

H&P magazine

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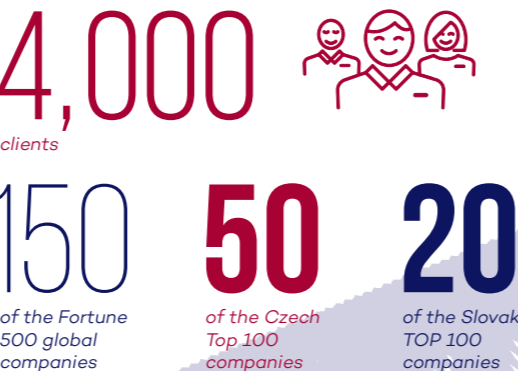
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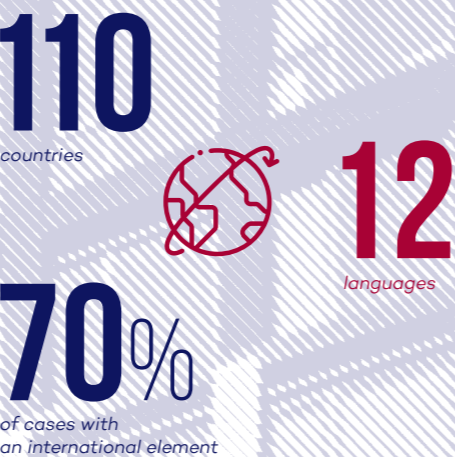
OUR TEAM



OUR CLIENTS



INTERNATIONAL APPROACH



FOREWORD

Dear Clients and Business Friends,

Next year we will celebrate 25 years since the formation of our law firm, which has gradually outgrown the vision of providing top legal services at an international level. Today, we are a consulting group whose services cover the entire spectrum of clients' needs – from complex legal and tax advice to out-of-court debt resolution, financing, accounting, patent practice, competition economics, personal data protection, legal and management training, to health concierge and security, HR, marketing and public relations consulting. In addition, we also provide comprehensive asset management and development services for selected clients within our ONE FAMILY OFFICE.

We are consultants with a broad scope and an increasingly international reach. We believe that comprehensiveness is our exceptional added value and reflects the essence of our work, i.e. to find the best private and business solutions for you, our clients, from A to Z and to help you grow safely and achieve your ambitions. Through H&P magazine, we regularly help you navigate current business challenges and seek to provide inspiration, both local and international, for important decisions.

This is no different in this issue, in which we present an exclusive interview with Arham Karim, Vice President for Investor Relations at Bain Capital, one of the most successful investment companies in the world, who attended a VIP event for members of ONE FAMILY OFFICE in Prague this May.

For example, he talks about how the world of private equity works and what makes it no longer the preserve of institutional

investors. You'll also learn about the role of family offices and about the ONE FAMILY OFFICE concept, which allows member families and individuals, on a club basis, to live, invest and protect assets and family like Western dollar billionaires, including ensuring the highest quality of life.

You will also find out why you should prepare for the European digital identity wallet in your business, what you can learn from the German coalition agreement, or how to currently build in Slovakia and the Czech Republic according to the new building regulations. My colleagues on the tax team explain the tax treatment of ESOPs. We will tell you how not to lose ideas worth millions in business. We also report that the Czech Republic banned its first foreign investment and what lessons should be learned. Colleagues from the inheritance law team address the alienation of inheritance, which is advisable when you don't want to inherit but not walk away empty handed either.

We trust that you will find ample practical information and inspirational suggestions in the new issue of H&P Magazine that will help you to better navigate the dynamically changing business environment and take advantage of new opportunities for growth. We are ready to stand by your side and continue to support you in your crucial decisions.

Thank you for your trust and I wish you an inspiring read!

→ HAVEL & PARTNERS group's turnover reached CZK 1.7 billion

HAVEL & PARTNERS once again generated excellent economic results in 2024. The total turnover of the law firm in 2024 grew by 8% year-on-year and amounted to CZK 1.5 billion. The turnover of the entire group, comprising the Cash Collectors collection agency and other specialised services, reached CZK 1.7 billion.

"The results reaffirm our exceptional long-term economic stability, which is the result of a well-thought-out strategy, investment in innovation, and systematic development of strong teams. In 2024, we managed not only to maintain but even to strengthen our position as the largest independent law firm in Central Europe. We have expanded our international presence, which is essential in the age of globalisation – we have opened a direct representation in Frankfurt, Germany," said managing partner Jaroslav Havel.



↑ HAVEL & PARTNERS again TOP Employer

For the eleventh time in a row, our law firm has dominated the ranking of law firms in the TOP Employers poll, which is based on the votes of students of Czech universities. Like in previous years, we also succeeded in the related Lawyer category, in which only students with the best academic results vote.

"I believe this confirms that our long-term efforts to create a favourable environment for the professional growth of young legal talent make sense. We are able to offer students a combination of challenging practice under the guidance of experienced mentors and a supportive atmosphere. This enables our colleagues to experience exceptionally fast professional and career advancement," said Petra Rudová, HR Director at HAVEL & PARTNERS.

→ We are the best international law firm in Slovakia for the fourth time in a row

HAVEL & PARTNERS has won the main prize in the International Law Firm category of the Law Firm of the Year competition in Slovakia for the fourth time in a row. Our teams in Slovakia also won in the Competition and Mergers & Acquisitions categories.

In 14 other categories, we are among the highly recommended and recommended firms in Slovakia. The results thus confirm the high standard and exceptional complexity of our services, which is also highlighted by our victory in the Czech Law Firm of the Year competition, where we became the best domestic and most popular law firm in the Czech Republic for the fifth year in a row.

"We provide comprehensive international support to Czech and Slovak law firms, and our unique knowledge of the legal and tax environment as well as our international reach make our firm a reliable partner anywhere in the world," said Jaroslav Havel.

TECHNOLOGY

END OF THE OLD DAYS GET YOUR BUSINESS READY FOR THE EUROPEAN DIGITAL IDENTITY WALLET

The business landscape is undergoing significant transformation. The European Digital Identity Wallet is poised to revolutionise identity verification, contract signing, online sales, and customer communication across the EU. How can your business fully leverage its potential? And why and how should you prepare for it without delay?

While children will be looking out the window for Santa Claus, European companies will be anxiously awaiting whether their Member States will provide them with a European Digital Identity Wallet. Perhaps that is an exaggeration, but that's what the next Christmas in Europe could look like. Member States have until precisely 24 December 2026 to furnish at least one functioning wallet. Preparations for this date are gradually gathering pace in the Member States and businesses are already looking forward to the benefits of this digital innovation.

The preparations have been ongoing in each Member State since the adoption of the final text of eIDAS 2.0 in May 2024. What's the current situation in the Czech Republic? In choosing the appropriate model for development and operation, the Czech Republic took the concession route. This means that the wallet will be operated by a private provider commissioned by the state. The selected contractor should ideally have a contract in place by the end of this year. By next Christmas at the latest, we should be able to use the wallet in the Czech Republic.

Classic wallets in your pocket – a thing of the past?

What will it all look like in practice? The European Digital Identity Wallet is designed to function as a mobile application. You can upload virtually all your identifying information – such as your name, age, and address – as well as your university diploma or medical prescriptions. The wallet will also allow you to confirm family relationships, gun permits, powers of attorney, student status, gym memberships, airline tickets, sports event tickets, and more.

BY THE END OF 2026,
EVERY EUROPEAN
SHOULD BE ABLE TO
OBTAIN A SINGLE
DIGITAL IDENTITY
RECOGNISED IN ALL
MEMBER STATES.

You will even be able to add information related to items or services – for example, a licence or a technical certificate. Put simply, it can be seen as the digital equivalent of a traditional wallet, with the key difference being that you have full control over it. You decide which documents and information you "carry" in it, and with whom you share them.

You only need to click to share the specific information required for a given purpose – for example, to confirm your age or citizenship – without revealing any additional personal details. The wallet can also be used offline for identification. You'll be able to prove your identity using your phone instead of presenting physical documents during in-person meetings. This concept already exists today with the eDoklady app, which offers a digital version of your driving licence. However, compared to the expected capabilities of the European Digital Identity Wallet, eDoklady is very limited in function.

Use of the wallet will, of course, be voluntary, and existing ID cards and identification methods will remain valid. But if you choose to verify your identity digitally using the wallet, public authorities and selected private companies will be required to accept it as a legitimate method of identification.

Signature in a few clicks
The European Digital Identity Wallet will primarily be used by individuals for identification – whether as consumers, entrepreneurs, or representatives of a legal person. This presents a major challenge for both the B2C and B2B sectors. The wallet provides seamless access to digital services across the EU and enables the use of qualified electronic signatures – at least for non-professional use – free of charge. This is the highest level of electronic signature, recognized under the eIDAS Regulation as legally equivalent to a handwritten signature.

The wallet will therefore play a key role in many areas of everyday life, such as online shopping, signing contracts, and managing or sharing personal documents. With the ability to automate many processes, it can also significantly streamline business operations and reduce costs. The potential for integration is broad, and every sector will be able to find its own use case.

E-commerce and the financial sector are likely to benefit the most from the wallet.

Banks, fintech companies, investment firms, and insurance providers – all of which currently face demanding client verification procedures – will see a significant transformation in how those processes are handled.

Beyond the limits
One of the biggest advantages of a European Digital Identity is the removal of barriers to cross-border interactions. The wallet will function both at home and abroad, specifically across the EU, setting it apart from national solutions like eDoklady. This makes it just as easy to verify a foreign business partner as it is a domestic one. It can simplify the paperwork involved in expanding a company into foreign markets and support cross-border online sales of goods and services.

The wallet will also be highly practical for individuals outside the Czech Republic. For example, if you move to Germany with your family, you'll be able to use your wallet to handle all the initial administrative steps – registering with local authorities, enrolling your children in kindergarten, submitting your university diploma to your employer, signing a work contract, and more. All of this can be done from anywhere, with just a few clicks.

E-commerce businesses will be able to serve customers across the EU without unnecessary complexity. For instance, customers shopping online will be able to instantly share personal data – such as their full name, age, or delivery address – through their wallet, eliminating the need to fill out traditional forms. As a merchant, you'll know immediately who you're dealing with – and be confident that the information is accurate and up to date. In the future, you might even be able to make payments directly through the wallet. In short, we've never been closer to leaving our physical wallets behind.

Safe and without paperwork
Implementing the wallet in your company will also make it easier to meet statutory obligations related to data protection. By design, digital identities adhere to the principles of the GDPR. Customers share only the minimum necessary information – often with their explicit consent. This gives you greater legal certainty that the data you're working with is accurate, relevant, and compliant when verifying customer identities. It also reduces the risk of penalties for improper data handling.

The wallet can also help prevent data leaks from company databases, since you won't need to store copies of documents or unnecessary personal data. Combined with the wallet's robust security features – such as multi-factor authentication and asymmetric cryptography – it also strengthens your overall cybersecurity. That's especially important given that the recently adopted new Cybersecurity Act will tighten compliance requirements for businesses.

Overall, the wallet promises a major simplification of administrative tasks. There will be no need to copy documents, fill out forms with customer data, or archive physical contracts – all of this can be fully digitised and automated. Even repetitive tasks like checking document validity or updating client information can be handled automatically, saving both time and resources.

The wallet will also be a valuable tool in HR processes. Employees will be able to share all necessary information with a new employer remotely, securely, and in just a few clicks – including items that previously required a trip to the office or a physical copy, such as a university diploma or a certificate of good conduct. This simplifies onboarding for new hires and streamlines updates to records for current staff.

The validity of data in the wallet will be confirmed by trusted electronic attribute providers. Qualified public providers will rely on official state-run databases and registries for verification. This increases trust in the authenticity and accuracy of issued electronic certificates.

Under the eIDAS 2.0 regulation, certain organisations will be required to accept the wallet. The final list of obligated entities is still being determined and may expand. In addition to public authorities and government organisations, it will include companies offering services that require strong online identification – such as banks, insurance providers, and large online platforms like Meta or Google.

What to do next?
Do you want to ride the digital wave and boost your business by taking advantage of the European Digital Identity Wallet? On the face of it, it may seem like there's still plenty of time before the end of 2026. But the preparation, technological integration, and legal groundwork required for

implementing the European wallet will take time – and the sooner you begin, the better. Now is the right time to start taking the first steps. We've prepared a list of practical tasks to help you get ready and bring the benefits of the wallet into your business as soon as possible. It is already time to take the first steps.

Map the terrain
We recommend starting by identifying where the wallet could be integrated in your business. Review your customer, HR, and business processes: Where do you currently ask clients, partners, or employees for personal data, document copies, or signatures? For example, during registration, online purchases, contract negotiations, or while accessing portals? Think about how these steps could be simplified using the wallet. Consider how it could enhance the customer experience – for instance, by speeding up online shopping, reducing the need for in-person visits, or eliminating paperwork when setting up services.

Assign responsibility
The introduction of the wallet will impact multiple areas – including IT, legal, business, and security. It's therefore a good idea to appoint a dedicated person (or a working group) to coordinate preparations, monitor developments, and plan the necessary adjustments within the company. This will help you maintain a clear overview and also assist in preparing a realistic budget and timeline for the transition.

Audit your systems and websites
To connect to the wallet, you'll need to register and obtain an access certificate. Make sure your systems are technically prepared for integration. Ask yourself: Will customers be able to log in using the

wallet? Are your backend systems ready to connect to the wallet's API? If not, start planning the necessary adjustments or consult your IT providers to ensure compatibility with the Architecture and Reference Framework.

Stay on top of legislative developments
Implementation rules are gradually being adopted to define how the wallet ecosystem will function in practice. Pay close attention to how the Czech legal system is being adapted to the Regulation. A proposal for adaptation legislation, currently envisaging the launch of the wallet in the Czech Republic on 1 January 2027, has already been published. However, it is likely that it might undergo certain changes during the legislative process, as it will be debated by the newly elected Chamber of Deputies after the autumn elections.

Many of the institutions and processes envisioned may not align with current eGovernment solutions. We especially recommend following the Digital Information Agency, which is responsible for this agenda and will be a key source of information as the wallet nears launch.

It's also worth monitoring the EU Business Wallet initiative, currently underway at the European Commission. A legislative proposal is expected by the end of this year, aiming to extend the European digital identity framework to include economic operators and public authorities – enabling the issuance of wallets not just to individuals, but also to companies and government bodies.

Get inspired
It's a good idea to keep an eye on the so-called early adopters – organisations that

begin integrating the wallet into their processes early on. These will mainly include government institutions, with banks expected to be among the first in the private sector. See how they're using the wallet, what direction they're taking, and draw inspiration from their experience.

