



Business Newsletter 2015/6 – September 2015



Dear friends,

The new school year has started, and the Bulgarian government and parliament didn't wait for this moment to work on new legislation for reforms in important sectors such as energy, health care and education. In the field of the judicial and the fight against corruption, they are moving forward at a slower pace, although these subjects are certainly not less important.

We have recently seen the economic forecasts improving and at the Embassy we also meet more prospective Belgian investors, and hear about expansion plans of other companies, these are certainly positive signs. During the visit of Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European affairs, it was announced that, YTD, Belgium is – again – the second largest foreign investor in Bulgaria. We'll celebrate that during the 10th edition of the Belgian days under the motto "fun, food and quality". Looking forward to seeing you there!

Best regards,

Anick Van Calster
Ambassador



Belgian Days - 2015

Autumn in Bulgaria means beautiful nature, nice colours, and... Belgian Days of course. This year, we celebrate the 10th edition, from the 7th of October till the 18th, with a focus on "Fun, Food & Quality". The program is nearly finalised, but looks very promising with three corporate events, the traditional opening reception and the closing dinner party, three exhibitions, a prestigious Belgian-Bulgarian jazz concert, and Belgian animation films after the brunch in the Hilton.

A detailed schedule will follow soon, but for the cultural events you can already write down the 13th (Aka Balkan Moon) and the 18th (screening of Belgian animation films).



Visit Minister Didier Reynders - exchange on opportunities and challenges



On 7 and 8 September, our Minister of Foreign Affairs brought a working visit to Sofia. During the different meetings he had with his homologue, the President, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister in Charge of European Affairs, he discussed with them about political issues, but also exchanged on the investment climate in Bulgaria. He also met representatives of the business community. They informed him about the opportunities and challenges for companies in the country, the investment environment and topical subjects such as energy, the banking environment, relations with the administration, tax policy, labour market...

Awex - FIT mission in Bulgaria from 4 to 6 November

Anne Defourny, Economic and Commercial Counsellor for the Walloon Export Agency (AWEX) and Flanders Invest and Trade (FIT), is currently actively busy with the organisation of a common economic mission to Bulgaria between 4 and 6 November. Different Belgian companies already registered for this mission.

If you want to participate, contact Anne on her e-mail : sofia@awex-wallonia.com



Aka Balkan Moon in Sofia



It's hard to imagine the Belgian jazz scene without Aka Moon. In their richly filled career they have worked with dozens of artists from differing backgrounds. Since 2012 they are once again aiming for a musical cross-pollination, with musical fellow travellers from Bulgaria.

AKA BALKAN MOON consists of: the three members of Aka Moon, Tcha Limberger (violin & vocal), Fabian Fiorini (piano) and famous singers and musicians from the Bulgarian oral and improvisation traditions: Nedyalko Nedyalkov (kaval flute), Tima Nedyalkova (vocal), Vladimir Karparov (sax) and Stoyan Yankolov (tupan drum).

For the 10th anniversary of the Belgian Days, the Embassy, in collaboration with Wallonie-Bruxelles International, has the pleasure to announce the concert of Aka Balkan Moon on 13 October in Studio 1 of the Bulgarian National Radio. Together with the Business Club, we offer you the opportunity to invite your guests to this prestigious concert. For more details, contact the Embassy (sofia@diplobel.fed.be).

Belgium has 10th best reputation

Belgium has risen two places in Reputation Institute's 'Country RepTrak' ranking for countries with the best reputation. The country completes the top 10 this year. "Belgium is perceived positively as an ethical and safe country that functions well, is progressive on an economic and social level, and assumes its responsibilities in the international community," dixit Reputation Institute's communication partner Akkanto. "The presence of European institutions and the NATO undoubtedly plays a big role in this positive reputation." Belgium scores a total of 72.3 points. Not surprising that the theme of the Belgian Days this year is « fun, food, and quality... ».



Sowalfin signs an agreement with EFSI

On 11 September, Sowalfin, the Walloon agency for support to the SME's, signed an agreement with the EFSI (European Fund for Strategic Investment, also called "Juncker Plan"). This agreement will allow Sowalfin to increase the guarantee they can offer to the banks to cover investment plans of SME's. Since Sowalfin will now share these guarantees with EFSI, the banks will have a risk coverage of 66 % instead of 50 % previously. Thanks to this mechanism, Sowalfin will be able to manage 200 to 300 additional applications every year. Good news of course for the Belgian economy...



More info on :

<http://www.sowalfin.be/>

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