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Chapter 4

Slovakia and Brazil

4.1 Political and diplomatic cooperation

As Slovakia shares a common history with Czechia, the following part presents only a brief history of Czechoslovak–Brazil relations,¹ and then we shall focus on Slovak–Brazilian relations since 1993, that is since the year of the establishment of the Slovak Republic.

Slovakia, as part of Czechoslovakia at that time, established diplomatic relations with Brazil in 1920. The first Czecho–Slovak ambassador, Jan Klecanda, presented his letter of credentials on 29 June 1920 and Carlos Lemgruber Kropf as Brazilian ambassador in November 1921.² After the interruption of diplomatic relations in 1939 because of the occupation of Czechoslovakia during WWII, Brazil recognised the Czechoslovak Government in exile in London on 16 September 1942. As a result of further development and the bipolar organisation of the world, the relations between both countries were limited but never interrupted. Bilateral agreements signed in the 1980s created the basis of the relations between Brazil and a new independent state – the Slovak Republic.

Brazil and Slovakia established diplomatic relations on 1 January 1993 and the first Slovak representative was the Chargé D’Affaires Jozef Adamec. Until now, Slovakia has sent to Brazil the following delegates as the head of the representative office (see Table 1).

¹ For more information see the chapter on the Czech Republic and Brazil.

² J Klíma, *Dějiny Brazílie* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2011), 385.

Table 1: List of titulars of the Slovak Republic in Brazil

Titular	In office
Chargé D'Affaires Jozef Adamec	1993–1994
Ambassador Branislav Hitka	1994–1998
Ambassador Jozef Adamec	1998–2003
Chargé D'Affaires Terézia Šajgalíková	2003–2005
Ambassador Marián Masarik	2005–2008
Ambassador Branislav Hitka	2008–2012
Ambassador Milan Cigán	2012–2018
Ambassador Milan Zachar	2018–present

Source: Compiled by the author based on the data of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

In addition to the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Brasilia, Slovakia has five representations in Brazil. They include the Honorary Consulate General and Consular Offices mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2: List of missions of the Slovak Republic in Brazil in 2020

Representative office	Embassy/consular area	Ambassador/Consul
Embassy of the Slovak Republic	Brasília	Milan Zachar
Slovak Honorary Consulate General	São Paulo	Peter Paulíček (till 2016)
Consular Office in Belo Horizonte	Minas Gerais	Renato Werner Victor de Queiroz
Consular Office in Recife	Pernambuco	João Alixandre Neto
Consular Office in Rio de Janeiro	Rio de Janeiro	Mohamad Faiçal Mohamad Said Hammoud
Consular Office in Joinville	Santa Catarina	Ernesto Heinzelmann

Source: Compiled by the author based on the data of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

The Federative Republic of Brazil has only one diplomatic mission in Slovakia – the Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Bratislava. The Brazilian Embassy in Bratislava supports Slovak citizens and it provides consular services related to Brazil. The current ambassador of Brazil is Luís Antonio Balduino Carneiro, who has served as ambassador since 2016, when he replaced Ambassador Susan Kleebank in this office. Both Embassies, Slovak and Brazilian, help to develop mutual relations between the two countries and support cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and scientific spheres.

In recent years, the bilateral cooperation between Brazil and Slovakia has accelerated. In modern history, the milestone of the Slovak–Brazilian relations is the year 2015, when the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák came to Brazil for an official visit. During his visit, he negotiated with Michel Temer, the Vice President at that time, the previous Minister of External Relations Mauro Luiz Lecker Vieira, Brazilian members of Parliament³ and the Brazilian ex-Minister of External Relations Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, whom Lajčák invited to the Globsec Conference in Bratislava. M. Lajčák also had a meeting with the consuls serving in Brazil and gave a lecture at the Diplomatic Academy in Rio Branco.

In addition, Ambassador Kleebank and State Secretary of MFEA Igor Slobodnik expressed the need for more frequent visits and contacts between both countries. Subsequently, the cooperation has been deepened, mostly in the economic sphere.⁴

Slovakia also supports the tight cooperation of Brazil with the Visegrád group, of which Slovakia is an active participant. Last year, the Slovak Ambassador Milan Zachar organised a breakfast meeting for the Czech Ambassador Sandra Lang Linkensederová, the Hungarian Ambassador Zoltán Szentgyörgyi, the Polish Chargé D’Affaires Marta Olkowska and Brazilian Designated Minister of External Relations Ernesto Henrique Fraga Araújo. They consulted about the future direction of Brazilian foreign policy and the cooperation with the Visegrád group.⁵ All parties confirmed that sound relations should be maintained and deepened. In addition, during the V4–Brazil meeting in Budapest which

³ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘M. Lajčák v Brazílii: Znovuoživenie kontaktov i konkrétne nové investície’, March 26, 2015.

