Winners of Via Bona Slovakia Award Announced


Awards were presented at an award giving ceremony held in Bratislava’s Design Factory to winners in six categories. Mobile operator Orange Slovensko, a.s. defended its last year’s victory and received the Main Award in the corporation category. Main Award for SMEs went to software company ANASOFT APR, s.r.o. The Long-term Partnership Award went to the Soria & Grey advertising agency. Heineken Slovensko, a.s. won the Award for Promotion of Publicly Beneficial Activity in Region, while Západoslovenská energetika (ZSE) energy distribution company received the Courage to Support Innovative Project Award. Slovenská televízia (STV) public television reporter Katarína Meščanová was awarded an honourable mention for media contribution to the development of corporate philanthropy.

The 6th Pontis Foundation Award was organised with support from the general partner – the Citigroup company and award partners including U. S. Steel Košice, KPMG Slovensko and Design Factory. Media partners involved dailies SME and KORZÁR, weeklies TREND and Týždeň, Stratégie monthly magazine and TA3 news TV channel. Based on the results of individual evaluation, 17 nominees were chosen from a total of 43 evaluated candidates for a second round. Winners for each category were selected from the 17 nominees on 18 May by an independent evaluation committee. The evaluation committee included: Simona Bubánová, CD Ogilvy & Mather, Branislav Cehlárik, Citigroup, Michaela Eliášová, T-Mobile, Boris Farkaš, Divadlo Astorka Korzo’90 theatre, Anna Jankivová, association for helping mentally disabled people from Vranov nad Topľou, Pavol Kárász, Institute for Forecasting of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Juraj Kušnierik, Týždeň weekly, Martin Mazág, Stratégie monthly, Juraj Renčko, Ecofin Consulting and Katarína Šulíková, U. S. Steel Košice. Transparency of the two-round evaluation was also supervised by Ľuboš Vančo of KPMG Slovensko, a representative of the award’s auditor. Due to a comparable high quality of all projects described in nomination sheets, the committee stood before a very challenging task. Being both a representative of the general partner and an evaluation committee member, Citigroup’s Branislav Cehlárik, who wasn’t on the committee for the first time, saw the event from two different aspects and could make comparisons: “I can see a huge shift and an increase in pressure on businesses’ strategic thinking in the area of social responsibility. This has proven that small Slovakia is gradually becoming a peer to large advanced countries. I’m already looking forward to the next year’s award and believe we’ll manage to set up an equally strong and sound committee.”

The winners of the 6th Via Bona Slovakia Award were announced at a ceremony held on 25 May in Design Factory on Bottova 2 in Bratislava. The awards were designed by artist Ján Sajkala, a winner of a separate competition for artistic design of Via Bona Slovakia 2005 awards, whose second year was organised by Pontis Foundation in cooperation with Foundation – Centre for Contemporary Arts.

Main Award for Corporations went to Orange Slovensko, a.s. The award was presented by the US Ambassador to Slovakia Rodolph Vallee to Andrea Cocherová, Orange Slovensko communication and brand director. Main Award for SMEs was presented by Iveta Radičová, the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, to the hands of Stanislav Čekovský, ANASOFT APR executive director.

The Long-term Partnership Award, a prize rewarding a partnership contributing to a social problem solution and strengthening of a partner non-governmental organisation, was granted to SORIA & GREY advertising agency for its cooperation with Liga proti rakovine (League Against Cancer) civic association in preparation and implementation of communication, media and education campaigns, such as the well-known Daffodil Day. The award was handed over by Holland Ambassador to Slovakia Laurent Stokvis to SORIA & GREY director Patrik Kmeč.
The Award for Promotion of Publicly Beneficial Activity in Region was received by Heineken Slovensko, a.s. for its support to the "Restoration of Zobor Information Path" project carried out in the Nitra region in cooperation with Nitrianska komunitná nadácia community foundation and other partners. The award was presented to Heineken Director General Dimitar Alexiev by Michal Kováč, the first president of the Slovak Republic.

The Courage to Promote Innovative Project Award, rewarding a project carried out in an unexplored field or in an unconventional form, was granted to Západoslovenská energetika, a.s. for supporting the "Disenchanting the Castles" project which helped preserve 13 castle ruins in western Slovakia. The award was handed over by Martin Bútora, honourable president of the Institute for Public Affairs, to Ján Orlovský, ZSE Director of Central Affairs.

A separately assessed category was the Honourable Mention for Media Contribution to the development of corporate philanthropy and social responsibility of companies in Slovakia granted by Pontis Foundation in cooperation with the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists. Nominations in this category were evaluated by an independent committee whose members included Zuzana Krútka of the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists, Zuzana Wienk of the Fair-Play Alliance, Andrej Salner of the Slovak Governance Institute and Milan Nič of Pontis Foundation. The award went to Katarína Meščanová, a reporter with Slovenská televízia (STV), for her TV report entitled “A path to ironworks” on how U. S. Steel Košice helps the Roma community in eastern Slovakia by employing the Roma under fixed job contracts with a prospect of becoming regular U.S. Steel Košice staff. Katarína Meščanová has conveyed a positive example of corporate charity which does not involve a financial donation but a more challenging and original assistance provided to the community which is in acute need of such help.

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Pontis Foundation cooperates with companies in execution of philanthropic activities and advises them on preparation of a philanthropic strategy. The Foundation further carries out surveys and prepares education and training events. Since 2004 Pontis Foundation has been an administrator of Business Leaders Forum whose mission is to motivate firms doing business in Slovakia towards social responsibility by means of increasing their awareness and providing the necessary know-how. The Via Bona Slovakia Award is an expression of thanks to those who have the ideas of philanthropy and donation included in their strategies and, at the same time, carry out concrete projects. Via Bona Slovakia (from Latin via bona = good route) aspires to raise interest in publicly beneficial partnerships of entrepreneurs and NGOs in the area of community development, education, protection of human rights, the environment and health, social assistance and protection of cultural heritage and traditions.
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