**Fáilte, Go raibh maith agat as teacht! Welcome and thank you for coming! Lecture about Ireland and Everything Irish**

6th November 2019, the week of science at the Matej Bel University, nice sunny weather, 2 pm, friendly and respectful welcome by the Faculty of Art´s Dean, doc. Mgr. Martin Schmidt, Phd. and vice-dean, Dr. Lujza Urbancová, 2:30 University Centre of Matej Bel, Tajovského 51 street, 4 pm Department of English and American Studies. All of the items mentioned before have got something, or to be more precise, somebody in common - the Irish ambassador to the Slovak Republic who visited Faculty of Arts to give speech about Ireland and everything Irish.

Students attending the lecture had a possibility to learn more about Ireland, Irish culture, language and identity. Moreover, they were also encouraged to study at Irish universities. Her Excellency, Mrs. Hilda Ó Riain, talked about current topics like migration, Brexit, future of the Northern Ireland, Irish traditions, the Irish language revitalization, Irish folklore as well as about the chance given to students attending the Irish language and Irish studies courses to be awarded with the scholarship issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This grant has enabled students to participate in the Irish language summer school in the most interesting parts of Ireland, the Gaeltacht regions surrounded by natural beauties, well-known by the inhabitants of the island, for more than 3 subsequent years since 2016.

The students discussed actively about the importance of learning foreign languages and fostering intercultural communication skills in the context of the 21st century. The issues like tolerance, respect and understanding of other cultures have also been mentioned.

Mrs. Ó Riain herself can speak five foreign languages, the Irish language not excluding. Therefore, we could call her a polyglot and admire her multilingualism and respect to other cultures and languages. The lecture was enriched by the experience of the Irish consul Conor McDonagh and our new Irish language lecturer Antóin Ó Dúllaing with Irish language, culture and identity. Antóin is a graduate of the University College Cork and from this academic year 2019/2020 he is in charge of the Irish language and Irish studies at the Faculty of Arts, optional subjects open to all students interested in Ireland and everything Irish.

We do hope that a new lecture will be organized in summer semester 2019/2020 and that the future cooperation between Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, University College Cork in Ireland, the Irish Embassy in Bratislava, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in Ireland and Charles University, Centre for Irish studies, Prague will be fostered in the upcoming months. We wish this goal and ambition every success!