

CULTURE OF
Dialogue





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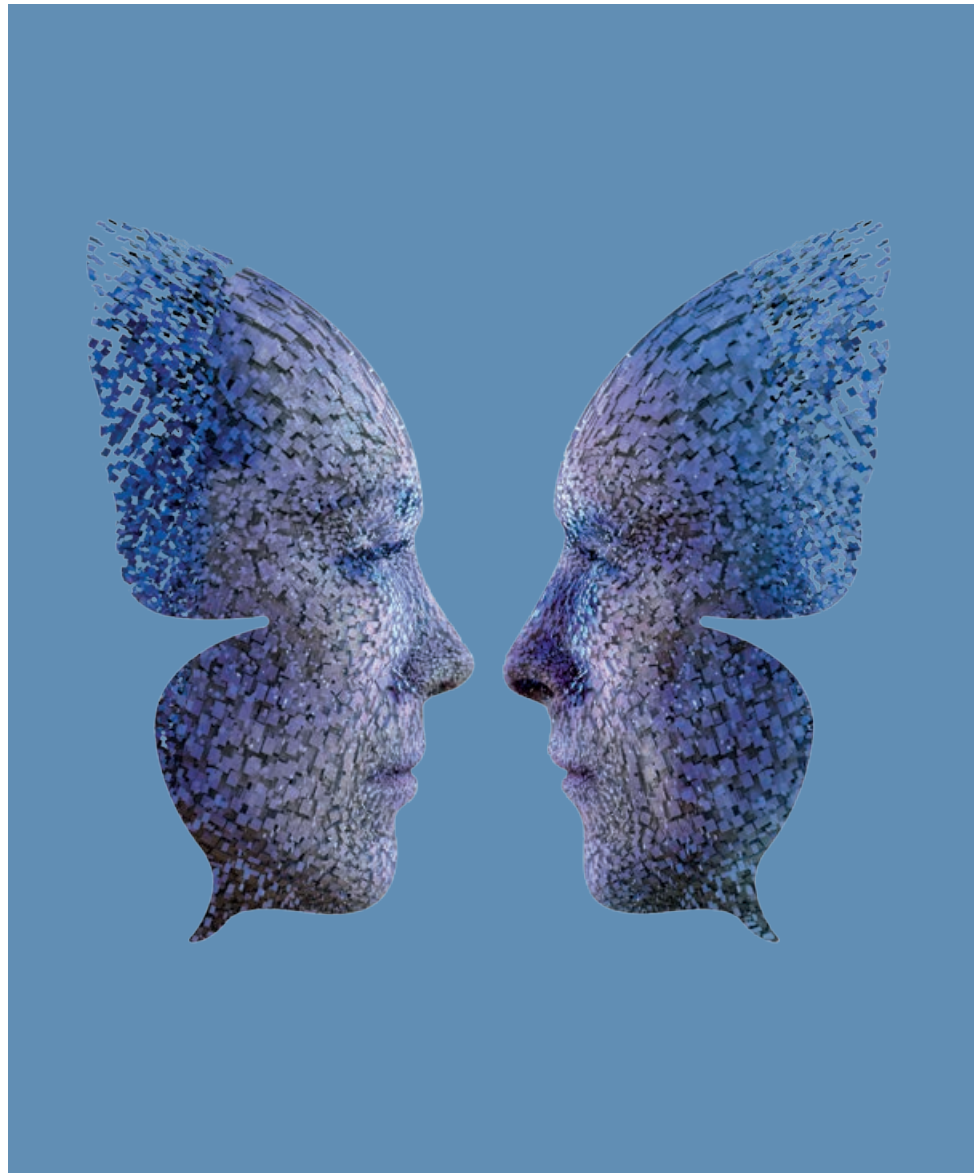
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FLIP THROUGH DIALOGUE



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

**ONLY A
STRONG
CULTURE OF
DIALOGUE
ALLOWS US
TO LISTEN
TO AND
HEAR EACH
OTHER**



Ajša Vodnik, MSc.
CEO of AmCham Slovenia
and Vice Chair of AmChams
in Europe

E for Environmental
S for Social
G for Governance



ESG.

Three simple letters. Are they merely the initials of buzzwords that enable greenwashing, or are they the indispensable elements that help create value and propel us towards an improved future?

At AmCham Slovenia, the business community of opportunities, we realize the true importance of the concepts behind ESG standards.

We are pleased with the fact that many of our member companies continue having a significant positive influence on nature and society by adhering to these concepts and standards.

E stands for the environmental criteria. Every company consumes energy and resources. It affects and is affected by the environment.

S is the social criteria. The social environment also strongly affects companies, as they are an integral part of society. They need to focus on more than just their own results.

G represents the governance criteria: meritocracy, transparency, and corporate ethics. All these criteria are fundamentally important for companies, but also for governments.

Just as ESG is an inextricable part of how you do business and its individual elements are heavily intertwined, what we do at AmCham Slovenia is also tightly interwoven.

Networking, advocacy, the YOUNG platform, and international cooperation. And initiatives such as the Partnership for Change and I am a teacher! Everything we do is lovingly laced with the notion of a culture of dialogue. After all, only a strong culture of dialogue allows us to listen to and hear each other. An active culture of dialogue will enable the changes we need to create in society. And that is exactly what we want in 2022.

The culture of dialogue is the basis for the cooperation with our members. Many of you often inspire us with your excellent practices, strong commitment, worldly views, and skillful leadership. I sincerely thank everyone and look forward to showcasing your brilliant work and positive attitude in our Yearbook, this time published under the title Dialogue.

To all our members, partners, colleagues, and friends, I wish you to listen with your heart as often as possible, speak with reason, and understand with empathy.

Ajša Vodnik, MSc.

CEO of AmCham Slovenia and Vice Chair of AmChams in Europe



Q&A

WE WANT TO RESTORE THE AMBITION TO BE AMONG THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES WITH THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF LIFE

WITH **Blaž Brodnjak**



▲
Blaž Brodnjak
President of AmCham
Slovenia, CEO, NLB



W

hat does a culture of dialogue mean to you? How should we promote it in everyday life?

B.B. Dialogue begins by being ready for it. If individuals and groups distance themselves from dialogue with those of differing opinions in advance, it forms an exclusion that is in stark contrast to the sustainable aspects of the development of any society. It is therefore first necessary to remove the preexisting obstructions, and then regularly challenge different points of view with arguments and try to find a middle ground. In fact, this is probably not possible with opposing viewpoints, but that is precisely why extreme opinions should not gain importance in any society. And this applies to the so-called left, right, red, black, green, or purple. If we overcome these two steps—that is, if we do not exclude in advance, if we present compelling arguments, and follow the win-win logic—it will be easier and better for us. It is an indisputable fact that we have very demanding reform decisions ahead of us, which a large number of people will find difficult to accept, but when we reach the turning point, there is simply no alternative to common sense.

As the President of AmCham Slovenia, what do you stand for and what do you think is the greatest added value of AmCham?

B.B. At AmCham, we bring together independent-minded individuals and institutions, united by a sincere ambition to restore the status of a beacon of the fastest-growing transition societies in Europe to Slovenia and its people. We do not accept any narrow-mindedness and institutional abuse for group-specific interests, which, almost without exception, make the economic and living conditions in the country worse and divide the Slovenian people; consequently, we do not define key common goals, nor do we mobilize all our talents and energy in order to achieve them. We want to restore the ambition to be among the most successful societies with the highest quality of life. We require key subsystems to collectively understand that in a small open economy, international competitiveness is the only legitimate national interest, and from there on, the decisions are simple. We need the most capable people in key positions in all social subsystems. But these people will

only be interested if they feel welcome there and will consequently be able to act independently of irrational expectations and in accordance with the highest standards of corporate governance. If this is the case for all subsystems (government entities, all state-owned companies, health and education systems, etc.), the whole system will be reset automatically.

You have said multiple times that Slovenia should be a talent magnet where success is desirable and appreciated. Do you think that we are succeeding?

B.B. In answer to the previous question, I defined the minimum necessary conditions for this, which are not being met at the moment. Belonging to certain cliques is what counts, instead of relevant experience, rare skills, independence of mind, and the right kind of energy. As long as we provide such income to the Prime Minister and expect him to perform miracles, it cannot honestly be believed that we can find top talent for other key positions where rewards mainly depend on the government revenue or entirely absurd legal wage restrictions. This limits our level of ambition and our performance capacity in advance. With Luka Dončić, we are among the best in the world, but without him, we can hardly qualify for any championship. We need to apply the mindset of our athletes, scientists, and entrepreneurs who have succeeded in global competition, everywhere. We have an exceptional geostrategic position which we do not take advantage of enough. We do not understand the logic of value creation. We focus on a static understanding of the division of what is now created in the given tax regime, instead of creating value dynamically. As long as we divide what has been created and thus stifle the system and drive independent talent away from key institutions, we will find it difficult to create much more, which could also mean we can share significantly more. The polarization of public versus private and the rights of older people against the youth will need to be significantly balanced, and this calls for a calm and argumentative dialogue without ideological distortions. Public health needs a transparent and official private alternative; otherwise, we will have this non-transparent hybrid system forever. Do we really expect people who invested 25 years in their education before they could even start working





independently to limit themselves to ridiculous pay for their public service and not to look for other opportunities in order to normalize their income in the market? They need to be paid appropriately, but in return, of course, they must be comparably efficient in their public-service work, otherwise, they will simply escape into the gray area or go abroad. The same is true for the education system. Lifelong tenures without market tests and with questionable topicality and quality of knowledge transfer, with occasional shifts into politics and back to the university, regardless of the results of such shifts, are an absurdity. Such market behavior is bound to fail. Of course, it is good to have inexpensive education, but it must also reach the appropriate level of quality, which is why it needs a market adjustment in the form of private offers.

The past year was full of challenges and new realities. How did you perceive it and what did you learn during that time?

B.B.— It does not need to be said again that we responded well with self-protection, digitization, market flexibility, and so on. At the moment of writing this, I realized above all that we have come way too far in the development of modern civilization by constantly emphasizing personal freedoms and neglecting our responsibilities. In a society of abundance in conjunction with permissive educational models and the steady growth of employment in the public sector in which the award does not reflect the value created, constant calls for new rights are being radically intensified. This completely undermines the labor market balance, as the private sector does not acquire talent, which in turn creates a budget deficit due to fewer taxes on market revenues and more payments from the budget. I see an even bigger problem in the fact that we are raising generations of young people who have their parents talk to their teachers, the latter having less and less authority. Supposedly, we are protecting them, but from what? Rights, I firmly believe, must stem from hard and responsible work, lifelong learning, adaptation, and sacrifices. Our children get a cell phone and no longer need socializing and physical exercise and the injustices they suffer at school are handled by lawyers hired by their parents. On the other hand, I am sincerely pleased with the ever-growing realiza-

tion that this cannot go on. Not if we really want our civilization to stay even remotely predictable.

What will be the prevailing business topics of the future?

B.B.— Definitely, the whole field of sustainable development, which will not be limited exclusively to environmental but also—and especially—social issues (inclusion, dialogue, equal opportunities, adequate care...) and management (meritocracy by appointing the right people to the right positions based on relevant experience and knowledge). Everything else clearly leads to a loss of competitiveness and there is plenty of evidence for this.

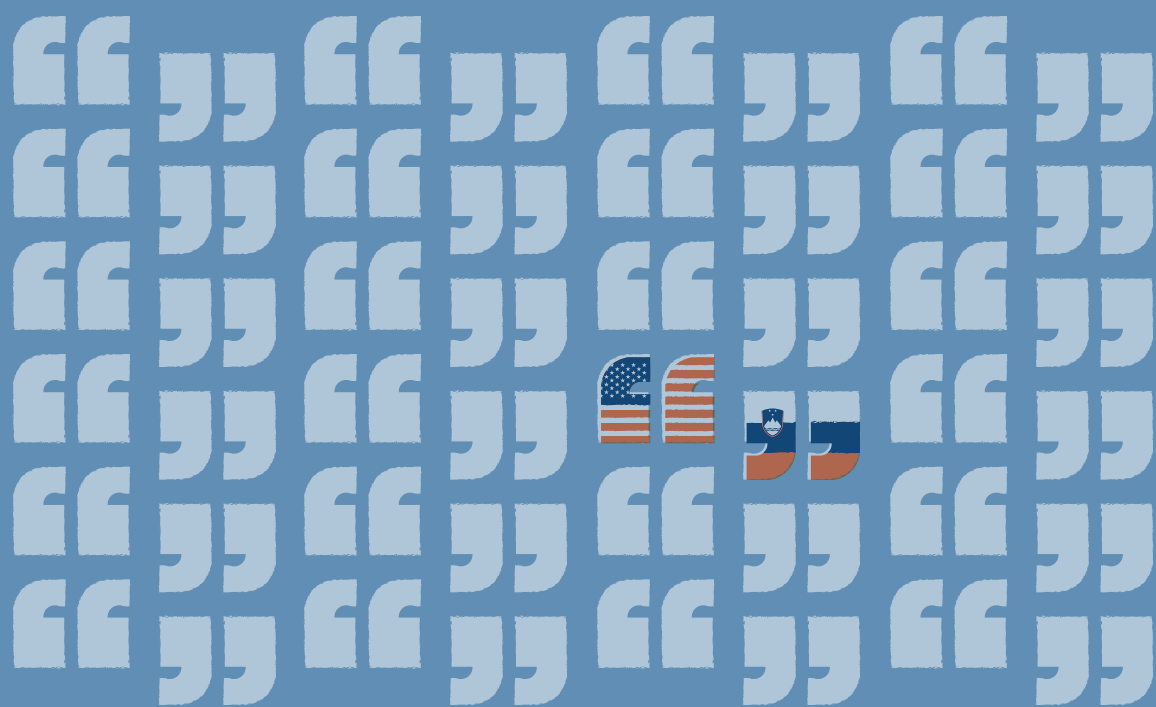
You are increasingly focusing on sustainable banking, also in terms of business. Why should we be guided by sustainable business operations and activities?

B.B.— Because—if we are serious about the predictable development of our civilization—there is simply no alternative to such mindset and actions. However, we can have selfish, hedonistic fun for a couple more decades and let our grandchildren deal with the cataclysm.

What do you think the leader of the future is like and what is the one skill they would need the most?

B.B.— The world will be changed for the better by individuals and teams who will go back to the basics of sustainable living on our planet and the balancing of rights and obligations with great authenticity, responsibility, and energy. To begin with, I suggest everyone read *A Life on Our Planet*, in which David Attenborough shows us the way in an extremely simple manner. Such books should prevail over all narrow-minded religious sacred books that, even if their intentions are good, are sooner or later misused for complete polarization with, quite often, gratuitous violence against fellow human beings. For us Slovenians, it is high time to get out there, stop seeing conflicts everywhere, and unanimously place our homeland alongside those with the highest quality of living. We are capable of this and we deserve it, so let's take our destiny into our own hands.





WE ARE ALL ON AN ACCELERATED PATH TO TOMORROW



I congratulate AmCham Slovenia for all its accomplishments over the past year, especially considering the many challenges of operating during a pandemic. “Dialogue” is an inspiring and fitting name for this yearbook, as it is critical that we continue to have thoughtful discussions with each other about our current realities and develop a shared vision for a post-pandemic world. COVID-19 has left no part of our world unscathed. There is no returning to yesterday, and we are all on an accelerated path to tomorrow.

During the past year, the United States expanded the breadth and depth of the Transatlantic dialogue with our European partners, including Slovenia. Climate change, respect for human rights and freedom of expression, and economic inclusion are just a few areas where we have invested in continued dialogue. One dialogue that may be of particular interest to AmCham is the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), launched by U.S. President Joe Biden, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President Charles Michel at the June 2021 U.S.-EU Summit. Building on shared democratic values and the world’s largest economic relationship, the United States looks forward to working with the European Union to ensure trade and technology policies and international standards deliver for our people. The TTC aims to demonstrate to the world how democratic and market-oriented approaches to trade, technology, and innovation can improve the lives of our citizens and be a force for greater prosperity. Leading global, like-minded partners in promoting an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable digital space will be a key goal as we aim to work together to remain leaders in developing and protecting the technologies of tomorrow. Through the TTC, the United States and the EU can work together toward a safer and more prosperous world, with growth guided by principles of sustainable development, environmental protection, and urgent action to confront the climate crisis.

The United States Embassy in Ljubljana looks forward to continuing our partnership and open dialogue with AmCham Slovenia in order to expand business relations and economic opportunities for Slovenians and Americans alike.

Susan K. Falatko
Chargé d’Affaires
US Embassy Ljubljana

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CEO, AmCham Slovenia

12. **Elizabeth MacDonald**
Political and Economic Counselor, US Embassy Ljubljana

13. **Nina Klemenčič**
AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2021, Exec. Admin & Project Manager, Celtra

To me, a culture of dialogue means listening with your heart and speaking with reason. And, above all, understanding with empathy.

Ajša Vodnik
CEO and Vice President of AmChams in Europe



In my opinion, respectful attitude, listening, connecting, and especially empathy are the key ingredients of a culture of dialogue.

Vida Dolenc Pogačnik
COO & International Cooperation Leader



AMCHAM DREAM TEAM

What does a culture of dialogue mean to the members of the team?

For me, a culture of dialogue represents respect and acceptance. Exchange of opinions, views, and ideas in a dignified and responsible manner.

Mojca Grobelnik
Communication Director



I wish for a future where we can all hear and understand each other. A future where arguments prevail and where a culture of dialogue and empathy represent the two key values.

Katja Čenčur
Membership Manager & YLC Manager





To me, a culture of dialogue is not just a constructive exchange of opinions during which we listen to the arguments and leave the discussion with new ideas and views of the world. It is also a means of achieving common goals which we have recently forgotten about. I hope that in the future, it will once again become the key factor in solving problems.

Gregor Hočevar
Junior Project Manager



Respect, acceptance of diversity, argumentation, responsibility, empathy, ethics, and transparency are the key values needed for the successful and development-oriented functioning of the state as well as for our future.

Nina Marinšek
Advocacy Director



The first thing that springs to my mind is the culture of conversation. Talking and providing arguments, listening to each other, respecting our own as well as someone else's opinion. Why? Because through conversation, we look for a way to make progress. The conversation is the driving force of democracy, a means of achieving its goal, and the best option for the majority of us.

Tonja Avsenik
AmCham YOUng Platform Leader & Project Leader

Nurturing a culture of dialogue in a time when it is rapidly withering away in this loud and populist post-truth world, is extremely important. Let's nurture it together!

Mart D. Buh
Chief Experience Officer



With a culture of dialogue, we express respect for the person we are addressing, create mental leaps, and make the desired changes. A culture of dialogue is a path to understanding and cooperation.

Tanja Petakovič
Office Coordinator

Culture of Dialogue



Thank You,

AMCHAM WORKING COMMITTEES FOR ALL YOUR WORK AND DEDICATION. WE ARE PROUD OF ALL THE 320 EXPERTS, WORKING FOR A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE AND A BETTER BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVENIA.



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AmCham Slovenia
Sustainable Growth Committee

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Partnership for Change is a national platform of collaboration between employees in the private and public sectors, headed by AmCham Slovenia and the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia. We collaborate!

Partnership for Change— 7th Round

The Knowledge Transfer Office of the University of Ljubljana, the National Institute of Chemistry, and the Institute of Oncology Ljubljana have proven that with enough willpower, determination, and willingness to cooperate, important small victories can be achieved on the way to ultimate success.

The National Institute of Chemistry: NICKI: Proof of Concept Incentive

The National Institute of Chemistry has succeeded to connect 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.

**Knowledge Transfer Office, University of Ljubljana:
ADDED VALUE/ADDED KNOWLEDGE! Compliance
Between University Knowledge and the Labor Market**



The challenge of the University of Ljubljana (UL) was to find possibilities and joint activities that would enable greater harmony between the companies' expectations and the competencies of the graduates of the UL. In cooperation with employers, researchers, and students, they identified four activities that can improve the connection between the economy and the University:

- ① a clear presentation of the offer of the UL for the economy and the environment;
- ② the involvement of employers in the educational process of the UL through "challenge-based education";
- ③ building of a community between researchers and companies (within the Knowledge Transfer Office and Career Centers); and
- ④ the provision of intergenerational mentoring.

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.



Partnership for Change— 8th Round

Partnership for Change entered its 8th round, in which it is to solve three exceptional challenges. They are all outstanding and will be dealt with jointly until October next year.

Ledina Kindergarten: Zone: Ledina Kindergarten

The preschool, which is attended by 420 children, is located in the city center and is positioned in a narrow underpass that is also used by others. In order to ensure the safe arrival of children to the preschool and as they deem it important that the pedestrians and cyclists coexist in the urban environment, they proposed the installation of the road signs “preschool zone” and “no cycling”, the installation of road surface markings (children’s footsteps) in the underpass, more visible marking of the bicycle lane along Čufarjeva Ulica and the installation of road surface markings, as well as markings in Čufarjeva Ulica next to the fence of Elektro Ljubljana. This



is something all preschool employees want, as well as parents who are becoming increasingly aware of the problem.

