

India- Slovakia Relations

India – Slovakia relations are friendly and free from any bilateral issues. The two countries have, generally, been supportive of each other's candidatures in international organizations. Notable instances in recent years include Slovakia's support to the Indian candidature for the Council of International Telecommunications Union (ITU) for the term 2019-20, Wassennar, Australia Group as its 42nd Member, Dr. Neeru Chadha's membership of the International Tribunal for the Law of Sea (ITLOS) for the term 2017-26, Council of International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the term 2018-19, India's re-election to the Executive Board of the UNESCO for the term 2017-21, Justice Shri Dalveer Bhandari's election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the term 2018-27 with a reciprocal support arrangement to support Slovakia's Judge Peter Tomka for the term 2021-30, Reciprocal arrangement (*yet to be confirmed*) for India's candidature to UNSC non-permanent seat for the term 2021-22 and Slovakia's candidature to UNSC non-permanent seat for the term 2028-29 (*subject to be updated in due course of time since Slovakia's turn will be ten years later*).

Political Relations

Important Bilateral treaties and Agreements:-

- MOU on Defence Cooperation (1995)
- Air Services Agreement (1996)
- Protocol for Agreement on Cooperation in Science & Technology (1996)
- Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between Indian National Science Academy & Slovak Academy of Sciences (2001)
- Protocol for Economic Cooperation Agreement (2004)
- Programme of Cooperation in the field of Culture (2004)
- Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the Republic of India and the Slovak Republic (2006)
- Bilateral Investment Promotion Agreement (2006)
- MoU on Technical Cooperation in Railway sector, between Ministry of Railways of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic (effective from 12th August, 2015)
- MOU on the implementation of EU-India Horizontal Air Service Agreement between India and Slovakia on the four provisions relating to liberalization of cargo service effective from 5th April, 2017.
- Action Plan for Implementation of MoU between Office of Standards, Meteorology and Testing, Slovakia and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) (2017).

Visits from India to Slovakia during 2013-2018:-

Dr. D. Purandeswari, MoS for Commerce chaired the Indian side on the seventh Joint Economic Committee (JEC) meeting from 11-13 July, 2013; Dr. Mukul Sangama, the then Chief Minister of Meghalaya visited Slovakia from 02-05 November, 2013; Retd. Gen (Dr.) V.K. Singh, MoS for External Affairs participated in GLOBSEC Security Forum 2016 followed by bilateral discussions with Slovak authorities and V-4 Foreign Ministers (on the sidelines of the Forum) from 15-17 April, 2018; MoS for External Affairs Shri M.J. Akbar, participated in the political dialogue and attended the GLOBSEC Forum 2018 from 15-18 May, 2018. He held high-level meetings with Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs & 72nd President of the UNGA, Mr. Lukas Parizek, State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Mr. Richard Rasi, Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Informatisation and Mr. Peter Gajdos, Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic.

Visits from Slovakia to India during 2013-2018:-

Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Dy. PM and Foreign and European Affairs Minister visited Delhi and Mumbai from 17-19 June, 2013 and again to attend the ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting from 12-12 November, 2013; Mr. Vazil Hudak, Minister of Economy held meeting with Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Railways from 07-10 October, 2015; Mr. Miroslav Lajcak,

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs attended 6th Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process at Amritsar from 2 to 5 December, 2016, as a Representative of Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Foreign and European Affairs Minister visited India as President-elect of the 72nd Session of UNGA and called on Prime Minister Modi and Smt. Sushama Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs on 28 August, 2017; State Secretary Mr. Lukas Parizek visited India from 26-28 September, 2017 and held meetings with MoS for External Affairs Retd. Gen (Dr.) V. K. Singh and MoS for Defence, Subhash Bhamre.