⁴ More information in the section on Slovak–Brazilian Economic Relations.

⁵ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘Pracovné raňajky s ministrom zahraničných vecí Brazílie’, December 18, 2018.

took place on 15–17 November 2017, ‘the head of the Brazilian delegation said Brazil held the strong cohesion between the countries of the Visegrád Group’.⁶

In general, the Visegrád Group has become a closer partner to Brazil following EU policy. Countries belonging to the Visegrád Group try to diversify their traditional European and North American partners and begin to focus on other markets such as Latin America. Because Brazil belongs to the top partners of the European Union (the EU), the countries grouped in the Visegrád Group decided to enhance cooperation with one of the steady partners of the EU in general. Though the Visegrád countries should be more involved in already-existing programs of the EU to strengthen cohesion with Brazil, countries of the Visegrád Group continue in tighter cooperation within the Group and at bilateral level, too. Actually, most of summits and meetings between Brazil and countries grouped in the Visegrád Group are established at bilateral level. During these meetings, countries are slowly reassessing cooperation and seeking new fields appropriate for common aims.

In 2019, negotiations between Slovakia and Brazil continue. Ambassador M. Zachar has met Eduardo Nantes Bolsonaro, the Brazilian federal deputy and the Chair of the Committee for International Relations and National Defence. During their meeting, Zachar presented an agenda and priorities of Slovakia that would be the main goals of the Slovak Presidency of the Visegrád Group. He also mentioned the previous successes and activities within Brazil–Visegrád cooperation. Bolsonaro approved with satisfaction the cooperation and noticed the current challenges as the security, migration and modernisation of the economy, smart solutions and the need for searching new cooperation possibilities in trade and investments. Bolsonaro supports a continuous dialogue between the Visegrád countries and Brazil.⁷ Brazil considers the Visegrád countries steady partners within the EU. Moreover, Slovakia and Brazil also share the idea of reformation of the system of the United Nations.

Recently, Slovakia became an associated member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP – *Comunidade dos Países de*

⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, ‘V4–Brazil meeting in Budapest’, November 21, 2017.

⁷ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘Pracovné stretnutie veľvyslanca M. Zachara s predsedom Výboru zahraničných vzťahov a národnej obrany Snemovne poslancov Brazílie’, June 14, 2019.

Língua Portuguesa) in 2016.⁸ Operating since 1996, CPLP brings together 9 countries – Angola, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Portugal, Equatorial Guinea, East Timor, São Tomé and Príncipe.⁹ The main goal of the organisation is to foster relations and partnership among Portuguese-speaking countries but also to support close cooperation with other countries in the world. Due to her associate membership, Slovakia may facilitate communication and improve the efficiency of possibilities to cooperate with CPLP countries. Eventually, the actions of the last years prove that the connection between Brazil and Slovakia has become closer and more specific in the political arena.

4.2 Economic relations

4.2.1 Trade

Brazil is the most important trade partner of Slovakia in the region of Latin America. However, neither Brazil nor Slovakia are among their top trade partners, mutually. Concretely, Slovakia ranks as the 90th trading partner of Brazil in the world;¹⁰ meanwhile Brazil is the 26th exporter to Slovakia.¹¹

The beginning of economic relations between Slovakia and Brazil dates to the 20th century. Slovakia part of, Czechoslovakia at that time, concluded the first commercial and payment agreement with Brazil in 1931.¹² Despite different political regimes and directions, economic cooperation remained constant and the acceleration of relations started at the end of the 1980s and has continued since.

Until the early 1990s, Slovak–Brazilian trade remained at a level below 40 million USD, the trade value increased to almost 114 million USD in 1997. Thereafter, turnaround decreased at minimum level and increased gradually in the next years. Economic relations did not pick up even after Slovakia had become a member state of the EU; this was probably caused by the lack of overall economic ties between the EU and Latin America. But exports from Slovakia

⁸ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'SR je asociovaným pozorovateľom Spoločenstva portugalsky hovoriacich krajín', November 2, 2016.

