**Introductory speech by Peter Kasalovský**

**at the 105th regular assembly and 249th club event**

**Dear Assembly,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let’s begin with a moment of silence in honour of Cardinal Ján Chryzostom Korec, our precious honorary member and Golden Biatec laureate, who passed away last Friday. Almost since the time our club was established, he was a source of inspiration infusing new life into our activities in a myriad of ways.

He was one of us since 1993 and he would often take the time to talk with us until his illness prevented him from doing so. The last time he spoke to us was short before his message was presented at the 92nd regular assembly - our association’s 230th event held on 14 June 2012. Among other things, in his message he wrote: “*...On several occasions in the past I have publicly praised your activities and I am delighted that you have had me as a member for twelfth years now.* *I, like you, also think that no nation can live and no economy can exist without people’s spiritual development, development of respect for people, the family, the nation and the state, without respect for conscience and morality, without solid education that instils true values. That is why I support your commitment to sound economic and social life. The 92nd regular assembly has a truly inspiring agenda, which is much needed at this time for joining forces in the interest of better living conditions. One could say that it is a major challenge for politicians and the general public as a whole. Being eighty-eight years old, my age does not allow me to be with you now. So, let me go back and remind you of some of the views and my thoughts in response to the words of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Other thoughts, too, keep emerging in my mind inspired by the legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius and many rare people from both home and abroad, but also your views, especially the Human and Social Responsibility Memorandum adopted by the members of the association in May 2010.*

*... there is an opportunity to reflect, first of all, on the anniversary of Slovakia’s existence as an independent and sovereign state. There is not much need to mention that your association also came to life after our republic was established, the republic which you will always be committed to caring about and seeing to its health. I am convinced about this. I am not sure, nevertheless, whether there is ever going to be someone who can explain what happened to us, in our home, in the new republic. Institutions like your organisation could have been the basis of our rejuvenated existence because its initiators are succeeding in bringing together experts from all spheres of human activity and entrepreneurs who were always able to analyse the situation and criticise mistakes, but also offer solutions to both economic and social problems. It is impressive that you have managed not to get drawn into politically and professionally fruitless disputes over those twenty years. Despite ill will from many politicians, you have made a significant contribution to the fact that we still have things to protect, rescue, and aspire to in our home state and our nation. To finally address unemployment and the looming social tension, as well as the no less dangerous soullessness of life and absence of values in day-to-day existence of a considerable number of people in our country. Although many unsuccessful politicians have disappeared from the political scene, the new ones have failed to bring more discipline into their lives and our lives in general, without which no progress is possible.*

*... Without deeply rooted respect for man, marriage, the family and good upbringing of children, democracy may be ravaged and freedom put to the mercy of arbitrary economic and financial interests. This is particularly true in a disfigured market economy which is only guided by success and profit following the “to die means to revive” principle and which can strangle humanity and culture. More urgently than ever before, today's society needs legal and moral control over man and power. In our society, too, we need the power of law, not the law of power. The fact that a law has been passed by the majority in the parliament does not guarantee that it is a just law. Such law may be blind and unjust, it may be a product of forceful propaganda and the power of money. Public opinion or science cannot be used as a justification. Public opinion cannot decide on the multiplication table or gravity, nor can it decide on ethics or deny the respect and value of an individual. For all of us it is important to have a deep understanding of the world, existence, people and nations, to see them as they are. It is important to live and act on the basis of the truth thus understood. Therein lies our well-being and meaningfulness of our lives. Every human is dependent on this truth. The whole society, the whole nation and country rely on public protection, presentation and preservation of the truth about man. This truth of life needs to be reiterated, reasoned, constantly developed further and protected as the common property of our nation. Such a country was also the desire of an Indian poet who wrote that it should be a place where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, where the world has not been broken up into fragments, where words come out from the depth of truth, where tireless striving stretches its arms towards love, where the stream of reason has not lost its way into the desert sand, where the mind is led forward by God into ever-widening thought and action...*

*Dear Assembly, Dear Administrator and Members of the Committee, I will be very pleased if your association, which brings together very competent personalities, continues the effort to provide space for a critical dialogue about how to create the resources, creatively and on the basis of our people’s skills, wisdom and hearts, for increasing the human standard of living in our Slovakia. With sincere thanks for your twenty years of contributing to sound thinking and good repute of Slovakia in the world, may God bless you and your loved ones, Cardinal Ján Chryzostom Korec**Nitra, 10 June 2012.”*

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Just like then, the content of the message from Cardinal Korec, a great personality of our nation, a patriot, and spiritual giant, continues to be a great commitment for us today.

At our today’s 105th regular session and 249th event, I have the pleasure to welcome representatives of the diplomatic missions of Croatia and Cuba, our members from abroad and all of you who were able to make time in their busy schedule to be here with us today. Some of the confirmed participants are still on their way.

It is a pleasant discovery that we have twenty six Golden Biatec laureates and thirteen university professors in the conference room. Slovak President Andrej Kiska, Minister of Economy Vazil Hudák, President of the Supreme Audit Authority Karol Mitrík and National Bank Governor Jozef Makúch have apologised for their absence.

Unfortunately, right at the beginning let me apologise for the absence of Rudolf Mosný who is unable to attend our assembly due to a serious health condition of his wife and his business partner. *(His speech will be published on our website* [*www.hospodarskyklub.sk*](http://www.hospodarskyklub.sk)*both in Slovak and English.)*

I hereby open today’s assembly.

First of all, let me present my report - the announcement of the results of voting by the International Peace Committee on the laureate of the “2015 Peace Prize from Slovakia”.