



NASB Newsletter - September 2013

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Bratislava Summer - the HFCC-ASBU B13 Coordination Conference

by Jeff White, NASB Secretary-Treasurer

When you tell people here in the Americas that you're going to Slovakia, many are not sure exactly where it is. They may have heard of Czechoslovakia, which emerged from communism in 1989. Then in 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia became separate independent nations.

It's not possible to fly directly from the U.S. to Slovakia. In fact, there aren't many flights to Slovakia from elsewhere in Europe. Most people fly into Vienna, Austria, which you may be surprised to find is only an hour or so by bus, train, boat or taxi from Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.

The NASB organized the B13 Conference in cooperation with Radio and Television Slovakia (RTVS) and its international service, Radio Slovakia International (RSI). RSI stopped broadcasting on shortwave from Slovakia at the end of 2010, but NASB member WRMI in Miami has continued to relay the station's English and Spanish broadcasts to the Americas since January of 2011. And RSI would like to resume shortwave broadcasts from Slovakia in the near future if funding can be restored.

The conference took place at the Sheraton Bratislava hotel, an impressive new facility located right next to the modern Europea shopping mall a short walk from Bratislava's Old Town district. The Europea complex includes a pleasant riverwalk along the Danube River, a series of open-air restaurants that are extremely popular with locals and tourists alike, and open-air stages with free shows by musicians and other performers. Bratislava, like much of Europe, had emerged in recent weeks from devastating floods, excruciating heat and was very pleasantly warm by the time the HFCC Conference took place.

Nearly 100 shortwave frequency planners from about 48 stations and organizations from around the world took part in the conference -- from Saudi Arabia to Russia, from Germany to Romania, from South Africa to Turkey, and of course the United States. There were four representatives from the U.S. International Broadcasting Bureau, which returned to the HFCC after not having been able to attend the last meeting in Tunisia due to U.S. Government restrictions. The U.S. FCC private broadcasting delegation consisted of eight persons from WWCR, KTWR, KNLS, WRMI and Continental Electronics. NASB member Adventist World Radio had its own delegation, which represents KSDA in Guam. The FCC delegation was headed by Shahnaz Ghavami, who for the first time replaced Tom Lucey at an HFCC conference. Shahnaz also attended the NASB annual meeting in Washington in 2012.

OPENING PLENARY

Conference registration took place on Sunday afternoon and evening, and also on Monday morning, just outside the main meeting room. NASB Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Thais White was in charge of the registration desk, ably assisted by Ladia Hudzovicova of Radio Slovakia International and Edita Chocholata of Towercom. Towercom also provided some colorful FMO (Frequency Management Organization) name placeholders for the conference with photos of Bratislava.

The HFCC-ASBU B13 Conference got underway on Monday, August 26 with the Opening Plenary. At the head table were Vlacav Mika, General Director of Radio and Television Slovakia; Anton Skreko of the Ministry of Culture; and Viliam Podhorsky of the Ministry of Transportation. HFCC Chairman Oldrich Cip introduced these distinguished guests. Then Mr. Mika of RTVS welcomed the nearly 100 delegates from around the world to his city and country, which he said was “the right place for such an event.”

Mika mentioned that Radio Slovakia International has listeners in 130 countries. The station broadcasts in six languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Russian and Slovak. RTVS has two TV channels and 9 radio networks (including RSI). RTVS was established on January 1 of 2011, but the history of Slovak Radio goes back to 1926. Mr. Mika encouraged delegates to take part in some of the many social events planned for the conference week to promote culture in the Slovak capital, and he invited everyone to a tour of the Slovak Radio building on Wednesday afternoon. He noted that the famous upside-down pyramid-shaped building “is one of the architectural wonders of Bratislava.”

In his opening remarks, HFCC Chairman Oldrich Cip said: “We strongly believe that broadcasting by means of terrestrial shortwave transmitters remains relevant for a large critical audience around the world.” He said that listening live to long-distance shortwave radio “even more enhances this authentic experience.” Oldrich noted that non-shortwave distribution platforms based on new technologies are not available everywhere in the world, so “direct radio from terrestrial transmitters remains therefore the only means for large segments of populations.”