Commercial Relations

Bilateral trade Statistics (in millions):

The total Indo-Slovak bilateral trade represents around 0.22 per cent of Slovakia's global trade

(Courtesy:- Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic)

Slovakia joined the Euro Zone w.e.f. Jan 01, 2009

	2018 (January-September)	2017	2016	2015	2014
India's Export	€207.5	€285.8	€264.6	€268.4	€232.9
India's Import	€52.1	€50.0	€50.3	€53.7	€30.7
Total Trade	€259.6	€335.8	€314.9	€322.1	€263.6
Trade Balance	€155.4	€235.8	€214.3	€214.7	€202.2

India – Slovakia Trade Basket:- According to Slovak Statistical Office data, major items of India's export to Slovakia during 2017-2018 include footwear, part of footwear, t-shirts, tires, ladies garments, babies garments, parts of motor vehicles. Major items of import from Slovakia include antibiotics, electric motors, transmission shafts, pumps, magnesite, bearings, machinery for working rubber or plastics and seats. In 2015, India's imports from Slovakia recorded a year-on-year increase of 75% to €53.7 million, mainly due to India's recognition of validity of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement the same year. In 2016-2017, annual imports were at €50 million. In January – September 2018, there was a 40% growth of imports y-o-y and reached €52.1 million. India's exports to Slovakia grew between 2014 – 2017 by 22.7% from €232.9 to €285.8 million. In January – September 2018, exports decreased by 5%. Trade balance is in favour of India and reached €235.8 million in 2017, representing 70% of total bilateral trade.

Investment:- Slovakia has attracted foreign investment from a large number of foreign companies, especially from the USA (US Steel), Germany (Volkswagen) France (Peugeot, Citroen), Republic of Korea (Kia Motors and Samsung Electronics) and Japan. More than 80 per cent of its industry has already been privatized. In the past, Indian companies have explored investment opportunities in auto accessories, tyre manufacturing, and the spa and wellness sectors in Slovakia. India's Tata Group owned Jaguar Land Rover state-of-art automobile manufacturing plant at Nitra started its production on 25th October, 2018. Although Slovakia has the advantage of a good physical infrastructure, key geographical location, and a skilled labour force and is a Euro zone member, its neighbours, Hungary, and Poland, provide larger domestic markets and lower costs and have proven to be somewhat more attractive to Indian investors. The Apollo Tires which had expressed interest for developing a production facility in Slovakia moved to Hungary. The lower corporate tax and cheaper work force appeared to be the reasons for the move. However, there are opportunities for India in select sectors, especially in pharmaceuticals and in auto accessories. In this regard, Slovakia follows the EU regulations. In 2017 almost 90 % of FDI in Slovakia was from EU countries.

Joint Committee Committee :- The Joint Committee Meeting mechanism between India and Slovakia was started in May 1995. So far nine JEC meetings have taken place. The 9th Session of India-Slovakia Joint Economic Committee was held in Bratislava on 21st April, 2017. From the Indian side Ms. Anita Praveen, Joint Secretary(Europe), Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industries co-chaired the meeting and from the Slovak side was led by Mr. Dusan Jurik, Director General in the Ministry of Economy. The 10th session of JEC will be hosted by India on 13-14 February, 2019 in New Delhi.

India-Slovakia Joint Business Council:- An agreement on the formation of India-Slovakia Joint Business Council was signed between the Slovak Chamber of Commerce & Industry and FICCI/ASSOCHAM on March 29, 1995. A 7-member CII delegation headed by Shri D K Hota visited Bratislava from 11-12 October, 2017. During their visit, the delegation called on Mr Vojtech Ferencz, State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, Mr Jozef Rajtar, Director for International Cooperation, Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Mr Drahomir Stos, Director of Economy Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The delegation had a fruitful B2B sessions in Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) and at D1 Expo-Business Centre, Senec. MoUs with SARIO and INDCHAM were signed during their visit.

On 9-11 November 2017, the Indian Chamber of Commerce (INDCHAM), with support of M/s ESET, the Slovak Alliance for the Promotion of Innovative Economics (SAPIE) and the Slovak Embassy in New Delhi organized Slovakia Hub Summit in Mumbai. Approximately 60 entrepreneurs, chairman, CEOs and investors from India and Slovakia attended the Summit aimed to support cooperation of Slovak and Indian innovative companies. Two MOUs were signed between INDCHAM and NRI Startup India and PHD Chamber.

