



Quarterly Newsletter June 2005

Membership & Sponsorship Slovakia: the Detroit of Europe?

Dear Member,

Welcome to this issue of our newsletter – especially to the 26 companies who have joined us since March.

Over the past few months, I hope you have benefited from attending an event, visiting www.mwtf.org.uk, or talking on the phone to Claire or a fellow member of the Forum. Our company board members are phoning as many members as possible; we want to know your views on what's good about MWTF and what we could be doing better.

If you have not been contacted but would like to be, please phone Claire Gamage on 0121 607 1759 or me, Steve Swinden, on 07968 779008.

We will publish the results in the September newsletter but I'll say now that it's turning out to be a very informative and pleasurable exercise. It's clear that amongst our members

there are many companies who are the best at what they do - across a hugely diverse range of market sectors - but some need support specific to a certain market, or advice on planning their overall export strategy.

If that's you, then please let us know via the website or on one of the numbers above. MWTF can help, or direct you towards people who can.

Most MWTF activities are free to members. This is possible only through various forms of sponsorship. To enable us to continue to grow and offer members what you want, we would like to obtain more sponsorship. If you have any ideas of who would be appropriate sponsors of Midlands World Trade Forum please give one of us a call.

Yours faithfully

Steve Swinden
MWTF Chairman

MWTF members met on 27th April to hear how they can secure deals with the "Detroit of Europe".

The Slovak Republic provides British companies a variety of opportunities in a wide range of sectors, particularly the automotive sector.

With the latest investment and expansion announcements from GETRAG FORD Transmissions, Visteon and VW Slovakia, the Slovak Republic is truly becoming the "Detroit of Europe" according to UK Trade & Investment, the government body set up to help British companies get into exporting.

Along with other countries in central Europe, Slovakia has made remarkable progress in its transition from a command-driven economy to a free market one.

The Slovak Republic boasts a good strategic location, substantial natural resources, a skilled workforce and an established industrial base. Since May 2004, the country has been a member of the EU and NATO.

MWTF hosted the event with the Confederation of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce, which explained how businesses can take advantage of one

of the fastest growing markets in Europe.

Speakers at Forest of Arden Hotel and Country Club near Meriden included John Baron, chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, and other experts on the Slovak economy and culture, including the director of KPMG Bratislava and the managing director of a British company already successfully exporting to the country.

Allen Matty, senior international trade adviser at Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, said: "Slovakia is a largely untapped market for British companies. There are many areas of growth, but particularly exciting at the moment are the huge opportunities in the automotive sector, which is accelerating fast.

"Many people believe that the next 12 months will be critical for companies looking to develop those all-important business relationships – which could be very timely for regional suppliers in the light of recent events at MG Rover. Companies offering good products at a good price are finding an excellent reception."

China: Sourcing & Selling

The next MWTF Members Event will focus on how to source products from China *and* how to sell into this difficult market.

There will be a speaker from the China-Britain Business Council and two company case studies, one covering sourcing product and the other, how to sell.

The event will take place at the Quality Hotel, Walsall (off J10 of

the M6) on Friday 23rd September 2005.

This event is open to MWTF members only and is free of charge (including Breakfast).

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To reserve a place, please contact Claire Gamage, MWTF Coordinator on 0121 607 1759. Full details will be distributed shortly.

ON THE EXPORT TRAIL: Left to right:

Colin Rosser, Alpha Management Consultants; John Baron, chairman of British Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, Mark Cooke, Cobra International Ltd, and David Burton, chairman of the Confederation of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce.



French and Dutch vote 'No' to the EU Constitution

Voters in France and the Netherlands have dramatically rejected the proposed EU constitution in their national referendums. 55% of voters in France voted no and just over 61% voted no in the Netherlands.

Have any countries ratified the constitution? Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia have all ratified the constitution through parliamentary voting. Spain voted yes in a national referendum, although it still had to be officially ratified by the Spanish Parliament.

Who else is due to hold national referendums? Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Czech Republic and Poland still plan to hold referendums. The referendum in the UK has been shelved.

