

# Race to Zero in Slovakia: Business

Virtual Conference

**18 March 2021**

9.00 – 13.00

While there are few positives to take from the global pandemic, one is that businesses now better understand the disruptive potential of unforeseen shocks. A useful lesson has been the need to change what we do, and how we do it, far more quickly than was initially imagined. The United Nations' **Race to Zero** is a global campaign to mobilise leadership and support for a healthy, resilient, zero-carbon coronavirus recovery which creates well-paying jobs, unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth and prevents future threats.

This event will showcase the actions that companies from all sectors and of all sizes are doing to align their strategies and operations to become carbon neutral. Slovakia has recently joined the UK and EU countries and committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. This can be reached only if businesses, cities, regions, universities and government work together. The time for action is right now.

## Programme

### 9.00 – 9.25 Opening Remarks

**Nigel Baker**, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Slovakia  
**Zuzana Čaputová**, President of the Slovak Republic  
**Nigel Topping**, UK High Level Climate Action Champion, UNFCCC

### 9.25 – 9.45 What is Race to Zero?

**Fiona Macklin**, Race to Zero Campaign Coordinator, UNFCCC

### 10.00 – 10.45 The Business Case for a Net Zero World

In the fight against climate change, the world has reached a tipping point. More and more companies are waking up to the opportunities of a zero-carbon economy, but we urgently need to scale the endeavour to cement low-carbon practices along supply chains and across societies. By setting bold targets to phase out fossil fuels and cut waste, companies can send a powerful signal to the government in support of strong climate policies. At this session you will hear about the experience of companies which have already committed to this green journey, why they decided to make the first step towards achieving the net zero and what benefits it has brought to their business.

**Ján Oravec**, State Secretary, Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic  
**Eliot Whittington**, Director, Prince of Wales's Corporate Leaders Group  
**Michael Hayes**, Global Head of Renewables, KPMG  
**Kuuno Vaher**, Cluster Country Director, Central Europe AstraZeneca

Chaired by **Katarína Kozinková**, Journalist, SME

## 11.00 – 11.45 Break out sessions

- **The Automotive Industry and the Net Zero Future**

Automotive is the bedrock of Slovakia's economy, creating 12% of country's GDP. The transition to green vehicles represents a huge environmental and financial opportunity for this sector. But making the switch to greener vehicles is often easier said than done. A high initial costs of purchasing these models, a general lack of vehicle options and inadequate local and national charging infrastructure are just some of the challenges for companies in this sector. As consumers make greener choices, so must producers and their supply chains. This session explores how these challenges can be overcome and the role emerging technologies are playing in helping the green transition in a scalable way and deliver zero-emission/carbon transport and vehicles.

**Russell Leslie**, Operations Director, Jaguar Land Rover Slovakia

**Marián Boček**, Co-Founder, InoBat Auto

**Alexander Matušek**, President, Automotive Industry Association

Chaired by: **Juraj Porubský**, Editor-in-Chief, Forbes Slovakia

- **Financing Net Zero**

In order to achieve a successful transition to decarbonisation, both public and private investment will be required. EU recovery package poses a great opportunity drive investment into the key transformations needed to meet Slovakia's and Europe's net zero emissions target, including buildings renovation, renewable energy, clean mobility, industrial innovation and more sustainable land use and food systems. But there is a role to play for traditional players, from banks to insurance firms, in enabling a net-zero economy through finance. In this session you can learn what support and initiatives are available to combine recovery with a just transition towards a sustainable economy and the role the financial sector can play in supporting your transition to net zero.

**Lívia Vašáková**, Director General, Recovery Plan Section, Ministry of Finance of the SR

**Roman Vlček**, Executive Director, Slovak Association of Asset Management Companies

**Marcel Kaščák**, Member of the Board of Directors, Tatrabanka

**Marián Bíž**, Leading Partner, Ernst & Young Slovakia

Chaired by **Peter Robl**, Chairman of the Board, Buildings for the Future

## 12.00 – 12.45 Break out sessions

- **Enabling Net Zero through the Circular Economy**

Focusing on decarbonising the energy and transport sectors alone will not be enough to achieve a net-zero carbon economy. The remaining 45% of emissions comes the way we make, use and dispose of products, materials and food. We need to address all sources of CO2 emissions, which is where the circular economy comes in. The net zero pledges being made at the moment present an opportunity to embed circular economy principles into climate action plans and complete the picture. Hear from speakers about their short-medium-long term strategies for achieving Net Zero targets and sharing best practice by adapting circular business models, reducing waste, water and reuse of materials, lowering their costs in the process.

**Matt Simister**, CEO, Central Europe, Tesco

**Rudolf Mackovič**, Managing Director, Association of Slovak Cement Producers

**Peter Heinz**, Project Manager, Greencon

Chaired by **Michal Hudec**, Journalist, Euractiv

- **SMEs for a Green Tomorrow**

Business of every size, sector and geography has a role to play if we are to achieve our collective goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. Small and medium companies constitute of more than 99% of the total number of businesses in Slovakia. They are, therefore, central to the green transformation. SMEs have faced significant challenges in the past year – many have been forced to cut staff and salaries in order to stay afloat. But as we look ahead, by putting climate change action at the heart of SME coronavirus recovery strategies, firms can take action now to future proof themselves in the long run. At this session you can learn from other SMEs about some practical steps that can be taken to improve both financial and environmental performance and how, in the real world, does a small business become carbon neutral.

**Majda Dabaghi**, Co-Founder, SME Climate Hub

**Nancy Zeffman**, Co-Founder, Cucumber Clothing

**Andrea Basilová**, Co-Founder, Sensoneo

**Lukáš Poór**, General Manager, Unilever Slovakia

Chaired by **Tomáš Grečko**, Journalist, Denník N

### **12.50 – 13.00 Closing remarks**

**Miroslava Remenárová**, Chair of the Board, British Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia

**Hajni Hayler**, Executive Director, British Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia