

India- Slovakia Relations

India- Slovakia relations are friendly and free from any bilateral issues. The two countries cooperate well in international fora and have been supportive, by and large, of each other's candidatures in elections in multilateral organizations. Notable instances in recent years include Slovakia's support to the Indian candidatures for the UN Audit Board, and the UN's Joint Inspection Unit, Justice Shri Dalveer Bhandari's election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and India's support for the Slovak candidature for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Slovakia supports permanent membership for India in UNSC and has also expressed support for India's position on UNSC reforms. Slovakia also supported the waiver of NSG guidelines to enable international cooperation with India in civilian nuclear energy. Slovakia's support to India's non-permanent seat in the UNSC, the candidature of Ambassador Gopinathan for the UN's Joint Inspection Unit, the election of the CAG of India to the UN Board of Auditors, and India's re-election to the executive Board of the UNESCO for the period 2013-17. Slovakia have supported our candidature for Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for the term 2014-2018, re-election to the Postal Union Council(POC) of the Universal Postal Union(UPU) in 2015 and our candidature to the Council of the International Maritime Organization(IMO) in 2015. India supported Justice Peter Tomka of Slovakia for re-election to the bench of the International Court of Justice [ICJ]. Slovakia supported our re-election to the Human Rights Council for 2015-2017.

Political Relations

Important Bilateral treaties and Agreements:-

- Protocol on Scientific cooperation between Slovak Academy of Sciences and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (1995)
- Agreement for formation of the Indo—Slovak JBC (1995)
- MOU on Defence Cooperation (1995)
- Air Services Agreement (1996)
- Agreement on Cooperation in Science & Technology (1996)
- Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between Indian National Science Academy & Slovak Academy of Sciences (2001)
- Economic Cooperation Agreement (2004)
- Programme of Cooperation in the field of Culture (2004)
- Bilateral Investment Promotion Agreement (2006)
- Programme of Cooperation between Ministry of Culture of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic for the period 2011-2013, further extended for one year 2013-2014.
- Protocol for Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement (2013)
- Protocol for Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement (2015)

Visits from India to Slovakia during 2012-2016:-

16-22 September 2012	Shri Birender Prasad Baishya, M.P. Rajya Sabha and former Union Minister led Indian Weightlifting Team consisting of 14 members to Kosice, Slovakia in the
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	3rd Youth (Boys & Girls) Weightlifting Championships.
29-31 October 2012	Smt. Preet Kaur, MOS for External Affairs for bilateral consultations.
11-13 July, 2013	Dr. D. Purandeswari, MOS for Commerce as co-Chair of the seventh session of India-Slovakia Joint Economic Committee.
2 to 5 November 2013	Dr. Mukul Sangama, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya
15-17 April 2016	Gen(Dr.) V.K. Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs participated in GLOBSEC Security Forum 2016 and had bilateral discussions with Slovak authorities as well as with other V-4 Foreign Ministers(on the sidelines of the Forum)

Visits from Slovakia to India during 2012-2016:-

1-19 October 2012	Mr. Jan Ilavsky, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic attended the 11 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Hyderabad.
17-19 June, 2013	Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Dy. PM and Foreign and European Affairs Minister visited New Delhi and Mumbai.
11-12 November 2013	Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Dy.PM and Foreign and European Affairs Minister visited India to attend the ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting.
07-10 October 2015	Mr. Vazil Hudak, Economy Minister of Slovakia visited India and met Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Railways.
02- 05 December 2016	Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs visited India to attend 6 th Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia –Istanbul Process held in 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.

Bilateral Trade Statistics (in million):-

	2016 (Jan-Aug)	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
India's Exports	€181.4	€268.443	€232.853	€200.853	€ 176.837	€ 206.890
India's Imports	€ 31.5	€ 53.656	€ 30.708	€ 32.597	€ 55.43	€ 68.933
Bilateral Trade	€212.9	€322.099	€263.604	€233.450	€ 232.263	€ 275.823
Trade Balance (X-I)	€149.9	€ 214.787	€202.188	€168.256	€121.41	€ 137.957

The total Indo-Slovak bilateral trade represents around 0.24 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

Commercial Relations

India – Slovakia Trade Basket:- Major items of India's exports to Slovakia during 2009 to 2013 include textiles and clothing accessories, footwear, inorganic chemicals, yarns and related products, plastics and pharmaceuticals. Major items of import from Slovakia include iron and steel products, road vehicles, industrial machinery and parts thereof, organic chemicals, and pharmaceutical products (antibodies) etc. A Slovak company has also supplied axles for TATRA trucks assembled by Bharat Earth Movers Ltd (BEML). Both bilateral trade, and especially, India's exports had been buoyant until 2011, but there was a slowdown in 2012. Exports from India have shown a revival, registering an increase of 15.9% during the year 2014, and an increase of 15.3% over 2015. There has been a decrease of 2.9% during the period January to August 2016 over 2015.