Is the constitution now dead? It has to be ratified by all 25 member states and the original plan was for it to be implemented by November 2006. It

is therefore difficult to see how the constitution can still go ahead due to the referendums in France and the Netherlands. However the draft treaty does state that if after two years of the treaty being signed 20 member states have ratified it, but others have experienced difficulties it can be referred to the European Council.

What were the issues behind the French and Dutch no votes? There were a variety of reasons. The French thought that the constitution was too Anglo Saxon and feared the loss of their social rights. Both the Dutch and the French voters feared the prospect of Turkey joining the EU, and saw the potential rise of immigrants from Turkey as a big threat. Dutch voters are also disenchanted with the performance of the euro, and the high rise in prices in the Netherlands. There is also a deep dissatisfaction with both of the countries main political parties.

What was in the Constitution? It is a huge document, and expresses large ambitions, for example a common foreign policy, however each member state would retain a right of veto to go its own way.

It included the new role of a Foreign Minister backed up by a new EU diplomatic service. The constitution also included a Charter of Fundamental Rights, which included the right to strike. It also proposed to give national parliaments more say over the decisions of the European Commission, and to change the structure of voting in the Council of Europe to reflect the balance of population in the expanded EU. There would also have been more joint action to be decided by majority voting with such issues as immigrating and asylum policy.

Finally it is important to note that the EU already has rights to legislate over external trade and customs policy, the



euro zone, internal market, the monetary policy of countries in the EU already has rights to legislate over external trade and customs policy, the internal market, the monetary policy of countries in the euro zone, agriculture and fisheries, and also subjects including the environment and employment.

The constitution brought together the many treaties and agreements on which the EU is based for the first time. Its purpose is to define the powers of the EU, stating where the EU can act and where member states retain their right of veto. EU law only takes precedence over national laws when the member states have agreed to for it to do so.

Manage all your Overseas Accounts in one place

The Royal Bank of Scotland have launched their new Internet based, fully automated cash concentration service, Global Liquidity Engine (GLE). This is a service that will enable customers to manage their bank accounts around the world more effectively.

GLE is an international cash management (ICM) service accessed via the internet, which allows customers to view balances and transaction details of their accounts across the globe through one system. It allows the customer to auto-initiate transfers, to move funds to wherever they are required, and provides them with a projected close of business position available for investment each day.

Through the Bank's extensive partner bank network, RBS customers can avoid moving their current overseas banking proposition and continue with their current local banking provider. This is an effective and cost efficient feature that

appeals to RBS clients and helps minimise disruption globally whilst maximising investment opportunities. This also enables a rapid implementation of the RBS cash pool, which saves the customers time and cost and, most importantly, allows them to enjoy the benefits fast.

Carolyn O'Brien, Regional Sales Manager, International Cash Management Sales at RBS commented:

"We are delighted at the launch of GLE and the improved international cash management solutions it will provide to our new and existing customers. As a UK bank providing global solutions, we are acutely aware of the importance of assisting our customers to manage their monies across the globe. We firmly believe this is a product that will improve the effectiveness of our customers banking requirements."

For further information, visit www.rbs.co.uk.



New Members this quarter

- Abeco Tools Ltd *Hand Tool Manufacture*
- Aether Media Group *Film, Video and DVD production*
- Alumasc Interior Building Products Ltd *Column casings, radiator guards, casing for services and premier castings*
- Baylis & Harding *Toiletry and gift manufacture and supplier*
- British Jewellery & Giftware Federation *Represents the UK's jewellery, giftware, luggage & leathersgoods industry.*
- Brown McFarlane Ltd *Steel stockholders, processors, and traders*
- BSA Metal Powders *Producer of metal powder for thermal spray coatings, filter, brazing and on applications*
- Chapman Hamer Limited *Time Recording and Project Management software for the public, voluntary and education sectors*
- Ceramics *Manufacturers*
- Colliers Hill *Bespoke Shakespeare Tours*
- Future Training 2000 *Training and Development*
- Glasshouse Productions *Entertainment & Entertainment Agents, music publishers, recording studios, record label, training and consultancy organisation*
- Hygan Products Ltd *Foam converters and potters merchants*
- IBP Conex Ltd *Manufacture of Pipe fittings and compression joints.*
- Instarmac Group plc *Manufacturer of highway maintenance, concrete repair, tile adhesives, streetscape bedding and pointing mortars*
- JP Media *Publishing*
- Keltruck Limited *Exporter of used (Mainly Scania) trucks and used reconditioned scania cabs, parts and assemblies*
- LTI Vehicles *Manufacturer of the London Taxi – commonly known as the 'Black Cab'.*
- Marston's Brewery *Brewers*
- Moltech Power Systems Ltd *Design, manufacture and commercialisation of re-chargeable power solutions*
- OER *Fireplace Manufacturer*
- Oxford Fiber *Design and Manufacture of optical fiber tooling*
- Palletcap Ltd *Manufacture and supply of anti-stack warning cones to the transport industry*
- Portech Systems Ltd *Mobile and wireless data systems*
- Rateoval Ltd *Manufacturers of plastic extrusion, specialising in the production of tubing*
- Tolputt Keeton Limited *Giftware*

