



Athens, March 21st 2016

PRESS RELEASE

With major players from eleven countries and with more than 100 Greek exporting companies, from the food & Beverages and the Cosmetics industry, **Go In Athens** was successfully launched today. The event forms part of the business meeting programme organised by **Eurobank**, in the context of the Bank's **Go International** initiative, and will be concluded on Wednesday, March 23rd 2016.

Go In Athens is part of a series of large-scale actions focusing on strengthening the extroversion of the Greek economy. It is the continuation of **Go International**, the initiative launched in 2009 by Mr. **Nikos Karamouzis**, current Eurobank Chairman, which aimed at strengthening and supporting Greek exporting companies.

Go In Athens is held under the auspices of the **Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and is a joint effort between Eurobank Group and:

- the **Panhellenic Exporters Association (PEA)**,
- the **Greek International Business Association (SEVE)**, **Exporters' Association of Crete (EAC)**, **Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)** and **Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE)** partnership,
- the biggest bilateral chambers of commerce, namely the **British Hellenic Chamber of Commerce**, the **French Hellenic Chamber of Commerce**, the **German Hellenic Chamber of Commerce**, the **Italian Hellenic Chamber of Commerce**, the **Hellenic Canadian Board of Trade**, and the **Hellenic-Dutch Association of Commerce and Industry**.

This is the first business meeting taking place in Athens, giving the opportunity to over 100 Greek exporting companies to come in contact with 50 prominent international Buyers coming from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Canada, China, Great Britain, Holland and Sweden. This morning marked the start of more than 1,400 B2B meetings between Greek and foreign entrepreneurs. These prescheduled meetings are held in areas within the hotel specially designed for this purpose and will be completed on Wednesday, March 23rd.

In his welcoming address at the forum held for the event, **Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Dimitris Mardas** noted, "*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a wide network of diplomatic circles, including the liaison offices of economic and commercial affairs, mainly tasked with supporting and strengthening the exporting*

efforts of Greek businesses. Among other things, we aim at enhancing business extroversion, promoting Greece in international markets as a country producing and exporting quality products and services, as well as expanding Greek business activity into new markets. In 2016 we are planning a series of business delegations. Dates have already been set for Jordan, Tunisia, India, Sweden, Serbia and South Korea, and we are expecting details on Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Romania, Poland, Belarus, Iran and Southeast Asia.”

“As part of a national strategy for boosting competitiveness and restructuring the economy, it is necessary to create stronger Greek businesses that can compete in international goods and services markets from a better vantage point. This can be achieved through mergers encouraged by the banking system, which is the main creditor of sustainable but ailing companies,” said Mr. **Fokion Karavias, Eurobank CEO**. He further added, *“In this vein, Eurobank will provide consultation and financing to exporting companies that consider merging with or buying out companies in distress due to non-performing loans. The cornerstone of our planning is to provide constant support to the productive forces of Greek entrepreneurship. We do not believe in banking paternalism. The idea that the bank, or any other State or private central body, knows best – and businesses need to follow – belongs to the past. Our priority is you, our clients. All our initiatives, all our partnerships revolve around this core concept. Our aim is not to tell you what to do or what to avoid. On the contrary, we are ready to stand by you, providing consultation and financing, because we believe in the power, the creativity and the intelligence of sound Greek entrepreneurship. By giving priority to our clients and supporting their own initiatives, we believe we can contribute significantly and efficiently to restarting production activity in Greece.”*

“To exit the crisis, Greece needs a strong chain of extroversion running all the way from the primary sector, manufacturing, tourism, transport and the financial sector through to the official State. Go International at first and now Go In Athens are a shining example of a globally-oriented public, private and banking sector partnership,” stated Mrs. **Christina Sakelaridis, President of the Panhellenic Exporters Association**.

The forum commenced with a greeting by Mr. **Kostas Vasiliou**, Eurobank General Manager and Head of Group Corporate & Investment Banking, who focused on the high turnout. *“Given the current economic conjuncture in Greece, this response is extremely hopeful in terms of the prospects of the Greek economy, proving that, despite the crisis, there is room for substantial efforts to grow.”*

Eurobank Deputy General Manager and Chief Economist Mr. **Platon Monokroussos** presented an analysis of the Greek economy entitled “Macroeconomic prospects, exporting performance and what is necessary to strengthen investment and the extroversion of the Greek economy”.

A discussion followed, with the participation of Mr. **Alkiviadis Kalabokis**, President of the Exporters’ Association of Crete, and Mr. **Kyriakos Loufakis**, President of the Greek International Business Association. The Buyers were represented in the discussion panel by Mr. **Evagoras Mavromatis**, founder and CEO of La Table de la Méditerranée, one of the biggest catering companies in France.

Special attention was drawn to the presence and statements made by Deputy Vice-Chairwoman of Guangzu Group Mrs. Wei Liu, who represented one of the major business groups in China at Go In Athens. She announced that in June, Guangzu would be hosting a Greek product week in Beijing.

Go In Athens is being broadcast via live streaming by www.Exportgate.gr Eurobank's successful portal that promotes business networking on a global scale. For further information, please visit www.go-inathens.gr.

