

czech focus

BUSINESS IN A PLEASANT ATMOSPHERE

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CZECH-HUNGARIAN BUSINESS CLUB COVERS MAJOR BRANCHES OF THE ECONOMY



» The Cseh-Magyar Üzleti Klub (Czech-Hungarian Business Club) celebrates the 15th anniversary of its establishment this year. As the President of the Club, László Vajányi points out to Diplomacy&Trade, he considers the membership, itself as the greatest success of this period. "We have 29 members – all of them are active! We have three professional events a year and each member shows up for at least one of these. Our members also attend events organized by the European Chambers of Commerce in Hungary (EU Chambers) that we are a member of (since 2010), despite not being an actual chamber. Although, earlier, there was talk about the possibility of the Czech-Hungarian Business Club evolving into a Visegrád Four (V4) Chamber of Commerce in Hungary, we have given up on that because there is no Polish-Hungarian or Slovak-Hungarian chamber or business club in this country," he explains.

Mutual help

The Club facilitates the business connections of its members among themselves and with outside partners, the President (who is the managing director of Ravak Hungary, the local subsidiary of the Czech bathtub and shower enclosure maker Ravak) stresses that "since we have members from different spheres of the economy – like the automotive, construction and food industries – with different fields and

levels of experience, we can provide, within the Club, professional advice in several fields (management, tax, legal environment, etc.). Several members have great knowledge of the Hungarian as well as the Czech market and thus, they are able to explain the differences to other members. Sometimes, we also have lecturers from outside the Club, which, by the way, have contributed to the growth in our membership as several guests speakers – experiencing the great atmosphere – decided to join us. This was a good decision from the professional point of view, as well, since they acquired clients from within the Club. If Czech companies entering the Hungarian market wish to establish business contacts here, we can provide initial help free of charge. If the issue to be solved goes beyond what we can do or more information is needed, we usually suggest they contact CzechTrade, which can explore the possibilities for the newcomers. We also propose market players – first from among our members – who can be of help." He adds that last year, the Czech-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce was re-established in Prague and that organization is now ready assist Hungarian firms to do business in the Czech Republic.

Relevant issues

"At club meetings, we always try to adjust the topics discussed to the relevant issues arising in the business environment at the given time. These subjects change, of course, from time


to time. One of them is well-known to most employers in Hungary: the difficulties of hiring and maintaining skilled labor. This has recently been the topic of discussion at our professional seminars with the participation of HR and other relevant experts. Another timely topic nowadays concerning basically all spheres of the economy is online marketing, online communication. Our members are not of the Y generation but we would like to understand them and their purchasing habits, therefore, we also invite experts from this field. Be it an industrial product or a consumer product, it needs to be communicated effectively to clients and customers," he highlights.

Not just business

Events at the Czech-Hungarian Business Club are held in a relaxed atmosphere complimented by fine Czech food and beers, contributing to bilateral relations outside the business sphere, deepening cultural and human ties. In this respect, László Vajányi, who has been the President of the Club since 2011, notes that their members include catering firms active in the field of Czech gastronomy like beer importers. "A publisher of guidebooks about Prague and the different regions of the Czech Republic is another member in the Club. All these can help spread – or introduce, for that matter – Czech culture. In 2018, the Club organized a Czech beer tour during which we visited craft beers workshops in several

Moravian regions and learned about the art of beer brewing – I would call art the experience that the Czechs have accumulated over many centuries in beer production, brewing this drink in a lot of flavors. This is, of course, part of the Czech culture as you can see it in brilliant literary pieces and movies. One of the places we visited was the venue where the deservedly popular film 'Cutting it short' (the Hungarian title is more telling: Brewery Capriccio) was shot in the little town of Dalešice. We had a beer tasting there and watched the movie on the bus. During the professional seminars, we also consume primarily Czech food and drinks."

Trying to be not too big

Membership is growing, which is a welcome development but the President says they do not want to grow too big. "Our goal is to have membership that covers all important spheres of the economy so that the focus would not be narrowed down to a certain branch because then, the Club would not be attractive for its members. However, we would not like a size of over 50 members because that would not be a club anymore. We would like to keep this friendly atmosphere what we have now. We wish to continue to hold three professional events a year: in January, May and October. Also, the beer festival in June is attended by most of our members individually." He stresses that the job of the Club is to create professional but pleasant surroundings and then "it is up to the individual members to forge business contacts and proactively take advantage of the opportunities we provide at the events of the Czech-Hungarian Business Club." 



PHOTOS BY DÁVID HARANGÓZÓ, CZECH-HUNGARIAN BUSINESS CLUB