TIRANA, 24 - 26 April 2014

With the commitment of the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism in Albania

ALBEXPO – GROUP

organize:

Western Balkans Tourism Fair 2014

Co-operators:

Balkan Tourism Associations,

Handicraft Associations,

Hotel Associations and Culinary Arts Associations of exhibiting countries

INTRODUCTION

In the context of developing a sustainable tourism in the Western Balkans and supporting the regional cooperation and integration in the tourism industry, Albexpo Group propose to organize for the second time regional Western Balkans Tourism Fair We.B.T.F., in Albania. The aim is to organize the most important regional tourism event of the year in order to encourage cooperation and promote Western Balkans as a unique tourism destination through trade shows, conferences and B2B. Participants from Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia will exhibit their tourism in five divisions Hotels, Tour Operators, Handicrafts, Wine Tourism and Culinary Arts. The benefits of this event will generate high impact on the economy of the Western Balkans countries.

ALBANIA

CNN news agency has listed Albania as one of the top destinations to be visited, positioning in sixth place on the list.

The famous touristic site Lonly Planet, placed it on top of the list

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

In a time when the global tourism has written a history of decades, many tourists are curiously drawn towards a new destination; Western Balkans. Leaving behind the conflicts, this region is ready to offer the possibility of discovering one of the most ancient populations in the world. Through a magical combination of the almost untouched nature with the culture, history and peoples' tradition, Western Balkans has the potential to become one of the most interesting touristic destinations.

Western Balkans countries that are also emerging markets include Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia. Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the economy of these countries and developing strategies are continuously high priority of the respective governments. The development of tourism shows high positive impact on the labor market and on

the living standards. The economic growth remains one of the common aims of the region for walking towards the European Union.

The rich landscape of the Western Balkans offers a vast variety of tourism possibilities that have to be explored. A lot of improvement initiatives undertaken from the countries are focused on the infrastructure, legislation and cooperation with international institutions. USAID and the Regional Competitiveness Initiative (RCI) Project have supported the regional tourism cooperation since 2006. Some of the activities of this project include the regional wine tour, regional meetings and workshops, publication of the Western Balkans Supplement, development of the regional website as part of the National Geographic Geotourism website. Another important initiative regarding the development of sustainable tourism and cooperation in the region is the introduction of the Authentic Quality Mark system.

KOSOVO

International studies show that, in Nemuna Highlands can build 10 centers for the development of winter sports tourism

JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROJECT

The development of the tourism industry in the Western Balkans countries bears promising premises for the upcoming years; therefore each country is working on its growth and promotion in order to achieve international standards. While the single countries of the region work on the self promotion, many tourists are interested in visiting more countries of the region on the same tour, due to the geographic convenience and the vast diversity these destinations offer. Arises a need in this case for close collaboration in the context of concrete between the Western Balkan Citys to promote tourism as a unit . Conversations to develop common policies and regulatory chain offering tourist packages are necessary , which will be very helpful to all countries . Promotion of Tourism in the Western Balkans, as an integrated tourist destination , is not only to approach local tourists but also international .

MACEDONIA

The first hotel of high class called "Kumanovo" built in 1930 by Popovich family and designed by Russian architect V. Antonov. Inside was a barber on hotel expenses.

Cooperation within the destinations , has started with the initiative of USAID and the governments of the Western Balkan countries , organizing important summits that appropriate strategies to manage the application of high standards in tourism . Besides cooperation at the destinations , tourism in the Western Balkans need cooperation at the level of companies which operate directly in this field (tourist agencies , hotels , gastronomy , artisans , etc.) . The cooperation of these would bring the unification of standards , which change country to country , and his promotion will attract all interested in the sector . Successful communication through an adequate network enables the development of cooperation in the region rapidly .

SERBIA

Most of the territory is dominated by the mountains of four different mountain ranges, Rhodope, Carpathian, Balkan and Dinaric

The idea of realizing for the second time "Tourism in the Western Balkans Fair", proposed to close regional cooperation and its promotion as an integrated tourist units, creating the biggest attraction to tourists. The organizing society has several years experience in the organization fairs of this kind, being the organizer of the most important trade fair for tourism in Albania initiated by Albexpo Group and supported by the Association of the Invesitoreve Foreigners in Albania. Given the success of the first edition of this event in 2012, Albexpo Group with the support of the Balkan Association of Tourism and Hotelier again continues to aim the promotion of this important sector for all countries of the Western Balkans.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The main scope of the Western Balkans Tourism Fair (*We*.B.T.F.) is to continuously support regional cooperation and integration of the tourism industry and to promote Western Balkans as a unique tourism destination.

The main objectives of Western Balkans Tourism Fair (*We*.B.T.F.):

- Increasing the Regional Cooperation between Western Balkans countries

- Exchanging of experiences and possibilities with regards to the development of the various tourism sectors
- Drawing of integrated policies for the development of tourism in accordance with international standards
- Establishing of right connections for initiating regional mutual investments and foreign investments
- Drawing of integrated tour packages
- Cooperation for securing and promoting the tourist safety

MONTENEGRO

Tourism Income, from 2001 to 2012 annotate an increase of 46%. Result of local long-term strategy for sustainable tourism development.

- ❖ Promoting globally the Sustainable Cooperation of the tourism industry of the Western Balkans countries
- ❖ Developing of the communication network between the Western Balkans countries

EXHIBITORS AND VISITORS

We.B.T.F. is planned to be focused on the most important players of the tourism industry from the Western Balkans:

- ❖ ***Albania***
- ❖ ***Montenegro***
- ❖ ***Kosovo***
- ❖ ***Macedonia***
- ❖ ***Serbia***
- ❖ ***Bosnia Herzegovina***

And Other Neighbor Countries such as Croatia, Slovenia, Greece, Italy, Turkey etc.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

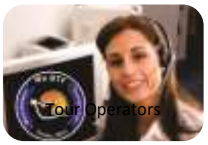
Medugorje is visited by about 15 million pilgrims since 1981. Six teenagers in this year, probe the appearance of the Virgin Mary, prompting the country to be recognized by all the world's Catholics.

We.B.T.F. will be organized into six divisions:

- ❖ Cultural & Environmental tourism
- ❖ Hotels
- ❖ Tour Operators
- ❖ Handicrafts
- ❖ Culinary Arts
- ❖ Wine tourism








Handicrafts

Culinary Arts

Wine tourism

The exhibitors are planned to be invited through the associations and supported tourism projects from the respective countries.

Visitors will be regional and international tourists and investors.

BENEFITS

- Getting of the latest trade information about the Western Balkans tourism industry
- Informing on the latest policies concerning tourism
- Establishing contacts with visitors, companies and organizations
- Exchanging of know-how and experiences form the tourism industry
- Informing on the latest developments in the global tourism
- Understanding of cooperation potentials
- Understanding of investing potentials
- Promoting of the Woman Labor through handicraft stands
- Promoting small and medium size businesses
- Helping the development of the Western Balkans economy

TOURISM FORUM

We.B.T.F. will also host a Tourism Forum that will emphasize topics related to development of sustainable tourism in Western Balkans. The fair organizer will select topics for the forum with co-organizers and partners.

Potential highlighted themes:

- Development of Western Balkans Sustainable Integrated Tourism
- Travel packages
- Gastronomy
- Folk Craft/ Women labor
- Wine
- Adjectival Tourism