?**

**K.M.L.**— On the one hand, I think that many companies put a lot of effort into relationships and providing a “healthy” working environment. On the other hand, going from one crisis to another, instability, the pandemics, the consequences of the Ukrainian and Middle Eastern crises, and many other things that destabilize the business environment are also reflected in the microenvironments.

If we proceed from the above-men-

tioned values, today’s workforce consists of members of generations with extremely different priorities, and this is another potential source of misunderstanding and tension among staff that must be skillfully navigated.

**You say positive psychology is your passion. What are the basic principles of this concept or how would you explain it to someone who is not familiar with it? It probably doesn’t mean that one is smiling and in a good mood 24 hours a day.**

**K.M.L.**— No, of course not. Life is made up of a colorful palette of diverse experiences. Just like happy moments – which I hope to be as many as possible – stumbles, falls and losses are also a part of life. The essential “added value” of positive psychology is not the pursuit of constant happiness and laughter, rather the opposite: the strengthening of those life skills, contentment, hope, optimism, humor, resilience and more, which can help us overcome, with fewer psychological scrapes and bruises, the not so pleasant

and painful moments when they occur.

**Can following these principles contribute to an individual’s success in a business environment? If so, how?**

**K.M.L.**— Of course it can. To be always happy in an environment where everything is “fine” is a utopia, and I genuinely despise charlatans and manipulators who deceive people with promises and recipes for constant happiness under the pretense of “psychology”.

However, striving to be better, more successful, and ultimately more satisfied and happy is not a utopia. Only two steps are necessary. The first is that we stop dealing with others and realize that we are the only ones who can be the creators of our own happiness and that most depends on us. The second is to start working. On oneself and for oneself. No matter what I do or where I am. One small thing that I can do for myself every day is to remember the most pleasant thing that happened to me that day before going to sleep and relive it.

✘



# FEDEX: DELIVERING A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

BY **Diego Asproso**

**H**ow is FedEx preparing for the future with sustainability in mind?

**D.A.**— As a business that recently celebrated 50 years of operations, FedEx has built one of the world's largest express transportation networks, enabling trade and global connectivity with a focus on always doing so responsibly. We operate in one of the more challenging sectors when it comes to decarbonisation, but the urgency of the climate crisis sees every industry and sector – transportation and aviation included - striving to find solutions for this collective challenge. In 2021, FedEx announced a goal to achieve carbon neutral operations globally by 2040. Building on our past efforts to reduce our emissions, increase vehicle efficiencies and find savings in fuel consumption wherever possible, we have set out our commitment to neutralize the environmental impact of our day-to-day business by 2040.

**What does the journey to carbon-neu**

PHOTO:  
Fedex Archive



▲  
**Diego Asproso**  
Senior Sales Manager for  
South East Europe & GSP  
Countries at FedEx Express  
Europe





*We are committed to making a positive impact across the globe, by delivering a more sustainable future, supporting communities, and helping small businesses grow.*

### tral operations look like for a global transportation company?

D.A.\_\_\_\_ FedEx has favoured a practical sustainability philosophy, guided by our longstanding ‘Reduce, Replace, Revolutionize’ approach. With initiatives across the business – from parcel pickup and delivery, linehaul, facilities and aviation – we are working to identify and implement solutions that can reduce the environmental impacts of our operations in meaningful ways.

We’re designating an initial \$2bn in investment across three key areas: electrification of our parcel pickup and delivery fleet, upscaling our use of renewable energy, and funding the scientific research needed to further develop and scale natural carbon capture solutions.

### What does this mean for parcel pickup and delivery in Europe?

D.A.\_\_\_\_ We’ve already begun our vehicle electrification plans in Europe, gradually transitioning our parcel pickup and delivery fleet to battery electric vans in a phased procurement approach. We are taking an energy-first approach to electrification, prioritising the FedEx Express stations where electric vehicles can most readily replace diesel vans and working with suppliers to prepare those facilities for the energy needs of our future electric fleet.

We’re operating small but growing numbers of electric vehicles in major cities of Amsterdam, London and Paris and will soon be welcoming more in both Madrid and Barcelona. In the meantime, energy infrastructure designs are underway for further stations to benefit from the installation of electric charging points this year and next. The use of dynamic power management systems and station-specific designs for this infrastructure means our vehicles can charge overnight onsite at the facility, leaving for a fresh round of parcel pick up and delivery on a full charge the next morning.

Alongside our light commercial vehicles, we have also introduced electric-assist cargo bicycles in 16 locations across Europe. These are an attractive alternative to vans when it comes to making deliveries in congested urban

centres. Where the density of deliveries allows, cargo bikes offer a first or final mile delivery method with reduced emissions and with an efficiency comparable to a diesel van.

### What are the biggest challenges faced by the sector in the near and long term?

D.A.\_\_\_\_ When it comes to our European road network, the nature of our operations – crossing into multiple countries and travelling long distances to connect road hubs in the region – would require more significant battery range. Electric vehicle technologies and charging infrastructure isn’t yet developed enough to transition to use of electric trucks.

While continuing to test and pilot electric tractor-trailer combinations in our operations, we have started to trial alternative fuels – such as renewable diesel or HVO diesel products – in countries like the UK and the Netherlands where availability allows. While tailpipe emissions are still produced by these vehicles, the use of a diesel that has not been derived from fossil fuel allows us to significantly reduce well-to-wheel carbon emissions by as much as 90% per litre compared to regular diesel\*.

When it comes to the makeup of our carbon footprint, aviation is by far the biggest contributor and will remain so into at least the next decade. The FedEx Fuel Sense program continues to identify a myriad of ways to reduce fuel consumption in our aircraft operations, while maintaining a modern fleet of the most efficient aircraft plays a big part in minimizing impact. Between 2009 and 2022, we reported a reduced carbon dioxide emissions intensity on a revenue basis by 48.9%, even as average daily package volumes grew by 142% during the same period. But there is a long way to go to reduce the emissions impact from aircraft operations. From where the industry stands now, we know that achieving carbon-neutral cargo aviation will be the industry’s biggest environmental challenge.

### What role can carbon sequestration play in decarbonising cargo aviation?

D.A.\_\_\_\_ To reach our goal of carbon neu-

tral operations by 2040, innovative solutions will be required across the board, but particularly when it comes to the scientific research, development and scaling of natural carbon capture solutions.

Even if the sustainable aviation fuel market scales up in the way the industry hopes it will, we consider carbon capture and storage to be an essential component in a suite of solutions that can help balance the emissions of hard to abate sectors like aviation.

Alongside strategic charitable giving and continued advocacy efforts, we’ve also pledged \$100 million to establish the Yale Center for Natural Carbon Capture. With additional support from industry partners, our funding will support the scientific research necessary for developing measurable carbon capture strategies and solutions for sequestration and long-term storage of carbon at scale. The center’s initial target is to develop solutions that could mitigate GHG emissions of approximately one gigaton per year, equivalent to current annual airline emissions.

### How is FedEx empowering its customers to make sustainable choices?

D.A.\_\_\_\_ Alongside our own efforts to reduce emissions across our operations, we recognize the desire of our customers to, not only know, but build a deeper understanding of the emissions generated from their transportation services. Our customers are increasingly conscious of the need for sustainable solutions and often regard shipping as an area they can influence, to meet or exceed the environmental expectations of their own customers.

Our recently launched FedEx® Sustainability Insights tool provides customers a self-serve solution to run and download estimated emissions reports for the shipments they send via FedEx. This gives customers on demand visibility into their own emissions footprint and helps them build a more complete view of estimated greenhouse gas emissions across their supply chain. The reporting tool is available for customers in Slovenia now, supported in local language since November 2023.

✘

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## AmCham BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB



The AmCham Business Leaders Club is a place where excellence meets innovation in the dynamic realm of corporate synergy. Our club, comprised of visionary business leaders from the foremost companies associated with AmCham Slovenia, serves as a distinguished platform for the exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and invaluable experiences at the pinnacle of the business world.

### AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB MEET

At the heart of our ethos lies the AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB—a conduit for exclusive gatherings of top-tier executives. These events are designed to foster relationships, facilitate the exchange of groundbreaking ideas, and showcase the best business practices. Our occasions provide an unparalleled opportunity to forge connections with decision-makers at the highest level of diverse industries.

### AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB READ

Read with us at the Book Club for Leaders, where we delve into topics that transcend the boundaries of our business community to address issues of global significance. We believe that an informed leader is a powerful leader, and our book club serves as a hub for intellectual exploration, stimulating discussions, and broadening perspectives.

### AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB LEAD

Lead with distinction as we recognize and celebrate outstanding Business Leaders of the Year. This initiative, born in response to the AmCham YLC's call, tackles crucial challenges such as the need for role models, transformative shifts in business leadership, fostering a culture of dialogue, and upholding fundamental values. It is not just an award; it's a testament to motivation and the reinforcement of meaningful relationships.

Partners 2023:



KEARNEY





# AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Embrace the future with the BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD, introduced in 2021 by AmCham Slovenia. This prestigious accolade, developed within the AmCham Business Leaders Club and proposed by the AmCham Young Platform, recognizes exceptional leaders shaping the landscape of Slovene business and society. Endorsed by the Young Platform, it stands as a bold response to the imperatives of role modeling, nurturing a culture of dialogue, and instigating vital changes in business leadership. In the AmCham Business Leaders Club, we don't just lead; we redefine the contours of leadership, inspire change, and illuminate the path to a future where innovation and collaboration reign supreme.



BUSINESS  
LEADER  
*of the Year*

## AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS OF THE YEAR 2023

Two outstanding ladies, **Aleša Mižigoj** and **Ana Petrič**, and two outstanding gentlemen, **Blaž Brodnjak** and **Enzo Smrekar**, were selected by our young members to stand on the victory podium of business leadership for 2023.

HERE ARE THEIR STORIES WRITTEN BY MELITA MERŠOL ➤



## BLAŽ BRODNJAK IT'S ALL ABOUT TEAMWORK WITH A SHARED GOAL!

Born in Ptuj, Blaž Brodnjak graduated from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana and later completed his MBA with honours at the IEDC - Bled School of Management. Since 2016 he has been CEO of NLB Bank and has been breaking records there.

A highly focused and practical banker with a strong value system, he also associates banking with rock 'n' roll. His rebellious nature means he won't stay silent. As the architect of the bank's restructuring, he sets an example with his integrity. He is committed to responsible banking, social responsibility, and sustainability in business. He is meticulous about keeping his promises. At the same time, he's a family man and a man of many interests. You can also talk to him about wine growing or raising cattle. In every respect, he reiterates the importance of cooperation. *"It's all about teamwork with a shared goal,"* he says.

He and his wife Barbara have three children—two daughters and a son—about whom he gushes: *"I am proud of my bright, energetic, and healthy children! With the kids I just want to do the right things. We do not tolerate injustice. I have a balanced value system. I stand up for the things that feel right to me."*

Asked what shaped him into the man he is today, he replies that he has always been slightly on the "dissident" side. *"Even in high school, I was always fighting for some classroom rights or something. I have followed common sense all my life; I don't believe in extremes and single-mindedness, but take the middle way."* He also swears by sport, which he says teaches you discipline,

habit-forming, and to build a value system. *"Sport leaves a mark on you!"* At a young age, as a member of the Petovia table tennis club from Ptuj, Blaž Brodnjak was considered one of the most promising players in Slovenia. He was highly developed for his age, which allowed him to hit powerful shots, while at the same time he cultivated a very attacking style. He won many championships in children and youth competitions, and was actively involved in table tennis until he reached club level. In business, he likes to draw parallels with sport in terms of being first among equals in a team, with the aim of winning: *"The economic model will have to change by teaming up."*

Coming from a wine-growing region, he knows wine and viticulture. He has also launched his own wine brand, Familija. He has maintained strong ties with Ptuj, his birthplace, since moving to the capital. A very sociable banker, he pays a lot of attention to tradition. It is therefore not surprising that he is an enthusiastic and proud *"Kurent"*. Blaž Brodnjak, a man of action, still likes to dress up in this characteristic Ptuj carnival costume.

For the coming year, the charismatic head of NLB is determined: *"Let's stop talking and get down to business. Slovenia is fantastic. It will be tough, but we are winners. Nothing is impossible. In 2023, let's fly!"*



## ALEŠA MIŽIGOJ WE HAVE A LOT TO LEARN FROM BEES!

Those born in the year of the fire horse are characterized by strength, perseverance, and success. All of the above certainly apply to Aleša Mižigoj, who has had knowledge and awareness of the benefits of bees for the environment and human health instilled in her. Her family has made an indelible mark on Slovenia with the development of apitherapy and the wider use of bee products.

Her father always inspired her, and her mother instilled in her a sense of order. More than two decades ago, Aleša took over as CEO of the family company Medex, which under her leadership has become one of Europe's leading manufacturers of food supplements based on honey bee products.

She is the leader of and a key contributor to the company that is socially responsible and focused on sustainability. With a keen awareness of the importance of broader environmental engagement, she connects with organizations at home and abroad that are committed to changing the world for the better.

She relies mostly on honesty, sincerity, and cooperation. On accountability in leadership. She also likes to refer to Confucius's idea that if you choose a job that you love, you will never work a day in your life. *"The greatest asset is one*

*that is not quantified, but measured in conversations and smiles,"* says Aleša Mižigoj, who emphasizes the importance of family and friendship as an absolute value. Who is she most proud of? Her son Martin. By providing financial backing to Slovenian professional and recreational sports activities, she also fulfils her mission—a healthy spirit in a healthy body. She enthusiastically supports Radomlje Medex Women's Football Club. Nature and sport are very important in her life.

She is also active in encouraging women to take up roles in business and society. In its seven decades of existence, Medex has always acted not only as an apiarist and manufacturer of honey bee products, but also as a developer and disseminator of knowledge in the field of beekeeping. *"Bees are very feminine. They are unique. They cooperate with each other. We can learn a lot from them,"* says Aleša Mižigoj, whose graceful appearance and charming energy remind us a little of Princess Diana, who was the Queen of People's Hearts.



## ANA PETRIČ JUST ANA.

Ana Petrič's official title is Director of the DEOS Centre for the Elderly Notranje Gorice. She is a Master of Social Work who took over the center's management seven years ago. From a housekeeper and many in-between jobs, she prefers *"Just Ana."* *"Ana is a child from a block of flats who had to work very hard to get where she is now,"* says the pleasant—and truly different—director.

Why is she different? Because she takes the elderly on trips in an old Beetle and takes those who have difficulty walking or are in wheelchairs on trips on a special bicycle. She escorts the frail in their beds out into the sunshine. She dresses up in a carnival costume every year. She constantly cheers up everyone in the center. She organizes Christmas concerts for them in a snow globe on the roof of their home, and a brass band plays under a mild sky.

Ana is a fighting person. She stands up for the right things with sincerity. She is vocal about changing things for the better for the elderly. That is why she was noticed and invited to become a director. She has been committed to the nursing home for 16 years. She started as a server and gradually worked her way up the ladder with original ideas and initiatives alongside her education. From pastry vocational school, she successfully completed her master's

degree at the Faculty of Social Work. She is now a Ph.D. student, and she loves sports, which teach her perseverance.

She believes that being a director is not just about dressing up and smiling but about coming in, helping, and listening to colleagues, residents, and their relatives: *"If I only worked from the office, I wouldn't know about their wishes, expectations, and demands, so I think my way is the right way!"*

She has two daughters, who are her greatest asset. She wishes to give them what she did not have, love and support. Above all, she likes to keep things tidy at work and home and to have a clear conscience. She is only at peace when she knows she has done everything possible. It is just Ana.



## ENZO SMREKAR: "YOU COULD SAY I'M A SELF-MADE MAN."

The Managing Director, Member of the Board of Droga Kolinska, and Chief Executive Officer of Atlantic Droga Kolinska came to his position spontaneously. He began with basic shop tasks such as stacking shelves.

*"From a young age, I had the ambition to be an entrepreneur. I wanted to open a restaurant and later a hotel, but things turned out differently. I have been working since I was very young and I have quite a lot of work experience. I did most of my studies while working. You could say I'm a self-made man,"* says the marketing- and strategy-oriented leader, who has been recognized with awards for his outstanding economic and entrepreneurial achievements.

A man with an unprivileged background, who is also the President of the Slovenian Ski Association, one of Slovenia's most important sports federations. *"We have reached zero debt. Next comes the development period,"* he said, receiving a new mandate for which he received unanimous support. At the inaugural meeting of the new Bureau in Zurich, he

was also appointed as Treasurer of the International Ski Federation (FIS) and is the first Slovenian to hold this post.

Enzo Smrekar, who successfully combines his work and leisure time with his entrepreneurial wife and daughter, is convinced that investing in knowledge makes sense in all areas. He adheres to the old Chinese wisdom that you must teach people how to fish and be prepared for the opportunity to come someday. Which says it all.

Last but not least, Enzo Smrekar conceived of Argeta, which is synonymous with the best paté. The project celebrated its 10th birthday in 2019 with the flavors of the Exclusive Festive Editions, co-created by some of the most distinguished chefs in our area. Argeta's horizons are still expanding, thanks to Enzo, whose breadth of knowledge and spirit is as vast as a pine forest. As they say, *Nomen est omen*, the name is a sign, the name speaks for itself.

Business Leader of the Year is an award that rewards the future. So, who are the winners and the inspiration for the 2024?

**THE AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS OF THE YEAR 2024 ARE  
ANITA OGULIN & JURE LESKOVEC, Ph.D.**



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Naložbena pot vaših ciljev je le korak stran. Ustvarimo jo skupaj.

[nlbskladi.si](http://nlbskladi.si)

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# RIDING THE TIDES OF THE DYNAMIC FINANCIAL MARKETS

PHOTO:  
Unsplash

**L**uka Podlogar, CEO of NLB Skladi (NLB Asset Management), provided insights into his perspectives and the company's strategic initiatives, shedding light on his investment management approach. Luka boasts an extensive background in finance, having served at Citigroup in London from 2006 to 2010 as an investment banker specializing in sales, acquisitions, and financing for companies in the industrial and automotive sectors. In 2010, Luka transitioned to KD Group, where he assumed the role of Assistant to the CEO, primarily focusing on corporate development. From 2012 to 2022, he held key positions as a board member and chairman at Generali Investments. In February 2023, he assumed the role as the president of the board at NLB Asset Management, the largest asset management company in Slovenia.

**As the landscape of asset management undergoes rapid transformation, influenced by both legislative changes and evolving consumer preferences, how do you perceive the current market conditions impacting the asset management industry and business model? Specifically, could you elaborate on how NLB Asset Management is strategically adapting to these changes? From your perspective, what holds a greater significance in driving these changes: the shifting demands of consumers or the evolving legislative framework?**

**L.P.**— The current market conditions are a mix of a very dynamic global financial markets environment of high interest rates and inflation, which has just started to decelerate, coupled with a very highly strung geopolitical atmosphere. In addition, global asset managers are challenged with a heap of legislation, a trend which has been especially notable in the EU in recent years. Furthermore, over the last few years, especially since the Covid-19 epidemic, the trend of on-

line low-cost investing has become even more pronounced, with more investors getting increasingly comfortable with online platforms versus the traditional financial advisory model.

Within our industry people are the key assets of the company. NLB Asset Management therefore focuses strongly on raising and retaining talent to be able to provide best-in-class asset management as well as best customer service within distribution. A lot of work still lies ahead of us, especially in grabbing the online distribution opportunity, which will enable us to reach a significantly higher number of potential and existing investors more efficiently and cheaply than today.

**We could say saving is a national sport in Slovenia as we are traditionally very frugal and careful. Is this statement true and what are most common mistakes Slovenians make when saving, investing, etc?**

**L.P.**— The savings rate has historically been very high in Slovenia. By

“savings” Slovenians mostly understand keeping their money in bank deposits, which for most people is not the most optimal investment strategy. Due to a relatively low level of financial literacy, many households do not allocate their excess cash to higher-yielding savings in the capital markets, or allocate them too late, not using to the full extent the power of time, the strongest compounding force in the investment world. Furthermore, many households have too strong a bias towards residential real estate, which has traditionally yielded just slightly more than bank deposits.

**Could you elaborate on the methodologies NLB Asset Management employs to identify promising investment opportunities and discuss the company's approach to effectively managing risk within client portfolios?**

L.P.— NLB Asset Management has the strongest and largest investment team in Slovenia. This enables us to cover a broad spectrum of geographies, industries, and asset classes, and gives us the ability to perform a good asset allocation from the top down, as well as pick out the winners using the bottom-up approach. To fuel this analysis, we need an increasing amount of data, which is key to success; we are spending a significant amount of money to obtain the latest information from a broad spectrum of international providers to help us uncover good investment opportunities. Risk management is a key part of any investment management process. At NLB Asset Management we use the technology which enables us to manage risk pre- and post-trade, using real market data, thereby ensuring a proper level of diversification and risk optimization.

**How do you prioritize client satisfaction and what measures do you take to ensure that their needs are being met?**

L.P.— As a member of NLB Group, we have the luxury of having a very close relationship with our distribution channel which is represented by almost 500 highly trained financial advisors. To ensure good client satisfaction, we invest, together with our banking partners, a great

*Having a strong distribution network enables us to speak to our clients directly, which is of immense importance especially in times of market volatility.*

amount of time into training our sales force, so that they help every existing or potential client make appropriate investment decisions, adapted to their financial risk profile. Having a strong distribution network enables us to speak to our clients directly, which is of immense importance especially in times of market volatility.

**Could you provide a brief commentary on the current situation on the capital markets and shed light on the significance of geopolitical developments in influencing market dynamics? What worries you most and fills you with hope the most in the current situation in the world?**

L.P.— After a long period of low interest rates, the central banks in the Western world started with significant monetary tightening in 2022, a situation which has continued throughout 2023. The tightening was a result of a rapid increase of inflation, which occurred after years of relaxed monetary policy, coupled with the effects of the Covid-19 epidemics, which created supply shocks, and to which governments across the globe responded with unprecedented fiscal spending. The increase in interest rates had a different effect on different businesses, but in general its effects are starting to be felt in consumer spending as well as capital investments. Generally, it seems that the monetary policy shift is having an effect on inflation, which started to decelerate. Currently, the con-

sensus among the economists is that the interest rates have reached their peak, or are very close to it; what is not clear though is for how long the interest rates will remain high and when the central banks will start decreasing them.

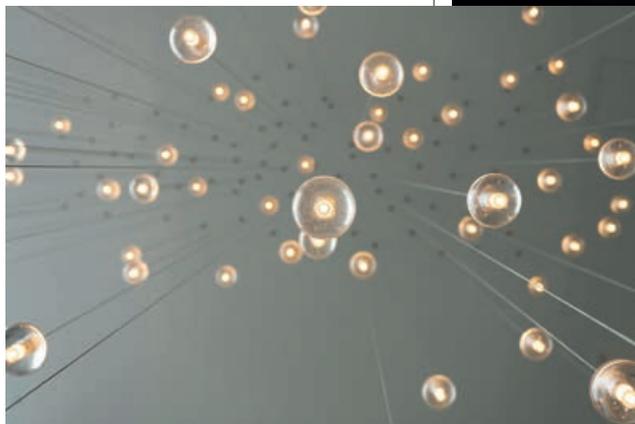
The equity markets in general remained relatively resilient, supported by strong growth of certain technology companies, especially in the US. The performance has not been universal across the globe—especially emerging markets, such as China, performed rather poorly. Given that I have seen a few periods of increased volatility in my career, I am confident that the current situation with inflation will eventually get resolved. The most important lesson investors should note is that they should be invested, considering the long-term perspective, and not wait with their money on the sidelines. Very rarely can investors successfully time the market; it is more important to properly diversify the portfolio among industries and geographies, and invest regularly in order to lower the risk of market entry.

✘

Luka Podlogar,  
CEO, NLB Skladi



G L W L K V A L U E S P Z K R G  
Z B O N O Y X O F X H E H R N Z  
B C Y K F J S T T Q C T U O I B  
M P H V C O S U S E Z T T S F M  
P S K D U R S T T B L H U R Q P  
W T T I N T E G R I T Y P N S W  
V H R T Y G B E L U Y S O P Z V  
D Z T U F U U M I K L I X A Y D  
E E W V S D I D X T T A N M Q E  
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Y S M V F I T D R N Z O W I W Y  
A K C G O F M O T C P H U T M A  
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V H T T Y G B X I U Y S O O Z V  
D Z T R F U U M I K L I X P Y D



# WHEN THE INNOVATIVE SPIRIT AND PEOPLE OF HEART COME TOGETHER



▲  
**Tomaž Bizjak**  
Managing Director, CEO,  
ReCatalyst d.o.o.

**A** lot is being said about climate change and corporate sustainability to reduce companies' carbon footprint. In your opinion, what are the main areas in which companies and countries should introduce sustainability measures and what should these measures be?