⁹ CPLP, Estados Membros, s. a.

¹⁰ UN Comtrade Database, s. a.

¹¹ The Slovak Spectator, 'Brazil and Slovakia seek ways to grow together', January 23, 2012.

¹² Klíma, *Dějiny Brazílie*, 386.

to the Latin American region have actually increased by an average of six times in the last thirteen years.¹³

The pre-crisis period is considered an important milestone in trade relations between both countries. Although the global crisis disrupted bilateral trade, the negative consequences did not last for a long time. Brazilian–Slovak turnaround already accelerated in 2010, and it reached a peak in 2014 with a value above 460 million USD. There was a sharp trade deficit on Slovakia’s side of –318 million USD. After this year, trade relations have developed well and steadily (see Figure 1).

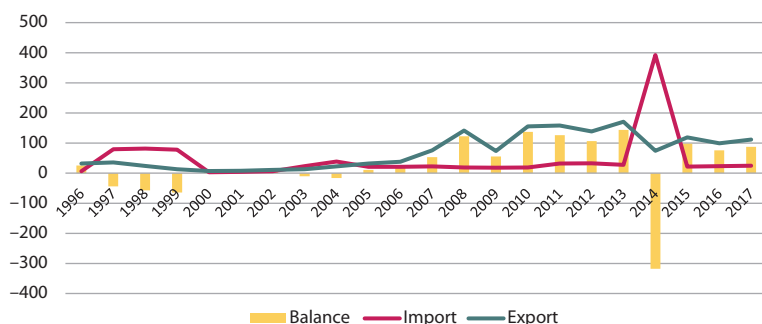


Figure 1: Slovak trade value with Brazil (in million USD)

Source: Compiled by the author based on UN Comtrade Database, s. a.

In 2014, there was a change in the pattern and quantity of Brazilian exports to Slovakia. The most significant components became cuts and edible offal of chicken, parts of pumps, compressors, and parts of devices in general, whose substantial increase in value translated in growth in Brazilian total export to Slovakia which amounted to approximately 102 million USD. The total export of Brazil was stabilised at a significantly lower level (87 million USD) than the previous year. This trend is continuing today.

Changes occurred not only in case of Brazilian exports, there were also changes in Slovak exports in the last years, when the biggest export items

¹³ K Brudzińska, ‘Getting closer: the V4 and LAC’, *Visegrad Insight*, August 18, 2014.

constituted vehicles and their parts. The automotive industry should be a great opportunity for future economic cooperation between Brazil and Slovakia.

Now, the top exports of Slovakia to Brazil are machinery, mechanical appliances and electrical equipment (37 per cent), followed by vehicles, aircraft, vessels, transport equipment (29 per cent) and base metals (15 per cent). Besides these top three commodity categories, to the more significant Slovak exports belong chemical products (6 per cent), plastics, rubber (5 per cent), optical, photographic, cinematographic equipment, clocks and watches (5 per cent).¹⁴ Although Brazil does not belong to the top Slovak trade partners, Brazil purchases more Slovak products than countries like Portugal, Finland and Norway in Europe, as well as Canada.¹⁵

Distance, poorly known markets and some strict terms on the Brazilian market could be a reason for low export from Slovakia. Customs procedures in Brazilian ports are very lengthy. The time needed to clear goods in the port may reach 10 days or more.¹⁶ Products could be better sold in Brazil after cooperation with a local representative because Brazilian entrepreneurship, mainly state-owned enterprises, require communicating with a foreign company via a delegate. To negotiate in Portuguese is an advantage or if a foreign entrepreneur tries to do business with a small Brazilian company, it is a necessity. Many duties on goods and services are imposed on the Brazilian market. The next significant factor contributing towards success on the Brazilian market is to attend and participate in fairs, exhibitions and long-term promotion of goods and companies.

Like the export of Slovakia, the export of Brazil to Slovakia is dominated by machinery and mechanical appliances and electrical equipment (30 per cent). In the second place were Brazilian exports of base metals, which posted 23 per cent of total Brazilian export in Slovakia. Close behind were live animals and animal products (14 per cent), then Brazilian chemicals (10 per cent), vegetable products (9 per cent), vehicles (5 per cent), foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, vinegar, tobacco, optical instruments, articles of stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, raw hides, skins, leather and furskins that posted below 5% of total Slovak import from Brazil in 2017.¹⁷ Brazil is also interested in delivering natural gas material,

¹⁴ UN Comtrade Database, s. a.

