**Pope Francis received GLOBSEC President Róbert Vass at the Vatican**

***Bratislava, 13 October 2022:* Pope Francis received GLOBSEC president Róbert Vass and the GLOBSEC delegation at the Vatican.**

*"A private audience at the Pope's personal invitation in the Apostolic Palace is an indescribable honour for me because usually, only heads of state receive such an honour. Only very rarely does His Holiness give others a private audience. I am even more honoured because I had the opportunity to sit down for 30 minutes alone with the Holy Father, which is extraordinary,"* said GLOBSEC President Róbert Vass*.*

**Pope at GLOBSEC**

For GLOBSEC, this is not the first contact with the Holy See. In the pandemic year 2021, Pope Francis spoke at the GLOBSEC Forum about inequality between people and countries and pointed out the uneven distribution of wealth in the world. He talked about the pandemic and the world that is changing before our eyes. In June of this year, the State Secretary of the Holy See, His Excellency Mons. Paul Richard Gallagher participated in the GLOBSEC security conference.

**The world is in a deep crisis**

Pope Francis talked with the President of GLOBSEC about current world problems, refugees, climate change, the technological revolution and the war in Ukraine. Both sides agreed that what we see in Ukraine is a conflict between the old world of imperialism and the new world of free countries. For small countries like Slovakia, stable rules and principles of international law and the immutability of borders by military force are crucial. If such principles erode, the first victims will be weaker or small countries. The world is experiencing a transformational crisis. After the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the world will no longer be the same place. "*We can come out of every crisis either better or worse, but never the same*," said the Holy Father.

**Small countries can have a big role**

Pope Francis reminded us that we all have an important generational mission to master new challenges and create the foundation for a better and fairer world. "*The Holy Father is convinced that this can only be achieved through international cooperation and dialogue. Platforms like GLOBSEC help strengthen small countries' international role*," says Róbert Vass.

"*We presented some symbolic gifts to the Holy Father. On behalf of GLOBSEC, we offered him a commemorative crystal globe with a picture of Slovakia. It symbolises our creed that even small countries or actions can have a big impact as long as you believe in them. It shows an effort not to stand aside when solving world crises and not to hide behind excuses that we are small or insignificant. This gift commemorates his participation and statements at the GLOBSEC Forum in 2021. The second gift was a beautiful watch made in Slovakia displaying the first Biatec coin. It symbolises Slovakian skill and the fact that we have little time in this world and, therefore, cannot waste it with meaningless arguments. Rather, we should use it for the benefit of humanity and international cooperation for a better world*," added Robert Vass.

**Moral relativism and the crisis of values**

Pope Francis spoke about the global crisis of values ​​and moral relativism. In times of significant changes, people are often disoriented, losing their footing and moral compass. It is precisely in those times that leaders, whether political or civil, must not lose their moral compass and hold on to hope. The Holy Father reminded us that the world around us might change, but moral principles must remain firm and stable, surviving any change. Pope Francis praised the work of GLOBSEC and supported its efforts for international cooperation and dialogue. GLOBSEC will continue to develop relations with the Holy See. Representatives of the GLOBSEC delegation who also met with the State Secretary for International Relations of the Vatican, Mons. Paul Gallagher, agreed on further activities.

**About GLOBSEC:**

GLOBSEC is a global think-tank based in Bratislava committed to enhancing security, prosperity and sustainability in Europe and throughout the world. It is an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation. Its mission is to influence the future by generating new ideas and solutions for a better and safer world. To this goal contributes the annual GLOBSEC Bratislava Forum, one of the leading global security conferences. GLOBSEC also organises the annual GLOBSEC Tatra Summit, a conference that provides the opportunity for experts to have fruitful political discussions on the future of Europe.