



**PRÍHOVOR PREZIDENTA SR  
pri príležitosti otvorenia start-upovej  
konferencie**

**Turín, 5. 5. 2025**

Dear guests, dear friends,

First of all, let me express my pleasure at meeting you here today in Turin, a city that has symbolized courage, innovation, and progress since ancient times. These values are shared by all of us, whether from Slovakia, Italy, or other European countries.

Today, we also remember the story of the great Slovak, General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, whose courage and visionary spirit crossed national borders. His words, “I will wake up because I want to wake up,” should be a challenge for all of us not to fall asleep, especially now—in a time of significant technological changes.

We face a crucial question: What role will Europe play in global innovation and technological advancement? We must realize that if we don't actively create, innovate, and support talent, the future will be claimed by others—companies from the United States, China, or other regions.

Europe has the potential to become a leader in innovation. We have creativity, education, tradition, and strong determination. Slovakia and Italy can be strong players on the global technology stage. However, we must collaborate, connect our startup ecosystems, share experiences, and seek joint solutions.

I especially want to highlight the contributions of Stefano Buono, an outstanding researcher and passionate supporter of innovation, who recently became our new honorary consul here in Turin. Thanks to his dedication and enthusiasm, we are gathered today at the startup incubator LIFTT, a platform that allows us not only to discuss but also directly collaborate on shaping a future full of innovation and technological progress.

You are here today to inspire each other, create new partnerships, and show the world that European innovation has the power to transform our future. Just as General Štefánik believed in a united Europe, we too must believe in a united, innovative, and competitive Europe.

Let's not hesitate to be courageous, let's boldly chart our own path and create products that transcend our national borders. Together, we can achieve great things.

I wish you a successful day filled with inspiration and new opportunities.

Thank you.