Oldrich pointed out that 50 percent of the world's population -- about three billion people -- live on an income of less than two-and-a-half dollars per day. "Their first choice of communication devices," he said, "will be either a mobile telephone or a radio, or both, and listening to a local FM or community station or an international broadcast will be more affordable to them than a computer, TV set or video or other new technology."

Oldrich also mentioned the important humanitarian role of terrestrial radio. "It is capable of reaching across the Digital Divide to the most disadvantaged and marginalized societies. By drawing attention to these aspects we are trying to keep it alive. International radio has been frequently called 'crisis' radio. All communication and information channels that are needed most when a disaster strikes are destroyed or overloaded, and the affected population suffers from an information blackout. Long distance wireless radio remains the only source of information.... That is why the HFCC in cooperation with the Arab States and Asia-Pacific broadcasting unions are working on an International Radio for Disaster Relief project that is based on the system of online coordination of frequencies managed by the HFCC in accordance with International Radio Regulations."

After the Opening Plenary, the frequency coordination began. All of the delegations entered their proposed schedules into the master database, and each day a series of "collision lists" was created by Vladislav Cip in the Secretariat office next to the main meeting room showing potential interference problems -- stations on the same or adjacent frequencies at the same time beaming to the same target areas. Delegates then negotiated among one another to find solutions to these collisions. In some cases, a station will change a frequency, or change the time of a broadcast, or change an antenna in order to eliminate the potential interference. That is the most basic of the HFCC's activities. The idea is to eliminate any potential interference before the B13 frequency season begins on October 27, 2013. Each day of the conference, the number of collisions was reduced significantly, and by Friday the vast majority of them were resolved.

WHY KEEP BROADCASTING ON SHORTWAVE

On Monday afternoon, André Boussaton and Céline Fernandez of Thales Electron Devices (a division of Thales group based in France) gave a presentation to the conference about electron tubes for shortwave radio transmitters.

The Thales presentation began with the intriguing question: "**Why keep broadcasting on shortwave?**" Several reasons were suggested:

- the continuous demand in this niche market, especially in emerging countries.
- the inherent benefits of broadcasting on shortwave (the largest coverage of any medium and a low cost-coverage ratio).

- the limited constraints of operating shortwave infrastructure (DRM-compatible, better operating profitability, low-cost backup solution).

There is also another reason, linked to the transmitting technology itself. Indeed, most SW transmitters are operated with electron tubes. Compared to other components, electron tubes are:

- Proven electronic components
- Reliable due to their extended lifetime
- Sustainable technology

Thales has guaranteed and committed to produce electron tubes for shortwave applications for the long-term. With about 50 years of experience producing electron tubes, Thales is a key supplier to transmitter manufacturers and broadcasters. Thales has manufactured electron tubes which have been used for over 320 million hours of radio broadcasting around the world since the 1960's. Nowadays, Thales tubes are used in 80% of new transmitters sold worldwide. To support this demand, Thales has strengthened its international network with sales and CTS (Customer Technical Support) offices around the world in Europe, Asia and the USA. Thales CTS teams offer dedicated technical support and services such as on-site technical assistance, spare part delivery and tube disposal.

Thales is a pioneer in new technology (pyrolitic grids and hypovapotron) and production processes. In their 25,000-square-meter facility, Thales manufactures hundreds of original designs and brand new tubes from 40 to 600 kilowatts every year.

To sustain broadcasting activities in the future, Thales has also launched a diversification strategy. Today, Thales power grid tubes are not only produced for broadcasting applications, but also for industry, medical, fusion and scientific purposes.

Broadcasters who are interested in more information about Thales products may contact Céline Fernandez, Broadcast Marketing Manager, at celine_fernandez@thalesgroup.com.

A WELCOME FROM RADIO SLOVAKIA INTERNATIONAL

Tuesday morning, August 27, the HFCC Conference began with some words of welcome from Maria Mikusova, Chief of Radio Slovakia International. "As the General Director of Radio and Television Slovakia pointed out yesterday," she said, "the fact that this conference is taking place in Bratislava is a great inspiration and impulse for us. It broadens the horizons of us -- journalists and professionals from the foreign broadcast of Radio Slovakia International, on behalf of whom I'd like to welcome you to Bratislava as well."

