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Annual Report 19/20

by Martin Uhnak

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THE LASTING SEASON OF TRANSITION

Last year we made the complete transition to the new team and structure. We remade the website and worked on the priorities within the policy topics of digital and knowledge economy. We took part in commenting on the EU and local level within AI regulation, e-privacy, digital services and copyright.

We prepared our pitch for a partnership to the new government after the election in March with the 11 recommendations, little did we know that most of our plans would be squashed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic unveiled the great utility and potential of the digital industries. From e-commerce to communication, we all relied on these businesses to keep society functioning as we're used to.

We took this message to our first meeting with the finance minister Heger and his team with a handful of quick measures to help the business of innovation. We hope for this collaboration to be fruitful and effective.

The season of transition lasts and it may never cease to an end. We at SAPIE are ready to help face this challenge through communicating, representing, promoting and educating the authorities toward innovation friendly policies.

We made a few important steps towards this ideal and I am grateful to our members and partners for supporting our cause.



— Martin Uhnak
Executive Director

Doubling down on our digital economy and innovation policy efforts, we have been active in commenting and co-signing multiple joint position and open letters on the local and EU level.



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Joint Statement on Artificial Intelligence Regulation

Together with Czech Confederation of Industry we joined the AI Challengers group to develop the joint statement as a resource for upcoming European Artificial Intelligence legislation.



Joint letter on e-privacy with Digital Europe

Among other joint efforts on the EU level, we collaborated on the industry joint letter as part of the Rethink EPR initiative. The letter was signed by 61 signatories within Digital Europe and was featured on Politico.



10+ position papers and joint letters

We collaborated on more than 10 position papers within topics of digital and knowledge economy. Topics covered within our policy & advocacy agenda are AI, digital tax, e-privacy, digital services and copyright. You can find out more about our policy efforts [here](#).

The year of Slovak parliamentary elections was an opportunity to persuade a the new government to point our economy to a innovation focused environment with a strong digital sector. Here are the highlights of our engagement with the new government.

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11 recommendations of the digital sector

We formulated and published 11 recommendations of the digital sector for the new government in our Digital Manifesto.



Meeting with the Ministry of Finance leadership

We met with the new leaders of Ministry of Finance and proposed measures to help innovation during and after the pandemic and promised further collaboration on a strategic approach to promotion of innovation.



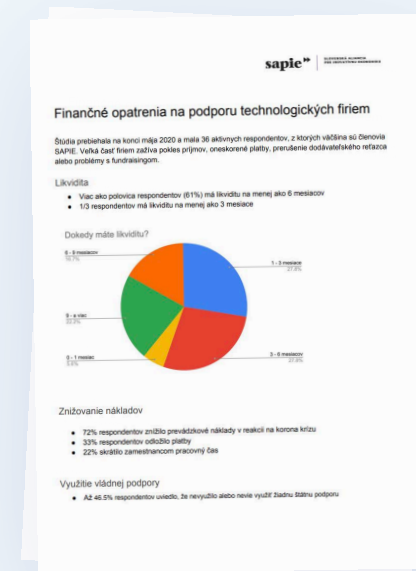
IT sector unified for an innovation focused strategy

We collaborated on an open letter to deputy prime minister Remišová together with all major digital industry platforms to unify the voice of the industry.

The pandemic unveiled the great utility and potential of the digital industries. We supported a variety of relief initiatives and prepared a study of relief measures to the innovation ecosystem.



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Financial support for tech businesses

Based on the [techleap.nl](https://www.techleap.nl) study of COVID-19 pandemic impact on technology ecosystem in Netherlands, we prepared a similar study in Slovakia. We synthesized the findings into financial measures that we subsequently proposed to the Minister of Finance.



Pandemic relief digital initiatives

The digital sector activated during the onset with multiple initiatives and we supported and collaborated on a number of them.

ECOSYSTEM

We are engaged in building the innovation ecosystem through network building and community partnerships. This year we organized and co-organized a variety of initiatives, programs and events.