¹⁵ The Slovak Spectator, 'Brazil and Slovakia seek ways to grow together', January 23, 2012.

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Ekonomická informácia o teritóriu', 2017.

¹⁷ UN Comtrade Database, s. a.

fasteners, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, parts and accessories for passenger cars.¹⁸ According to the Brazilian–Slovak Chamber of Commerce, 340 Brazilian companies have exported their goods to Slovakia.¹⁹

4.2.2. Foreign direct investments

Slovakia has successfully attracted several investments from Brazil. The biggest and the most significant from among them is Embraco, the company focused on innovative solutions for refrigeration, namely compressors and air conditioning units. Embraco, founded in 1971 in Brazil, started its business in Slovakia on 5 December 1999. Embraco operates in Spišská Nová Ves, located in the east of Slovakia, where high unemployment is concentrated traditionally. Embraco is one of the biggest foreign investments in this region and plays an important role on the labour market in the east of Slovakia. Embraco is currently the biggest employer in the region of Dolný Spiš in Slovakia; furthermore, it also helps to decrease inequality between marginalised groups and the rest of the population because it employs 10 per cent of Roma in the east of Slovakia.²⁰ Besides economic benefits, Embraco provides many others, such as the development of the labour environment, as demonstrated by the award Via Bona Slovakia that it won for being the most responsible large company in 2013. The compressor NEU, product of Embraco produced in Slovakia, also won the second prize in the contest Innovative Act of the Year.

Slovakia can be an attractive location for Brazilian investments because of its location in the heart of East Central Europe underlined Ľubomíra Gabrielová, the Head of the Marketing Department at SARIO, and Renato Pellegrini, the General Secretary of the Luso Brazilian Business Association. Slovakia as a member of the EU could be a gateway to the EU common market. Moreover, Slovakia offers a qualified workforce.

Thanks to the presence of Embraco, three other companies from Brazil came to Slovakia. All of them are situated in Spišská Nová Ves, in the east of Slovakia. These investments are CRW Plásticos Slovakia, a producer of injection moulds

¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Ekonomická informácia o teritóriu', 2017.

¹⁹ 'Brazilian Slovak Chamber of Commerce', 2017.

²⁰ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Zlaté plakety ministra M. Lajčáka pre veľvyslancov Indonézie a Brazílie', January 27, 2017.

for the plastics industry, Micro Juntas SK, which manufactures insulators and seals for compressors, and Rudolph Usinados SK, a metalworking and machine tool producer.²¹ There are also two food industry companies from Brazil.

Slovak FDI amounted to 12 million USD in Brazil in 2016, amounting to only 3 million USD in 2015.

In terms of investments in Brazil, there are two Slovak investments. The first of them, ESET spol. s.r. o., a company established in 1992, is operating today in more than 200 countries worldwide,²² including Brazil. ESET spol. s.r. o. has one of its offices in São Paulo and offers computer virus protection services on the Brazilian market.

The other Slovak company connected with the Brazilian market is Sygic, which produces vehicle navigation systems. Sygic has cooperated with Brazilian Multilaser since 2008 of which task is to produce and distribute electronics. Multilaser integrates Sygic navigation into cars and vehicles in Brazil and into personal navigation devices in China, as said by Marian Mladý, the Commercial Manager of Sygic. More than 12 thousand police cars in São Paulo have a navigation system from Sygic. Brazil is also the biggest market for software of personal navigation. Mladý expects the expansion of Sygic products for smartphones in Brazil, which belongs to the top five countries by smartphone users in the world. That is an interesting opportunity and challenge for the Slovak company and an example of cooperation for both countries as well.²³

These two Slovak high-tech enterprises, ESET and Sygic, have established themselves on the Brazilian market and are an example of successful mutual economic cooperation between both countries, as the official statement of Slovakia also expresses. Therefore science, development and innovation could be spheres with the biggest potential for the future development of bilateral economic cooperation.

Over the past years, the bilateral relations between Brazil and Slovakia have accelerated, as demonstrated by the mutual negotiations and visits of politicians and officials. The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (MFEA) cooperates with other organisations, both Slovak and Brazilian, to strengthen economic cooperation. MFEA supports Slovak entrepreneurs to invest and start business in Brazil by organising fairs.