**T.B.** Over the past five years, this topic has indeed come to the forefront, both in the economy and in society in general. I say five years because of the increase in investments in this area, financial incentives for projects, and policies in the pipeline. There is a lot of talk about these topics because we are now experiencing the negative effects of climate change ourselves. This is not just information brought to us by the media

*Currently, we are saved by the extraordinary spirit of innovation that Slovenians possess.*



from distant places, but rather our own backyard. Aggressive industrialisation and mega consumerism have resulted in an abundance of goods at affordable prices, but also at the expense of the environment and depletion of natural resources. However, 'sustainability' is a much broader concept than the preservation of clean air, water or circular economy. Sustainability is not only about care for the environment, but also means human resources management, access to market-competitive raw materials and much more.

If we focus on reducing the carbon footprint alone, the transport and energy sectors have the most negative impact. Agriculture also has considerable negative effects on the environment. The activities of the European Union in these areas include accelerated electrification of transport, transition to green energy

PHOTO:  
Unsplash

sources, emission coupons ... We cannot deny these are the right steps we are making. The European Green Deal provides another very important component – financing, as green technologies and innovations in this area can otherwise hardly compete with cheaper approaches.

One of the main areas to which more work should be devoted is the comprehensive perception of the impact on the environment. It is to no avail to drastically limit meat consumption, if on the other hand we establish monoculture. Neither can car electrification help, if it requires even more energy, the prices of which are on the rise, and millions of tonnes of minerals that we do not have

access to. We should critically assess what we can afford, what is best for a certain sector and what we can sustainably compete with, because there is an interesting power struggle going on in the world.

**It is clear that if we are to make a move towards a greener future, a lot of innovation will be required and green technologies will have to be adopted. Which technologies would you highlight as key in eliminating or at least mitigating the negative consequences of climate change?**

**T.B.**— Carbon-neutral materials such as cement or steel can make a major contribution, as their current production is energy-intensive. Innovations in these areas are being developed both by young innovative companies and also major players, who want to maintain

their position in the markets.

At this point, I must mention our company (ReCatalyst), which seeks sustainability through better use of precious metals in applications such as catalysts for hydrogen fuel cells. Electrification of the transport sector is crucial to mitigating climate change, but it must be properly employed. I am talking about combinations of technologies, from batteries to hydrogen fuel cells. Some momentum is also seen in internal combustion engines that would run on hydrogen.

Carbon capture technologies, such as the direct capture of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, also show a lot of promise. There are more than 10 different approaches to carbon capture technologies, so innovation is happening.

However, it is necessary to understand that all of the above requires time for implementation. These are 5-, 10-year cycles, from the initial projects to industrial scales that can be price-competitive. We are on the right track, but we need to maintain the current momentum and resources, and implement appropriate policies.

**Your company offers an innovative solution for more efficient and affordable manufacture of fuel cells. How would you explain to someone unfamiliar with the area and your company how your solution contributes to a more sustainable future?**

T.B.\_\_\_\_ The technology developed and commercialised by our company is a production process that makes better use of precious metals. Specifically platinum, which is rare and valuable. Of course, there are no naturally occurring deposits in the European Union, so this technology is also strategically important. Better utilisation of platinum in catalysts for hydrogen fuel cells allows us to produce more catalyst and consequently more hydrogen fuel cells with the same quantity of this precious

metal. More hydrogen fuel cells for the same price mean more applications, trucks, buses that have a smaller carbon footprint. Although we are working on a component of the overall system, this component is of the utmost importance. In the future, we want to expand to other markets, such as catalysts used in electrolysis for the production of green hydrogen, contributing even more to a sustainable future.

**ReCatalyst is a spin-out company of the National Institute of Chemistry in Ljubljana, and was also developed with the support of the Ljubljana University Incubator. How does the connection between academia and companies work in practice? What could be improved in this area?**

T.B.\_\_\_\_ In practice, it should work so that knowledge institutions research and innovate, and then companies take over, as licences are obtained or start-up (spin-off) companies established to commercialise it. This enriches both the economy and society and creates development. A key role in this process must be played by technology transfer offices, which are usually established in institutions of knowledge to seek and create commercial opportunities. In the case of start-ups, these are business incubators such as the Ljubljana University Incubator.

That is how it is supposed to work. Unfortunately, this area has not (yet) flourished in Slovenia. I know we can do much better, but I am concerned about the negative connotation of entrepreneurship in society, which has been growing lately. Investing in development will not contribute to the development of Slovenia if we do not know how to make economic use of what has been developed.

In order to take a step forward, we have to improve several elements, for instance the tax environment. We need to build science parks, and also improve

the Slovenian 'brand', since it is very important where you come from when raising venture capital. I mentioned just a few examples to outline the spectrum of all issues that should be addressed for an excellent support environment. Some solutions can be ready in a few months, others within one government term, while some require a long-term strategic commitment from politics and society. Currently, we are saved by the extraordinary innovative spirit of Slovenians and by individuals who put their heart into it and selflessly help to create few, but important success stories.

**What would be your advice for all innovators and young entrepreneurs who are trying to develop their idea and bring it to fruition?**

T.B.\_\_\_\_ They need to know precisely why they are doing it and what they want to achieve. Only in this way can they discover if they have the exceptional motivation that is necessary on such a demanding and often long journey. In one of the interviews, Dr. Mark Pleško, a person and entrepreneur whom I greatly esteem, put it nicely: the initial idea is the most beautiful part of the journey. There are extremely beautiful but also difficult moments in entrepreneurship. The fact is that it takes a lot of effort and constant solving of situations – that is probably why we entrepreneurs usually get along quite well, because we have all experienced it.

What is also important is to realise that we will not succeed on our own. We always need other people, be it mentors, colleagues or partners. The ability to foster good relationships is key.

The third aspect is the ability to understand the wider context. Everything is intertwined in such a story – from legal, technological, human, financial, political matters ... that is why broad general knowledge is important, at least in my opinion.

✘



▲ Jožica Frigelj, M.Sc., Kette and Murn Primary School, Ljubljana, Teacher of the Year 2023; Mayor of Ljubljana Zoran Jankovič

# I'M A TEACHER!

The *"I'm a teacher!"* initiative highlights outstanding stories of Slovenian teachers who feel that their work is a calling and who can serve as role models for future generations of both students and teachers, placing the teaching profession back on the pedestal of the most esteemed professions. In the *"I'm a teacher!"* initiative, we are not looking just for projects but also a sound way of working and excellent and innovative educational practices that prepare children for the future. For the project, we have joined the Varkey Foundation and their Global Teacher Prize initiative and have received funding from the Google.org Impact Challenge Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2020 outstanding and insightful Slovenian teachers can also compete for the Global Teacher Prize – the award for the best teacher in the world. We are proud that Slovenia was in November, represented by Uroš Ocepek, Ph.D., the Teacher of the Year 2022, who teaches the professional modules in

the field of computer science at Trbovlje Secondary School. A teacher who is brimming with ideas to bring the subjects as close as possible to young people, he is also a member of the RINOS group and therefore a passionate advocate for the introduction of the compulsory subject of COMPUTING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (RIN) in primary and secondary schools. Dr. Ocepek made it to the top 50 teachers in the world, coming through a field of thousands of teachers from all over the globe competing for the title and thus once again made us proud.

The title of Teacher of the Year 2023 was awarded to Jožica Frigelj, M.Sc., from Kette and Murn Primary School, Ljubljana. Ms. Frigelj is an old-school teacher, who applies innovative approaches in her teaching and underscores genuine contact with children. She describes herself not as a teacher of subjects, but rather a creator of the educational process and a motivator of pupils in acquiring new knowledge. In her long-standing teaching career she has employed countless innovative, creative, children-friendly educational practices, which she has presented at professional conferences, in professional journals and magazines, and at public forums of the *"What kind of school do we want?"* initiative, which she co-founded. Years ago, a manifesto was written as part of the initiative, which is sent to every minister. Among all these well-intended practices she points out a different assessment paradigm, which she developed in the scope of the project of introducing the European Language Portfolio into foreign language classes and called it collaborative





▲ **Uroš Očepek**, Ph.D., Trbovlje Secondary Technical and Vocational School at the Global Teacher Prize



▲ **Laura Mohorko Kumer**, Cirkulane-Zavrč Primary School; **Jože Lango**, Majda Vrhovnik Primary School, Ljubljana; **Jožica Frigelj**, Kette and Murn Primary School, Ljubljana; **Vanja Kolar Ivačić**, Bistrica ob Sotli Primary School; **Barbara Gradišnik**, III Grammar School, Maribor; **Uroš Očepek**, Ph.D., Trbovlje Secondary Technical and Vocational School



▲ **Deana Jezeršek**, Initiator of I am a teacher!; **Uroš Očepek**, Ph.D., Trbovlje Secondary Technical and Vocational School

**JOB SATISFACTION IS THE BASIS FOR A HAPPY LIFE. THE CURRENT SHORTAGE IN THE LABOR MARKET MUST NOT BE RESOLVED BY UNDERQUALIFIED PERSONNEL.**

assessment. Her extensive teaching experience, continuous professional training and commitment to children's well-being as well as her effort and perseverance have already been rewarded by the profession, as in 2020 she received a lifetime achievement award in the field of primary education. Upon being awarded the title of Teacher of the Year 2023, Ms. Frigelj said that she would continue to work for children and inclusion, because she believes that all children deserve attention and opportunity and everyone can succeed. Above all, she wants to raise the reputation of the teaching profession through good practices. *"Job satisfaction is the basis for a happy life. The current shortage in the labor market must not be resolved by underqualified personnel."*



▲ Event of the initiative: "Between giftedness and attention disorders"

Partners of the "I'm a teacher!" Initiative

**DELO**

**ROKUS Klett**

# THERE IS POWER IN COOPERATION, ONLY COOPERATION CAN LEAD TO POSITIVE CHANGES!

WITH **Jožica Frigelj, M.Sc.**

▶  
**Jožica Frigelj, M.Sc.,**  
 Kette and Murn Primary  
 School, Ljubljana, Teacher  
 of the Year 2023



## H

**ow would you describe your approach to teaching and how has it developed over the more than forty years of your teaching career?**

**J.F.** In all these years of teaching, I have used and tested all known and unknown methods, forms, and approaches. There is no straightforward recipe, the most important thing is for the teacher to “feel” the students. The teacher must impress with their personality, positive approach, and love for teaching. The only thing that always works is for the students not to be subjected to prescribed approaches or universal recipes, as they are individuals and unique.

**You are a co-founder of the civil initiative “What kind of school do we want?” What is its mission?**

**J.F.** With a broad consensus of the interested professional public, the Manifesto for an Excellent Public School was created on three public platforms using “World Café” method, which defines 12 requirements to make this possible. In all subsequent activities, the Manifesto served as a guide for meetings with the current ministers and organized annual public debates to inform and encourage the interested public to find solutions to the most pressing issues at the time. The list also includes continuous efforts to recognize teachers—as experts, with a proposal and articles designed to enable the establishment of a teachers’ chamber, for inclusion in an umbrella law, or a developed concept and a proposal for establishing an expert committee within the framework of the representative trade union. As long as teachers only follow curricula and are not creators of the learning process, “school” problems will only accumulate. There is power in cooperation, only cooperation can lead to positive changes!

**As the winner of the lifetime achievement award in primary education and holder of the title “Teacher of the Year 2023”, how will you continue to advocate for improving the quality of education in Slovenia?**

**J.F.** The Manifesto for an Excellent Public School of the civil initiative “What kind of school do we want?” has been my

guide since its inception. In any case, I will continue to constantly underline the importance of good teachers, who must also be adequately rewarded for their good performance. The greatest reward would undoubtedly be taking into account their opinion and knowledge in professional issues, thus increasing their reputation in society, which always sidelines them one way or another and does not recognize their importance and role in society.

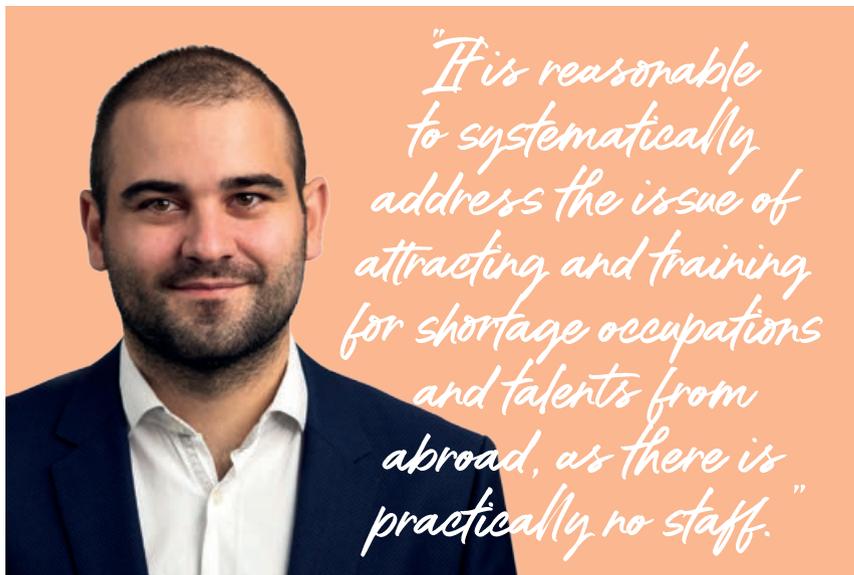
**What is the future of education in Slovenia in your opinion? What values and approaches do you hope will become part of the learning process in the next decade?**

**J.F.** Hyper-regulation of education does not encourage creativity; the profession is taxing, underpaid, and therefore unattractive to young people. Unfounded judgements by the lay public on social networks do not contribute to the promotion of the profession. I wish teachers would dare use approaches that work and not those that dictate, at the same time instilling values such as cooperation, solidarity, and tolerance.

**Can you put a teacher’s mission into words?**

**J.F.** Teachers are the weavers of the future. The fabric, however, depends on the threads that the society provides. (I just hope that someday we do not wake up to find out that the emperor has no clothes.)

✕



Žan Dapčević  
Chief Executive Officer  
ACADEMIA

the issue of attracting and training for shortage occupations and talents from abroad, as there is practically no staff. Potential short-term measures include the introduction of residence permits for talents who have completed study at leading universities in the world, following the example of the United Kingdom, Singapore or the United Arab Emirates, as well as residence permits for digital nomads like was done in neighboring Croatia, or work permits according to the points-based system applied in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to address the deficit. Longer-term systemic measures and support should be targeted primarily at attracting international students to Slovenia. International research shows that the education of one thousand international students creates 300 direct and indirect jobs.

However, when it comes to the reasons for the shortage arising from inadequately qualified labor force – which has been reported by employers for some time within the framework of the Occupational Barometer survey of the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia (for example, software developers and system administrators) – it is also necessary to evaluate the existing secondary and tertiary education programs and update them accordingly.

#### Define the future-ready classroom.

ž.d. I envision the future-ready study environment as an interdisciplinary, collaborative space for co-creation, critical thinking, creativity, innovation and evaluation of acquired knowledge, problem solving of concrete challenges, which encourages learners to develop their personalities and the ability to learn, and where the study process is delivered by mentors and not ex-cathedra lecturers.



#### EMPOWERING EDUCATION:

## A VISIONARY'S QUEST FOR CHANGE

**I** f you had a magic wand, what is the first thing you would change in the Slovenian school system? Where have you already left your mark – what is your greatest achievement?

ž.d. First, I would empower school management and professionals in education to be braver and to take control. I believe that this would yield teachers full of passion, energy and optimism. I think that such an approach would expedite changes and allow us to successfully introduce them in the Slovenian school system, for example, introducing basic knowledge of computer and information sciences into primary and secondary

education and introducing basic knowledge of sustainable development. In my opinion, it is very important to highlight the good practices of individual teachers and schools, including in the media, and to reward them within various initiatives, including your “I’m a teacher!”.

We are happy that our mark on education at Academia goes back 30 years. This academic year, we have students studying here from as many as 17 countries. In addition to Slovenian state-approved higher education study programs we also provide British higher national diploma courses, enabling graduates to obtain a double degree. In 2020, we were ranked the second-best vocational college by the British regulator BTEC from among nearly 800 schools in 60 countries, specifically because of our entrepreneurial spirit, which we consider our greatest achievement.

**What methods should be used at the national level in efforts to reduce the deficit of occupations that are in short supply?**

ž.d. We need to address the occupation-specific reasons for the deficit. With full employment and the fact that the generation entering the labor market is smaller than the one retiring, it is reasonable to systematically address



# BELIEVE IN SLOVENIA

INITIATIVE THAT CONNECTS SLOVENIA AND THE USA

*Get to know the "ambassadors" and why they Believe in Slovenia:*



**Andrej Košmrlj, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Princeton University.

- After graduating from the University of Ljubljana, he continued with doctoral studies at **MIT** and was Post-Doctoral Fellow in Physics at **Harvard**.
- He has received the **NSF CAREER**, the most prestigious award of the American Science Foundation for lecturers and was many times awarded with the **Princeton Engineering Commendation List for Outstanding Teaching**.
- He is mainly interested in theoretical and computational research of **complex systems**.
- **Member of the Princeton Institute for the Science and Technology of Materials**, American Physical Society, Society of Engineering Science, Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics.
- As **ASEF** co-founder and mentor, he connects Slovenians around the world through education. He is also a member of the Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia.



**Marinka Žitnik, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics, Harvard Medical School

- After finishing her computer science studies, she continued research studies at universities in Toronto and London, and earned a doctorate at **Stanford**.
- She was the first Slovenian woman to become a professor at Harvard.
- She investigates foundations of AI to enhance scientific discoveries. Her lab is pioneering AI systems.
- She founded Therapeutics Data Commons and is the faculty lead of the International AI4Science Initiative.
- She also supports students in their chosen fields as the director of the ASEF Institute for Education and Research.



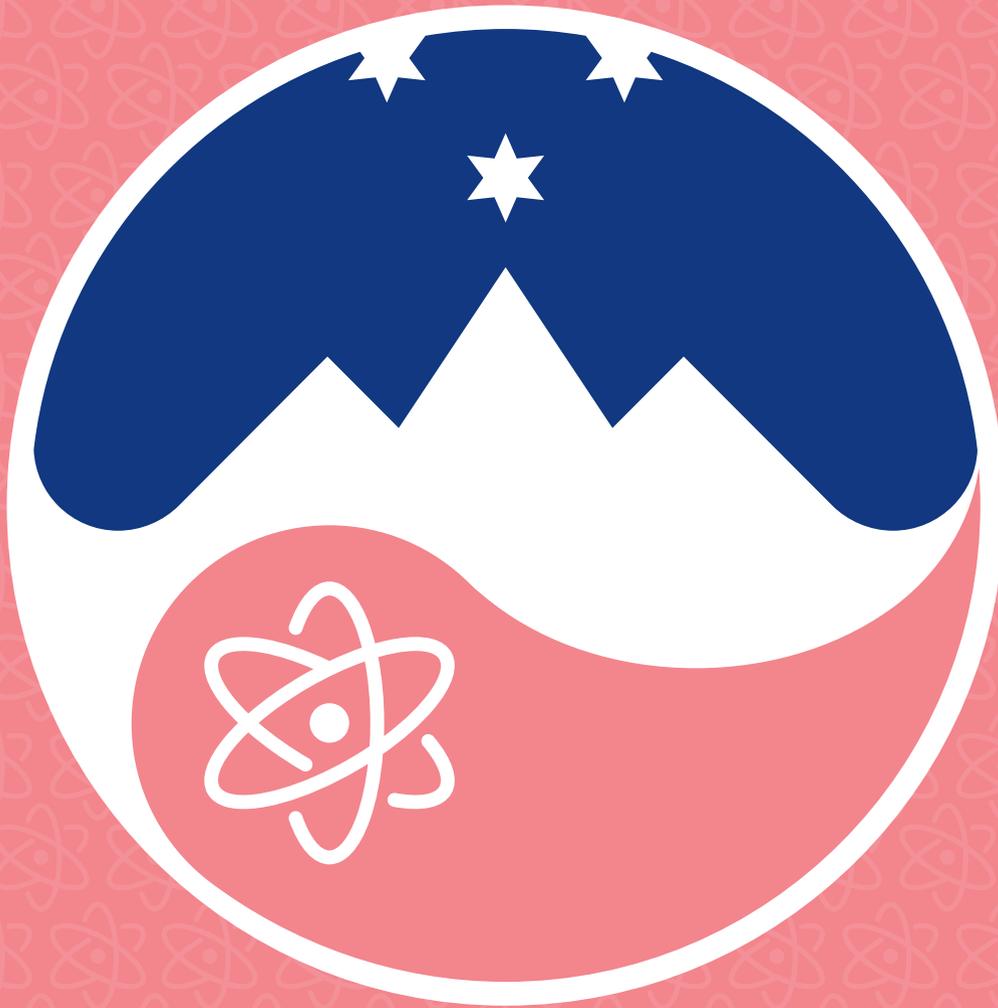
**Uroš Seljak, Ph.D.**

Full Professor at the University of Berkeley in California, Full Member of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, and Director of the Center for Cosmological Physics.

- After graduating from the University of Ljubljana, he earned his doctorate at **MIT**.
- He was a **Smithsonian Fellow** at Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.
- He is the only Slovene member of the **National Academy of Sciences**.
- His research focuses on weak lensing, galaxy clustering, and cosmological simulations.
- He has been awarded the **Helen B. Warner Award** of the American Astronomical Society and the **NSF Career Award**.
- In 2021 he received the prestigious **Gruber Cosmology Prize**.
- The award for the best scientific publication given to under- and postgraduate students by the University of Ljubljana and the ASEF is named after him - **the Prize of Uroš Seljak, Ph.D.**

**Believe in Slovenia** is an initiative of AmCham Slovenia that aims to emphasize the friendship between the USA and Slovenia in a positive light. Its purpose is to draw attention to the outstanding individuals living in the US who were born in Slovenia or Americans of Slovene descent. Believe in Slovenia "ambassadors" have kept connections with Slovenia, have positive feelings towards our country, and are our country's biggest promoters.

The extraordinary stories of successful individuals can serve as inspiration because even as a small nation, we can be successful anywhere, even in the US.



AmCham Slovenia

# READY4DFUTURE COMMITTEE

Knowledge & Support 2023

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# CATALYZING A PARADIGM SHIFT: FORGING A SUSTAINABLE PATH FORWARD

WITH **Tina Kobilšek**

**Y**ou started your career in an international setting and gained valuable experience in various fields. You are Slovenia's lead climate change negotiator and you also represented the EU. How important are the culture of dialogue and the strength of relationships when it comes to achieving the goals you pursue?

**T.K.**— International climate negotiations are based on multilateralism, and if there is no trust, it is difficult to reach agreements. At these negotiations, agreements must be reached with all countries (close to 200 countries). The key is that as many stakeholders as possible are involved; including the corporate, private sector, because we know that the states themselves will never succeed in this game. It is the duty of the state to set up a suitable framework showing the way, then it is up to the various actors to carry it out.



**Tina Kobilšek**  
Head of climate  
policy department at  
Slovenian Ministry of the  
Environment, Climate and  
Energy and Lead negotiator  
for climate change, Head of  
delegation to UNFCCC

*Unless companies go green,  
they will lose out.*



### What does Slovenia do well compared to other EU countries?

TK. Over the last few years, we have significantly reduced emissions in the buildings sector. Mainly because we made considerable investments in the comprehensive energy renovation of buildings, including improving the thermal insulation of buildings, replacing fuel oil with low-carbon energy sources and focusing on other measures of efficient energy use. Overall, we are doing quite well in the building segment, with a notable effect of subsidies received by individuals and legal persons.

### Slovenian roads, however, are definitely not “leading to (green) transition”. What would you say about the consequences of dense traffic?

TK. Traffic is the core of the emission problem in Slovenia – total traffic emissions account for more than 40% in total. We will have to start thinking about putting a greater focus on sustainable mobility and changing our habits. Expanding radial and other

roads will not be enough to solve this problem, we must also concentrate on and address a greater uptake of public passenger transport, encourage work from home and consider these different alternatives. Slovenia is among the EU countries with the largest share of household income spent on cars, while having the smallest car occupancy – 1.2 persons per vehicle. We should create a paradigm shift to avoid shorter driving distances and increase the number of passengers. Solving the consequences of congested traffic will involve several elements – from smart infrastructure planning to promoting sustainable means and awareness.

### Do you think that the state could take a step forward by providing incentives?

TK. Absolutely, a lot is already being done. The government reorganization has resulted in the first ever Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy, which covers 60% of all emissions in Slovenia. Two laws have

been adopted, namely the Road Transport Act, providing some basis for shifting road policies towards sustainability and reducing emissions, and the Infrastructure for Alternative Fuels and the Promotion of the Transition to Alternative Fuels in Transport Act, which will essentially speed up the transition to emission-free mobility, at the same time accelerating and fostering the necessary investments. A lot of effort is going into setting up an incentive framework at the national level. Much depends on municipalities and individuals as well.