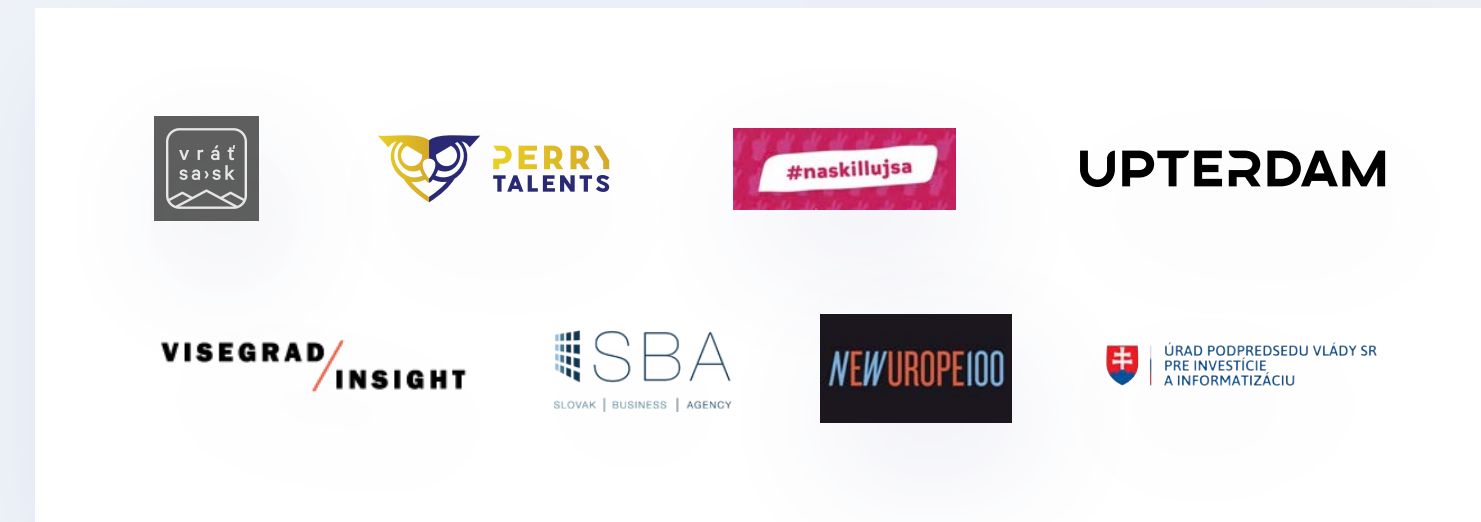
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SAPIE events

We organized six signature Meet & Learn events and four Braintrust discussions. The highlight of the year was the edition of Meet & Learn with Websupport with more than 90 attendees.



