

Dear friends

Many thanks to all of you for accepting our invitation to participate in this XVth Edition of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion!

The Forum AIC is composed by nearly 40 Chambers of Commerce from 8 countries of the Adriatic and Ionian basin, in different stages regarding European Integration as follows: **Italy, Slovenia, Greece, Croatia**- member countries and **Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia** - potential candidate countries. It is considered by us as a highly effective and efficient instrument of Regional Integration, an intermediate step towards European Integration of our country.

In this regard we hope that with the works of this edition we get answers, orientations for solutions or models of best practices for some dilemmas and challenges of the socio-economic development of our economy, such as:

- In ***Agriculture***, we have products, even organic, but often we do not have companies to commercialize them. This gap caused by the widespread parceling in agricultural land ownership should push us to find incentives and mechanisms that support the creation of for-profit subjects, whether companies or cooperatives, to move towards economies of scale and a rural development and sustainable agriculture, but also to balance agricultural imports. These goals should also be linked with the vocational training of young people, to give them high qualification as a farmer, but also other occupational qualifications that reduce the number of employees in the village.
- The construction of the ***Fishing Port*** in Durres should be seen as an ideal challenge to set up a real Cluster, which would be best completed also with the investment of a Fishing Market in the foreseen area in the project. Also, the termination of this Fishing Port could and should be seen as an opportunity to use its external wall for the construction of a new Tourist Port.
- The lacking ***catering*** for around 100 hotels of Durres Beach, that often obliges the manager himself to go to the rural market to buy fruits and vegetables, it is a very significant fact for the need of incentives to the creation of relative supply chains. Also, short seasonality of tourism demonstrates the need for a better promotion of the tourist offer “Albania”, but also of that entitled “Durrës”. Meanwhile, the public-private partnership in infrastructural investments (energy, water - sewage, telephony and

Internet), and also on staff qualification in favor of better services, could be two safe routes towards networking for a cultural and sustainable tourism.

- The pinery following the virgin sandy beach of the village Rinia can not force us to continue considering *agricultural land* the surface behind this forest. The New Municipality should initiate its liberation and transformation in a building plot to open the way to urban and tourist constructions in this area, as well as in other similar areas of Northern Durres.
- The new *Technical Economic Development Area in Spitallë* represents the essence of the geo-strategic position of Durres in Albania and of Albania in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. Its rational use with domestic or foreign investments oriented towards exports would create a powerful economic pole of the Albanian economy. The Durres Chamber contribution for this economic area has begun with its discovery, has continued with a pre-study of feasibility on the area development, culminating with another feasibility study for an Exhibition & Trade Fair Center within the area. A business group of our Chamber will participate in the relative bidding process for the role of area developer.

In conclusion, we hope you enjoyed the yesterday tourist tour, which we wish to be inspiring for today works that should lead us to the establishment of "Adriatic-Ionian Chambers cluster". The utilization like in a cluster of the existing capacities of our Forum, along with new projects within the framework of the Strategy of the Macroregion will be the best support for SMEs operating in the Adriatic-Ionian basin.

As you could see, this international event is an activity example that clearly demonstrates the contribution of the system of Chambers of Commerce for the development of SMEs

Thanking you for the attention, once again I wish you success in your involvement in this Plenary Session, especially in the Thematic Workgroups.

The President

Andrea XHAVARA

Durres, 12th May 2015