



Balkan Economic Forum

Profile Information

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Balkan Economic Forum (BEF) Ethos and Mission

The Balkan Peninsula countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey constitute a significant socio-economic component of the global economy with a combined population of approximately 136 million people producing an estimated \$1.46 trillion in annual Gross Domestic Product according to the World Bank in 2014.

Many of these countries are members of various international institutions to facilitate economic development and security, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU).

These and other alliances along with diverse cultures and natural resources represent economic assets, the responsible management of which can contribute to the long term economic performance of the individual nations; however, Balkan development potential, economic growth and inter-state cooperation have been hindered by the consequences of multi-faceted regional conflicts.

Reliance upon external economic development aid is neither a viable nor a sustainable long-term solution to the region's current challenges that include the need for socio-economic stability, security and inter-state cooperation.

As a result, the Balkan Economic Forum was established to strengthen the region's network of business enterprises and economic growth prospects through:

- the development of alliances and partnerships among regional, European and international private sector enterprises, including SMEs, with the support of public sector institutions using a grass roots approach;
- the support of business models based on "best practices" that will improve the region's underperforming global competitiveness in business, capital and labour markets, and
- the promotion of financial and technical support programmes offered by international institutions (e.g. the European Commission, EBRD, USAID) in an effort to strengthen cooperation and forge closer ties between the Balkans and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

The Balkan Economic Forum is independent of any national government, political party or any other vested interest and operates with an inclusive approach that respects universal human rights and recognises the potential of every individual to actively contribute to the achievement of tangible economic development for the social welfare of a region.

BEF Registration Information

The Balkan Economic Forum is registered with the following authorities having jurisdiction for the purposes hereinafter set forth:

- The Balkan Economic Forum is a nonprofit organisation registered at the Athens Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Athens, Greece under Registration No. 340561/18-03-2015 with the accompanying VAT No. 997539262 registered at the Hellenic Ministry of Finance.
- The Balkan Economic Forum is a registered trade name with the European Union Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) under Registration No. L101F/013402367/27-10-2014.
- The Balkan Economic Forum is registered in the European Union Transparency Register as an authorised lobbyist at the European Parliament and the European Commission under Registration No. 012701314185-90/07-08-2014/VI.

BEF Registered Membership Profile

Since the Balkan Economic Forum was launched in 2014, more than 2,100 individuals and organisations from 86 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, the Americas and the South Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand, have joined the organisation. While three-fourths of our members are currently based in the Balkans, all of our members share common Balkan socio-economic development, geo-political and regional security interests as their wide-ranging professions clearly attest.

Based on the current BEF membership registration, our members' professions (and examples of institutions with which they are associated) as well as their percentage representation in our membership group are, in pertinent part, represented as follows:

- government administration (e.g. international and regional governing institutions, national parliaments, ministries, embassies, consulates and municipalities) (10.1%);
- financial services (e.g. The World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Securities and Exchange Commission of the Republic of Macedonia, Securities and Exchange Commission of the Republic of Montenegro, Montenegro Stock Exchange, Bank of Greece, Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo, Central Bank of Romania, Central Bank of Turkey, Capital Markets Board of Turkey, Development Bank of Turkey, Investment Bank of Greece) (20.3%);
- non-profit organisations (e.g. Soros Foundation, Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children International, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Habitat for Humanity Macedonia) (8.9%);

- higher education (e.g. Balkan and international universities, including the University of Cambridge [UK], International Center for Finance at Yale School of Management [US], Georgetown University [US], University College London [UK], University of California at Berkeley [US], Tsinghua University [China], University of British Columbia [CA], University of Hawaii [US], Stellenbosch University [South Africa], Norwegian University of Life Sciences [Norway], University of Edinburgh [UK]) (11.3%);
- broadcast media and media publication organisations (e.g. BBC, CNN, Euronews, France Television, Bloomberg News, American Broadcasting Co., Radio Africa, Radio Free Europe, Associated Press, Thomson Reuters, International New York Times, Kathimerini, Barron's, Newsweek) (8.4%);
- scientific research and environmental services (e.g. NASA Ames Research Center, International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, Conservation International, Coastal & Marine Union – EUCC, EUROPARC Federation, European Landowners' Organisation, European Centre for Nature Conservation, WWF, BirdLife International, Regional Environmental Centre Turkey, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Finnish Environment Institute-SYKE, Norwegian Environment Agency, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – RSPB, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds – BSPB, Hellenic Ornithological Society, Marine Stewardship Council) (9.4%);
- aerospace, airline, maritime transport and tourism industries (e.g. General Dynamics Information Technology, Hellenic Aerospace Industry S.A., Aegean Airlines, Croatia Airlines, Etihad Airways, Montenegro Airlines, Romanian Air Transport-TAROM, Turkish Airlines, Ionian Ferries Shipping Co., Global Sustainable Tourism Council) (5.3%);
- information technology (e.g. Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Microsoft) (4.6%); and
- energy sector (e.g. Statkraft [Norway], Shell Global Solutions International B.V., BH-Gas d.o.o. [Bosnia and Herzegovina], Hellenic Petroleum S.A., Kosovo Energy Corporation J.S.C., OMV Petrom S.A. [Romania], Enerji Petrol Gaz and Gas & Power Newspaper [Turkey]) (2.5%).