Mrs. Mikusova noted that RSI has received feedback from listeners in 130 countries. "The core

of this feedback,” she said, “comes from broadcasting our programs via short waves. We left shortwave broadcasting only recently, at the beginning of the year 2011, and not fully.” She noted that RSI remains on shortwave via WRMI in the Americas.

Mrs. Mikusova said that RSI is busy developing a new website. “In regards to the variety of languages we broadcast in, you can listen to RSI in six languages, which is the same number as Radio Prague, our Czech colleagues and closest partners, broadcast in. This says a lot about the power of tradition and our efforts and ability to preserve this kind of a broadcast at a time of such a vast choice of communication channels opening on the internet and social networks.”

Mikusova said that RSI still receives good listener feedback from areas such as Russia, and the station still sends QSL cards to listeners. “We consider this to be a very important form of communicating with our listeners, although we know that QSLs are traditionally a shortwave communication.”

“Let me wish all the best to this coordination meeting,” she continued. “Your conference allows us to get to know better your work, and makes us feel that we are still part of the world network of shortwavers. For us, this conference is a firsthand, live encounter with the shortwave network and its significance for broadcasting. But at the same time it unveils what strategies of radio broadcasting and shortwave transmission are out there in the modern world. After all, the outlook and future strategy of Radio and Television of Slovakia is to bring RSI back to shortwave broadcasting. Although this issue has not been resolved yet, it shows just how important the HFCC Conference in Bratislava is, and why we, RSI, are so very interested in it.”

DRM UPDATE

Following Mrs. Mikusova’s remarks, Jochen Huber of Transradio (based in Germany, formerly known as Telefunken) and Josef Troxler of Ampegon (based in Switzerland, formerly known as Thomson Broadcast) updated conference delegates on the latest news regarding DRM -- Digital Radio Mondiale.

Jochen Huber is CEO of Transradio and Vice Chairman of the DRM Consortium. He spoke about “Technical Aspects for Digitalization of Radio Broadcasting Networks using the DRM Standard” for longwave, mediumwave and shortwave (known as “DRM 30”). He noted the coverage efficiency of DRM transmissions compared to standard AM broadcasts, citing an EBU technical publication:

“The useful (information carrying) output from the DRM transmitter is likely to be greater than the sideband output from an AM transmitter operated with a typical average modulation rate. The fact that DRM is optimized for the RF channel should mean that greater coverage is achieved. A more useful measure of efficiency might be gained from looking at the coverage achieved for a given mains power level. Using this, DRM transmitters should routinely score higher than AM transmitters.”

DRM power is normally given as the average power of the digital modulation. Because of the high modulation peaks of the DRM signal, the average power is significantly lower than for the same transmitter operating in the analog AM mode. A standard DRM transmitter with a carrier power of 100 kw and 100% modulation reaches a peak power of 400 kw. The DRM power of such a transmitter is only 40 kw. As a result, for the same coverage, up to 60% of the power can be saved running an AM transmitter in DRM. Transradio's TRAM family of transmitters produce nearly two times the DRM power compared to a standard transmitter.

Jochen talked about Transradio's DRM exciter DMOD3, which was designed to make ITU-compliant DRM broadcasts possible with all modern transmitters, providing the highest reliability in 24/7 operation. He said the DMOD3 is currently used worldwide for the vast majority of DRM systems in operation. He also showed slides of an 800-kilowatt Transradio transmitter that was built for DeutschlandRadio on 756 kHz in Cremlingen, Germany in 2005, and a 600-kilowatt Transradio transmitter made for the Qatar Media Corporation for use on 675 kHz. He highlighted a new cooperation agreement which had just been announced on August 20th between Transradio and Ampegon: "Two powerful suppliers with a high reputation join forces." A joint press release issued by the two companies explained:

"The collaboration is primarily based on TRANSRADIO's longwave and mediumwave transmitter TRAM line and Ampegon's system expertise with comprehensive antenna products. Both companies are founding members of the DRM Consortium and represent together the world's largest number of successful DRM installations. Ampegon's product line of shortwave transmitters and wide range of radio antenna systems will be extended by the TRAM line and will become even more attractive for radio broadcasting customers around the world."

