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Dear Irish community, friends of Ireland, A chairde,

Welcome to the spring edition of our Embassy newsletter. We hope you got to enjoy a break over the Easter period and are refreshed as we move towards longer days and warmer weather.

It has been an eventful few months since our last issue in February. In the following pages, you will find a selection of photographs which give a better overview of our activities than I can hope to do in words.

The keynote event was undoubtedly the Embassy's Saint Patrick's Day reception on the evening of 16 March at the *Hradná Reštaurácia* in the grounds of Bratislava castle. We were delighted that so many of you joined us to mark Ireland's national feast day, albeit held a day early! We were honoured by the presence of the Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcom Noonan T.D. The Minister's attendance was a sure sign of the importance which Ireland attaches to our relationship with Slovakia and with you, our community. Indeed in his address, Minister Noonan spoke eloquently about the friendship between our two countries and how this is ultimately built on the personal and professional ties that bind our peoples.

After the long gap since our last Saint Patrick's Day reception owing to the pandemic, we hoped you enjoyed the evening as much as we did, meeting old friends and making new ones. While there is much to be said in favour of the new technologies, an in person event will always trump a gathering via zoom. As you can imagine, enormous effort goes into planning every last detail of such an evening. I want to pay tribute to the team at the Embassy for ensuring that everything ran smoothly. For my own part, St. Patrick's Day neither began nor ended with the Embassy reception. Over that week, I visited universities in Trnava and Bratislava to celebrate all things Irish with students and their professors. Joined by Consul Janet O'Sullivan and policy officer Ivana Pangracova, I also attended a wonderful evening of song and dance organised by the Irish staff at the European Labour Authority, the EU's newest agency headquartered here in Bratislava. Well done to them!

Beyond that, the Embassy pursued its core mission of promoting the best of Ireland across the spectrum. We were proud to showcase our country at Europe Day on 9 May in the Old Market hall, marking the 50th anniversary of our accession to the then EEC in 1973. Only last week, we introduced the public here to the Slovak language translation of *The Echo Chamber* by Irish writer, John Boyne at the *Night of Literature*.

On a personal note, it was wonderful meeting up with many of the 35 or so Irish students studying veterinary science and medicine at universities in Kosice during my visit there in April. They are a valued part of our community in Slovakia and we hope to follow up with further contact in the coming months. We at the Embassy wish them continued success in their studies.

If you know of anyone who has recently arrived in Slovakia and who you think would be interested in being on our circulation list, please encourage them to register with us at [CitizensRegister](#).

For news and updates, the Embassy's twitter account @IrEmbSlovakia remains your chief source of information together with our Facebook at this [LINK](#). You can also check out my twitter account - @IEAmbBratislava ([LINK](#))

As always, we warmly welcome your feedback and suggestions as we work to improve our service and outreach to you. Please send any comments or ideas to Bratislava@dfa.ie We would be delighted to hear from you!

With best wishes, le gach dea-ghuí.

**Dermot McGauran
Ambassador of Ireland**

St. Patrick's Day Reception



Our St. Patrick's Day Reception was a great opportunity to foster relationships across the Irish community, with Slovak government officials, academia and our partners from the business and civic sectors. We hope you enjoyed the celebration of our national day. We were delighted to have you with us.

Renowned musician, Martin Furey entertained us with a truly memorable performance.

Embassy Activities



ZŠ Ostredková

We continued with our programme of visits to primary and secondary schools, talking to young Slovaks about Ireland and our relations with Slovakia. In April, Ambassador McGauran had the pleasure of meeting the pupils and staff at Ostrednova School. The pupils showed great interest in Ireland's culture, history and politics. Thank you for the warm welcome.



We also visited the Gymnázium Jura Hronca in Bratislava, discussing Ireland and Slovakia, how Ireland has benefited from 50 years in the European Union as well as the role of a diplomat. Our congratulations to the impressive young citizens and to their dedicated teachers.