Slovakia was one of the partner countries at the Uttar Pradesh Investors Summit 2018 held on 21-22 February 2018 in Lucknow. Following companies attended the summit from Slovakia:- INDCHAM, Elcom, TomarkAero, Danube Capital Advisors, Schmidt Rozmer, Indimex, Tufepro, Sportvideo, Nuclear, Herbal Health, SEAK Energetics, Kryptobanka, Credit Trading. The companies presented themselves at the Country Session Discussion Panel and offered investments in the field of smart city solutions, IT, green energy as well as the aerospace industry. 5 MoUs were signed on cooperation in aviation, defence, fire protection, and smart city.

Slovak delegation visited DefExpo 2018 held on 11-14 April 2018 in Chennai. The delegation comprised officials from the Ministry of Defence and representatives of defence manufacturers M/s Konstrukta Defense, DMD Group, MSM Group, EVPU, VRM, Exponea and Tomark Aero. The Indian Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic (INDCHAM) in cooperation with Vidarbha Defence Industrial Hub (VDIH) in Nagpur, Maharashtra presented possibilities of the Nagpur Hub to the delegation.

In July 2018, representatives of M/s CSM Industry, manufacturer of trucks and excavators used by mining, defence, firefighting and patrol units participated in Vidarbha Defence Industries Association's Investors Summit in Nagpur. They also held a meeting at BEML headquarters in Bangalore with Mr. Deepak Kumar Hota, BEML Chairman on business opportunities between the two sides.

India's Tata Group owned Jaguar Land Rover state-of-art automobile manufacturing plant at Nitra started its production on 25th October, 2018. The plant was officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Mr. Peter Pellegrini of the Slovak Republic and Jaguar Land Rover's CEO Mr. Ralf Speth. The new plant will expand Tata Group and JLR's global footprint. The construction of the €1.4 billion plant began in September 2016. It currently employs around 1,500 people and this number will be gradually increasing to 3,000. The plant has a capacity to produce 150,000 vehicles annually, with the Land Rover Discovery being the first model to be produced at the facility. Jaguar Land Rover expects to reach annual production of 100,000 cars at its factory in Nitra by 2020.

Two representatives of M/s Eso Travel, Bratislava participated as Hosted Buyers in the India Tourism Mart 2018 held from 16-18 September 2018 in New Delhi on Government of India hospitality. Eso Travel is one of the largest tour operators with their head office based in Czech Republic. They interacted with almost 30 Indian tour operators during B2B meetings at Hotel Ashok, New Delhi and received valuable information on Ayurvedic products and safari tourism in India.

On 22-23 November 2018, the Indian Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic (INDCHAM) with the support of the Indian Embassy in Bratislava and the Slovak Embassy in Delhi has organized 2nd Slovakia Hub

Innovation Summit in Chennai. The event was attended by Mr. Ivan Lancaric, Slovak Ambassador and Mr. Benoit Sauveroche, First Counsellor of the Delegation of EU in India.

S&T Cooperation:- An Agreement on Cooperation in Science & Technology was signed in 1996. It envisages cooperation in joint research projects, exchange of specialists/scientists, organization of bilateral workshops/exhibitions etc. However, actual scientific exchanges under the Agreement have been limited.

Educational Exchanges: 12 ITEC slots are offered to Slovakia annually.

Cultural Exchanges: Yoga classes – A Teacher of Indian Culture (TIC) deputed by ICCR since December, 2017 is conducting yoga classes within the Embassy premises. Four classes of 60 minutes duration are taking place on working days. These classes have gained massive popularity with an attendance of up to 70 people a day. Besides the classes at Embassy, the TIC conducts Yoga class for professors at Slovak Medical University once a week.

Book Launch – Embassy organized the Slovak Release of the Hindi Translation of Book ‘Kód 1’ by Mr. Jozef Banas under the title “Yerusalem Se Kashmir Tak – Isa Masih Ki Jivan Yatra” on 25th April, 2018 where Ms. Zuzana Megova, Director General, Section of Art and the State Language at the Ministry of Culture was the Chief guest. Mr. Banas responded to questions from the audience. The event was attended by about 50 people.

