



Embassy of the United States of America

Bratislava, Slovak Republic
February 8, 2010

Mr. Andrej Hrnčiar
Mayor of Martin
Nám. S.H. Vajanského 1
036 49 Martin

Dear Mayor Hrnčiar:

It is a pleasure for me to write in support of Martin's nomination for the United Nations Public Service Award. As a co-sponsor, with Transparency International, we have followed with great interest the progress Martin has made in this novel transparency initiative since the project was launched two years ago.

Broad access to information is a fundamental tenet of a robust democracy. When voters can see municipal contracts, tenders, and budget information for their own eyes, it fosters a sense of trust and engagement. An informed citizen is an active citizen, and judging from the growing interest in the city's "transparency" website, I would say that Martins' citizens are increasingly both. On an even more basic level, publishing the details of municipal decisions and expenditures narrows the scope for corrupt practices.

I congratulate you, as I know that Martin's endeavor has inspired other towns and cities in Slovakia. As a famous U.S. judge once said: "sunlight is the best disinfectant." Keep shining the light.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "KEITH A. EDDINS", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Keith A. Eddins
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.