### When referring to ESG, we are mainly talking about the E. Could you comment on that?

TK. Maybe the E is indeed in the forefront somewhat, but it is crucial from the point of view of competitiveness. IMAD (the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the Republic of Slovenia) conducted a survey on productivity. In 2020, 51% of Slovenian companies believed that climate change would have no impact on their



business. IMAD warns that Slovenia is at the tail end of green investment in the EU and this will put our competitiveness at risk. Companies will simply have to invest in green, not only in the domestic market, but also globally. Unless companies go green, they will lose out. Ironically, the Chinese are the leaders in this green race – when it comes to e-vehicles, panels, etc., their technology is superior. The USA, for example, responded with the Inflation Reduction Act, the EU with the Net-Zero Industry Act. But we must realize that even if we stop emissions today, the world will continue to warm up until a certain moment. We know that the global temperature today is already 1.1 degrees Celsius higher than in the pre-industrial era. Our long-term goal is to keep it at 1.5 degrees Celsius. That is why we need to take steps forward in this decade, by 2030 we have to reduce emissions globally by 43%. We know that the current measures are not sufficient, a recent report shows that with the plans of all countries combined, the temperature

rise is still 2.5–2.9 degrees Celsius. We simply fall behind the target, which is very worrying.

**What (if any) is the sanction in case of violation?**

T.K.— There is no “global climate police”. There are no sanctions in terms of fines. However, there are more and more court cases, where various groups of people before domestic courts, and even international courts, are asking about the role and especially the responsibility of states with regard to the consequences of climate change.

**Is there an overview available of who best fulfils the commitments and who the least?**

T.K.— The thing is that everyone sets their own goals. This is the difference between the Paris Agreement and the previous Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol set the goals for the developed countries and we had to pursue them, whereas now every country sets its own goals, in terms of Nationally Determined Con-

tributions (NDC). The common goal of the EU of –55% is ambitious, but still insufficient in the long term. The 2040 target is already being considered, with the European scientific community basically suggesting a 90–95% emission reduction target. Unfortunately, some other countries set very low goals and then exceed them. With legislative frameworks, the state can provide a clear incentive regarding investments, indicating the direction to be followed by entities.

**Would you like to share with us your green motto for SLOVENIA?**

T.K.— Due to its geographical position, Slovenia is much more exposed to climate change; it is a hot spot according to all global surveys and science. This year, we experienced that in the form of the floods. More and more droughts and also more and more downpours – this is our reality. I think it is very important that we all realize this, from an individual perspective and from a corporate perspective. Adapting to climate change is key – where we live, how we do business. We take this very seriously at the national level, but it is also a local and regional concern, because when something happens in the coastal area, it is not quite the same as if it happened in the Štajerska region. All sectors will have to start adapting and internalize the awareness that when we build, we do not build for five years only, but for a longer period. When we make our business plans, we do not make them for five years, but for a longer period. Also, from an individual’s point of view, we have to ask ourselves today, especially in Slovenia, what means of transport we use, what we eat – agriculture, for instance, is one of the key sectors where we know the biggest reduction in emissions will be needed.





◀  
**Katarina Primožič  
Ramovš, M.Sc.**  
People and Culture Director,  
NIL, part of Conscia

# HYBRID WORKING LANDSCAPES REQUIRE A CULTURAL RESET

BY **Katarina Primožič  
Ramovš, M.Sc.**

PHOTO:  
Unsplash



A photograph of two women sitting at a small, modern table in a bright, modern office. They are both looking at laptops. The woman on the left has long, curly hair and is wearing a black top and blue jeans. The woman on the right has curly hair and is wearing a purple top and black boots. They are sitting on green chairs. The background is a large window with a view of a city skyline. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*In the era of hybrid work, aligning corporate culture with corporate strategy is not just a necessity, but a strategic advantage.*

The transition to different hybrid working models, accelerated by recent global events, has brought the importance of corporate culture to the forefront. Organisations are challenged to redefine their strategies to cultivate a culture that not only adapts to these new models, but also aligns with sustainable business practises. In the article, I will share the model that helped our company NIL, part of Conscia develop and support the desired culture in the past and one we are still following in the context of hybrid work.

### The Cultural Imperative in the Context of Change

Culture is a business priority as it can help create change and build an organisation that thrives. Research has shown the impact culture has on results and how important context is when assessing the strategic effectiveness of culture<sup>1</sup>. As outlined in McKinsey's "Culture in the Hybrid Workplace"<sup>2</sup> and Gartner's Global Knowledge Worker Forecast<sup>3</sup>, as well as several other studies, the hybrid model is becoming a mainstay. This shift requires a reassessment of cultural norms and business strategies.

### How Can Reassessment Be Addressed in the Context of Hybrid Work?

At NIL, part of Conscia, we have identified several useful steps to cultivate a desired culture that has worked for our company:

**1 Reassessment and Realignment of Organisational Values and Processes:** Reassessing and realigning core values to adapt to the dynamics of hybrid work is the first step in understanding how core values will be implemented in the new work environment and which adjustments are required. In this context, it is crucial to adapt organisational processes to be more inclusive, flexible, and support hybrid work dynamics. The reward system, the KUDOS system, and the organisational structure in the hybrid context must support flexibility and autonomy while maintaining accountability. This includes developing and tracking performance metrics that align with cultural expectations to ensure employees and managers are evaluated not only on tasks completed, but also on their adherence to cultural values.

**2 Strengthening Leadership:** Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organisational culture and modelling and strengthening the desired culture. Training programmes that equip leaders to effectively lead remote teams and promote a positive culture are important, as is providing them with the tools to be able to effectively lead a remote or hybrid environment.

**3 Employee Engagement:** To support an inclusive culture where all employees feel valued and heard, regardless of their location or working arrangement, employees must be actively involved in the culture-building process in order to solicit their feedback, address concerns, and integrate their perspectives into the evolving cultural framework. This participatory approach promotes a sense

<sup>1</sup> Boris Groysberg, Jeremiah Lee, Jesse Price, J. Yo-Jud Cheng: The leader's guide to corporate culture, Harvard business review press, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Bryan Hancock, Bill Schaninger, and Brooke Weddle: Culture in the hybrid workplace, McKinsey Global Publishing, McKinsey & Company podcast, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Check press release by Gartner: <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-03-01-gartner-forecasts-39-percent-of-global-knowledge-workers-will-work-hybrid-by-the-end-of-2023#:~:text=March%201%2C%202023-,Gartner%20Forecasts%2039%25%20of%20Global%20Knowledge%20Workers%20Will%20Work%20Hybrid,Help%20Alleviate%20IT%20Talent%20Crunch.> Accessed 4.11.2023.

<sup>4</sup> Check your company cybersecurity maturity, contact NIL, part of Conscia: <https://nil.com/en/cybersecurity-maturity-assessment/>.

of ownership and engagement. The McKinsey report also suggests prioritising inclusivity and mental health.

### Identifying and Mitigating Key Risks as Part of Your Quality Management System

Hybrid working models introduce new risks, so regular audits and updates are essential. The most effective way for us has been to incorporate the 'building the desired culture' model into our quality management system as part of the ISO standards.

**1 Communication Gaps:** Remote working can lead to communication breakdowns and people drawing conclusions that are not based on facts. Therefore, we need to examine and question whether current communication practises with people managers, current meetings, and implemented tools enable effective communication and collaboration across the organisation.

**2 Isolation and Influence on Employee Engagement:** Employees can feel isolated or disengaged in a remote environment. This can be countered by encouraging regular virtual interactions, team-building activities, and recognising and rewarding achievements. The McKinsey study "The Future of Mental Health at Work" suggests prioritising mental health and wellbeing and taking steps to promote work-life balance, provide mental health resources, and create a supportive work environment.

**3 Cybersecurity Risks in the Remote Workplace:** The increase in remote connections increases the attack surface for potential cyber threats. As a major provider of SOC services<sup>4</sup>, we suggest you implement robust cybersecurity protocols and regularly train your employees on cybersecurity.

NIL 5-step model towards desired culture



Picture 1: NIL model of nurturing the desired culture

### Towards the Reset

Building a desired culture in the context of hybrid working is not just a question of adaptation, but a strategic imperative for sustainable business growth that requires a reset. In the era of hybrid work, aligning corporate culture with corporate strategy is not just a necessity, but a strategic advantage. ✘



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# AMCHAM ADVOCACY

## FOR A BETTER BUSINESS AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVENIA

**In AmCham Slovenia, the international community with a diversified network of more than 400 members from various industries, which together account for almost 36% of Slovenia's GDP in terms of revenue, we connect knowledge and act as the voice of Slovenian and international companies in Slovenia. Over 380 experts are involved in the AmCham Advocacy within seven committees, working for a better business and living environment in Slovenia.**

### Main points of AmCham advocacy for 2024

#### Health

Implementing comprehensive healthcare reform in Slovenia presents a formidable challenge. Accessible, effective, and modern public health system must be based on realistic foundations and place individuals at its core. Our vision for achieving this encompasses digital transformation, clearly defined financing and health benefit basket, public-private partnership, value-based healthcare, and the transformation of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia.

#### People and Knowledge/Competencies

Acknowledging the scarcity of skilled labor and talents is paramount. It is crucial to address the issues of how to retain highly skilled employees, make it easier for companies to recruit skilled foreigners, and adapt education to the needs of the digital age. As a foundational step, we need to introduce Computer Science as the compulsory subject in primary and secondary school. For almost 2 years, AmCham Ready 4D Future Committee has working actively with other stakeholders on achieving this goal.

#### International Competitiveness

To be competitive, we need a predictable

business environment, a positive attitude toward the economy, and an appropriate tax policy that is predictable, reasonable, and does not interfere with constitutional rights. Additionally, the pension system reform bears relevance, as it impacts both the population and overall quality of life. If designed thoughtfully, it can also create a more extensive base of Slovenian capital to be invested in Slovenian businesses.

#### Sustainability

Businesses are in a phase of green transition; hence, ESG criteria are no longer just a corporate responsibility pillar but a prerequisite for investment, competitiveness, and survival. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is coming into effect in 2024 and, with it, a new era of sustainability reporting. It is essential to ask ourselves whether we are reducing emissions from a commitment to climate neutrality or whether these endeavors are driven solely by a desire for favorable points on a report.

#### Welfare Society

Without a competitive and predictable business environment, we cannot ensure a welfare society, our shared goal. Stimulating the economy is crucial, especially in light of the current global situation, with declines in orders, reductions in production, reductions in the volume of consumption, and lay-offs in many industries. Thus, we oppose any additional burdens placed on the economy.

*Thank you, Amcham working committees for all your work and dedication. We are proud of all the 380 experts, working for a better quality of life and a better business environment in Slovenia.*



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7th INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

# Believe in Business



SEPTEMBER 21-22, 2023

# 7TH INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE SLOVENIA BUSINESS BRIDGE™

CROSSROADS OF  
OPPORTUNITIES  
SEPTEMBER 2023  
LJUBLJANA  
SLOVENIA

The 7th Slovenia Business Bridge™ Investment and Development Conference, held on September 21-22, titled “Believe in Business – Crossroads of Opportunities,” focused on global economic challenges and the role of business in creating sustainable, interconnected communities. The panels highlighted the importance of family businesses and addressed topics such as connectivity, the drive for a green future, and the power of technology and artificial intelligence. The event brought together more than 40 speakers – industry experts – to discuss the impact of large corporations on economic growth, and more than 350 participants had the opportunity to exchange the best practices to strengthen local, regional, and global economies.





▲ Pre-event USA Connect



▲ Ken Walsh, Senior Commercial Officer U.S. Commercial Service; Gregory Meier, USA Embassy; Don Plusquellic, Akron USA; H.E. Jamie Lindler Harpoottian, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia; Steve Staresinic; Erin McKelvey, European American Chamber of Commerce Texas; Ryan Combs, Research Triangle Regional Partnership, Honorary Consul of Canada; Dijana Mitrović, DM Global Consulting; Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., AmCham Slovenia

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023  
PRE-EVENT:

# USA Connect: Unlocking Business and Partnership Opportunities

The two-day 7th Investment and Development Conference Slovenia Business Bridge™, organized by **AmCham Slovenia** in cooperation with **SPIRIT Slovenia** and the **Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport**, opened with the pre-event “USA Connect: Unlocking Business and Partnership Opportunities,” which brought together companies from various industries and offered them the opportunity to network with experienced business developers and representatives of chambers of commerce.

**GUESTS**

**Ryan Combs**, Executive Director at Research Triangle Regional Partnership, Honorary Consul of Canada; **H.E. Jamie Lindler Harpoottian**, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia; **Erin McKelvey**, President & CEO at European American Chamber of Commerce Texas; **Dijana Mitrović**, CEO & Founder, DM Global Consulting; **Steve Staresinic**, Certified Public Accountant and International Business Consultant; **Don Plusquellic**, Managing Director, Akron, USA

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023  
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SLOVENIA BUSINESS BRIDGE CONFERENCE™:

# Beyond Borders: Why Big Business Matters for National Prosperity?

The first panel of the Slovenia Business Bridge™ “Beyond Borders: Why Big Business Matters for National Prosperity?” brought together outstanding speakers who shared their understanding of the role and impact that big companies and international investment have on the country’s overall prosperity. The success and growth of large corporations not only contribute to the domestic economy and have vast implications for global trade, job creation, technological advancements, and the well-being of societies. The influence of big business reaches far and wide, shaping the economic landscape of nations and playing a crucial role in driving economic growth and development. Recognizing the importance of big business in fostering national prosperity is essential for understanding the interplay between industry, government, and society and for harnessing the potential of large corporations in creating a prosperous future for nations across the globe.



▲ Robert Ljoljo, M.Sc., Lek d.d., Sandoz Slovenia; Péter Bese, International Retail Directorate, OTP Group; Bartosz Ciołkowski, Mastercard; Božo Črnjla, Trimo; Mohamed Hammam, Pfizer; Matevž Frangež, Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport; Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., AmCham Slovenia

**GUESTS**

**Péter Bese**, International Retail Directorate, OTP Group; **Bartosz Ciołkowski**, Divisional President, South Eastern Europe, Mastercard; **Božo Črnjla**, CEO, Trimo; **John Denhof**, CEO & President of the Management Board, Nova KBM; **Matevž Frangež**, State Secretary for Internationalization, Entrepreneurship, Development Resources and Tourism, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport; **Mohamed Hammam**, Country Manager, Adriatic Region, Pfizer and **Robert Ljoljo**, M.Sc., President of the Board of Management, Lek d.d. & Country President, Sandoz Slovenia



▲ Jure Bračko, NKBM; Lovro Peterlin, AI Slovenija; John Denhof, CEO & President of the Management Board, Nova KBM

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

# Business Leaders & Investors Dinner

LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF ... OPPORTUNITIES



▲ Žiga Vavpotič, Bora Partners; Maša Jazbec, Ph. D.; Borut Čeh, Labena Ltd; Luka Trikić, Connect the Dots; Blaž Brodnjak, NLB d.d.

The first day of the 7th Investment and Development Conference Slovenia Business Bridge™ ended with dinner with business leaders and investors, highlighting investment opportunities, innovation, and development. The dinner was a stimulus to encourage a dialogue between visionaries and innovative entrepreneurs who dare to challenge the status quo and industries that drive society forward.

#### GUESTS

**Blaž Brodnjak**, Group CEO, NLB d.d., President, AmCham Slovenia; **Borut Čeh**, Co-owner and Managing director, Labena Ltd; **Maša Jazbec**, Ph. D., Artist, Curator, Researcher; **Luka Trikić**, Co-founder & Product Manager, Connect the Dots; **Žiga Vavpotič**, Co-founder and CEO, Bora Partners



▲ Ana Maria Mitić, Žiga Vavpotič, Bora Partners



OTP Group; ...  
... Ministry of the



Management Board,





▲ Stjepan Orešković, Ph.D., M+GRUPA; Ivo Boscarol, Pipistrel Aircraft; Nuša Pavlinjek, Roto Group; Jure Podkrižnik, M.Sc., Podkrižnik Group; Klemen Šešok, Iskra

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023  
AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST:

# Legacy and Innovation: Unveiling the Importance of Family Businesses in Slovenia

The AmCham Business Breakfast provided an opportunity to explore and highlight the critical role that family businesses will play in the future of the Slovenian and regional economies. This event delved into the anticipated significance of family businesses, shedding light on their potential contributions to future economic growth, job creation, innovation, and social cohesion. By examining the delicate balance between legacy and innovation within these businesses, we can anticipate their ability to navigate challenges, adapt to the evolving times, and foster sustainable development. The stories and projected successes of family businesses in Slovenia and the region offered valuable insights into their anticipated importance and future role in shaping a thriving and resilient economy.

**GUESTS**

**Ivo Boscarol**, Founder, Co-owner & Chairman Emeritus, Pipistrel; **Matjaž Han**, Minister of the Economy, Tourism and Sport; **Stjepan Orešković**, Ph.D., Principal Investor, M+Grupa; **Nuša Pavlinjek**, Managing Director, Roto Group; **Jure Podkrižnik**, M.Sc., Executive Director, Podkrižnik Group; **Jure Remškar**, Chief Financial & Operations Officer, Smart Com and **Klemen Šešok**, COO, Iskra



▲ Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., AmCham Slovenia; Matjaž Han, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport



▲ Jure Remškar, Smart Com d.o.o.; Matthias Eckert, emc2invest; Ivo Boscarol, Pipistrel



▲ Jure Mikuž, Managing Partner, South Central Ventures; Matjaž Filipič, Partner & Founder, KF Finance & ALFI Funds; Janez Škrubej, Partner, Invera Equity Partners; Marko Kettel, Senior Partner, Kettel and Partners, Member of Karanovic



▲ Rok Capl, Acting Director, SPIRIT Slovenia

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023  
ROUNDTABLE:

# Green Heart of Europe: Hub for High-Tech and Innovation

The panel “Green Heart of Europe: Hub for High-Tech and Innovation” developed the idea that Slovenia is the green heart of Europe, with its strategic location at the European crossroads of opportunity and access to markets in both Western and Eastern Europe. The panelists also drew attention to the facts and challenges of an unstable business environment, which hinders the potential of a unique country like Slovenia.



▲ Niklas Pichler, Blackpeak Capital; Rob Irving, Ph.D., Global Private Equity, Dentons; Andrzej Bartos, Innova Capital; Matjaž Ulčar, Law Firm Ulčar & Partners

GUESTS

Andrzej Bartos, Senior Partner, Innova Capital; Rok Capl, Acting Director, SPIRIT Slovenia; Matjaž Filipič, Partner & Founder, KF Finance & ALFI Funds; Rob Irving, Ph.D., Co-chair, Global Private Equity, Dentons; Marko Kettel, Senior Partner, and Attorney at Law, Kettel and Partners, Member of Karanovic; Jure Mikuž, Managing Partner, South Central Ventures; Niklas Pichler, Managing Partner, Blackpeak Capital; Janez Škrubej, Partner, Invera Equity Partners; Matjaž Ulčar, Managing Partner, Law Firm Ulčar & Partners.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023  
ROUNDTABLE:

# Synergizing Humans and Technology; The Power of AI for Future of Innovation and Business

The speakers of the conference's last panel, “Synergizing Humans and Technology; The Power of AI for Future of Innovation and Business,” addressed a topical subject: AI. Its future is exciting and uncertain, with countless potential benefits, from improving healthcare and education to increasing efficiency and productivity across industries. However, concerns remain about its impact on employment, privacy, and security.

GUESTS:

Martin Bäuml, Senior Staff Engineer, Google; Benjamin Gošar, President of the Management Board, Triglav Skladi d.o.o.; Joško Mrndže, Country Director, Adriatics Region, Google; Igor Papič, Ph.D., Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation; Mitja Pirc, Ph.D., Director, Kearney; Jaka Repanšek, Founder, RePublis, and Co-chair of the AmCham IP Committee.



▲ Joško Mrndže, Google



▲ Mitja Pirc, Ph.D., Kearney; Joško Mrndže, Google; Benjamin Gošar, Triglav Skladi, d.o.o.; Jaka Repanšek, LL.B. MBA, RePublis; Igor Papič, Ph.D., Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation; Martin Bäuml, Google



South Central  
Ventures



▲  
**Jure Mikuš**  
Managing Partner, South  
Central Ventures

**D**uring the lifetime of us who currently occupy this planet, there is hardly an innovation that has changed our lives to a greater extent than the revolutionary development of mobile communication technologies. The invention and global expansion of mobile technologies has resulted in a huge leap and – especially in the geographical areas which had previously lagged behind the developed world as regards fixed communication infrastructure – it made the level of many services deliverable via mobile devices comparable between parts of the world that greatly differ in terms of development.

The explosive pace of mobile technologies development not only revolutionized human communication, but consequently accelerated the use of the Internet, as users were no longer tied to their computers and they started using internet services on the go. The Internet of Things brings faster data transfer, changing the ecosystem into a network of sensors and data processing centers with the aim of optimizing the use of human resources and improving the quality of life in general. We are entitled to legitimate concerns about the impact of digital social networks on the development of interpersonal relationships, but social networks today are much more than just Facebook and Instagram. As with any novelty, this one too can only bring benefit to those who know how to use it properly, whereas it punishes naivety.

Because of the expansion of mobile technologies, along

**CO-CREATORS  
OF THE  
DIGITAL  
REVOLUTION**



PHOTO:  
Unsplash

with connectivity at practically every inch of the Earth's surface, the business landscape will never be the same again. Arguably, the mobile revolution was not enough to convince a critical mass; it needed the power of nature, which came in the form of a global pandemic in 2020. Science, therefore, with nature's help, brought down traditional business models and customs and significantly accelerated the process of digital transformation in the business world. The emergence of new business models made possible by the development of digital technologies provided for the renaissance of young tech companies, many of which have outgrown traditional corporations. Increasingly more entrepreneurs are taking advantage of digitalization, significantly contributing to shaping the business environment of the future. The physical location of their employees and customers is of no importance to them, and best of all, their operations are much more efficient than those of traditional companies lagging behind in the digital transformation process.

Take a look at your rhythm of life and try to imagine how you lived a decade ago and how you live today. How many e-mails did you receive and answer on your mobile today? Did you do it from the office, on the train or while watching your child's sports practice in the afternoon? And as you are preparing a document - anywhere in the world - that you have to digitally send to your potential customer tomorrow at the latest, your colleagues, whose whereabouts you do not even know, can help you edit it in real time. Although dislocated, you work together, on the same document, in real time.

How many financial transactions have you made via mobile banking without having to stand in line at the bank? When was the last time you saw your accountant in person? Did you leave for work ten minutes earlier because you had checked the traffic conditions using a mobile app, which also advised you to dress a little warmer because winter is coming? The productivity made possible by the digital revolution and the resulting connectivity cannot be compared to how it was before.

The flexibility and increased productivity would not exist without the aforementioned tech start-ups. The latter would not exist without highly motivated individuals who want to co-create a business environment in which modern technologies help business and individuals to boost efficiency. Nor would they exist without financial investors, as they are a necessary component of these companies' development in the stages preceding product commercialization, which ensures stable operations. Venture capital is a key element in the development of modern business ecosystems, and the beauty of it is that it represents the fusion of entrepreneurship and the financial industry. We investors are aware of the responsibility we assume in the early stages. The satisfaction of knowing that we are co-creating future global winners always outweighs the risk-associated problems that we face together with the companies' founders.



G L W L K V A L U E S P Z K R G  
Z B O N O Y X O F X H E H R N Z  
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D Z T R F U U M I K L **I** X P Y D

# CODING FUTURE: HOW DOES COMPUTER SCIENCE SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN?



**Irena Nančovska Šerbec,  
Ph. D.**

Assistant Prof., Department  
for Mathematics and  
Computer Science, Faculty  
of Education, University of  
Ljubljana

**H**ow is computer science taught in primary school and what is the role of computational thinking? When would it be most appropriate to start teaching students computational thinking?

**I.N.Š.**— In many countries, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland, as well as neighboring Croatia, computer science has become an indispensable element of the compulsory curriculum. Computer science is taught gradually, with students at the entry levels (kindergarten and the first triad) focusing on developing basic concepts such as logical thinking and the use of algorithms. The basics of block-based coding, etc. are introduced in the second triad. Computer science is taught by generalist teachers.

Computational thinking is a way of thinking employed in defining and solving problems. It entails thought processes that are based on the fundamen-

tal concepts of computer science. At the same time, it develops an understanding of the strengths and limitations of human intelligence and AI. It includes breaking down problems into smaller, manageable parts, recognizing patterns, abstracting key information and using algorithms, as well as analyzing and evaluating different solutions. According to psychologists, early introduction of the basics of computational thinking contributes to comprehensive cognitive development, as it comprises a general approach to problem solving through play, object manipulation and other unplugged methods more suitable for the preschool period.

**Is computer science teaching in Slovenia comparable to that in neighboring countries, in Europe and globally?**

**I.N.Š.**— No. In Slovenia, information science is compulsory only one year in secondary schools, with a “loose” subject curriculum. In contrast, in countries such as Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, computer science has been a

compulsory part of the education system for decades. Croatia introduced compulsory computer science education in 2018. In some countries, such as Austria, computer science lessons cover digital literacy development to basic computer skills. That being said, we are missing the opportunity to compete with our neighbors and on a global scale. It is interesting, however, that computer science was taught in some Slovenian secondary schools already back in 1974, which was avant-garde at the time.