AmCham Ready 4D Future 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 could increase 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.

Municipality of Kočevje: How to Bring Local Businesses Closer to the Youth

In local environments, there is a gap between businesses and young people. The companies have not adapted to the mobility of young people and changes in their career decision making. At the same time, young people are not familiar with local businesses, do not feel connected to them, and are therefore not even aware of the opportunities offered by the local environment. As they do not see the opportunities that would excite them, they plan their future outside of their local environment. In order to successfully tackle this challenge, the companies will have to actively communicate with young people and inspire them to learn through gaining experience. Consequently, young people will know and form a positive opinion about at least ten local businesses and will “compete” for their position for holiday work, scholarships, internships, etc.

Q&A

WITH **Nina Jelen**



Nina Jelen
Primary School Teacher and winner
of the National Teacher Prize

Even in the System We Have, Teachers Can Do So Many Magical Things



Who is teacher Nina and what is her superpower?

N.J.— Teacher Nina is a teacher who has devoured all the knowledge in the world! Why? Because she has experienced soooooo much:

- She has already been broken-hearted.
- She worried about her pimples.
- She agonized over her crooked nose. Her friends used to call her Nina Nose.
- Even though she loved them dearly, her parents some times drove her nuts. Everyone else could stay out so loooong, but not her. So unfair!
- Homework got on her nerves.
- And then there is school. Except for the breaks. Those were pretty cool. Especially because then that cute kid wandered around the school.
- She loved gym and Slovenian, but can't get math to this day.
- She argued with her friend. And cried desperately.
- She has asked a boy out. (And then married him, ha!)
- She did not like cleaning her room, but loved going to concerts.
- She has managed to make a fool out of herself several times in her life.
- She has been afraid of something many times.
- She has been soooooo nervous before some exams that she almost peed her pants.
- She used to wear a nose ring. And had pink hair. And a tat too on her leg. Well, she still has that one. Sometimes she tells her students that it's just a picture from a gum wrapper. They don't really believe her.

Teacher Nina has experienced all of this and a hundred times more. And survived! She is actually very proud of these moments. So now she can

be smart in front of the kids and try to show them life in a bright light. It could be that this is her superpower. ☺

You say that it's the various ways in which you motivate students that makes you someone special. How do you motivate yourself so that you are then able to motivate your students and, last but not least, also your teaching colleagues?

N.J.— Even though it might sound corny, my inspiration truly is my students' motivation. If they're having a great time in school, if they like coming to class, if they can't wait for us to do something awesome, I'm having a great time, too, and then this really is the most amazing job. Can you imagine driving to work with an idea that you know is going to rock and that you'll all have a great day? A day you could remember forever? Well, this is what it feels like when I walk into my classroom and the kids are ready for action. When their eyes light up. When they're having a great time but they connect and learn so much at the same time. This is a true inspiration.

Your energy, which can also be felt through your recordings we can see and pieces we can read, is truly contagious. Where do you draw it from along with all your ideas?

N.J.— If students ask me where I get the ideas for all the things we do, I like to stand up straight, clear my throat, and tell them that it comes from reading a library of books when I was their age. That that's how imagination and ideas grow. (Optimistically, I believe that this will encourage them to run to the library that very instant.) That is generally true; however, a fair share of my energy probably also comes from chocolate, which I absolutely adore. ☺

In the last two years of the epidemic and partial home schooling, have the students changed and if so, in what way?

N.J.— At our school we have been really trying to carry out distance learning on as high a level of quality as possible,

to adapt it to the students, and after we returned to school, we went over the material again and filled the gaps. Hence, my fifth-graders this year don't have many such gaps in their knowledge now. Furthermore, behavior-wise and when it comes to staying focused on the class, I haven't noticed major changes. However, I think that the first and second-graders are those who were most affected by distance learning. In these first years of school, children acquire basic knowledge – reading, basic calculus, understanding of events, etc. Distance learning enabled much less of all that than it would be possible to acquire in class. After returning to school, these children now need more time to acquire these skills. They also need patient parents and teachers.

I think teaching in schools changed a lot even prior to the epidemic. Teaching in class is done in a different way than was done for a long time in the past. Contemporary teaching includes a lot of movement, collaboration, research, group work, the use of ICT, etc. It is adapted to children and their needs much more than it was in the past. Modern kids are kids that master technology, learn very quickly, but have a shorter attention span, need a lot of exercise and various activities. These are also children who have so many ideas, are brave, curious, like to explore, and, despite being big, like to play very much.

What did it mean for you to win at the national competition for the Global Teacher Prize? Has anything changed for you since then?

N.J.____ Being a teacher is not just a job for me. It's a big part of my life, something my entire family takes part in (and I'm really grateful that they bear it so stoically). My occupation, my life – it is all so intertwined that it is difficult to find the dividing line. I think that people probably felt my love for kids and I'm so grateful for that.

The competition gave me a chance to say and show what teachers do in class, how the system is changing, to elevate the profession of a teacher. I did a lot of interviews, participated in TV and

The "I'm a teacher!" project highlights outstanding stories of Slovenian teachers who through their innovativeness, devotion to pupils, and responsibility write exceptional stories. The project aims to give a voice to teachers who feel that their work is their calling, who search for the best in their pupils with incredible dedication, and who can be role models for future generations of educators. We believe that outstanding people have the key to spark changes, great and small, and that these very teachers with the right support can be the heralds of improvements to the school system.

radio shows. This year, I'm giving numerous lectures in which I spread best practice from my class. Participation in the competition connected me with many teachers, both in Slovenia and abroad. So now I have acquaintances all over the world. I became such good friends with a teacher from Turkey that I can pack a bag this minute and go see her, and we've also created a project together. I'm contacted by many students who will one day become teachers.

During the project itself, both leaders (Brina Tomovič Kandare and Deana Jezeršek) prepared numerous lectures and workshops for us, connected us with people we can turn to, get advice from, and connect with for a project. I acquired knowledge that empowered me so much. And finally... participation in this project lifted my self-esteem. I got the confirmation that I'm obviously doing something right and well.

How do you perceive the role of the "I'm a Teacher!" project in Slovenian society?

N.J.____ At a particular time, not long ago, it came about that the respect for many professions diminished drastically. We no longer trust lawyers, doctors, journalists, electricians, ... and teachers.

Therefore, the I'm a Teacher! project is a real balm for a teacher's heart. Everyone involved are striving for teachers to be heard again. They connected us, organized numerous events for us. Their main goal is to bring the teaching profession back to the high level of respect it enjoyed before. They gave us the opportunity to show what we do, what miracles happen in our classes, how much we love our kids, and how teachers are sometimes everything from mums and dads, to actors, singers, and historians. And I'm immensely grateful to them for that.

If you had a magic wand to change the school system, what would you do with it?

N.J.____ My magic wand would change school into a slightly funky school. A school with bigger classrooms, hammocks, monkey bars, slides, tents, cushions, a sofa, and padded stairs where children could learn. A school where we would connect more, where younger students would learn from the older ones and vice versa. I can also imagine special classrooms: a classroom for dance, performances, a planetarium, a classroom of the future with contemporary technology, etc. I would definitely start with an open-air classroom: with friendly benches, toys, playground equipment, etc. Regarding the system itself: less grades, fewer children in one class.

I know... we could really use a magic wand; nevertheless, even in the system we have, teachers can do so many magical things.

✘



**UČITELJ SEM!
UČITELJICA SEM!**

Q&A

WITH Dr. Samo Uhan

**INSTEAD OF
COMPETITION,
WE NEED MORE
COOPERATION,
IMAGINATION,
TOLERANCE,
AND
SOLIDARITY**

PHOTO:
Unsplash



▲
Dr. Samo Uhan,
Associate Professor,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Ljubljana

*It is in
human nature
to adapt,
innovate,
and strive
for the better.*

In one of your interviews, you said that this is an interesting and challenging time for sociologists and that you can now explore phenomena we have never encountered before. Can you describe how you perceive the current situation in society?

s.u.____ The statement about interesting and also challenging times for scientists is related to the realization of how little it takes for a run-of-the-mill theory to become a real and also cruel social fact overnight. Let me explain. In the scientific community, sociologists, above all, have pointed out the fallacy of ideologies stemming from the anecdotal statement of the late Margaret Thatcher that there is no such thing as society and that only individuals matter. While the extreme individualism ideology has survived economic crises, the current climate—and, even more, health—crisis has exposed the powerlessness of policies that neglect the community and the public good.

In modern societies, economic indicators do not seem to be the ones of most concern; it rather seems that successful societies differ from the less successful ones in whether or



not they are able to define the 'common good' in a complex and competitive environment characterized by crisis, and shape strategies, policies, and the future on this basis.

The global health crisis has, in the most unpleasant way, revealed just how harmful it is to neglect the interests of the community. Slovenian society (along with others) has found itself in a situation where survival depends almost literally on the capacity for social empathy. The individualistic ideology that atomizes society and transforms us all primarily into consumers simply fails to see the complexity of the problems that modern societies are facing. Returning to the question, the key challenge of modern critical social science is to look for the causes of the 'social anomie', as sociologists would say, and at the same time offer solutions.

Slovenian society is more divided than ever. In your opinion, what is the root cause of this division and how can we overcome it?

s.u.____ The impression of the division of Slovenian society is only partially true. If we

take political polarization as a criterion, this impression is correct. But if we delve deeper into the social value orientations of the population, which is made possible by domestic and international research, the big picture is different. Findings of the abovementioned research show that Slovenia ranks among the countries that have carried out the so-called 'cultural modernization', which has influenced the implementation of values that are no longer based on the traditional value and moral scheme with the family, state, and church at the center; instead, the central values have become the individual, his or her freedom, creative work, reducing social inequalities, and broad social participation.

Numerous studies show that the emergence of such an orientation is no longer directly influenced by economic growth, but by the established democratic culture of these countries. I am talking about a qualitatively different system of values and beliefs, which is reflected in how people perceive life and what they expect from it. At this point, there is almost no division in Slovenian society. Unfortunately, the crisis has a strong impact on the functioning of even the most stable democracies, which is also reflected in our society. The integrity of the system has been shaken and the trust in the institutions is extremely low. This mistrust has also been projected to the experts because they have failed to enforce their professional autonomy. At the moment, we are spinning in a circle and the result is a completely uncontrolled course of events.

How can we overcome this situation?

s.u.____ Short-term solutions are related to daily politics and are not in the domain of experts. Solutions for a more inclusive society, however, are in the long run reliably linked to significantly higher investments in education, efficient social models, and innovative economic sectors. Instead of competition, we need more cooperation, imagination, tolerance, and solidarity. Eventually, trust will come naturally.

Why is a culture of dialogue in society important and how should we promote it?

s.u.____ A culture of dialogue is important because it simply cultivates the public space in which ideas are being exchanged. In his work 'After Europe', Ivan Krastev, an expert on Eastern European transition, draws attention to the consequences of the systematic disintegration of the culture of dialogue caused by politics. He gives an example of Poland and Hungary which have changed from promising liberal democracies to illiberal, conspiratorial, and autocratic societies. It began as political intolerance towards those with differing opinions and ended as a xenophobic, anti-intellectual, and populist project with disastrous consequences.

Unfortunately, we must realize that the culture of public dialogue is currently at an extremely low level in Slovenia as well. It has come so far that it has been brought up by the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties (LIBE), which in its report holds those in the highest positions responsible for the hostile atmosphere associated with a low culture of public dialogue. This should be worrying.

How has the expression of an individual's opinion been influenced by social media? Where, in your opinion, is the limit?

s.u.____ I am not an expert on social media, but the statement of one of my students on the subject was very interesting. He said that because of social media, we have all become more anti-social. Social media make it easier to express opinions, but often only on the surface because, in reality, it is not about real communication but more about self-promotion and consolidation of one's own views, which is the fastest way to radicalize opinions. Another thing, of course, is hate speech, which includes the abuse of any media and should be sanctioned.

How do you view various conspiracy theories and what do they bring to society?

s.u.____ In sociology, we know the so-called Thomas theorem, which was formulated in 1928 by the sociologist W. I. Thomas. In a simplified version, it says that "*things or situations that we define as real are real primarily in their consequences*". In other words—the behavior of individuals and crowds is decisively influenced by subjective and often distorted perceptions of circumstances, even in cases where objective information is available. Numerous experiments have shown that people are more interested in the impact of a fact (which can also be a construct) on their lives rather than in objective truth, which is why people are prepared to uncritically accept the solutions that make their situation temporarily easier or make it seem rational. If expectations are not met in the long run, this can lead to rather destructive behavior. I am afraid this is also happening in our society.

A year and a half of epidemic, measures, and social distancing has left a trace on people. We interact and enter into relationships differently. What is your view, where do you see significant changes?

s.u.____ Weariness, fatigue, and anxiety have accompanied us for the past year and a half. At the same time, a 'new normal' is emerging, which should not be seen as completely negative. It is in human nature to adapt, innovate, and strive for the better. It will be the same this time around as well.





AmCham
**BUSINESS
LEADERS
CLUB**

BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB



AmCham Business Leaders Club is a club of business leaders of the largest companies, members of AmCham Slovenia, which enables the exchange of knowledge, views, and experiences at the highest level.

AmCham Business Leaders Club promotes dialogue with important guests, successful Slovenian and foreign members of the business community, diplomats, and decision-makers; informal networking events and building personal contacts, activities within the AmCham Business Leaders Book Club, and a selection of role models amongst Business Leaders.

AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB MEET

Exclusive meetings of top business leaders in an inner circle aim to establish relationships, exchange ideas, experiences, and best business practices at the highest level. Events are an excellent opportunity to make acquaintances and meet with top-level decision-makers from various fields.

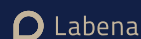
AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB READ

At Book Club for Leaders, we address topics that are important for our business community, general society, and the world as a whole.

AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS CLUB LEAD

The Female and Male Business Leaders of the Year is an entirely new initiative in Slovenia. It is a response to the call of the AmCham YLC and addresses several challenges—the issue of role models, urgent changes in business leadership, the culture of dialogue, and fundamental values. It represents motivation and strengthens relationships.

Partners:



Mobility Partner:



AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR



BUSINESS
LEADER
of the Year

The recognition is given to exceptional female and male leaders in the Slovenian business world and was developed within the AmCham Business Leaders Club on the proposal of the AmCham Young. Three outstanding female business leaders, Maja Mikek, Lucija Sajevec, and Ana Roš, and three outstanding male business leaders, Aleksander Čeferin, Jure Knez, and Jadran Lenarčič, were selected by our young members to stand on the victory podium of business leadership. They are Business Leaders of the year 2022.

Maja Mikek & Jadran Lenarčič, PhD

"I am an optimist and I believe in the good in people. I would wish for everyone to have an open heart."

— MAJA MIKEK

"People think I am reasonable, but I am not; I rely on my intuition and imagination."

— JADRAN LENARČIČ, PhD

Lucija Sajevec & Jure Knez, PhD

"I am guided by ethical criteria and principles. Acceptance is also an important value, and this is something that is not present enough in the Slovenian environment. We do not hear one another, even though we all have a lot to give to each other if we just remain open."

— LUCIJA SAJEVEC

"In life, we should do what truly makes us happy as this is the only way to succeed. The success lies in things that make our eyes sparkle."

— JURE KNEZ, PhD

Coming in 2022...

Ana Roš & Aleksander Čeferin



Trust in Science



Q&A

WITH Prof. Dr.
Maja Ravnikar

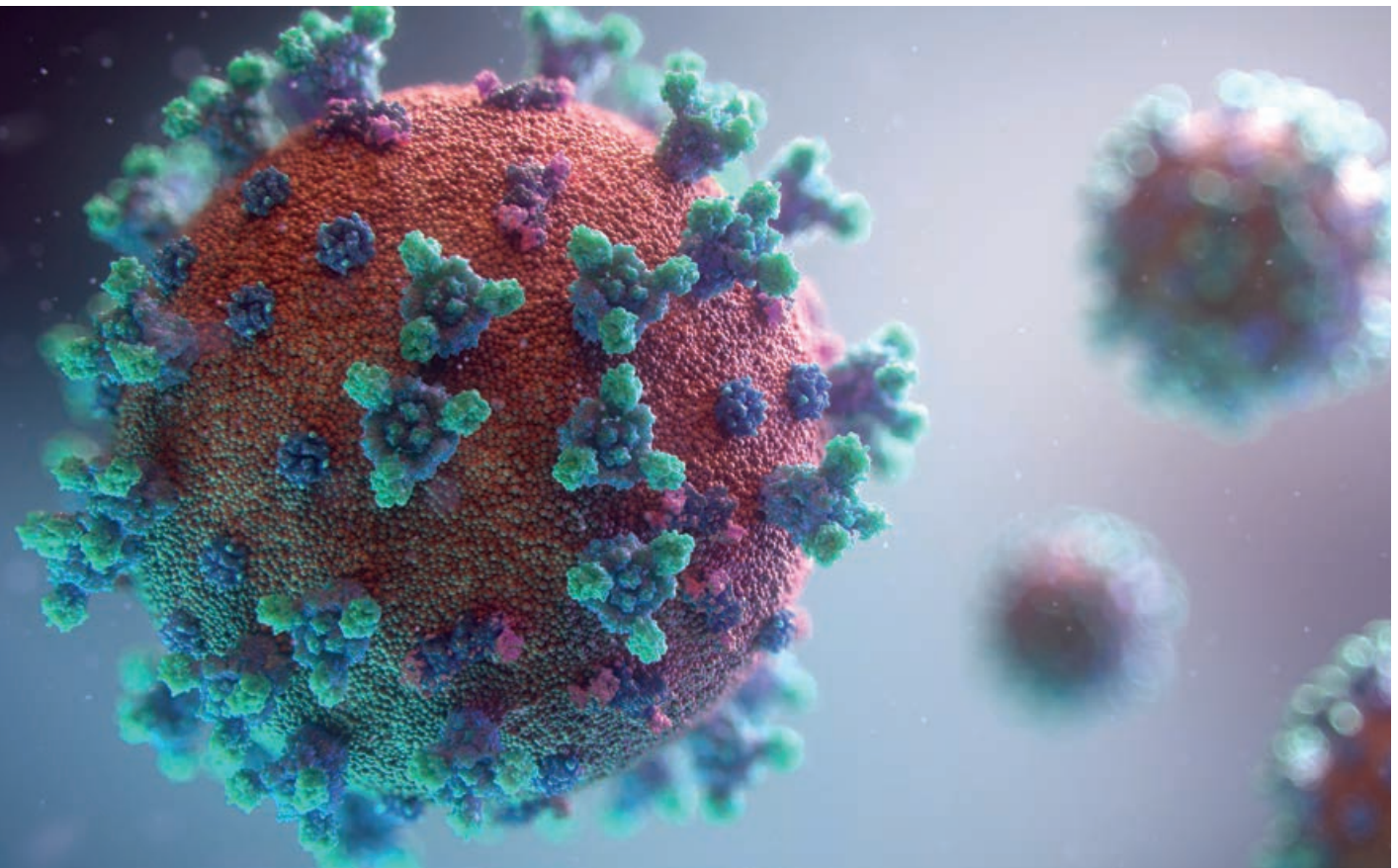
I HOPE THAT,
AS A SOCIETY,
WE WILL
EMERGE
FROM THIS
SEVERE
CRISIS
RICHER



▲
Prof. Dr. Maja Ravnikar
Director, Scientific
Counsellor, National
Institute of Biology

We have found ourselves in a situation where confidence in science is nearing an all-time low. How do you view the current developments and what should be done to turn this trend around?

M.R.— I would not link the confidence in science to the Slovenian response to the COVID-19 situation and vaccination. I believe that, generally, people are confident in science, as according to a survey carried out by Valicon in October 2021, the profession of scientist is still ranked fourth on a scale of 24 different professions—behind firefighters, nurses, and small entrepreneurs. In my opinion, it is impossible to expect the mood of the population to be very encouraging ►



after over a year and a half of living in a situation presenting both economic and personal difficulties. The pandemic has affected every part of our society and every family. Additionally, communication in society is not at a great level. I miss tolerance a lot, the understanding of different views, agreement in the medical profession, among themselves, as well as the agreement of different professions in regard to how the pandemic should be handled. I also miss seeing more empathy from speakers during public presentations. The COVID-19 crisis has caught us completely off-guard in many areas. We would expect the decision-makers to turn to various professions for advice. Luckily, we have top-class infectious disease specialists, clinical virologists, and immunologists in Slovenia. However, I still think we need more bioinformatics specialists, data modeling experts, communicologists, sociologists,

PHOTO:
Unsplash

and psychologists, etc. to be included in consultative groups. Major social crises can only be managed through the consensus of the profession and by coordinating views from different angles.

You believe that the role of scientists in public should include active participation in addressing and solving societal challenges. How can we now overcome this division that we are witnessing in society?