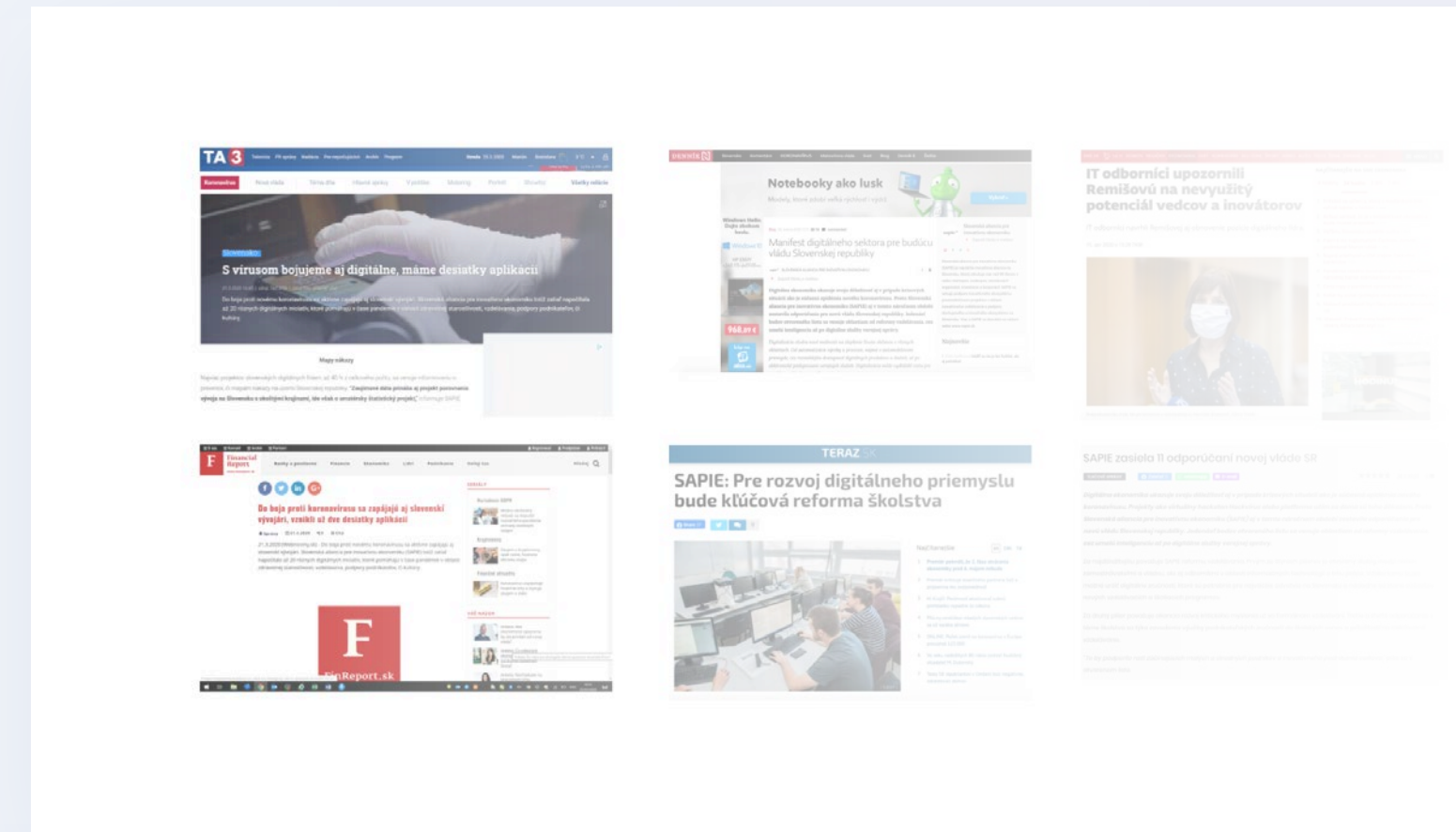
Projects & Partnerships

We partnered with a variety of initiatives within educational and social context, among others:

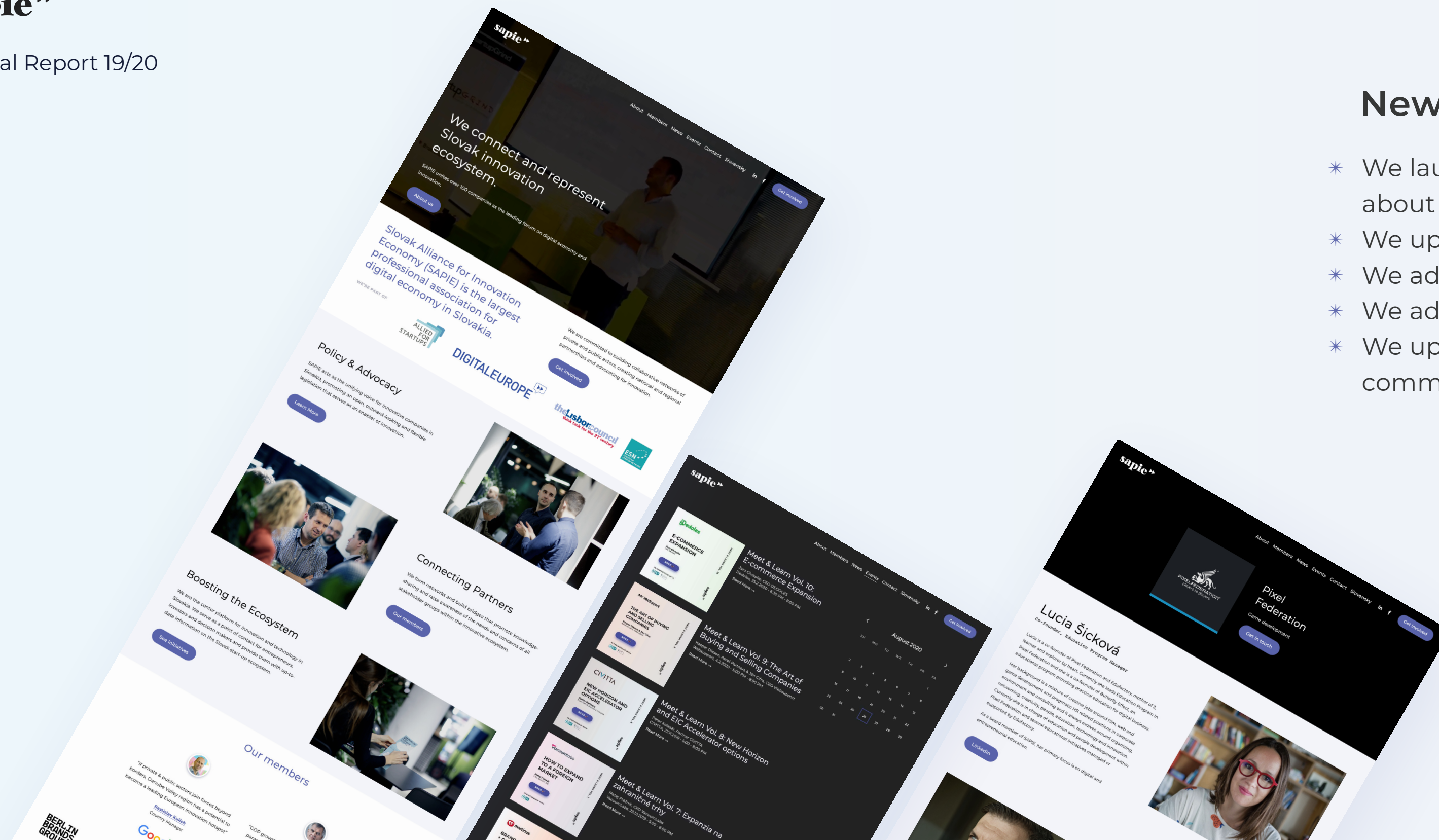
- * Perry Talents startup accelerator
- * Visegrad Insights New Europe Conferences
- * Upterdam e-commerce conference
- * Slovak Business Agency small business support committees
- * UPVII tech accelerator committees
- * Co-organized vratsa.sk
- * Co-organized naskillujsa.sk

Visibility & outreach

- * Our stories have been picked up by the media in more than 70 outcomes
- * Our Facebook page subscriber count grew by 18% to 2378 followers
- * We launched our LinkedIn page, subscriber count came in at 260 followers
- * Our newsletter subscriber count grew by 12% to 378 subscribers



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New website

- * We launched a complete new website with updated information about all of our projects and initiatives
- * We updated the Member profiles
- * We added the Current events section
- * We added the Member only access zone
- * We updated the visual communication guidelines to easily communicate with partners



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New members

In 2020 the member base grew to 109. The joining of software firms such as Whitestein, 26House, Touch4IT and nettle.ai proves that SAPIE is the no. 1 representative of the slovak innovation ecosystem.



New board member

In 2020, Ján Cifra was elected to the board of directors. He came into position for Michal Meško, who has served in the board since 2015.



New team

In 2019, we went through a complete team switch. Martin Uhnak (left) took the role of the General Secretary, Martina (middle) is in charge of operations and corporate relations. In 2020, Michal Kardoš (right) joined as our Policy Director. With a refreshed team and streamlined processes we are ready for the next stage of SAPIE.

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Thank you for your support.

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Martin, Martina & Michal

Team SAPIE