### **How can teachers support and pique students' interest in computer science in the classroom? How do they spot computer talent?**

I.N.Š.— One of the ways to popularize computer science is through computer competitions. Among those, ACM Bober stands out, a competition in computational thinking that has been held in Slovenia since 2011. Every year, 24,000–30,000 pupils and students compete at the school level. Another popular competition is ACM Pišek, a block-based coding competition. It was first organized in 2020, whereas this year it is held at the national level for the first time. In addition, there are several other programming competitions, where talents are showcased. Creative computing is developed at computer summer schools and workshops, which are unfortunately only available to the privileged.

### **Do teachers in Slovenia acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to teach “modern” computer science?**

I.N.Š.— In Slovenia, future computer science teachers are educated at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana and the University of Maribor, for the most part as teachers of two subjects – mathematics and computer science. Despite some teachers being qualified to teach modern computer science, there is a shortage of teachers in this field. The number of graduates of computer science teaching courses at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana is low, about 5–10 per year, partly because computer science is an optional subject. The necessary knowledge can also be obtained by further education of information or

## **COMPUTER SCIENCE IS BECOMING A KEY SKILL COMPLEMENTING OTHER KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT AND APPROACHES, AND PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT IN MODERN SOCIETY.**

computer science specialists, equipping them to teach computer science through the Pedagogical-Andragogical Education program. However, there are even fewer such teachers, also because of low teachers' salaries.

### **How is technology changing the way we teach and learn? How is the role of the teacher changing in the light of new pedagogical trends? Do you have any ideas for rebranding and how to improve the reputation of the teaching profession and bring it closer to the younger generations?**

I.N.Š.— Technology has brought significant changes to the way of teaching and learning, enabling individualization, adjusting the pace and creating interactive learning experiences. The role of the teacher changes accordingly, with mentoring becoming crucial, as the teacher must encourage independence. The new teaching practice emphasizes collaborative learning and the use of technology as a tool for creating and sharing knowledge.

To rebrand the teaching profession, it is important to emphasize and promote the leading role of teachers in forming learning experiences as well as to foster innovative approaches and provide teachers with continuous in-service training. Improving the reputation of the teaching profession can also be achieved through campaigns that highlight the key role of teachers in shaping the future of young generations. Highlighting positive stories can further strengthen the reputation of the profession and attract young talents to the educational sphere. An additional incentive to opt for the teaching profession is scholarships for

personnel in short supply.

### **How does artificial intelligence contribute to improving the educational experience of pupils and students in Slovenia? Can gamification serve as an effective practice to bring the subject of learning closer?**

I.N.Š.— Artificial intelligence has the potential to improve educational experience through personalized learning. Intelligent tutors facilitate an authentic learning experience for students through the analysis of progress data. Gamification, an effective practice of using games in lessons, can increase motivation and create an interactive learning environment conducive to the successful delivery of the subject of learning. At the Department of Computer Science and Didactics of Computer Science, colleagues and students develop didactic computer games through project-based learning and then test them in class. They have received several awards for their innovations at computer game conferences, even among strong competitors from the industry.

I also notice that (future) teachers have an ambivalent attitude towards generative artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT or Midjourney. On the one hand, AI helps them in lesson preparation, whereas on the other hand, it opens up possibilities for one-click plagiarism.

### **How can schools better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century, such as climate change and digitization?**

I.N.Š.— Schools can better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century by incorporating interdisciplinary approaches such as environmental education and digital literacy. Project work, practical experience and cooperation with the community enable students to come into direct contact with modern challenges. Connecting with experts from different fields broadens the learning experience and enables the acquisition of knowledge for the future. Computer science is thus becoming a key skill complementing other knowledge of the subject and approaches, and preparing students for successful engagement in modern society. ✕

*“Practice isn’t the thing you do once you’re good.  
It’s the thing you do that makes you good.”*

MALCOM GLADWELL



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▲ Boštjan Stražar, Suzana Sturm, Tina Gorenc, Bojana Florjančič in Jože Lenič

# LEAN ON LEADERS TO OVERCOME UNCERTAINTY

## Leadership drives success in uncertainty

What does it take to succeed in this uncertain environment? As organizations grapple with growth and rapid technological advancements, leaders have emerged as a key factor in success. Companies increasingly find there is a need for individuals who can adeptly guide others through turbulent journeys of change.

However, the shape of leadership has evolved. It used to be the case that leaders in organizations ascended to their roles based on proficiency in their fields. The best salespeople got promoted to sales managers and the best engineers took on the role of research leads. It made sense. However, things have changed and sustained success today hinges on the ability to impact and inspire others.

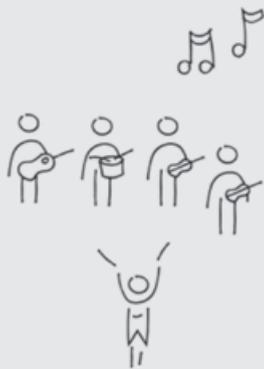
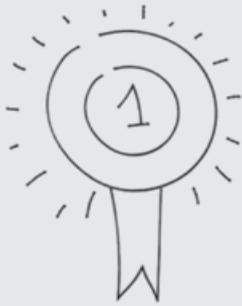
So, how important is this ability?

A Gallup study highlighted the staggering statistic that up to 70% of team engagement can be attributed to the influence of a manager or leader. This underscores the tangible impact leaders can have on the success and satisfaction of their teams.



▲  
**Bojana Florjančič,**  
Partner and Training Leader, Hansen Beck

We live in an era of rapid and unprecedented change not seen in any other era in history. Sometimes, progress and change seem relentless. Hardly a week goes by when there hasn't been another technological shift, another geopolitical earthquake or another announcement of business restructuring or initiative. While on the surface this might seem exhausting, these constant transformations also allow us to see—and help others see—opportunities.



## Leadership starts with a vision

So, where does good leadership start? It starts with a powerful vision—a crystal-clear mental image or idea that propels individuals beyond societal norms and personal fears. A vision gives us meaning, guides our decisions, and provides the energy we need to act.

The ability to envision success and take matters into your own hands has distinguished many leaders and famous people throughout history. For example, Harriet Tubman was a renowned U.S. civil rights leader who escaped slavery and saved hundreds of slaves from the worst fate. The greatest football player in history, Pelé, was known for his ability to envision success on match day.

However, vision alone is not enough for tangible results. Leaders also need to act and compel others to act.

## Goals and obstacles

Your actions need to be guided by goals, either professional or personal. When thinking about goals, we recommend that you utilize the well-known framework of S.M.A.R.T. goal setting, which is a practical and effective approach to turn visions into tangible results. If you're not already familiar with it, we recommend that you Google it (or ask ChatGPT about it).

While goals help you develop your own skills and guide your actions, the fact is you're not living in a vacuum. In your professional life, you work in an environment with many obstacles, where not everything depends on you. You might find yourself slowed down by other people (what we sometimes refer to as 'You obstacles') and material and physical limitations (which we refer to as 'It obstacles').

'It obstacles' will never go away. These are things such as state of the economy, regulatory environment, supply chain constraints, and other challenges that are simply outside our control. What about 'You obstacles', meaning other people we interact with on a daily basis? Given the almost unending range of human experiences and characteristics, we cannot expect others to think and act like us.

## You cannot motivate people directly

Still, as leaders we have to motivate others to act. The catch is that it's really hard to motivate them. In the words of Phil Jackson, who coached the Chicago Bulls to six NBA championships: "I don't motivate my players. You cannot motivate someone. Players will motivate themselves... all you can do is to provide a motivating environment."

How do you create a motivating environment? By fostering an atmosphere that rewards ambitious individuals. Of course, people need good salaries, flexible working conditions, and an attractive environment to work in. But that's not really what motivates them.

To attract and keep the best people you need to focus on relationships. To see just how important this is, let's look at another example from sports—English football club Leicester City. The team reached unprecedented success in the 2015/16 campaign when it beat the odds of 5000:1 to win the championship. To put this into perspective: the team had worse odds of winning than the Queen having a number one single that year!

London Business School analyzed their achievement and found that a large share of the success can be attributed to individual talks the club manager had with team players. By talking with them openly, he created a motivational context, aligning individual capabilities with organizational goals, and shaping an environment conducive to success.

This approach aligns people's motivation and their capabilities with organizational goals and values. It allows people to feel like they belong and creates an environment that encourages innovation and creativity.

## Long-term success depends on values

So, a leader's role is to create a motivational environment rather than directly motivate individuals. Of course, team members are responsible for their motivation and capabilities, but leaders play a crucial role in cultivating trust, developing capabilities, and influencing the organizational environment.

Here, we again circle back to our starting point—a leader is not a leader because of their technical skills. What makes them an effective leader are their interpersonal and soft skills that can align company values with individuals' motivation. In a world full of uncertainty long-term success requires companies to crystallize their values and create an environment that allows people to get behind them.

And there is no way of achieving this without effective and visionary leaders.

# 10 YEARS, ONE VISION: PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE



The Partnership for Change has been a beacon of innovative cooperation between employees in Slovenia's public and private sectors for a decade, aiming to transmit and use good ideas, practices, and valuable solutions and facilitate employee exchanges. In this dynamic program, professionals from the civil service and business sphere have consistently pushed boundaries, shattered stereotypes, and scripted inspiring narratives. They have shown that the synergy between the government and the private sector can be reimagined to work in innovative, impactful ways. Every year, we have solved challenges considered crucial by various societal stakeholders.



## Rounding Off with Round 9

This year three projects have proven that with enough willpower, determination, and willingness to cooperate, important small victories can be achieved on the way to ultimate success.

### AmCham Future of Work and Education Committee: Boosting the country's competitiveness by facilitating the employment of foreign experts

Being aware of the need for highly educated staff in Slovenia, in 2023 the working group within the Future of Work and Education Committee endeavored to shorten the procedures for recruiting foreign citizens. Namely, in Slovenia, a highly qualified workforce is in short supply, as due to more favorable tax and other policies such workers seek residence and employment elsewhere, which has an adverse impact on the domestic economy.

The world has been evolving into a global village, with work processes becoming more flexible. We have been witnessing workers moving to foreign countries as well as digital nomads, who normally do not settle in one location for a stretch of time. It is precisely for this reason that Snowball, a think tank of young people, has prepared a three-year program to attract such profiles to the country.

### The University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Computer and Information Science: The introduction of a compulsory course - Computer and Information Science in primary and secondary schools - so that we will design our future

Digital skills, competences, digital literacy, and knowledge of digital technology are the fundamental skills of the 21st century that we need to be active creators, not just followers. Individuals and society will be successful if we not only use digital technology, but also understand and master it. In 2023, a major portion of the Future of Work and Education Committee's activities focused on introducing computer and information science in primary and secondary schools as a mandatory subject.

**The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Sustainable Mobility and Transport Policy Directorate: Sustainable commuting**  
The green transition is increasingly talked

about in the corporate sector; however, we can launch good practices ourselves. The Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy thus organized the Bike to Work campaign, and such practice is rewarded with incentives to make a bicycle the preferred option over the car when choosing a means of transport.

Work process flexibilization brings flexible working hours. The said Ministry introduced a flexible hours schedule on a test basis, allowing flexible working hours. The initiative met with an extremely positive response.

## 10/10

As we reflect upon 10 years and 9 successfully executed rounds, it's bittersweet to announce that we are concluding the program in its current form — the problem-solving rounds and exchanges that many have come to value. Yet, the core spirit of Partnership for Change remains undiminished. While the program is evolving, we're laying the foundations for a renewed platform, one that will continue to champion positive changes in society and amplify the power of collaboration. Here's to the next 10/10 chapter of making a difference!

**10 Years, 400+ Exchanges**  
**10 Years, Infinite Highlights**

**Round 3****Slovenia's brand – How to strengthen the national brand “I feel Slovenia”**

In Round 3 of the Partnership for Change, the I feel Slovenia team faced the challenge of reactivating the “I feel Slovenia” brand, namely to identify and highlight the key values of Slovenia as the basis for boosting the recognition of the brand both at home and abroad. The team promoted the positioning slogan I feel Slovenia, green. creative.smart in the corporate sector, with an emphasis on start-ups. It intensified the promotion of the “I feel Slovenia” brand at Ministry events in cooperation with SPIRIT Slovenia Business Development Agency.

**Round 4****Slovenia 4.0: Eliminating paper billing in Slovenia! – Managers' Association of Slovenia**

The annual cost of paper invoices issued from kindergarten to the end of secondary school exceeds seven million euros at the national level. In Round 4, the Managers' Association participated in the project “Eliminating paper billing in Slovenia!”. Through this positive communication campaign, two main target groups, namely the management of educational institutions and children's parents, were called upon to replace paper bills with e-invoices using the channel provided free of charge by the Public Payments Administration to budget users. The goal was to set a Guinness record for the number of transitions to e-invoice, thus increasing the recognition of Slovenia and awareness of sustainability. Through awareness raising and training, the challenge contributed to the number of recipients of e-invoices having increased by 38%.

**Slovenia – Green Reference Country in Digital Europe: how to instill this ambition into 300,000 Slovenians – We Will Be Engineers!**

The challenge Slovenia – Green Reference Country in Digital Europe: how to install this ambition into 300,000 Slovenians was prepared as part of the We Will Be

Engineers! project. The topic addressed was how to realize the vision of a green reference country and extend it to as many users as possible. To this end, a digital quiz was organized with the aim of reaching 300,000 Slovenians and identifying an inspirational environment for talents. More than HALF A MILLION Slovenians were reached!

**Round 5****I'm a Teacher! – AmCham Slovenia**

In the framework of the national platform Partnership for Change and AmCham Slovenia, the “I'm a Teacher!” initiative was created in Round 5 of the program in February 2019, which spreads good practices of teachers in Slovenian schools. The goal of the initiative is to give a voice to teachers who believe their work is a mission, who seek the best in students with exceptional dedication and who can be role models for future generations of teachers. We are convinced that great people are the key to making small and big changes happen.

**Round 6****Mobile Application e-Taxes – Financial Administration of Slovenia**

The goal of the successful Round 6 challenge of the Partnership for Change – ‘Mobile Application e-Taxes’ was to enable company representatives a simple yet sufficiently secure registration in the mobile application e-Taxes, which contains well-structured and useful functionalities, thus encouraging them to keep up to date with the tax issues of their company on an ongoing basis. This was intended to facilitate the fulfilment of their tax obligations and exercising of their rights.

**Round 7****The National Institute of Chemistry: NICKI: Proof of Concept Incentive**

The National Institute of Chemistry has succeeded in connecting both with representatives of innovative companies as well as with public research organizations

and ministries. In the scope of this project, they were later joined by the Jožef Stefan Institute, and together they put forth proposals for improving the innovation environment in Slovenia, which were sent to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The proposals were the fruit of the hackathon that was carried out with the aim of improving the visibility and activities within the innovation environment in Slovenia and was organized in cooperation with key stakeholders in the Slovenian innovation environment.

**The Institute of Oncology Ljubljana: Proton Therapy in Slovenia – a Responsible Contribution to Society and the Public Healthcare System**

The Institute of Oncology Ljubljana wants to build a proton center where cancer patients would be treated with state-of-the-art technologies. As part of the Partnership for Change, they received the support of the Council of the Institute of Oncology Ljubljana for the center, formed a project group for the proton center that helps with expert content, and established a relationship with the Ministry of Health, which would serve to define the modus operandi and construction of the proton center.

**Round 8****AmCham Ready 4DFuture Committee: There Is No Green and Digital Society Without ICT Professionals**

Slovenia lacks several thousand ICT experts specializing in, for example, big data and artificial intelligence. There are concerns that, therefore, as a country, we will fail to fulfill our potential and will be unable to keep up even with the most basic development. If we increased the number of ICT professionals and thus gain new opportunities for the development of the economy, country, and society, we would be able to transition to a green and digital society. Accordingly, the Committee prepared 18 measures for more ICT professionals.





# PROMETHEUS PROJECT: PAVING THE WAY FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY

In just over a year, the Prometheus Project has become a catalyst in reshaping workplace dynamics, prioritizing the delicate balance between work and life, and promoting gender equality. It is not just a concept; it is a concrete effort to bring about real change. At its core, the Prometheus Project seeks to empower individuals by providing them with the tools to effectively manage their professional and personal lives, regardless of their professional role. Over the past year, the project has achieved several notable milestones that mark a shift in organizational culture.

Thanks to the project's efforts, decision-makers and national stakeholders have become more aware of the importance of work-life balance and gender equality. Empowerment is at the heart of the Pro-

metheus Project, empowering workers and managers to take control of their work-life balance. Recognizing the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project addresses the elephant in the room by acknowledging how personal circumstances affect this delicate balance. Drawing on scientific evidence, the Prometheus Project has uncovered a strong link between work-life balance challenges and overall workplace satisfaction, revealing hidden truths that inform future strategies. The project's impact extends beyond corporate boundaries, raising public awareness of the central role of gender equality in business.

#### The Prometheus Project's ensemble of partners includes:

Lead Partner and Project Initiator:

- American Chamber of Commerce - AmCham Slovenia
- Slovenian Partners:
- Gender Equality Research Institute, Maribor
- Merkur trgovina d.o.o.



- Riko, industrijski, gradbeni inženiring in leasing, d.o.o
- Knauf Insulation d.o.o., Škofja Loka
- Public Scholarship, Development, Disability, and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia
- A1 Slovenija, telekomunikacijske storitve, d.d.
- AMZS d.d.
- University of Maribor

Norwegian Partner:

- Norges Automobil-Forbund, the Norwegian Automobile Foundation

Made possible through financial support from Norway Grants, the Prometheus Project aligns with Norway's commitment to a sustainable, competitive, and inclusive Europe. Slovenia actively participates in this program through various initiatives, including education, scholarships, apprenticeships, and youth entrepreneurship. The Prometheus Project, initiated on July 1, 2022, is set to continue until April 30, 2024.

For more information, visit [www.amcham.si/en/advocacy/prometheus/](http://www.amcham.si/en/advocacy/prometheus/) or explore the project's activities and take a quiz on their website at <https://www.projekt-prometej.si/?lang=sSI>. Working together for a green, competitive, and inclusive Europe – [www.norwaygrants.si/en/](http://www.norwaygrants.si/en/).



# AMCHAM PROUD PARTNER



## NT CONFERENCE

AmCham Slovenia is a proud longtime partner of the NT Conference. Each year, the event showcases the intersection of modern technology, business expertise, and collaboration, which plays a central role in insightful discussions on technological advancements. In 2023, AmCham Slovenia's business lunch featured Lidija Kralj, an analyst and consultant at the European Commission and a distinguished professor leading educational reform in Croatia, discussing steps toward reform and the importance of computer science in schools with Vida Dolenc Pogačnik, COO and International Cooperation Director, AmCham Slovenia.



## FANFARA

AmCham Slovenia proudly sponsored the 16th annual Fanfara Conference, demonstrating our commitment to supporting innovation and education in Slovenia. We are excited to contribute to an event that brings together students and professionals to explore the dynamic intersection of marketing, technology, and artificial intelligence. The success of Fanfara reflects our dedication to empowering the next generation of marketers and fostering collaboration between academia and industry.

## INFORMATION SECURITY: TRUST IN PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY

AmCham Slovenia was once again a proud partner of the cybersecurity conference titled "Information Security: Trust in People and Technology," organized by the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, on November 8, 2023. The well-attended conference featured a career fair for future talents in information and cybersecurity, along with a panel discussion in the first part of the conference titled "Cyber Resilience in the Digital Age: Securing the Future of Modern Business." The roundtable was led by Vida Dolenc Pogačnik, COO and International Cooperation Director, AmCham Slovenia.



## EISEP

AmCham Slovenia is proud to partner with the European Institute of Compliance and Ethics (EICE), a global business compliance and ethics event featuring renowned speakers like Richard Bistrong and Ruth Steinholtz. This international conference, with participants from three continents and eight countries, delved into crucial topics such as ethical decision-making under pressure and practical strategies to foster ethical cultures within organizations. Anand Kumar Guruswamy's innovative insights on gamifying business compliance added a creative dimension. AmCham Slovenia is honored to contribute to this initiative, promoting the importance of ethics and integrity in global business practices in the AmCham Business Leaders Club framework.



## IEDC

AmCham Slovenia was also a proud partner of the IEDC - Bled School of Management conference, organized in collaboration with media partner Bloomberg Adria. The event gathered around 400 executives, experts, and government representatives from Slovenia, Croatia, and various other countries. The conference provided a valuable opportunity to explore the limitless possibilities achievable with dedication, courage, knowledge, and a strong network. Ms. Ajša Vodnik, CEO of AmCham Slovenia and Chair of AmChams in Europe, shared her expertise at the event titled "Crisis Environment and the Benefits of Networking," highlighting the crucial role of networking in navigating challenging business environments.

# THANK YOU, AMCHAM SLOVENIA PATRON MEMBERS



G L W L K V A L U E S P Z K R G  
Z B O N O Y X O F X H E H R N Z  
B C Y K F J S T T Q C T U O I B  
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D Z T R F U U M I K L I X P Y D



# WHAT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN SCIENCE AND INNOVATION?

WITH Igor Papič, Ph. D.

**H**ow would you assess the current environment for the development of science and innovation in Slovenia?

**I.P.**— The adoption of the new Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act (ZZrID), which provides for a

gradual increase in science funding up to 1% of GDP, is an important step in the development of science. We want to increase this percentage to 1.25% of GDP from public funds and to 3.5% together with the corporate sector.

According to the European Innovation Scoreboard (2022 data), Slovenia's performance is currently 93.5% of the EU average, which places it in the group of moderate innovators. Innovation leaders in the EU are Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium. Slovenia's ranking on the innovation scoreboard is satisfactory, but far from fully so, and Slovenia's goal is definitely to return to the ranks of strong innovators. In the future, we will do our best to make Slovenia progress from moderate innovators through the group of strong innovators to innovation leaders. An action plan for advancement on the innovation scoreboard is in the pipeline.

**In your opinion, what are the optimum conditions for the development of science and innovation, and what is Slo-**

**venia doing to create such conditions?**

**I.P.**— The strategic direction of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI) is to promote cooperation between the research community and the corporate sector or society in a wider context, along with the transfer of knowledge and innovation. In short, the basic direction is faster development and an increase of corporate added value.

The foundation for development is a well-functioning, transparent and predictable system that the state must establish. Support instruments (e.g., tenders) must be prepared on this basis for cooperation to materialize.

In Slovenia, a lot of effort has been recently devoted precisely to building the system – the implementation of the new Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act (ZZrID). A uniform agency (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency – ARIS) has been established, which combines support for basic research, applied research and innovation in a single place, with the goal of setting up a single

point for support along the entire TRL scale. This will improve the transparency and predictability of funding and support schemes, including for cooperation between science and business. On the other hand, the new agency facilitates better interministerial coordination in the field of science and innovation. The Agency is already operational and the foundations for its innovation section to start working are being established.

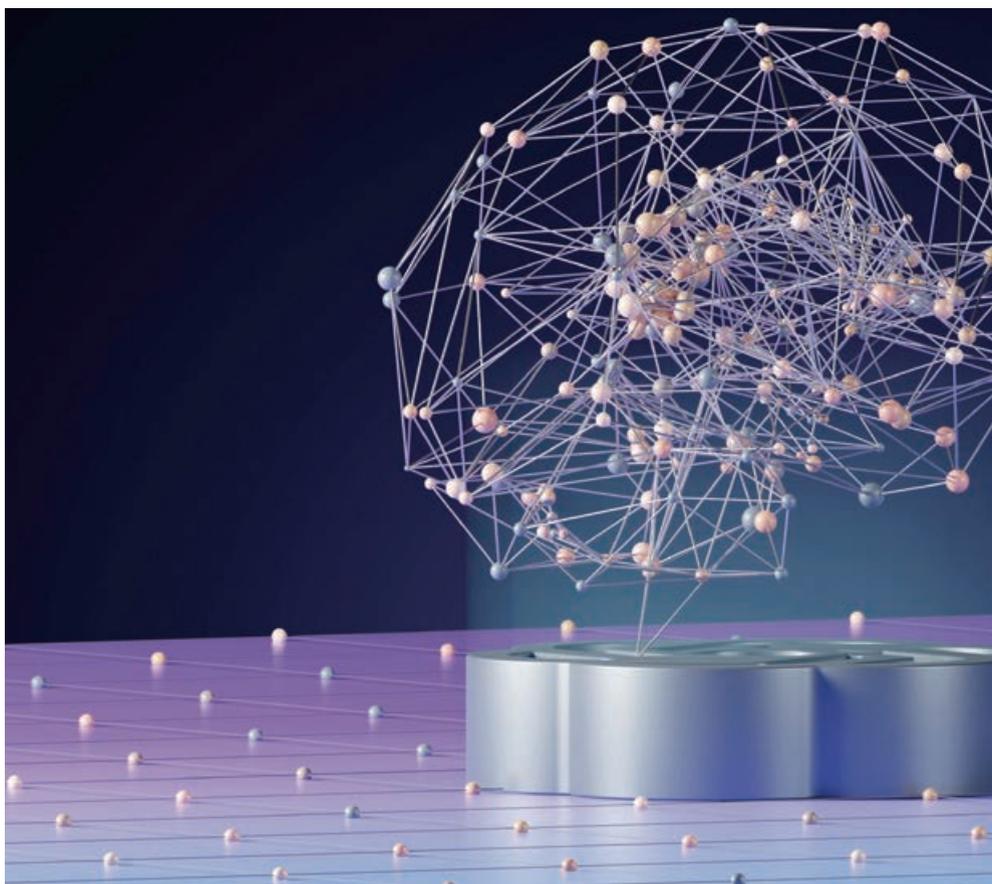
**How could we further encourage cooperation between business and science?**

**I.P.**— With various measures, the state strengthens the culture of innovation and encourages cooperation and the transfer of knowledge, as well as promoting acceptance of creativity and change. A national platform is being designed to connect all stakeholders of the research and innovation ecosystem, through which we want to improve information, establish a strategic dialogue and exchange good practices.

