



Business Newsletter 2016/2 — February 2016



Dear friends,

Commercial relations between Belgium and Bulgaria are in a positive trend. The export from Belgium grew with 13,5 % within one year, and Belgium imports a lot of products from Bulgaria. More and more Belgian tourists come to the Black Sea as well and we see numerous economic missions to this region. The title of Doctor Honoris Causa awarded to M. Luc Gijsens is another illustration of the good atmosphere between the two countries.

Another country in our jurisdiction is highlighted by Belgian tour-operators since Thomas Cook focused on the Macedonian touristic offer during the important Brussels holiday fair.

13 chairmen of Chambers of Commerce in Belgium published an open letter to correct the wrong image Belgium got recently. A remarkable initiative I really appreciate.

Best regards,

Anick Van Calster,

Ambassador

VLAM mission Fruits & Vegetables in Sofia

From 21 to 23 March 2016 a delegation of VLAM, active in the fresh fruits & vegetables sector, is coming to explore the Bulgarian market.

The delegation is composed by six dealers of fruits & vegetables (capsicums, leeks, strawberries, nectarines, etc.) as well as auction houses.

For further details, please, feel free to contact Mrs Anne DEFOURNY, Economic and Commercial Counsellor, sofia@awex-wallonia.com.



Tour operators expect important increase of Belgian tourists in Bulgaria during summer season



Jet Air, and Thomas Cook, the two main tour operators for Belgian tourists in Bulgaria, observe a very important increase of reservations for the summer season in Bulgaria. Jet Air, for instance, has 35 % more reservations compared to last year, and will propose 10 flights/week to the Black Sea, while in 2015 they had 6 flights/week during the summer. The main explanation of this success of the Black Sea is that the resorts offer a good quality/price ratio, and that Bulgaria is considered safer than previous destinations such as Tunisia or Egypt. Bulgarian official statistics consider that about 100.000 Belgian tourists visited Bulgaria every year till now.

Thomas Cook presents Macedonian Tourist Offer at Brussels Fair



Another successful touristic destination in the region is the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. Belgian tour- operator Thomas Cook is bolstering its cooperation with Macedonian travel agencies and intends to enlist the country in its tourist offer for 2016. The Agency presented Macedonian tourist offer at the Brussels Holiday Fair 'Salon des Vacances', in Brussels. - See more at: <http://www.independent.mk/>

Belgian export to Bulgaria grew by 13,5 % between 2014 and 2015

At the end of November 2015, the y/y figures of export from Belgium to Bulgaria showed a growth of 13,5 % in volume. Total export for the first eleven months of the year was worth 632,3 M€. Main export sectors are machines and tools (19,9 %), transport material (19,8 %) and chemical products (15,8%). Import from Bulgaria is worth 851,5 M€ and grew by 2,4 %, with metal industry representing 67,2 %.



Chairman of the Supervisory Boards of DZI and CIBANK Doctor Honoris Causa



On 19 February 2016, at a ceremony held in 'RIU Pravets Resort', the town of Pravets, Luc Gijsens - executive director of KBC Bank & Insurance, an ExCo member and chairman of the supervisory boards of DZI and CIBANK, was awarded the honorary title Doctor Honoris Causa by the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

Luc Gijsens started his career in 1977 when he joined the Kredietbank. Since 2011 he has been an executive director of KBC Bank & Insurance and an ExCo member of KBC Group. Since 2014 he has taken the post of a chairman of the Supervisory boards of DZI and CIBANK - entities which are part of KBC Group.

Luc Gijsens expressed his gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Vazov and the whole academic board of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance for the honour he has been conferred with. In his academic speech he presented the 'KBC's Bank insurance Model'.

Chambers of commerce stand up for Belgium



The international business community in Belgium recently published an open letter highlighting the fact that Belgium remains an attractive country to invest in, notwithstanding the security issues it encountered in the past months. The open letter enumerates the most important assets that will allow Belgium to keep on attracting foreign investments in the future. Next to the highly skilled workforce and the favourable geographical location of Belgium, also its strong spirit of innovation, its high quality of life and its open and stable economy are addressed. The chairmen of thirteen Chambers of Commerce have signed this open letter, with the explicit intent of making thus a long-term commitment for Belgium on behalf of the international business community. The full text of the open letter can be found on the website of [CanCham Belux](http://www.canchambelux.org) (<http://www.canchambelux.org>) one of the participants to this remarkable initiative.

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