Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me tell you few words about IP teaching in Slovakia and to explain you how our history affects the current IP teaching.

This presentation provides an indepth overview on imparting intellectual property law education in Slovakia. Far from being a distant overview, this presentation is an intimate one, a presentation that charts my growth in academic pedagogy through the years.

As I progressed through the ranks and became a lecturer, my pedagogy kept improving.

In my progress lies the story of Slovakia's progress. We both grew at the same time and at the same speed. It’s been an interesting and exciting journey for my nation.

We are a nation that is very excited about the future, and takes building IP and innovation seriously. Academics play an important role in shaping the future, and I am glad to report that we are progressing in the right direction, one step at a time.

The interest in IP from students is growing. While IP is not always a compulsory subject, the students have showed keen interest and insight in not only tracking Slovak IP developments, but rather a worldview focused on Europe and beyond.

As an academic, I enjoy helping my students in developing a worldview. This event at Prague provides a wonderful platform for us to speak, engage and learn from each other.

I would like to thank the organizers for having me here. This is very important for me especially because of the both common history – the Czechoslovak history - and common presence, especially as EU Member States with a little bit closer relation.

When talking about the development of the IP theory in the Czechoslovakia we should say that it started actually after 1948. However, first signs of IP theory could be found in the textbook on civil law of prof. Luby in 1941. This period was fully influenced by the political era and strong socialism system in our country. After short non-censorship and pro-science period around 1968, the new difficult era started after occupation by Warsaw Pact armies.
In 1989 when the totalitarian communistic system in Czechoslovakia collapsed, the Slovak civil law science – opposite to e. g. Hungary or Poland – was directed totally the other way as the rest of the Europe. In 1990 the transformation process started as well as the approximation of European Law into the Slovak legal regulation. That was however realized only on administrative level and no scientific research was made in this civil law field.

In spite of the problematic situation after 1989 in the field of IP science, we can mention that many new IP legal acts were adopted in a short period. The IP law was taught in both Law faculty in Bratislava and Košice, it means both in Eastern and Western part of the country. A new generation of IP lawyers influenced this period, especially Prof. Švidroň and Prof. Vojčík, who is present here with us today, but also some other experts (Muríň and Gregušová).

It is during this period that our publications started appearing not just in Slovak language but many new books and articles were published also abroad. We could mention at least the International Encyclopaedia of Laws written by Prof. Švidroň. Thanks to the rapid development of IP literature, and the development in pedagogy, IP became established as a separate scientific discipline.

Good thing for IP law was that immediately after 1989 could be developed autonomously in a pedagogical sense. It was clear that the legal regulation of IP cannot be developed separately from international, European and global connections. On the other side it is always necessary to develop the IP law with the primary focus and primary support of domestic intellectual property. Different specific interdisciplinary connections, both legal and non-legal, have to be followed.

At the end of the last century the situation in Slovakia in the IP field has changed substantially. New subjects like Computer Law and Legal Informatics were taught thanks to doc. Gregusova. But also Media Law, Competition law with focus on IP and later also International and European Copyright Law, European Patent Law, CTM Law, and others were taught or at least prepared to be thought.

This last comment deals with the student´s prospective. It is true that not always were efforts of pedagogues followed by the enthusiasm of students. But the rule everything needs time applied. It’s obvious that after 40 years of communistic era and 20 years of transformation process the situation in Slovakia cannot be compared with other EU countries, especially old EU Member States.
However we can feel that the situation has been changing slowly but in a positive way. More and more students are interested in this subject and many of them are really involved especially in current discussions on IP in the digital era, information technologies, computer law, community trademarks or others.

In 2007, led by Prof. Švidroň and with support of Trnava University we established the Intellectual Property Law Institute as the sole scientific and research institution in the field of IP. The aim was to follow the message of Prof. Luby and Knap and to create the partner institution for other cooperation in this field. The Institute of Copyright Law, Industrial Property Rights and Competition Law of the Charles University represented here by Prof. Kříž and his colleagues is the best example of the importance of the IP science and research as the basis for teaching and practice in post-communistic countries.

At Trnava, we are looking at new tools and techniques for making IP and innovation interesting and relevant for students. We work with students individually, and allow them to explore IP themes of interest to them in-depth.

To support the interest of students of law we, for example, prepared an electronic case-law book with modular hypothetical cases that is supplemented by the CD with a program for installation in which the students may find relevant questions with quotations of relevant provisions, judicial decision, literature and other information. Such electronic tools help both the teacher and students to make the IP study attractive.

Maybe I have been talking about things that are obvious for many of you. However I can see the rapid strides made since Slovakia became a separate state in 1993.

The academic sphere has a great cooperation with state offices, especially Industrial Property Office and Antimonopoly Office, but also with research institutions, NGOs, national and foreign universities and many other institutions.

In general, when talking about cooperation, this we consider a very important part in the field of IP. Therefore we pay extra attention to it.

As there are many non-legal academic institutions we try to spread the IP knowledge also among non-lawyers, mostly technicians. This applies not only on students but also on pedagogues, academic employees and university stuff. This is required for example because of the expansion of Transfer Technologies Offices on many universities but often because of the anti-plagiarism activities. We focus on creation and spreading the IP Culture at Universities that is
considered also according to WIPO one of the crucial task when talking about the universities. Spread awareness of the importance of IP, setting the strict IP rules at universities and respect of these rules are slogans we promote.

When talking about the future, we look at the future with an aspirational attitude. However, as a country in transition, we do need the support, expertise and encouragement from the international community of experts, and especially those stalwarts who are present here today. For the development of a new conception of IP (especially regarding the IP enforcement) and IP teaching in Slovakia, we need you, we need your experiences and we definitely need events like this one.

We would like to gain better support for IP scientific projects and for basic IP research.

When we look at IP teaching, we aim to get IP law to be a separate study field within the PhD. study as currently one can study IP only within civil law, theory of law or other relevant field of law.

As we move ahead, we look at gaining better financial support, and cooperating internationally and globally.

I think that Slovakia is ready to make another step in improvement IP teaching and improvement IP awareness. And, we need you. Your support. Your encouragement. Your inspiration.

Thank you.