Market Research for Exporters

Market Research is often time consuming and expensive—especially when looking at your next potential overseas market.

UK Trade & Investment offer a service designed to keep both the costs and research time as low as possible.

The Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) will put you directly in touch with the staff in their overseas offices, which will give you focussed business advice and visit support. This service is now available in all our markets overseas.

There are three levels of service priced at £300, £600 and £1,200. These packages are built around the typical requirements of businesses making their first steps into a new overseas market. All provide a flexible blend of preparatory advice and research, and support when you visit the market.

Each business and each market is unique. Their overseas experts will propose a programme of support and

advice at the level you have chosen. Their teams will help research markets for you, arrange appointments and guide you through the process of exporting to markets involved in the scheme. The aim is to support you with market information, potential contacts and ultimately guide you to successful completion of a visit to the market.

Via OMIS, Market research can be commissioned for over 200 overseas markets. These heavily subsidised reports, produced by the British Embassy commercial staff, aim to give you market information prior to any market visit and will contain information such as: Country / Sector Profile, detailed list of potential business partners and other useful contacts, comments, pen picture, recommendations on how to approach the market and expert guidance and advice from Commercial staff based at the British Embassy / Consulate in market.

On commissioning an OMIS, your

Visit www.mwtf.org.uk for latest International News from the BBC

Forthcoming Seminars & Events

United Nations/World Bank Clinic

28 & 29.06.05, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (Appointments available between 0900–1700 hrs) Business Clinic with Commercial Officers specialising in promoting UK Business to the United Nations, New York & the World Bank.

VAT Around the EU

12.07.05, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce A guide to the essential information required by businesses dipping their toes into the EU for sales/purchases for the first time.

Market Visit to Australia & New Zealand

9-22.09.05

Advantage West Midlands and UK Trade & Investment-West Midlands are organising a supported mission to coincide with Fine Food Australia - Australia's largest international event showcasing the latest innovations in food, drink and equipment and Hotel Australia - the motel, hotel and restaurant equipment exhibition, trade exhibitions which are held at the Sydney Convention Centre on 12-15 September 2005.

China: Sourcing & Selling

23.09.05, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (0700–0930 hrs)

A guide to sourcing products in from China and selling into the market.

Please Contact Claire Gamage on 0121 607 1759 or email c.gamage@mwtf.org.uk for further information on any of these events



The Midlands World Trade Forum is sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland and the UK Trade & Investment Passport to Export Programme

organisation may also qualify for financial subsidy if you visit the target market within 6 months of commissioning this research.

In order to assist you during your market visit. The commercial staff overseas may also be able to arrange meetings on your behalf.

To find out more, please contact your local International Trade Team based at your local Chamber of Commerce:

Birmingham & Solihull
Tel: 0121 450 4205

Black Country
Tel: 0845 113 1234

Coventry & Warwickshire
Tel: 02476 654321

Hereford & Worcestershire
Tel: 0845 641 1508

Shropshire
Tel: 0845 641 1515

Staffordshire (North)
Tel: 01782 224408

Staffordshire (South)
Tel: 01543 460076