Consult with experts
Are you required to implement the wallet? For more complex services – such as banking, insurance, or HR systems – you may need to revise contracts or system integrations. Consult with legal and technical experts to understand what changes are necessary to meet the new requirements without unnecessary complications. Working with the wallet may also require updates to your terms and conditions or privacy policies.

Educate your teams
It's important that people across your company understand how the wallet works and what it offers. Prepare training for your sales, customer support, technical, and HR teams so they know how to use the wallet, promote it effectively, and respond to any questions from clients or employees. Good preparation will help prevent confusion once the wallet is fully launched.

The European Digital Identity Wallet is not just a new technology – it represents a new model of trust and interaction between organisations and individuals across the EU. The sooner you start preparing, the easier it will be to integrate the wallet into your processes – and the sooner your business will benefit from it. Start early, and you'll gain an advantage that counts.

Key contacts



DALIBOR KOVÁŘ | PARTNER

Dalibor is a partner in the Technology Law team. He specialises in electronic legal transactions, digital transformation, information technology, intellectual property law, and cybersecurity. Dalibor advises clients on implementing electronic legal transaction principles and the use of electronic identity. He also supports the practical and strategic development of digital solutions tailored to the Czech market. Dalibor has contributed to the drafting of key legislation in the area of digitalisation (eGovernment).

ONDŘEJ KAŠPAR | ASSOCIATE
Ondřej specialises in electronic legal transactions, information technology, media and telecommunications law, data protection, and contract law. Ondřej focuses on establishing appropriate principles for electronic legal conduct within both private and public organisations, including the use of electronic signatures and electronic identity, with an emphasis on legal sustainability.



NEW BUILDING ACTS IN SLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC A PURELY COINCIDENTAL SIMILARITY?

A simple, fast, and digital building procedure – this is what the new building acts on both sides of the Czech-Slovak border promise today. How are they similar and how do they differ? The fiction of consent, black buildings, digitalisation, the decision makers – check with us for how to build in Slovakia and the Czech Republic according to the new building regulations.

**THE PERMITTING PROCESS
HAS BEEN GREATLY
SIMPLIFIED IN BOTH
COUNTRIES. THE DUAL
PROCESS OF PLANNING
DECISION AND BUILDING
PERMIT IN BOTH THE CZECH
REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA
HAS BEEN REPLACED BY
A SINGLE PROCEDURE.**

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the building permit procedures that take months or even years, loads of paperwork and an endless quest for opinions should by now be a thing of the past. The new Building Act came into effect for most buildings in the Czech Republic in July 2024. In Slovakia, the new Building Act came into effect nine months later – on 1 April 2025. Whether you are involved in property development, real estate, industry or if you simply need to expand your corporate headquarters, these changes will affect you. Let us take a closer look at what the new acts in both countries have in common, and where they diverge.

One permit procedure rules them all!

The permitting process has been greatly simplified in both countries. The dual process of planning permission and building permit in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia has been replaced by a single procedure. In the Czech Republic, this is called a building planning permission, in Slovakia it is called a building plan procedure. But the result is the same in both countries: one procedure, one decision, less paperwork and less waiting time.

The difference, however, is that if you want to build in Slovakia, you must initiate a discussion on the building plan before starting the procedure. This means that you or your designer will upload the project documentation into the electronic information system and request that the authorities and legal entities concerned issue binding opinions or statements on your building plan.

Once you have collected all the binding opinions, you (or your designer) will prepare a report on the discussion of the building plan. This report should evaluate the comments on the opinions and statements, i.e. indicate who specifically made each comment and how the comment was evaluated, if applicable.

Subsequently, as part of the building plan procedure, you will submit a report on the discussion of the building plan to the building authority together with the plan itself. Once a decision on the building plan has been issued, you will ask the building authority to authorise the building project. If the building authority approves the building project, it will issue an authorisation clause and you can start building in Slovakia.

The Czech Act, on the other hand, does not specifically regulate the discussion

of the building plan or the building plan procedure. In the Czech Republic, you can voluntarily obtain binding opinions and other supporting documents before proceedings are initiated. Such steps, however, are not specifically laid down in procedural law. Nonetheless, this will speed up the entire permitting process and prevent any complications and delays.

According to the new Building Act, however, you can also leave it entirely to the building authority to obtain opinions. The authority is obliged to request them from the authorities concerned itself. Even if you provide only part of the statement and some opinions are missing when you submit the application, the authority cannot consider this as a defect. In practice, however, such a procedure is not yet used, especially for larger buildings. Building authorities are already overloaded; moreover, it is quicker to arrange the opinions yourself.

Simply online

There were high expectations in both countries for the digitalisation of building procedures. In the Czech Republic, building permits can be applied for electronically via the Builder's Portal, which has not functioned perfectly since its introduction last year. This year, Slovakia launched the Construction Portal. This digital space collects all necessary documents, permits and submissions in electronic form. At the same time, the portal facilitates communication between all construction participants.

Users can, among other things, upload and manage building documentation electronically, submit electronic applications and monitor the status of the permitting procedure, and obtain binding opinions and statements from the authorities concerned. They can also verify and manage construction information.

The future direction is therefore clear in both countries: complete digital building permit procedures are set to become the industry standard. Currently, most things can already be done online. Although there were certain technical problems in the Czech Republic in the early days (which still persist in some areas), digital solutions are already in use and just need fine-tuning to everyone's satisfaction.

Silence means consent

Presumed consent should also help to speed up the granting of building permits.

In Slovakia, the authorities, bodies or legal entities concerned are obliged to issue a binding opinion or, in the case of legal entities, a binding statement within 30 days of receiving the application or, in the case of complex buildings, within 60 days. If they fail to do so within these time limits, they are deemed to have no comments or requirements regarding the content of the building plan, or its incorporation into the building project (with exceptions for the authorities concerned, where a special legal regulation provides otherwise). Presumed consent also applies if the authority or legal entity concerned fails to issue a compliance clause within the statutory time limit when discussing the building project.

Presumed consent is laid down in the new Czech Building Act in a manner similar to the previous regulation. If the authority concerned fails to issue a binding opinion within 30 days (or 60 days in exceptional cases), it is deemed to have given its consent. This presumption, however, does not apply absolutely. In Czech building law, presumed consent is possible with the public health authority, the fire department or the road administration authority, for example. It is not applicable to opinions in the field of nature protection, where specific acts explicitly exclude it.

Where to apply

In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the acts do not differ much in terms of where you actually apply for a permit. In Slovakia, municipalities continue to act and decide as building authorities in the first instance, exercising their delegated state administrative powers. What is new, however, is that there are now eight regional offices for spatial planning and construction in Slovakia, responsible for deciding on appeals against municipal building authority decisions. They also inspect building authorities and handle complaints filed against them.

Furthermore, a new central state administration body called the Office for Spatial Planning and Construction has been established in Slovakia. It has national competence for construction, expropriation and spatial planning (except for environmental aspects).

Institutional reform has also been a major topic of discussion in the Czech Republic. The new Czech Building Act originally envisaged a unified system of state building administration, which was to consist of

the Supreme Building Office, specialised and appellate building offices and regional building offices with territorial offices in 205 municipalities with extended jurisdiction. However, before the new Czech Building Act came into force, it was fundamentally changed by an amendment in 2023. This amendment returned building authorities back to municipal and regional authorities with delegated powers, and binding opinions back to the authorities concerned. The only remaining part of the original state building administration structure is the specialised Transport and Energy Building Office. This office now makes first instance decisions on the most significant (so-called reserved) constructions, such as motorways, railways or power plants. According to the latest amendments to the building regulations, it now has sole decision-making power over larger renewable energy plants (i.e. appeals are inadmissible).

Construction commenced

According to the new Slovak Building Act, you must start construction work within two years, otherwise the authorisation clause (formerly the building permit) becomes invalid. In practice, doubts have started to arise in Slovakia as to whether the commencement of construction also encompasses the mere carrying out a few initial preparatory works. The new act clarifies this issue, stating that the start of work is no longer specifically considered to be the fencing of the building site and the establishment of the building site, equipping the building site with the necessary facilities, providing access for

people and vehicles to the building site, or water and electricity supply, or removing vegetation from the building site, carrying out initial soil clearing, removing waste from the building site or just marking out the construction area. By contrast, the commencement of construction is defined as “the start of construction work directly related to the execution of the construction”. These are, for example, earthwork, demolition, assembly or craft work required for the execution or alteration of the building, construction adaptations and maintenance or removal of a building.

According to Czech legislation, building planning permission is also valid for two years from the date of its entry into force. In addition, the new Czech Building Act lays down a new rule that if you start construction during the permit’s validity period, its validity is automatically extended to 10 years. This is an incentive to complete buildings that would otherwise become illegal after 10 years. Unlike the Slovak legislation, however, the Czech Act does not define the moment of commencement of the plan, which therefore remains a matter of interpretation and proof in practice.

Black buildings

In Slovakia, too, they want to radically address black buildings constructed without permits. From April 2025, any building to which the new regulations already apply that is constructed through unauthorised construction work (without an authorised building project or in violation of it) will not be able to be legalised

in any way. If the authorities discover unauthorised construction work carried out without an authorised building project when the project is inspected, the building inspector will instruct the builder and the contractor to stop immediately. If the unauthorised construction continues, the building inspector will notify the building inspectorate. The inspector will then order the owner of the building to remove the building, the construction adaptations and modifications made through unauthorised construction work.

A similar tightening measure was also considered in the Czech Republic, where the original version of the act required the builder to demonstrate good faith in order to obtain an additional permit. However, the 2023 amendment has relaxed this requirement and an additional permit for illegal construction is still possible in the Czech Republic if the builder pays a fine for the offence and if the construction complies with building regulations and does not require an exemption. This change was based on the assumption that it would be pointless to demolish a black building that otherwise complies with all legal regulations, and then rebuild it again once it has been permitted.

Objections are inadmissible

In Slovakia, there has long been a problem with speculative entities that often entered into proceedings with the intention of causing harm and prolonging them artificially. According to the new Building Act, however, Slovak building authorities should no longer consider proposals,

comments and objections from parties to proceedings that do not pursue the protection of their rights and legally protected interests. This means that they will disregard objections that are intended to cause harm, gain an unfair advantage or delay or obstruct proceedings.

Unlike the Slovak Act, the Czech Act does not prohibit objections to the same extent, but to a certain extent it does guarantee that building authorities will not consider manifestly unfounded objections.

Different kinds of buildings

One of the less obvious, yet in practice crucial differences is the definition of a building itself. While in the Czech legislation, a building does not require a fixed connection to the ground and the key parameter remains the purpose of the building, i.e. whether it is intended for permanent use, production or housing, the Slovak regulation focuses more on the building’s physical characteristics and the main role is played by the fixed connection to the ground: “A building is a structure erected by construction work that is firmly attached to the ground or whose positioning requires the treatment of the subgrade.”

Therefore, a mobile home can easily be considered a building in the Czech Republic, while in Slovakia the same object may not, thus escaping the entire permitting regime. In both countries, therefore, more attention needs to be paid not only to documentation but also the interpretation of the acts.

The new Slovak Building Act has also expanded the definition of small buildings. It is no longer just an accessory building to the main building; rather, it is any building that cannot significantly affect its surroundings. The Act lays down a non-exhaustive list of examples of small buildings, which have a built-up area and height of no more than 50 m² and 5 m², respectively. Examples of small buildings include power-generating, heating and cooling installations from renewable sources with a total installed capacity of up to 100 kW inclusive. This includes charging stations for electric vehicles with a total capacity of up to 22 kW with one or more outdoor charging points, or the electrical equipment for the charging stations and their installation.

The situation in the Czech Republic is similar. Annex 1 of the new Building

Act sets out a very detailed list of small buildings. It also extended the range of small buildings that can be built without permission or notification of the building authority.

Both acts in the Czech Republic and Slovakia also introduce a category of reserved buildings. These are technically complicated structures that can only be carried out by certified contractors in order to improve the safety and quality of construction. In the Czech Republic, they are permitted by the state Transport and Energy Building Authority and are subject to some additional requirements concerning their design, construction and supervision.

In our comparison, the Czech and Slovak building acts therefore aim at the same goal: faster and more efficient proceedings. However, each country has chosen a slightly different approach. For entrepreneurs and developers, this means thinking strategically and addressing the differences in the preparatory stage. Their detailed knowledge can be the key to successfully implementing your building project.

Key contacts



FRANTIŠEK KORBEL | PARTNER
František specialises in public building law, public administration, administrative justice, legislation and information law and IT law. He received the Czech Prize for Architecture for his work on the Prague Building Regulations. He lectures at the Department of Administrative Law at the Faculty of Law of Charles University in Prague and is a member of the Government Legislative Council.



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In real estate law, Ondřej advises a number of clients on the preparation, financing and implementation of real estate projects, as well as on the acquisition of real estate and real estate projects. He represents investors and developers in key transactions across the Czech and Slovak markets. He also has experience in the contractual setup of development or lease relations.



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Jiří focuses mainly on administrative and building law, administrative justice and development. He also works as a university lecturer in building law at the University of Economics in Prague. He lectures on and publishes professional articles about development and building law.



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Šimon specialises in real estate and building law. He has experience in providing comprehensive legal advice to Slovak and foreign investors on the sale of real estate and the construction of various types of building projects, including infrastructure projects in accordance with international FIDIC standards.

	Main type of proceedings	Building planning permission (single proceedings)		Building plan procedure + authorisation stage of the building project
	Digital system	Builder's Portal (functional, but limited for now)		Construction Portal (functional and connected)
	Presumed consent of the authority / legal entity concerned	Yes, but only with some of the authorities concerned (e.g. public health authority, fire brigade)		Yes, during the discussion of the building plan (unless a special regulation lays down otherwise vis-à-vis the authorities concerned) and during the discussion of the building project
	Additional permit for black buildings	Permitted (under a fine and subject to terms and conditions)		Prohibited – black building cannot be retroactively legalised
	Commencement of construction – validity of the permit	2 years + automatic extension for 10 years after commencement		2 years, precise definition of “commencement of construction”
	Decision-making authority	Depending on the type of building, usually the municipal building authority (with delegated powers)		Municipalities (first instance) + regional authorities (appeals, supervision)
	Objections of the parties	Limited, but self-serving objections are allowed		Manifestly self-serving objections are ignored

OVERVIEW OF SELECTED TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING HAVEL & PARTNERS

19
years

900
transactions

35.5
bn EUR

Over the past 19 years, we have been involved in completing over 900 transactions, not only in mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, and restructurings. Their total value exceeds EUR 35.5 billion. Here is an overview of the most important deals over the latest period.