International Day of Yoga – IDY 2018 was celebrated in Bratislava on 16th June, 2018 at the iconic Kukhaida Park with the support of city of Bratislava and various Yoga associations and organizations. The occasion was graced by the presence of Mr. Rudolf Kusy, Mayor of the New City of Bratislava. It was followed by Common Yoga Protocol conducted by TIC and concluded with Shanti Mantra and light refreshments. About 125 participants joined the celebration. IDY was organized in various other cities of Slovakia too.

Hindi classes for foreign nationals – Hindi classes were being conducted by Ms. Helena Hadvigova, Indologist in Comenius University, Bratislava till the end of June, 2018. About 15 Slovak students had enrolled for these classes. The classes are due to resume during the upcoming summer semester starting in February, 2019.

Asian Weekend (27-28 July, 2018) – The Embassy of India, in collaboration with the Embassies of Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, China and Korea and the Bratislava Cultural and Information Centre (BKIS) took part in the Asian Weekend held at the Main Square, Bratislava. The event saw culinary and traditional cultural performances from the 6 Asian countries and was well received by tourists visiting the country and locals of Slovakia. India tourism material was widely promoted and distributed to the visitors at the Indian Embassy Booth.

6th International Buddhist Conclave (22-26 August, 2018) – The Conclave held in New Delhi, with site visits to other states, was participated by 3 Slovak nationals – Mr. Jozef Banas (eminent writer, former diplomat and parliamentarian), Mr. Alexander Horvath (freelance journalist, owner of 3 e-magazines and a travel agency) and Ms. Katarina Micova (Destination Manager for tours to India in Bubo Travel Agency).

1st Indian Festival (23 September, 2018) - India Klub, a local Indo-Slovak Cultural Society, organized the 1st Indian Festival in Bratislava on 23rd September, 2018 at the city centre, with the support of the Embassy and Bratislava Old Town Administration. The festival included stalls for Indian food, handicrafts, garments, home textiles, yoga classes, henna, sari show and a colourful cultural programme, which witnessed about 1000 people.

4th Edition of “Indicke bajky ocami slovenskych deti - (Indian Fables through Eyes of Slovak Children) drawing competition was held on 28th September, 2018. The competition open to children up to age of 10 was organized by the Slovak-India Friendship Society in schools throughout Slovakia with the support of the Embassy.

Gandhi@150 celebrations (02 October, 2018) - The Embassy celebrated the 149th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the International Day of non-Violence with the launch of Gandhi@150 celebrations in collaboration

with the University of Economics, Bratislava. The celebration included photo and book exhibition and speeches by the Ambassador and other prominent Gandhians; release of commemorative stamps issued by the GOI and video of 'Vaishnav Jan To' bhajan sung by Slovak Artist Ms. Petra Humenanska Sedlakova; screening of Gandhi@150 Visual Narrative, a special film prepared to highlight the relevance of Gandhi's message in today's world. A short documentary on Mahatma Gandhi's life was also screened. About 300 guests and students attended the event. A video projection was also organised at Kernov Dom, Main Square, Bratislava in the evening.

Photo exhibition on Churches in India - Since September 2016, the Mission with cooperation of the Slovak-Indian Friendship Society has been organizing 'Churches and Christian Culture of Goa' photo exhibition. Till date, the exhibition has been held in 8 cities across Slovakia.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (31 October, 2018) – The birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was celebrated as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas in the Embassy premises. A documentary on Sardar Patel's life and PM Modi's speech was screened in the Embassy premises, on the occasion of unveiling of Sardar Patel's statue in Gujarat.

Indian community

The NRI/OCI population in Slovakia is estimated to be around 250. Most OCIs [total around 80-100] are engaged in small businesses, such as ethnic groceries, garments and textiles, handicrafts, and restaurants. NRIs on the other hand can be divided into two groups: the first consisting of 40-50 technically qualified IT and other professionals on short term assignments of 1-2 years, and the second a somewhat larger group working as cooks and waiters, and masseurs/masseuses at ayurvedic and other spas. The Embassy maintains regular contact with them and associates during our National Days celebrations and other occasions. There are no associations of Indians in Slovakia.

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- Useful Resources: Mission website: www.eoibratislava@mea.gov.in
- Facebook: @IndiainSlovakia
- Youtube channel: Indiainslovakia
- Twitter account: @IndiaInSlovakia