



## Workshop on Project Promotion

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Meeting venue: BSEC PERMIS Headquarters

*(Darüşşafaka Cad. Seba Center İş Merkezi, No: 45, Istinye 34460, Sarıyer-Istanbul (Turkey))*

**Mr Charilaos Alexopoulos**, Chairman of the National Committee for the Representation of the Greek Business Community at the BSEC Business Council – Member of the Board of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry

### **THE MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIONS IN THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF BSEC – HELLENIC REPRESENTATION AND THESSALONIKI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

#### PART 1 – The Business Council

The Business Council of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, referred to as the "BSEC Business Council", is an international non-governmental and non-profit organization, established according to the provisions of the BSEC Charter as a Related Body to the Organization. It was established in 2005 in Komotini Greece and thereafter is aimed to constitute the reference point for the business communities of the twelve participating countries.

Each BSEC Member State participates in the BSEC Business Council through one National Organization which officially represents the business

communities of that country. The National Organization of each BSEC Member State is designated by the provisions of the respective country's law or by the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The BSEC Member States are represented in the BSEC Business Council by the following National Organizations:

- (i) Republic of Albania: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana;
- (ii) Republic of Armenia: Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA);
- (iii) Republic of Azerbaijan: National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- (iv) Republic of Bulgaria: Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI);
- (v) Georgia: Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- (vi) Hellenic Republic: National Committee for the Representation of the Hellenic Republic at the BSEC Business Council;
- (vii) Republic of Moldova: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Moldova;
- (viii) Romania: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania;
- (ix) Russian Federation: "Delovaya Rossiya" (Business Russia);
- (x) Republic of Serbia: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia;
- (xi) Republic of Turkey: Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK);
- (xii) Ukraine: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ukraine

The BSEC Business Council aims to promote business cooperation and regional integration, whereas Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) are the main focus of the attention of the Business Council, given their importance as major drivers of the national economies of the BSEC Member States.

Its mission is envisaged in the statutory provisions, in order to:

- (i) Lobby and act for the continuous improvement of the business and investment environment throughout the BSEC region, which will both benefit local business people and help attract foreign investors;
- (ii) Act as a catalyst and ensure the involvement of the business communities in the BSEC process;

- (iii) Provide a platform for a dialogue between the private and public sectors and for joint reviews of business needs, opportunities, challenges and other issues;
- (iv) Catalyse the process of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the BSEC region;
- (v) Facilitate, through trade conferences, business fora, fairs, exhibitions, sectoral meetings and through the Internet, etc., regional and global trade, the establishment of joint ventures and other strategic partnerships, the exchange of experiences and know-how, as well as other forms of cooperation among business people, thus contributing to the increase of economic interdependence within the BSEC region;
- (vi) Actively help attract Foreign Direct Investment in the Black Sea Region by providing, through targeted promotion, investment fora, international conferences, fairs and exhibitions, road shows and special Internet sites a showcase for the region's strengths and opportunities, resources, products, know-how and human talent to the rest of the world;
- (vii) Help enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through management training, marketing training, assistance in developing e-business as well as through other technical assistance programs;
- (viii) Help SMEs take advantage of the globalisation process by giving them export training and information on foreign market opportunities as well as by helping them network with foreign customers, suppliers and sub-contractors;
- (ix) Facilitate the networking of business people with Universities and Research Institutes, as well as with other business people, both within and outside the Black Sea Region, in order to help them identify innovation opportunities;
- (x) Develop joint projects of cooperation, by paying equal attention both to the end result and to the actual process of working together;
- (xi) Help with the building of new business institutions in the Region, such as national and regional sectoral associations, and provide assistance to existing institutions so they can improve their effectiveness in serving their own business constituencies;
- (xii) Foster better mutual understanding of the Region's national and business cultures and help pave the way for a more effective intercultural business communication and cooperation;
- (xiii) Collect and disseminate statistical data and information on business conditions and business opportunities in the Black Sea Region;

The above activities shall be undertaken in close collaboration with other national and international organizations, financial institutions and donors. Finally, great importance is given to the utilization of modern Information Technology (e-commerce, e-business, e-training for distance learning, teleconferencing, etc.), which aims to bridge the inherent distance between the twelve countries of BSEC.

## PART 2 – The Hellenic Representation in the BSEC Business Council and the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Hellenic Representation in the BSEC Business Council is settled by the Decision of the Hellenic Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2011. The National Committee is comprised from the representatives of the following national business organizations and Chambers:

- Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Panhellenic Exporters Association (PEA)
- Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (FING)
- Greek International Business Association (SEVE)

The National Committee focuses on identical scopes and activities of the BSEC Business Council. The today's national representation is vested to the representative of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one of the most extrovert business organizations of the country.

Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) was founded in 1918 and began operating in 1919. The Chamber's numerous activities focus on the manufacturing community of Thessaloniki, but extend further business, covering the broader economic, social and cultural development of the area and the broader region of Northern Greece. Approximately 20,500 commercial and industrial enterprises are registered members of TCCI

We live in a constantly changing global environment. The importance of geographical borders has diminished in recent years. Within this framework, Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry has greatly enhanced its extroversion, gaining a global orientation.

The activities of the Chamber mainly extend to the Balkan and Black Sea countries, with which our economic relations are constantly expanding, and transcend these to reach the rest of the world.

Its national and international role is underlined by the participation in various organizations and initiatives such as:

- The Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- EUROCHAMBRES (Association of European Chambers of Commerce)
- The Hellenic Chambers' Transport Association
- The Chambers' Group for the Development of Greek Islands
- The Arab-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Development
- The National Committee for the Representation of the Hellenic Republic at the BSEC Business Council

- The National Council of Exports
- The General Assembly of the Hellenic Foreign Trade Board (HEPO)
- The National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce
- The Thessaloniki Stock Exchange Centre SA
- The Exhibition Research Institute
- The Inter-Balkan and Black Sea Business Centre SA (DIPEK SA)
- The Association for Tourism Promotion and Marketing of the Municipality of Thessaloniki
- The Centre of International and European Economic Law
- The Developmental Association of Macedonia
- The Board of Directors of the Society for the Utilisation and Management of the Property of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- The Board of Directors of the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art
- The Committee of Friends of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad
- SIRIUS-Centres for the prevention of and information on addictive substances, in cooperation with OKANA
- The Regional Council of Central Macedonia
- The Board of Directors of the Regional Development Fund
- The Permanent Committee for the facilitation and simplification of international trade processes (Hellenic Trade PRO)
- The Monitoring Committee of the Regional Operational Programme of Central Macedonia 2000- 2006
- The Supervisory Committee for the Development of Thessaloniki Innovation Zone
- The Programme for the Promotion of Commerce and Investment in the Black Sea Zone, within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

TCCI gives great importance to bilateral cooperation with Chambers and business organizations from Southeast Europe and the Black Sea region and in this respect has entered into twinship and collaboration agreements with the chambers of commerce and industry of Bursa (1999), Izmir (2000) and Istanbul (2008) and has signed cooperation agreements with the Russian Federation Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1994), Moscow (2000) and St Petersburg (2002).

It has also entered into important agreements and signed MOU 's with other Chambers in the Black Sea region such as

Dnepropetrovsk (Ukraine), in 2002;

Moldova (Republic of Moldova), in 2008

Odessa (Ukraine), in 2009

Kherson (Ukraine), in 2009

Konstanza (Romania), in 1994

Bucharest (Romania), in 1998, 2006 and 2017

Tirana (Albania), in 1998

Regional Chamber of Economy of Nis (Serbia), in 2007

and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Belarus (Belarus), in 2008

The Chamber's know – how on international business is envisaged by the continuous participation and implementation of projects aiming at supporting entrepreneurship, within the framework of Greek and European programs such ADAPT, RECITE, IRIS, INTERREG CADSES & ARCHIMED, Information Society, etc., in cooperation with agencies from Greece and other European Union countries.

TCCI has been organising important international events in Thessaloniki, such as the International Symposium entitled “The Development of Cities as a Prerequisite for Enhancing Entrepreneurship. The International Experience” in April 2006 and the International Symposium entitled “Sustainable Development in Modern European Cities and Entrepreneurship” in June 2007. Furthermore, on October 5-6, 2006, the Chamber hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Eurochambres Association of European Chambers of Commerce entitled “Communicating Europe”. This event was recognised by the International Congress & Convention Association as one of the most important international conferences, ranking the city of Thessaloniki 91<sup>st</sup> on the list of the 100 most popular convention cities in the world for 2006, above important convention destinations such as Lausanne, Moscow and Los Angeles.

Since August 2004, the **World Bank's Private Sector Liaison Office for Greece** was established at Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The World Bank group is greatly interested in the private sector, since it helps the development of direct foreign investment in developing countries and constantly announces international tender competitions governed by a regime of total transparency for supplying goods and services related to projects funded by the Bank.

Due to all these advantages and the extrovert entrepreneurial activity in the broader region, the international community has chosen Thessaloniki as the seat of important organisations, such as the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the Black Sea Trade & Development Bank, the financial Institution established from the twelve Member states of BSEC.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century brings Thessaloniki to the forefront of international developments. The completion of major infrastructure projects, such as Egnatia Highway, which connects Europe to Asia, and important energy pipelines, the construction of which is underway, in combination with the accession of SE European countries to the European Union and the reconstruction of Western Balkans, provide Thessaloniki with new dynamism.

In this view, the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as the Hellenic Representation in the BSEC Business Council, declares its commitment, along with the rest of the members of the Business Council, to support and enhance all similar initiatives and especially the one that we focus on today.

Thank you very much for your attention.