

Slovakia's Story Doesn't End at Its Borders: Slovaks in Czechia on Talent, Artificial Intelligence, and Their Connection to Home

9.7.2026 - | Kempelenov inštitút inteligentných technológií

On Thursday afternoon, June 18, Slovak could be heard in every corner of Prague's Atlas cinema, in the underground gallery of filmmaker and designer Karel Vachek's work, in the foyer outside the screening rooms, and in the stylish Atlas rostlin café. At the Slovaks in Czechia for Slovakia event, researchers, entrepreneurs, students, managers, people from tech companies and the civic sector came together to discuss how the Slovak community in the Czech Republic can contribute to Slovakia's future.

The event was organized by the **Kempelen Institute of Intelligent Technologies (KInIT)** together with the **Slovak Diaspora organization**, as part of the **slovaks.ai project**. Its goal is to map and connect talent at home and abroad and to create new forms of cooperation between Slovakia and its communities beyond its borders.

Brain Drain

Listening to the views of Slovaks abroad, especially in Czechia, matters a great deal today. Slovakia is facing a massive brain drain. Around 70 percent of Slovak students who go abroad to study choose the Czech Republic, and Slovaks are the largest group of foreign students at Czech universities. In 2024, as many as 40 percent of the top Slovak high school graduates left the country. Many of those who study in Czechia never come back.

According to KInIT's **CEO Mária Bielíková**, these numbers don't necessarily have to be seen as a problem. *"Slovakia doesn't always need people to return home in every case, but rather the circulation of talent, through connecting communities, investment, mentoring, and cooperation abroad,"* she stressed in her opening remarks. This idea became one of the central themes of the meeting. The goal wasn't to convince people to come home, but to find ways they can remain part of the Slovak story no matter where they live. *"Being successful in Czechia while still caring about Slovakia isn't a contradiction. It's a practical form of modern patriotism,"* says **Mária Bielíková**.

Technology is Advancing. Can We Keep Up?

The event's guest speaker was strategist and innovation expert **Ján Uriga**. In his keynote, he spoke about the relationship between the pace of technological development and people's ability to adapt to change. Uriga pointed out that public debate about artificial intelligence often focuses on the technology itself, when the far more important questions are how we actually use it and what decisions we make as individuals, companies, and states. *"Technology reduces effort, saves time, and increases efficiency, while leadership gives direction, purpose, and decides where we invest our limited time and resources,"* he said.

In his view, the biggest challenge of the future isn't artificial intelligence itself, but society's ability to put technological progress toward meaningful goals. *"In the digital age, it's not enough to ask: how do we use technology? We also need to ask what technology allows us to stop doing, and what that allows us to devote ourselves to."*

Thinking About Home From Across the Border

For the group discussions, organizers prepared a series of questions about identity, the relationship to Slovakia, the differences between Slovaks and Czechs, and the future of artificial intelligence.

When asked ***what they're most proud of when they think of Slovakia today***, recurring themes included folklore, culture, language, the country's safety, remarkable people, athletes, and Slovaks' ability to make their mark on the world. Several participants said that only after moving abroad did they start to truly appreciate certain qualities of Slovak society, especially its sense of community, close family ties, respect for tradition, and willingness to help others.

When the discussion turned to comparing Slovakia and Czechia, similar observations came up. Participants described Slovaks as warmer and more relationship oriented, while seeing Czechs as more pragmatic, more rational, and more trusting of how systems work.

Most agreed both countries have something to offer each other. Slovakia, they felt, could draw more from the Czech emphasis on education, culture, entrepreneurship, and strategic thinking. Czechia, in turn, could take more from Slovakia's sense of togetherness, warmth, and community spirit.

AI as a Shared Project

In the third round of discussions, participants reflected on artificial intelligence, its impact on their work, and the changes it will bring in the future. Topics included support for research and innovation, building Slovak language models, education in AI, and the fight against disinformation alongside the need for critical thinking.

"Could Slovakia find its own competitive advantage in AI and emerging technologies?" asked **Mária Bieliková**. This question was also picked up by one of the event's guests, **Czech government AI commissioner Lukáš Kačena**. *"If we want to attract talent and be strong in AI, we need to join forces,"* he said. In his view, if Central European countries want to succeed in global competition, they need to build strong international partnerships and bring together their expertise in research, education, and talent attraction. *"A small country like Czechia or Slovakia can't manage this alone."*

The theme of the need for cooperation and joining forces kept coming up throughout the informal conversations as well, not just around artificial intelligence but also in discussions about talent, innovation, and the region's future. Participants agreed that Slovakia can only succeed as part of wider European and international networks.

Ready to Make a Difference

The discussion in Prague, about artificial intelligence and much more, showed that there's strong interest among Slovaks in Czechia in helping shape Slovakia's future. People who live in Prague, Brno, or elsewhere abroad still care deeply about what's happening back home. They don't want to just watch from the sidelines. They're ready to help through mentoring, investment, professional expertise, and connecting communities. *"I'm grateful for the chance to be part of this event. So many new connections were made here, and I'm looking forward to more Slovak-Czech professional events like this. Together we're showing that Slovaks abroad can also be part of positive change for Slovakia,"* said **Adela Klepáková**, one of the participants and deputy chair of the Slovak Diaspora association.

The Slovaks in Czechia for Slovakia event was supported by the Recovery and Resilience Plan, Component 10: Attracting and Retaining Talent, Investment 2: Strengthening ties with the diaspora and supporting civic initiatives. Project code: 10I02-03-V01-00021

<https://kinit.sk/slovakias-story-doesnt-end-at-its-borders-slovaks-in-czechia-on-talent-artificial-intelligence-and-their-connection-to-home>