²¹ The Slovak Spectator, 'Brazil and Slovakia seek ways to grow together', January 23, 2012.

²² ESET, 'Profil a história spoločnosti', s. a.

²³ Finweb, 'Najväčší partner Sygicu je v Brazílii', May 22, 2013.

More specifically, MFEA has invited Slovak entrepreneurs for example to ExpoLondrina in Londrina, Mercopar in Caxias do Sul and Conference TCS in Foz de Iguazu.²⁴ The other significant event for Brazilian–Slovak relations was the establishment of the Slovakia Business Forum in São Paulo in 2018.²⁵ During official visits, the Slovak–Brazilian Chamber of Commerce in São Paulo was opened by the State Secretary of the MFEA Lukáš Parizek. MFEA also organised a seminar together with the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which was attended by the business consultant of the Brazilian Embassy A. Rodrigues Martins.²⁶ Moreover, the Brazilian–Slovak Chamber of Commerce was founded on 6 October 2017, as the first Latin American country's institution of this kind in Slovakia. The chamber was launched with the support of 16 companies and the Embassy of Brazil in Slovakia.²⁷ SARIO (Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency) is the next institution that supports mutual economic relations, helping projects of Brazilian investors.

Slovakia, as a member of the EU, supported economic cooperation between Mercosur and the EU reached in June 2019. During the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Slovakia confirmed her interest in the renewal of negotiations between the EU and Mercosur. Moreover, the agreement in trade between them could be an opportunity for both Slovakia and Brazil to seek ways how to cooperate more tightly.

4.3 Cultural, educational and scientific cooperation

4.3.1 Migration and famous Slovak–Brazilians

Currently, migration between Brazil and Slovakia is not significant. Indeed, 259 Brazilians migrated to Slovakia and 131 Slovaks to Brazil in 2017. In comparison

²⁴ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Medzinárodný obchodný veľtrh o tepelných konverzných riešeniach v Brazílii 01.–03. 06. 2016', February 18, 2016; Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Veľtrh spojený s výstavou zameraný na pôdohospodárstvo, 7.–17. Apríla 2016 v štáte Paraná, Brazílii – ExpoLondrina' February 29, 2016; Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Pozvánka na veľtrh Mercopar v Brazílii', October 6, 2011.

²⁵ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Slovensko a Brazília chcú posunúť ekonomickú spoluprácu k vyššej pridanej hodnote', October 2, 2018.

²⁶ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Podujatie SOPK: okrúhly stôl – Brazília', November 3, 2015.

²⁷ 'Brazilian Slovak Chamber of Commerce', 2017.

with the other countries of the Visegrád Group, the trend is not to migrate to Brazil a lot. Although migration between those two countries has never been high due to distance, Slovak natives left traces from their original culture during the exodus from Czechoslovakia to Brazil in the previous century. One of them, Zlatica Medlenova de Farias, who has lived in Brazil since 1966, made a documentary about her first interaction with Brazilian culture and environment. She also wrote the book *Literatura e imigração: sonhos em movimento* [Literature and Immigration: Dreams in Motion] in English, in 2006.²⁸

It is interesting that one former president of Brazil, Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira, also had Czechoslovak ancestors. As it is mentioned above,²⁹ the great-grandfather of Kubitschek was Czech, and in addition, the mother of Juscelino was half Slovak and half Czech. The president who ruled Brazil between 1956 and 1961 built the new capital Brasília.

Probably, the most famous Slovak in Brazil is Milan Rastislav Štefánik, an astronomer, photographer, and military pilot, a Brigadier General in the French Armed Forces, a diplomat and a politician. He is undoubtedly one of the most significant persons in Slovak history due to his participation in the Czech–Slovak foreign resistance during WWI and as one of the founders of the first Czechoslovak Republic. Milan Rastislav Štefánik came to Brazil to do research work as an astronomer. Actually, he observed the total eclipse of the sun on the mountain Passa Quatro, in the federal state of Minas Gerais, in 1912.³⁰ Later on, the Brazilians built a monument to honour him.³¹

Another significant political leader connected with Brazil is Rudolf Schuster, the former president of Slovakia in the years 1999–2004. He has a significant connection with Brazil because his family, namely his uncle and father, visited Brazil in the 1920s. Moreover, his uncle, Ján Benedik made many pictures and a documentary film about the Pareci Indians, who were indigenous people from Amazonia and worked on rubber plantations.³² They had also brought many souvenirs and Indian artefacts from their expedition and these were a part of the exhibition in Bratislava Castle and the Slovak Technical Museum in Kosice in 2017. The exhibitions also consisted of photos from the expeditions of the former

²⁸ Leituras dos Girassóis, ‘Zlatica de Farias, da Tchecoslováquia para o Brasil’, 2018.