M.R.— I think that science, on both a global and Slovenian level, has reacted very quickly and well in the crisis. The results obtained with research started circulating and the cooperation between different laboratories around the

world was put in place immediately and without any of the usual obstacles. This is definitely true for SARS-CoV-2 analyses in wastewater that were carried out by our institute. Another example is the European Union's Joint Research Center in Ispra, Italy, which began collecting research results and organized regular laboratory meetings in Europe and around the world (with hundreds of participants), where we all shared data and methodologies. Our institute also participated in the preparation of European recommendations for monitoring the effects of the pandemic in wastewater. To answer the question of how to overcome divisions in society, I believe we should look for answers in the aforementioned search for consensus between the views that natural science, technology, social science, and humanities have of the epidemic. At this point, the most important thing is for the pub-

lic to receive as much credible and clear information as possible.

The whole world has been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic for almost two years. We get more information about the disease as we learn how to deal with it. What is your prediction for the future of this virus and the behavior of the disease? Will we ever manage to put an end to it once and for all?

M.R.— The majority of significant epidemics in history were overcome within 3–4 years. The likelihood of eradicating the SARS-CoV-2 virus is slim, but eventually, the majority of world's population will become infected and thus build up antibodies. This, together with vaccination, especially amongst the most vulnerable groups of the population, will lead to the infection no longer causing large numbers of deaths and putting the health system under extreme strain. Improved treatment methods and newly developed medications will also help us achieve this. Vaccines will certainly continue to evolve. Findings of the biology of the virus and knowledge about the factors that make the disease fatal for some individuals while others develop only mild symptoms or none at all will be extremely crucial. Research in systems biology, which is already underway at many centers around the world, will also contribute to this.

As you mentioned, you predicted the evolution of the epidemic at your institute by studying wastewater. How did you get started with this method and what findings does it offer?

M.R.— SARS-CoV-2 is a virus that also multiplies in the digestive system of patients and is excreted in fecal sewage, which is collected in cities in treatment plants. This is why the treatment plant in Ljubljana, for example, is the right sampling point for monitoring the condition of hundreds of thousands of residents at a time. Right after the beginning of the pandemic, we used our almost 20 years of research on the epidemiology of viruses in rivers and wastewater to develop a methodology for determining the amount of SARS-CoV-2 in waste-

water and began pilot monitoring in seven treatment plants in Slovenia, thus covering over 650,000 inhabitants. In addition to the amount of virus, which is currently at its highest level since we started monitoring it, we can also determine virus variants and inform the government's consultative group and the Ministry of Health on a weekly basis. This year, the research developed into official monitoring which will be expanded to additional treatment plants in the new year, therefore covering most Slovenian regions. The predictive value of our data is an important addition to the results of clinical testing for epidemic modeling, so we also send the data to the Slovenian "COVID-19 Tracker" with which we co-operate and which makes the data freely available to the public.

To what extent will viruses shape our lives in the future?

M.R.— The COVID-19 pandemic will certainly continue to shape our lives and influence many changes to make us better prepared for similar situations in the future. Viruses are powerful creators of life on Earth but it is not so easy to identify this as they are only visible to our eyes with the help of an electron microscope. They are the most numerous living beings on our planet, present in water and air, underground, in clouds, as well as in all living beings. The vast majority of them are harmless to humans, animals, and plants—only a few cause diseases. The worst pandemics and consequences of viruses emerge when a virus changes its host or finds a new carrier. The transmission of viruses in our population is certainly much easier due to the way of life we are leading in modern society, which includes high population density, uninterrupted travel, exposure to extreme effort and stress, and consequent loss of contact with nature, fellow human beings, as well as ourselves. The capitalist model, which leaves the operation of society solely up to supply and demand in the free market, no longer offers a long-term solution. Factors that "upgrade" our society, including culture, science, education, and even health, have been

losing their relevance in comparison to economic interests.

I hope that, as a society, we will emerge from this severe crisis richer with the realization that we must take a step back and change our line of action to stop measuring progress solely through continuous economic growth and profit maximization, but also through measuring the quality of life, preserving the environment, and building a humane society.

As you said in one of your interviews, the development of science is also important for the development and functioning of the state and society, for the promotion of innovation, the operation and establishment of high-tech companies. What is the situation like in Slovenia in this field and what could be done better?

M.R.— I think that, given the situation, we are becoming more and more successful in this area. This year, our institute helped establish a new high-tech company, Niba Labs, which operates in one of the fastest-growing areas of the development of biological medicinal products, namely viruses for gene therapy. I hope that more attention will be paid to science in the future. New hope was given by the recent adoption of the Research and Development Activity Act, which will serve as the basis for science to gain much-needed additional funding to improve its performance and gradually catch up with successful European countries as we are currently lagging far behind them. Getting out of this difficult situation Slovenian science is currently in will enable greater opportunities in the field of development. SID Bank is introducing new instruments to support the development of entrepreneurship in public research institutions in cooperation with the European Investment Fund and the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR), which will manage and support the establishment of high-tech companies and much-needed start-up funds to help transfer scientific achievements to the entrepreneurial level.

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Tomaz Bizjak
Co-Founder & Managing
Director, ReCatalyst,
Technology Transfer Expert
at the National Institute
of Chemistry

WE CANNOT AFFORD ANOTHER PUBLIC MISUNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE AS THE ONE WE ARE EXPERIENCING NOW

A s a young scientist, how and where do you leave your mark in society?

T.B. I am so involved in science that most people actually perceive me as a young scientist. But out of respect for their work, I must tell you that I am not officially a scientist. At the National Institute of Chemistry, I work in the field of technology transfer from laboratories to the market; I am also a co-owner of a spin-off company called ReCatalyst. I try to complement the researchers' knowledge and thus find economic use for their scientific achievements. Specifically, I am currently active in the field of cell and gene therapy as well as hydrogen fuel cell technology.

As for leaving my "mark", I would probably say that with some boldness

and exceptional co-workers, we have demonstrated new approaches in communicating science and cultivating entrepreneurial spirit in young researchers as well as established a spin-off company that can serve as a learning example to others. This is a unique endeavor in a system that sometimes supports other values more.

Some people seem intimidated by science. How do you think we should bring it closer to them and why?

T.B. Science is complex because we are talking about 'in-depth' knowledge and the details that scientists can only acquire over a number of years or during the course of their entire careers. On the other hand, there is the general public, which, by the very human nature, looks for the simplest possible answers. We must also critically

Q&A

WITH **Tomaz Bizjak**

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ask ourselves why an individual with 101 everyday problems would even want to know more about, for example, nanotechnologies?

We have to accept that we humans have different values. A scientist should not be astonished if someone is not interested in the greenhouse effect. One of the answers is probably to accept human nature; we humans are susceptible to sensational, short news stories that align with our beliefs. Technology with various selective filters also contributes to this. Within the current social values, science will have to be the one to take a new step and adapt to what people are now accepting. This will be crucial for rapid dealing with the real dangers, such as the imminent energy crisis. We cannot afford another public misunderstanding of science as the one we are experiencing right now.

On the one hand, confidence in science is declining greatly, and on the other hand, we can see an enormous upsurge of “internet” scientists, where each individual feels that they know as much as actual scientists. How do you think we should address these two social phenomena?

T.B.— Science is sometimes less convincing precisely because of its nature of doubting, formulating, and testing hypotheses. An actual scientist follows high ethical principles and therefore sometimes finds it difficult to prove something definitely—and it might take time. On the other hand, we have “prophets” with lower ethical principles who will be able to defend some untruth with all their might, and people are used to following “persuasiveness”. And there is another aspect. An expert’s mistake will have a greater negative impact than a mistake of an amateur researcher who browses the web while drinking coffee. It is up to us whether we will still be able to trust the experts at such time or will we discard their next opinion.

I am inclined to say that some people should simply be censored when they

are visibly causing harm. But freedom of speech, of thought, is a value we must uphold. There is also the aspect that “internet” scientists sometimes do not appear by chance. I am talking about the emergence of hybrid wars and certain interests, but that is another story for another time.

It is not wrong to think with one’s own head, but along with that right, we also have the duty of accepting the truth if a mistake is proven. In other words: the virus exists and we are not adapted to it enough just yet to call it a common cold. Some are still unable to accept this.

You advocate the national Proof-of-Concept initiative. Can you explain to us what PoC is and why it is so important?

T.B.— The “Proof-of-Concept” initiative is a financial mechanism for scientists, preferably (I must emphasize) with as few bureaucratic and other constraints as possible, that provides the funding for the next research step. If a scientist first conducts an experiment on one human cell, he or she can use the funding for another experiment on two types of human cells.

The more findings are confirmed, the less risk threatens the research. And if the thing works—if it has, for example, therapeutic effect—it is then easier to find an investment for the next step. This is how we create lower-risk business opportunities. Specifically, we are talking about tens of thousands of euros in funds, which can significantly help the testing phase of the invention. At the National Institute of Chemistry, we have established the “NIC-KI” PoC incentive for this purpose and we are also actively working on the establishment of national PoC support.

The CCEdit project, which you have also submitted for the Best of the Best program, enables the development of technology for medical and biological purposes. What is the goal of the project and how will you further develop it?

T.B.— First of all, a big thank you to AmCham for the opportunity to share our story with the public. We talked about how to bring science closer to the public, and this channel is an example of good practice.

CCEdit is basically a PoC project funded by the European Research Council. Within the 18-month project led by Prof Roman Jerala, PhD, we tested several approaches towards knowledge marketing. The technology cured a certain type of blood cancer, and now we have developed it towards engineering our defense cells against other types of cancer. The aim of the project was to carry out small steps and experiments to demonstrate the potential of this new therapy. At the same time, we conducted experiments on communicating science, cultivating entrepreneurial spirit in young researchers, and connecting with foreign experts.

All of this has confirmed that our science is applicable and that we have the vision for expanding this project. The vision is to establish a national Center for Gene and Cell Therapy Technology along with foreign partners to complement our knowledge, placing therapeutic focus mainly on Slovenian patients. This will also result in new companies, as this is an important factor in the modern health ecosystem.

As you have said before, Slovenian researchers are recording globally competitive achievements in the field of life sciences, but most of this research is not further developed despite its economic and social potential. Why is this the case?

T.B.— Believe me, a handful of successful Slovenians in this field have invested much more energy than would be necessary in some other Western economy. It all starts with money or with an individual. With the right approach, an individual can exceed the effect of the system, but it might mean having to establish a company abroad, causing damage to the Slovenian economy. With a greater interest from the state and with investments, individuals cannot only be retained but also attracted to us. The cornerstone is therefore better conditions and legislation that we determine ourselves. Things are shifting, but overall, we are too slow in the development of our country, given that others are becoming faster.

✘

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE IN FULL CONTROL OF THEIR HEALTHCARE (DATA)

Mateja Malnar Štembal,
Reputation and Communication Partner, Roche



*Data will be
a game-changer
for us as a society.*



◀
Mateja Malnar Štembal
Reputation and
Communication Partner,
Roche

I will start on a very personal note. I consider myself lucky because I survived really difficult health issues. I still have to live with some restrictions every day, just recently I was diagnosed with diabetes. It is therefore my personal wish to be in full control of my healthcare data sharing and usage. During the pandemic, my worst fear was what would happen if I needed an emergency admission to the hospital and was unable to respond and tell the medical staff all about me and my condition? Where would they get the information needed? And if I imagine asking my doctor(s) for the results of my blood tests for the last five years, will I ever get them?

So my biggest wish would be for all my scattered health data to be digitalized and stored in one place. To help me and the next generations tackle the illnesses more efficiently, to predict the threats early enough, but also to help researchers and others to learn from my case in real-time and help science to develop even better solutions faster.

Believe in science and digitalization

At Roche, we strongly believe that the prerequisite for more personalized treatment is the digitalization of healthcare.

To enable data-driven decision-making in healthcare, we also need to enable secondary data usage. By reusing health data, we can enable a wide range of benefits across the entire healthcare system and foster innovation. This data enables progress in science and innovation and helps clinicians and others better understand the impact of healthcare interventions in real-world settings.

But data quality is key and is essential to ensuring that data is reliable and fit for purpose. We also need the European and national legal basis, and we must not forget something crucial—public trust in data sharing.

At Roche, we believe collecting real-world data is a way to speed up research. I would add that many of us, patients, want to share our health data for research, but we also want a transparent system that would enable us to be fully in control of our data.

At Roche, we already have successful cases to show. We are partnering with numerous organizations, stakeholders, and institutions to unlock the potential value of electronic records for research purposes.

Roche and its Genentech division have, for example, partnered with San Francisco-based startup PicnicHealth to help aggregate patient medical records for use in biomedical research. A special app collects and manages all their available healthcare records that patients agree to share in advance. PicnicHealth then organizes the data in a readable, coherent timeline that allows patients to take their electronic records with them wherever they go. Simultaneously, PicnicHealth creates a longitudinal real-world database, which is available for research and helps researchers to better understand what diseases look like outside of the controlled setting of clinical trials where research has traditionally been done.

Waiting for the renaissance

We are already more than willingly sharing our data. Just think of it: many use Google Maps, where traffic flows and especially traffic jams are visible, and can then be avoided. This is possible because we share our data.

The same is true for diseases: if we enable the use of anonymized health data—even those who are healthy—we can predict and avoid certain diseases or cure them faster and in a more targeted way, and, above all, it is important that certain diseases can be prevented.

At Roche, we believe that health data are pivotal for the delivery of the right medicine to the right patient at the right time. As our General Manager Nicole Arming said recently at the European Big Data Value Forum (EBDVF):

“Data will be a game-changer for us as a society. Insights from anonymized health data on the population of Europe help us to accelerate research, find cures for some of the most severe diseases, learn from similar patient cases in real-time, apply these learnings to the next patient, as well as identify differences in how patients are treated and areas for improvement.”





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PP-PFE-EEP-0338 Januar 2021



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Pfizer, podružnica Ljubljana, Letališka cesta 29a, 1000 Ljubljana

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As a human race, we have to work
**TOWARDS THE HIGHEST
& NOBLEST ACHIEVEMENTS**

BY **Urša Lakner, MPharm, MSc.Econ.**

▶
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A pandemic. Strong and powerful word we haven't heard so often until 2020. Now it's a part of our everyday life and bears a burden like never before. On March 11th, 2020 the WHO officially declared a pandemic of the unknown coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. It was a global

problem which required immediate cooperation between pharmaceutical companies, state governments and regulatory bodies in order to progress in developing coronavirus vaccine and to prepare for what already looked like a future health crisis. As a symbol of fight and hope, Pfizer gave five promises based on which scientists will be able to develop thera-

pies and vaccines to protect humanity from an escalating pandemic.

In the same month, five promises were manifested through a "5 - point plan" which consists of the following keypoints:

PHOTO:
Unsplash

1 Sharing tools and insights

Pfizer committed to make tools and ideas available to the wider scientific community, all for the purpose of advancing therapy itself and developing vaccine.

2 Marshalling our people

At the end of the day - as people, as humanity - we must be united in this struggle. Pfizer has formed an entire army of experts in this field who implement their passion, commitment and expertise to deliver therapies and vaccines to patients on a daily basis.

3 Applying our drug development expertise

Many smaller biotech companies are developing compounds to act against the virus that causes Covid-19, but they lack what a pharmaceutical giant like Pfizer has - a huge long-term experience in the later stages of development as well as handling regulatory procedures.

4 Offering our manufacturing capabilities

Pfizer offered what was crucial at the time - an extremely quick response in logistical terms. The key thing was - how to rapidly manufacture and distribute large quantities of Covid-19 vaccines to hopefully put an end to the pandemic.

5 Improving future rapid response

To address some potential future situations that could endanger the health of global population, Pfizer has built a strong network with federal agencies to make collaboration between scientists, technicians and clinicians much more efficient and responsive.

BioNTech, a small biotechnology company with big expertise in innovative mRNA technologies have been committed to developing new compounds against the virus. Pfizer and BioNTech successfully co-developed mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine, manufactured and clinically tested it, followed by approval of the regulatory bodies in under one year - a process would normally take at least five years. Pfizer has invested its own huge financial resources in the development of a life-saving vaccine. To be exact, more than \$ 2.5 billion has been invested in the entire process so far.

Pfizer and BioNTech are leveraging an extensive network of owned and operated manufacturing sites to produce COMIRNATY, thanks to the nine operational facilities and more than 20 external manufacturing partners. To increase the number of doses produced, Pfizer

made many process improvements to its global supply chain and it has reduced its COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing timeline from approximately 110 days - from start to vial-ready - to an average of 31 days, an almost 72% improvement. As of this month, we have manufactured 3bn doses.

Whilst the manufacturing continues at pace, as does the science to stay one step ahead of the virus.

A booster research program was launched earlier this year to evaluate the safety and immune response of a third dose of the vaccine, intended for application six months after receiving the second dose. We also continue enhance and improve the vaccine to support the global roll out and are remaining vigilant and constantly conducting surveillance efforts focused on monitoring for emerging variants that have

the potential to escape protection from our vaccine or resist treatment.

In addition, we believe that antivirals may play an important role in treating or preventing COVID-19, complementing vaccines and other therapeutic. We are working diligently, at all speed, to create targeted treatments that may help those who contract the virus around the world.

It's clear, that as a human race, we have to work towards the highest and noblest achievements, in this case saving lives. The commitment to fight against the virus and for the survival of humanity must be stronger than ever before.

The world was never been in more need to surrender with confidence to a cause that is usually very difficult for people to agree upon - and that is complete trust, this time in science.





50 YEARS OF BAYER IN SLOVENIA

INNOVATION FOR THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

Company Bayer in Slovenia is one of the leading providers of scientifically based and state-of-the-art technologically advanced innovations for patients, doctors, carers and payers. For the last 50 years, the company in Slovenia has been supporting the entire healthcare system by supplying innovative solutions and services, raising public awareness, creating partnerships and investing in the strengthening of integrated healthcare at various levels. Bayer's efforts are focused on the sustainability of the healthcare system, while ensuring the fastest and best possible access to medicines, self-care products and technologically advanced diagnostic solutions.

Bayer remains an important partner in the future to provide rapid access to innovative solutions in digital healthcare, new treatment options in the field of cell and gene therapy and personalized therapies. The company wants to strengthen its role in the local market with ambitions to not only treat, but also to prevent, diagnose, and



PHOTO:
Peter Ginter

Bayer remains an important partner in the future to provide rapid access to innovative solutions in digital healthcare, new treatment options in the field of cell and gene therapy and personalized therapies.

SOURCES:

1 United Nations (2020), World Population Ageing 2019

2 United Nations (2020), World Population Prospects 2019

COR-GEN-SI-0013-1-11.2021

potentially cure diseases and empower the role of patients in self-care and treatment of diseases.

Growing healthcare demand and new technologies are transforming the pharmaceutical industry

Over the next three decades, the number of elderly people aged 65 or over worldwide is projected to double to more than 1.5 billion people in 2050. As a result of this demographic shift and the modern lifestyle, chronic conditions are on the rise and patients are often suffering from more than just one ailment.¹ By 2025, 300 million more people will be aged 65 or more.²

At the same time, digitalization, big data and advanced analytics such as artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the pharmaceutical industry and enabling companies to improve drug research and development. They bear the potential to elevate patient care beyond the mere treatment of diseases. Digital solutions enable the shift from a disease focus to an integrated, human-centric approach that spans prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and aftercare.

Other medical innovations such as precision medicine, cell and gene therapy and immuno-oncology are fuelling new ways to



PHOTO:
Bayer Archive

Bayer has been present in Slovenia for over 50 years. The company was registered as Bayer Pharma d.o.o. on the 10. March 1971 as a joint-venture company.

At the forefront of bringing breakthrough innovation in cell and gene therapies to patients around the globe

Bayer has invested heavily in cell and gene therapies and is at the forefront of exploring new therapeutic methods in this emerging growth market. Cell and gene therapies have the potential to revolutionize modern therapeutics as they may offer the possibility to go beyond treating symptoms by addressing the root cause of a disease.

Our aim is to further broaden our long-term innovation strategy by investing in this area. Our strategy goes well beyond single investments or individual assets – instead, we invest holistically in entire fields of technology, so-called technology platforms. This enables a better understanding, more flexible optimization and promising development of new therapies, and will also speed up the development of individual products, giving Bayer a competitive edge. Our development portfolio already comprises several candidates in various stages of clinical development that cover several therapeutic areas with a high unmet medical need – with leading programs in Parkinson's disease, Pompe disease, hemophilia A and congestive heart failure.

Building a holistic digital health business

Data and digital technologies, especially AI and machine learning, have the potential to transform the value chain – from drug discovery to clinical decision making and ongoing patient management – as well as conventional healthcare approaches.

The opportunities to provide benefits to patients go beyond diagnosis. The combination of conventional healthcare approaches with behavioral interventions delivered via digital technologies can make a real difference – especially in the context of Integrated Care, the general concept of taking a holistic approach to health and disease management. Leveraging artificial intelligence, machine learning, and vast amounts of data, integrated care aims to help people regain agency over their health through predictive, proactive and personalized actionable insights delivered through digital applications.



prevent and treat with the potential to revolutionize the standard of care of many diseases.