Companies must themselves identify opportunities to create new value or satisfy unmet needs in the market. I expect that the corporate sector will be interested in establishing long-term collaborations and will form long-term partnerships with the research sphere. An excellent example of such cooperation is the GREMO initiative in the automotive industry.

**What are the key advantages (compared to other EU countries) offered by Slovenia to domestic companies that innovate and develop innovative products?**

**I.P.**— The key advantage of Slovenia is its top knowledge in certain niches, which we currently do not know how to effectively tap into or transfer from the academic environment to the corporate sector. We boast educated and productive staff, a safe environment and a geographical position in the heart of Europe. We are creating an attractive research system, while at the same time



**”SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES ARE KEY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SLOVENIAN SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY.”**

— IGOR PAPIČ, PH. D.

**Igor Papič, Ph. D.**  
Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation



PHOTO:  
Unsplash

work for effective implementation. A very important element is the building of trust between knowledge institutions and the corporate sector.

### How can highly qualified staff be motivated to stay in Slovenia and how can we attract them from abroad?

I.P.— At the Ministry, we want to emphasize the need to distinguish between knowledge or brain drain and brain circulation. Circulation is important for higher education and science as it enriches its fundamental mission – the creation and transfer of findings in the research and teaching process.

Even if young talents stay outside the borders of Slovenia, this is not necessary brain or knowledge drain, as many are very actively involved with Slovenia, namely they help promote Slovenia abroad and strengthen ties with other countries (scientific diplomacy of a kind). A good example is the members of the Association of Slovenes Educated Abroad (VTIS) and the American-Slovenian Education Foundation (ASEF).

Providing suitable conditions for circulation is one of the measures that can be used to prevent brain drain and departures abroad. We are planning to introduce the so-called Slovenian ERC project, featuring special tenders targeted at experienced Slovenian researchers who wish to return from abroad. We want to modernize the system of higher education and research scholarships for international mobility. This includes encouraging the mobility of domestic students and employees to go abroad for a certain period, as well as attracting international students and employees from international higher education and research institutions to come to Slovenia.

Ad Futura currently offers study abroad scholarships only to Slovenian students. We will change this, so that it will also provide scholarships for students from abroad.

### How can we ensure highly qualified

### staff in STEM and ICT, where the shortage is severe?

I.P.— We need to do more, especially in terms of promoting professions from a wider field of natural sciences and engineering. Because of the stereotype that such studies are more suitable for boys than girls, we have lost and, are still losing, a large part of our talent. This is a loss for society and the corporate sector.

As a professor, I can assure you that gender does not play a role in studies, and there are no programs or professions that are more suited to either men or women.

However, we must understand that encouraging girls to study STEM and ICT starts at home and continues at school. Parents and teachers must encourage students to develop various talents and then decide on a future profession.

It is important that the corporate sector participates in the promotion of these professions, namely it should provide attractive jobs.

### Let us conclude with a look ahead. What do you think the future holds for Slovenian scientists and innovators?

I.P.— Scientific research and innovation activities are key to the development of Slovenian society and the economy. Despite the tight public finance situation and the remediation of the consequences of floods, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia has decided to continue and increase support for science and innovation, pursuing the approach of the countries with the greatest development success, where development and growth are based on knowledge and innovation. In these conditions, the said direction of the Government and the increase of the integral state budget funds puts a great responsibility on research organizations and institutions in the scientific research and innovation ecosystem to ensure that the funds are used efficiently, with the greatest possible impact on the development of the economy and society as a whole. ✘

developing the necessary financial resources and networking opportunities.

### Is our goal to become an R&R hub? How can this be achieved?

I.P.— We have set ourselves the goal of making Slovenia a land of knowledge, science and innovation, and to be recognized as such in the world.

We have demonstrated our clear intention in this respect by signing an agreement for the development of Slovenia between business, science and politics. This is an agreement on strategic cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia (GZS), the Coordination of Independent Research Institutes of Slovenia (KOsRIS), the Slovenian Rectors' Conference (RKRS) and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in the field of technological development and innovation breakthrough.

The prerequisite is a well-organized system environment and predictable legal bases for operation. As already pointed out, both elements have been addressed, and we are building a frame-



**Vesna Vodopivec**  
Executive Assistant to the  
Management Board of NLB



# THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER HUMAN RESOURCES ARE THOSE THAT ARE MOST IN SHORT SUPPLY

WITH Vesna Vodopivec

**Facilitating a good work-life balance is becoming an increasingly important aspect of a good employer in the eyes of employees. How can an employer provide a good work-life balance to employees?**

**vv.** Balancing work and personal life is undoubtedly one of the key aspects that contribute to employee satisfaction. NLB holds a Family Friendly Enterprise Certificate owing to 25 measures, which we are constantly upgrading and enhancing. Employees have free days available to coordinate their personal life (transitioning to kindergarten, accompanying ninth-graders to an information day, extraordinary leave for family reasons, accompanying a family member to hospital, etc.).

An important measure that ensures flexibility at NLB is the hybrid work model. It is





PHOTO:  
Unsplash

**”UNFAVOURABLE  
DEMOGRAPHIC  
CHANGES ARE  
EXPECTED TO CAUSE  
AN ADDITIONAL  
SHORTAGE OF SUITABLE  
PERSONNEL FOR  
RECRUITMENT.”**

— VESNA VODOPIVEC

a combination of work from home and work in the office in a ratio of 4:1. Employees therefore come to the business premises once a week at the most. Or possibly not even as often, if they so agree with the manager. At NLB, we strongly encourage working from home where this is possible given the nature of the work, as we believe it significantly helps to improve the quality of life of our employees on the one hand and reduce the Bank's carbon footprint and burden on the environment on the other.

We believe that only healthy and satisfied employees will make for a good colleague. Therefore, we regularly hold online Healthy Bank workshops on current topics such as sleep, a healthy spine, relaxation and stress management. We offer external psychological help to employees who are under pressure due to private or work-related problems.

**In the banking sector, you must be looking for different profiles of people. Which are the most in short supply?**

**What about attracting highly qualified personnel from abroad? What challenges do companies on the Slovenian market face?**

**vv.** Universal banks such as NLB employ an extremely wide range of profiles with very specific skills. In Slovenia, there has been a severe shortage of IT specialists for several years, which is why we were extremely dismayed when we learned that faculties are forced to reduce the number of entries, as they do not have guaranteed funding for their programmes. We believe that this is a step in a completely wrong direction, which will further diminish the competitiveness of the Slovenian economy in the long run.

Due to the lack of adequate IT personnel in Slovenia, NLB has been establishing its

competence centres in other markets in which it is present. Specifically, we have set up the NLB Digit IT centre in Belgrade and we created a card competence centre in Skopje.

**In the past decade, the situation on the labour market has changed considerably. What were the biggest changes in employment and what has remained unchanged?**

**vv.** Digitisation and automation bring ever greater changes to the banking system, resulting in the emerging need for new profiles. Recently, we have noticed a growing need for data scientists, data analysts and data translators as well as data engineers, information system analysts, software and process developers and personnel skilled in optimising the user experience.

Banks today employ rather different profiles than they did a decade ago. Moreover, there is a huge shortage of such personnel on the market, which makes staff recruitment much more complex and demanding than it used to be. In order to successfully address this problem, NLB invests heavily in the education and training of its employees, re-equipping them for these new profiles in demand. We point out that this problem will escalate unless the issue is thoroughly addressed and the education system adjusted.

**We have discussed employment in the past and the present. Let us talk about the future. How would you define future trends in the field of human resources management and specifically in recruitment?**

**vv.** Unfavourable demographic changes are expected to cause an additional shortage of suitable personnel for recruitment. On the other hand, Slovenia's tax environment is extremely unfavourable and as such particularly unstimulating for highly qualified profiles. If the tax environment is not relieved, an even more severe lack of talent for recruitment can be expected. This is of particular importance in light of the growing number of digital nomads who are looking for more tax-friendly environments to work in.

In addition to the above, HR is also extremely unpredictable, as evidenced by the fact that the profiles that are in high demand today did not even exist a few years ago. We can expect a similar trend in the future. Based on all the above, it is my opinion that the battle for talent will intensify further in the future.





# Tu je naš dom. V regiji, polni priložnosti.

Tu so naše družine, prijatelji, sodelavci, sosede, športniki, za katere navijamo, gostitelji, ki vedo, kakšno kavo imamo najraje ... Vse to je naš dom in vanj srčno verjamo.

Zato lahko prepoznamo vaš potencial in razumemo vašo predanost, ko je ne razume nihče drug. Zato tudi vemo, da si zaslužite vsako priložnost.

Za svoj dom želimo poskrbeti po najboljših močeh ter omogočiti boljše življenje in lepšo prihodnost. Saj tam, kjer drugi vidijo zgolj točko na zemljevidu, mi vidimo regijo, polno priložnosti.

Za vse, kar sledi.

**NLB Skupina**



AmCham Slovenia

# FUTURE OF WORK & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Knowledge & Support 2023

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**aqilcon**



AmCham Slovenia

# SUSTAINABLE GROWTH COMMITTEE

Knowledge & Support 2023

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**CORWIN**



A SYMBOL OF **YOUNG**

# AMCHAM YOUNG PLATFORM

AmCham YOUNg is a platform of exceptional young people who share values, enthusiasm and an abundance of optimism.

It is also a place where the integration of ideas is encouraged and where infinite new opportunities open up for personal and career development as well as the development of society as a whole. At the core of AmCham YOUNg are mentoring programs - the Student Entrepreneurship and Internship program, Young Leaders Club Network programs - which are much more than just programs. YOUNg comprises the energy of over 2,000 young talents and is the magic that transforms young people and society.



**Student Entrepreneurship and Internship**

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For Students

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**18 - 25**  
Years



**AmCham Young Professionals™**

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For personal and career development for the next generation of business leaders

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**25 - 35**  
Years



**AmCham Mentor**

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For AmCham young professionals

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**25 - 35**  
Years



**AmCham Young Leaders Club**

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For young leaders

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**35 - 45** Years



**AmCham First Mentor**

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For YLC members



**Snowball**

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For YLC members



**AmCham Equals**

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For YLC members





▲ Barbara Kramar, Novartis in Slovenia, AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2023



▲ Urh Vamberger, Corwin; Barbara Kramar, Novartis in Slovenia; Nikolaja Frece, AI Slovenija



▲ AmCham Top Potential 2023



▲ Super-finalists: Dara Dobrijević, BE-terna; Barbara Kramar, Novartis in Slovenia; Ziga Kljun, Kyndryl Slovenija; Urh Vamberger, Corwin; Nikolaja Frece, AI Slovenija



▲ AmCham Top Potential 2023



▲ Barbara Kramar, Novartis in Slovenia; Urh Vamberger, Corwin; Nikolaja Frece, AI Slovenija; Ziga Kljun, Kyndryl Slovenija; Dara Dobrijević, BE-terna; Matej Duraković, IBM Slovenija; Aljaž Dobnikar, Plume Design



▲ AmCham Top Potential 2023



▲ Musical performance



▲ Jan Jazbec, Corwin; Urh Vamberger, Corwin; Michal Maco, Corwin; Urša Ušeničnik, Corwin; Ermina Delić Kamenčič, Corwin



# BARBARA KRAMAR

## AMCHAM TOP POTENTIAL OF THE YEAR 2023

WITH **Barbara Kramar**

**W**hat have you gained from the 13th generation of AmCham Young Professionals and what did or will you give back to the generation as its representative and the holder of the title AmCham Top Potential of the Year?

**B.K.**— My experience with the 13th generation has been absolutely incredible. The people I've met are not only fascinating and ambitious, but also incredibly kind-hearted. Our conversa-

tions have been so captivating that if we had an hourglass straight out of a famous movie franchise (for the young and young at heart), the grains of sand would stand still as we delved into topics ranging from the economy to war, leadership, and even the latest travel hotspots and where we last partied. Despite our differences in opinions sometimes, it's these very differences that make us truly fantastic!

Moreover, the program has given me the courage to speak up and express

my thoughts. While I've always been extroverted, it's through engaging with all the stakeholders—my classmates, the amazing AmCham team, and the representatives from various companies—that I've come to realize just how much my opinion really matters. I've discovered that I have valuable insights to share with others, and I truly wish more people would recognize the same. So often, we remain silent because we doubt ourselves, whilst in fact, we own a powerful voice.

**Barbara Kramar**

Process expert, CGT,  
Novartis, AmCham Top  
Potential of the Year 2023

As an ambassador for our generation, my goal is to be a bridge that connects us long after this one-year program has come to an end. I am staying actively involved in the Young Leaders Club, leading the Snowball initiative. Together, we've already outlined what has been done so far and started carving our path further in topics of the economy of the future, as the young see it. My hope is to carry forward the mission of the 13th generation, championing the values we believe in and fighting for a better tomorrow. By strengthening our bond and working together, there's no limit to what we can achieve.

**In the course of your career, you have gained valuable experience in various academic and industrial settings. What advice would you give to yourself as an 18-year-old and what kind of a leader would you like to develop into?**

**B.K.**— I remember my 18th birthday like it was yesterday. I can still feel the tears streaming down my face as I grappled with the terrifying reality of adulthood. Little did I know that nearly twice as many years would pass, and today, I would tell my younger self to embrace the unknown with open arms! Life is an adventure waiting to unfold, and the wonders that lie ahead are beyond imagination. So, stay curious, my dear self, and dare to step outside your comfort zone. Even if you find yourself face-to-face with an insurmountable wall, remember this: EVERY wall crumbles eventually.

My goal is to become an empathetic leader who prioritizes people above all else. While it may be impossible to fulfill every wish, I believe in the power of transparency. Honesty and open communication work wonders in fostering trust and understanding. Additionally, I yearn to master the art of time manage-

ment, for it is one of the greatest adversaries of our modern era.

**You studied at Imperial College London and the University of Copenhagen. How can you compare these experiences with Slovenia and what competitive advantages does Slovenia offer young scientists in your opinion?**

**B.K.**— I did indeed do a placement in the UK and a full Masters in Denmark. These experiences opened my eyes to the immense possibilities that lie within my field and awoke my ambitions.

Now, I am thrilled to witness a similar wave of opportunities emerging more and more in Slovenia. While we may not yet be on a par with the Nordic countries, we are tirelessly paving the way. There are numerous student organizations, a few accelerators, providing a fertile ground for young researchers to collaborate, experiment, and bring their visions to life. The resources and mentorship available within these incubators are invaluable, propelling young minds towards thinking outside of the box. Furthermore, numerous national and industrial grants act as a guiding hand, providing the necessary financial support to the researchers.

But what sets Slovenia apart the most is the opportunity to have the best of both worlds. Researchers can make a significant impact on a global scale, all while maintaining a connection to their roots and living in our beautiful green country.

**What are the main challenges and opportunities as regards connecting academia and industry?**

**B.K.**— I believe that it is essential for industry to establish better connections with academic institutions and vice versa. Too often, students are left in the dark about the diverse range of positions and opportunities that exist within industry. Likewise, when applying for positions, scientists tend to limit themselves to research and development roles, unaware that their skills are equally valuable in, e.g., manufacturing or quality control positions. By offering comprehensive explanations, on-site training and mentoring programs, industry can help students

and scientists gain a deeper understanding of the various career paths available to them. On the other hand, faculties might think of adding a new subject to their repertoire in industrial settings, to help foster the knowledge about opportunities from their side.

With better collaboration between industry and academia, we can create a generation of professionals who possess a well-rounded skill set, capable of tackling complex challenges and driving progress, resulting in job opportunities for candidates and a profit for the company.

**You often say "La vida es un carnaval". How do you live this philosophy?**

**B.K.**— "La vida es un carnaval" means that life is beautiful, every day is a celebration since hardship never lasts. It is my motto for positivism, a smile on my face and a desire for adventures to come. I can't wait to see what tomorrow brings!

**What is Culture of Dialogue to you?**

**B.K.**— A culture of dialogue is crucial in fostering understanding and resolving conflicts. Even in heated discussions, it is important to maintain respect, listen to the other party's perspective, and keep an open mind. Avoiding hate speech and labeling others is essential for productive conversations. It is also important to recognize that discussions can be emotional for some people and to be empathetic towards their experiences and backgrounds. You can always disagree but do it respectfully.

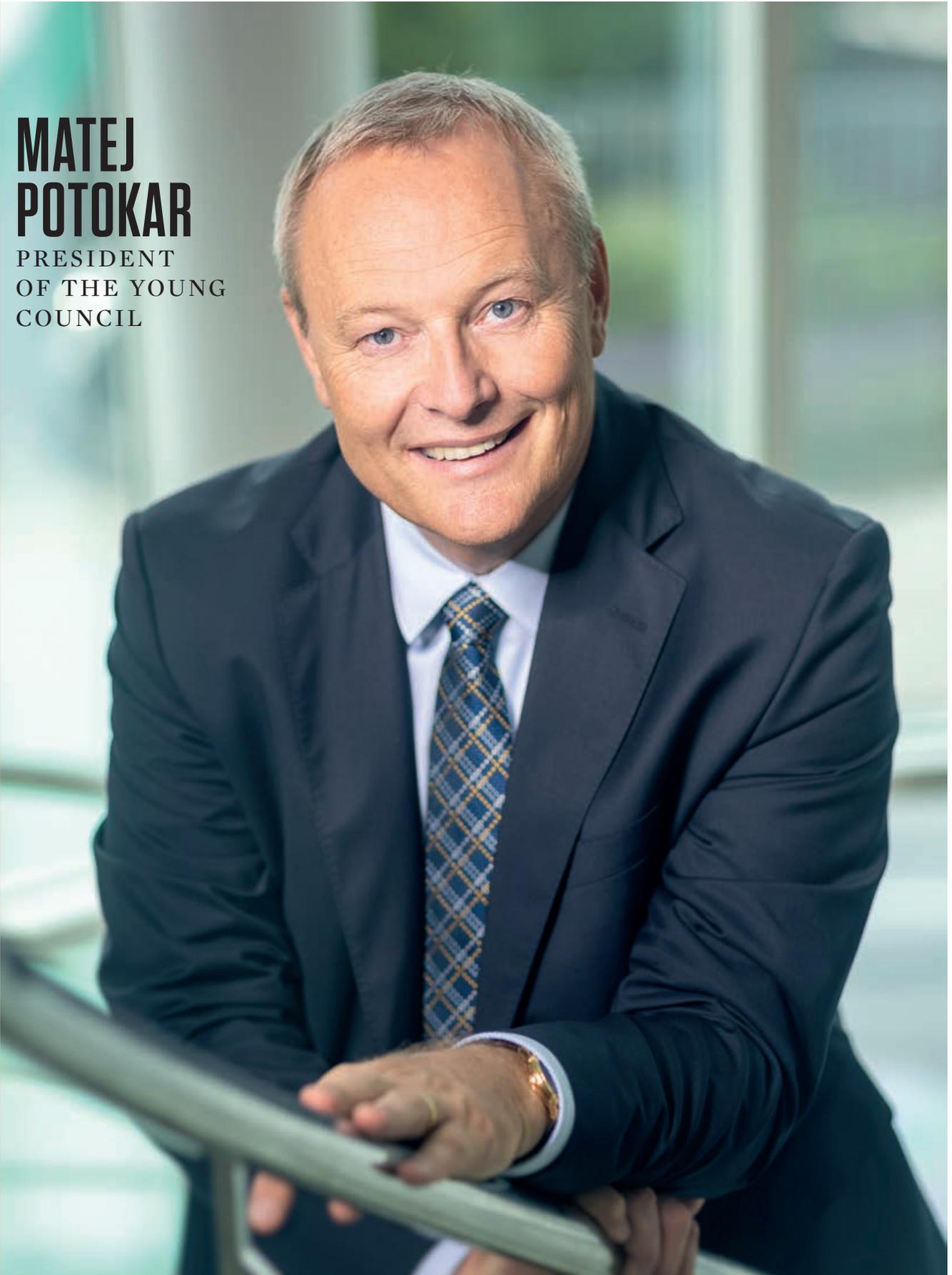
**What is your mission?**

**B.K.**— Ever since I was a student, I've wanted to make a difference and save lives, and I found my purpose in the captivating field of biotechnology. My mission is to contribute to the creation of a healthier future for all. In the dynamic world of cell and gene therapy, I have the incredible opportunity to support manufacturing of medicines that have the power to help severely ill patients. My drive comes from the knowledge that my work has the potential to bring hope and healing to those in need.



# MATEJ POTOKAR

PRESIDENT  
OF THE YOUNG  
COUNCIL



**A**s the President of AmCham Slovenia at the time, I was eager to empower innovation and support fresh ideas. A pivotal moment emerged when Ajša Vodnik and Bogo Seme approached me with an innovative proposal. Their vision was to initiate the Young Professionals program, tailored for employees within our member companies aged between 25 and 35. The aim was to foster young business leaders' personal and professional growth. This initiative stood out because of its foundation on intuition, an unconventional concept in the business realm at that time. Particularly groundbreaking was the decision to empower young professionals as co-creators of the program.

The essence of this initiative lay in recognizing the value of nurturing emerging talents, a concept that often took a back seat in traditional corporate settings. By engaging the younger demographic, we provided them with growth tools. We incorporated their fresh perspectives, enriching the program's dynamics—the emphasis on personal and professional development aligned perfectly with the evolving needs of the business landscape.

The Young Professionals program served as a platform for skill development and knowledge exchange and cultivated a culture where intuition and collaborative creation were esteemed. This departure from conventional norms created an innovative paradigm, setting a precedent for forward-thinking strategies within the business community.

**15 years steering personal and professional development**

Securing support and acknowledgment from several companies was essential for the program's success. Atlantic Group, Riko,

**"I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO FURTHER WORK! I BELIEVE THAT IT IS JUST THE BEGINNING, THE PROGRAM IS STILL YOUNG, AND WE ALSO HAVE A LOT OF YOUTHFUL ENERGY."**

— MATEJ POTOKAR

and Goodyear were the foremost advocates of the program from its inception.

We hoped the program would succeed fifteen years ago, but I am super proud that it surpassed expectations. Today AmCham YOUng is an important platform which embodies forward-thinking ideologies, steering personal and professional development among the next generation of business leaders, spanning from student internships to

the AmCham Young Professionals™ program and encompassing the AmCham Young Leaders Club, the First Mentor initiative, and the 'Snowball' (a think tank of exceptional young minds), YOUng bridges generations of proactive, standout individuals within the young community.

**Prosperity of our nation**

It holds immense significance for me, and I take tremendous pride in having the esteemed position of President of the YOUng Council. This Council gathers every year's Top Potentials, including the program's creators—the pioneering Vodnik and Seme, and there are also former program leads Maja Košir and Tonja Avsenik and current YOUng manager Helena Vrbnjak. Every meeting of the Council serves as a catalyst for fresh perspectives, a moment where collective minds are ignited, all fervently desiring to contribute to the amplified success of the YOUng platform. It's a matter of immense pride for me to witness the annual inclusion of new, ambitious young individuals, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping the future landscape of Slovenia. Their contribution is integral to the progress and evolution of our society, and it's a testament to the commitment to nurturing the leaders and visionaries of tomorrow. The dedication and enthusiasm they bring are invaluable, underscoring the importance of cultivating and empowering this next generation. The aspiration is not just success on an individual level but fostering a collective advancement that bolsters the prosperity of our nation.

I'm looking forward to further work! I believe that it is just the beginning, the program is still young, and we also have a lot of youthful energy.



**AmCham YOUng Advisory Board**





**SAMO KUMAR**, IBM

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with exceptional leaders and mentors at an early stage of my career, who have had a major impact on the development of my leadership skills. Many times, I put myself in challenging situations where I learned by doing (learning by doing) and every time I remembered Billie Jean King's words on a plaque above the entrance to the Center Court of the US Open: "Pressure is a privilege".



