

## **Annual Review April 2000 - April 2001**

Dear Members,

Our chamber is now six years old and I believe continues to make some more excellent progress. All in all we now have 94 company members and 14 individual members, which makes a total of 108 members, a slight increase from last years 101. The most satisfying is that it is the number of company members, which has increased.

We are very pleased to welcome all the new members to our ranks. However we have also regrettably lost a few, some because of the hard Czech economic business environment and a few because they have lost their Scandinavian connection. We continue our effort to expand our membership within the other Scandinavian communities and are very happy to welcome Danish, Finish and Norwegian friends.

During the last year a number of events have taken place. I want to express some self-criticisms about this. One of the events we tried to introduce last year was the Scandinavian Happy Hours, which was to be held at the Restaurant Pravda every first Wednesday in each month and generously sponsored by Mr. Sjöö. Unfortunately this showed to be an event with very low showing and last autumn we decided to cancel it.

In addition we think that we didn't arrange enough events. Although, obviously the TIME conference held in the presence of among others the Swedish Finance Minister Bo Ringholm, Mr. Carl Bildt, etc. probably was our largest and most successful event ever.

I would here like to express our gratitude to Mr. Jan Stocklassa and his team for the handling and arrangement of this project.

We always seek new great "events". However, time is our most scarce asset and all board members do this work on a voluntary basis. Hence, we very much appreciate if you, our members, would come forward with suggestions and perhaps also the preparedness to arrange an event.

Therefore we plan to start with a new type of sponsored business mixer, which we both hope will result in better events as well as more people attending the event so that they will become true social gatherings.

We continue to try to make our members aware of cultural and other initiatives that we feel are worthy of support.

During the past year you have received our Newsletter. We actually received so much positive feedback and interest that we decided to expand it with 4 additional pages and you should just have received the first such expanded number.

We in the board now believe that we have a product that we can proudly present to anybody.

I thank the editorial committee and staff, which have made a tremendous work producing it.

In addition we also published a Membership Directory last year and our intention is to do a new issue of this for 2002.

In summer 1999, we founded together with the British, Dutch, French and German Chamber of Commerce's the Euro-Czech Forum, in order to have a vehicle through which we could be more proactive on behalf of our members to exchange ideas with the Czech political and community.

The Forum was met with great interest and support from the political establishment, but unfortunately had a bit of a slow start and didn't have the impact we searched for.

In January this year we appointed a new Executive Team, lead by Mr. Petr Greger, who previously worked for the EU commission here in Prague. The new team started their work mid March and has so far among other issues tackled the driving license regulation for foreigners, which all of you with foreign drivers licenses should be very grateful for.

The importation of used trucks, drafting of the bankruptcy act, a newly drafted act on packaging, etc.

However, in order to practically work it is of course important that you, our members, communicate to us, which problems you have.

If it is a general problem, which a number of companies have, the ECF might be able to act on your behalf.

And when different working groups, for example on environment, business register and bankruptcy are created, it is important that not only lawyers are participating.

Your chamber currently supports the Euro-Czech Forum with CZK400.000, as agreed in last years general annual meeting. However, the forecasted cost for the ECF for this year is CZK650.000 per chamber. The other chambers have agreed to finance this but I have made a reservation saying that if the new team live up to our expectations, which I have a strong feeling they will, we will for this year try to find the remaining CZK250.000 among our members in September instead of raising our membership fee this year.

The board members would like to express their special gratitude to Mr. Martin Landgren, our Executive Assistant. Without him it would have been impossible to arrange all this and other events. We are also very thankful for the support we receive from Mr. Jan Stocklassa and the rest of his team at the Swedish Trade Council.

I would also like to express our gratitude to our honorary Chairman the Swedish

Ambassador H.E. Mr. Karlsson and the Embassy staff for a good co-operation and their continued interest in our activities.

During the last two years we have had the pleasure of having Mr. Birger Husted as an associated member of the board representing our Danish members. He has made the most valuable contribution and now we hope to make him a permanent member of the board.

As I have expressed several times before, we would also like to welcome associated board members representing our Finish and Norwegian members, but so far no one have shown any willingness.

From the present board Mr. Karel Vagner and Mr. Olle Jarleborg will not stand for re-election and I would like to thank them for their valuable contribution and wish them all the best for the future.

At last I would like to thank you for the past year. Let´s continue to move forward making the Swedish Chamber of Commerce a strong and admired organisation in the Czech Republic.

Nils Silfverschiöld  
President