Technological progress and new therapeutic approaches have the potential to not only treat, but ultimately cure diseases – or identify and remove risk factors before a disease develops. Part of this development are personalized therapies, a promising approach tailoring medical treatment to the individual characteristics of each patient.

Bayer's late-stage pipeline set to treat diseases with high unmet medical need

Bayer's pipeline has promising candidates with the potential to be blockbusters in Cardiovascular, Oncology and Women's Health and is set out to treat heart failure, chronic kidney disease in people with type-2 diabetes, prostate cancer and vasomotor symptoms associated with menopause – to name just a few. The company is currently advancing more than 50 projects through clinical development – especially in areas of high unmet medical need. We regularly review our research and development pipeline so that we can give priority to advancing the most promising projects.



PHOTO:
Mihael Lorberg

Regional distribution centre in Kranj is today supplying 8 countries in South Eastern Europe while at the same time provides innovative solutions for the customers.

Sustainability



NLB GROUP ON THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE BANKING

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY



“In the NLB Group we have put the sustainability of our business decisions and actions at the very center of our operations. As a systemic player, the Group is in a position to truly influence the environment in which we operate and to fulfill our mission to impact the quality of life in our home region. We have also committed to this by approaching the global United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking, another of the Groups’ initiatives that demonstrates we really care, and that binds us to further intensifying our work in sustainability in a systematic, engaged, and continuous way.”

— BLAŽ BRODNJAK, CEO



Blaž Brodnjak
CEO, NLB

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circular economy is very much about reduce, reuse, refill, repair, repurpose, replace, recycle, and so on. But what about banks? Can banks re-something

which makes a significant impact on climate change mitigation or adaptation? Banks can reorient financial flows, and this is one of the concepts related to circular economy that the NLB Group wants to be associated with.

The NLB Group is adapting its business model:

- not only to support the effective reorientation of capital flows towards sustainable investment to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth,
- but also to manage financial risks stemming from climate change, resource depletion, environmental degradation, and social issues,
- and to foster transparency and long-termism in its activity.

All of these are also objectives of the EU Action Plan on Sustainable Finance, released in 2018 with the purpose of channeling private financial flows towards investments supporting the UN Paris Agreement target of a carbon-neutral economy by 2050, and more broadly the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

With the adoption of the NLB Group’s Sustainability Program at the end of 2020, the bank has moved from the phase of raising awareness to the phase of actively implementing sustainability elements into the business model. The goal of this organization-wide initiative is to ensure the sustainable financial performance of the bank by considering social and environmental risks and opportunities in its operations, and to actively contribute to a more balanced and inclusive economic and social system.

The three pillars of NLB Group’s sustainability program

NLB Group records sustainable financial performance and actively contributes to a more balanced and inclusive economic and social system.

Pillar #1: Contribution to society

We actively contribute to broader socio-economic development through our Corporate Social Responsibility activities, with an overarching focus on education in the communities in which we operate. In addition, we also support a range of external initiatives such as social and humanitarian projects, arts and culture, health and the environment, and sport.

Pillar #2: Sustainable finance

Sustainable finance integrates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria into our business and investment decisions for the lasting benefit of our clients and society. Embedding sustainability practices within our lending, investments, products, and services is crucial for supporting our national and global sustainable development goals. It also enables us to manage risks to our own financial performance and profit from business opportunities emerging from the transition to a greener, more inclusive economy.

Pillar #3: Sustainable operations

'Sustainable operations' refers to the management of our direct ESG impacts, and ensuring we operate ethically and efficiently. Our aim to improve sustainable operations is accomplished through measurement, management, and reporting performance in alignment with relevant EU regulations and UNEP FI.

The NLB Group sustainability pledge

- By 2025, the NLB Group will fully align its business model with the UN Principles for Responsible Banking.
- To the best of our ability, awareness of sustainability will be raised throughout the entire Group through educational programs for employees and customers.
- For the most part, the Group CSR



THE NLB GROUP IS THE LARGEST BANKING AND FINANCIAL GROUP IN SLOVENIA, WITH A STRATEGIC FOCUS IN SELECTED MARKETS OF SE EUROPE. IT IS PRESENT IN MARKETS WITH A TOTAL POPULATION OF AROUND 17 MILLION RESIDENTS.

activities such as donations and sponsorship will be performed in accordance with UN Sustainability development goals.

- The overall risk management framework will be additionally enhanced by integrating assessment, monitoring and management of ESG risks.
- The Group will disclose and report its metrics and performance against targets used to assess and manage relevant environmental and social risks and opportunities, where such information is available.
- NLB Group will lower its carbon footprint:
 - directly, through sustainable functioning of the organization: digitalization, paperless offices, remote working, etc.
 - indirectly, through its lending and investing activities: refraining from coal-related business, financing projects related to the low-carbon economy, etc.

With minds focused on the future of this region, the NLB Group is committed to creating a better life for present and future generations. Because this region is not just a spot on the map - this region is our home.





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Green Roofs



Smart Building
Control



EV Compatibility



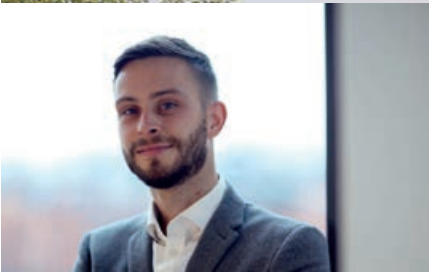
Natural
Materials



Energy Efficient
Technologies

WE PLAN TO CREATE THE MOST SUSTAINABLE & AMBITIOUS PROJECTS IN SLOVENIA

WITH **Michal Maco**



▲ **Michal Maco**, Country Manager, CORWIN Slovenia

Why have you decided to invest in Slovenia, in particular in Ljubljana, the “green capital of Europe”? How important is the Slovenian market for your company?

W **M.M.** Sustainability has been a core priority for CORWIN since its very founding. We were the first to create a LEED Platinum office building in Slovakia and the first to implement a large-scale ceiling cooling scheme within a residential project. This included green roofs on each building and paved the way for many other technologies and approaches which are still very uncommon. These projects have cemented us as leaders in sustainable development. We are not a short-term investor. We like to build a relationship with the city in which we operate because this is the only way we can actually develop it in a meaningful way. When looking to expand into new markets, it therefore was the only logical choice to look for places with a similar philosophy and appreciation for good architecture where we can build on our strengths and establish ourselves on a more distant horizon. We are currently actively working on two projects in Ljubljana—the residential neighborhood Kwartet and the largest, greenest office-retail complex in the country, Vilharia. Our local office is growing with many great new Slovenian colleagues, and we are looking for further new projects in the capital. Slovenia is therefore very important to us both as a market and as a “second home”.

How can Ljubljana and Slovenia benefit from CORWIN’s presence, and why are you unique?

M.M. Slovenia is a rapidly growing, modernizing country. As such, it is naturally experiencing a very high demand for real estate that is sustainable, of high quality, and created based on tested urban and town planning principles. That is what we specialize in. In cooperation with some of the world’s finest architects, we have created the most sustainable and ambitious projects in Slovakia and plan to do the same here. Moreover, we also work hard to introduce fresh innovations and improve with each new project. This does not just mean creating a better product for our customers, but also continually pushing the market towards a new, higher standard.

How important are the ESG objectives for your company?

M.M. As a green developer, we recognize the reach of the construction industry’s impact on its surroundings and see the worldwide rise in the popularity of the ESG as a very important and positive trend. For us, it provides a way to formalize the methods and values by which we have conducted our work for over a decade. However, it does not just serve as proof



▲ Office-retail complex Vilharia

that we have been doing things right. Adopting the ESG objectives into our work also allows us to further improve our operations and set ambitious goals for CORWIN in the future.

How do you develop the concepts of a modern sustainable business space?

M.M. Sustainability in office buildings concerns everything from energy efficiency and water protection to occupant health and productivity. It is an environmental, social, and economic question that, in the end, defines the space where you spend most of your day. That is why we design all of our office buildings in line with the LEED framework. Apart from being an internationally recognized certificate of sustainability, LEED is also a repository of the best practices and technologies in sustainable building design, with over three decades of continuous improvement. It allows us to create a building that is environmentally friendly and which, at the same time, maximizes the positive benefits that a “green” office can have on the people working inside of it.

What are the trends in Europe in terms of business construction?

M.M. One of the best trends we recognize and believe in is the rise of the importance of wood in development. That is why we aim to be the first to construct a timber office building. We can definitely count the rise in environmental and social consciousness as a whole among the positive trends in real estate. However, that also goes hand in hand with the increase in greenwashing—companies trying to seem like they are sustainable and beneficial for their surroundings, but then having very little to show for it in reality. There are many small investors who just want to make money from this trend, and that is why it is even more important today to look at a company’s track record and make sure you are dealing with someone who follows up on their promises.

What are your next big projects, what markets do you want to break into, and what are your biggest challenges?

M.M. We are obviously planning new projects in Slovenia and are looking for other perspective markets

to get into as well. The biggest challenge there is to find a city that is a reliable, like-minded partner that allows us to develop the city and bring about positive change.



▲ Residential neighbourhood Kwartet



THE ULTIMATE INNOVATION

WITH Dejan Spasovski,
Owner and CEO, Ineor

Idea and Purpose

For a few moments, let's forget about all other scientific theories describing how the world, the planets, and everything else was created, and about all our different views on that subject and imagine God having an idea and later deciding to implement it, thus creating the heaven and the Earth, the water, the light, and everything. The idea behind the creation of our planet and all creatures that have ever inhabited it. Think about the pure moment when God got the idea and the motivation to implement it. Think about the purpose of that idea: the abstract concept to create everything. Was that new and original idea the most innovative idea ever? The ultimate innovation?

Individualism and Social Media

We are currently living in the age of individualism; a person thinks firstly (or only) about themselves. The culture and technology, the pandemic, and the media put the individual into its personal focus, thinking less and less about others—from the communities that person belongs to, businesses where that person works, the country where that person lives, the planet (and nature) that person inhabits, and, above all, that person's beliefs.

Social media drastically changed the forms of dialogue. At the same time, the global society is not ready for social media, either by providing rules or even more by mathematically evaluating the informational value in the sense of truth and scientific proof in real-time. Even more, the traditional media today are adopting and using the communication culture of social media. In the past, personal communication from any person to masses was not easily achievable—you needed TV, radio, or newspaper access to communicate (as well as some help from the editor). Now, with the everyday use of the internet and social media, anybody can communicate anything to large groups with ease—this in itself is fantastic. With the development of mobile technologies, a person can publish information at any time, from anywhere, which is also great when used with positive intent. And if not?

We must urgently globally introduce two concepts about information that are missing: trustworthiness and reliability. Since it is not democratic if it is regulated by the governments, businesses must now grab this chance and deliver the solutions that show the scientific distinction between fictional storytelling and providing valuable reliable information, between fiction and non-fiction, as artificial intelligence can now do that. In non-fiction storytelling, we assume responsibility for presenting only the historical and factual truth. Everything else is fiction—and must be presented and easily recognized as such.

Society 5.0

What follows Industry 4.0 is Society 5.0—a human-first, human-centric world. Now, human potential development becomes an obligatory focus. Governments must provide an environment and platforms that can be used by other society stakeholders. Companies must strongly focus on skill development or re-skilling to survive. And most importantly, on a personal level, each person must desire and act towards building personal competencies and skills. I believe that this will be the main challenge and task for artificial intelligence: primarily helping individuals, but also other parts of society, to not only compete for this task, but to also think and care about others

(and therefore grow). And that means human-centric, defined by MIT as “the design, development, and deployment of (information) systems that learn from and collaborate with humans in a deep, meaningful way”, artificial intelligence should be used to enhance human potential.

The transformation from “expert-based” IT to “everybody-based” IT is well underway. Low-code/no-code platforms will change who is creating IT solutions and how they are created.

Science

Science is the most important pillar in civilization growth. We live with technologies like AI, technologies that we scientifically developed in more than the last half a century—and they have grown to become indispensable technologies.

Now we are building the next scientific bricks like AI—the modules to create new scientific discoveries that will later become bricks for the discoveries to come. The future generations will be born with these technologies, just like we are with ours that were available to our generation from the beginning. They will be born with what we have researched and what we still have to, what we will invent; the founding technologies we will develop and implement, the applicable and necessary solutions based on them... And while we do that, we absolutely must not harm or even destroy our planet—that is the most basic and important condition!

Green and Smart

I am sure that every person will have more possibilities to grow with each new technology, to create and scientifically and sustainably understand the meaning of ideas, and develop them into solutions that benefit everyone. Which ideas succeed and which do not is not only a matter of their market benefits, but also (and even primarily, when it comes to ideas affecting the whole society) matter of democratic process. Democracy is based on a culture of dialogue, and artificial intelligence as a part of Green IT is the technology to enable all that.

Green IT defines a specific strategy an organization follows in order to align its information and communications technology with sustainability goals. New technologies are changing digital transformation solutions and this is our chance to incorporate sustainability into everything we do, including IT technology itself.

Do not forget about the Earth and nature as the center of all attention. Do not ruin the most innovative idea ever, the ultimate innovation—our world. Yes, you are responsible for that. Each of us!



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Sustainable Investing



◀
Vid Pajič
 Fund Manager of Triglav
 Zeleni, an ESG fund

Definitely one of the most if not the most prominent investing trends in recent years has been the rise of sustainable investing. The rise of sustainable investing can also be understood as a proxy for how markets and societies are changing and how concepts of valuation are adapting to these changes.

What Is Sustainable Investing?

The easiest way to think about sustainable investing is if we look at return expectations on our investments. When we invest, we expect returns on the spectrum from social impact to financial returns. For example, traditional philanthropy is an investment with a focus on addressing social challenges and we do not expect any financial returns. On the other side of the spectrum, we have conventional financial investing where the focus regarding sustainability (or social issues) is very limited or there is none, and we focus solely on financial returns. Sustainable investing covers a part of the spectrum from where we expect sub-market returns and specific social returns to part where we expect market returns but also social return. We can say that sustainable investing is an umbrella term under which we can fit different approaches to investing.

The two most known approaches to sustainable investing are ESG Investing and Impact Investing. ESG Investing is the most

widely adopted approach to sustainable investing. The ESG acronym stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance, three pillars of considerations when we choose our investments. That term is usually used among professionals when they talk about sustainable investing because all subtypes of sustainable investing use ESG metrics (metrics that we use to assess a company's exposure to a range of environmental, social, and governance risks) when selecting or eliminating investments. Impact investing differs from ESG investing in a way that we expect sub-market returns, but we also expect specific social returns (clean air, etc.).

Most commonly sustainable investments are determined by using ESG ratings. ESG ratings are similar to the ones we use for credit ratings, and they help us determine our investment universe. But we must be aware that ESG rating methodologies are still evolving following the demand from investors and regulators. So there are currently still some issues with ESG ratings such as coverage for emerging markets being poor, ESG ratings tend to be biased towards large companies, and there is a big disparity between ESG ratings for the same companies between different ESG score providers.

Current Situation

Currently, more than 36% of total global Assets Under Management (AUM) are managed according to some sort of ESG metrics. 80% of all ESG assets are located in Europe and US. Demand for ESG investments is rising. Especially younger

generations no longer care just about financial returns. A big majority of millennials are demanding that their investments have some sort of social return, and they are becoming a more and more important force on the market. The second big force is women whose role in investment planning and managing family budgets has become a lot more prominent, and according to various research, women on average care more about social returns than men do.

The leading region in sustainable investing is Europe. Europe is the frontrunner in terms of regulations, market coverage, and investment share of ESG investments. Among EU countries, the share of sustainable investing is the biggest in Sweden where 95% of all AUM are invested in sustainable funds. The EU average is 24%. In Slovenia, we are behind the EU average, currently, we estimate that only around 2% of AUM are invested in sustainable funds.

Trend Is Here to Stay

In the future, we can definitely expect the trend to continue. The fact that 50% of new money that went into the investment funds in 2020 was attracted by sustainable funds speaks for itself. I would argue that investors are more powerful than regulation when it comes to the operational practices of big companies. And people are getting more and more aware of that. There are definitely some obstacles and issues ahead of us, but a lot of these issues have already been addressed or already solved, and as we all know: Rome wasn't built in a day!



Invest in what you believe in.

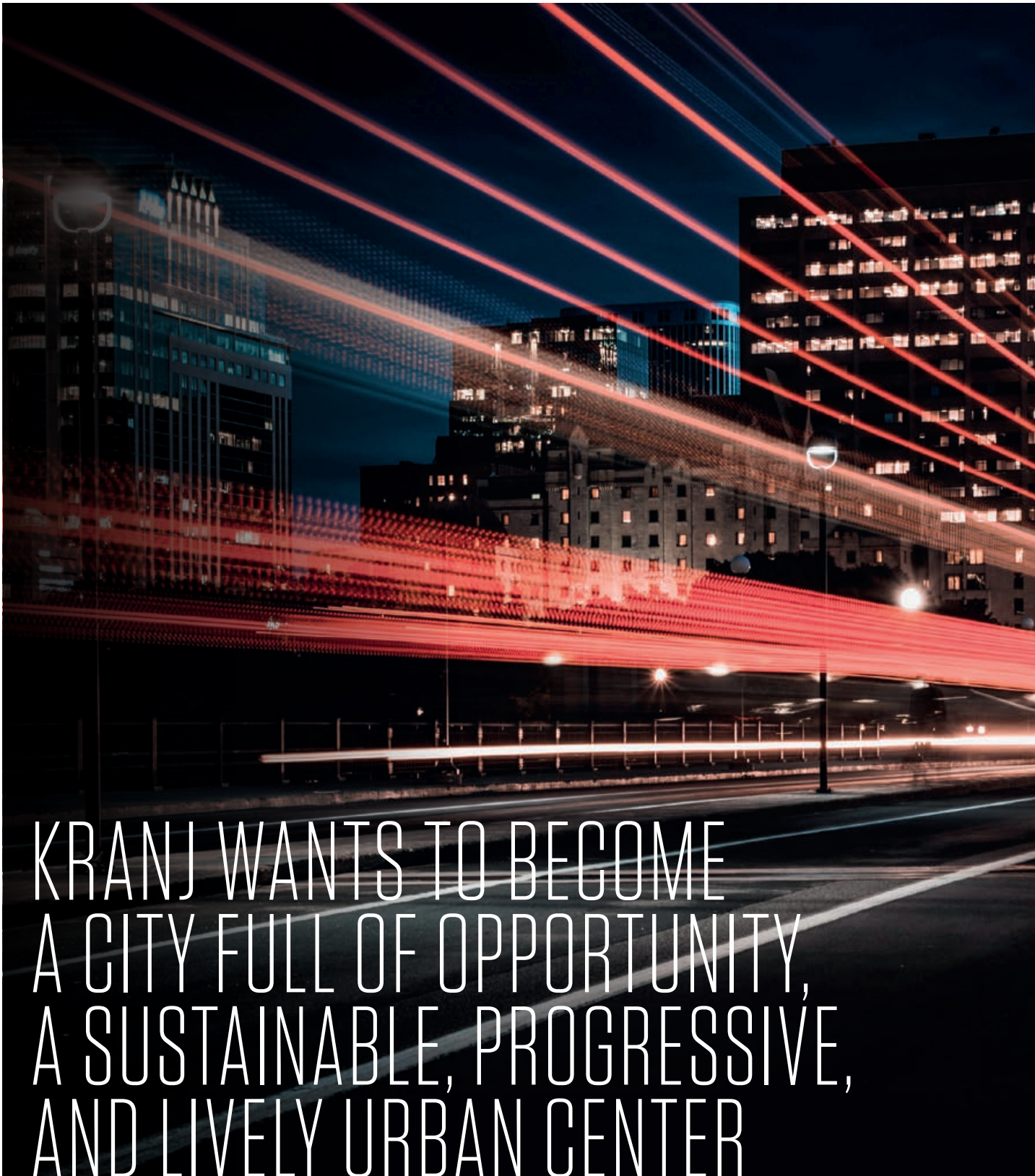
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KRANJ WANTS TO BECOME
A CITY FULL OF OPPORTUNITY,
A SUSTAINABLE, PROGRESSIVE,
AND LIVELY URBAN CENTER



Q&A

WITH Matjaž Rakovec

What are the main characteristics of a smart city and how do citizens benefit from them?

M.R.— A smart city uses data and technology to increase efficiencies and improve citizens' daily lives. The Municipality of Kranj has adopted the Sustainable Urban Strategy 2030, which defines key challenges related to development. It also identifies priority areas and strategic objectives. Digitalization can make an important contribution to achieving virtually all of them.

Automated processes enable the safe, efficient, and more sustainable operation of urban infrastructure, and with the help of predictive analytics, those responsible can take timely action and prevent accidents (such as gas or water leaks in households, as is seen with the Pametna Mlaka pilot project*, or modified traffic lighting systems that allow ambulances to travel without obstacles and stopping, etc.). Monitoring public transport and its availability (buses, e-bikes), as well as electric charging stations and parking spaces will be especially useful for citizens. We want to slow down the traffic on dangerous road sections, monitor energy consumption used for public lighting, water consumption, and air quality, as well as develop more efficient waste management procedures. ▶

▶
Matjaž Rakovec
 Mayor of the Municipality
 of Kranj

How will Kranj become a smart city, and will the development process ever end?