SEKYRA GROUP

Acquisition of land for the Žižkov City project

Leading Czech developer Sekyra Group has acquired land plots in the southern part of the Žižkov Freight Station with an area of 92,000 sq.m. from Czech Railways. They plan to build Žižkov City, a modern district with more than 3,000 flats, civic amenities and a tramline. We provided comprehensive legal advice on this acquisition, including negotiating the contractual documentation.

The transaction team was led by partner Martin Ráž, with counsel Natalija Traurigová, senior associate Patrik Chrást, and junior associate Dominika Hřebočková.

UPVEST & RSJ

Investment in Centrum Černý Most

We represented Komerční banka's Upvest investment platform and the investment group RSJ in the acquisition of a 25% stake in the Prague shopping centre Centrum Černý Most with an option to increase their share up to a total of 49%, through a SICAV fund of qualified investors. This was an extremely demanding, year-long complex consultancy process.

The transaction team was led by partner Petr Dohnal and included counsel David Šmída, managing associates Josef Bouchal and Adam Karban, senior associate Patrik Chrást, and junior associates Dominika Hřebočková and Anna Gloserová. Partner Josef Žaloudek dealt with the related tax issues.

ACCOLADE

Acquisition of the football club FK Teplice

Accolade, an investment group focusing on industrial real estate, has bought 100% of the shares in the first league football club FK Teplice from AGC Group. We provided comprehensive legal services to the Accolade Group in this regard.

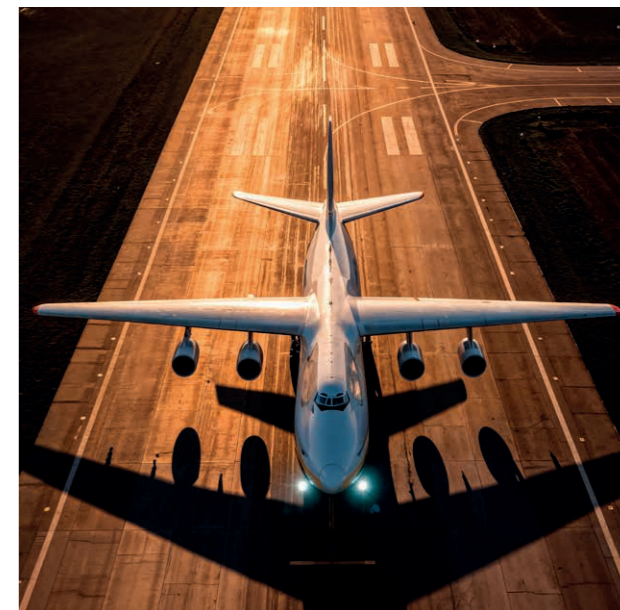
The team was led by partners Jan Koval and Lukáš Syrový, complemented by managing associate Ivo Skolil, senior associate Nikola Pospíšilová Leová, and junior associates Dominika Hřebočková and Johana Němečková.

AIT GROUP

Aerospace joint venture in Spain

AIT Group, a Czech industrial group focused on investments in advanced industrial technologies, has established a joint venture with the Spanish shareholders of Egile Corporation, a Basque manufacturer of aerospace components.

In this international transaction, we took care of the preparation and negotiation of the relevant documentation and the final settlement. Legal advice was provided by partner Jan Koval assisted by managing associate Ivo Skolila.

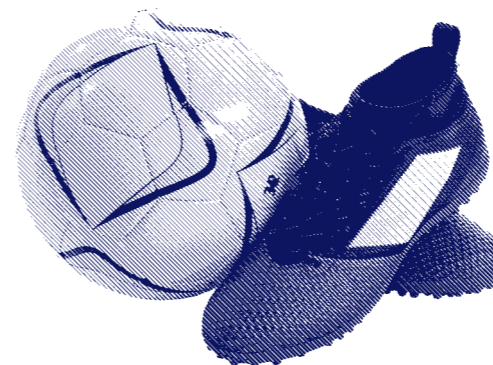


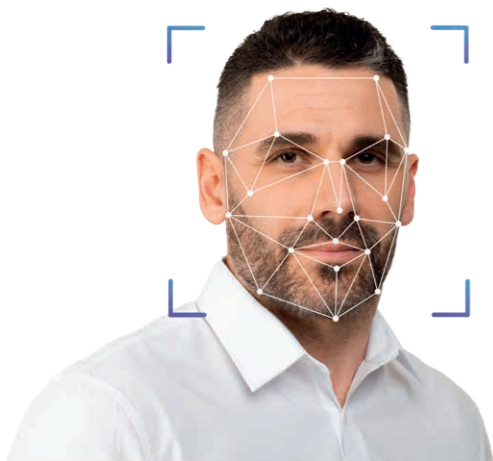
CAPITON

Sale of Gritec to Viessmann Generations Group

As cooperating legal advisors to the German private equity fund capiton, we were involved in the sale of Gritec, a supplier of technical buildings and stations for energy infrastructure, to the Viessmann Generations Group.

Partner Marek Lošan, counsel Natalija Traurigová and managing associate Vladimír Ivanov focused primarily on the Czech legal aspects of the transaction, including the seller's due diligence.





TENSOR VENTURES & ELEVATOR VENTURES

Investment in Wultra

We represented Central European deep tech fund Tensor Ventures and Austrian corporate VC fund Elevator Ventures in their investment in Czech fintech startup Wultra. Wultra specialises in cyber security, specifically in the development of security solutions for identity verification on the Internet and in mobile apps.

Legal advice was provided by managing associate Josef Bouchal together with junior associate Róbert Košala. The transaction was supervised by partner Jaroslav Baier.



CROWN ESTATES

Sale of the fairytale castle Žinkovy

For our client, Crown Estates, we handled the legal aspects of the successful sale of Žinkovy castle near Nepomuk to the Lázně Poděbrady group. Some scenes from the famous fairy tale The Proud Princess were filmed at the castle.

Partners Martin Ráž and Josef Žaloudek, counsel David Šmída, managing associate Albert Tatra, senior associate Zdeněk Chroust, senior tax manager David Bureš, and junior associate Tomáš Belada were involved as advisors.



DIAGNOSE.ME

Amalgamation of two health-tech leaders in Slovakia

We provided comprehensive advise to the client on the legal, transactional and tax aspects of the acquisition of DNA ERA and the simultaneous entry of DNA ERA shareholders into diagnose.me. This was one of the most significant transactions in the venture capital sector in the previous year, resulting in the merger of two health-tech leaders in Slovakia.

Our team of experts was led by partner Jaroslav Baier and complemented by senior associate Peter Košecký and associate Gabriel Kulik.

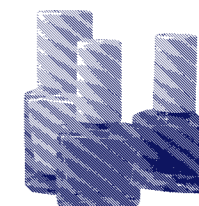


MÜLLER HOLDING

Advising on the entry of a drugstore chain into the Slovak market

We provided comprehensive legal advice to the German company Müller Holding in Slovakia in connection with the entry of the Müller drugstore chain into the local market, including the establishment of a local legal structure. Headquartered in Ulm, Germany, Müller Holding is present in eight European countries, operates more than 900 stores and employs approximately 35,000 people.

Legal advice was provided by partners Martin Peckl and Štěpán Štarha, managing associates Patrícia Jamříšková and Róbert Gašparovič, and associate Oliver Benda.



EMEIS/SENECURA

Sale of Czech operations to Penta Healthcare

We advised the emeis/SeneCura group on the sale of its 17 domestic nursing home and Alzheimer centre facilities with a capacity of approximately 2,200 beds to Penta Healthcare.

One of the largest transactions in the healthcare sector in the Czech Republic last year was tended to by partner Martin Peckl, together with counsel Roman Světnický and senior associates Robin Štork and Martin Rott.



MTX RENEWABLES

Entry into a Spanish RES project

In 2024, MTX Renewables, a division of Czech industrial group MTX, acquired a 40% stake in a joint venture with Germany's Aquila Capital to build 9 solar and wind power plants in Andalusia with a capacity of 1,080 MW. We provided the client with legal services including transactional, corporate and competition law aspects.

The team led by partner Petr Dohnal included counsel Pavel Ondrák and junior associate Pavel Váňa, and also partner Jiří Kunášek, senior associate Kateřina Kabátová and senior associate Martin Rott.

Partner Filip Čabart, managing associate Štěpán Černý, associate Jakub Jireš, and legal expert Ondřej Sýkora advised on the financing of the transaction.



GERMANY'S GOVERNMENT PLANS – WHAT ENTREPRENEURS CAN LEARN FROM THE COALITION AGREEMENT?

Germany's new government plans to turn recession-hit Germany into a “locomotive of Europe” moving forward. So, what will change under the leadership of the new chancellor? And how can Czech and Slovak entrepreneurs benefit from this?

**IN ITS 2026 BUDGET,
GERMANY'S NEW
GOVERNMENT PLANS
RECORD INVESTMENTS
TOTTALLING EUR
126.7 BILLION
(APPROXIMATELY CZK
3.1 TRILLION).**

Since May, Germany has been led by a new government headed by Chancellor Friedrich Merz. It is a grand coalition of the CDU/CSU and the SPD. Expectations of the new cabinet are high among our western neighbours. Germany, the world's third-largest economy, has been in recession for two consecutive years and the outlook for the coming months offers little hope for significant improvement.

However, the new government promises changes that aim to make Germany the “locomotive of Europe”. Even before taking office in May, the new government scored its first success by securing Bundestag approval – thanks to support from outgoing Chancellor Scholz's administration – for a package of up to EUR 1.5 trillion. This package allows Germany to exceed its current debt brake, provided the funds are used for clearly defined purposes, despite the country's relatively low debt levels.

Bureaucracy and digitalisation

One of the government's top priorities is streamlining bureaucracy. In a symbolic first move, it reduced the number of government commissioners and coordinators by 25 during its inaugural session. More significantly, it aims to ease the administrative burden on businesses by eliminating excessive notification and reporting requirements. Among the proposals under discussion is the repeal of the Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (Lieferkettengesetz).

The government also plans to accelerate the digitalisation of public administration. This process, including government spending on IT, will be managed by the newly established Federal Ministry for Digitalisation and State Modernisation (Bundesministerium für Digitales und Staatsmodernisierung). Among its goals are the introduction of digital identity, the interconnection of registries (based on the “once only” principle for data provision), more efficient data usage, the launch of a digital health card, the acceleration of company formation processes, and improved cooperation between the federal government, states, and municipalities.

Germany also wants to actively participate in shaping digital policy and cooperation at the level of the EU, G7, and G20, and aims to play a leading role in the implementation of the EU AI Act and in coordinating regulatory and technical requirements for artificial intelligence systems.

If you operate in IT or digitalisation, this opens up a significant opportunity. German demand for software solutions, digital services, cybersecurity, and AI technologies is expected to grow rapidly. Czech companies with innovative products or experience in public IT projects can become valuable suppliers or partners.

Infrastructure

The government also wants to direct major investments into modernizing outdated and underfunded infrastructure. A special fund for infrastructure investments will contain EUR 500 billion (approximately CZK 12.3 trillion), which will be allocated to roads, bridges, railways, and other transport routes for goods, as well as to schools and kindergartens. The cabinet will also support electromobility. By the end of this legislative term, at least half of German households should have access to fibre-optic networks, and 5G coverage should be nationwide. Investments will also strengthen civil defence, and funding will be increased for hospitals and education infrastructure (including school digitalisation). Funds will also go into science and research.

If you operate in construction or focus on technology, you can benefit from these planned massive investments in infrastructure. Geographic proximity, high expertise, and competitive pricing of Czech companies are all advantages with which you can compete for public contracts and gain new orders from state and regional contracting authorities for the modernisation of roads, railways, hospitals, etc.

Utilities and energy sectors

Germany wants to continue significantly investing in its transmission network, modernize it, and integrate renewable energy sources. At the same time, it will adopt measures to reduce energy costs and thereby increase and maintain the competitiveness of energy-intensive sectors or the expansion of renewable sources. Industrial hubs are to be connected to a nationwide hydrogen network. Germany will continue supporting investments aimed at improving building insulation and modernizing heating systems. The government also wants to develop central heating infrastructure, as well as hydrogen and CO₂ distribution systems.

These efforts are designed to attract manufacturing companies, particularly in the semiconductor and pharmaceutical sectors. This strong focus on energy sector transformation presents numerous

opportunities for Czech businesses active in renewable energy, energy efficiency, electrical installations, hydrogen technologies, and smart energy management. Demand for innovative solutions and components for transmission networks, energy-saving technologies, and decarbonization projects is expected to grow. This could open doors for Czech companies not only as suppliers but also as partners in joint development and research with German institutions and industrial clients.



**THE CHANCELLOR AND
17 NEWLY APPOINTED
MINISTERS HAVE PROMISED
THAT THE FIRST TANGIBLE
CHANGES WILL BE VISIBLE IN
THE SECOND HALF OF 2025.
FOR CZECH ENTREPRENEURS,
THIS “NEW GERMANY” OPENS
UP FRESH OPPORTUNITIES
AND CHANCES.**

External and internal security

By 2029, Germany plans to gradually increase its defence budget to 3.5% of GDP. This year, spending is already expected to reach 2.4%. According to government plans, the German military is set to become Europe's strongest conventional force. At the same time, the government intends to significantly strengthen internal security forces.

This is a signal for Czech companies specialising in defence, security technologies, and cybersecurity. The modernisation of the military and reinforcement of police forces may lead to increased demand for sensors, drones, security systems, data management software, and crisis management IT

solutions – areas where Czech firms have long been recognized as innovative suppliers.

Innovations

The German government has pledged significant, targeted and systematic support for innovations and the startup ecosystem. A “practicality test” will be introduced into the legislative process to assess the impact of new regulations, especially on startups and efforts to reduce bureaucracy. Business and innovation development will be supported through tax incentives: easier depreciation of newly acquired equipment, a gradual reduction in corporate income tax starting in 2028, and relaxed rules for employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) to better attract and retain talent.

Improved conditions for investors are creating space for Czech solutions to enter the German market. Technology transfer, cross-border research cooperation, and participation in innovation programs could significantly accelerate the growth of Czech companies with European ambitions.

What will be achieved, and what do the first 100 days of the new federal government reveal?

Historically, political promises have often diverged significantly from reality. That may also be the case – at least in part – for the goals set by the new German cabinet. This is true even though the government has secured a substantial, debt-financed financial injection to support its plans. However, the flow of funds from state accounts to suppliers may be hindered by the very issues the German government aims to eliminate: bureaucracy and complex public procurement procedures.

The composition of the government coalition and the political landscape in Germany

also complicate matters for the new chancellor. To push reforms through, he will need to accommodate the views of his coalition partner, the SPD. A collapse of the coalition would likely strengthen the far-right AfD.