²⁹ More information in the chapter on the Czech Republic and Brazil.

³⁰ Klíma, *Dějiny Brazílie*.

³¹ The Slovak Spectator, ‘Little pieces of Slovakia in Brazil’, January 23, 2012.

³² Pravda, ‘Divoká Brazília na Bratislavskom hrade’, October 28, 2016.

Slovak president Rudolf Schuster who visited Brazil several times, privately and also as head of Slovakia in the years 1991, 2001 and 2014. The last expedition named Brazil – the expedition IV – 2014 was the expedition of the 4th generation of Schuster's family.³³ These photos and artefacts were also exhibited in the Slovak Institute in Berlin, during the exhibition of Rudolf Schuster's travels and expeditions named *Churchill's Bears*.³⁴

Former President Schuster himself said that 'Brazil had become the second closest country after Slovakia worldwide for his family'.³⁵ The fact that the Square of Slovakia was opened in the capital of Palmas in Brazil in 2001 is testimony to the significance of the above mentioned. The initial idea was to name this square after Schuster's family but Rudolf Schuster declined it.

4.3.2 Cultural dimension

The Embassy of Brazil has organised the Cultural festival called Brazilslava every year since 2017. The first festival Brazilslava took place on 7 September 2017, on the Independence Day of Brazil (*Dia da Independência*, in Portuguese). The festival shows different forms of Brazilian art through music, dance and theatre performances, cinema shows, architecture, design and literature, representing Brazilian artists. Moreover, some of these shows are presented by Slovak artistic groups, handling Brazilian culture and art. The festival provides an opportunity to connect artists from both countries and gives an overall view of the Brazilian lifestyle, the exotic culture, impressions and tastes of Brazil in the wider sense. Brazilslava is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, the Federal Government of Brazil, the capital Bratislava, the Portuguese Institute in Slovakia, but also by the British Council in Slovakia, the French Institute in Slovakia etc.

In the first year of Brazilslava, Bratislava offered 14 events at several historical and cultural places and hosted the artists such as the pianist Pablo Rossi, the singer Lica Cecato Stefano Scutari, the architect Professor Daniele Pisani etc.

³³ R Némethová, 'Rudolf Schuster: Brazilska džungľa ma lákala od detstva', *SME*, October 23, 2016.

³⁴ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Výstava fotografií bývalého prezidenta SR a cestovateľa Rudolfa Schustera v Berlíne', August 27, 2010.

³⁵ Pravda, 'Divoká Brazília na Bratislavskom hrade'.

The Slovak cinema Lumière in cooperation with the Portuguese Institute in Bratislava showed three Brazilian movies, *Two Sons of Francisco*, *Russian Red* and *The Second Mother*, which brought the problems and aspects of life in Brazil closer to Slovak citizens. In addition, 12 Brazilian painters participated in the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) from 8 September until October and the visual contemporary artist Carmela Gross exhibited a light installation in the House of Arts (Kunsthalle) in Bratislava. During Bratislava, the Slovak capoeira group, the Abadá Capoeira, showed the traditional Brazilian martial art and the Slovak music group Campana Batucada the Brazilian drumbeat.

Thanks to the success of the first year, Bratislava was organised again the next year and this tradition will continue every year showing closer cultural connection between both countries and interest for Brazilian culture from the Slovak side. During the second year of this festival, a series of Brazilian movies were broadcasted and five movies were screened at the Lumière cinema (the feature films *Elis*, *A Movie of my Life*, *Gabriel and the Mountain*, *Dear Ambassador*, *Doctor of Spirits*).

