

Issue 1

Volume 1

April,

1999

# Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum



## News

**Affiliated to The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum**

**Letter by the Chairman  
Bill Drysdale  
Managing Partner KPMG**

*The launch of the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum (BBLF) seems to me a very important development for Bulgaria. The event itself was on 6 November 1998 when HRH The Prince of Wales was visiting Bulgaria.*

*The whole concept and activities of the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum (PWBLF) in this country goes back to four years ago. Now we have brought together a number of companies willing to continue and enrich these activities.*

*The launch was held in an exceptionally constructive environment in the presence of the Prince of Wales, the President of Bulgaria Petar Stoyanov, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry Alexander Bozhkov, the Mayor of Sofia Stefan Sofianski, Robert Davies, Chief Executive Director PWBLF and Susan Simpson, Director - Regional operations, BBLF. Originally the BBLF was set up by twelve founding members. With the exception of two, all others are corporate entities. Their spheres of activities are quite different and together they will represent a first level business cross-section.*

*The founding members of the BBLF have already put enthusiasm, time and resources into the first*

**Page 2**



*The Prince of Wales at the launching event, November 6, 1998*

### **Sustaining the Initial Success**

Since the launch of BBLF on 6 November 1998 the Executive Directorate concentrated its efforts on sustaining the initial success and proliferating beyond the limits of the capital city of Sofia the information on the philosophy of the Forum and the main instruments for its implementation. For this purpose letters were sent out to non-present, but invited to the inauguration event companies, accompanied by a newly prepared infopack. Further information on new projects identifi-

cation and implementation was also sent to those who attended the launch. In parallel to the correspondence special attention was paid to the personal approach. We met representatives of more than 50 companies and NGOs in our strive to present the Forum as widely as possible. Since 6 November 1998 in addition to the 12 founding members 15 new companies and NGOs have joined BBLF and 12 more applications are being processed. The full list of new members comprises AmCham, Zeneca Bulgaria,

**Page 2**

*The Business Leaders Forum works with its members and partners to promote continuous improvement in the practice of business citizenship and sustainable development internationally, as a natural part of successful business operations.*



**Bill Drysdale**  
**Chairman**

**Page 1** three initial projects. They supported the foundation "Mothers Love". The second project is the renovation and reconstruction of children's playgrounds in the Slinden Municipality in Sofia. The third project is concentrated on the Visitor's Centre in the National Park Vitosha Mountain.

The BBLF is a non-profit organisation.

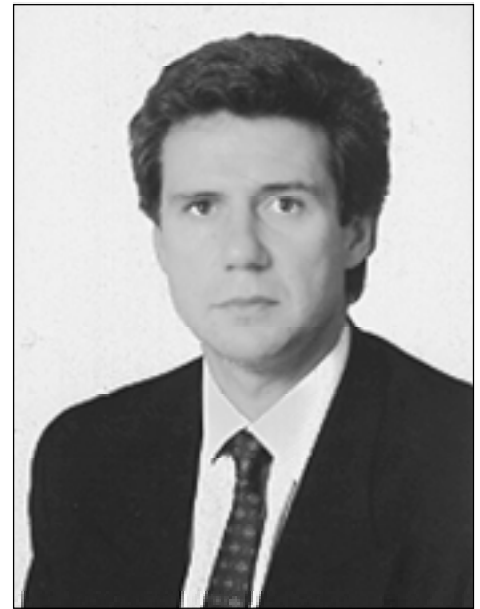
It is a practical and uncomplicated structure to unite all those who share the objectives of the Forum. These are first to promote good corporate citizenship and social responsibility, to prove the reputation of businesses as reliable partners in civic and NGO type developments on national and international level, to be the cross-over point of the dialogue between businesses and civic society and social partners, to promote the active involvement of businesses together with the Government and non-governmental sectors in different projects.

**Our philosophy for the future is the widest possible membership of corporate businesses, NGOs and individuals who are in support of the objective. This is not only aimed at getting the market economy fully on its way, but also at improving the social climate and completing the process of democratization in Bulgaria.**

**Page 1** Domaine Boyar AD, ATAMA AMBASSADOR Hotel - TBS Hotels, M3 Communications Group Inc., Common Good Projects Foundation, ALBENA AD, Hydro Bulgaria, Snelling, Junior Achievement - Bulgaria, Mr. Nikolai Bojinov (Gloria Place Diplomatic Club), Karin Dom Foundation - Varna (Ivan Stanchioff), British Airways, Museum Earth & Man and Xerox Bulgaria, Grand Hotel Varna, B&H Ltd., Federation Green Balkans Bulgaria, Interlin EOOD.