To see the technical details of Jochen Huber's presentation, we suggest reviewing the PDF at: http://www.hfcc.org/doc/HFCC_REP_2013-006-B13_Bratislava-TSB_Presentation.pdf

Josef Troxler, CEO of Ampegon in Turgi, Switzerland, gave an overview of his company, which was known as Thomson Broadcast until November of 2012. Ampegon manufactures products for transmission systems, antenna systems, scientific applications and green technologies. The company has a long heritage which began in 1892 as Brown Boveri (BBC), and later became ABB, Thomson-CSF, Thomcast, Thales Broadcast & Multimedia, Thomson Broadcast & Multimedia and Thomson Broadcast (part of Technicolor).

Josef noted that "Ampegon is the leading designer, manufacturer and system integrator of AM/DRM radio transmission systems worldwide. We offer the complete system including transmitters, antennas and a wide range of auxiliary equipment." It produces shortwave and mediumwave transmitters; DRM equipment; broadcast control systems; shortwave, mediumwave and longwave broadcast antennas; RF amplifiers, high voltage power supplies and photovoltaic power plants, among other items. The company makes shortwave transmitters from 100 to 500 kilowatts, and at IBC 2013 it announced a new generation of shortwave

transmitters.

In the area of shortwave broadcast antennas, Ampegon manufactures fixed curtain antennas, rotatable curtain antennas, fixed log-periodic antennas, rotatable/inclinable log-periodic antennas, omni-directional antennas and associated RF circuits.

Josef Troxler suggested that we may be seeing a revival of shortwave broadcasting, based on an overview of recent Ampegon projects:

- 3 x 250 kW SW near Abuja, Nigeria, including one rotatable antenna 4/4/1.0, commissioned 2012
- One 100 kW SW Tx near Tashkent, Uzbekistan, commissioned 2012
- One 250 kW SW near Dhaka, Bangladesh, including one rotatable antenna 2/2/0.5, commissioned 2012
- 4 x 250 kW SW Tx for Hike/KDDI Japan, the first one commissioned mid-2013
- 10 x 300 kW SW Tx and 12 rigid dipole antennas are in production for Taiwan, two units commissioned in May 2013
- 2 x 100 kW SW Tx are contracted for AIR in India, production started
- Large tender requests ongoing: AIR India, Saudi Arabia (Riyadh), TDA Algeria

Josef also gave an overview of DRM-to-FM rebroadcasting -- a process by which programs are transmitted in DRM mode via analog shortwave to FM radio stations for local rebroadcasting on FM. He noted that "at this moment, Radio New Zealand International is broadcasting 20 hours per day in DRM to all the Pacific islands, servicing 10 islands with a 100-kw shortwave DRM transmitter installed at Raingitaiki." Local FM stations on the various islands rebroadcast the DRM signal. He emphasized the following features of DRM-to-FM rebroadcasting:

1. Program distribution by SW, MW DRM for Rebroadcasting in FM
2. Independent Operation (independent from Satellites)
3. Extensive coverage with shortwave signal DRM30
4. Digital audio quality and full feature list within coverage area
5. DRM and FM reception of the program in the coverage area

6. Low power consumption => stand alone solution in remote areas with solar energy and battery
7. One single channel DRM transmission can feed two FM audio programs
8. DRM receiver and two full featured FM Exciters included
9. FM-RF amplifier and antenna can be individually selected, depending on the target area for the coverage
10. Ideal solution for FM-Gap filling in remote areas with low power FM
11. Listeners can use their existing (old) FM receiver

More information can be found at ampegon.com.

RIMAVSKA SOBOTA: SLOVAKIA'S SHORTWAVE STATION

Edita Chocholata has attended many HFCC conferences in the past, representing Radio Slovakia International and later Towercom, her current employer. Edita worked with her colleague Ladia Hudzovicova of RSI on many aspects of the organization of the B13 Conference.