M.R.— Kranj has already taken a huge step in the direction of becoming a smart city and community. We are involved in the process of digital transformation, with digitization itself being only a small part of the whole transformation. We see the most effective basis for planning and accelerated implementation of digital development in an understandable digital development strategy for our city, which defines the basic development concepts, specific areas, and solutions. The strategy, which was also co-created by citizens, using many useful suggestions collected through public announcements, is also open to new services, solutions, and technologies that will prove to be relevant in the future. So, this is undoubtedly a good basis for a longer period of development.

How do you involve local businesses in smart city design, what do you expect from them, and what are the benefits of such collaboration?

M.R.— Kranj needs an accelerated economic transformation, taking it from an industrial to an entrepreneurial city based on modern technologies, services, and tourism. Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship are encouraged and enabled, and these values are used to strengthen the “economic” identity of the city. That is why we are also building a new business zone in Kranj. We have launched several initiatives for collaboration with our companies here, and we are already seeing the rewards in this field, as more and more of them are participating in various initiatives. Among these, the most recognizable participation of companies includes the “Pametna Mlaka” pilot project. Creativity and innovation can also be stimulated by the



city with concrete challenges that represent an opportunity for development and a pilot project for entrepreneurs, as well as the opportunity for marketing in other environments later on.

Can you give us one concrete example of good cooperation in the local environment?

M.R.— Currently, the most recognizable initiative is Pametna Mlaka, which is acting on the renovation of municipal infrastructure for 450 buildings. Pametna Mlaka is a unified information infrastructure for connecting systems, data collection, and communication between systems. It enables the rapid, transparent, and rational development of many concrete solutions. The following areas of development of digital solutions for smart Kranj have been highlighted as priorities in past activities:

- energy management;
- automatic remote readings;
- traffic flow management;
- control and security;

- waste management;
- monitoring of environmental parameters;
- public lighting management.

These areas were highlighted by providers of concrete solutions and representatives of the Municipality of Kranj, which is why they can serve as priority areas for the establishment of concrete functional solutions within a common platform.

More and more funding is being allocated to smart communities and cities in Europe overall. In your opinion, would Slovenia need a national strategy for the development of smart cities or is it better to leave the development to the municipalities?

M.R.— Both options are possible. Slovenia has obviously decided to leave the cities to develop on their own and then this development will be followed at the national level. The Scandinavian countries have taken the same path. In this way, cities gain creativity and op-



portunities to develop the solutions they actually need, while the state gains due to the implementation of solutions happening faster, as cities are responsible for that. The only danger lies in cities not being ambitious enough. It is also very important that state takes care for modern legal basis to create smart ecosystem.

Kranj wants to become a city full of opportunity, a sustainable, progressive, and lively urban center of Gorenjska. Therefore, we certainly cannot forget about a neat, modern, and efficient information environment. Already today, digitization and digital transformation are impacting virtually all areas of our lives and work, and in the future, this will only become even more relevant. This is why such development, based on sound strategic planning, is necessary for the integrated development of Kranj and Gorenjska. This should also apply to Slovenia since we, as a country, have an excellent opportunity to take advantage of this transformation to make Slovenia an even more recognizable and successful, agile and young country full of talent.

How would you respond to the numerous concerns that smart communities also result in a society governed by control?

M.R.— This is a concern we cannot disregard, but which is also relevant

without the building of smart cities and communities, as individuals are already faced with requirements to agree to the terms and conditions of use for certain commercial applications that we want to use. In doing so, we always weigh the benefits and possible negative consequences of our choices. The goal of building smart cities and communities must be focused on the implementation of activities that bring concrete results that will be visible and positively assessed by the citizens. The starting point of all activities should put the human/citizen at the center along with his main life situations that smart solutions aim to optimize. International findings clearly show that “smart cities and communities” projects are only successful if combined with the introduction of new services, solutions, and technologies, intensive training of all stakeholders. This is, in short, an important factor given the principle that the benefits must outweigh the risks.

What are you preparing in Kranj in connection with digital transformation?

M.R.— We are upgrading the Pametna Mlaka pilot project to establish the Smart Kranj digital platform. For this, it will be necessary to clearly define all standards and functionalities, as well as business relations between stakeholders within the system. In any case, it will be necessary to provide resources for its maintenance and development, as the system will be constantly evolving and upgrading.

Based on related data sources, we will also design and monitor what is referred to as the digital twin of the city in real-time, which will be a good tool not only for monitoring the effects of development but also for predicting the re-

sults of the introduction of innovations and changes.

This environment includes:

- existing systems to support the operation and management of public infrastructure;
- establishing a platform for data collection, processing, and transmission;
- establishing (upgrading) an umbrella communication platform in the form of a web and mobile application.

Another key example is a single city card system, which will be linked to various digital services. It will involve various partners from the public and private sectors and will be open to all users. An example of a regional approach could be a city loyalty payment app or card, where the concept already envisages expansion to a wider region and co-management of the entire system.

Within the project group for local self-supply, we are developing solutions to ensure the connection of local food producers with their customers, especially public institutions. The city platform will include a solution that, on the one hand, enables joint public procurement and recording of needs while adapting to the current offer, and on the other hand, a solution for a comprehensive overview of currently locally available quantities of various agricultural products. The system will include local producers and customers in order to shorten supply chains, reduce the carbon footprint, promote local self-supply for food, and increase the quality of food in (public) institutions.



* Mlaka is a settlement north of Kranj.

YOUNg





▲
Nina Klemenčič

AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2021, Exec. Admin & Project Manager, Celtra

**TRY,
BE PERSISTENT,
AND DO YOUR BEST,
DO NOT GIVE UP.**

Q&A

WITH **Nina Klemenčič**

With the title AmCham Top Potential of the Year, you have become the ambassador of your generation, representing the voice of young people both in AmCham and beyond the organization. What will you stand for this year, where would you like to leave your mark?

N.K.— I want young people to connect with each other and make sure that even Slovenia becomes an environment full of opportunities and challenges for them. The transfer of knowledge and experience between generations, cooperation and mentorship, as well as various thematic events represent opportunities for the creation and improvement of a supportive environment for young talents in Slovenia. All too often, young people leave Slovenia for at least a couple of years to satisfy their desire for something more, something different and stimulating. Sometimes, however, when they wish to return, they have difficulties finding a suitable job or we do not know how to include them in the system and use or transfer their international (and therefore, different) experience. I am aware of my responsibility and the opportunity to improve this situation together. As part of the First Mentor team, I want to encourage young people at the beginning of their careers. I strive to do my best to empower them to carefully explore their talents, seek opportunities and ways for their all-round development, and at the same time be aware of what opportunities lie in their hands—from the choice of education (possibly abroad)

to the choice of employment and their unique way of living. We no longer live in a world where you are defined by the choice of high school or faculty (I also hold a master's degree from the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana, but I am now active in a completely different field). Your first job does not determine what you will actually do in your life. I definitely wish that young people would not feel "trapped" in Slovenia, as I occasionally did myself—the world is your playground, go explore it and play—but in my experience, Slovenia could be a paradise for talent development, an even bigger one as it already is. We can do the most to achieve this by creating conditions that will strengthen the desire to come back in those who have "temporarily" gone abroad to gain new experience and knowledge—and not only once they retire. :) Slovenia must become a training ground for young talents and aspiring entrepreneurs, not just a talent hatchery from which they flee abroad.

What have you learned in the year you spent with the colleagues of the 11th generation of AmCham Young Professionals and what will you take with you on your career path?

N.K. Above all, I learned to participate more actively and use my voice. Before that, I was usually in the role of someone who mainly soaks in the knowledge and asks questions. This year, however, I was given the opportunity to share my knowledge, experience, and stories, and as the ambassador of the generation, I am aware of the opportunities and responsibilities to myself as well as to everyone else. It has become easier for me to perform in public, I am more independent and self-confident because I see that everyone really contributes something for the good of the community. The lack of professional experience is not an obstacle; it can also be an advantage because I look at things differently. When you do what truly makes you happy, you do not look for confirmation

and praise, which is why you can be surprised when you get it anyway. :)

For the first time, I really saw how many people support me, are inspired by me, and somehow identify with me. In a way, this is a compliment, but also a great responsibility to actively share my opinions, views, and initiatives with a wider circle of people—I truly believe that together, we can achieve much more than we think is possible. And most definitely, I met a lot of lovely people—AmCham is probably the only platform in Slovenia that connects and unites so many young potentials and at the same time has excellent mentors from various fields, all of whom are happy to help you out with advice and support.

In your opinion, what is the value that modern leaders should live by? What kind of leadership would you label as good and who is your role model?

N.K. Authenticity—guidance from within, a sincere, open, and direct one. That what you think is aligned with what you say and do. This is the only way leading can be authentic and intrinsic and people feel it. This is why there is a difference between those who follow out of fear and those who follow because they support and trust their leaders. I find role models in very different areas, sometimes they are sports coaches (I think we can learn a lot from sports and I look at many challenges through the prism of sports), sometimes managers in the company where I work (I could hardly imagine better leaders), and sometimes the parents I observe on the street and see how they lead their children by example. I truly believe we all have the ability to lead within us, of course at different levels and in different forms. For me, leadership starts with leading yourself, and this concerns all of us. I think role models are great as you can see what else is possible, but at the same time I believe that everyone should find their own style of leading—one can take something from each role

model but in the end, everyone is really good at something, and they should accept this and build on it. We need all these different pieces to make the mosaic a beautiful and perfect whole. It would not be helpful if everyone led in the same way. Even the people who follow are motivated in different ways.

What would be your advice for young people embarking on their career path?

N.K. Try, be persistent, and do your best, do not give up. Especially in the beginning when you have the feeling you do not really know what you truly want and in which direction you should go. Just get started and try, even if you do not have the answers to all questions yet, the challenges keep coming and they are always new. Done is better than perfect.

At the same time, pay attention to your life, to the people you share it with, and what they bring into your life—we do not all have to be entrepreneurial or very ambitious. Each of us is "the average of the five people he or she spends the most time with". Therefore, it is necessary to take your time and choose wisely. Make sure you are surrounded by people whose values you appreciate and whose habits you want to adopt yourself. Take advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet (you have the opportunity to access endless collections of knowledge) and stay curious—leave the comfort zone, go around the world with open eyes and an open heart, try new things, surprise yourself.

What changes do you think should be introduced into the school system in order to prepare the younger generations for the challenges of the present?

N.K. Huh, what a difficult question. We live in a time where changes are becoming bigger and exponentially faster. Therefore, it is difficult to predict what skills will be the most beneficial for today's youth when they enter the labor market. At the same time, there has never

been so much knowledge at your fingertips—there is more information and content available than one can consume and it is crucial to distinguish between useful and useless sources, to choose relevant and credible data. The ability of critical thinking and forming your own opinion, starting with critical reading of content by asking yourself what is behind this, what is the purpose of a particular publication, who benefits from me believing in it, who is selling it to me, and what, why?

I would definitely enrich the curriculum by adding the ability to adapt and learn quickly—in this way, young people would be ready to acquire any needed knowledge while at the same time staying calm. As a basis, I would not forget taking care of physical and mental health, as too little attention is paid to this, even though it has been proven that good and productive work requires physical and mental fitness, stress management, emotional stability, etc. I also think that financial literacy is important because young people are becoming more and more interested in that, they are looking



▲ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia, Nina Klemenčič, Celtra, Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia

for answers through other channels, and, unfortunately, they often fall for bad advice. Students (in elementary and vocational schools, also high schools) need to be involved in interdisciplinary projects as soon as possible so they can test the acquired knowledge in practice, upgrade it and, above all, find out what really interests them and in which field they see themselves working in the future. This is also the only way for them to enter the labor market ready and confident. Computer literacy and contact with technology go without saying today as young

people are often more skilled than their parents in this field.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that education does not have a time limit today; lifelong learning is needed if we want to successfully tackle all the challenges that are brought to us each day.

You are a passionate traveler and have already visited more than 100 countries around the world. What have your travels given you and what have you learned about yourself during your travels? Which country is now at the top of your “bucket list”?

N.K.— Above all, traveling made me more broad-minded, accepting of differences, it satisfied my curiosity and at the same time made me even more curious. When traveling, you find yourself in all sorts of situations, sometimes even dangerous and reckless, so you learn to solve problems at a higher level. Consequently, in everyday life, when a problem arises, you look at it in a little more relaxed way, because you are aware of what you have already dug yourself out of. :) Traveling also gave me the ability to make quick decisions and act, manage risk, and accept differences. I learned to be alone with myself (as I went on many trips alone), but at the same time to be part of a team, to adapt, and make sure there are no conflicts, to mediate, to unite, to look for similarities and common interests. Usually, I also somehow took on the role of the organizer or someone keeping track of the finances when we went on longer trips. There are several countries at the top of my bucket list as the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed my travel plans. Maybe I would go to Bhutan first, as it is the last country in that part of the world I have not visited yet, in addition to Bangladesh. I really want to go to the Paro Taktsang Temple (Tiger’s Nest). You can imagine that my list is long, I also want to visit some parts of the countries I have already been to.



▲ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia, Dajana Janjatovič, Odvetniška pisarna Rogl, Nina Klemenčič, Celtra, Tjaša Lenarčič, LanguageSitter, Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia, Maja Šipek, CMS REICH-ROHRWIG HAINZ, Milan Grašič, Knauf Insulation



Atlantic Droga Kolinska

ENZO SMREKAR

Vice-President for Savoury spreads, Donat Mg and international expansion at Atlantic Grupa and General Manager of Atlantic Droga Kolinska



Avantcar

GAŠPER ŽVAN

Executive Director



Aviat

STEVEN TOTEDA

EVP, Managing Director, EMEA, Sales & Services



Bayer

MICHAL WRONKA

Managing Director

Thank you,
AmCham Heroes



Dun & Bradstreet

KATARINA RAIČEVIĆ

Head of Sales for Central East Europe (CEE)



BTC

DAMJAN KRALJ

Chief Executive Officer



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AMCHAM YOUNG PLATFORM TO MAKE
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ADRIAN JEŽINA
President of the Management Board
Telemach Slovenija & Telemach Hrvatska

Q&A

WITH

Riitta Fagerholm Mošić



▲
Riitta Fagerholm Mošić
 Program Manager, Dun &
 Bradstreet, Leader of the
 First Mentor program



MENTOR IN YOUR LIFE IS A BLESSING AND AN ENRICHMENT

How important is it to have a mentor in your life and why?

R.F.M.____ I think that having a mentor in your life is definitely a blessing and an enrichment. It might be possible to go through life without it, but having one certainly makes it a lot easier and more interesting.

I believe that it can sometimes even be a turning point in someone's life. Just having the possibility to have a friendly,

informal connection with someone who is not in your immediate family or your teacher, and who is there to help, can help you find your own voice and see things from a different angle, which you were unable to do by yourself.

You designed the First Mentor program with the aim of guiding young people on their business journey. In four years, you have reached many important milestones, can you present them?

R.F.M.____ From my point of view, the First Mentor project team designed the First Mentor program to serve two purposes:

① to enable students and other young people to get a possibility to have someone help them with their first big career choice challenges—what to study, how to approach life, and so on, and

② to provide young professionals with an opportunity to gain experience as mentors and to share their knowledge with the younger generation.

We saw too few or almost no such options available on the market—be it for free or for a fee—and we wanted to fill that gap. Therefore, I would say that the first meaningful milestone was just starting off and getting the amazing opportunity and possibility from Am-Cham to set up such a program within the frame of Young Leaders.

I feel the second important milestone was reached when we finished off the first pilot phase of the project and were able to start developing and creating it to be a real platform for connecting young people and providing opportunities for growth. We also started focusing on our marketing activities and engaged with our community via social media as well as different activities and competitions. I was also immensely happy when we saw that after their experiences with us and our mentors, our mentees wanted to start joining the team and support the cause and pay it forward! :)

As the third milestone, or rather a challenge, I see the COVID-19 pandemic and especially the way that our amazing mentors and mentees managed the situation and got adjusted to it! We had the highest number of mentoring pairs so far, more than a hun-

dred, and all of a sudden we needed to do matching, introductions, educational events, and workshops and everything had to be carried out entirely virtually, never having the chance to actually meet face-to-face. And what a generation it was! Truly a sign that when there is young energy, motivation, and a positive attitude, nothing can hold you back.

I cannot wait to see what the upcoming fourth generation will bring along!

The mentoring relationship is almost always also a two-way process of learning and gaining new knowledge. What is your experience with this?

R.F.M.— In my experience, a mentoring relationship, like any other relationship, is always a two-way process of learning. Like Carl Jung is believed to have said: “The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.” Open mind, willingness to see the world from another perspective, and accepting the other person’s views are paramount for a successful mentorship. If these are missing, no growth can be expected from either side. If I am really honest, I almost think that I myself have gained more from having had the opportunity to be a part of this program than my mentees have! Such amazing young people with such creative energy, an open mind, and curiosity about the world make me believe that there is still hope for this world.

Are young people who are leaving the school system and entering their business paths ready for challenges that lie ahead? Do they have the right skills and sufficient knowledge to help them on the way?

R.F.M.— That is an interesting and important question, and partly the reason why we started the program in the first place. I do not think there is a straightforward or “one-size-fits-all” answer to this since it really depends on the person, the school, and the teachers they have had the privilege to interact with. Some are of course more ready than others, that is for sure.

Having said that, I would still dare to go as far as to say that there is room for



▲ First Mentor Team

The First Mentor is a program designed for all young people between 15-25 who have just begun to dream about their business path, are considering their careers, or are looking for the best way to move on and switch from the classroom to the business world. Mentors are members of the AmCham Young Leaders Club who accumulated experience and knowledge over the years in the business world.

improvement in bridging the gap that we see between real-life business, the needs of society, and the academic institutions from which our kids are graduating. At least I remember having felt slightly “lost” with my graduation papers in my hands and wondering about “what now?”. I was lucky enough to have a mentor at the time who connected me with the right people and was able to guide me forward on my journey.

I think sometimes we as a society seem to forget that being successful or “doing well in life” is not based only on academic

skills and monetary or hierarchical success. In addition to the basic “book-knowledge”, young people need to learn to improve their communication skills, build up their resilience, find their sources of motivation, develop their organizational skills, find their confidence, and create systems and structures for self-management. Many of these skills, I fear, have not yet found their way into the official curriculums of our schools, and that is what I hope we can offer to our young mentees when they enter the program.

What advice was the one you got from your mentor that you can now pass on to your mentees?

R.F.M.— I have been blessed with multiple mentors—official and unofficial ones—along my journey and hence there has been a lot of good advice too, but as a lover of poems, sayings, quotes, and other little condensed droplets of wisdom, I am going to have to go with a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt, which my ex-boss, mentor, and a friend Maria Anselmi put on her office door once: “Future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

I think it encapsulates nicely some of the key values I believe will bring you far in this life: resilience, hopefulness, positivity, and imagination. If you keep on course with them while staying true to yourself, you will always find success at the end of your path, wherever it may lead you!



Q&A

WITH Aljoša Krdžić

Aljoša Krdžić
President of Young Leaders
AmChampions, Partner,
Law firm Rojs, Peljhan,
Prelesnik & partners



WE CAN LEAVE THE BIGGEST MARK BY BEING ACTIVE

*Not just by
generating ideas,
but also by acting
upon them.*

One year of leading the AmChampions is behind you and another year of your term awaits. What have you already done during this time and what else can we expect from you?

A.K.— As in all areas of life, the work of AmChampions was marked and often determined by the COVID-19 measures in the past year. Nevertheless, we tried to offer as much diverse content as possible and get as close as we could to the established practices of our club in this new normality. Despite our efforts and the commitment of the AmChampions Executive Committee members, quite a few ideas remained unrealized. Above all, we would like to be able to offer more “live” meetings to our members, since we all believe such meetings are the added value of the AmCham Young

Leaders Club membership. Among the positive steps we have taken in the past year, I would like to point out the AmCham Equals project which we will continue to develop in the future. But that is not all we are planning to do in the second year of the mandate. In the coming year, we plan to make a more active contribution to the discourse about the importance of good corporate governance practices and the role of meritocracy in all areas of society, with an emphasis on the economy. These are the two aspects that we will focus on the most in the future. When it comes to social and educational events, we will definitely organize a professional excursion abroad (which was planned to take place this November but was canceled due to the epidemiological situation). We also hope to be able to revive the #ylcfun events and run them more often. In any case, we all hope the coming year will be full of var-

ious events and activities which is why we invite all members to actively participate in the organization and management of events.

How can you as an individual and AmChampions as a group of young people, aspiring leaders, leave a mark on our society and help it?