Artists such as pianist Loraine Balen, the musical group Ricardo Fiuza Trio and Brazilian pianist Pablo Rossi performed at the festival. Moreover, the common performance of Pablo Rossi and Slovak violinist Dalibor Karvaj was organised to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Brazil and Slovakia. Next, Bratislava hosted the exhibition Circuito Internacional de Arte Brasileira and the exhibition of Slovak traveller and publicist Zdenko Somorovsky and his photographs from Brazil. Within the second year of the festival, Slovak citizens had an opportunity to taste Brazilian barbecue called *churrasco*. In conclusion, a discussion about a book of the well-known Brazilian writer Machado de Assis, the representative of Brazilian realism, was organised.

On the other hand, there is another interesting connection between Brazil and Slovakia. Brazil has a folklore group called Život ('Life', in Slovak) which spreads Slovak culture in Brazil by singing Slovak folklore songs and wearing traditional Slovak folk costumes. The ensemble was established by Slovak immigrants who had brought CDs and DVDs, which inspired the folk group Život to dance and sing Slovak traditional dances and songs, even though its members do not understand the lyrics of the songs.³⁶ Moreover, the Association of Czech and

³⁶ The Slovak Spectator, 'Little pieces of Slovakia in Brazil', January 23, 2012.

Slovak people was established in Rio de Janeiro in 2017 as an important cultural organisation.

Furthermore, Slovakia as a member of the EU also participates in the European Week in Brazil, where it presents its culture through bazaars displayed in the capital of Brazil. Besides offering demonstrations of Slovak crystals, embroidery, special ceramics called Modranská, Slovak blueprints and typical Slovak food and drink, Slovak representatives inform visitors about the country and the touristic and economic possibilities there.³⁷

Within the European Week, members of the EU also organised the European Film Festival where EU countries have the opportunity to screen their movies for Brazilian audiences. Slovakia introduced the movie *Tigre v meste*, shot by Juraj Krasnohorský at the Festival in 2017³⁸ and the Slovak–Czech movie – *Dôverný nepriateľ*, made by Karel Janák at the Festival in 2019.³⁹ These movies were presented in the capital, Brasília and other ten cities of federal states (Aracaju, Belém, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Florianópolis, Goiânia, Manaus, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro a Salvador).

Moreover, Brazilian citizens had a chance to know more about Slovakia, about the Parliament of Slovakia, as well as the culture and history of Slovakia via broadcast on Radio Senado. The broadcast also contained three speeches of the Slovak ambassador in Brazil – Milan Cigáň.⁴⁰

4.3.3 Educational and scientific cooperation

Educational cooperation between Brazil and Slovakia is based on agreements signed in the 1980s.⁴¹ Since joining the EU, educational and scientific cooperation is regulated by the Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the European Community and the Federative Republic of Brazil.⁴² Though Brazil launched the programme *Science without Borders* in 2011,

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘XIII. ročník týždňa Európy v Brazílii’, May 15, 2017.

³⁸ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘XIII. ročník týždňa Európy v Brazílii’, May 15, 2017.

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘Slovenský film na XV. ročníku Festivalu európskeho filmu v Brazílii’, May 23, 2019.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, ‘Reportáž o Slovensku v Radio Senado Brazília’, July 11, 2017.

⁴¹ More information in the chapter on the Czech Republic and Brazil.

⁴² EUR-Lex, 2019.

Slovakia did not join it. The main aim of the programme financed by the Brazilian Government was to strengthen and expand cooperation with American and European scientific institutions, through international mobility of researchers and students. MFEA regularly informs about the options of cooperation in the educational sector but mutual cooperation is considered as not significant, probably due to the geographical distance between Brazil and Slovakia. Not only do Slovak universities lack departments aimed at research of Latin American countries, but also an institution generally dealing with Brazil and Latin America is missing in Slovakia.

Students have the opportunity to study in Brazil via the programme Erasmus+ and bilateral agreements. The main institution which helps Slovak students and researchers to find possibilities to obtain scholarships to study and doing research abroad, and of course in Brazil too, is SAIA (Slovak Academic Information Agency). Another opportunity for international cooperation is offered by bilateral agreements between several Slovak and Brazilian universities, such as the agreement between the University of Economics in Bratislava (Slovakia) and two partner universities from Brazil: Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo and Universidade de São Paulo. Since 2013, SAIA has provided scholarships and travel grants to four Slovak students to study in Brazil.