Towercom operates Slovakia's large shortwave station in Rimavska Sobota, which is currently unused since RSI discontinued its shortwave broadcasts at the end of 2010. On Tuesday morning after the coordination activities finished, Edita's colleague Juray Vodnay of Towercom gave a presentation about shortwave broadcasting in Slovakia.

Juray first provided an overview of Towercom. It is the nationwide provider of broadcasting services in Slovakia related to the terrestrial network of digital TV and radio transmitters and digital satellite uplink services. Towercom is the provider of modulation and service data transport services from studios to single broadcasting centers using the state-wide network of microwave links. And it is the nationwide provider of the leasing of local and trunk digital data circuits in standard and individualized parameters.

Operation of television broadcasting throughout the Slovak Republic is the company's core business. Terrestrial digital broadcasting is provided by its television transmitters and frequency transposers in UHF bands for the public broadcaster and for license holders. Towercom also provides the design, building and operation of television transmitters and frequency transposers for the broadcasters. The company operates a number of television transmitters in a wide spectrum of power outputs from a few watts up to tens of kilowatts.

On the radio side, Towercom provides nationwide service for Slovakia's public radio broadcaster

and commercial radio licence holders. Transmission of analogue radio signals is carried out by AM broadcasting in the MW and SW bands and by FM broadcasting including RDS services. Radio broadcasting also uses digital satellite broadcasting on the Skylink platform. In accordance with ongoing broadcasting digitalization trends in Europe, in March 2006 Towercom, a.s., together with its technological partners, conducted a testing operation of the first digital radio broadcast in Slovakia using the DRM system in the MW band.

Towercom provides the leasing of satellite capacity and uplink services designated for the distribution of television and radio programs in digital form via satellite. It operates uplink stations on the Kamzík television tower in Bratislava and on Barrandov in Prague. Towercom is a provider and operator of satellite free-to-air and pay TV platforms.

Juray Vodnay explained that the first shortwave broadcasts in Slovakia began in 1949 from a broadcasting station in Velke Kostolany, in the west of Slovakia. There were four transmitters with 100-kW output power. In 1970, the transmitters were renewed and new antennas were added.

The Rimavska Sobota broadcasting station was built in southeastern Slovakia in 1956. It began with two 100-kW Tesla transmitters. In 1982, the transmitters were upgraded to 250 kW. The station has a total of 15 shortwave antennas. The curtain antennas can be slewed 15 degrees in azimuth. Each of the transmitters can be switched to any of the 15 SW antennas which cover all parts of the world.

Although it is currently off the air, Towercom hopes to resume shortwave operation with analog broadcasting during the B13 season using existing antenna systems. This is assuming the Slovak government allocates new funding to Radio Slovakia International. In the future, Towercom hopes to add digital DRM broadcasts.

OLD TOWN BRATISLAVA

Shortly after the Towercom presentation on Tuesday afternoon, Ladia Hudzovicova led most of the conference attendees on a walking tour of Old Town Bratislava. On a 20-minute walk from the Sheraton Hotel beside the Danube River, one has some marvellous views of the bridges which cross the Danube, one of which has a flying saucer-shaped restaurant atop it appropriately named UFO. You can also see the landmark Bratislava Castle on the hillside above the river. Then you turn north and walk into Old Town, passing by numerous historical buildings and plazas.

Our first stop was a small three-room gallery to see an exhibition of photos from the “Bratislava Spring” of 1968. Many people are aware of the “Prague Spring” in 1968, when Czechoslovak communist leader Alexander Dubcek began social reforms that were halted by an invasion on August 21 by Soviet and other Warsaw Pact military forces. What many outsiders don’t realize is that similar actions occurred in Slovakia, known as the “Bratislava Spring.” The photo

exhibition included a famous picture by Slovak photographer Ladislav Bielik of a protester named Emil Gallo confronting a Soviet tank, very similar to the Tien An Men Square scene in Beijing in 1989. We were also able to hear recordings of some historic broadcasts of Slovak Radio during the invasion urging citizens to stand up to the invaders.

After the photo exhibit, Ladia took us on a walk through other historic sites in Old Town Bratislava, including the site of a Jewish synagogue that had been destroyed during the Second World War. We ended up in a very interesting open-air theater where we watched an English-language version of a play by a well-known Slovak writer of the early 20th century.