A.K.— We can leave the biggest mark by being active. Not just by generating ideas, but also by acting upon them. It often happens that we all (including me, mind you) have a lot of ideas about what could be improved, but at the same time spend more time talking about it rather than taking action. And that does not just apply only to AmChampions, but to YLC members in general and to the entire society. We need to acknowledge that YLC brings together individuals from different professional fields, with experience from abroad, at different stages of life, and so on. The intellectual potential of YLC is therefore immense. This was reflected in the work, ideas, and proposals for measures that were formed within the Snowball project. The task of AmChampions is to activate this knowledge, experience, and potential and consequently contribute to a brighter future for all generations.

What are the topics that will, in your opinion, mark the next five years and why?

A.K.— If you asked me that 5 years ago, I would definitely be wrong. In today's world of the ever-faster pace of life, globalized economy, and tectonic geopolitical changes, 5 years sounds like an eternity. If I had to guess, I would say that discussions about the importance of mental health and matters related to the social position of individuals will be the most dominant among social topics. Also, in my opinion, the global economy will pay much attention to the issue of independence of European supply chains from China and the United States in addition to standard discussions on digitalization and green transition.

You have also contributed to the Snowball project within which, in re-



▲ AmCham Young Leaders Club

cent years, you have been preparing a prototype of a country for talents that could be Slovenia. Can you briefly describe to us what would be the deciding factor for the talents to come live and work in Slovenia?

A.K.— These discussions usually start with “lower taxes”. Even though I believe that a development cap would positively contribute to retaining our own and attracting foreign talents, I do not agree that the issue of taxes is crucial, especially not among the younger generations. I estimate that a significantly greater and long-term sustainable effect would be achieved by establishing a business environment in Slovenia that would be based on meritocracy. We need to be aware of the fact that the threshold value of money is counterbalanced by an individual's income. This is why other motives for working and creating in a certain environment come to the fore. Therefore, my opinion is that, in addition to financial aspects, there are some others that are equally or even more important, such as, for example, a functioning rule of law, a safe environment, mechanisms for recognizing the value and involvement of an individual in the company's operations and society as a whole, clear rules of promotion based on one's own past achievements and invested efforts, etc.

You are also quite an active citizen—how do you assess the current state of our society and what do you believe should be done in order to overcome the divisions and disputes we are witnessing?

A.K.— The current state of our society is bad. But this is not the fault of the epidemic alone. The erosion of values we have witnessed in recent decades has made an important contribution to the state of our society. The epidemic has only exposed these challenges. In the past, society has focused too much on individualism, not cultivating enough awareness of the importance of life in society. This can also be seen in, for example, the electoral turnouts that decrease from election to election. Most people no longer want to be involved in the management of public affairs and focus only on their own existence. Step “zero”, the fundamental predisposition to overcome our differences and disputes is for all of us to take a deep breath together and slow down. Even if only some people do that. I once wrote somewhere that we can only demand higher standards if we act in accordance with those standards ourselves. I live by the words of the former First Lady of the United States: “When they go low, we go high”. The more people act in this way, the easier and faster we will raise the level of mutual communication and the quality of discussions about our common issues. Then, as a first step, we should focus on increasing the involvement of each and every one of us. No matter what we think about society, I firmly believe that individuals approach discussions much more wisely if they revolve around the issues that concern “them” and are not merely the issues of “others”. Greater involvement of people should therefore lead to more substantive discussions about the challenges we face today.





AMCHAM MENTOR

Meet one of the most active mentoring pairs, Lucija & Ursulla

Dark-haired, smiling, with a spark in her eyes, proactive. This is Ursulla. So, you do not know her yet? You will definitely learn more about her soon. Because she is committed, motivated, with her heart in the right place and a pretty clear idea about what she wants. I have no doubt that she will succeed in everything she sets out to do.

Her handshake is strong—because she rides a motorcycle (maybe this is why I am a bit subjective, but I truly appreciate women who like to put on a helmet in their free time). Our ride has been more of a journey... Including everything we are both familiar with from our motorcycle adventures. Sometimes it was windy, there was some rain (figuratively speaking), the horizons were opening, the sun was shining. The goal was not so important to us because we were enjoying the ride. At the first meeting, we have already established a good relationship, which was in fact so good that we actively met as many as 17 times. There was plenty of laughter, good energy, mutual respect, trust, learning. This was an experience that has taught me a lot—not just new perspectives on things, but also served as a confirmation that change begins at the end of the comfort zone.

Thank you, dear Ursulla, thank you, dear AmCham—you are building bridges that we successfully cross from both sides.

– LUCIJA SAJEVEC, DIRECTOR, AMZS

Next year you will be put in mentoring pairs” is what we were told at one of the last meetings of the 10th generation of AmCham Young Professionals. I did not know what to expect and I had no idea what kind of influence mentoring could have on an individual. Especially if you embark on this adventure with an open mind and have a mentor like Lucija. A wonderful, inspiring person who selflessly passes on all her knowledge and experience and chooses paths that, in some parts, were completely new to me. For us, it was not just a mentor/mentee relationship, but we have established a friendship and alliance, which I believe we will nurture and build in the future as well—Lucija, I will be there for trials training next season!

I was always looking forward to our meetings, which were not few, not only because of chocolate candy, which Lucija never runs out of, or because we sped down the karting track. Her mentorship, energy, and words of encouragement have inspired me to reach several milestones in a bit more than a year, both in my personal and business life. I believe that since the beginning of the AmCham Mentor program, there have been many similarly successful stories (and more are to come), empowering young people for their chosen journeys while at the same time weaving lasting bonds.

I sincerely thank you for that, AmCham, and thank you, Lucija, for all the dedication!

– URSULLA OJSTERŠEK,
PRODUCT MANAGER FOR NEW BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES, A1

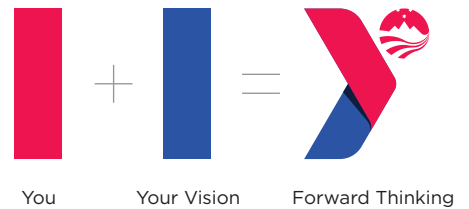




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NEW VISUAL IDENTITY FOR AMCHAM
YOUNG PLATFORM IDENTIFIES THE MOST
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AmCham Young is a way of thinking. Forward Thinking. Forward not only inspired the symbol and slogan but also their meaning.

By introducing a new, dynamic “AmCham Young” platform architecture into an existing endorsed brand structure, we merge all programs for young professionals under the single roof by giving them strong presence and more visibility. The refreshed brand identity is now simpler and more flexible. It is based on the brand idea of revealing the other side. On one side of the ribbon is you(ng), and on the other side, your vision or goal you want to achieve. The people you want to catch up with. The horizons you need to discover.

The modular structure plays with different numbers and colors of “Y” elements by creating new and surprising individual forms. A bright and expressive color palette adds optimism, energy, vibrancy, and diversity to the AmCham Young platform.

“LONI DBS is not just another branding studio, but a highly knowledgeable and committed long-term business partner. The outcomes of our partnership will help to drive a change in our brand perception.”

– AJŠA VODNIK, CEO, AMCHAM SLOVENIA

Q&A

WITH **Matej Potokar**

Each year, young people impress us even more with their creativity and openness

Matej Potokar,
President of the AmCham
Young Board, CEO, Emma



This year, we have already successfully welcomed the 12th generation of AmCham Young Professionals. You have been there from the very beginning. What is the main contribution of the AmCham Young Platform to the business community?

M.P.— Looking at the young business leaders of the future who take part in the Young platform, I am particularly impressed by how they bring to life the essence of this word—Young. They are unburdened, full of fresh young energy and unique creative ideas, driven by the “yes we can” mentality. This is a platform that enables the older members, in particular, to learn a lot from the younger generations.

Over the years, in addition to AmCham Young Professionals, the AmCham Young Platform was joined by other programs and projects, from the Summer Economics Institute to the AmCham Mentor program, the AmCham Young Leaders Club, the

Snowball, and the First Mentor program. How did you experience this development over the years?

M.P.— The development has grown along with us and we have grown along with this story. Our goal with the development of new programs has always been how to include young people as much as possible and provide them with as many opportunities for personal and business growth as possible. Therefore, we have always been upgrading the programs over the years and including fresh ideas. We later changed or polished many of the ideas, but above all, with the development of the platform, we have all grown together and I am convinced that this is just the beginning of a story that will only become even more successful in the future.

Have young talents changed at all from the first generation to the present day and if so, how?

M.P.— Each year, they impress us even more with their creativity and openness, they are even more inspiring, and less burdened by the past. These are

the generations that look only ahead, for a better tomorrow.

What are the values that guide young business leaders on their business paths today?

M.P.— Above all, values that are very noble are at the forefront, such as sustainable development, trust in people’s potential, and responsibility for the environment and the generations to come.

Because the world stands on young people, what do young people need today to be empowered and have enough knowledge and courage to change the world for the better?

M.P.— With all the talent and enthusiasm, young people today only need the opportunity to prove themselves, the support to feel heard, and a bit of guidance: not to limit them, but just enough not to get lost on their way to reaching the goals. I believe that sharing our wisdom with them—this intergenerational connection—can be the basis for the most beautiful and powerful stories.

✕

Members of AmCham Young Board



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CEO, Emma, President of the AmCham Young Board



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Sector for Development and Smart Cities, City Municipality of Kranj, AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2011



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Ekipa2 d.o.o. (Outfit7), VP of Legal Affairs, AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2012



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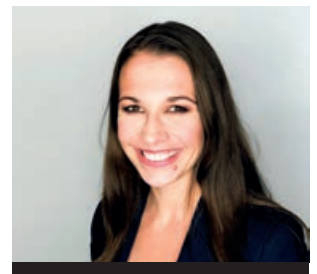
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DEANA JEZERŠEK
Managing Director, LanguageSitter d.o.o., AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2017



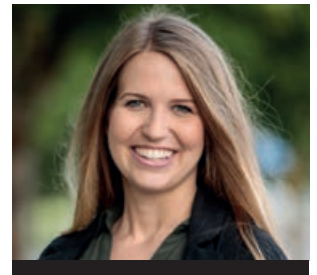
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COO, Lenis farmacevtika d.o.o., AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2018



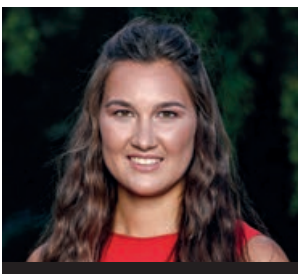
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Member of the Supervisory Board, Triglav Osiguranje d.d., Sarajevo, AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2019



URŠKA KAJTNER
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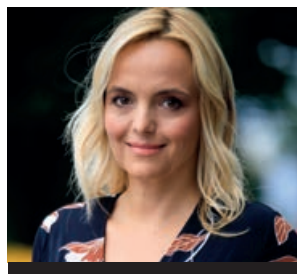
NINA PEJIČ, Researcher, Centre of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Co-Founder, Gender Equality Research Institute, AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2020



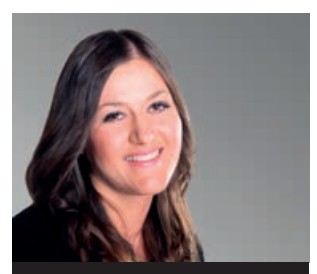
NINA KLEMENČIČ
Executive Admin & Project Manager, Celtra, AmCham Top Potential of the Year 2021



BOGO SEME
Intuitive Coach of the AmCham Young Platform



AJŠA VODNIK
CEO, AmCham Slovenia



MAJA KOŠIR
Founder, Organizacija dogodkov, Maja Košir s.p.

AmCham Slovenia



| Membership Benefits 2021 | Patron* | Corporate | Entrepreneur | Non-Profit |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Networking, Knowledge Exchange and Best Practices | | | | |
| Events | | | | |
| 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 Fokus | ✓ 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 of events in case of limited seating | ✓ | | | |
| Exchange of Best Practices | | | | |
| Best of the Best | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community | | | | |
| AmCham Business Leaders Club meetings | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| AmCham Business Leaders Book Club meetings | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| AmCham Business Leader of the Year events | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Advocacy | | | | |
| AmCham Committees | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Partnership for Change | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| OSAC Ljubljana | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Visibility | | | | |
| AmCham Slovenia website | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AmCham Slovenia newsletters | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AmCham Dialogue - AmCham Slovenia yearbook | ✓ special emphasis | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AmCham Slovenia social media | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 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) | ✓ | | | |
| Young Programs | | | | |
| AmCham Young Professionals™ (Enrollment Limitation of 150) | ✓ 2 candidates (Priority Enrollment) | ✓ 2 candidates | ✓ 1 candidate | ✓ 1 candidate |
| AmCham Young Leaders Club | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| YOung platform programs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| International Cooperation | | | | |
| 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 46 AmChams in 44 countries throughout Europe and Western Asia | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Access to open events of 46 AmChams in 44 countries | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Individual meetings with executive directors of AmChams in 44 countries throughout Europe and Western Asia | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| One-on-one meeting with executive directors of AmCham organisations in 44 countries in Europe and Western Asia | ✓ | | | |
| Additional Patron Benefit | | | | |
| 15% off on partnerships (on all AmCham programs, AmCham Business Breakfast, and AmCham Fokus) | ✓ | | | |
| Membership Fee | | | | |
| 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 =
A Business Community
of Optimism & Opportunities*

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 8 working committees operating in AmCham Slovenija's advocacy framework, and these include over 320 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 part of the AmChams in Europe network and currently hold the seat of the organization.

23
YEARS

400+
MEMBERS

130+
EVENTS
ANNUALLY

50+
PATRON
MEMBERS

4.7k
PEOPLE
IN ONE
BUSINESS
COMMUNITY

2k+
MEMBERS
OF OUR
YOUNG
PLATFORM

Networking & Events



AmCham Business Breakfast
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 Collaboration, presentation of best business practices.

AMCHAM FOKUS

AmCham Focus
We create value through knowledge.



AmCham Exchange
Exchange of practices between corporations and SMEs. Business transformation, people and culture, business models, digitalization, and sustainability.



Coffee to Connect
Virtual conversations with interesting guests from various fields and parts of society.

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.

Health and Wellbeing Committee

For a sustainable, accessible, and fair healthcare system.

Co-chairs: Urša Lakner, Pfizer, & Janko Bugar, Cosylab

Finance Committee

For a predictable and more competitive fiscal-financial environment.

Co-chairs: Žiga Vižintin, Pokojninska družba A, & Luka Gabrovšek, Mastercard

Intellectual Property Committee

Awareness of the importance of intellectual property rights.

Co-chairs: Eva Gostiša, Jadek & Pensa Law Office & Jaka Repanšek, RePublis

Future of Work and Education Committee

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

Co-chairs: Nevenka Oštarjaš, IBM & Sanja Savič, PwC

Investment Committee

Slovenia should become the first choice of investors coming to Europe.

Co-chairs: Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting & Aljoša Krdžič, Rojs, Peljhan, Prelesnik & partners

Corporate Ethics and Transparency Committee

Transparency, compliance and values at the heart of every company and institution.

Co-chairs: Aleš Lunder, CMS Reich-Rohrwig Hainz Law Office & Marko Srabotnik, Dun & Bradstreet

Ready4DFuture Committee

We need to be "Future Fit".

Co-chairs: Uroš Majcen, S&T Slovenia & Boris Horvat, Abelium

Sustainable Growth Committee

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

Co-chairs: Mojca Markizeti, Iskraemeco & Gregor Skender, Deloitte Belgium



Partnership for Change

Innovative national collaboration platform.



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UČITELJICA SEM!

Učitelj sem! Učiteljica sem!

A project highlighting great stories of Slovenian teachers who with their innovation, dedication to students, and sense of responsibility write exceptional stories.

YOUng Platform

The AmCham YOUng Platform represents a way of thinking forward.



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 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.



Prvi mentor (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.



Young Talent Institute

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

International Cooperation



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

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Believe in Slovenia

Believe in Slovenia

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



AmChams in Europe

A network of 46 AmChams in 44 countries across Europe and Western Asia. With Ajša Vodnik as Vice Chair of AmChams in Europe, **Slovenia currently holds the Secretariat of the organization.**

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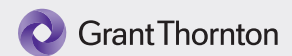
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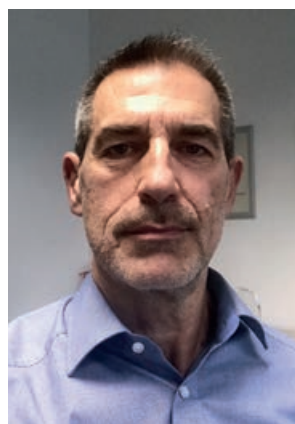
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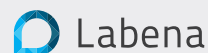
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Datum priprave informacije: november 2020.

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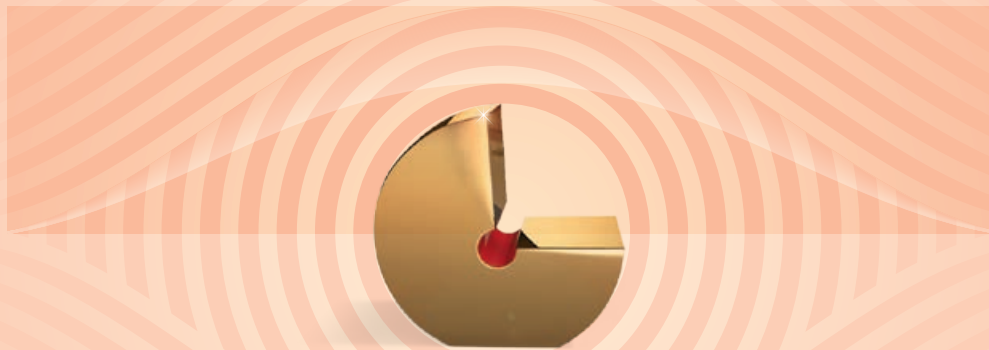


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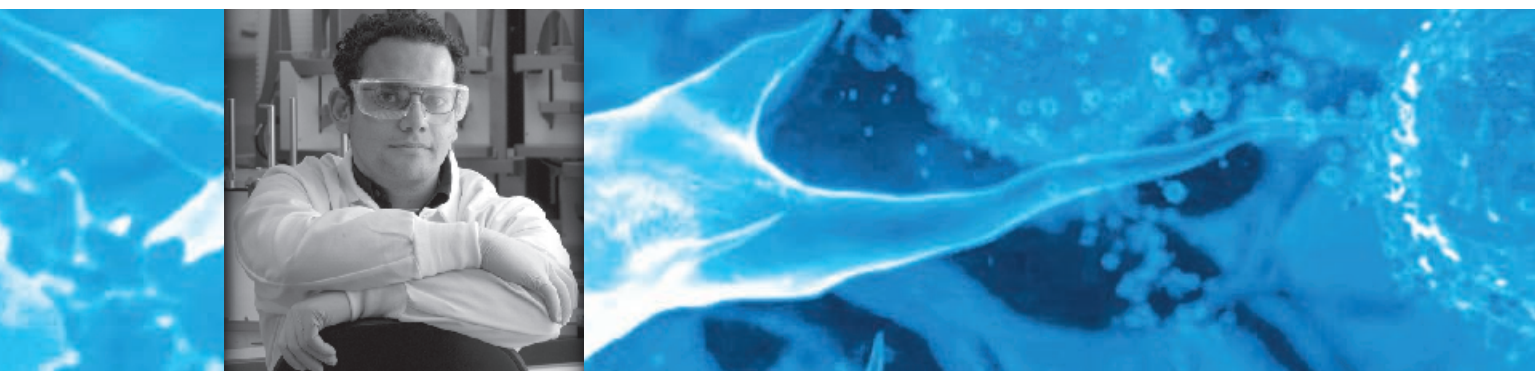
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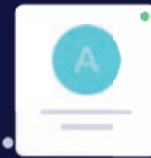
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www.tobacna.si



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| |  | VIVO d.o.o. Jerneja Kamnikar, Director www.vivo.si | | | |
| |  | Vzajemna zdravstvena zavarovalnica, d.v.z. Aleš Mikeln, President of the Managing Board www.vzajemna.si | | | |
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Damir Opsenica, CEO
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Ina Kukovič Borovnik, Founder
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www.educell.si

G



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Gašper Kahne, Director
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www.competo.si



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Nika Močnik, Director
eventnika.si

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www.svetdaril.si

F



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www.giacomellimedia.com

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Primož Rojac, Founder and CEO
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Jadranka Jezeršek Turnes, Director
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L



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Luka Švab, Founder and Attorney



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Irena Dobravc Tatalovič,
Director, Lawyer
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dr. Maja Menard, Managing Partner
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Domen Neffat CEO, Managing Partner
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Tomaž Čad, Managing Partner
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Odvetniška pisarna Jerovšek Malis
Rok Jerovšek, Attorney at law
Peter Malis, Attorney at law
www.jerovsek-malis.si

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Marko Kosmač, MSc, General Manager,
Attorney at Law specialised in
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www.kosmac.si























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Tanja Martelanc, Director
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| |  | POINT OUT d.o.o. Nejc Slovnik, Partner & Co- Founder www.pointout.si | |  | Sistem 2 d.o.o., Družba za poslovno svetovanje Martina Merslavič, Founder & CEO www.sistem2.si |
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uporabna-psihologija.si

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Center of Business Excellence, School of Economics and Business Ljubljana University
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Katja Pleško, Director
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COMBO AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

2021 Economic Recovery: A Struggle for Survival or the Beginning of a Business Renaissance?

📅 DATE:
January 20, 2021

☆ GUESTS:
Zdravko Počivalšek, Minister of Economic Development
and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia
Nevenka Kržan, Partner, KPMG
Blaž Brodnjak, CEO, NLB, President of AmCham Slovenia
Susan K. Falatko, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Slovenia

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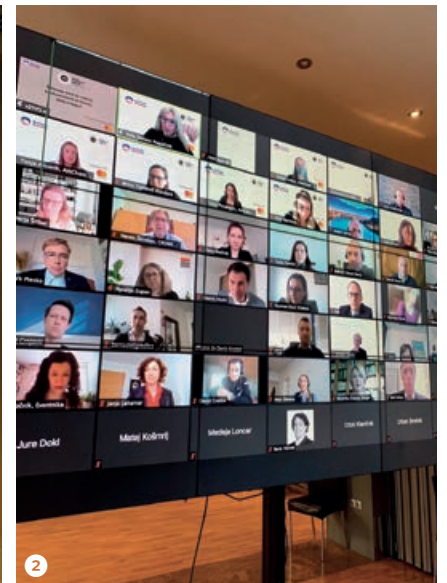
COMBO AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

Slovenia Among the 15 Most Competitive Countries. When and How?

