



REPRESENTATION PERMANENTE DE LA GRECE
AUPRES DE L' UNION EUROPEENNE

Brussels, 18 April 2016
Ref. No: 2969

Subject: Invitation extended to Commissioner Hogan to participate in the "1st Inter-Balkan Forum" (Thessaloniki, 7-8 July 2016)

I have the honour to enclose herewith, a letter by the Greek Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Dimitrios Mardas addressed to the Commissioner Mr. Phil Hogan, inviting the latter to participate in the "1st Inter-Balkan Forum: Promoting Regional Cooperation", scheduled to be held in Thessaloniki on the 7th and 8th of July 2016, and focused on the Food and Beverages sector.

Further information about the concept and the programme of the aforementioned event is also attached to the invitation letter.

I would be very grateful if you could ensure that the letter with its attachments is brought to the attention of its high destinee.

May I avail myself of the opportunity to convey to you, Mr. Power, the assurances of my high esteem.



Mr. Peter Power
Head of Cabinet of
Commissioner for
Agriculture and Rural Development
Mr. Phil Hogan
European Commission
Brussels

19-21 Rue Jacques de Lalaing 1040 Bruxelles Tél. (02) 5515611
Fax: (02) 5515651 E-mail: mea.bruxelles@rp-grece.be



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
DEPUTY MINISTER

18 April 2016

Ref: 114

Dear Commissioner Hogan,

The Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF-HELEXPO) is planning to host the **“1st Inter-Balkan Forum: Promoting Regional Cooperation”**, in Thessaloniki, 7th and 8th July 2016, which will be mainly addressed to the Business Community related to the *Food & Beverages sector* in the countries of the Balkan peninsula.

The participating countries in the Forum will be, apart from Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

The main purpose of the Forum is to promote cooperation among the countries of the Balkan Peninsula on a political, scientific and business level, with a focus to the Food and Beverages sector. We firmly believe that promotion of synergies in this vital sector, for all countries involved, can lead to sustainable and broad positive effects with regards to jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness. Hence, this Forum aims to highlight the opportunities offered for investments and commercial transactions both to the local and international business community.

The first day of the Forum will have an institutional character with high level officials from EU or an International Organization and representatives from the political scene in the involved countries. The second day will be devoted to the business community and is planned to entail presentations of the Food and Beverages Sector in the respective countries as well as B2B meetings.

Your presence, either to address the opening speech or to be the keynote speaker, during dinner, on the first day of the Forum, would not only be a great honor for the organizers but it will also highlight the importance that EU attaches to the economic development of the Balkan countries.

We would appreciate if you could confirm your participation by May 20, 2016. In case your commitments do not allow you to be present, please be so kind and indicate a representative.

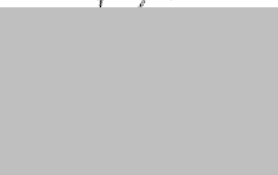
Thanking you in advance for your reply,



Yours Sincerely,



Dimitris Mardas



Attached: Draft programme of the Forum

H.E. Mr Phil Hogan

Member of the European Commission

Agricultural and Rural Development

200, Rue de la Loi

1049 Brussels

Belgium



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1st Inter -Balkan Forum

Following the initiative of the Deputy Foreign Minister Mr.D.Mardas, the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF- HELEXPO) is planning to host the 1st Inter-Balkan Forum, which will be mainly addressed to the Business Community related to the Food and Beverages Sector of the Balkan countries.

The Food and Beverages industry is very important in the region, contributing significantly to the GDP, the employment and the exports of the countries. The aim of the Forum will be to further promote regional cooperation in the Food and Beverages Sector, thus enhancing its positive effects with regards to trade, investments and profits for the entrepreneurial community.

The 1st day of the Forum will have an institutional character with representatives of the political scene and possibly a high level official from EU or an International Organization, whereas the 2nd day will be devoted to the business community and is planned to entail presentations of the Food and Beverages Sector in the respective countries as well as B2B meetings. The programme of the 2nd day is planned to cover various related topics, such as:

- Exports dynamics
- Cross-border cooperation perspectives
- Promoting R&D in the Business Community
- Financing tools & patterns

The Forum will include an exhibition centre, at the availability of firms which are interested to promote their products.

Participation to the Forum will be free of charge.

"1st INTERBALKAN FORUM"
Promoting Regional Cooperation
in the
Food and Beverages Sector

Location: Thessaloniki, Conference Hall "Ioannis Vellidis"

Dates: 7-8 July

1st Day

15:00 – 15:30	<i>Reception /Registration</i>
15:30 – 18:30	<p>Word of Welcome</p> <p>General remarks on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Strengthening the ties in the region</i> - <i>Perspectives on Increasing the region's Prosperity and Sustainability</i> <p>(Representatives from all the countries – mainly from the political arena)</p>
19:00-22:00	<p>Keynote Speaker & Dinner</p> <p>(e.g. European Commissioner, WHO Europe/FAO regional Director, etc)</p>

2nd Day	
9: 30 - 10:00	<i>Registration</i>
10:00 – 12: 00	<p>The Food & Beverages Sector across the Balkan countries Presentation of the Food and Beverages Sector in each one of the Balkan countries</p> <p>Participants: Economic and Commercial Attachés from all participating countries</p> <p><i>Possible topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas of potential growth and Business expansion - Niche markets in each country - Food standards – Cross-border harmonization Marketing the Food& Beverage sector: Strategic tools - Agrobiotechnology
12:00 – 12: 30	Break
12:30 – 14: 30	<p>Promoting R&D in the Business Community</p> <p>Participants: Universities, Technological Institutes</p>
14:30 – 15: 30	Break: Light Lunch
15:30 – 17: 00	<p>Presentation of the Food and Beverages Sector in each one of the Balkan countries <i>(session contin.)</i></p> <p>Participants: Economic and Commercial Attachés</p>
15:30 – 17: 00	Break
17:30 – 19: 00	<p>Banking Sector, Financing tools</p> <p>Participants: Financing Institutions representatives</p>