Walking back to the Sheraton along the Danube River along with Ladia and Gabriel Stanciu of Radiocom in Romania, we were able to get a fairly close view of some of the large river cruise ships that ply the major rivers of Europe these days, including the Danube, stopping in ports such as Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest. Our evening ended with dinner in an open-air Italian restaurant along the Danube right in the Eurovea complex next to the Sheraton.

THE UPSIDE-DOWN PYRAMID

Frequency coordination work continued on Wednesday, but ended a bit early so that everyone could participate in an excursion sponsored by Transradio and Ampegon. The delegates were divided into two groups in two buses. One bus went to the Slovak Radio building, the other to the Kamzik television tower. Then they exchanged places, so everyone was able to visit both locations.

The first stop by our bus was the inverted pyramid, where we were greeted by Maria Mikusova of Radio Slovakia International. This building houses all nine networks of Slovak Radio, including Radio Slovakia International. The structure was built during the communist era, and it was planned to be part of a long boulevard of buildings of unusual architecture which never really materialized. But the inverted pyramid did, and it is a true tribute to no-holds-barred spending. Elegant and elaborate exhibition and reception halls, state-of-the-art studios and one of central and Eastern Europe's greatest concert hall/studios (with an 8000-pipe organ!) grace this building, along with radio drama studios with all sorts of sound effects which aren't used much anymore since these effects can now be achieved with computers.

The ground floor contains a very nice exhibition of photos depicting the history of Slovak Radio, along with assorted historical transmitter and studio parts and equipment, and a selection of antique radio receivers -- shortwave and otherwise. The building has a few floors below ground and several above, each one about seven meters wider than the one beneath it, thus producing the "inverted pyramid" look. An amazing amount of empty space is aesthetically pleasing, but costs a fortune to heat and air condition (which was not a concern back in the communist era). Due to government regulations, authorities are not allowed to rent any part of the building to other agencies or companies. However, on the ground floor there is actually a small guest house that's open to the public.

Incidentally, Slovak Television is located in another building in Bratislava. The inverted pyramid contains only the radio.

A Slovak Radio technician and Anca Dragu of RSI's English section led the tour through the building. You can watch an eight-minute video of the building tour on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oetUtpowAqq>

KAMZIK TELEVISION TOWER

On the outskirts of Bratislava, on a hill with an excellent view of the city below, is the Kamzik television tower. Edita and her colleagues from Towercom arranged a special visit for us to this site, which began with a short film about Towercom and its installations throughout the country. Next was a stop at the master control room with monitors for the various television channels that are transmitted from the tower, and another stop at the floor where the TV and FM transmitters are located. On the master control room level, it was possible to walk outside on a small ledge to have a magnificent view of the city of Bratislava below. Later, in the lobby downstairs, the group was treated to a small reception with drinks.

SLOVENSKY GROB AND THE GOLDEN GOOSE

From Kamzik, the bus took us 20-some kilometers into the countryside, in the wine region that surrounds Bratislava, to the small town of Slovensky Grob, where there are several restaurants that serve the local specialty, goose. The most famous of them is U Zlatej Husi -- The Golden Goose -- frequented by Slovak and international politicians and celebrities. The owners showed us albums of photos of Czech and Slovak presidents, international sports personalities, even military and political figures from the United States who have eaten at The Golden Goose. And the restaurant's chef -- the mother of the owner -- has won numerous awards for her goose dishes at international competitions from as far away as Korea.

As we got out of the buses and entered the restaurant, a group of 20 Slovakian folk musicians and dancers called Krakovienka, under the direction of Dagmar Dzurová, greeted us with traditional tunes of the country. It was quite a spectacular site. Some of the group sat indoors, where country decor covered the walls, and the rest sat outdoors under a covered roof. The gardens were beautifully landscaped and adorned with -- what else? -- artificial geese. An aperitif of Slovak liquor made with pears was waiting at the tables, and the evening began with a group toast to the evening's sponsors, Transradio and Ampegon. Unfortunately, Jochen Huber of Transradio had to leave for Germany before the dinner to attend his annual shareholders meeting. But Josef Troxler of Ampegon was with us, as was a small delegation from Radio Slovakia International and Towercom, including RSI chief Maria Mikusova and her husband Dusan, a print journalist who writes for a literary newspaper.