Investment:- Slovakia has attracted foreign investment from a large number of foreign companies, especially from the US (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. However, there are no significant Indian investments in Slovakia, or from Slovakia into India. In the past, Indian companies have explored investment opportunities in auto accessories, tyre manufacturing, and the spa and wellness sectors in Slovakia, without anything concrete materializing so far. Although Slovakia has the advantage of a good physical infrastructure, key geographical location, and a skilled labour force, and is a Eurozone member, its neighbours, Hungary, and Poland, provide larger domestic markets and lower costs and have proven to be somewhat more attractive to Indian investors. In 2012, the Sahara Group was approached for a possible investment in developing Bratislava Airport as a regional cargo hub in strategic partnership with the government or under a lease. But matters have not progressed. 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 - where recent legislation has significantly expanded the market for generics - and in auto accessories. In 2014, French and German companies together represented over 50% of Foreign Direct Investment in Slovakia, especially in the sectors of energy, automotive, telecommunications and services.

Joint Committee:- Under the trade agreement signed with Slovakia in 1993, an India-Slovakia Joint Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (ISJEC) was set up in May 1994. So far seven meetings have been held. The 8th Session of India-Slovakia Joint Economic Committee was held in New Delhi on 25th February, 2015. During the meeting, discussions were held on the further development of bilateral economic and business cooperation, especially in the auto, energy and tourism sectors. A protocol on Economic Cooperation was also signed during the meeting. A two member team of ICRA Management Consulting Services Ltd. (IMaCS) supported by Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and Automotive Component Manufacture Association (ACMA) of India visited Bratislava, as a follow up to the JEC in October 2013.

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. The JBC has so far held 5 sessions in Bratislava and Delhi, the last having been held in April 04 in Delhi. CII had organized an 'Enterprise India' trade exhibition in

Bratislava in Oct 05 with the participation of 35 Indian Companies. A five-member delegation from the Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council visited Slovakia in 2006. The JBC mechanism has not been very active in recent years.

An 11-member business delegation led by Capt. Avinash Batra, President, The Council of EU Chambers of Commerce in India visited Bratislava from 28-30 May, 2015. They had meetings with Officials of the Ministries of Foreign/Economic and Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency(SARIO), Slovak Chamber of Commerce and B2B meetings. An MoU was signed by SARIO and The Council of EU Chambers of Commerce on 29th May, 2015 in Bratislava.

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. Actual scientific exchanges under the Agreement have, however, been limited.

Cultural Exchanges: With effect from 2005-06, 10 ITEC slots are offered to Slovakia annually. With better utilization in recent years, Slovakia has been offered 12 ITEC slots annually.

The bilateral Cultural Exchanges Programme (CEP) 2011-13 signed in 2011, which is extended for another one year or till signing of new CEP.

As a result of the budgetary constraints of ICCR, and the non-availability of other sources of funding in Slovakia, the exchange of music and dance troupes between the two countries is scant. However, there is a small community of lovers of Indian music in Slovakia, which has made possible occasional visits of Indian performers of classical music for ticketed performances by local organizations. Yoga is very popular in Slovakia. The Mission has engaged itself in the last few months for further promotion of yoga and organized the International Yoga Day(IDY) on 21st June, 2015 in eighteen cities and during 18 to 26 June, 2016 in twenty two cities across Slovak Republic organized.

Shovana Narayan, Kathak Maestro performed her innovative style dance on May 21, 2015 at Mirror Hall of the Primate's Palace in Bratislava.

A documentary film entitled "City's Sheep Child and the Dump Hill Dreams" by Director Pranab Aich has won the award main price in category G-short films, prize of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic at the International Festival of Sustainable Development Films Ekotopfilm-Environfilm 2016.

A Kuchipudi dance troupe led by legendry Dr. Saraswathi Rajathesh gave a performance in Piestany, Slovakia on 6th May, 2016 wherein around 250 people attended the live event. The event was organized by the Embassy of India in close cooperation with the India-Slovakia Friendship Society, Piestany as well as the City of Piestany.

Indian community

The NRI/PIO population in Slovakia is estimated to be around 200. Most PIOs [total around 50-75] 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 contact with them and associates them with Independence Day/Republic Day celebrations and other occasions. There are no associations of Indians in Slovakia.

Few Indian nationals are in the custody of Slovak authorities, having entered Slovakia illegally. In the event of cases coming to the Embassy's notice, either through the Slovak authorities or in other ways, the established procedures for consular assistance, including repatriation of Indian nationals to India on Emergency Certificates, are followed.

8 December 2016

Useful Resources

- Mission website: www.indianembassy.sk
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/India-in-Slovakia/193785564101966>
- Twitter account: eindia.com@stonline.sk