Our members include officials and representatives from the European Commission and European Parliament, NATO, OSCE, Institute for China-EU Relations, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Permanent Mission of the European Union to the World Trade Organisation, and international security organisations such as the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) in Kosovo.

BEF Programmes

While the principal focus of the Balkan Economic Forum is its annual conference, other programmes and activities currently under development include BEF guidance to global financial resources for economic development, the Youth Programme, media promotion of beneficial BEF projects, advocacy and multi-level professional membership networking. The BEF also supports the international promotion of the growing Balkan tourism industry.

Our Balkan Economic Forum LinkedIn Group is comprised of global professionals from the private and public sectors, institutions of higher learning and NGOs who exchange ideas for transforming various Balkan business sectors. These discussions include shared information about financial resources available from financial and governmental institutions. In our BEF Facebook page, you will find the latest articles from international media organisations on a wide range of socio-economic and geo-political subjects concerning the Balkans.

Annual Conference

The 2015 Balkan Economic Forum conference will be held on 9 November 2015 in Athens, Greece. This forum will provide a venue for all interested public and private sector parties to meet and network in furtherance of Balkan economic growth with the support of regional, European and international cooperation. The forum will also extend invitations to select broadcast media and media publication organisations.

The agenda currently planned for this year's forum is set forth below. The schedule includes panel discussions on stage guided by an experienced moderator and, time permitting, questions from the audience.

8:00-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:10	Balkan Economic Forum Introduction
9:10-11:00	Balkan Energy Security A panel discussion among a select group of representatives from the oil, gas and renewable energy industries who will address: the growing Balkan energy requirements including the need for energy reliability and security; the current challenges to energy deliveries; the latest energy priorities, strategies and initiatives within each industry; and the expected short to medium term Balkan energy mix to facilitate private and public sector business planning.
11:00-11:30	Coffee break
11:30-13:00	Foreign Government Investment and Development Assistance

A panel discussion among national government officials from countries that are planning or have already made significant Balkan economic investments. The panel of experts will discuss the factors inherent in the region that led to these investment decisions; their assessment and prioritisation of regional economic development challenges; and the expectations associated with these investments including their impact on inter-state cooperation, regional socio-economic development and geo-political security.

13:00-14:00 Buffet Lunch

14:00-15:30 Private Sector Investment in the Balkans

A panel discussion among a select group of representatives from key industries who will focus on the current issues associated with private sector investment in the Balkans. These issues include an assessment of the basic requirements of various business sectors prior to their establishment or expansion into the Balkans which concern a range of factors such as the status of capital and labour markets; geo-political stability and security; and transportation, energy and advanced technology infrastructure.

15:30-17:00 Balkan Economic Development Outlook

A panel discussion among Balkan government economic development officials who will discuss (i) specific national priority economic development measures including projects involving Balkan inter-state cooperation, labour market reforms, development assistance programmes, and recent advancements in transportation, energy and technology infrastructure and (ii) economic development challenges that are being addressed to improve private sector global competitiveness.

17:00-17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:00 Banking on the Future

Panel discussion among international and national private and public sector banking institution representatives and officials on: priority monetary policies and access to credit in support of economic development; the latest banking regulation policies and initiatives in support of a credible and stable banking system; favourable Balkan economic growth factors, challenges and recommended priorities for governments from the perspective of the investment banking industry.

19:00-21:00 Reception for social and business networking.

Balkan Economic Forum Contact Coordinates

In the event of any questions or request for further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Balkan Economic Forum at the coordinates that appear below or through our website at www.BalkanEconomicForum.org.

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