Despite these challenges, the new German cabinet has committed to a bold renewal of the country and a strengthening of its economic development and role. The chancellor and 17 newly appointed ministers have promised that the first tangible changes will be visible as early as in the second half of 2025. For Czech entrepreneurs, this “new Germany” opens up fresh opportunities and chances.

The first hundred days of Friedrich Merz’s cabinet show that even in difficult times, the cabinet is working to give the German economy a fresh impulse. Although conditions are far from easy – high energy prices and global market uncertainty continue to weigh heavily on the economy – the government has introduced concrete steps aimed at strengthening competitiveness. One positive example is the approval of an investment package to support small and medium-sized enterprises. The initiative is designed to improve their access to financing and accelerate digitalisation. Overall, the assessment so far is rather favourable: the government is demonstrating a political will for change and sending a clear signal that Germany intends to regain economic momentum. Even though the results of these measures will only become visible over a longer time horizon.

What to do and how to do it?

Naturally, there’s no one-size-fits-all answer. Every entrepreneur will find different approaches suitable. In general, the most important step is to monitor

developments in Germany – especially in sectors relevant to your business – and identify emerging opportunities, whether in M&A, trade, technology partnerships, or supply contracts.

Thanks to the unified European market, Czech suppliers can directly compete for public tenders in Germany. Public contracts exceeding set thresholds (for example, EUR 215,000 for government supplies/services) must be open to foreign bidders. Above-the-threshold contracts can be found on the EU’s official portal, TED (Tenders Electronic Daily). In addition, German federal and regional authorities also announce smaller tenders via platforms such as “Vergabeplattformen” of individual federal states. Useful websites include DTVP.de and eVergabe.de.

Building strong partnerships with German companies is also key. Consider attending major German trade fairs like Hannover Messe (industry), BAU (construction), MEDICA (healthcare), or InnoTrans (mobility). These events offer Czech firms excellent opportunities to form partnerships and secure new contracts in sectors targeted by government investment.

We also recommend leveraging the support of CzechTrade, preparing materials in German, and actively participating in B2B meetings that often accompany these fairs. If you are looking for suppliers, buyers, or business partners, the CzechTrade office in Düsseldorf is a valuable resource. Cooperation with the Czech-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ČNOPK) can also be beneficial, as it regularly organizes networking events for Czech and German entrepreneurs.

Key contacts



PHILIP SMITKA | PARTNER

Philip is the partner leading the German representative office of HAVEL & PARTNERS in Frankfurt am Main. Philip provides comprehensive legal advice on mergers and acquisitions, including real estate transactions. His expertise also covers contract law, international trade, litigation, commercial and investment arbitration, and compliance. He has extensive experience as Coordination Counsel in international legal projects involving multiple jurisdictions.

MARTIN PECKL | PARTNER

Martin specialises in mergers and acquisitions, real estate law, commercial law, and corporate law. He provides legal services in German (his native tongue), English, and Czech. These are comprehensive services in areas such as strategic investments, forming and governing joint ventures, turnkey deliveries, and project financing.



INTERNATIONAL APPROACH

HAVEL & PARTNERS OPENS THE DOOR TO GLOBAL BUSINESS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE WORLD – AND FROM THE WORLD TO US

In today’s global economy, legal certainty is just as vital as capital – whether for Czech companies expanding internationally or foreign investors entering the Czech and Slovak markets. HAVEL & PARTNERS supports clients navigating both directions of cross-border business. Thanks to its close cooperation with ONE FAMILY OFFICE, the firm has also extended its international reach in services for private clients.

AT HAVEL & PARTNERS,
WE SUPPORT OUR CLIENTS
AS THEY EXPAND THEIR
BUSINESS BOTH AT HOME
AND ABROAD, OPENING UP
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
AROUND THE WORLD
FOR THEM.

Expanding a business internationally involves a wide range of legal and strategic challenges – from market entry to investment protection. At HAVEL & PARTNERS, we assist clients precisely in these situations. We provide support in international mergers and acquisitions. We ensure legal frameworks for cross-border restructurings and set up holding and operational structures from both corporate and tax law perspectives.

We help with business expansion, prepare commercial and distribution agreements, handle compliance, and coordinate complex financial transactions across multiple jurisdictions. Clients also turn to us for international intellectual property protection, litigation and insolvency proceedings, and antitrust matters. We can also help with employee relocation abroad and immigration services.



Frankfurt: Gateway to the world

For over a year, HAVEL & PARTNERS has operated a direct representation office in Frankfurt am Main, becoming the first law firm from the CEE region to establish a presence there. For us and our clients, Frankfurt serves as a gateway for international business heading to the West and beyond.

The local team provides comprehensive support to foreign clients entering Central Europe, as well as Czech and Slovak clients wishing to expand abroad. Rather than competing with local law firms, we deepen cooperation with local partners and law firms in Germany.

Global reach

The firm's M&A practice extends far beyond Central and Eastern Europe. We have an extensive team of 80 M&A specialists, including 17 partners. Almost 70% of all our cases have an international element, and we have assisted clients in more than 110 countries.

We assisted Rohlik Group, a leading online grocery retailer operating in the Czech Republic and across international markets, in expanding its commercial activities in Germany. For Metrans, an international logistics group specialising in cross-border freight transport, our team

structured a joint venture in Serbia. We advised the Czech industrial group AIT Group on the formation of a joint venture with Spanish partners. Also, we represented a major Czech bank in litigation proceedings in France, initiated by several French citizens.

Thanks to our cooperation with top-tier domestic and international law firms across Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, and Australia, our clients have access to the both global and local expertise of more than 90,000 lawyers in approximately 160 countries.



Global experience

ONE FAMILY OFFICE, an affiliated family office, also has an extraordinary international reach, benefiting both member families and individual clients. Thanks to the reputation and extensive network of the HAVEL & PARTNERS group, ONE FAMILY OFFICE is able to secure globally prominent treatment for its clients in managing their affairs.

With assets exceeding CZK 12 billion, it stands as the largest family office in Central Europe by number of professionals. This scale and backing grant ONE FAMILY OFFICE a unique international position and access to global investment opportunities typically out of reach for investors from the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

ONE FAMILY OFFICE boasts a specialised team of nearly 20 investment professionals with international experience from major financial hubs such as New York, London, Frankfurt, Zurich, and Dubai. Many team members and close advisors have previously worked in prestigious institutions such as J.P. Morgan, Credit Suisse or Erste, and have served dollar billionaires as bankers, investment bankers, legal and tax advisors, either within global financial centres or directly for their financial groups and family offices in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and abroad. ONE FAMILY OFFICE operates offices in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, with international representation in Dubai, Miami, London, and Frankfurt and Silicon Valley, and plans to expand to Zurich.



**ALMOST 70% OF ALL
OUR CASES HAVE AN
INTERNATIONAL ELEMENT,
AND WE HAVE ASSISTED
CLIENTS IN MORE THAN
110 COUNTRIES.**

It provides comprehensive services for affluent families and individuals, ranging from investment and wealth management to advisory, legal protection, succession planning, fiduciary services, and premium lifestyle support – including health, security, next-generation development, and philanthropy.



Dubai

A key strategic advantage in the investment domain is ONE FAMILY OFFICE's direct presence outside the EU in Dubai. The number of registered family offices in the UAE is growing by 30–50% annually, nearing 600, making the Emirates the fastest-growing family office hub globally. In the past three years, Dubai has even surpassed London in this regard.

With partner Peter Bálint actively engaged in Dubai's family office sector for over four years, ONE FAMILY OFFICE is positioned at the heart of this dynamic environment. This presence enables access to attractive international opportunities and direct investments in major capital markets. Moreover, ONE FAMILY OFFICE is part of an exclusive closed network of leading family offices across Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Saudi Arabia.

FROM THE MEDIA



Jaroslav Havel

**BILLIONAIRE-
LEVEL
FAMILY
OFFICE**

**THE INVESTOR AND
BUSINESS CLUB OFFERS
ELITE SERVICES FOR
AFFLUENT BUSINESS
FAMILIES, SUPPORTING
THEM IN WEALTH
MANAGEMENT, ASSET
PROTECTION, AND
ACHIEVING A QUALITY
OF LIFE COMPARABLE TO
THAT OF WESTERN DOLLAR
BILLIONAIRES.**

The elite attorney Jaroslav Havel has been building the largest family office in Central Europe, a unique club for business families. He helps them access the world's most exciting investment opportunities, and work together to protect their assets, ensure a high-quality life, and educate the next generation. The managing partner of HAVEL & PARTNERS opens up a whole new world of multigenerational wealth management to Czech and Slovak family businesses.

In the first half of your life, you work hard, take risks, and build your business. In the second half, it is mainly about working with capital and ensuring that the money you earned appreciates in value. Having built the largest law firm in Central Europe, Jaroslav Havel has been at the apex of business for almost thirty years and now makes good use of his experience, contacts and reputation in his ONE FAMILY OFFICE.

“We bring to Czechia a unique concept of multi-family office for wealthy families who wish to manage their assets collectively. Having joined forces, they have more capital and stronger bargaining power, greater efficiency and lower costs. They may not be the world’s richest people, but they can still gain access to the most exciting investment opportunities,” said Jaroslav Havel.

The idea to set up a family office arose from his own need to manage his assets and to let them appreciate in value. Together with his partners from ONE FAMILY OFFICE and HAVEL & PARTNERS, they are the “founding family” of the largest family office in Central Europe, a project they launched fifteen months ago.

Their assets represent a slight majority of the nearly CZK twelve billion currently managed by the family office. ONE FAMILY OFFICE expects another CZK four to six billion to be added this year and aims at one billion dollars of invested money, i.e. about CZK 23 billion, by the end of 2026.

It primarily targets clients with over USD 10 million in disposable assets, having associate members who regularly invest with the office as well as full members who manage all their assets through the family office.

Opportunities in the private playground

“My investment strategy is to build a high-yielding, balanced, and maximally safe global portfolio, diversified across currencies and continents. I also achieve high returns through active investing. And I expect active involvement from our partners. We make joint club investments with successful, wealthy and smart people who have excellent business information and insight. On the other hand, we also take care of families who do not have the capacity to invest, and together we create

very conservative portfolios for them that ensure a regular annuity and a stable overall yield of around ten to fifteen percent per year,” said Havel.

He believes that the greatest added value the multi-family office offers is the access to unique opportunities in international private markets, ranging from venture capital investments over the world’s largest private equity and hedge funds to the listing of global companies.

“We’re getting to extremely interesting opportunities on the market that are very difficult to access,” emphasised Jaroslav Havel. “We are also able to gain that access because today, HAVEL & PARTNERS is a world-renowned firm, and we have partnerships with family offices in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Dubai.”

The company’s core management also includes David Neveselý, an attorney-at-law, Peter Bálint, a former investment manager of the richest Slovakian Ivan Chrenek, and Jan Mynář, the managing partner of OneCap, a private equity firm. The advisory body also includes Constantin Kinský, an investor, former banker and family wealth manager, Petr Řehák, Equa bank’s former CEO and now Deloitte’s partner for financial institutions across CEE, Andrej Kiska Jr., a banker, startup investor and entrepreneur, and Pavel Riegger, former EY Advisory’s partner for CEE and now Trask Group’s CEO and co-owner.

The entire team is composed of seventy members, almost half of them being women. “In the investment world, it’s extraordinary. However, it is important for us because we want to be partners to the families, and in families, men and women tend to be equally represented,” said Veronika Dvořáková, a partner at ONE FAMILY OFFICE and HAVEL & PARTNERS.

Accounting for about a third of the world’s wealth according to global data, women’s share is increasing. “We observe the same trend in Czechia and Slovakia, as evidenced by our NextŽeny survey. If the property of the families of the ten wealthiest Czechs and Slovaks were passed on to the next generation as provided for by statutory law, up to 70% of that property could be owned by women,” said Dvořáková.

Women are getting richer not only because of inheritance, longer life spans

or divorces, but also because they are becoming more educated, more successful and more likely than ever to reach top positions. “A McKinsey study predicts that women will control about 38 percent of all investable assets in the United States by 2030, and that Western Europe will experience a similar trend,” said Dvořáková.

Assemble a Lamborghini

In addition to investments and asset appreciation, the family office also focuses on intangible family values. “Our goal is to make the life of the families as high-quality and easy as possible. Our offer includes concierge medicine and access to superior healthcare services. We provide both physical and cybersecurity as well as reputation protection. In addition, we help family businesses with succession planning, successor education and training, and philanthropic activities,” said Dvořáková.

“We also publish dozens of translations of interesting books on investing, doing business and managing companies, and the sophisticated collection of our library includes hundreds of books. For example, we have published a work entitled The University of Berkshire Hathaway to mark the founding of ONE FAMILY OFFICE, which offers insight into the thinking and strategy of the world’s most successful investor Warren Buffett and his partner – who happens to be a lawyer as well – Charlie Munger,” said Jaroslav Havel, who is trying to increase financial literacy in Czechia through ONE FAMILY OFFICE.

His long-term vision is to create the most sophisticated family office in Central and Eastern Europe. With ONE FAMILY OFFICE, he seeks to open a whole new world of multigenerational wealth management for family businesses, which the first generation of Czech entrepreneurs is only slowly discovering.

“We are unique in terms of the complexity of our services and the exceptional quality of each of them. It’s hard to assemble a Lamborghini using mediocre stuff. You can only succeed if every part is by far the best. And that’s what we are – from legal services over investment advisory to concierge services,” said Havel.

This article was first published in Forbes Magazine in May 2025 and has been edited for length.

PRIVATE EQUITY



Private equity is no longer the preserve of institutional investors. “What was previously only available to institutions is now more accessible. People are richer, more global and better informed, often because of their education at banks or their own experience, for example, selling their companies to private equity funds,” said Arham Karim of Bain Capital in an interview.

YOU SHOULD NOT ENTER THE WORLD OF PRIVATE EQUITY WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING IT. YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE INVESTMENT PROCESS, THE OBLIGATIONS OWED TO THE FUND AND THE CAPITAL CALLS, UP TO THE EXIT.

A finance expert who joined Bain Capital in 2023 and works as a Vice President in the Investor Relations team, focusing on the Middle East region, Arham Karim brought his experience working for high-net-worth clients from Citigroup in London, where he managed relationships with ultra-high net worth investors and family offices.