On the other hand, six university teachers, researchers and students have gained scholarships from SAIA to study and do research in Slovakia. Though Brazilian students are not very interested in studying in Slovakia, some of them had an opportunity to find out more about Slovakia during a lecture given by Milan Cigáň, the Ambassador of Slovakia in Brazil. The lecture was given at the Catholic University in the capital, in 2017. The presentation of the Slovak Ambassador concerned experiences within the EU, the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council, cooperation within the Visegrád Group, the economic situation in Slovakia and the need to strengthen cooperation with Brazil and Latin America.⁴³

4.4 Tourism

Tourism also belongs to important aspects of cooperation. Relations in this sector are regulated via the Agreement on the partial visa waiver between the

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Veľvyslanec Milan Cigáň prednášal pre študentov Katolíckej Univerzity v Brazílii', May 8, 2017.

Government of the Slovak Republic and the Federative Republic of Brazil on the basis of which Slovak citizens are not required to obtain visas for entry into Brazil.⁴⁴ Slovak tourists have to fill out and print two copies of the Brazilian foreigner entry and exit card, and their residence in Brazil shall not exceed 90 days on a semi-annual basis.⁴⁵ The agreement applies to both parties identically, and thus Brazilian citizens are eligible for entry into Slovakia with a valid passport and without a visa.⁴⁶

Though Brazilian tourists account only for a small proportion of total visitants (0.29 per cent), they belong to the most numerous group of Latin American visitants in Slovakia, after Mexicans. According to the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, 6,503 Brazilians visited Slovakia in 2018, 5.9 per cent more than in the previous year.⁴⁷ Slovakia already informed about the significant annual increase (32 per cent) in the number of Brazilian tourists who visited Slovakia in 2013. The increased interest of tourists from Brazil is explained by a total increase in visits of Slovakia by foreigners.⁴⁸ Tourists from Brazil tend to spend approximately 2 nights on average in Slovakia.⁴⁹

The Ministry of Transport and Construction is responsible for seeking options how to make Slovakia a more attractive destination for tourists. In addition, Slovakia as part of the Visegrád Group, signed the Tourism Cooperation Protocol within which a common marketing plan called *Discover Central Europe* was elaborated. The main aim of this strategy is to attract tourists from farther countries, such as Brazil, to central Europe.⁵⁰

On the other hand, Slovak tourists visit Brazil by a higher proportion. However, Brazil does not belong to the top tourist destinations for Slovak people due to the distance between both countries. According to data of the Ministry of Tourism of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 2,554 tourists from Slovakia visited Brazil in 2018, of whom 1,941 Slovaks arrived by airplane, 572 by road,

⁴⁴ Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, 'Federative Republic of Brazil', s. a.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 'Brazília', s. a.

⁴⁶ Zbierka Zákonov č. 70/2007, Agreement on the partial visa waiver between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Federative Republic of Brazil, 2007.

⁴⁷ Ministry of Transport and Construction, 'Štatistiky a analýzy CR', s. a.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Transport and Construction, 'Slovensko navštívilo o desatinu zahraničných turistov viac', December 6, 2013.

⁴⁹ Ministry of Transport and Construction, 'Štatistiky a analýzy CR', s. a.

⁵⁰ Ministry of Transport and Construction, 'Iniciatíva Discover Central Europe zameraná aj na latin America spolu s V4', February 16, 2017.

36 by sea and 5 by waterway.⁵¹ It is an increase in all categories of transport and visits as well.

Most Slovak tourists visited the most famous destinations in Brazil such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, followed by Paraná. Only several dozen Slovaks visited the Federal District and the capital, Brasília built on the initiative of President Kubitschek of Czechoslovak origin. The Amazon forest is not visited frequently by Slovak tourists, in spite of its attractiveness.⁵²

In conclusion, there is a curious connection between Brazil and Slovakia, while Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia has a twin in Brazil. Brazilian Bratislava, a small town located in the south of Brazil, was set up by Slovak immigrants some decades ago. Central European influence is felt there to this day owing to the blue eyed people living there. Even Brazilian Bratislava has a football team whose colours are identical to the Slovak national flag.⁵³ After all, this place could also be an interesting place to visit for Slovak tourists.

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⁵¹ Ministry of Tourism of Brazil, ‘Anuário Estatístico de Turismo’, 2019.

⁵² Ministry of Tourism of Brazil, ‘Anuário Estatístico de Turismo’, 2019.

⁵³ The Slovak Spectator, ‘Little pieces of Slovakia in Brazil’, January 23, 2012.

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