**KATARINA RAIČEVIĆ**, Dun & Bradstreet

My personal journey of "self-discovery" is still in progress. When I started to face myself, to learn about my limitations and my strengths, I was becoming more and more authentic and with that I was also able to bring more value to my team. Now I teach others how to do it and how to be who you are – because authentic leaders are the ones who have the strongest impact on their teams.



**ENZO SMREKAR**, Atlantic Droga Kolinska

Becoming a better leader wasn't an overnight transformation but a journey of self-discovery and skills development through embracing coaching and mentoring as pivotal in this evolution. I sought guidance from experienced leaders, learning from their successes and failures. Their insights became the building blocks of my leadership style. By incorporating coaching and mentoring into my leadership approach, I discovered the true essence of empowerment. It wasn't just about leading, it was about enabling others to lead as well.

*Thank you,*  
**AmCham Heroes**

**YOU ARE THE ONES EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION LEADERS ON THE AMCHAM YOUNG PLATFORM TO MAKE PROGRESS AND GROW.**



**MATEJ ZAVRL**, Goodyear Slovenia

I am convinced that the possibility of developing leadership skills largely depends on the environment in which you work. At Goodyear, awareness of the impact and importance of leadership is at an enviably high level and therefore every leader has countless opportunities for continuous improvement in this area. In leading, I also follow my personal principles and thus put a lot of emphasis on authenticity and example.



**DAMJAN KRALJ**, BTC

I believe it was a mix of personal and professional factors. Namely my parents as role models, a passion for team sports, character, and mentorship in the company. Rock solid components for leadership that last forever!



**ANDREJA SMOLNIKAR**, Bayer Slovenija

The constant desire to learn and experiment, the ability to listen and understand the individual, and the active involvement in processes greatly contributed to the development of my leadership skills. Knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses, seeking feedback, and following the principle of leading by example is certainly an important part of the continuous search for improving management of an organization. Another important ingredient in my recipe – authenticity, which gives a special flavor and recognition.



**BENO CEGLJAR, Nil**

There is an abundance of content available on leadership skills development and I like to tap into it regularly. However, the power of a conversation with a mentor or coach is nothing short of extraordinary, as it provides you an additional perspective of practicality, maturity, confirmation – which simply cannot be gotten from “books”. This combination helps me a lot.



**VANJA HROVAT, Generali Zavarovalnica**

In conversation with customers, whom we not only listen to, but hear, we are always looking for solutions to make their experience with the winged lion the best possible. I believe that this is the only right way that helps to form lifelong partnerships – long-term, sustainable, and future-oriented. At the same time, it allows us to be better every day.



**ROBERT LJOLJO, Lek**

I think we have to constantly ask ourselves if we have done something well enough, if we have tried hard enough, and how our surroundings are impacted by what we do. This non-stop search for answers allows us to improve and stimulates innovation in everything we do. We have to be agile all the time and see before us the bigger picture.



**DALI BUNGIĆ, Luna**

A good leader does not shrink from responsibility and knows how to accept accountability even when the decision is wrong. “We learn from mistakes” is not a platitude, but a very valuable piece of advice for each of us. Only if we are able to recognize and admit our weaknesses and flaws can we improve and grow, both professionally and personally. In this way, we also create a strong internal culture of responsibility, solidarity, and respect.



**ZOULLIS MINA, Pivovarna Laško Union**

We as leaders have to be an example because people look at how we behave and take their cues from us. I see our role as leaders as being to provide tools for people to improve what they do, to set the context for what kind of environment we are operating in now, and what the behaviors that will allow us to grow, survive, and live in the culture where the environment around us is changing.



**JANEZ ŠKRABEC, Riko**

I learn by not underestimating any moment in my life. I do not underestimate the people I meet. I do not underestimate events and I try to absorb what happens to me every day. This enriches me every day.



**GAŠPER ŽVAN, Avantcar**

Good leadership requires effective integration of diverse talents, creating innovative solutions, and promoting agility in a dynamic business environment. I believe in adaptability, standing for justice, and developing great relationships.



**BLAŽ BRODNJAK, NLB**

I have learned from many people, both directly and indirectly, and I have read many success stories. Above all, I am interested in Olympic-level ambition, so I look forward to Slovenian entrepreneurs' achievements. I am happy to talk to them about why and how they have succeeded, the key factors and challenges of success, and what should be avoided on such a path.



**TOMISLAV ČIZMIČ, Telemach Slovenija**

The most important factors in developing my leadership skills are a commitment to continuous learning and adaptability, gaining different experiences, seeking mentorship, and learning from successes and failures. Fostering a culture of collaboration and open communication within the team is also crucial to perfecting my ability to inspire and lead others toward our shared goals.

# YLC SYNERGY DESIGNER

WITH **Nina Langerholc Čebokli**

**N**ina, in 2016 you won the title of AmCham Top Potential of the Year and were a representative of the AmCham Young Professionals generation. Now you are again very involved in the YOUnG platform. How are you creating synergies in YLC now, what is your role?

**N.L.č.**— Since 2016, I have been active all the time in various roles, from being a member of the YLC executive committee, the head of Snowball, a mentor in the First Mentor program, and a member of the YOUnG Council. This year I focused even more on strengthening the connections between programs, members, and bodies. As a synergy designer, I act as a bridge between YLC EC, individual project managers, the YOUnG Council and the AmCham executive team. Together we look for synergistic effects between ideas, content, and activities. The ultimate goal is to create the best experience for young people who participate in the YOUnG platform.

**How are AmCham YOUnG platform programs changing the business world for the better?**

**N.L.č.**— In my opinion, one of the many advantages of the platform's programs, in addition to good content, is that their functioning is by design very agile, open, and connective, thus organically strengthening the mindset that is important for leadership in the future. This suggests moving away from command-and-control and rigid hierarchies, in which there is



very limited space for synergies and tapping into collective intelligence.

**Which YOUnG values did you internalize as the holder of the AmCham Top Potential 2016 title and which did you bring to the program and platform?**

**N.L.č.**— YOUnG values come natural to me. Creativity, collaboration, and passion are the most innate to me. To me personally, (self)accountability—for action, result, consequences—is an extremely important value.



**Nina Langerholc Čebokli**  
Transformative Governance  
Lead, Demos Helsinki, YLC  
synergy designer

**Your mission is to shape organizations into exceptional environments where people can express themselves and truly thrive. Can you explain why working or organizational environments are more than merely a space, but also have a synergistic relevance?**

N.L.Č.— My passion is creating organizational systems, namely fit-for-purpose organizational design, which means that I am interested in complex challenges (for instance, increasing the inflow of talent, introducing a new level of management or reducing internal complexity, improving cooperation between units, limiting firefighting mode, etc.) that are solved through a systematic process. The famous Edward Deming already proved that 94% of companies' issues are caused by their systems and are not people driven. It is important to understand that an individual can flourish and create results in one environment and quite the opposite in another. I believe people are naturally motivated to do well and I believe that it is managers' responsibility to create optimal working conditions/systems, which are a prerequisite for good business results.

**Many are afraid of change, but you are happy to make it. What strategies and approaches do you use to encourage embracing change?**

N.L.Č.— The most important step is always to align the goals and the goal

achievement path. I assign much importance to communicating the context and explaining the "why". It is crucial for the change agent to be personally convinced that they are doing the right thing, stepping forward and leading. Everyone affected by change will shape their reactions not only based on the change in question, but also general trust, attitudes, and past experiences.

**Can you explain to us what does it mean to create legends from fairy tales?**

N.L.Č.— It means that I support organizations in implementing their strategies in a systemic way. I swear by long-term partnerships that enable changes to be introduced holistically. Ultimately, it means that companies are gladly making the decision to take a longer and deeper path to results, even though they could opt for fairy tales that sound sweet and promise quick results in a few steps.

**In your opinion, what are the main differences between approaches to organizational design in Slovenia and other European countries?**

N.L.Č.— The main difference is that in northern countries, for instance, this is a recognized independent profession. In Slovenia, there is still great scarcity of this knowledge. Internal changes are left to managers or the HR function, who do the best they can, by drawing organizational charts and reporting lines. Unfor-

tunately, these skills are not yet taught in our educational systems and in business schools, except for rare modules.

**You have extensive international experience and have been part of various ecosystems. How do these experiences affect your work in Slovenia? In your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities for collaboration and innovation between the public and private sectors?**

N.L.Č.— Experience gained at an international level and in different sectors definitely helps me to understand the diverse contexts in which decisions are made and to see the bigger picture. In Slovenia, I see many opportunities for increasing ambition, penetration, and conducting a constructive dialogue between different interests. Cooperation between the public and private sectors is one of the key synergies that is underused because we are too concerned with names and consolidating the role of the victim. This brings us back to accountability. Another great opportunity is the transformation of cooperation and governance mechanisms into such that would support extensive processes of dialogue between various stakeholders and the co-creation of solutions for major challenges affecting all pillars of society and nature. ✘

▼ Young Leaders AmChampions



AMCHAM FIRST MENTOR

# TO ME, MENTORING IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND VALUABLE THING YOU CAN GIVE

BY **Martin Stariha**

**I feel that mentoring is my mission, so the decision to join the AmCham First Mentor program as a mentor and head of the organizational team was an easy one. To me, mentoring is the most beautiful and valuable thing you can give. It entails connecting, getting to know each other, and transferring knowledge to younger or older generations. Above all, it is an exchange of experiences, advice, and the thoughts of both sides.**

Being a part of such an exceptional community that is being built and created by the AmCham First Mentor program under the umbrella of the AmCham YOUng platform is very inspiring. AmCham First Mentor is a professional and high-quality program dedicated to the future of young potentials, as it brings together outstanding individuals and future potentials of each generation with the goal of mutual empowerment, learning, and transfer of knowledge and experience between them. Therefore, it means a lot to me to be able to be a part of this connecting bridge for a better tomorrow, which helps the mentees to learn under the aegis of the selected mentor, develop their competences and skills, and overcome challenges by employing all the knowledge gained. At the same time we support (young) mentors in gaining mentoring experience to promote their personal development.

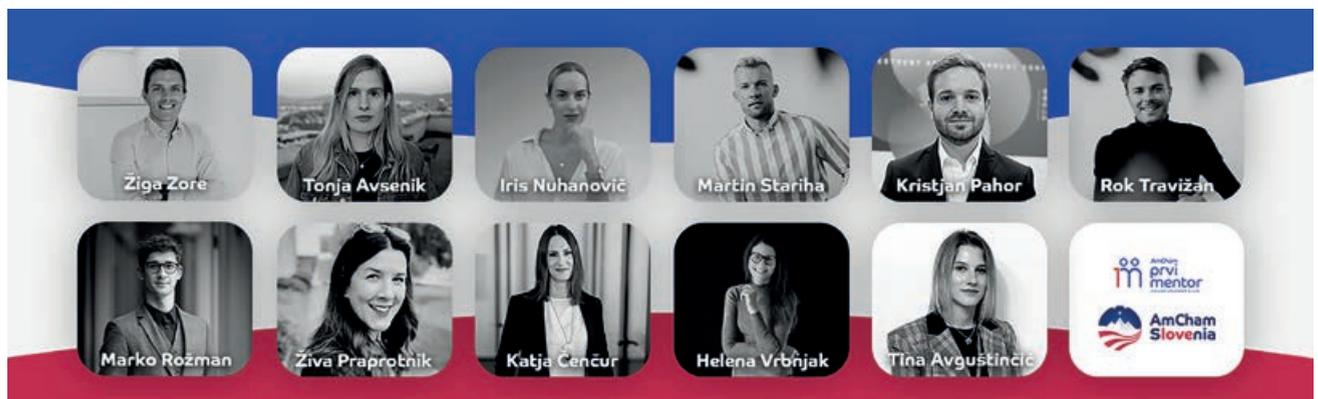


The program involves and is (co)created by exceptional individuals—the organizational team, mentors and mentees alike. All mentors are part of the AmCham YOUng Leaders Club and they share their knowledge and experience, motivation, passion and cooperation, which AmCham Slovenia puts into practice through activities.

The members of the AmCham First Mentor program organizational team (Helena Vrbnjak, Katja Čenčur, Živa Praprotnik, Tina Avguštinčič, Tonja Avsenik, Iris Nuhanovič, Rok Travižan, Marko Rožman, Žiga Zore and Kristjan Pahor) are exceptional individuals, specialists in their fields and beyond. They are inspiring, inquisitive, pleasant, and treasure troves of a variety of knowledge, committed to writing the stories of this project. Each of them contributes significantly to the success of our activity with their knowledge and a positive attitude. Due to our diversity and variety, but at the same time similarity, as we all strive for a common goal, a very special energy has been created between us, which motivates us and gives us the impetus to make the project even better and more successful every year and to foster program values at every step: accountability, cooperation, knowledge transfer, development, and dialogue.

I am happy to participate in the creation and development of the AmCham First Mentor program, because I care about future generations, because wonderful energy flows between us, because I enjoy constantly learning and developing, and because I see great potential for the development of the program. Ajša, thank you for trusting me!

▼ AmCham First Mentor Team



# STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INTERNSHIP



“The 2023 U.S. Embassy-AmCham Slovenia Student Entrepreneurship and Internship (SEI) Program enthusiastically welcomed 22 Slovenian students representing diverse academic backgrounds, including electrical and mechanical engineering, law, medicine, biosciences, and economics. Organized by the Embassy, the program conducted in July featured a dynamic Lean Start-Up course led by U.S. Professor Jay Ebben, complemented by over 30 expert lectures, insightful site visits, and engaging discussions with industry founders and start-ups. Moreover, students had the invaluable opportunity to intern with esteemed AmCham member companies, gaining firsthand experience of real-world business operations and practices. Hats off to our incredible student teams for their remarkable feat—conceiving an array of outstanding startup ideas within a mere two weeks! Their innovations span from Last Call, aimed at reducing food waste, to TabTeacher, facilitating guitar learning, and Dentzy, focusing on dental health. Additionally, they’ve crafted solutions for connecting with legal expertise, reducing clothing waste, and even navigating the realm of dating. These concepts are a testament to their creativity and teamwork.”

▲ **Charlotte Taft**  
Education  
Coordinator, Public  
Affairs Section, U.S.  
Embassy Ljubljana



▲ **Benjamin Strajnar, Robert Jutreša; H.E. Jamie Linder Harpootlian, United States Ambassador, Embassy Ljubljana; Rene Mohorič**

“SEI really was a life changing experience. I’ve met many like-minded and talented people, most of all Robert Jutreša and Bruno Toič. Our idea TabTeacher—an innovative approach to learning guitar, was born at SEI. Since then, we have pitched the idea at LUI for the UL Rector’s Prize and are currently in the testing phase.”

— **RENE MOHORIČ**, University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business



▲ **Lea Zahrastnik, Gal Gantar, Joseph Mezner**

“The SEI program is not only an amazing learning opportunity, where you can bring your ideas to life, it is also a place where you can meet great people who think out of the box and encourage you to be an even better version of yourself.”

— **LEA ZAHRASTNIK**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Law

“The SEI program was an amazing opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship and the Slovene economy from accomplished Slovene entrepreneurs, VCs, incubators, and others. Even more important, I was able to make meaningful connections and lifelong friendships. One of my favorite memories was visiting Inkubator Sežana and hearing the founders of Paradigma Technologies talk about how they saw their vision become reality. In addition, having the ability to work with NLB Skladi was an incredible experience to develop my knowledge about asset management and financial management.”

— **JOSEPH MEZNER**, Slovenian-American SEI 2023 student



# BEST OF THE BEST 2023

Within the scope of the Best of the Best program, AmCham Slovenia highlights, presents and rewards the best business practices within our business community. Now in its tenth consecutive year, the program provides guidance, inspiration and help in transferring new knowledge and positive business experiences. Their creativity and energy motivate others, and connection, cooperation and trust help to expand the knowledge, experience and optimism. In 2023, the program featured three thematic sets: **MOTIVATION**, **ESGT** and **INNOVATIVENESS**.

## Meet 2023 super-finalists

From the projects in the **MOTIVATION** thematic set, the jury and the audience were most inspired by Young **Advisory Board**, a project of the company **Lek d.d.** Lek, a member of the Sandoz Group, which strives to create an inspiring and innovative work environment that allows each individual to develop their potential. Young Advisory Board (YAB) – Lek's innovative initiative targeted at young talent – was created in 2020 at the initiative of young employees with the aim of establishing a direct channel that would enable communication between younger employees and the company's management. Together with YAB, the top management creates a fresh perception of the profession and company management relying on the opinions of the youngest generation of scientists and businesspeople. In this way, an interdisciplinary and intergenerational community is created, fostering new ways of thinking and solving challenges through diversity. Last year, the initiative expanded to the wider social environment, connecting with student organizations and providing an insight into the functioning of the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the exchange of knowledge and best practices through mentoring at hackathons and summer schools, some international.

The common good practice of **Refresher Driving Lesson for the Elderly of Zavarovalnica Triglav d.d.** and **AMZS** is more than just a project. It is a super-finalist of the **ESGT** thematic set and a commitment to community, understanding and intergenerational cooperation. It offers older drivers the opportunity to refresh their driving skills free of charge with the help of experienced instructors in their hometown. Zavarovalnica Triglav and AMZS also instigated an intergenerational dialogue on the importance of maintaining driving fitness of the elderly and generated positive triggers for media coverage. Among other results, 65,500 older drivers (as many as 20% of all drivers!) refreshed their knowledge on the vozimse portal, with more than 2,000 applicants recorded in three cities, culminating in as many as 700 drives.

Developments in the electricity price market over the last two years have reminded us that the optimization of resources and large consumers can have a significant impact on the energy cost balance, which inspired **MEGA M** to develop comprehensive solutions for energy ecosystems. As a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral operator and provider of comprehensive solutions in the field of electromobility, the company strives for innovative solutions. One of them is smart home charging, which already enables an optimal charging schedule based on the network load and the price of electricity. The good practice **"Smart Solutions for Efficient Energy Management"**, a Best of the Best 2023 super-finalist in the **INNOVATIVENESS** thematic set, takes into account electricity prices on the market, the battery charge status, the condition of the electric vehicle, and electricity price predictions for 24 hours in advance, which are available on power exchanges.



AmCham  
Slovenia



ISKRENE ČESTITKE

LEK, ČLAN  
SKUPINE SANDOZ

ZA NAJBOLJŠO  
POSLOVNO PRAKSO  
LETA 2023!



GENERALNA POKROVITELJA BEST OF THE BEST



triglav



NLB

NAJBOLJŠI PARTNER POTOVANJ

NOMAGO





*We envision a future where making sustainable choices is not just an option but a norm that is accessible, affordable, and appealing to all.*

# BECOMING PEOPLE AND PLANET POSITIVE

Since today's challenges, such as climate change, disruptions in supply chains, consumer demands, and community expectations among others, affect people and businesses and require joint action of various stakeholders, incorporating ESG aspects into business strategy is a must. IKEA is on a mission to create a sustainable business model to be fit for the customers and co-workers of today and tomorrow.

## Committed to Sustainable Growth

Looking forward to the next 80 years, they remain committed to having a positive impact on people, and society at large. To address diverse sustainability and ethical challenges, IKEA has developed the "People and Planet Positive" sustainability strategy. The strategy identifies three major sustainability challenges that are highly relevant for the IKEA business: climate change, unsustainable consumption, and rising inequality. The overarching

▶  
**Cas Lachaert**  
 Market Manager,  
 IKEA Slovenia

goal is to achieve circularity and climate positivity by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050, contributing significantly to the Paris Agreement's targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### Global Ambitions, Local Actions

Global ambitions translate into concrete actions on a local level. The IKEA Ljubljana store itself stands out as one of the city's most sustainable buildings, for which they received a BREEAM certificate of Excellence. In addition to using solar panels to produce energy for storage, geothermal energy is used for heating and rainwater for flushing and watering. The store recycles 23 different types of waste and cleans wastewater with a smart cleaning system.

Steps towards a sustainable business model were acknowledged at the 17th Strategic Trade Conference by the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce in 2023, where IKEA Slovenia received the gold Sustainability Award among major retailers for its substantial efforts in transitioning from a linear to a circular economy.

"We envision a future where making sustainable choices is not just an option but a norm that is accessible, affordable, and appealing to all. We aspire to become circular and climate-positive, developing our business while simultaneously replenishing resources. This means reducing a greater amount of greenhouse gas emissions than the entire value chain of IKEA emits. By advocating justice and equality, we aim to create a positive social impact for everyone in the IKEA value chain. This involves strengthening our efforts for greater inclusion, embracing diversity, and promoting decent and meaningful jobs throughout our entire value chain," explains Cas Lachaert, market manager of IKEA Slovenia.

### Decarbonizing Transport and Digital Transformation

In the pursuit of climate positivity by 2030, they actively engage in the decarbonization of transport and logistics while advocating sustainable mobility choices. In and around the city of Ljubljana, IKEA has implemented



emission-free home deliveries, made possible by the introduction of its electric truck fleet.

In addition to IKEA's commitment to green initiatives, they are also embracing the digital transformation of the retail industry. This not only aligns with sustainability goals but also enables the optimization of processes. As an omnichannel retailer, IKEA aims to make the shopping experience more accessible for every customer, allowing them to shop whenever and wherever they prefer. To achieve greater efficiency across IKEA's business operations in Slovenia, they are investing in various digital solutions.

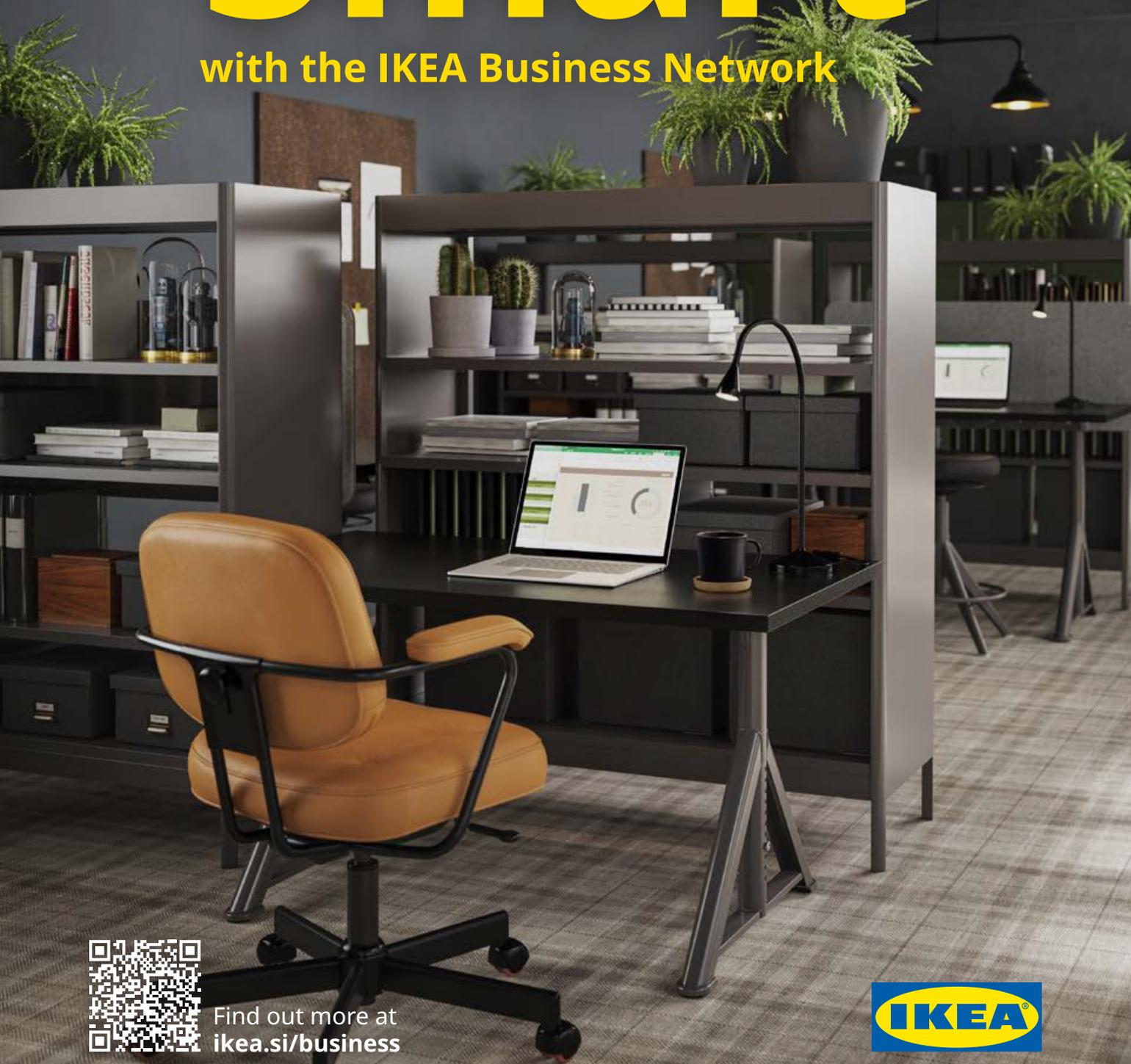
As an example, Cas Lachaert highlights the use of drones in the Ljubljana store as an innovative approach to enhance efficiency in business operation: "One of the investments in 2023 was in drones that fly over the IKEA Ljubljana store every night and scan the products so that we have a 100% accurate stock inventory in the morning. This is the key to a well-functioning online store. We are also constantly introducing digital services that enable better planning of furnishing rooms. An average of 12,000 people visit us on Saturdays. Serving them and helping with planning and buying is impossible without the help of digital tools."