Before long, a bread bowl arrived for everyone, filled with cheese soup. These soup bowls made

of bread are common in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Next was an appetizer of goose foie gras, a real delicacy in this region. A selection of Slovak soft drinks -- including a local version of Coca Cola -- was on the table, along with mineral water and local wine produced in the Slovensky Grob area. The main dish was roast goose, very nicely prepared and tasting a bit like something between turkey and roast beef, accompanied by "lokses" (like Slovak tortillas) and cabbage. Dessert was a local strudel and coffee.

All during the dinner, the folkloric group entertained HFCC delegates with music and dance. Especially enjoyable was the Slovakian hat dance, where male dancers formed a circle and had to move their hats to the person in front of them in unison as the music got faster and faster, until someone could not keep up any longer. After the professionals showed us how it was done, some conference delegates were invited to try their hand at it. The winner and last man standing was Jerome Hirigoyen of NASB associate member Télédiffusion de France, despite fierce competition from Russian challengers.

CLOSING PLENARY

While some delegates got a later-than-normal start on Thursday morning, the frequency coordination work continued throughout the day. The Thursday session ended with the Closing Plenary. Locations of the next HFCC-ASBU conferences were announced. The A14 conference will be in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, January 20-24, 2014, hosted by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union. The location for the B14 conference has not yet been confirmed, but the only proposal that has been received is from Spaceline to host the meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, with the co-sponsorship of the NASB. The A15 conference would normally be hosted by the Arab States Broadcasting Union, and Bassil Zoubi of the ASBU said they have received a proposal to hold the meeting in Muscat, Oman. And the B15 conference was finally confirmed as Brisbane, Australia, accepting a longstanding offer by HCJB-Australia to host the meeting there. It will be the first time the HFCC-ASBU conference has ever taken place in Australia.

Next, Oldrich Cip reported on the International Radio for Disaster Relief project. The HFCC has been invited to join the CDAC (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities) network, based in the United Kingdom. Gary Stanley of Babcock International reported on an ITU working group dealing with emergency broadcasting, for which he is seeking contributions from HFCC members. Sergio Salvatori of Vatican Radio gave a brief report on the Group of Experts meeting in Bratislava. The Group decided that it would be helpful to include ITU data of non-members in the general frequency database, but that information would not be included in the public version. As of the A14 season, it will be mandatory to include language information in the frequency requirements submitted to the HFCC.

Gary Stanley reported that the total income of the HFCC in 2012 was down somewhat, due to the loss of some members and lower membership fees. The HFCC is now inviting and encouraging stations in the Asia-Pacific region and other parts of the world to become direct members, and it is inviting corporate memberships as well. At the Bratislava meeting, both

Ampegon and Continental Electronics Corporation were welcomed as new associate members of the HFCC. Continental, based in Dallas, Texas, manufactures shortwave transmitters in the 100 to 500-kilowatt range. It is a big supporter of the DRM Consortium. Continental hosted the HFCC-ASBU B11 Conference in Dallas, co-organized by the NASB.

IBRA Radio, a privately-owned station based in Sweden and dating back to the 1940's, has rejoined the HFCC. Until recently, IBRA's frequency requirements were coordinated by FEBA Radio. Dick Whittington of FEBA, a fixture at HFCC conferences for many years, announced at the Closing Plenary that FEBA has decided to stop managing shortwave broadcasts and will not be renewing its HFCC membership. However, IBRA Radio will take on the remaining FEBA transmissions with the help of Chris Cooper of NASB member FEBC.

Finally, Gary Stanley thanked Radio Slovakia International and the NASB for organizing the B13 Conference, especially citing Ladia Hudzovicova and Vladislav Cip for all of their hard work.

CONTINENTAL RECEPTION AND NASB MEETING

After the Closing Plenary ended, Calvin Carter of Continental Electronics invited all conference attendees to a drinks reception at the Kolkovna Czech restaurant in the Eurovea complex. Cal received high marks as a first-time HFCC attendee who systematically attempted to meet and network with almost every other delegate in attendance.

