



**PRÍHOVOR PREZIDENTA SR
na otvorení podnikateľskej konferencie
„Why Slovakia? Fit for investing and trade“
v rámci oficiálnej návštevy Talianskej republiky**

Rím, 15. 1. 2025

Dear Madam Vice President Cimmino,

Dear Ministers, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it's a great pleasure to open this conference today here in beautiful Rome.

Many years ago, my great-grandfather, Leopoldo Pellegrini, left his hometown of Salter in northern Italy to work in Slovakia. Attracted by the beauty of our country and similar mentality of our people, he decided to stay.

Thanks to his decision, and based on my family history, I am now standing before you as someone who proudly holds a special place for Italy in my heart. Sharing with you one of the many personal stories that bind our countries on a people-to-people level, as a reliable foundation of our close partnership.

Indeed, yesterday I agreed with President Mattarella and Prime Minister Meloni that Slovakia and Italy are not only close partners but also very good friends. Italy is one of Slovakia's most important business partners, with over eight billion euros in bilateral trade.

As a country with a growing economy, a stable business environment, and an excellent location in the heart of Europe, we offer an attractive destination for foreign investments and business opportunities. More than four hundred Italian companies have established a strong presence in Slovakia, contributing to the modernization of our industrial sector by bringing in new technologies and know-how.

I hope this conference will open new avenues for cooperation and uncover fresh opportunities. I believe that your debates and new contacts made during this forum will play a key role in turning many of these opportunities into success stories.

I wish you fruitful conversations and productive outcomes!