### Co-workers are the Main Driver of the Company's Growth

In the journey of IKEA Slovenia's third business year, marked by significant growth, they recognize the crucial role of nearly 400 co-workers as the main drivers of the success. They believe it is about togetherness, care for people and the planet, and other values that act as guiding principles in every aspect of their work.



# Equip your business **Smårt\*** with the IKEA Business Network



Find out more at  
[ikea.si/business](https://ikea.si/business)



\*Smårt also means small in Swedish. So you get top-notch quality that won't break the bank.



**AmCham  
Slovenia**



**25 YEARS  
OF VALUES**



**AmCham Slovenia**

**FINANCE  
COMMITTEE**

Knowledge & Support 2023



Membership Benefits 2024	Patron*	Corporate & Entrepreneurs	Small Business	Non-Profit
<b>Networking, Knowledge Exchange and Best Practices</b>				
<b>Events</b>				
AmCham Business Breakfast*	✓ 3 seats free of charge at all AmCham Business Breakfasts in the current year	✓ 2 seats free of charge at all AmCham Business Breakfasts in the current year	✓ 1 seat free of charge at all AmCham Business Breakfasts in the current year	✓ 1 seat free of charge at 5 AmCham Business Breakfasts in the current year
<i>* AmCham Business Breakfast takes place either virtually (and it's open to all of the members) or live in combination of both, live and virtual events. In case of live events, restrictions from the table apply.</i>				
AmCham Focus	✓ priority invitation	✓	✓	✓
AmCham Exchange	✓ priority invitation	✓	✓	✓
Other AmCham Slovenia events	✓ priority invitation	✓	✓	✓
Events within the organization of AmCham Slovenia partner companies	✓ priority invitation	✓		
Two exclusive events per year	✓			
Priority attendance at events in case of limited seating	✓			
<b>Exchange of Best Practices</b>				
Best of the Best	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Community</b>				
AmCham Business Leaders Club meetings	✓	✓		
AmCham Business Leaders Book Club meetings	✓	✓		
AmCham Business Leader of the Year events	✓	✓		
Monthly newsletter Leaders Inspire	✓	✓		
<b>Advocacy</b>				
AmCham Committees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnership for Change	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Visibility</b>				
AmCham Slovenia website	✓	✓	✓	✓
AmCham Slovenia newsletters	✓ special emphasis	✓	✓	✓
AmCham Dialogue - AmCham Slovenia yearbook	✓ special emphasis	✓	✓	✓
Possibility of partnership at AmCham events and programs	✓ special emphasis	✓	✓	✓
AmCham Slovenia social media (2x annual promotion)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Priority partnership and possibility of promotion at the events where AmCham Slovenia is a partner	✓			
Visibility at all AmCham events	✓			
AmCham Slovenia social media (2x annual promotion)	✓			
<b>Young Programs</b>				
AmCham Young Professionals™ (Enrollment Limitation of 150)	✓ 2 candidates (Priority Enrollment)	✓ 2 candidates	✓ 1 candidate	✓ 1 candidate
AmCham Young Leaders Club	✓	✓	✓	✓
AmCham First Mentor / Snowball / Equals	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>International Cooperation</b>				
Possibility of receiving basic guidelines for successfully entering the U.S. market	✓	✓		
AmCham business delegations to the U.S.	✓ priority invitation	✓	✓	✓
Enter: USA	✓	✓	✓	✓
AmChams in Europe network of 49 AmChams in 47 countries throughout Europe and Western Asia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to open events of 49 AmCham in 47 countries	✓	✓		
Individual meetings with executive directors of AmChams in 47 countries throughout Europe and Western Asia	✓	✓		
One-on-one meeting with executive directors of AmCham organisations in 47 countries in Europe and Western Asia	✓			
<b>Additional Patron Benefit</b>				
10% off on partnerships (on all AmCham programs, AmCham Business Breakfast, and AmCham Focus)	✓			
<b>Membership Fee</b>				
A one-time initiation fee in the amount of EUR 100 + VAT is applicable for new members only.	Annual fee EUR 3,300 + VAT	Annual fee EUR 1,650 + VAT	Annual fee EUR 825 + VAT	Annual fee EUR 275 + VAT

\* The Number of Patron members is limited. Patron membership by special invitation only.

# WHAT DOES AMCHAM SLOVENIA DO?

*AmCham Slovenia is Business Community of Power of Relationships*

## 4 PILLARS OF OUR ACTIVITIES

### Networking and events

We address various topics and subjects, we inform and exchange good business practices. At the same time, these events represent an excellent opportunity to expand your acquaintances and knowledge.

### Advocacy

There are 7 working committees operating in AmCham Slovenija's advocacy framework, and these include over 380 representatives of companies, our members, who are experts in their fields. With our knowledge and vision, we wish to contribute to forming a better business environment and quality of life in Slovenia.

### Young Platform

The AmCham Young Platform connects generations of young and active individuals who stand out from the average. Programs within the platform guide the personal and career development of the next generation of business leaders.

### International Collaboration

We represent an entry point for Slovenian companies that want to penetrate the US market, and open doors to investors into Slovenia. We are also a part of AmChams in Europe network and proud that our CEO Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc serves as a Chair of this important organization.

25  
YEARS

400+  
CORPORATE  
MEMBERS

150+  
EVENTS  
ANNUALLY

60+  
PATRON  
MEMBERS

4.7k  
PEOPLE  
IN ONE  
BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY

2k+  
MEMBERS  
OF OUR  
YOUNG  
PLATFORM

## NETWORKING & EVENTS



**AmCham Business Breakfast**  
International networking with content since 2002.



**AmCham Business Leaders Club**  
Renowned business leaders sharing ideas and networking at the highest levels.



**Best of the Best**  
Innovation, Motivation, and ESGT, presentation of best business practices.

### AMCHAM FOKUS

**AmCham Focus**  
We create value through knowledge.

## ADVOCACY

As changes in society require an open dialogue between the private sector, science, the state, and civil society, AmCham Slovenia is using its well-branched network of members from various lines of business to connect know-how and act as the voice of Slovenian and international companies.



**Partnership for Change**  
Innovative national collaboration platform.



**I am a Teacher!**  
Inspiring stories of teachers who are changing the world with their innovation and dedication.



AmCham Slovenia  
**HEALTH  
& WELLBEING  
COMMITTEE**

#### Health and Wellbeing Committee

For a sustainable, accessible, and fair healthcare system.



AmCham Slovenia  
**FINANCE  
COMMITTEE**

#### Finance Committee

For a predictable and more competitive fiscal-financial environment.



AmCham Slovenia  
**INTELLECTUAL  
PROPERTY  
COMMITTEE**

#### Intellectual Property Committee

Awareness of the importance of knowledge, innovation and IP protection.



AmCham Slovenia  
**FUTURE OF WORK  
& EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE**

#### Future of Work and Education Committee

Education and the labor market in line with development and the needs of the economy.



AmCham Slovenia  
**INVESTMENT  
COMMITTEE**

#### Investment Committee

Predictable and stable business environment for high value-added domestic and foreign investments.



AmCham Slovenia  
**READY4DFUTURE  
COMMITTEE**

#### Ready4DFuture Committee

The readiness for the digital era defined by innovative business models, new technologies and competencies.



AmCham Slovenia  
**SUSTAINABLE  
GROWTH  
COMMITTEE**

#### Sustainable Growth Committee

As individuals and the business community we must actively participate in the sustainable mindset.

## YOUNG PLATFORM

The AmCham YOUNg Platform represents a way of thinking forward.



#### AmCham Young Professionals™

Personal and career development for the next generation of business leaders.



#### AmCham Mentor

Informal transfer of knowledge, social capital, and support. A powerful personal development and empowerment tool.



#### Student Entrepreneurship and Internship

AmCham Slovenia in cooperation with the US Embassy in Slovenia links academic and business career through its student internship program.



#### AmCham Young Leaders Club

A network of business leaders of the younger generation, whose desire and goal is to work together and co-create a better future, strong economy, and a high quality of life.



#### AmCham First Mentor

Members of AmCham Young Leaders Club offer mentoring to young people between the ages of 15 and 25 who are considering a career, starting to dream about their business path, or looking for the best way to jump from school to business.



#### Snežna kepa (Snowball)

Snowball is the center of optimism. It is a group of active young people brought together by a common vision—to make Slovenia a country of optimism and opportunity, with a high quality of life.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



**delegationUSA**

**AmCham Business and Development Delegations to the US**  
Business and investment opportunities for Slovenian companies in the US.



**Slovenia Business Bridge™**  
**Investment and Development Conference**  
Finding opportunities & making them happen.



#### USA Meetup

Informal conversations and concrete answers as well as examples and first-hand experience for a better understanding of the US market.



#### USA Boot Camp

We share knowledge and experience and provide detailed insights into individual industries, their specifics, and trends.



#### Enter USA

Custom made business training for companies that are entering or expanding business operations on the US market.



#### Believe in Slovenia

Discover the stories of our »ambassadors of friendship« and their true belief in Slovenia.



#### AmChams in Europe

A network of 49 AmChams in 47 countries across Europe and Western Asia. With Ajša Vodnik as Chair of AmChams in Europe.



# INTERNATIONAL

**AMCHAM SLOVENIA –  
START OR EXPAND YOUR SUCCESS  
IN THE U.S. MARKET WITH US**



# COOPERATION

PHOTO:  
Unsplash



JANUARY 3- 8, 2023

## DIGITAL FUTURE - AMCHAM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DELEGATION TO THE USA



**LAS VEGAS** – Nevada’s economic centre, the country’s fastest growing metropolis and a place of superlatives was the delegation’s stop at the very beginning of the year, in the first week of January 2023. AmCham, in cooperation with SPIRIT Slovenia and with the support of the embassies from both countries, organized the Business Development Delegation “Digital Future”, which was attended by 27 representatives of the leading Slovenian companies from various fields, interested in “out-of-the box” innovative spirit.

AmCham delegations offer an excellent opportunity to visit globally renowned, innovative, and trendsetting corporations and through networking create successful partnerships.

For additional information, contact:  
[vida.dolenc@amcham.si](mailto:vida.dolenc@amcham.si)

Since the state of Nevada is well known for many industries, such as tourism, data management, IT, green energy, breakthrough technologies, etc., the delegation was looking forward to exploring the highlights and the innovative mindset in the fields of green transformation, digitalization, and new business models. The exciting program included visiting corporations dealing with databases and the development of smart cities. The delegation had the opportunity to marvel at the scientific research institute Black Fire Innovation, Switch Las Vegas, the Department of Brain Health at the UNLV, the Las Vegas Convention Center, and more. Furthermore, the delegation had the

opportunity to meet the leading researchers in abovementioned fields and joined the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the successful Slovenian company Chipolo. One of the program’s main highlights was a visit to the most powerful tech event and fair in the world –CES (Consumer Electronic Show) – at which more than 3,900 exhibitors from all over the world exhibit annually and attract masses of visitors eager to learn about the global innovations and the latest breakthrough technologies.

### Highlights of the “Digital Future” delegation:

- CES – Consumer Electronic Show
- Black Fire Innovation
- Switch Las Vegas
- The Boring Company
- Department of Brain Health at UNLV
- Las Vegas Convention Center
- Chipolo 10th Anniversary Party



▲ Black Fire Innovation



▲ Black Fire Innovation



▲ CES – Consumer Electronic Show



▲ CES – Consumer Electronic Show



▲ Department of Brain Health at UNLV



▲ Department of Brain Health at UNLV



▲ Startup Nevada



▲ The Boring Company – LVCC Loop



APRIL 6-8, 2023

# DALLAS, TEXAS

The Business Development Delegation and the Business & Investment Conference “Texas Feels Slovenia” were organized by SPIRIT Slovenia Public Agency, Ministry of Economy, tourism and sport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Communication Office, Slovenian Tourist Board and with the support of AmCham Slovenia and European American Chamber of Commerce Texas. The delegation included 24 representatives of the leading Slovenian companies from various fields with the main aim to present Slovenia as a sustainable tourist destination, as a country of great investment opportunities, and as a trusted business partner.



▲ Nokia Executive Experience Center Dallas



▲ Nokia Executive Experience Center Dallas



▲ The Point Group



▲ Boštjan Peršin, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington; Connor Terry, Dallas Mavericks; Cynt Marshall, Dallas Mavericks; Mitja Blaganje, Ph.D., Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport; Maša Puklavec, STO; Erin Finegold White, Dallas Mavericks; Jernej Štromajer, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport



▲ Conference Opening - Mitja Blaganje, Ph.D., Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport



▲ Welcoming Remarks - Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., AmCham Slovenia



▲ Empower Talk: An Interview to Remember  
Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Cynt Marshall, Dallas Mavericks; Vanja Černivec, London Lions – Women's team



▲ Live, Work, and Do Business in the Dallas Region  
Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Dale Petroskey, Dallas Regional Chamber; Janice Z. Davis, Morgan Lewis, Dallas



▲ Entrepreneurial Slovenia: Innovative & Smart  
Marko Bitenc, GenePlanet; Luka Zupančič, BioSistemika; Jernej Zupančič, Cleangrad; Jaka Repanšek, RePublis



▲ Exceptional Slovenes in Texas: Believe in SLOVEnia  
Vida Dolenc Pogačnik, AmCham Slovenia; Miha Zakotnik, Noveon Magnetics; Prof. Dr. Igor Gregorič, Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute



▲ Slovenia – the Land of Champions in the Heart of Europe  
Radoslav "Rasho" Nesterović, Basketball Federation of Slovenia; Mark Followill, Dallas Mavericks



▲ Erin McKelvey, European American Chamber of Commerce Texas; Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., AmCham Slovenia



delegationUSA

APRIL 6–8, 2023

## AMCHAM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DELEGATION TO THE USA “TEXAS FEELS SLOVENIA”

Members of the delegation explored business opportunities and visited the leading companies in the fields of IT, digitalization, smart solutions, and security—all headquartered in Dallas, one of the centers of technological development, innovative methods, and disruptive business models. The highlights were represented by visits to corporations such as the Nokia Executive Experience Center Dallas, The Point Group, Cisco Allen Data Center, Dallas Mavericks and the Dallas Cowboys HQ. One of the focal points of the business development delegation program was the business conference “Texas Feels Slovenia”, which proved to be a great opportunity

for a unique promotion of the Slovenian economy and for successful networking between business representatives from both countries. The highly anticipated basketball match between the Dallas Mavericks with the Slovenian outstanding basketball player Luka Dončić and the Chicago Bulls added to the great spirit of the evening on the occasion of the “I Feel Slovenia Night”, at which Slovenia experienced the peak of its promotion. Slovenia sincerely felt that the doors were flung wide-open in Texas and that is an incredible feeling.

### Highlights of the “Texas Feels Slovenia” delegation:

- Dallas Mavericks
- Dallas Cowboys World HQ
- Nokia Executive Experience Center Dallas
- The Point Group
- Cisco Allen Data Center
- Basketball match between the Dallas Mavericks and the Chicago Bulls at the American Airlines Arena



## ENTER:USA STARTUP OVERSEAS



**Enter:USA** is a custom-made training program intended for start-ups and scale-up companies that wish to prepare themselves for a successful entry or for further expanding on the U.S. market. With a valuable support of experts they can learn about key elements necessary at entering such as flexibility, innovative approaches, presentation, legal, financial and tax data, business culture, networking, and least but not last – to learn about how to avoid or reduce risks when entering the US market.

Enter:USA Startup Overseas 2023 program offered:

- **Conference** of the cross-border accelerator to the U.S. market
- **Bootcamp training** to enter or expand on the U.S. market
- **U.S. Buddy** – individual counselling in various fields
- **“Hands On” Business Delegation to the USA** – from June 18, 2023 to June 23, 2023, Las Vegas, Nevada

### Highlights of the ENTER:USA delegation:

- Black Fire Innovation
- StartUp NV (business incubator)
- The Vegas Chamber
- Department of Brain Health at UNLV
- Caffe Genius Pitch Mingle and Workout Room
- Lexicon Bank



▲ Enter:USA Conference of the cross-border accelerator to the U.S. market



▲ ENTER:USA Bootcamp training at Red Orbit



▲ Enter:USA Bootcamp training with Stephen J. Staresinic, CPA, CGMA



▲ Black Fire Innovation



▲ StartUp NV



▲ Vegas Chamber



▲ Lexicon Bank



# AMCHAMS IN EUROPE: BRIDGING PEOPLE AND COUNTRIES

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF  
TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIPS  
AND SUCCESS

The 2023 AmChams in Europe Best Practice Sharing Conference in Athens showcased the power of collaboration and celebrated six decades of AmCham achievements, inspiring and motivating us for a dynamic future.

**A**mChams in Europe (ACE) is more than an organization; it is a force for change, fostering transatlantic cooperation, sharing best practices, facilitating debates, and inspiring creative solutions. As we continue into the future, we look forward to even more opportunities to bridge the gap between American and European businesses, build a prosperous and interconnected transatlantic economy, and continue to inspire initiatives that make a difference.

For six remarkable decades, ACE has been a symbol of collaboration and opportunity, uniting 49 American Chambers of Commerce (AmChams) from 47 countries across Europe and Eurasia. As we celebrate this significant milestone, we look back on our journey, mission, and the promising future that lies ahead.

We are pleased to highlight the dedicated efforts of Ajša Vodnik, CEO of AmCham Slovenia, who has shown

exceptional commitment by serving as Vice Chair of ACE for two consecutive terms. AmCham Slovenia held the Secretariat from 2019 to 2023, and despite challenging times, we were proud to bring together outstanding colleagues from across Europe.

#### THE POWER OF OUR NETWORK

ACE has a presence in 47 countries, making it one of the most extensive networks of global chambers of commerce. The impact of this expansive network is profound. Businesses can access local insights, regulatory expertise, and a trusted community that helps them succeed in European and American markets.

#### TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

The United States and Europe represent the world's largest and most flourishing market. Within Europe, ACE proudly represents the interests of over 17,000 American and European companies. These companies employ 20 million workers and contribute more than \$1.1 trillion in investments. We have come to

understand that the transatlantic economy is more than a partnership; it is a dynamic force powering innovation and global prosperity.

#### OUR MISSION:

Our mission at ACE revolves around a set of core principles that shape our identity and drive our actions:

- **Sharing Best Practices:** We have created a culture of sharing best practices among our member AmChams. The idea is simple yet transformative: when businesses learn from each other, they grow stronger, more resilient, and prepared for success.
- **Building the “AmCham” Brand:** The “AmCham” brand signifies trust, integrity, and a commitment to transatlantic business values. We strive to strengthen and uphold this brand throughout Europe and the United States.
- **A Platform for Dialogue and Advocacy:** Our platform offers a space for discussion, debate, and representation on issues vital to the European and transatlantic business environment. We support policies that benefit both American and European businesses.
- **Highlighting Transatlantic Significance:** Our constant endeavor is to underline the transatlantic economy's importance in Europe and the United States. This inter-dependency is a shared economic interest that forms the basis of our partnership.
- **Advocating for Investor Interests:** We serve as a voice for American investors in Europe and European companies investing in the United States, advocating for a business-friendly environment and cooperation.

#### SHARING IDEAS AND BEST PRACTICES:

To ensure the highest possible standards of operations of AmChams across Europe, it is essential to share ideas and best practices.

#### Creative Network Award Winners

#### INSPIRING INITIATIVES

ACE goes beyond the traditional role of fostering dialogue and cooperation; it

is also at the forefront of inspiring creative solutions. The ACE Creative Network Award was established in 2014 to encourage and promote creativity. This award encourages AmChams to share innovative initiatives and projects that can benefit AmCham organizations throughout the ACE network. It serves as a platform for exchanging inventive ideas that can lead to positive change.

AmChams throughout Europe have showcased their resilience and strength in the face of challenges. One shining example of their impact is the recognition of AmCham Ukraine for their outstanding project this year, titled *Continuity amid Crisis: How to steer AmCham through Country's Hardship*. This accomplishment underscores the enduring strength and vitality of AmChams, even during challenging times.

Additionally, AmCham Slovenia has also made significant contributions with its innovative projects.

One of the standout initiatives that received the ACE Creative Network Award in 2022 is “I’m a teacher!” by AmCham Slovenia. This initiative places a spotlight on the invaluable role of teachers in shaping young minds and the future of society. “I’m a teacher!” celebrates passionate educators dedicated to bringing out the best in their students and serving as role models for the next generation of teachers. AmCham Slovenia has created a dedicated website where teachers can share their stories, innovative ideas, and experiences, effectively establishing a best practices model for the teaching community. Another remarkable initiative is “The Partnership for Change,” a program promoting innovative cooperation between employees in Slovenia’s public and private sectors. Recognized in 2016, this program aims to transmit and implement good ideas, practices, and valuable solutions while facilitating employee exchanges. Breaking down stereotypes and showcasing the benefits of collaboration between different sectors, “The Partnership for Change” proves that cooperation can lead to transformative change.



We are delighted to announce that Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., CEO of AmCham Slovenia, has been elected Chair of AmChams in Europe (ACE). Her term as Chair has officially begun on January 1, 2024.

#### As Chair, Ms. Vodnik outlines five critical areas of focus:

- **Promoting peace and open dialogue:** She emphasizes the importance of peace, open dialogue, and shared values in uncertain times.
- **Empowering AmChams:** Ms. Vodnik aims to build trust and elevate each AmCham within the ACE community, emphasizing core values of democracy, prosperity, and transatlantic cooperation.
- **Strategic vision and sustainability:** As the organization celebrates its 60th anniversary, she is focused on redefining ACE's core values and sharing best practices to ensure long-term success.
- **Empowering Future and Youth Programs:** She is dedicated to strengthening youth programs and inspiring future leaders across the ACE network.
- **Sharing Best Practices, Creating Common Initiatives, and Providing Mutual Support** Ms. Vodnik will focus on championing the sharing of best practices, creating common initiatives, and providing mutual support within the ACE community, aiming to strengthen the collective strength of the network.



Albania

Neritan Mullaj  
Executive Director



Armenia

Inga Harutyunyan  
Executive Director



Austria

Susanne Reisinger-Anders



Azerbaijan

Gulnara Aslanbayli  
Executive Director



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President



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Stephen Brugger  
Executive Director



Estonia

Daria Sivovol  
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European Union

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Tanya Sciberras Camilleri  
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Moldova

Mila Malairau  
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Romania

Letitia Pupazeanu  
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Russia

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President and CEO



Serbia

Vera Nikolić Dimić  
Executive Director



Switzerland

Martin Naville  
CEO



The Netherlands

Marc ter Haar  
Executive Director



Turkey (ABFT)

Aslı Özelli  
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Turkey (TABA)

Süleyman Ecevit Sanli  
President





Belgium

Stéphanie Rutten  
CEO



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Nedim Hanzic  
Secretary General



Bulgaria

Ivan Mihaylov  
CEO



Croatia

Andrea Doko Jelušić  
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Finland

Alexandra Pasternak-Jackson  
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France

Egle de Richemont  
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Georgia

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Germany

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General Manager



Israel

Oded Rose  
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Italy

Simone Crolla  
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Kosovo

Arian Zeka  
Executive Director



Latvia

Līga Smildzina-Bertulsone  
Executive Director



Montenegro

Marko Miračević  
Executive Director



North Macedonia

Jelena Arsovska  
Executive Director



Norway

Jason Turflinger  
Managing Director



Poland

Marzena Dreła  
Operations Director



Slovak Republic

Martina Slabejová  
Executive Director



Slovenia

Ajša Vodnik  
CEO



Spain

Aida Casamitjana  
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Sweden

Peter R. Dahlen  
Managing Director



Ukraine

Andy Hunder  
President



United Kingdom

Alice Mount  
Executive Director, London



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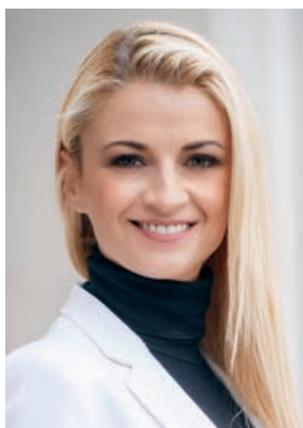


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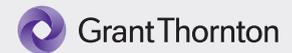
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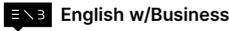
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AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

📅 DATE:  
January 20, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
**Blaž Brodnjak**, President of the Management Board, NLB and President, AmCham Slovenia; **Nevenka Kržan**, Member of the Management Board, Luka Koper; **Marko Lotrič**, Founder, LOTRIČ Metrology, and President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia

🗣️ MODERATOR:  
**Žiga Vižintin**,  
MSc, Advisor to the Management Board, Pokojninska družba A

# WHAT WILL 2023 BRING FOR SLOVENIAN BUSINESS?



❶ Marko Lotrič, LOTRIČ Metrology, President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia; Nevenka Kržan, Luka Koper; Blaž Brodnjak, NLB ❷ Blaž Brodnjak, NLB ❸ Peter Wostner, Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development ❹ Urša Lakner, Pfizer; Matej Rukavina, Pliva Ljubljana ❺ Primož Klemen, Profil d.o.o.; Slobodan Sibinčić, STJ; Beno Ceglar, NIL ❻ AmCham Business Breakfast

AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SLOVENIAN HEALTHCARE – HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND IT?