Meanwhile, in a corner of the Kolkovna restaurant, the NASB had a dinner for members present: TWR (George Ross and Shakti Verma), WWCR (Jerry Plummer), WRMI (Jeff and Thais White), Broadcast Belgium (Ludo Maes and Mireya Martinez), World Christian Broadcasting (Kevin Chambers) and Adventist World Radio (Giuseppe Cirillo). Topics discussed included the NASB's offer to co-host the HFCC B14 Conference in Sofia with Spaceline, recent developments at NASB member station WYFR in Okeechobee and the possibility of having the 2016 NASB annual meeting in New Orleans. Ludo Maes of Broadcast Belgium, which has a sales office in Miami, offered to co-sponsor a future HFCC conference -- perhaps B16 -- in Miami or elsewhere in Florida, together with Radio Miami International and the NASB.

ON TO BUDAPEST

After a final round of coordination on Friday morning, the HFCC-ASBU Conference ended with a special drink and a buffet lunch at the Sheraton. Many delegates said their goodbyes and began their journeys back home on Friday afternoon. But 20 of us took part in a bus tour to see the highlights of Budapest, Hungary -- only three hours away from Bratislava.

The tour was led by a very pleasant lady in her 80's named Eva who was born in a region of northern Hungary which later became part of Slovakia. She speaks Hungarian as her native language and knows the city of Budapest very well.

Leaving Bratislava at 2 p.m. after the closing lunch, we knew this would be a quick tour of Budapest, with time to see only the highlights of this jewel of the Danube. We arrived in the city during Friday afternoon rush hour, so traffic was not on our side. The bus first went to the top of the Citadella, an old fortress located strategically atop the Gellert Hill. The view over the city and the Danube from here is absolutely spectacular, and everyone spent several minutes taking pictures in front of the impressive background.

Later, the bus went into central Budapest to drive by historic and other sites for quick picture-taking opportunities. We saw a large synagogue, some of the major hotels, the House of Terror where the Hungarian secret police interrogated and tortured people during the communist era, the parliament building and square, the national museum (just in front of the Hungarian National Radio building) and more. Finally, we stopped near the famous pedestrian street Vaci Utca for some sightseeing and souvenir shopping for an hour or so. Later, the bus took us to a typical Hungarian restaurant for a nice dinner and folk music with our colleagues from the United States, China, Tunisia, Algeria, Oman and Russia. The evening was very enjoyable, and we ended up back at the Sheraton in Bratislava at 1 am.

The next day, like several of our colleagues, we checked out of the Sheraton and went to nearby Vienna to do some more sightseeing before returning to Miami with a brief stopover in Berlin.

A selection of photos from the HFCC-ASBU B13 Conference taken by Thais White can be found on the NASB Facebook page, www.facebook.com/nasbshortwave.

The direct link to the photos is:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.703670312996084.1073741830.236983979664722&type=1>

And the direct link to the photos of the Budapest excursion is:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.710343055662143.1073741831.236983979664722&type=1>

KVOH Testing from California

NASB member KVOH, the Voice of Hope, has been conducting tests recently on 17775 and 9975 kHz transmitting from Los Angeles towards the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America. Results show that the signal was received in many other parts of the world as well, including much of the U.S.

Operations Manager Ray Robinson says, "Our immediate plans are to begin with an evening schedule on 9975 kHz directed towards Cuba, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Mexico is very much part of our primary target area, and we were delighted with the reports we

received from that country."

Meanwhile, KVOH personnel are assembling programming, getting the studio set up and tested, the automation programmed, etc. "We'll get there," says Robinson, "very soon!" Reception reports are welcome to QSL@kvoh.net; general mail and inquiries may be sent to mail@kvoh.net.

Please look for more news from the NASB and its members regularly on the NASB's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/nasbshortwave.

NASB Members:

Adventist World Radio (KSDA)
Assemblies of Yahweh (WMLK)
EWTN Shortwave Radio (WEWN)
Strategic Communications Group (KVOH)
Family Stations Inc. (WYFR)
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Trans World Radio (KTWR)
World Christian Broadcasting (KNLS)
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