Bain Capital also has experience in the Czech market, having made its mark three years ago, when Tech Opportunities, its technology division, invested a record \$150 million in Ataccama, a Prague-based data company. At that time, it was the largest ever Series A investment on the Czech startup scene. Together with the Cinven fund, Bain also owns Stada, a German pharmaceutical company. Its factory in Třinec produces tens of millions of packages of medicines and food supplements each year. In the area of private equity, where Bain Capital manages the assets of the world's wealthiest people, Czech families have access to the fund thanks to Jaroslav Havel's ONE FAMILY OFFICE. The family office has the opportunity to invest in Bain Capital.

Arham Karim, Vice President of Investor Relations at Bain Capital, talks about the changing investment environment, the growing role of wealthy families, and the sectors that will be on investors' radar in the coming years in an interview during the exclusive ONE FAMILY OFFICE biannual conference in Prague.



It is not yet very common for smaller Czech investors to invest in private equity, especially on a global level. Why do you think they should pay more attention to this segment?
It's all about education – and that's where ONE FAMILY OFFICE can play an important role. You should not enter the world

of private equity without understanding it – you need to understand the investment process, the obligations owed to the fund and the capital calls, up to the exit. If an investor is unfamiliar with these principles, a misunderstanding or disappointment can arise, but once they understand them, it becomes clear why this is such an interesting segment.

And every investor should have at least some exposure in their portfolio, if only to diversify against the public markets. So it's about thinking about asset allocation and how to build a well-balanced portfolio. That's why at Bain Capital, we focus not only on private equity, but also venture capital, real estate and infrastructure – to help investors build portfolios that can withstand different market cycles.

What investment opportunities are investors looking at now?

This is very individual. Investments are very much managed by the investors themselves. Our clients are extremely sophisticated. My role, and that of my team, is to work closely with them, advising them on what works well in the market and bringing them insights from our global experience. But in the end, they know what they are doing and what they want, and they come to us with a clear idea. Our goal is to find and build the right solutions together.

You work mainly with investors from the Middle East, but you also meet European ones. How much do they differ in how they invest?

Overall, the global investment ecosystem is highly interconnected. Middle Eastern investors are in constant dialogue with their counterparts in the US and Europe. We really work with the most sophisticated investors and sharing knowledge and practices across regions helps everyone move forward. It depends on what investors are looking for, and it is not a question of the Middle East or Europe, it is a question of the investor alone.

How specifically?

Some investors prefer liquidity and are happy with lower risk in exchange for regular returns and income. Others take a longer-term view and are willing to make decade-long or even longer investments. Last week, I had two interviews. One investor said he was not concerned about the tariffs or what President Trump was doing. He thinks about his investments in the long term and these are just details



for him. The second investor was more focused on the short-term outlook, thinking about what might happen in the next year or two. So at the end of the day, it really comes down to some basic investment theory and what your time horizon is, what your approach to risk is, or how you look at liquidity.

What led you to private equity?

I spent the last ten years on the other side – working in finance. But I realised that the real value is created in private markets. Gradually it became clear to me that private equity was where I could bring more added value to investors.

Are the trends changing in the sectors Bain is focusing on most now?

Definitely. Like many other funds, we focus on specific areas that we see as promising. This year, for example, we have launched a fund for leasing aircraft because there is a global shortage of them. We buy planes and lease them to airlines that can't afford to buy them outright. Four years ago, we established a fund focused on the insurance industry. We saw an opportunity to bring innovation to the industry and build new platforms. We also have a fund focused on cryptocurrencies. The important thing is that Bain is

a private company, and we are the largest investors in our funds. So it's not just about management fees, it's about actually creating value and delivering strong yields.

What about artificial intelligence?

We have been investing in AI for many years. In fact, we invested in our first AI company back in 2016 and are currently preparing to exit. So AI isn't new to us, but we look at it in different ways over time. It's true that AI is a hot topic right now, but it of course entails risks.

Investment risks?

Yes. They all claim to be doing AI, so it can be hard to separate real innovation from noise.

Does this mean it's too late to invest in AI?

No, I don't think it's too late. In fact, I would say we are still at the beginning. Through our venture division, which we established in 2000, we continue to support and fund early-stage AI startups.

We meet in Prague. Is this region attractive to Bain Capital?

It definitely is. Europe is a long-term priority for us, with a team based in London and offices across the continent. We go

where the opportunities are. In Central and Eastern Europe, our investments tend to be quite large and often require us to take control of companies. Yet we had a portfolio of companies that expanded into the region. For example, we own Valeo Foods, an Irish company that has many food brands under its umbrella. Through Valeo, we bought IDC, a Slovak food company known for its Mila wafers. So even though we don't often make direct purchases, our portfolio is growing here. We are open to further opportunities in this part of Europe.

Is there any particular reason why this region is interesting for Bain Capital?

In our approach to investments, we are very conservative. We focus a lot on the US, Europe and developed Asia. Traditionally, we have not focused much on Africa or South America. So Europe is simply part of the global ecosystem for us. Historically, we focused more on larger markets such as Germany, Sweden, Italy. But we are also open to looking at opportunities across the continent.

Traditionally, private equity was mainly associated with large institutions. Is that changing?

Absolutely. Many firms engaged in private equity are starting to work more with family offices and wealthy individuals who manage their own assets. There are several reasons for this. One is that a number of new, sophisticated family offices with greater insight into the private markets have emerged over the past decade, and the other is the democratisation of private equity. What was previously only available to institutions is now more accessible. People are richer, more global and better informed, often because of their education at banks or their own

experience, for example, selling their companies to private equity funds. So the learning curve has risen significantly, and we expect the trend to continue. It is a very interesting source of capital, growing in the future.

What do you think private equity will look like in 20 years?

I wish I had a crystal ball... For the last decade, we lived in a time of low interest rates. That has changed now, and interest rates are rising. It will be interesting to see how private equity adapts. At Bain, we place great emphasis on practical value creation, i.e. on helping companies grow and improve their operations. I think the whole industry will have to gradually return to this approach. It also depends on the development of the world economy, but it is already clear that technology and artificial intelligence are advancing at an incredible pace and offer huge potential. In addition, we also see great opportunities in Asia, which is now extremely interesting for investors.



In what way?

We see rapid growth in some markets, such as Japan, where we have achieved strong results. That is why we are now fully developing our business in Asia and working with a pan-Asian strategy. For example, we see opportunities in South Korea, our Special Situations team has made investments in Indonesia, and our private equity team is very active in India. Asia has long been considered a difficult market. For example, last year the average return on private equity investments in the region was only 9 percent, which is not much. As a result, many investors felt that the risk outweighed the yield, but we believe this is gradually changing.

TO INHERIT? NO, THANKS WHEN TO CONSIDER ALIENATING INHERITANCE

Disputes within the family, protracted probate proceedings with an uncertain end or an unfavourable share of the real estate – these are situations you will commonly encounter when inheriting. Their solution can be quite simple – it’s called alienation of inheritance. It comes in handy when you don’t wish to inherit, but you don’t want to walk away empty-handed either. How to transfer the heir’s share?

ALIENATION OF THE INHERITANCE IS POSSIBLE DURING THE ENTIRE PROBATE PROCEEDINGS, I.E. FROM THE DEATH OF THE DECEASED UNTIL THE END OF THE FINAL DECISION OF THE COURT.

The alienation of inheritance allows you, as an heir, to dispose of your right to inheritance during the probate proceedings, i.e. not after its end. Simply put, this is a situation where, before you officially take possession of the inheritance as an heir and become the beneficial owner of the inherited property (for example, a house, accounts, or shares in a company), you may “sell”, donate or otherwise transfer your title to inheritance. However, you are not selling a specific item from the decedent’s estate (e.g. a car or furniture), but transferring your heir’s share, i.e. your right. The person who acquires such a title by inheritance (the “transferee”) becomes the “new” heir instead of you. Such person takes over not only the rights, i.e. what they actually receive from the inheritance, but also all obligations, including liability for any debts of the deceased.

When alienation of inheritance is the right solution

Inheritance alienation is most often used in situations where the heir does not want to or cannot own or manage the inherited property themselves or prefers the certainty of an immediate sum of money to the uncertainty and complications associated with inheritance proceedings. It is therefore a tool that can significantly speed up and simplify the settlement and distribution of the estate if a suitable interested party to replace the heir can be found.

This can be useful, for example, in situations where family relations are not ideal and disputes can be expected to arise in connection with the inheritance. If you don’t want to be drawn into endless disputes over property, there is an option how to avoid them. In this case, you can transfer your share of the inheritance to any third party, such as another heir, sibling or investor. As a result, you no longer take part in anything. Instead, you get a pre-agreed amount and “step out of the game” before any issues start to appear.

Sometimes an heir does not want to get involved simply because he or she is not interested in the property. This is especially true for shares in real estate – for example, if you only inherit one-sixth of a house and you know it’s not worth the trouble. In this case, it makes more sense to transfer the share to someone who already owns the rest or wants to take care of the house. Of course, you can do this even after the probate proceedings are over, but if you take the path of alienating your share of

YOU CAN TRANSFER YOUR SHARE OF THE INHERITANCE TO ANY THIRD PARTY, SUCH AS ANOTHER HEIR, SIBLING OR INVESTOR. AS A RESULT, YOU NO LONGER TAKE PART IN ANYTHING. INSTEAD, YOU GET A PRE-AGREED AMOUNT AND “STEP OUT OF THE GAME”.

the inheritance, you will save yourself the hassle and you will also receive compensation for your share in advance.

Fast money

An inheritance can also be alienated if the heir needs money quickly – for example, because of their own debts or an investment. Instead of waiting until the end of the inheritance proceedings, which in our experience can go on for months or years, it is possible to simply sell your title and receive the money immediately.

Typically, alienation of inheritance is also used in situations where the inheritance under the law does not cover the entire circle of the closest relatives, i.e. it does not “reach everyone”, for example, when the deceased lived in a household with his partner before his death, but the couple was not married, and at the same time had children, for example one son, and left no will. In such a case, the probate proceedings are conducted based on legal succession – only the son will inherit from the deceased, while the partner would be “left empty-handed”, even though she may have contributed significantly to building their joint property, not to mention taking care of her partner. It is possible to resolve such inequality by transferring the rights of succession between the son and the partner through an agreement on the alienation of inheritance.

At the same time, this option is an elegant solution to avoid the need for a transfer agreement for each individual item after the probate proceedings have been concluded, which can be emotionally and

financially demanding and time-consuming. On the other hand, it is also necessary to carefully consider the tax implications.

How to do it

Alienation of inheritance has its own rules, needless to say. Firstly, bear in mind that it is only possible to alienate an inheritance if the decedent has not expressly prohibited this step, for example in a will, etc. However, if there is no such restriction, and you, as an heir, do not wish to take over the inheritance or a specific part of it for some reason (and you do not want to refuse or renounce the inheritance in favour of another person in the probate proceedings), you may then consider alienating the inheritance.

If you find an interested party willing to assume your heir’s rights, you may conclude a contract with them in accordance with Section 1714 of the Civil Code. Such contract must be in the form of a public deed, i.e. in the form of a notarial deed drawn up by a notary public. Make sure that it is not the same notary who makes decisions in the probate proceedings.

As far as the contractual type is concerned, it is usually a contract of sale or a donation in which you, as an heir, undertake to transfer your right of inheritance to someone else. You can do so at virtually any time during the entire probate proceedings, i.e. from the death of the deceased until the end of the proceedings. However, this period is clearly delimited; a contract concluded, for example, when the deceased was still alive would be invalid and would not be taken into account by the notary in the probate proceedings.

Price by agreement

You may contractually transfer the inheritance to relatives, other heirs, but also to any individual or legal entity that has not yet been included in the probate proceedings, i.e. even to someone who the decedent would not have considered as their heir at all. You may transfer your share for free or for consideration. It depends on the agreement between the parties concerned.

The price for the transfer (alienation) of the inheritance is at the discretion of the contracting parties, i.e. the original heir (the alienator) and the person to whom the heir wishes to transfer the inheritance (the transferee). You can agree on a price based on the estimated value of the assets in the estate, or you can set the price as a lump sum. An inheritance can be alienated for

a symbolic amount, e.g. CZK 1, like in cases when it is transferred within the family.

The law does not provide for any obligation to use an appraisal or expert opinion, but such an opinion can help you to clarify the real value of the estate and can also serve as an argument when negotiating the price. If you do not know exactly what is included in the inheritance, it is a good idea to contractually agree on the price, for example by stipulating that the price may be adjusted according to the actual value of the inheritance when it is known.

Debts cannot be avoided

Beware of debts – the law says that the “original” heir and the “new” one are jointly liable for the decedent’s debts. This means that if the person you are supposed to inherit from had any debts (e.g. a loan, overdue taxes, etc.), the creditor may demand payment from both the new heir who took your place and you as the original heir, or even both at the same time. Unfortunately, the motto “all for one, one for all” applies here as well.

If the deceased had a debt of CZK 100,000 and the new heir (transferee) who inherits this debt does not have the money (for example, because the heir has not exercised the right to exclude assets from the inventory of the decedent’s estate), the creditor may demand payment of the entire amount from you as the original heir, without further notice, even if you have already transferred the inheritance. However, if you pay this amount, you have the right of recourse, i.e. you may subsequently claim it back from the transferee.

This regulation, however unfair it may seem at first, has a simple rationale – it is to prevent fraud and targeted manipulation with property. It is undesirable

for people to transfer an inheritance to someone who has no assets just to “get rid” of responsibility for debts. That is why the law gives the creditor the right to claim a debt from both or either of them.

Boom or bust

A contract of alienation of inheritance may also be concluded as an aleatory contract, where the outcome, i.e. who gets what or who pays what, depends on a future uncertain event. This is a kind of “surprise” for the buyer – only time will tell if it is pleasant or not. Often, in the probate proceedings, it may not be completely clear at the time of the conclusion of the contract what the estate contains. For example, an inheritance may reveal unexpected assets (a forgotten foreign account or investments that skyrocket) or, conversely, hidden debts that no one knew about beforehand. Such uncertainty is typical of this type of contract.

In all these cases, the risk is borne by the transferee, i.e. the one who takes over the inheritance from the original heir. If it later turns out that the inheritance hardly contains anything and is worthless, or that it is burdened with debts, the transferee is not entitled to a refund, a reduction in price or a change in terms and conditions. Such person has taken over the title including all the uncertainties and fluctuations, which have to be counted on. Even if the inheritance turns out to be completely worthless or even negative, the contract remains valid.

This type of contract can be advantageous for the original heir, as they quickly get rid of all the risks associated with the inheritance and ideally still get money in return. On the other hand, however, the heir also forgoes any profit if the estate later shows funds or valuable items that they

did not know about. For the transferee, it is therefore a bet on uncertainty that can bring profit or disappointment.