📅 DATE:
March 3, 2021

☆ GUESTS:
mag. Andrej Šircelj, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Slovenia
Barbara Žibret Kralj, Country Managing Partner, Deloitte Slovenia
Robert Ljoljo, President of the Board of Management, Lek d.d., Country President, Novartis

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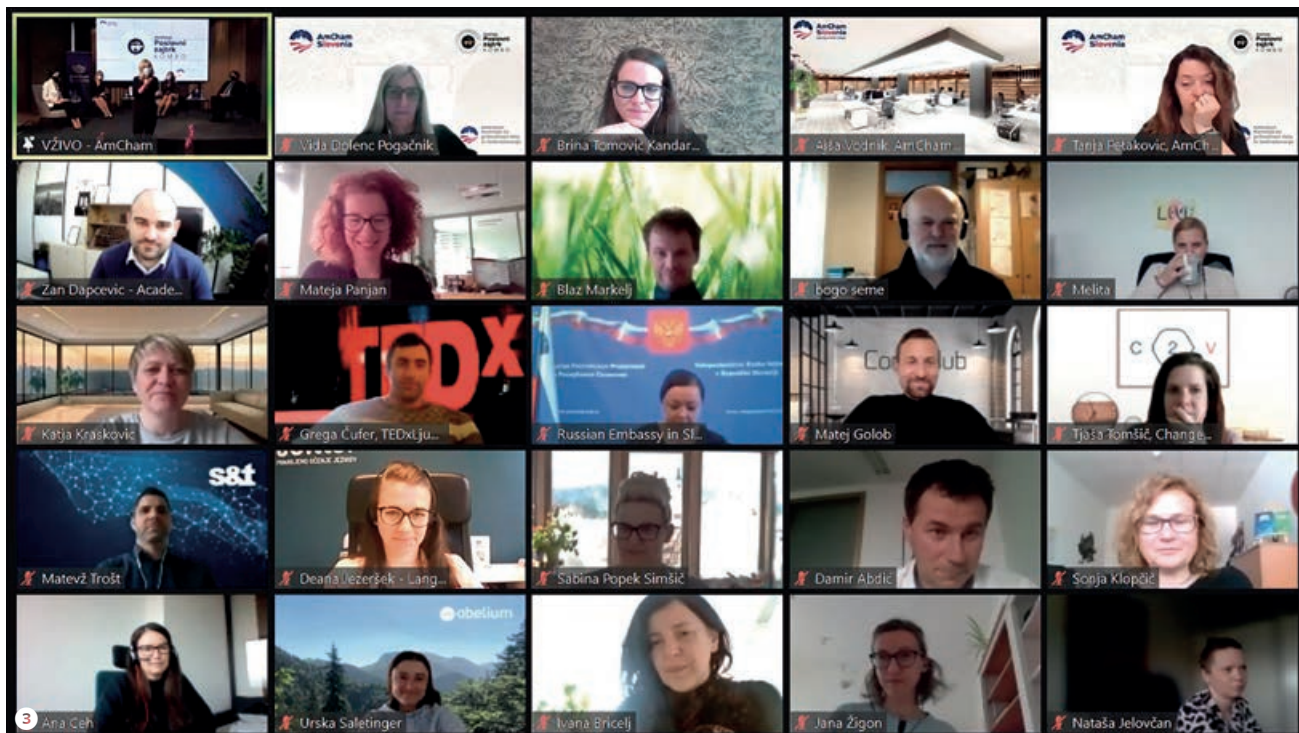
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Skilling Up People for Future Jobs

📅 **DATE:**
April 14, 2021

☆ **GUESTS:**
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Barbara Domicelj, General Manager, Microsoft Slovenija
Boris Horvat, CEO and cofounder, Abelium

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Slovenia 2021: Development, Resilience, and Opportunities in Response to the Crisis

📅 DATE:
May 13, 2021

☆ GUESTS:
Monika Kirbiš Rojs, State Secretary, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy
Matjaž Schroll, Partner, Templeton Private Equity Partners
dr. Polona Domadenik, Full Professor in Economics, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana
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Blaž Hribar, Member of the Management Board, Pokojninska družba A

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1



2



3



4

1 Aljoša Krdžić, Rojs, Peljhan, Prelesnik & partners; dr. Polona Domadenik, Faculty of Economics; Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Monika Kirbiš Rojs, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy; Matjaž Schroll, Templeton Private Equity Partners; Blaž Hribar, Pokojninska družba A 2 Aljoša Krdžić, Rojs, Peljhan, Prelesnik & partners; dr. Polona Domadenik, Faculty of Economics; Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Monika Kirbiš Rojs, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy; Matjaž Schroll, Templeton Private Equity Partners; Blaž Hribar, Pokojninska družba A 3 Combo AmCham Business Breakfast 4 Combo AmCham Business Breakfast

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Slovenian Healthcare – In What Condition Will It Be after the Pandemic?

📅 DATE:
June 9, 2021

★ GUESTS:
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Karel Loerts, General Director, KALCIO Healthcare
dr. Anže Burger, Associate Professor, Senior Research Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana
mag. Radivoj Nardin, Director, Izola General Hospital

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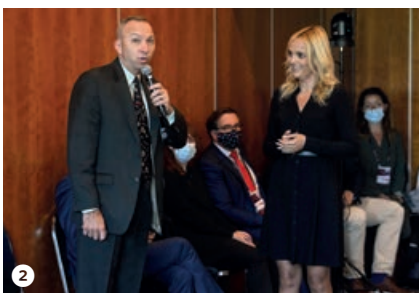
AMCHAM BUSINESS LEADERS BREAKFAST

Small Steps in Space, Giant Leaps on Earth

📅 **DATE:**
September 2, 2021

☆ **GUESTS:**
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Rebecca Bresnik, Assistant Chief Counsel for International Matters, NASA, Johnson Space Center
Gordon Campbell, Director, Science, Applications and Future Technologies Department, Directorate of EO Programmes, European Space Agency
 dr. **Tomaž Rotovnik**, CEO, SkyLabs
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🗣️ **MODERATORS:**
Ajša Vodnik, MSc, CEO, AmCham Slovenia, and Vice-Chair, AmChams in Europe



1 Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Rebecca Bresnik, NASA; Gordon Campbell, European Space Agency; prof. dr. Andreja Gomboc, University of Nova Gorica; dr. Tomaž Rotovnik, SkyLabs; Dušan Olaj, Duol 2 Randy Bresnik, NASA; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia 3 AmCham Business Leaders Breakfast 4 Zdravko Počivalšek, Minister of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia; Rebecca Bresnik, NASA; Gordon Campbell, European Space Agency; prof. dr. Andreja Gomboc, University of Nova Gorica; dr. Tomaž Rotovnik, SkyLabs; Dušan Olaj, Duol 5 Mirjana Rabič, U.S. Embassy in Slovenia; Milojka Novak, Johnson & Johnson; Petra Juvančič, Zdrženje Manager; Barbara Stegel, Forum znanstvenoraziskovalnih farmacevtskih družb; Tjaša Burnik, MSD 6 AmCham Business Leaders Breakfast



AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST: RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLANET.

Climate Change, Development, and Environmental Protection. The Responsibility Lies Also with Business.

📅 DATE:
September 23, 2021

☆ GUESTS:
Robert Swan, OBE, FRGS, Founder @ 2041 Foundation, UN Goodwill Ambassador for Youth, First person to walk to both North & South Poles
Prof. dr. Nina Gunde-Cimerman, Professor of Microbiology, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana
Blaž Brodnjak, CEO, NLB, President of AmCham Slovenia
Antonio Sirjan, Senior ESG Program Manager, A1 Telekom Austria Group

🗣️ MODERATORS:
Gregor Skender, Sustainability Senior Manager, Deloitte Belgium, Co-chair of the AmCham Sustainable Growth Committee



① Gregor Skender, Deloitte Belgium; prof. dr. Nina Gunde-Cimerman, University of Ljubljana; Blaž Brodnjak, NLB; Robert Swan ② Robert Swan, OBE, FRGS, Founder @ 2041 Foundation, UN Goodwill Ambassador for Youth ③ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Dejan Turk, A1 Slovenija & A1 Srbija ④ AmCham Business Breakfast ⑤ AmCham Business Breakfast ⑥ Mart D. Buht, AmCham Slovenia; Živa Praprotnik, Be-Terna; Katja Čencur, AmCham Slovenia ⑦ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Nada Jeraj Velan, Producer and Entrepreneur; Marko Mlakar, Amrop Adria



AMCHAM BUSINESS BREAKFAST. NETWORKING WITH CONTENT.

Culture of Dialogue

📅 **DATE:**
December 8, 2021

★ **GUEST OF HONOR:**
H.E. Borut Pahor, the President of the Republic of Slovenia

☆ **GUESTS:**
Jure Vajs, PhD., Senior Scientist, Lek
Aleksander Kurtevski, Managing Director, COO, CIO, Bankart
Tomaž Bizjak, Expert fellow (D12 Department of Synthetic Biology and Immunology), National Institute of Chemistry

🗣️ **MODERATORS:**
Ajša Vodnik, MSc., CEO of AmCham Slovenija,
and vice-chair of AmChams in Europe
Tonja Avsenik, AmCham YOUng Platform Leader & Project Leader



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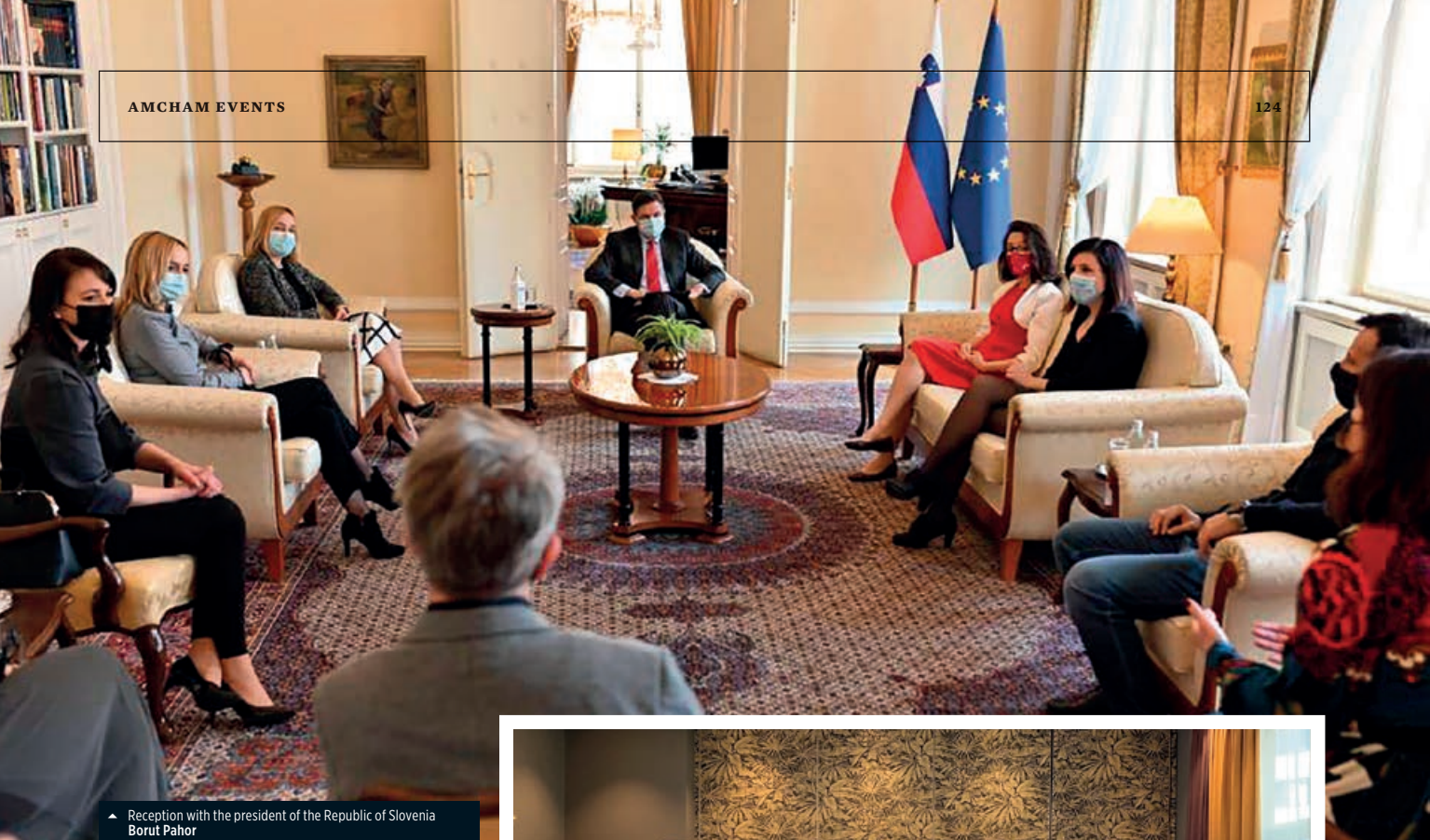


5



6

1 Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenija 2 Tomaž Bizjak, Kemijski inštitut; Aleksander Kurtevski, Bankart; Jure Vajs, PhD., Lek; Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenija 3 Blaž Brodnjak, NLB; Maša Tiselj 4 Jure Vajs, PhD., Lek; Tomaž Bizjak, Kemijski inštitut; Aleksander Kurtevski, Bankart 5 Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenija; Jure Vajs, PhD., Lek; Tomaž Bizjak, Kemijski inštitut; Marjan Beltram, Nomago; Aleksander Kurtevski, Bankart 6 AmCham Team with Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia



▲ Reception with the president of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor



UČITELJ SEM!
UČITELJICA SEM!

Učitelj sem! Učiteljica sem!

The "I'm a teacher!" project highlights outstanding stories of Slovenian teachers who through their innovativeness, devotion to pupils, and responsibility write exceptional stories. The project aims to give a voice to teachers who search for the best in their pupils with incredible dedication, and who can be role models for future generations of educators. With the project, we have joined the Varkey Foundation and their initiative **Global Teacher Prize** and have received the **Google.org Impact Challenge Central and Eastern Europe**.



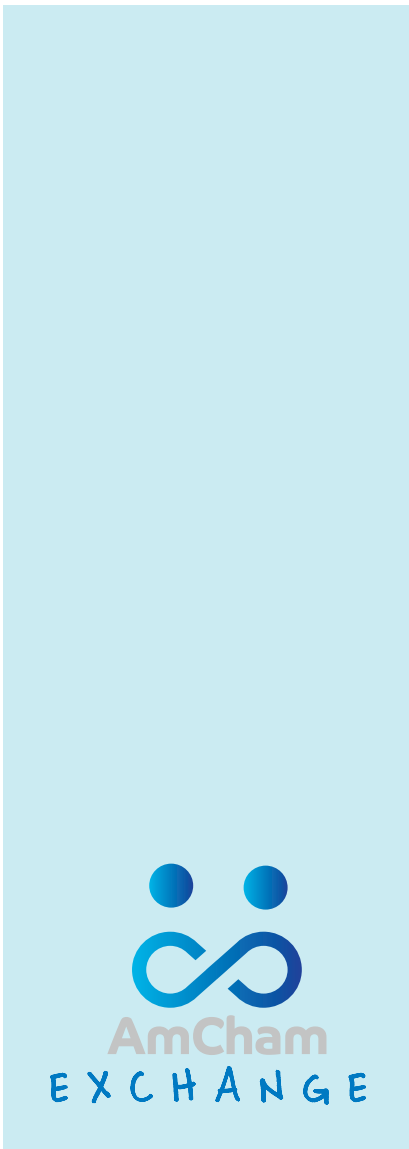
▲ Jože Senekovič, OŠ Bojana Illiča; Brina Tomovič Kandare, AmCham Slovenia; Mateja Pršolja, OŠ Preserje pri Radomljah; Tanja Jankovič, OŠ Danile Kumar; Nina Jelen, OŠ Ivana Škvarčar; Mladen Kopasić, OŠ Polje; Deana Jezeršek, LanguageSitter; Zan Dapčević, Academia; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia



▲ Deana Jezeršek, LanguageSitter; Brina Tomovič Kandare, AmCham Slovenia; Jože Senekovič, OŠ Bojana Illiča; Mladen Kopasić, OŠ Polje; Tanja Jankovič, OŠ Danile Kumar; Nina Jelen, OŠ Ivana Škvarčar; Mateja Pršolja, OŠ Preserje pri Radomljah; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia

Partners:

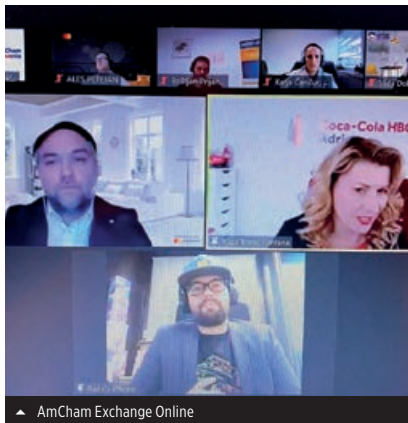




AmCham Exchange

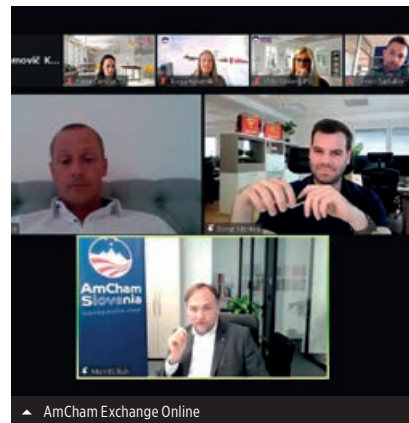
Share. Learn. Connect.

What happens when a small company and a large corporation are seated together on AmCham's sofa? It sparks a lively exchange of sincere stories about business and people. It sparks an exchange of knowledge: experience from large systems and lessons in entrepreneurial growth. It sparks a presentation of outstanding practices and at least two approaches to finding the right solutions. It sparks links between the best ideas of both worlds, entrepreneurial and corporate. It sparks the AmCham Exchange.



FEBRUARY 10, 2021
AmCham Exchange:
How to Build the Best Brand?

GUEST SPEAKERS:
Ruža Tomić Fontana,
 General Manager, Coca-Cola HBC for Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia
Rado Daradan,
 Co-founder and CEO, Hooray Studios



APRIL 4, 2021
AmCham Exchange:
Digital = Simple

GUEST SPEAKERS:
Borut Markelj,
 Co-founder, ehрана.si
Luka Gabrovšek,
 Business Director, Mastercard Slovenia

JUNE 17, 2021
AmCham Exchange:
People Always Come First

GUEST SPEAKERS:
Jernej Česen,
 General Manager and Senior VP of Distribution & BI, Outfit7
Deana Jezeršek,
 Co-founder and General Manager, LanguageSitter



▲ Mart D. Buh, AmCham Slovenia; Jakša Maganič, Coca Cola HBC; Deana Jezeršek, LanguageSitter; Jernej Česen, Outfit7

Partner:





**AMCHAM SLOVENIA –
YOUR PARTNER AND ENTRY POINT
FOR THE U.S. MARKET**



COOPERATION

AmCham Slovenia can be your main partner in entering the U.S. market. We use our knowledge, experience, and well-branched network of partners in the U.S., to help open up opportunities for our members, offer support to investors and foster connections with Americans of Slovenian descent or exceptional Slovenians in the USA from all spheres of science, business, and culture.