As a parallel result of the meetings with potential new members interest for co-participation in the on-going projects was generated and the following companies expressed their explicit willingness to help - AmCham, ELANA AD and Xerox Bulgaria (for the Vitosha Visitors Center), Kraft Jacobs Suchard Bulgaria AD (restoration of children playgrounds and even of whole recreation parks), Civil Society Development Foundation (Street Dogs), SmithKline Beecham (for Mothers Love) and KPMG (for Junior Achievement). Special interest in the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) by Ambassador Hotel Executive Director Mr. Radoslav Karaboikov, Albena AD and Gloria Palace.

As direct sponsorship by BBLF for the campaign of the Green Balkans Federation, aimed at preservation of the endangered bird species in Bulgaria, Christmas cards with images of these birds were purchased from the Federation and sent out as season's greetings. A meeting with His Majesty King Simeon II was organized for BBLF members and



**Evgeni Ivanov**  
**Executive Director**

supporters on 4 January 1999. The main aim of the event was to outline potential domains of interaction to assist Bulgaria in the difficult period of transition.

Guest of honour was H.E. Mr. Richard Stagg, Ambassador of the UK to Bulgaria.

**The short- and mid-term agenda at present includes:**

- endeavours to further increase membership
- expansion of interest in the on-going projects and mobilization of resources for respective co-financing and burden sharing. Regular get-togethers for members and supporters to discuss progress on project implementation;
- identification of new projects
- Preparation for the BBLF presentation in Varna (30-31 March 1999) and in Plovdiv (22 April 1999)

---

**PWBLF Partners and Associate Organisations**

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Bangladesh     | Mexico       |
| Brazil         | Pakistan     |
| Bulgaria       | Poland       |
| China          | Russia       |
| Colombia       | Saudi Arabia |
| Czech Republic | Singapore    |
| Egypt          | Slovakia     |
| Hungary        | South Africa |
| India          | Ukraine      |
| Indonesia      | Vietnam      |
| Latvia         | Zimbabwe     |

## Projects under way

### **Visitors' Centre in the National Park Vitosha Mountain**

Vitosha Mountain is a much visited place offering different kinds of opportunities to people - skiing, cliff hanging or just going up the mountain, places for having different kinds of events.

The intention is to turn a building in Dragalevtsi into an Information Centre with data on the flora and fauna of the mountain, number of visitors, weather, hotels, conditions of

roads, etc. The idea is to have programmes which work along the line of creating an environmental approach to life in children, young people, and to stimulate the mountain-related businesses

The Centre is well - based although in need of certain technological improvements and refurbishment.

### **Renovation and Reconstruction of Children Playgrounds in the Municipality of Ilinden, Sofia.**

The present state of the children's playgrounds can be described as neglected, dirty, without proper equipment. Sometimes they can be dangerous. Children do not play there because they are unpleasant. The wooden benches on which mothers and grandmothers can sit and rest till the child



*The meeting with His Majesty King Simeon II, January 4,*

plays are either broken or non-existent. Municipality Ilinden in Sofia is in contact with one of our founders on the matter of building new playgrounds. There is one ready, for which the municipality has paid the amount of GBP 2000, however future maintenance is not secured. The steps forward along this project are to allow a number of companies to use one company as a contractor and save money from economy of scale. The target price is to go below GBP 2000 per playground. There is a need for trees and plants that the municipality can receive from the state "green reserves", that could be used to do the park planning as well. There is a definite understanding and support on behalf of the municipal authorities - they are ready

to allow every company that restores or builds a playground to install its logo (win/win effect results).

### **Support to Foundation "Mother's Love"**

The foundation works in the sphere of pregnancy and maternity of women. The demographic decline in Bulgaria is a fact.

The high price paid in the period of transition to market economy, is paid by everyone, including pregnant women and young mothers. The foundation considers that the existing institutionalised approaches do not answer the social reality.