Bringing the contract to the notary

Once the contract of alienation of inheritance has been signed, both parties (the original heir and the new transferee) are obliged to inform the court in charge of the probate proceedings as soon as possible, namely the commissioner of the court, i.e. the notary in charge of the entire probate proceedings.

In practice, the notary who drew up the contract of alienation will often take care of this notification obligation for you, for example by informing the other notary in charge of the estate. This allows the probate court (or notary) to officially confirm that the transfer of inheritance has taken place. The information can be used for registration of a new heir instead of the original one and the proceedings may be resumed under the new situation.

Needless to say, in addition to alienation of inheritance, there are other ways you can influence the fate of your estate during your lifetime and after your death, from donating property during your lifetime, to making a will or other provisions mortis causa, to estate structures that literally outlive you and can serve for generations to come. Alienation of inheritance must also be clearly distinguished from the aforementioned refusal of inheritance – in which case, the heir renounces, without compensation, their rights, which pass to other heirs by law or by will. By contrast, in the case of alienation of inheritance, the heir actively transfers their title to a specific person of their choice, often for an agreed fee.



TAX LAW

TAXATION OF ESOPS WHAT EVERY EMPLOYER SHOULD KNOW

Employee stock ownership plans, or ESOPs, have become a popular incentive tool in recent years, particularly among startups and technology companies. However, taxation of these benefits remains a challenge for many employers. The rules have changed several times over the past year and a half, and in practice there is still uncertainty as to when and how tax should be paid. Let’s bring some clarity to the issue.

**ESOPS ALLOW
KEY EMPLOYEES
TO SHARE IN THE
COMPANY’S SUCCESS
BY RECEIVING SHARES
EITHER FREE OF CHARGE
OR AT A DISCOUNTED
PRICE.**



JIŘÍ KUNÁŠEK | PARTNER

Jiří is one of the leaders of the inheritance law practice group. He offers private clients comprehensive legal advice related to the protection and management of personal and family property, private assets, and intergenerational capital transfer. Jiří represents clients in large and complex inheritance disputes and their settlement. He was involved in establishing a dedicated family property law team.

MARTA FANTOVÁ ARGALÁŠOVÁ | SENIOR ASSOCIATE

Marta specialises in family and inheritance law. She advises on structuring succession, including the administration of the decedent’s estate, and represents clients in probate proceedings and inheritance disputes, and addresses issues related to the sudden impairment of the legal capacity to act.



Key contacts

Employees may receive three types of income in connection with Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). The first is non-monetary employment income, which arises when an employee acquires company shares – either outright or by exercising a previously agreed non-transferable option to acquire them – at no cost or below market value. This income is generally taxed as employment income. The second type of income is dividends, which are treated as capital income. The third type of income is income from the sale of shares, which the Income

Taxes Act classifies as “other income”. In this article, we will focus on the taxation of non-monetary employment income, as this is where the most significant recent changes have occurred – and where we see the greatest number of practical questions.

The taxation of non-monetary income from ESOPs also depends on who provides the shares/ and who covers the related costs. If the shares are offered directly to employees by the Czech employer, or if the employer bears the costs of providing them (for example, by the parent

company), the income is taxed as employment income – meaning it is processed through the company’s payroll system and is subject to social security and health insurance contributions.

On the other hand, if the shares are provided by a foreign parent company and the Czech employer does not bear the associated cost, the employee must report and tax the income via the tax return. In this case, no social security or health insurance contributions are due, but the responsibility for correct taxation rests with the employee.

An amendment is currently making its way through the legislative process that introduces a specific regime for qualified ESOPs and modifies (or adds to) the existing rules. For the sake of clarity, however, let’s first look at how the system has worked so far.

Tax before cash

Until the end of 2023, non-cash income was taxed at the moment the employee acquired the shares and could no longer lose them – for example, upon exercising options or upon vesting under Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Unit plans.

In such cases, the company had to calculate the difference between the market value of the shares and any amount the employee had paid and then withhold tax and insurance contributions on that difference – reducing the employee’s net salary (“tax before cash”). As a result, employees often had to sell part of their shares in order to cover the tax, social security, and health insurance contributions.

For companies that are not publicly traded, this often also means complex valuations – a process that proved highly challenging for many of them.

Deferral of taxation

As of January 2024, the “no tax before cash” principle was introduced into the taxation of ESOPs. The law now allows taxation of shares acquired after 1 January 2024 to be deferred until the occurrence of a future “triggering event,” whichever comes first. Examples of such events include termination of employment, liquidation of the employer, or a change in the tax residence of either the employee or the employer (this condition is expected to be abolished from 2026). Other triggering events include the transfer of shares (e.g. sale or donation; note that a transfer between brokerage accounts without a change of ownership does not qualify), an exchange of shares resulting in a change in their total nominal value, or the passage of 10 years after acquisition (likely to be extended to 15 years from 2026).

The respective amendment to social security and health insurance legislation took effect on 1 July 2024.

In addition to deferring the point of taxation, the legislation introduced the possibility of reducing taxable income if the value of the shares decreases between acquisition and the moment of taxation. In such cases, dividends received – net of

tax or any other consideration accrued up to the point of deferred taxation – must be taken into account.

However, this legislation did not otherwise alter the classification or method of taxation for ESOP income. Non-cash income remains treated as employment income, calculated as the difference between the market value of the shares at the time of acquisition and the price, if any, paid by the employee.

Nevertheless, proper reporting of deferred taxable income in payroll requires significant cooperation from the employee. They must inform the employer when they have sold the shares and at what price, as well as whether they have received dividends in the meantime, among other details. Although the law places a partial obligation on employees to provide this information, ensuring compliance can be challenging in practice. As a result, there have been calls for further amendments to the legislation.

Deferred regime notification

Dissatisfaction among many employers and representatives of the startup community led to another amendment to the legislation, which came into effect on 1 April 2025. This introduced the option of a deferred taxation regime – but to make use of it, employers must notify the tax administration.

From the moment employees acquire shares, the employer must submit a notification no later than the 20th day of the following month. For example, if an employee acquires shares in August, the notification must be filed by 20 September 2025. If the company fails to submit the notification on time, the income will be treated as taxable either in the month the employee acquired the shares (if processed through payroll) or as part of the employee’s annual tax return (if the employee handles the taxation personally).

This obligation applies not only to shares acquired after 1 April 2025, but also retroactively to shares acquired between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2025. For these, use of the deferred taxation scheme had to be reported to the tax administration by 2 June 2025. If no notification was filed by this deadline, the income is considered taxable – either as part of the May 2025 payroll or as part of the employee’s 2025 tax return. For notification purposes, an optional form is available on the tax administration’s [website](#).

Questions in practice

With the legislation effective from April, a number of practical issues have emerged that still need to be clarified in relation to ESOPs. For example, in April the General Financial Directorate confirmed that it remained possible to apply the rules in force until 31 December 2023 – meaning the value of the shares could either be taxed through payroll at the time of acquisition or reported by the employee as non-cash income in their 2024 tax return.

The Ministry of Health has agreed to a similar approach for income subject to payroll registration and social security and health insurance contributions. However, the Czech Social Security Administration has stated that it does not support this interpretation. This raises the question of whether, and how, retrospective corrections to payroll records should be made for income already recorded in 2024.

Other practical issues concern foreign companies that provide ESOPs to employees of their Czech branches. For instance, in the absence of a data box, submitting a notification by mail is impractical and carries the risk that the document may not arrive on time.

In general, the deferred tax regime is more advantageous for employees, while for employers it represents an additional administrative burden. Nevertheless, the decision on whether to apply the regime rests with the employer and depends on the company’s approach. It also remains unclear how situations will be handled where the company files the notification late without the employee – who is responsible for submitting the tax return – being aware of it.

The story doesn’t end there

The evolution of ESOP legislation is still ongoing. An amendment currently making its way through the legislative process specifically targets startups and will apply only to qualified ESOPs – as defined by law in relation to the company (startup), the participants (employees), and the plans themselves. Under this latest regime, income from ESOPs will also be taxed only at the time of the sale of shares and treated as “other income” under the Income Taxes Act in the employee’s tax return (no later than 15 years after the option is exercised or the shares are acquired). This means there will no longer be separate taxation of non-monetary employment income and income from the sale of shares.

Income from qualified ESOPs will not be subject to social security or health insurance contributions, and companies will not be required to report it through payroll records – only to file a notification with the tax authority by the deadline for submitting the monthly employer report.

However, under this latest scheme, income from the sale of shares cannot be exempt from taxation even if the statutory

minimum holding period is met (three years for shares of joint stock company and five years for shares of a limited liability company). This differs from the “standard” and “deferred” schemes, where the exemption still applies.

In summary: the existing ESOP taxation regimes will remain in place alongside the newest one. Once the amendment is passed, there will be three distinct ESOP taxation regimes.

Although the legislative changes to ESOPs generally create more favourable conditions for employees, the newly introduced regimes come with a number of nuances. It is therefore wise to carefully evaluate which scheme is best suited for your company and the employees.

THREE ESOP TAXATION REGIMES			
	Standard regime	Deferred regime	Deferred qualified ESOP regime
When Tax Is Paid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Non-monetary income is taxed at the time the shares are acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Non-monetary income is taxed later, typically upon the sale of shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Income is taxed later, upon the sale of shares
How It Is Taxed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Through payroll – subject to social security and health insurance contributionsOr through the tax return – without contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Through payroll – with social security and health insurance contributionsOr through the tax return – without contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Through the tax return – without contributions
Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Income from the subsequent sale of shares may be exempt from tax if the minimum statutory holding period is met	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Income from the sale of shares may be exempt from tax if the minimum statutory holding period is metThis regime is optional and must be reported to the tax authority by the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Income from the sale of shares is not tax-exempt even if the minimum holding period is met.This regime is optional and must also be reported to the tax authority by the company

Key contacts



DAVID KRCH | TAX PARTNER

David has many years of experience representing foreign corporations operating in the Czech Republic. He provides clients with comprehensive services, particularly in corporate income tax and VAT, both in Czech and international contexts. David is a founding partner of HAVEL & PARTNERS Tax.



PETR TUŠAKOVSKÝ | TAX PARTNER

Petr provides clients with long-term, ongoing tax advisory support and comprehensive VAT guidance. He leads the team responsible for preparing VAT returns and related statements and also specialises in tax due diligence. In addition, he represents clients in tax audits.



JOSEF ŽALOUBEK | TAX PARTNER

Josef specialises in corporate tax law, international taxation, restructuring, and related aspects of civil and commercial law, including the tax implications of employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs). At HAVEL & PARTNERS, Josef is also responsible for tax litigation.



ANASTASIA VERKHORUBOVA | TAX MANAGER

Anastasia specialises in personal income tax, social security and health insurance, and international employee mobility. Her practice focuses on preparing personal income tax returns and advising on employee benefit schemes, including company option and share plans.

NICE IDEA – TOO BAD IT’S NOT YOURS ANYMORE

REMEMBER THAT THE COMPETITION NEVER SLEEPS

You invest in development, marketing and people and you’re ahead of the competition. Do you protect what you have created though? Without a patent, trademark or well-drafted contract, you risk someone else reaping the fruits of your labour. How to protect intellectual property in business?

IP PROTECTION IS NOT JUST A FORMALITY. IT IS A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE AND A DEFENCE AGAINST UNWANTED LOSSES.

It is not only in business where speed and prudence often win out. But just as important as being first is protecting what you have created, developed or researched. Do you feel that securing legal protection for intellectual property is just an unnecessarily lengthy and costly step that delays the rapid launch of a product? Would you rather invest in marketing and finding investors than in IP protection? Intellectual property is not just a formality. It is a strategic advantage and a defence against unnecessary losses, as many cases show.

For example, Czech inventor František Hrabal and his company Coda Development had to face a technological giant – tyre manufacturer Goodyear. František Hrabal claimed that his self-inflated tyre technology had been stolen. First, thanks to the contractual set-up that bound Goodyear to confidentiality, he succeeded in the US court; the jury awarded his company compensation of up to CZK 1.6 billion. In the subsequent proceedings, the court has not yet definitively accepted the jury’s decision, although the proceedings continue, pending a final judgment. However, the case already clearly shows that the protection of an idea can have very significant financial implications.

Another example is the Czech Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences, which thanks to the correct licensing policy for the substances of Professor Antonín Holý has received CZK billions from the licensing of antivirals sold by Gilead Sciences. Early international patent protection has brought long-term income for research in the Czech Republic.

There are many other similar cases in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. How not to underestimate the situation and how to choose the right type of protection for your idea? Does it need to be protected at home and abroad, and what should the subject of the actual protection be?

Being fast doesn’t mean being reckless
In today’s fast-paced and competitive economy, flexibility and the ability to be first to market play an important role. But that doesn’t mean you should act recklessly. If you disclose a new technology too early, for example on your website, at a trade fair or in a presentation to investors, you may irretrievably lose the possibility of patent protection. In most countries, in order to be patentable, an invention must be new, i.e.

not yet published anywhere. The fact that you published it first just does not suffice. That in itself does not protect you. You must also be the first one to register your invention with the patent office.

If you create a new material, chemical compound, technological process or device in your company, it is necessary to file the patent or utility model application and only then go public with the idea. The application can give you the legal monopoly for your invention for up to 20 years, virtually worldwide. Without filing a patent application, you will only reveal the results of your expensive research to your competitors without any possibility of consideration.

However, you must take into account that in exchange for an exclusive monopoly, your invention will be publicly described in patent databases and thus accessible to everyone. The principle of a patent is therefore simple: monopoly in exchange for sharing technology.



Alternative: protection of trade secret
An effective alternative to a patent is the protection of know-how as a trade secret. It does not require registration and the protection is effective immediately. If the information is non-public, it has economic value, and as a business you take reasonable steps to keep it confidential. This can be especially crucial for innovations that you don’t want or can’t disclose in the form of a patent.

The famous US dispute between Google (through Waymo, its subsidiary) and Uber has shown that trade secrets can also be effectively enforced. Waymo sued Uber for misuse of confidential information related to the development of autonomous vehicles after a former Waymo employee defected to Uber and took 14,000 technical documents with him. The dispute ended

in an out-of-court settlement worth over CZK 5 billion (USD 245 million).

Even in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, trade secrets can be legally protected nowadays since EU directives and Czech and Slovak law expressly allow this. However, it is necessary to have an internal setup for handling and protecting trade secrets, otherwise the court will not grant it to you. We therefore recommend setting up these processes with an experienced advisor to ensure they are duly enforceable. It’s not just about the legal set-up, but also the technical set-up, the control of access to this information and the way it is handled in your company.