PHOTO:
Unsplash

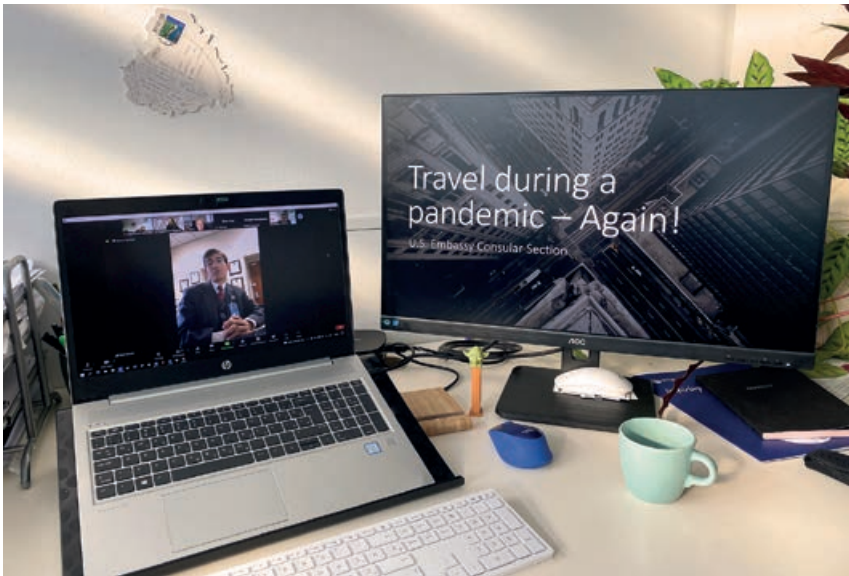


BUSINESS DELEGATIONS TO THE U.S.

Join our next delegation!

AmCham delegations offer an opportunity to learn about the American culture and ways of thinking and doing business, as well as to visit world-renowned corporations – such as Google, Facebook, Tesla, Honeywell, Uber, Westinghouse, IBM, Microsoft, Space X and others - that are setting trends and disrupt their respective industries. Do you have a product or service and would like to test its potential on the U.S. market? Would you like to get a bigger picture of the trends in particular industries?

For all information regarding the U.S. market – your key person is Vida Dolenc Pogačnik vida.dolenc@amcham.si.



USA Meetup

Informal talks, specific answers and examples from first-hand experience – USA Meetup sessions are designed to help better understand corporate culture in the U.S., the legal aspects of business, and possibilities for investment.

In 2021 we met four times:

- USA MeetUp – bussines trips to the U.S. and visas in 2021 (March 16, 2021)
- USA MeetUp – how to sell online to the U.S.? (April 20, 2021)
- USA MeetUp – “Is the American dream a reality for Slovenian companies?” (May 26, 2021)
- USA Meetup – key information on travelling to the U.S. during the pandemic (November 23, 2021)

Enter: USA

Fit for the USA Market is a custom-made training program geared at all start-ups, entrepreneurs and companies that want to prepare properly for a successful entry into the U.S. market. The program consists of hands-on training with experts in various fields and takes place both in virtual workshops and in person. Innovation, flexibility, and client/customer-centricity are crucial, but the most important thing is careful preparation to reduce your risks.



Believe in Slovenia

We are building a map of the stories and exceptional life paths taken by our ambassadors of friendship in the United States, as well as of their trust in Slovenia. We want to celebrate and connect remarkable individuals who are our great friends, thanks to their achievements and positive attitude towards Slovenia.

USA Boot Camp

USA Boot Camp workshops give you a detailed insight into particular industries, their specifics and trends. In addition to basic tips how to understand American consumers, the workshops look at sales channels, distribution, marketing strategies, visas, and any challenges that are specific to your business.

OSAC Ljubljana

OSAC' purpose is to share experience, challenges, and know-how, and most importantly to gain insight into the latest findings and technologies in safety as relevant to various fields – from healthcare and technology to work environments and personal safety.

A Business Solutions

Creating business opportunities for Slovenian enterprises to grow and develop potentials, business, and partnerships in the important U.S. reference market. Consulting services and establishing links with American partners.



SLOVENIA, THE RIGHT SIZED COUNTRY FOR BUSINESS

6th Investment and Development Conference
Ljubljana, September 23–24

SEPTEMBER 23 – 24, 2021

6TH INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE SLOVENIA BUSINESS BRIDGE™

The Slovenia Business Bridge Investment and Development Conference is a high-level biennial conference that brings together over 500 participants – representatives from the business world and the top levels of government, investors, members of the diplomatic corps, and entrepreneurs. This year, the conference discussed investment opportunities in Slovenia as well as constant development in technology and science.

① **Matej Tonin**, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia ② **Mark Boris Andrijanič**, Minister without portfolio, responsible for digital transformation of the Republic of Slovenia ③ **Dragan Solak**, United Group; **Iza Login**, Login Establishment; **Ajša Vodnik**, AmCham Slovenia



Co-organizers:



Golden Premium Trusted partner:

Premium Trusted partners:



Partner of the combo AmCham Business Breakfast:



Partner of Leaders' Dialogue:



Trusted partner:



Supporters:



Media partner:



Supporters of the AmCham Investment Committee:



ketter partners member of karanovic/



ROJS PELJHAN PRELESNIK & PARTNERS





❶ Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Dragan Šolak, United Group; Iza Login, Login Establishment; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia ❷ Matej Zavrl, Goodyear Slovenija; Matej Falatov, NKBM; Joško Mrndže, Google ❸ John Denhof, NKBM ❹ Jaka Repanšek, RePublis; Elvis Janežič, Instrumentation Technologies; Prof. Dr. Boštjan Zalar, Jožef Stefan Institute; Erik Bertman, Conscia Group; Boštjan Koritnik, Minister of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia ❺ Jernej Zupancič, Cleangrad; Borut Čeh, Labena; Prof. Dr. Maja Ravnikar, National Institute of Biology; Robert Ljolo, Lek and Novartis; Dr. Vita Godec, Lenis farmacevтика ❻ Marko Grobelnik, Jožef Stefan Institute; Mark Pleško, Cosylab; Mark Boris Andrižanič, Minister without portfolio, responsible for digital transformation of the Republic of Slovenia ❼ Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Lenart Celar, Google; Aleš Celar, BE-Terna ❸ Tomislav Perovič, Rothschild&co.; Matej Falatov, NKBM; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Matej Zavrl, Goodyear Slovenija ❹ Jernej Vrtovec, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Slovenia ❹ Susan K. Falatko, U.S. Embassy in Slovenia ❹ Slovenia Business Bridge ❹ AmCham Business Breakfast



Nina Klemenčič 😊

Maja Šipek 😊

AMCHAM TOP

ATLANTIC

avantcar

Aviat

BAYER

dun & stradstreet

BTB

GENERALI

GOODYEAR

KPMG

NLB

OMV



Milan Grašič 😊

Dajana Janjatovič 😊

Tjaša Smrdel 😊

POTENCIAL 2021



AmCham
Slovenia



AmCham
Young



AmCham
Young
Professionals™



▲ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Blaž Brodnjak, NLB



▲ Tomaž Lanišek, Mestna občina Kranj; Žiga Vavpotič, Mart D. Buh, AmCham Slovenia; Nina Langerholc Čebokli, Dodo Consulting



▲ Maja Šipek, Odvetniška pisarna CMS REICH-ROHRWIG HAINZ



▲ Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Nina Klemenčič, Celtra



▲ Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Danaja Janjatovič, Odvetniška pisarna Rogl



▲ Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Milan Grašič, Knauf Insulation



▲ Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Tjaša Lenarčič, LanguageSitter



▲ Maša Tiselj, Astrid Kljun



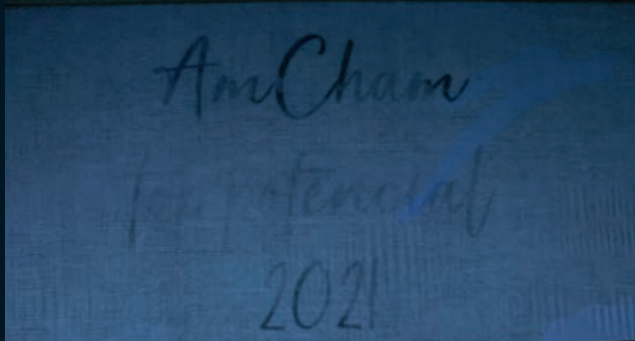
▲ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Dajana Janjatovič, Odvetniška pisarna Rogl; Nina Klemenčič, Celtra; Tjaša Lenarčič, LanguageSitter; Tonja Avsenik, AmCham Slovenia; Maja Šipek, Odvetniška pisarna CMS REICH-ROHRWIG HAINZ; Milan Grašič, Knauf Insulation



▲ Nina Klemenčič, Celtra



▲ Nina Klemenčič, Celtra; Tjaša Lenarčič, LanguageSitter; Maja Šipek, Odvetniška pisarna CMS REICH-ROHRWIG HAINZ; Dajana Janjatovič, Odvetniška pisarna Rogl; Milan Grašič, Knauf Insulation; Dejan Žerdin, Pfizer; Boris Rugel, Agilcon; Nebojša Vučković, Odvetniška družba Rojs, Peljhan, Prelesnik & partnerji o.p.; Blaž Preložnik, Loftware (NiceLabel); Jan Kuštra, PwC Svetovanje



▲ Nina Klemenčič, Celtra



▲ Nina Pejič, Univerza v Ljubljani; Nina Klemenčič, Celtra; Urška Kajtner, Loftware



▲ Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, NP Consulting; Matej Potokar, Emma; Maja Mikek, Celtra



▲ Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia; Nataša Luša, Delo; Tomaž Berločnik, Avantcar



▲ Ani Klemenčič, GBD Svetovanje; Nina Klemenčič, Celtra; Zoran Klemenčič



BEST OF THE BEST 2021



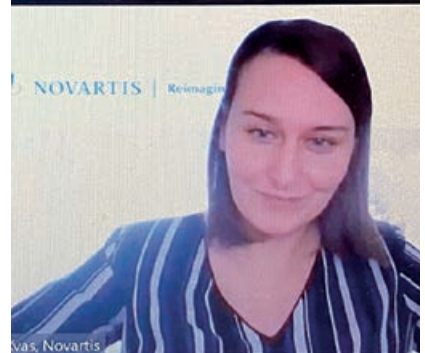
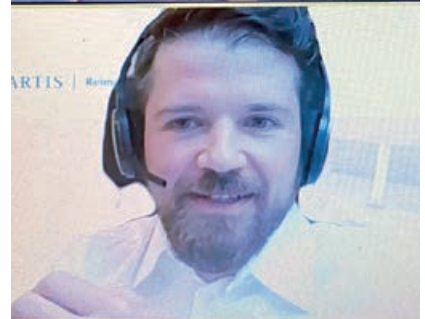
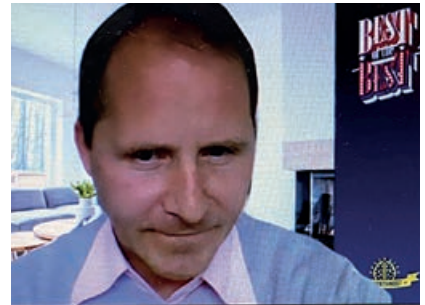
APRIL 6, 2021

Innovation

Lek: Vision, tehnologija mešane resničnosti v praksi

EQUA: EQUA CARE

Steklarna Hrastnik: e.BOTTLE smart solutions



▲ Best of the Best: Innovation



MAY 6, 2021

Motivation

Bankart: Proces razvoja zaposlenih preko vpeljave vloge kariernih vodij

Petrol: Živeti coaching kulturo

PwC v Sloveniji: BE WELL, WORK WELL



▲ Best of the Best: Motivation



▲ Best of the Best: Motivation



▲ Best of the Best: Motivation



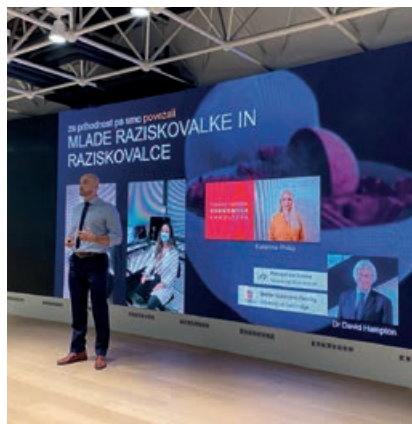
SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

Collaboration

Atlantic Droga Kolinska: Podpiramo lokalno – Posoška postrv

Kemijski inštitut: CCEdit (Proof-of-Concept)

Inženirke in inženirji bomo!: Aplikacija KAMBI



▲ Best of the Best: Collaboration



▲ Best of the Best: Collaboration



▲ Best of the Best: Collaboration

DECEMBER 8, 2021

Finale

Lek: Vision, tehnologija mešane resni nosti v praksi

Bankart: Proces razvoja zaposlenih preko vpeljave vloge kariernih vodij

Kemijski inštitut: CCEdit (Proof-of-Concept)



▲ Best of the Best 2021 finale



▲ Best of the Best 2021 finale



▲ Best of the Best 2021 finale



▲ Winner of the Best of the Best 2021

BEST of the BEST

2021

Iskrene čestitke Kemijskemu inštitutu,



NAJBOLJŠEMU MED NAJBOLJŠIMI!

Hvala, da bogatite našo poslovno skupnost!

GENERALNA POKROVITELJA BEST OF THE BEST



NAJBOLJŠI PARTNER POTOVANJ



PARTNER



AmCham Virtual Events in 2021

Coffee to Connect

AmCham Business Breakfast

AmCham Focus

USA MeetUp



Powered by MS Teams, Zoom, YouTube, Fabulatorij, Vživo and AmCham Team

Culture of Dialogue

AmCham Exchange

Best of the Best

AmCham Young

AmChams in Europe

AmCham Business Leaders Club

AMCHAM YOUNG PROFESSIONALS 12TH GENERATION

AmCham Young Professionals™ is a program focused on personal and career development for the next generation business leaders that are eager to make the most of their talents. It is an environment with high potential and inspiration for AmCham Slovenia.



▲ Communication and Public Speaking Training With Martina Merslavič



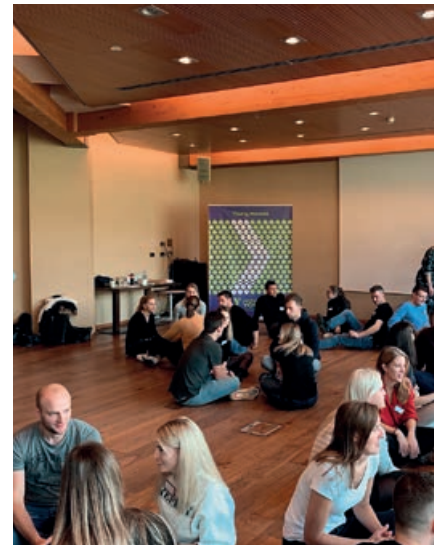
▲ Connectivity 24/7 with Urška Kajtner, Laura Smrekar and Rok Gumzej



▲ AmCham Young Weekend



▲ A Space Odyssey on Earth with Rebecca Bresnik and Randy Bresnik



▲ AmCham Young Weekend

AUGUST 26, 2021

A1 AMCHAM OPEN



▲ Dražen Malbašić, AmCham Croatia; Blaž Jakić, Triglav Osiguranje; Simon Bračun, Odvetniška družba KBP, o.p.; Raul Intriago Lombeida, Novartis



▲ Peter Škerlj, ABC Šport; Marko Rikato, EY; Klara Klaj, NielsenIQ d.o.o.; Damir Kecko, PwC in Slovenia



▲ Aljaž Pogačar, KPMG; Raul Intriago Lombeida, Novartis; Manca Kunavar, MK Svetovanje; Matej Pavlič, MSIN



▲ Blaž Ferenc, A1; Rok Pogačnik, High School of Design and Photography; Manca Kunavar, MK Svetovanje; Ajša Vodnik, AmCham Slovenia





▲ #YLCfun in Zagreb

AMCHAM YOUNG LEADERS CLUB



▲ #YLCfun around Ljubljana

A network of exceptional business leaders of the younger generation. They have the desire and aim to work together to create a better future, a stronger economy and a high-quality of life. They lead by example and set new standards of business leadership. They create new business opportunities through networking. They are committed to creating a stimulating environment that generates confidence. They give back to the community. They strive to become a good example in their own area of expertise and for greater effect, they can connect with like-minded individuals and organizations.



▲ AmCham Young Leaders Club: Entrepreneurship: What happens before a story becomes a success?



▲ AmCham Young Leaders Club: Thinking and acting inclusively



▲ AmCham Young Leaders Club: Culture of dialogue with the representatives of the political parties



▲ First mentor - Kick-off of the 4th season



▲ #YLCfun at Kogo restaurant



▲ AmCham Young Leaders Club dinner

46

AMCHAMS

44

COUNTRIES

17k

AMERICAN
& EUROPEAN
COMPANIES

20

MILLION
WORKERS

1.1

TRILLION US
DOLLARS IN
INVESTMENTS
ON BOTH
SIDES OF
ATLANTIC

AmChams in Europe

AmChams in Europe is the umbrella organization of 46 AmChams in 44 countries across Europe and Western Asia. In Europe, we represent more than 17,000 American and European companies, which employ 20 million workers and together account for more than 1.1 trillion US dollars in investments on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the voice of American and European companies, AmChams in Europe works to raise awareness about the importance of transatlantic collaboration.

WE ARE IMMENSELY PROUD THAT AJŠA VODNIK, CEO OF AMCHAM SLOVENIA, WAS RE-ELECTED AS THE ORGANIZATION'S VICE CHAIR IN DECEMBER 2020. THIS MEANS THAT AMCHAM SLOVENIA SERVES A SECOND TERM AS THE SEAT OF AMCHAMS IN EUROPE.



Albania

Neritan Mullaj
Executive Director



Bulgaria

Petar Ivanov
Executive Director



Croatia

Andrea Doko Jelušić
Executive Director



Cyprus

Lia Liris
Executive Secretary



Georgia

George Welton
Executive Director



Germany

Daniel Andrić
General Manager



Gibraltar

James Lasry
President



Kosovo

Arian Zeka
Executive Director



Latvia

Līga Smildziņa-Bertulsone
Executive Director



Lithuania

Zivile Sabaliauskaite
Executive Director



Norway

Jason Turflinger
Managing Director



Poland

Dominika Fax-Matulewicz
Executive Director



Portugal

António Martins
da Costa
President



Spain

Aida Cosamićana
Executive Director



Sweden





























































Peter R. Dahlen
Managing Director



Switzerland

Martin Naville
CEO



| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
|  <p>Armenia</p>  <p>Karine Sarkissian Executive Director</p> |  <p>Austria</p>  <p>Susanne Relsinger-Anders Executive Director</p> |  <p>Azerbaijan</p>  <p>Gulnara Aslanbayli Executive Director</p> |  <p>Belgium</p>  <p>Marcel Claes Chief Executive</p> |  <p>Bosnia and Herzegovina</p>  <p>Nedim Hanzic Secretary General</p> |
|  <p>Denmark</p>  <p>Stephen Brugger Executive Director</p> |  <p>Estonia</p>  <p>Daria Sivoval CEO</p> |  <p>European Union</p>  <p>Susan Danger CEO</p> |  <p>Finland</p>  <p>Alexandra Pasternak-Jackson CEO</p> |  <p>France</p>  <p>Egle de Richemont Managing Director</p> |
|  <p>Greece</p>  <p>Elias J. Spirtounias Executive Director</p> |  <p>Hungary</p>  <p>Irisz Lippal-Nagy CEO</p> |  <p>Ireland</p>  <p>Mark Redmond Chief Executive</p> |  <p>Israel</p>  <p>Oded Rose CEO</p> |  <p>Italy</p>  <p>Simone Cralla Managing Director</p> |
|  <p>Luxembourg</p>  <p>Paul-Michael Schonenberg Chairman and CEO</p> |  <p>North Macedonia</p>  <p>Jelena Arsovska Executive Director</p> |  <p>Malta</p>  <p>Tanya Sciberras President</p> |  <p>Moldova</p>  <p>Mila Malairau Executive Director</p> |  <p>Montenegro</p>  <p>Marko Miročević Executive Director</p> |
|  <p>Romania</p>  <p>Letitia Pupazeanu Executive Director</p> |  <p>Russia</p>  <p>Alexis Rodzianko President</p> |  <p>Serbia</p>  <p>Vera Nikalić Dimić Executive Director</p> |  <p>Slovak Republic</p>  <p>Ronald Blasko Executive Director</p> |  <p>Slovenia</p>  <p>Ajša Vodnik CEO</p> |
|  <p>The Netherlands</p>  <p>Marc ter Haar Executive Director</p> |  <p>Turkey</p>  <p>Aslı Özelli Executive Director</p> |  <p>Turkey (TABA)</p>  <p>Selin Sevke Foreign Relations Director</p> |  <p>Ukraine</p>  <p>Andy Hunder President</p> |  <p>United Kingdom</p>  <p>Emanuel Adam Executive Director</p> |

What is your value in 2022?

Life is
passion.
Insure it.



Tea Bajc

Tea Bajc,
Mladi up



Everything will be alright.

triglav

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