📅 DATE:  
March 28, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
Prof. Dr. **Bojana Beović**, MD, PhD, President of the Medical Chamber; **Matej Černe**, PhD, Full Professor, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana; **Igor Lerman**, Commercial Lead Croatia & Slovenia, IQVIA; **Eva McLellan**, General Manager, Roche Slovenia; **Igor Zorko**, Director ZZI, Chairman ZIT at Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and Chair of the Board of Slovenian Digital Coalition

🗣️ MODERATOR:  
**Jure Tepina**, Editor In Chief of digital assets at PRO PLUS, d.o.o.



Knowledge and support



1 AmCham Business Breakfast 2 Igor Zorko, Director ZZI, Chairman ZIT at Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and Chair of the Board of Slovenian Digital Coalition 3 Jure Tepina, PRO PLUS, d.o.o.; Igor Zorko, Director ZZI, Chairman ZIT at Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and Chair of the Board of Slovenian Digital Coalition; Eva McLellan, Roche Slovenia; Prof. Dr. Bojana Beović, MD, PhD, President of the Medical Chamber; Matej Černe, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana; Igor Lerman, IQVIA 4 Alenka Umek, Johnson & Johnson; Peter Mulec, Medtronic 5 Eva McLellan, Roche Slovenia; Prof. Dr. Bojana Beović, MD, PhD, President of the Medical Chamber; Jure Tepina, PRO PLUS, d.o.o.

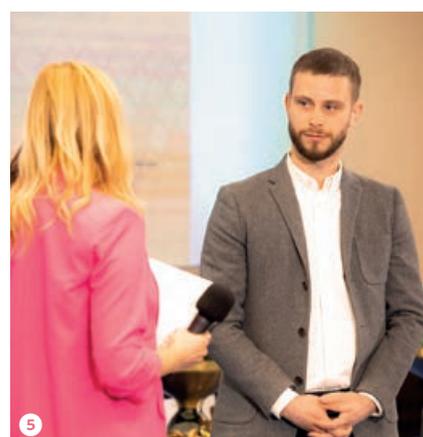
AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

# FOREIGNERS: NOT A QUESTION OF YES OR NO, BUT HOW?

📅 DATE:  
April 21, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs; Mitja Gorenšček, Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), member of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia; Boštjan Grobler, Director Candidate Mobility, Workforce; John Denhof, President of the Management Board, Nova KBM

🗣️ MODERATOR:  
Ajša Vodnik, MSc,  
CEO of AmCham Slovenia and Vice President, AmChams in Europe



1 Boštjan Grobler, Workforce; Mitja Gorenšček, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS); Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs; John Denhof, Nova KBM; Ajša Vodnik, MSc, AmCham Slovenia 2 AmCham Business Breakfast 3 Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Boštjan Grobler, Candidate Mobility, Workforce; Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs; Mitja Gorenšček, Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), member of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia 4 Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Bogo Semč, Hedoni 5 Ajša Vodnik, MSc, AmCham Slovenia; Michal Maco, Corwin

AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

# HOW VALUABLE ARE KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

📅 DATE:  
May 24, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
**Borut Čeh**, Co-Owner and Managing Director at Labena, Member of AmCham Board of Governors; **Sandi Češko**, Executive Chairman, Studio Moderna; **Sašo Dolenc**, Ph.D., Physicist and philosopher, co-founder and editor of Kvarkadabra, an online journal for the popularisation of science; **Aida Kamišalić Latifić**, Ph.D., State Secretary at the Ministry of Digital Transformation of the Republic of Slovenia; **Andraž Štalec**, CEO and Co-Founder, Red Orbit

🗣️ MODERATOR:  
**Jaka Repanšek**, LL.B. MBA, Founder, Republis, Co-Chair of the AmCham Intellectual Property Committee



1 Sašo Dolenc, Ph.D., Kvarkadabra; Andraž Štalec, Red Orbit; Aida Kamišalić Latifić, Ph.D., State Secretary at the Ministry of Digital Transformation of the Republic of Slovenia; Sandi Češko, Studio Moderna; Borut Čeh, Labena 2 Jožica Frigej, MSc, Primary School Kette and Murn, Ljubljana, Teacher of the Year 2023 3 Aida Kamišalić Latifić, Ph.D., State Secretary at the Ministry of Digital Transformation of the Republic of Slovenia 4 AmCham Business Breakfast

AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

📅 DATE:  
September 22, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
Ivo Boscarol, Founder, Co-Owner & Chairman Emeritus, Pipistrel;  
Matjaž Han, Minister, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport;  
Dr. Stjepan Orešković, Principal Investor, M+GRUPA; Nuša Pavlinjek,  
Managing Director, Roto Group; Mag. Jure Podkrižnik, Executive  
Director, Podkrižnik Group; Jure Remškar, Chief Financial and  
Operations Officer, Smart Com d.o.o.; Klemen Šešok, Industrialist  
/ Real estate developer / Sustainability advocate, Iskra

MODERATOR:  
Ajša Vodnik, MSc,  
CEO, AmCham Slovenia & Vice Chair, AmChams in Europe

# LEGACY AND INNOVATION: UNVEILING THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BUSINESSES IN SLOVENIA



① Stjepan Orešković, Ph.D., M+GRUPA; Ivo Boscarol, Pipistrel Aircraft; Nuša Pavlinjek, Roto Group; Mag. Jure Podkrižnik, Podkrižnik Group; Klemen Šešok, Iskra ② Jure Remškar, Smart Com d.o.o.; Matthias Eckert, emc2invest; Ivo Boscarol, Pipistrel ③ Ivo Boscarol, Pipistrel ④ Ajša Vodnik, MSc, AmCham Slovenia; Matjaž Han, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport ⑤ Daša Avsec, SPIRIT Slovenija; Vid Habjan, SPIRIT Slovenija; Lidija Vinkovič, SPIRIT Slovenija

AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

# COMPETITIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IS THE BASIS FOR A WELFARE SOCIETY

📅 DATE:  
November 15, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
**Blaž Brodnjak**, President, AmCham Slovenia, and CEO, NLB; **Tibor Šimonka**, President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, and Dagmar von Bohnstein, President, German-Slovene Chamber of Commerce & the Industry (AHK Slowenien)

🗣️ MODERATORS:  
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1 Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Blaž Brodnjak, NLB; Tibor Šimonka, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia; Dagmar von Bohnstein, German-Slovene Chamber of Commerce & the Industry (AHK Slowenien); Žiga Vižintin, Pokojninska družba A 2 Marko Derča, Kearney and guests 3 Blaž Brodnjak, NLB 4 Luka Gabrovšek, Mastercard; Vida Dolenc Pogačnik, AmCham Slovenia; Aleš Petejan, Mastercard 5 AmCham Business Breakfast



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AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

📅 DATE:  
December 10, 2023

☆ GUESTS:

**AmCham Business Leaders of the Year:**  
**Anita Ogulin**, Humanitarian, Association of Friends of Youth Ljubljana Moste-Polje; **Jure Leskovec**, Ph.D., Professor at Stanford University, Co-founder and Chief Scientist at Kumo-ai, and Co-Founder and Member of the Board of Directors of the American-Slovenian Education Foundation (ASEF)

**The representatives of the Best of the Best 2023 projects:**  
**Manuel Pungertnik**, Product Manager, AMZS; **Ana Cergolj Kebler**, Head of safe mobility programs and co-editor of Vozimse.si portal, Zavarovalnica Triglav d.d.; **Irenej Jerič**, Head Continuous Improvement - product development Sandoz, LEK d.d., a member of the Sandoz Group; **Miran Meža**, CEO, MEGA M d.o.o.

🗣️ MODERATORS:

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## AMCHAM FOCUS

# TOPICS AND POSITIONS FOR A BETTER BUSINESS AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVENIA

📅 **DATE:**  
April 13, 2023

☆ **GUESTS:**  
**Urša Lakner**, Policy & Public Affairs Senior Manager Adriatic Region, Pfizer, Co-chair of the AmCham Health and Wellbeing Committee;  
**Nevenka Črešnar Pergar**, CEO NP Consulting, Co-chair of the AmCham Investment Committee; **Boris Horvat**, CEO & Cofounder, Abelium, Co-chair of the Ready 4D Future Committee; **Alenka Recejl Mercina**, Head of Sustainability, NLB, Co-chair of the AmCham Sustainable Growth Committee; **Žiga Vižintin**, Advisor to the Management Board, Pokojninska družba A, Co-chair of the AmCham Finance Committee

🎤 **MODERATOR:**  
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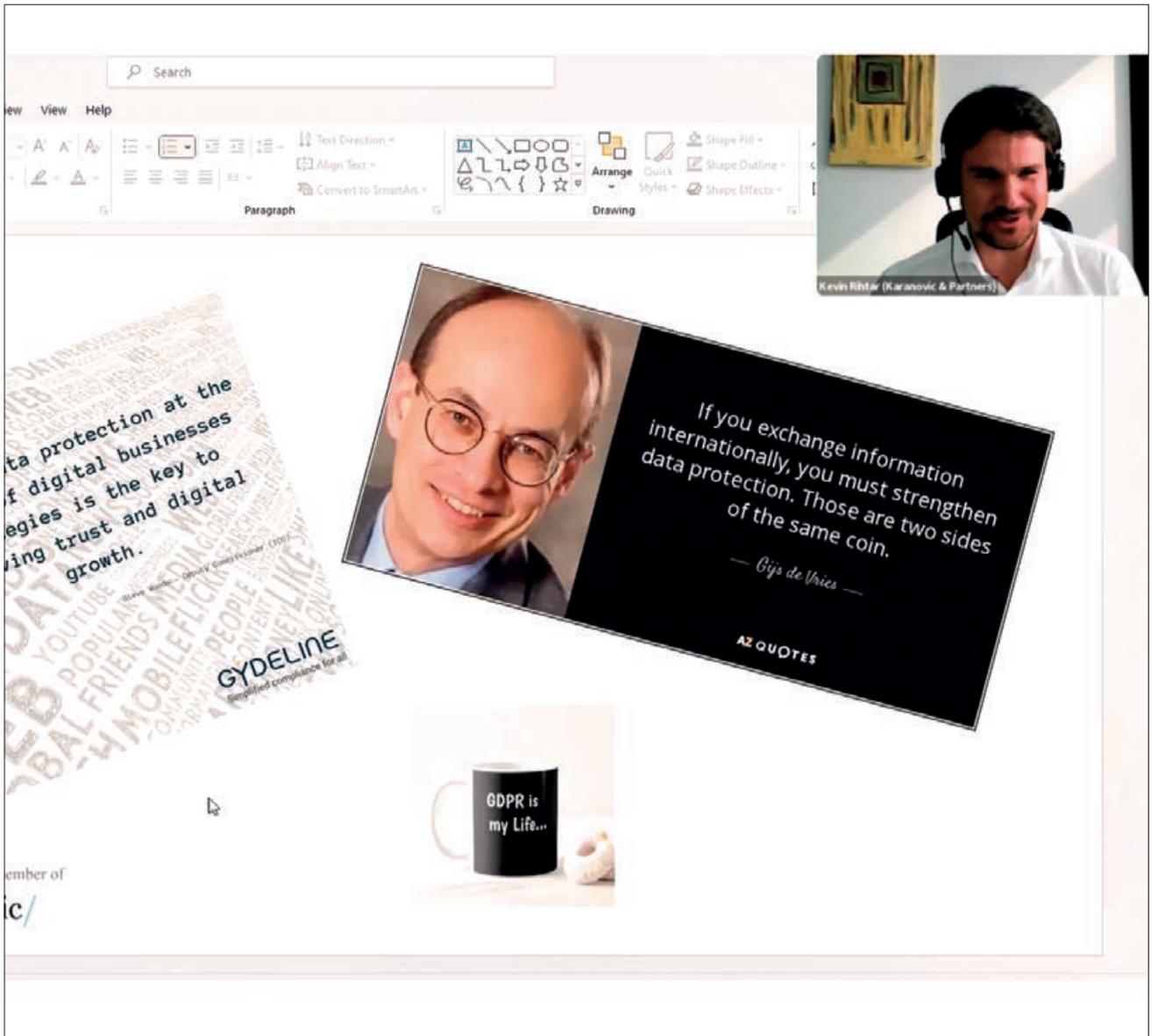
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AMCHAM FOCUS

# WHAT IS ZVOP-2 (PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT) BRINGING?

📅 DATE:  
March 23, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
Kevin Rihtar, Senior Associate at Ketler & Partners



## AMCHAM FOCUS

# WHO WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SLOVENIAN HEALTHCARE?

📅 DATE:  
June 22, 2023

☆ GUESTS:  
**Petra Došenović Bonča**, Associate Professor, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana; **Janez Cigler Kralj**, Member of Parliament, National Assembly, Republic of Slovenia; **Urša Lakner**, Policy & Public Affairs Senior Manager Adriatic Region, Pfizer, Co-chair of the AmCham Health and Wellbeing Committee; **Danijel Lamperger**, CEO, Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (OZS)

🗣️ MODERATOR:  
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COO and International Cooperation Director, AmCham Slovenia



Knowledge and support



1 Petra Došenović Bonča, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana; Janez Cigler Kralj, Member of Parliament, National Assembly, Republic of Slovenia; Urša Lakner, Pfizer, AmCham Health and Wellbeing Committee; Danijel Lamperger, Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (OZS); Vida Dolenc Pogačnik, AmCham Slovenia 2 AmCham Focus

AMCHAM FOCUS

# CSRD AND ESG REPORTING – WHY, WHAT, HOW?

📅 **DATE:**  
October 17, 2023

☆ **GUESTS:**  
Alenka Recelj Mercina, Co-Chair of the AmCham Sustainable Growth Committee, Head of Sustainability, NLB d.d.; Mitja Pirc, Director, Kearney

🎤 **MODERATOR:**  
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 ATLANTIC DRUGA APLIKOSA / AUSTRIA TREND HOTEL LJUBLJANA / AVIATION MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
 / AV STUDIO / AVANT JAZZ / AVIAT / AVTENYA / AZ ODVETNIKI / AZORACE / AZURE CONSULTING / BAMBINO /  
 BANKA SPARKASSE / BANKOVI / BASF SLOVENIJA / BAYER / BB CONSULTING / BBO GROUP / BELTERNA  
 / BELA VODA / BETTER / BIG BANK / BITSTAMP / BOC INSTITUTE / BOIS GROUP / BOIS PARTNERS  
 / BORBONA CATERING / BOUTIQUE D'ARTHER / BRIEFD / BSC / BTC / BOSTAJS VOLOVNIK / BULAN KUH /  
 CALEFFI HIDROTERMIKA / CAROL-FACONER / ČASNIK FINANCE / CATERING HOUSE / CATERING L&S / CBOE  
 / CELTRA INC / CENTRALOG / CERN PARTNERSTVO / CIRCULAR CHANGE / CISO SYSTEMS / CLOAKMATEK /  
 CMS REICH-ROHRWIG HAINZ ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW / COCA - COLA WBC SLOVENIJA / COLORE / COLORE  
 / COMTRADE / COOMES MANAGEMENT GROUP / COFIN / COSTLAB / CPOBT / COUNTESS VAMPA / DATA  
 / DATA-MS / DELAMARIS / DELIGHT / DELTA / DELOTTTE / DELTAHUB / DEMEOSTY / DEMO CONSULTING  
 UPORABNE POSLOVNE IN DRUŽBENE STROJNE MATEMATIKO / DODO CONSULTING / DORIS OLYMPIA / DORIS  
 BRADSTREET / E-ŠTUDENTSKI SERVIS VO / E-ŠTUDENTSKI WB / EIGER / EIPRAE / EIPREZZO / ELMU / ELMO /  
 ELI LILLY / ELMONT / EMMA / ENERY 510 / ENPLISSIM, SEDEFITO / ENXET / ENXOR / ENXTE CASE / ENXTE  
 / ESGNOVO / ESSENTIA PURA / EUROPLAKAT / EUROPELANS HOTELS / EYECORP / FADIBI, PSEKODI,  
 JERAJ, REJC ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW / FABULATORY / FADDA ENTERPRE SLOVENIJA / FIDORS / FLORENSTER  
 / FMG / FORMITAS SKUPINA / FORTINET / FRAGMA INC / FRYT CONSULTING / GATEWAY / GEM SLOVAKA  
 / GENEPLANET / GENERAL INVESTMENTS / GENERALI SLOVENIJA / GOODYEAR SLOVENIJA / GOODIE  
 HRVATSKA / GOOPTI / GORAN NOVKOVIĆ / GORENJSKA BANJA / GRANT THORNTON SLOVENIA / GRAYLING  
 / GRILC VOJK ŠKOF, RECHSTANWÄLTE / GROUPAMA RIZIČNOSTI IZ SAVA SLOVENIJA / HALLO / HANSEN  
 B / HEADS ADRIATIC / HERMAN & PARTNERJI / HEWLETT PACKARD ENTERPRISE / HIGRIA / HIGROU /  
 HIŠA VIZIJ / HOTEL MONS, FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON LJUBLJANA / HOTEL SLOK / HŠ CORPOTING  
 AND PRINTING / HRANILNICA LON / HSE / IBM SLOVENIJA / IBS / IBS SLOVENIJA / IMAGINE / INBER /  
 INA SLOVENIJA / INFONET MEDIA / INSTRUMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES / INVECOV / INTERCONTINENTAL  
 LJUBLJANA / INTERSPORT / INVERA EQUITY PARTNERI / IQVIA / IZARIN / IZKRAŠEVO / JOHNSON &  
 JOHNSON / JT INTERNATIONAL LJUBLJANA / JUICY MARBLES / KEMOMARKETIZACIJA / KEMOMED / KF FINANCE  
 / KLIPING / KNAUF INSULATION / KOKOS AGENCY / KOLEKTOR GRADNJE / KONSELZY / KONTRON / KPMG  
 / KRAFTPAL SI HOLDING / KYNDRYL LJUBLJANA / LABENA / LANGENKONSTR / LAW FIRM BLAŽ PATE  
 & PARTNERS / LAW FIRM KETLER & PARTNERS, MEMBER OF KARANOVIĆ / LAW FIRM SENICA & PARTNERS  
 / LEDINEK ENGINEERING / LEK / LEMUR LEGAL / LENIS PHARMACY / LEP PERFECTA / LITOSTROJ  
 POWER / LJUBLJANA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL / LOFTWARE / LONI DRG / LONJA KOPER / LUNA TBWA /  
 MANPOWER / MARAND / MARS OVERSEAS HOLDINGS / MARSH MCLENNAN SLOVENIA / MASTERCARD EUROPE  
 SA / MAT-FORMAT / MAZARS IT / MEDEX GROUP / MEDIAGE / MEDIASPEED / MEDIX / MEDTRONIC / MEGA  
 M / MERLATOR / MERCK SHARP & DOHME / MERKUR TRGOVINA / META / MGS PHARMA / MIC HENGES /  
 MILBOSHUT / MINT INTERNATIONAL / MIŠ / HMS MARKETINSKE KOMUNIKACIJE / MIRA KARIERA / MOS  
 SERVICE / MVS PLUS / NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHEMISTRY / NCS / NEW MOMENT / NIB / NIB ASSET  
 MANAGEMENT / NIB LEASEGO / NOMAGO / NORTHGRANT / NOVA KBM / NOVA LJUBLJANSKA BANJA /  
 NOVARTIS SLOVENIJA / NOVEON MAGNETICS / NOVO NORDISK / NP CONSULTING / NUKLEARNA ELEKTROKNA  
 KRAJKO / NOVOTOK / OX CONSULTING / ODVETNIK MAG. PRIMOŽ FEGUŠ / ODVETNIŠKA DRUŽINA PERICE  
 MARENČIČ / ODVETNIŠKA DRUŽBA KRP / ODVETNIŠKA DRUŽBA NEFFAT IN PARTNERJI / ODVETNIŠKA DRUŽBA  
 DOJČIČ BELIČAR, FRIELIČNIK & PARTNERJI / ODVETNIŠKA DRUŽBA SIBINČIČ KRIŽANEC / ODVETNIŠKA  
 DRUŽINA TAVARNO / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA BEVC / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA BOHL / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA  
 ČAD / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA JADEK & PENSA / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA JEROVŠEK MALIS / ODVETNIŠKA  
 PISARNA KOPRIVČIČ / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA MARTELANC, ČAMBER RISTIČ IN KUS / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA  
 BOHINJEVAČIČ / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA ULČAR & PARTNERJI / ODVETNIŠKA PISARNA VRTAČNIK / ONE SIP  
 / OPTIFARM / OPTIMARH / OPTIWIN / ORACLE SOFTWARE / P&P INTERSEARCH / PARSEK / PDI VIZIJA /  
 PENTAGON & PARTNERJI / PERNOD RICARD SLOVENIJA / PETROL / PFIZER / PHILIP MORRIS / PHOTKO  
 / PHOTONIC / PHOTONIC / POKOJNINSKA DRUŽBA A / POŠTA SLOVENIJE / PRAJS  
 / PRAVNA SKUPINA KOPRIVČIČ DOOR / PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS / PRIMA IP / PRISTOP SKUPINA / PRO  
 DESIGN / PRODUCTION PLUS / PROFIL / PROPRIAR / PSY BYTE / PUKLAVEC FAMILY WINES / QUANTIFLY /  
 QUANTUM / QUANTUM / RE WRT / RE MAX / REB ORBIT / REPORTER MEDIA / REPUBLIS / RESALTA / REXEL /  
 RICO / ROKOPINA / ROKOVIČ / ROTO SLOVENIJA / S-INVEST / SALUS / SAP / SAVA TURIZEM / SEOS / SHD,  
 SLOVAKIA / SLOVIA / SLOVIA GROUP / SIEMENS / SIEMENS HEALTHCARE / SIMBIOZA GENESIS / SINCULAR  
 / SINCULAR / SINCULAR / SIB / SLOVENSKA INDUSTRIJA TEKLA / SLOVENSKE ŽELEZNICE / SMART COM /  
 SMARTCOM / SMARTCOM / SVA / SOUTH CENTRAL VENTURES / SPARTAN DEVELOPMENT / ŠPICA INTERNATIONAL  
 / ŠPICA INTERNATIONAL / ŠPICA INTERNATIONAL / SLEKTARNA DOGAŠKA / STJ / STRATOS AKADEMIJA / STYRIA DIGITAL  
 MARKETPLACE / SUMMIT AGENCY / SZY TAXTIK / TALUM / TEDXLJUBLJANA / TEKNOXGROUP SLOVENIJA /  
 TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS / TELECOM SLOVENIJA / TERME RESORT / THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP / TIPS  
 / TITAN / TITAN / TITAN / TOKIO / TOROS / TRANSFORMATION LIGHTHOUSE / TRIGAL / TRIGLAV  
 STRADI / TRIGLAV SVETOVANJE / TRIGLAV ZDRAVSTVENA ZAVAROVALNICA / TRIMO / TRTNIK IN TRTNIK  
 / UNIBENEFIT BANKA / UNIK / UNILEVER GROUP / UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI / UPORABNA PSIHOLOGIJA, JAN  
 ROVATIK / VALCON / VALBER KOTIK / VARGO / VIATRIS / VIDEOMEDIA / VIENNAPHARM / VILBOSS /  
 VISION / VISA EUROPE / VITA, ŽITIŠNJSKA ZAVAROVALNICA / VIVO / VOLENIK / VZAJEMNA ZDRAVSTVENA  
 ZAVAROVALNICA / WELTER ABRASIVES / WOLFF THEISS ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW / ZALOŽBA ROKUS KLETT /  
 ZAVAROVALNICA TRIGLAV / ZAVOD BINC / ZAVOD KREZA PODJETNIŠTVA, CEED / ZAVOD YPSILON /  
 ZAVOD ZA / ZAVOD ZA SPOROČEVANJE KRAVJE IN DRUŽBE / ZDRUŽENJE PMI SLOVENIJA / ŽITO / ŽZI



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