A final academic visit for the season, this time to the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice along with Faculty of Medicine Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, also in Košice. The two universities are extremely popular with foreign students, including Irish students, reflecting the high calibre of the education and facilities on offer. Ambassador McGauran was delighted to spend time chatting with the Irish students at both universities

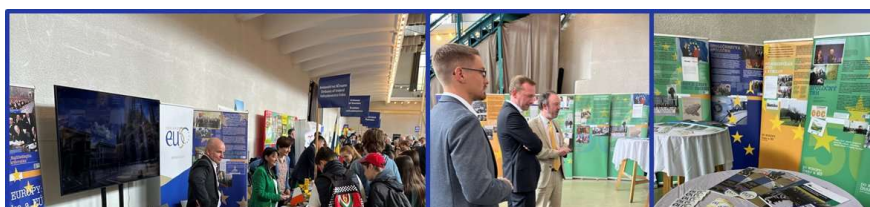
and hearing about their experience of living and studying in Slovakia.



On the cultural front, the Embassy participated for a second consecutive year in The Night of Literature, held in the magnificently renovated Slovak National Gallery. This unique event presents a selection of contemporary fiction from across Europe translated into the Slovak language. Passages are read by newly accomplished actors. This year, we selected the newly translated novel by John Boyne, *The Echo Chamber*, read by renowned actor Luboš Kostelný. The novel was also read in nine other cities across Slovakia that evening.



Ireland is well known for the quality of its produce, The Embassy had a stand showcasing our food and drink at an international event held at the French Institute in late March. Our cheeses, dried meats, chocolates and whiskey were a big hit!





This year, Ireland celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of our accession to the European Union. It was therefore only natural that our Embassy stand had place of honour at Europe Day in the Stará Tržnica in Bratislava. Ambassador McGauran gave an interview on stage about what the EU means to Ireland and how membership has transformed our country over the past five decades.

Working with Business



We continue to work with Irish and Slovak companies as they expand the trade links between our two countries. We were delighted to meet with representatives of Merkanta International, a company based in Slovakia bringing innovative Irish agricultural technology and solutions to Slovak farmers.



This week, Ambassador McGauran cut the ribbon at the official opening of Primark's first store in Slovakia at the beautiful new wing in Eurovea. We wish all at Primark great success as they enter the Slovak retail market. Of course to Irish people, Primark will forever be known as "Penneys"!

Visitors to the Embassy





We have had many distinguished visitors to our Embassy over the years but none more so than Nixon, the Bald Eagle! He joined us with the Principal, teachers and pupils of Maximilián Hell school in Štiavnické Bane who had just returned from a study visit to Ireland. With over 70 raptors, the school is unique in the world in teaching falconry as part of the core curriculum and through it, a form of therapy called Avetherapy. Children learn responsibility, decisiveness, patience and problem solving by working with these magnificent birds.



We welcomed a group of impressive young leaders from the *European Movement Ireland* to discuss and advance impactful channels for citizens' participation and activism within the EU ahead of their workshop organised by Slovak think-tank, GLOBSEC.





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A delight welcoming Presentation Sisters Immaculate and Louise to the Embassy. These Irish ladies and their fellow sisters have worked tirelessly and with great dedication for some three decades in eastern Slovakia with disadvantaged children from the Roma community. Sadly their mission to Slovakia will end later this year. A job well done. Respect.

News from GAA team Slovak Shamrocks

Dear All,
this is your local GAA team.

We started April strong with a GAA friendly against our neighbors, in Nove Mesto. Thank you to the organization team, Novomestský športový klub 1922 Bratislava for hosting and Vienna Gaels GAA for another amazing day of football.

We also hosted a handball tournament on the 22nd of April, with 5 grades played for and players from 9 nationalities including Australia, Canada, South Africa and Zimbabwe battling it out for silverware. Thanks to all those who helped organize, referee and play, to Conor McDonnell for presenting the medals and Midland Trophies of Longford for the medals.



The growth of the sport in Eastern Europe and the competitiveness of the matches made the day a joy for players and spectators alike.

If you would like to join our multicultural team feel free to send us a message on social media (@SlovakShamrocksGAA = [FB LINK](#)) and join **our trainings**:

- Gaelic football training every Wednesday, 19:00 at Molecova.
- Handball training every Tuesday, 18:00 at the German school.

Come to cheer and celebrate our achievements on the upcoming Vienna regional tournament on May 27th - stay tuned on our social media for more information.