The foundation accumulates, processes and distributes information on

present and future mother, children and family problems, offers services to young mothers, provides humanitarian aid to pregnant women and newborn babies, helps and supports the medical treatment of young women, pregnant women and children.

### **Street Dogs Project**

Strong interest in alleviating the problem with street dogs in Sofia. Under way is the development of a project on turning a bus into a centre for surgery (neutering male dogs), adoption and advertising the ways of how street dogs should be treated. The possibility of working on a shelter for dogs in Philipovtsi is at hand. This will engage Roma people.

### **International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI) in Bulgaria**

Hotels are at the very heart of the travel and tourist business. They can be a showcase for the very best practice of socially responsible activities.

A number of BBLF members have already shown interest in becoming a part of the IHEI programme of the PWBLF. The idea of having an event in Sofia in mid October with lecturers from abroad (with the support of IHEI Director in London) and Bulgarian hoteliers introducing their own good practice is already on its way.

### **Junior Achievement**

Contributing knowledge, skills and time to the education of Junior Achievement students in market economy - the new generation of capable business leaders in Bulgaria.



*The Launching Event - Bulgarian members with Robert Davies, PWBLF, Executive Director; Susan Simpson, PWBLF, Regional Director and Lana Narancic*

## The Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum (BBLF)

*Recognising the link between social and economic development, 12 companies with operations in Bulgaria are forming the BBLF to mobilise the private sector as an engine for growth and partner for sustainable development. The BBLF will build on the experience of business coalitions elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe in order to:*

- *promote socially responsible business practices that benefit business and society;*
- *develop projects and programmes to show how business, government and civil society working together can successfully tackle a wide range of local issues;*
- *help leverage resources to bring partnership projects to scale and maximise impact;*
- *share ideas, information and experience of socially responsible business practice and partnership action at local and international levels to encourage replication;*
- *build leadership and management skills in this field.*

### Founding Members

AIG  
Honeywell Bulgaria  
ICL Bulgaria  
KPMG Bulgaria  
National Partnership Forum  
Oresa Ventures S.A.  
Oriflame Bulgaria  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Sheraton Sofia Hotel Balkan  
Smithkline Beecham  
Unimasters Logistics Ltd.  
Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations

## Why We Joined?

*PricewaterhouseCoopers is a member of the BBLF for two reasons. Firstly, we believe in ethical business, treating our suppliers, customers, employees and the community in which we live with fairness and honesty. We are convinced this is not only right, but is also good business to be a fair player. Secondly, we want to support and play our role in the advancement of the society in which we all live, recognising that helping and sharing in the final analysis is the only way to build a successful community and a strong democracy. Now that the BBLF has been in operation for some time we find all of our reasons for joining are being fulfilled and we feel encouraged by meeting and working with others who share these values.*

*Jim Gaston  
Managing Partner  
PricewaterhouseCoopers*

### HISTORY OF THE PRINCE OF WALES BUSINESS LEADERS FORUM IN BULGARIA

#### 1994

Invited by the Ministry of Environment, and with funding from the EC's PHARE programme, to examine the potential for cross-sector partnership action to address environmental issues

#### 1995-96

Partnership-building workshops in 12 towns - Local Partnership Network established, 49 partnership projects initiated. USAID's DemNet Programme funded further workshops between 1997-98

#### 1995

Bulgarian National Partnership Forum (NPF) established

#### 1997

Manager Shadowing Programme - final year university students exposed to modern management practices

#### 1995-98

Capacity-building and training programmes  
eg 'Learning from Experience' - a **regional leadership and partnership skills building programme:**  
Management Skills Placement Programme - **looking at good**

#### **environmental management practices in the UK;**

Japanese Executive Management Training Programme - **training and placement programme in Japan**

#### 1997-98

Involvement in roundtables, workshops and awareness-raising events to promote the value of public-private sector partnerships and the role of business in development

#### 1998

Inauguration of the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum (BBLF) by HRH The Prince of Wales, Sofia, 6 November 1998

### For contacts:

Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum  
c/o KPMG, 13 Slavyanska Str.  
1000 Sofia  
tel: 00 359 2 980 53 25  
Fax: 00 359 2 980 04 58

Evgeni Ivanov  
Executive Director

Ralitsa Gospodinova  
Assistant Director