

Annual Review April 2002 - April 2003

Dear Members,

Our chamber is now eight years old and I believe continues to make excellent progress.

All in all we now have 92 company and 31 individual members, which make a total of 123 members, an increase in both categories from last years 114 members.

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 business environment and a few because they have lost their Nordic connection.

We continue our effort to expand our membership within the other Scandinavian communities and are very happy to welcome our Danish, Finish and Norwegian friends.

During the last year a number of events have taken place and I believe that we have succeeded in offering you a great variety.

Birger Husted, our event manager, will in his presentation go into greater detail about this and I hope you have noted the extensive list of past events, which Birger has prepared and to which you as members of the Chamber could have participated in.

We always seek new great "events". However, as you know time is our most scarce asset and all board members do this work on a voluntary basis.

Therefore, as I say each year, we very much appreciate if you, our members, come forward with suggestions and the preparedness to sponsor events.

Two years ago we started to make sponsored business mixer, the few we have arranged have turned out to be very successful.

The latest one arranged in co-operation with Telenord end of February was attended by almost 200 people. I would like to please encourage anybody who would like to arrange such an event to contact us.

We have decided to cancel our boat party this summer and instead arrange a summer party on June 3. This should be a real party and we hope many of you will attend.

In addition we of course continue to try to make our members aware of cultural and other initiatives that we feel worthy of support.

Due to the fact that all board members are busy people and the work load to continue giving you a great program is immense, we in the board suggest a change to Article 12.5 of the Articles of Association in order to increase the number of members from the current 10, including our honorary Chairman the Swedish Ambassador, to 12.

During the past year you have received our Newsletter. I hope you have taken a copy of the latest issue, which we have laid out on the table together with the other papers.

Since the rework of its design it keeps receiving a lot of positive criticism and luckily this has also been reflected in the numbers of companies wanting to advertise. Indeed it has been so successful that earlier this year we decided to expand it with four more pages.

We in the board believe that we have here developed a product that we justifiably can be proud of and I want to thank the editorial committee and staff, which have put in tremendous work producing it.

In addition we plan that by the next Annual General Meeting our Membership Directory 2004 will be presented. Our Membership Directory

2002 was well received and I hope you will all supply material and advertise in the new one.

In summer 1999, we founded together with the British, Dutch, French and German Chamber of Commerce´s the Euro-Czech Forum (ECF), 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.

ECF has now clearly emerged as the most significant body to express the concerns of the business community (Czech as well as the foreign investment) and has become a respected communication platform between politics and business.

Mr. Petr Greger, the ECF Executive Director, will present ECF recent activities and future strategy in greater detail in his presentation.

Last year I described our then recent visit to Brussels and the presentation of our position paper to Commissioner Verheugen.

The visit was a great success and our points in the position paper have since been quoted in many places including the Czech parliament.

The main points of the position paper was subsequently also reflected in the EU regularly report presented last October.

However the preceding years perhaps most significant political event was when ECF presented and debated its Agenda 2003 on January 28 in the Parliament. You should all have received a copy of the Agenda 2003 by mail.

Agenda 2003 was presented to the Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr. Jiri Rusnok in the attendance of several other members of parliament and over 100 people from the business community and press.

I saw some of you there but I hope many more of you will participate in future activities of the ECF.

The ECF received wide praise for the document, notably from the Ministry of Industry and Trade who shortly after finalised its own Position Paper for the Improvement of the Legal-Business Environment in the Czech Republic.

According to leading persons at the Ministry, Agenda 2003 was one of the most significant sources of inspiration for the Ministry' s paper.

Unfortunately Mr. Rusnok is no longer a member of the Government. But we very much hope that Minister Urban will continue on his path of understanding the business community's need for reforms and the importance of this for the future prosperity of the country.

Your chamber, just like the other four, currently supports the ECF with CZK650.000.

The board members would like to express their special gratitude to Mr. Martin Landgren, our Executive Assistant and his co-assistances Miss Lisa Muncker and Ingrid Lindahl. Without them 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 specially express our gratitude to our honorary Chairman the Swedish Ambassador H.E. Mr. Harald Fälth and the Embassy staff for a good co-operation and their continued interest in our activities.

From the present board Bo Hildingsson and Henrik Huitfelt will leave us and I would like to thank both of them for their most valuable contribution and wish them all the best for the future.

Henrik will leave to pursue other opportunities in Italy but Bo remains in the Czech Republic and has promised that we will continue to see him at many of our events.

On the board we have the pleasure of having Birger Husted representing our Danish members and Tom Lindberg representing our Norwegian members. This reflects our aim to increase our Nordic profile. We are however still searching for a board member representing our Finish members, but so far no volunteer has stepped forward.

The chamber's management board is elected for 2 years at the time and this year is election year. I hope all people interested in being elected have made them know and I would like to present the suggested board as follows:

At last I would like to thank you members for the past year. I hope to see you on our events and that please propose new events!

Let us continue to move forward making the Swedish Chamber of Commerce a strong and admired organization in the Czech Republic.
Thank you!

Nils Silfverschiöld

President