Join us for an overview of how intellectual property rights can be protected in the Czech Republic and Slovakia:

Trademarks

They protect your company’s brand as well as individual products. They can protect both the verbal name, the logo, but also the shape of the product (Toblerone chocolate), its colour (purple Milka) or the jingle (McDonald’s “I’m loving it”). The protection can also apply to an audiovisual animation (e.g. the Netflix jingle).

Industrial design

Besides protecting the name of your company or product, you can also protect your logo or design, i.e. what a particular product looks like. This is protected by industrial design. It does not only have to apply to fashion products, but also individual car parts, packaging and boxes of your products, or the appearance of your computer user interface or logo. Its application is really wide.

Patent and utility model

Do you want to protect not only the product’s name and appearance, but also its unique innovative features? You may do so through patents or utility models. These provide unique protection that guarantees a commercial monopoly. No competitor will be allowed to use your patented technology even internally.

Copyright

Copyright can protect any lyrics, graphics, jingle, music, and possibly even the look of the product. The advantage of copyright is that no application or registration is required for its protection. Copyright also applies to any software. Do you programme anything or do you have new software implemented? Remember to address

copyright issues between the contractor and the client.

Domain name

Don't forget to register a domain name for your company, project or product early to avoid cybersquatting, where speculators "buy up" domains that you might be interested in.

Right to the database

In practice, what tends to be forgotten is the sui generis right of the maker of the database. A database means any data that is structured in some way. Therefore, not everything that is available online is for free use. Web scraping or other copying of online data and its further processing may be a violation of this sui generis right. The right arises informally once the database is created without the need for any registration.

Trade secret

A trade secret is anything that gives you a competitive advantage (market research, client database, special production method) that is secret and valuable or standardly unavailable. It must be concrete information and facts, not abstract ideas or ideas. There have already been court decisions made in the Czech Republic awarding millions of dollars in damages for breach of trade secrets.

What to keep in mind

In today's online world, it is no problem to lodge an application on the other side of the globe. You need to take this into account and make sure that you do not infringe anyone's rights if you come to market with a new product or if you take inspiration from your competitors.

You may take preventive steps through a freedom-to-operate analysis that will check whether your technology interferes with the rights of competitors. Trademarks are checked through trademark searches. We routinely prepare such analyses for clients before embarking on costly patent or trademark registrations.

Please also keep in mind that if you want to use any idea, you need to have a contractual relationship with the creator/author. It's too late to secure such rights if an employee or executive leaves to join a competitor, or if your partner or supplier surprises you by competing with you using your idea. This also applies to the company name or logo.

Some intellectual property rights only provide protection upon their registration. So even if you secure the rights to an invention or logo from its creator, you still need to file an application for registration. This applies to trademarks, industrial designs, patents/utility models and domain names.

On the other hand, there is no need to overdo it with registration. File an industrial property registration application only for the territory where you realistically aim to carry out your activities or where you expect to licence or otherwise commercialise your intellectual property. It is not worth it for other countries.

H&P PATENTS and IP Litigation Practice

One of HAVEL & PARTNERS' key specialisations is intellectual property (IP) and technology law. Our dedicated team is the largest on the Czech-Slovak market – it comprises about 40 experts. We have a number of experienced IP lawyers, patent attorneys and attorneys specialising in IP litigation or technology transactions.

At HAVEL & PARTNERS, we have combined the technical expertise of patent attorneys in our H&P Patents practice with cutting-edge legal services. As a result, we provide comprehensive IP protection from technical to legal and tax issues.

Our patent and trademark attorneys have a technical background and are highly knowledgeable in the technical dimension of your industry. Our lawyers are responsible for all key areas, from comprehensive licensing agreements and tax implications to setting up group and transfer pricing structures to representing clients in court and defending against third-party claims.

We also use a range of advanced technologies to protect our clients' rights against illegal imitations and counterfeits, including in cooperation with customs administration and other relevant authorities.

Key contacts



IVAN RÁMEŠ | PARTNER

Ivan's key topic is intellectual property and technology law. He focuses on comprehensive IP strategy setting, enforcement of industrial property rights and copyrights, in particular on the issues of counterfeits and illegal imitations, parallel imports and exhaustion of rights.

TOMÁŠ HAVELKA | MANAGING ASSOCIATE

Tomáš specialises in industrial property and copyright law in the field of modern technologies and digital society as well as patent-related issues, transactional advice in connection with patents and utility models or patent litigation.



COMPETITION LAW

CZECH REPUBLIC BANS FIRST FOREIGN INVESTMENT SEVEN LESSONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

In March this year, the Czech government made history by using its powers under the Foreign Investment Screening Act (the FDI Act) for the very first time to block a foreign company's investment. What key takeaways are there from this? And if you're working with a foreign investor, could this put your company at risk?

Foreign investment rules in the Czech Republic have been developing quietly until now, but they've just taken their first concrete form. What is FDI and why should you care?

Foreign investment, whether it's buying a company, taking a minority stake, or starting a greenfield project, is a key driver of economic development. But on the other hand, it can also bring security risks, especially if investors from countries with different strategic interests get involved in sensitive areas. Screening foreign investments helps eliminate potential risks. It

lets the state control these investments, assess how risky they are, and potentially block them.

The Czech Foreign Investment Screening Act came into force on 1 May 2021. The Act aims to protect the security and public order of the Czech Republic by enabling the examination of foreign investments from outside the EU. Under the Act, a foreign investor is defined as any entity (including natural persons) which has its registered office or nationality outside the EU or which is controlled by such a person.

This legislation is primarily directed at investors from countries deemed sensitive, such as China, Russia, and Iran. However, investors from the USA, the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, and Israel are also required to apply for investment permits in the Czech Republic.

The law distinguishes two kinds of investments: those that need mandatory notification, and those the Ministry of Industry and Trade can examine on its own. This dual mechanism is uncommon in Europe, being present in only three other countries, including Slovakia.

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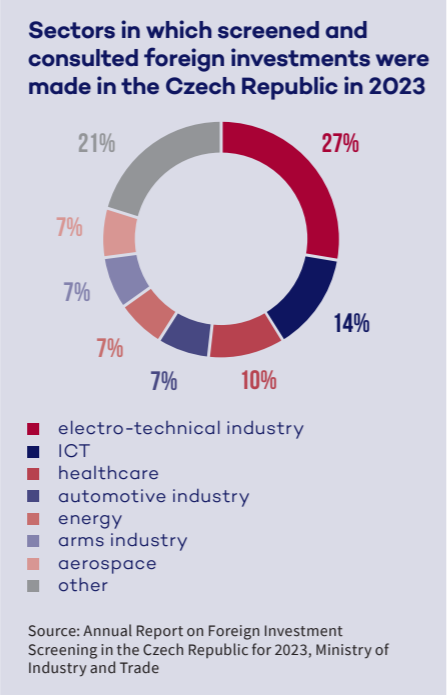
Specifically, the notification obligation applies to investments concerning critical infrastructure elements, the arms industry, or the production and development of dual-use goods. These products, while commonly employed in civilian applications, are also adaptable for military purposes or, due to their inherent properties, may be diverted to the production of weapons of mass destruction (or their delivery systems). Their scope encompasses a wide range of items, including drones, cybersecurity and cryptography software, and various chemical substances.

In 2023, the Ministry primarily reviewed investments in the electrical industry, information and communication technologies, and the health sector. Its scope also encompassed investments within the arms, aerospace, and automotive industries, alongside those in the financial, transport, services, and construction sectors.

In the context of other investments with potential implications for national security and public order, investors may also voluntarily provide notice of the transaction to obtain legal certainty regarding its compliance. Failure to do so, however, carries the risk that the investment could be subject to proactive review by the authorities for up to 5 years after its completion.

First ban in history: the Emposat case
In March 2025, the Czech government issued a classified resolution, empowering the Ministry of Industry and Trade to prohibit the Chinese company Emposat from proceeding with its planned investment in the country. Emposat's proposal involved operating a satellite earth station in Vlkost, a village located in South Moravia. Despite being a greenfield investment, the government determined that the project posed a potential threat to Czech national security or public order. Sources indicate that intelligence played a significant role in this decision.

The Brno-based company Pekasat was designated as Emposat's partner in the Czech Republic. Pekasat, however, asserts that its involvement was limited to an infrastructure lease, and that it had no financial or operational connection with the investor. Nevertheless, the project was halted. The key lesson here is: even an inconspicuous project not subject to mandatory notification can be subsequently stopped by authorities should it later be deemed hazardous.



Active market monitoring

Despite this being the first prohibition since the law's enactment, it does not indicate that the FDI regime has been ineffective. The Ministry has previously stated it has received numerous notifications and conducted multiple reviews since 2021, with the majority of cases concluding without adverse findings. Consequently, the market is under rigorous oversight, with even greenfield investments drawing state interest. Furthermore, our information corroborates that many reviews of foreign investments are not initiated based on investor proposals, but rather through the authorities' own proactive monitoring, specifically at the behest of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

We reiterate that the Act empowers the Ministry to initiate a review with a retroactive scope of up to five years. As a result, no investment, even one undertaken without prior notification, can be considered entirely secure. It is important to consider the potential changes in political representation and state security policy that may arise from current geopolitical developments, not only in the Czech Republic but also across Europe and globally, within the next five years.

Moreover, international experience indicates a progressive tightening of FDI legislation and an increase in the scope of prohibited investments. Furthermore, these statistics fail to capture instances

where a foreign investor abandons the pursuit of an investment following protracted negotiations with the regulatory authority.

Wider EU practice – The Czech Republic is not alone
The Czech Republic's approach to foreign investment screening is consistent with that of many other European Union members. Twenty-three EU countries, including Germany, France, and Italy, currently operate such screening mechanisms.

The Czech regulatory regime is notably more stringent than those of other nations, impacting not only the acquisition of existing enterprises but also new investments, and conferring extensive powers upon the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The government provides no detailed rationale for its decisions, and the Ministry's annual reports are consistently brief, general, and frequently issued several months late. This all significantly hinders investors' ability to accurately assess genuine risks.

What constitutes a safety risk?
How should foreign partners investing in your company be evaluated for their potential to pose risks to national security? The terms 'security' and 'public order' lack precise legal definition, which grants considerable latitude for interpretation regarding what constitutes a specific disruption. In practice, their application is frequently guided by the recommendations issued by the European Commission. According to the European Commission, clear warning signs for foreign investment are identified through several key factors. These include concerns regarding access to sensitive data or technology, an investor's links to government or military structures, the potential impact of the investment on critical infrastructure operations, or its effect on the availability of goods and services vital for security.

Non-public information, often derived from intelligence services, may also influence the decision to impose a ban. Nonetheless, unlike the public decisions issued by competition authorities and in relation to merger clearances, investment review decisions remain confidential. This stems from the sensitivity of the topics under review, yet it simultaneously implies that the entire vetting process lacks complete predictability for businesses.

Avoiding complications
The Emposat case consequently demonstrates that the FDI is an active instrument of state policy. What key considerations should foreign investors and other interested parties bear in mind? Seven crucial lessons can be gleaned from the initial ban and the ongoing monitoring of foreign investment:

- 1. Identify sectors at risk**
Foreign investment into companies operating within the telecommunications, defence, information technology (IT), energy, or healthcare sectors is subject to a higher likelihood of regulatory intervention. This also extends to other critical technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity.
- 2. Consider voluntary notification**
Even where reporting an investment to the authorities is not legally mandated, voluntary disclosure is permissible. It is particularly advantageous for complex transactions, especially those with intricate structures, or when the investor originates from a jurisdiction deemed high-risk. Voluntary notification provides enhanced legal certainty and significantly reduces the long-term risk of review by the authorities. Additionally, it offers a considerably less administratively burdensome process compared to situations where the Ministry of Industry and Trade initiates an investment review proactively.

3. Make early contact with the Ministry
It is advisable to initiate informal communication with the Ministry at the earliest opportunity, ideally during the contemplation or negotiation stages of the investment. Our experience indicates that officials from the Ministry of Industry and Trade are receptive to dialogue. The authority values transparency and a cooperative approach from investors.

4. Anticipate post-investment scrutiny
Stipulate FDI risk clauses within the transaction documentation. Particular attention should be given to the inclusion of conditions precedent for compliance and cooperation obligations, especially when these pertain to regulatory compliance. This protection is equally applicable to target Czech companies. Should a foreign investor decline to consult with the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the investment subsequently be banned or made subject to modified conditions, the seller's interests may be adversely affected.

5. Don't underestimate FDI risks
The risk of FDI review affects both the foreign investor and the Czech target company. It is therefore in their mutual interest to ensure the Ministry of Industry and Trade is notified and the investment approved prior to its implementation. The law further stipulates that an investment is also deemed to occur when the investor acquires as little as 10% of the voting

rights or obtains access to sensitive information, systems, or technologies critical to the security of the state. Consequently, officials are empowered to initiate a review even for transactions that may not overtly resemble traditional acquisitions. It is therefore advisable to incorporate an FDI assessment for the target company into the transaction preparation. Should any uncertainty arise, it is prudent to initiate consultation with the Ministry and to secure contractual protection against potential intervention by the authorities.

6. Consult lawyers
Regulatory experience is essential for effective communication with authorities, strategic risk analysis, and the proper submission of notifications. An expert legal team is invaluable in this regard, providing assistance not only with formal requirements but also with crafting the strategy for engagement with the Ministry, which is often crucial for the transaction's overall success.

7. Stay abreast of changes in legislation and interpretative practice
It is important to regularly monitor new cases, changes in the law, and the MIT's annual reports. European and Czech practice demonstrates an increasingly stringent trend, which is evident in the interpretation of sensitive domains and the authorities' growing readiness to adopt more robust measures.

Key contacts



ROBERT NERUDA | PARTNER
Robert leads a team of competition lawyers and economists specialising in competition law. His expertise encompasses advising on foreign investment investigations, addressing cartel and abuse of dominance issues, and conducting competition law assessments for mergers and acquisitions involving significant market power, as well as matters concerning public aid and foreign subsidies. Robert previously served as Deputy Chairman of the Office of Competition Protection.



MARTIN ROTT | SENIOR ASSOCIATE
His practice focuses on competition law, compliance, and regulation. Within competition law, Martin advises on matters including cartels, abuse of dominance, merger clearance, and foreign investment screening.

ROMAN SVĚTNICKÝ | COUNSEL
Roman specialises in competition law, compliance, public sector, and regulation. He advises on matters including cartels, abuse of dominance, merger clearance, foreign investment control, state aid, and abuse of significant market power.



WAITING FOR THE GLOBAL CHAMPION

Slovakia has talent, ideas and ambition, yet it is still waiting for its first technological unicorn. The third edition of the INVESTOR & STARTUP MEETUP event, organised by HAVEL & PARTNERS and ONE FAMILY OFFICE, took place in Bratislava's Rivers Club. It brought together leaders from the Czech and Slovak startup scenes to demonstrate to startups the changes necessary for global success.

