

Ambassador of Hungary to the U.S., Dr. Szabo spoke at Utah Valley University



Ambassador Laszlo Szabo speaks at Utah Valley University.

On November 6, 2018, the office for Global Engagement at Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted Ambassador of Hungary to the United States, Dr. Laszlo Szabo. His presentation was about the current country's economy, technology trends, and Hungary's sustainable development. Dr. Baldomero Lago, Chief International Officer at UVU introduced the Hungarian Ambassador by mentioning some facts from VIP-guests bio. Dr. Laszlo Szabo became an Ambassador of Hungary to the United States in July 2017. Prior to his current position, he was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary from 2014 to 2017. Dr. Szabo also served as CEO for the pharmaceutical company, a fortune 500 company in Indianapolis.

At the beginning of his presentation, Ambassador Szabo mentioned that the country's economy plays a critical role for his country. Ambassador Szabo stated that "we were trying to get rid of red tape and get things done. The results are coming in nice." The state of Hungary was almost bankrupt in 2010. In Hungary the previous government falsified data, like it was done in Greece. While in Greece, as Ambassador Szabo said, the moment of truth has arrived, Hungary is still before that," Then Ambassador Szabo added that: "This is exactly what we want

to avoid, and this government is ready to avoid the path that Greece took. After realizing what reality is, we will not hesitate to act," he said.

Greece and Hungary have the identical financial situation. Both countries have different interests and goals. However, they maintain their political relations, for example, Greece and Hungary cooperate closely within the EU and NATO. Bilateral contacts take place regularly on all levels, contributing to the further strengthening of their partnership. The result is that if Greece asked for more funding from IMF and the EU, Hungary repaid all the debt to IMF and now makes financial decisions on its own. Taxes in Hungary went down to the lowest possible level. Now Hungary has an income tax of 15% and a corporate tax of 9%.

Furthermore, unemployment went from 12% to 3.6% today. If before the Hungarian Government struggled to provide jobs for the people, as Ambassador Szabo stated, now we're having a problem of finding people for the jobs. Ambassador Szabo also mentioned that he is glad to say that the United States has found Hungary as a gateway to Europe. There are 107,000 US companies operating in Hungary. Hungary is doing well economically: it has outgrown the average of the EU twofold in the last five years and have outgrown the eurozone threefold.

Ambassador Szabo described his country as a jewel of Europe. Hungary is the size of Indiana that has a population is approximately 10 million. After the revolution against the Soviets, many people left the country. Hungarians are innovative people. They are great at inventing things and ineffective at commercializing. The United States and Hungary have a symbiotic relationship. Dr. Szabo expressed a pride of the country's Judeo-Christian heritage, which was started from the King Steven who converted Hungary into Christianity in the year 1000.

According to Dr. Szabo, Hungary became a health hub with a healthcare well developed and advanced, based on several medical schools. He also mentioned, that Hungarians take education seriously: for example, universities are crucial for the Hungarian economy, especially modern sciences, communication, high tech industry, etc. 70% of students come from other countries to study in our universities. Hungary offers 750 courses in English. Hungary's education system is based on the German style.

Significantly, Hungarian keen on preserving their own culture as well. But some Hungarians have different viewpoints about their choices to speak either English or Hungarian. The country maintains the values of language that promote cultural atmosphere.

Finally, Hungary has been a member of the United Nations and ultimately, the country's focus on implementation of sustainable development goals is the blueprint to achieve a better future for their new generations.

It was very interesting presentation about Hungary, nation located in Central Europe.

Cory Levin, UVU Student / Foreign affairs Club member.

