

France – Balkans Business Council

COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Christophe PETIT

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International

PARTNERS

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COUNCIL ACTIONS FOR COMPANIES

The France-Balkans Business Council of MEDEF International was created in 1989, as the region began its political and economic transition. The nine countries (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, North-Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia) stand for a market of more than 27 million inhabitants, easily accessible from France and increasingly integrated into the European Economic Area (through accession to the European Union or the signing of Association Agreements). The gradual adoption of European standards and the significant commitment of the international financial institutions (EBRD, EIB, World Bank) and the French Development Agency (AFD) are strengthening business prospects for the private sector.

The Council collectively supports and accompanies major groups, mid-sized companies and SMEs in their approach to the Balkans markets, the development of their activities, local partnerships and project management in these nine countries.

In order to answer the important needs in the region, the Council closely associates to its activities the MEDEF International task forces dedicated to Sustainable cities, Digital technology, Renewable energies and Agri-food business.

As part of its action, the Council has led more than 20 business delegations to the various countries of the region and on several occasions accompanied the official delegations of French Head of State or Government, becoming a privileged and recognized framework for direct and high-level contacts between French companies and public and private decision-makers in the States of former Yugoslavia.

The meetings and business delegations of the Council aim at:

1. allowing French companies to liaise regularly with:

- Head of States and Governments, ministers, administrative officials and public economic stakeholders with cross-cutting and sectoral competences,
- local business communities and private sector,
- and bilateral or multilateral financial institutions operating in the countries of the region;

2. providing companies with keys to understanding and in decision making for their activities and regional strategy, mainly related to:

- business opportunities in each sector of the economy,
- business environment, the operating and investment conditions in the country, the access to public procurement,
- available sources of funding, whether domestic, multilateral or European (pre-accession funds, structural funds),
- local partnerships and location of production,
- the structuring of industries and business sectors,
- and more broadly keys to understanding the risks and opportunities related to internal and regional evolutions;

3. increasing experience sharing between French companies of all sizes, operating in the region, and promoting interactions with new potential partners in these markets.

Reports of the meetings and delegations of the council are available to MEDEF International members upon request.