"Czech and Slovak startups have talent and ideas, but without global ambition and capital, they will not succeed in the global venture capital market," said Jaroslav Baier, Venture Capital Partner at HAVEL & PARTNERS and Associated Partner at ONE FAMILY OFFICE. According to him, Slovakia should take inspiration from the Israeli model. "There, technology is a strategic pillar of the entire economy. Startups account for 20 percent of GDP, more than half of exports, and employ hundreds of thousands of people. Most importantly, no one there can settle for local success, because the country is even smaller than the Czech Republic. From day one, they aim for the US market."

An example of how a Slovak startup can succeed on the global market is Photoneo, which was recently acquired by the US-based company Zebra Technologies. "Our seed investment was two million euros. The MVP from 2016 is our best-selling product to date," said

Ivana Žižková, the CFO, who led the comprehensive sales process.

Photoneo has created a unique technology – a robotic eye connected to artificial intelligence. "Imagine the scope of automation when your eyes are closed, you have to direct your hand, and then consider the possibilities when you open your eyes," explained Žižková, outlining the principle behind their innovative solution.

Smart money and opportunities abroad Participants of the meetup agreed that Slovak startups need more than just money – they need "smart money". "The combination of finance, intellect and built relationships can be as synergistically effective as finance alone," emphasised Baier.

Michal Vanovčan from Seed Starter of Slovenská Sporiteľňa mentioned another important aspect: "We are looking for companies that have the potential to grow and help keep talented people in Slovakia.

But most of the projects are still at too early a stage. That's why we support events like the INVESTOR & STARTUP MEETUP – they bring people, capital and ideas together, creating a stronger innovation ecosystem." Seed Starter is a venture capital fund of Slovenská Sporiteľňa that supports startups in their early stages. Among other things, it enables startups to run pilot projects with the bank, allowing them to test their solutions in a real-world environment, receive feedback, and accelerate their growth.

Jaroslav Lupták from Neulogy Ventures has a different perspective: "We want to bring higher added value to the founders, which is why we must specialise as a fund. The Slovak market is too small for that. Innovation knows no borders and even the best Slovak founders often do business in the US, London, and other places abroad."

At the meetup, Zuzana Doležalová from the Vienna Business Agency presented

an interesting alternative for Slovak startups. "We want Vienna to be much closer to Bratislava. Every year we receive forty million euros directly from the City of Vienna, which we invest in various projects. This is an opportunity for Slovak startup founders too," said Z. Doležalová. "If you want to expand to Vienna, we will connect you with investors, tell you where the networking events are," she said, explaining the opportunities for Slovak founders.

US as a magnet for capital and innovation

The added value of venture capital lies in the speed with which it can create huge added value – a world champion in a certain field – from nothing in a very short time. The highest valuations and most breakthrough companies are created in the US, offering venture capitalists unrivalled access to capital, talent and market potential. Europe, on the other hand, lags far behind, which is alarming.

"That's why we are primarily directing our investments to the US. Together with our partners at ONE FAMILY OFFICE, we now have access to US global venture capital funds on a restricted access basis,

which are otherwise not available. This is essentially the best-performing asset class in the world," explained Baier.

Obstacles to growth and reasons for optimism

What are the main obstacles to developing the Slovak startup ecosystem from the point of view of the meetup participants? "Slovakia is becoming very unattractive for founders in terms of the tax and regulatory environment," pointed out Lupták, partner at Neulogy Ventures.

From her position as a successful CFO, Ivana Žižková added: "I would welcome a functioning ESOP structure. Not things like a transaction tax. The legal system in our country is so complicated that it's impossible for foreigners to understand."

Despite the challenges, there is also reason for optimism in the Slovak market. "We are entering an era of first exits. The investment cycle is coming to an end and successful companies will create more founders and investors," Lupták noted.

Juraj Jusko from SLOVAK INVESTMENT HOLDING (SIH) stressed the importance

of the state investment fund in implementing financial instruments from EU funds. SIH primarily supports Slovak businesses through financial intermediaries, but also has an internal capacity for direct investments.

Drawing on his experience with startups, Štefan Petergáč, a technology veteran and founder of DATALAN, offered advice to investors: "You need startup owners who give 300 percent. It's a huge amount of work; there has to be extreme commitment. That's very important. And then there have to be people who understand each other, because if they don't, no business will be successful."

"Let's not be afraid of new adventures, whether it's on the waves of the Danube, in venture capital, or anywhere else. Slovakia has all the prerequisites to see its first unicorn. It just needs the right combination of talent, capital and the courage to think globally from day one," concluded Jaroslav Baier.



↑ Jaroslav Baier, HAVEL & PARTNERS and ONE FAMILY OFFICE



↑ Ivana Žižková, CFO at Brightpick

↓ From left: Juraj Porubský, editor-in-chief of MIT Sloan Management Review CZ and SK and Štefan Petergáč, co-owner of SYNTECA



← From left: Jaroslav Lupták, partner at Neulogy Ventures, Juraj Jusko, Investment manager at SIH, Michal Vanovčan, Seed Starter of Slovenská Sporiteľňa

Where success is created Czech Business Diamonds are heading to the regions

Czech businesses with regional roots prove that high-quality work, innovation and perseverance have nationwide as well as international reach. These are the stories uncovered by the Czech Business Diamonds award, which we at HAVEL & PARTNERS and ONE FAMILY OFFICE have partnered with for the second time.

With HAVEL & PARTNERS, we provide comprehensive legal and tax advice to regional companies across all key areas of business – from incorporation and development, to acquisitions, exports, asset protection and intergenerational transfers. With dedicated teams and a direct presence in the regions, our law firm is a reliable partner for entrepreneurs who want to strategically develop their business locally and abroad.

“Supporting Czech companies with a regional overlap is a natural part of our long-term mission. At HAVEL & PARTNERS and ONE FAMILY OFFICE we cooperate with entrepreneurs who create strong brands with international potential, and the Czech Business Diamonds give them well-deserved visibility and recognition,” said Jaroslav Havel.

The Czech Business Diamonds ranking, organised by the communication agency COT, is based on the evaluation of economic criteria (revenues, assets, ROE, EBITDA, margin, and current liquidity) and regional rankings, which combine to form the “Diamond Index”. A ranking of companies based on these criteria is created in each region, and the top three companies are awarded. At the same time, the organizers invite other companies that contribute to the development of crafts, responsibility, sustainability and promotion of the region to the Diamond Hall of Fame.

This year, the award ceremonies in the regions were hosted by the companies that scored in the previous years of the ranking. “It is an effort to amplify one of the dimensions of the Czech Business Diamonds – to inspire, share experience, and present the work of the best directly in their home environment,” said Gabriela Ben Ahmed, co-founder and managing director of the organizing agency.



Summer promotions at HAVEL & PARTNERS – 12 people moving to more senior positions

As of 1 July, Matúš Holubkovič, Patrícia Jamrišková and Tomáš Kalenský were promoted to the positions of managing associates. The team of senior associates has expanded to include Daniel Doležal, Zdeněk Chroust, Dita Krumlová, Roman Marša, Libor Novák, Svatopluk Novák, Barbora Sahánková and Tomáš Varšo. Within the firm’s tax team, Martin Bureš was promoted to senior tax manager.



Jan Procházka becomes partner in the banking and finance team

In April, Jan Procházka became the group’s new banking and finance partner. At HAVEL & PARTNERS, he is responsible for the further development of this dedicated practice group, which is handled by thirty seasoned lawyers, including six partners.

Jan Procházka has ten years of experience in banking and finance. He focuses on legal advice to banks, insurance companies, individual and collective investment vehicles and other financial market clients, including regulatory requirements or regulatory aspects of transformations, restructurings and acquisitions, AML, payment services including licensing, distribution of financial products and compliance in the financial sector.



Security Director joins the safety, security and risk prevention team

Our unique team of HAVEL & PARTNERS and ONE FAMILY OFFICE, which provides top-notch services and support in the field of security and crisis management to the firm’s key clients and members or associates of the multi-family office, was joined by Radovan Hříšný as Security Director in July. In cooperation with the firm’s partners, he is responsible for the comprehensive protection and risk management of the entire group and for ensuring the security of clients, in the broadest sense of the word, from physical and personnel safety to information security and cybersecurity, including the prevention of crisis situations.

“Thanks to our comprehensive approach, extraordinary connections and network of contacts, we are capable of effectively helping the firm’s clients and family office members in situations where they are dealing with a serious problem or crisis situation that jeopardises their economic stability, safety in the broadest sense, reputation, or health. It is a completely unique service with high added value that averts fatal damage or a devastating negative impact on a person or company. No other law firm or consulting company offers it to this extent,” said Jaroslav Havel, managing partner of HAVEL & PARTNERS and ONE FAMILY OFFICE.



(A) Moment for a good cause

In the first months of this year, we went through our wardrobes, collecting a total of 145 kg of clothes, accessories and items that went to Moment, a charitable NGO. The organisation returns them back to life, selling the collected items and donating the proceeds to those who need the money. The organisations that receive the donations include the Czech Coalition for Biodiversity Conservation (CCBC), the Institute of Circular Economy, Czech Bikes for Gambian Schools, the Ondrášek Mobile Hospice, the Platform for Early Care, Save-Elphants, Society for Early Care, and the Žebřík Day Care Centre.



When Running Does and Feels Good

This year, over seventy H&P runners took part in the traditional Night Run for Světluška in Prague and Brno. With record-high participation of our company's runners, we were excited to wholeheartedly support a long-term project that has been helping to light up the world of visually impaired people.

That was, however, not the only running event H&P participated in. Fifty colleagues ran in support of the Memory of Nations and the Post Bellum organisation, which preserve the precious memories of those who experienced the historical moments of the 20th century, so that we never forget the monumental experience and tragic consequences of events such as World War II, the Holocaust, and the persecution of opponents of the communist regime.

At another event, the RunCzech Half Marathon, H&P runners also performed impressively. On that occasion, we donated nearly CZK 120,000 to the following organisations: Light for the World (CZ), Health Clown, Trend vozíčkářů Olomouc – a charity assisting people with disabilities, Nadační fond Pink Bubble – a charity helping young people with cancer, and Domov sv. Josefa – a charity assisting people with multiple sclerosis.



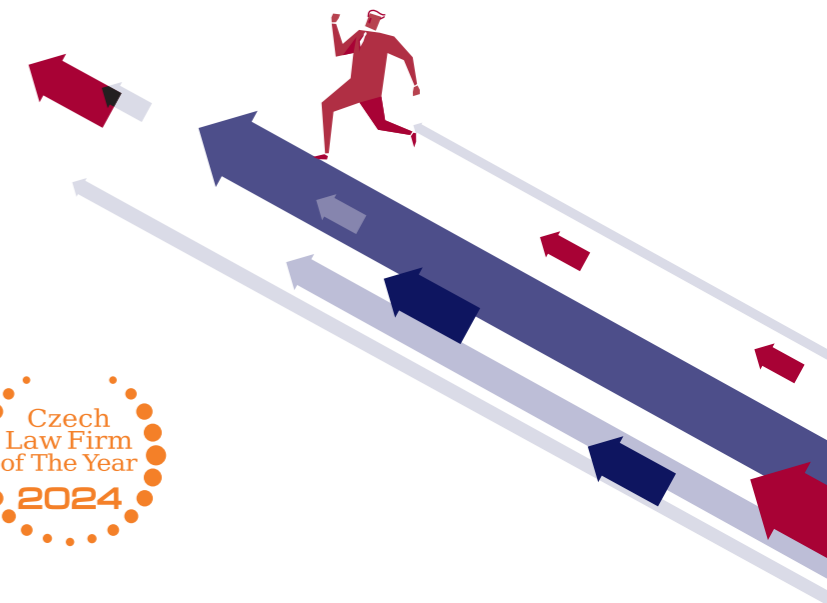
Voting and helping

At this year's Lawyer of the Year Gala, partner Veronika Dvořáková presented a cheque for charity in the total amount of CZK 200,000 on behalf of all her colleagues from HAVEL & PARTNERS. We all voted to decide which charitable projects would receive the money. According to the result of the vote, we split the amount between two meaningful projects: CZK 100,000 was donated to Loono – an organisation educating the public on how to prevent serious diseases and how to care for one's health, and the other CZK 100,000 went to IKEM's Czech Stem Cells Registry, which searches for and connects donors and patients with hematopoietic disorders.



AWARDS RECEIVED IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

HAVEL & PARTNERS is the most successful law firm, providing the most comprehensive legal services in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, based on the total number of all nominations and awards in all years of the Law Firm of the Year awards.



LEXOLOGY INDEX



The firm became the absolute winner of this competition eight times in the last ten years, receiving the main award **Domestic Law Firm of the Year in the Czech Republic** (2015, 2017, 2018, 2020–2024) and ranking among the most recommended law firms in all practice areas. HAVEL & PARTNERS is also a multiple winner of the **Law Firm of the Year award for Best Client Services** (2015, 2016, 2019–2024) and received the same award in Slovakia (2020–2022). The firm also won the **International Law Firm** category in the Slovak Law Firm of the Year competition (2022–2025).

HAVEL & PARTNERS was named the best law firm operating in the Czech Republic by the prestigious global rating agencies **Chambers and Partners** (2020–2022) and **Lexology Index** (former Who's Who Legal) (2018–2024).

In the field of M&A, HAVEL & PARTNERS ranks among the best law firms in the Czech Republic. As part of the **Law Firm of the Year** competition, it won this category both in the Czech Republic (2019–2022, 2024) and in Slovakia (2015, 2020, 2021, 2025). Reputable international rating agencies **EMIS DealWatch** and **Mergermarket** have ranked HAVEL & PARTNERS among the leading law firms by the number of transactions completed in the Czech Republic since 2010.

The firm has also won a number of non-legal awards and, at the end of 2024, was ranked in the **TOP 100 most valuable companies controlled by Czech owners** according to the **Czech Elite** ranking. The ranking is compiled by Seznam Zprávy in cooperation with Deloitte.

The firm has **historically won approximately 150 top legal, business and employer awards as a winner** in the law and professional services categories in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.



THE LARGEST CZECH-SLOVAK LAW FIRM WITH AN INTERNATIONAL APPROACH

110 12
countries languages

We provide legal and tax
advice in 12 languages
in more than 110 countries
around the globe.



Our clients have access
to international and local
know-how and expertise
through more than
90,000 lawyers in nearly
160 countries.

70%

Up to 70% of the
transactions we
deal with involve an
international aspect.



We have the most
comprehensive
international support
available to both Czech
and Slovak law firms.

