

Interview with Peter Bosse



Peter Bosse at a presentation about tourism in Macedonia at the Chamber of Commerce in Maastricht, The Netherlands.



Peter Bosse presents the Macedonian wines to the president of the Chamber of Commerce in Maastricht.

Peter Bosse is founding member of the association Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Macedonia. Since the establishment in November 2003, Peter Bosse is president of the association known as DCC.

What are the most important activities in your career in Macedonia?

"I came to Macedonia when the country was still a republic within Yugoslavia in 1987. I was working in import of flowers, but I was also active in the tourism industry. Some time later I became one of the best known singers and had 7 number-one hits since than."

"At present I am working for the Dutch media and have a contract with the Dutch broadcasting corporation VPRO, for which I regularly comment on Macedonian news for radio and television programmes. Additionally, I did lots of work for the EBU, CNN and other international media. Most journalists know me as a war correspondent but this is nowadays irrelevant as Macedonia became a stable country respecting international laws and agreements."

Why did you take the initiative to start a Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Macedonia?

"In 1992 I started a Dutch company under the name MacHol. This company was specialized in joint cargo between The Netherlands and the Republic of Macedonia. From that period the idea of a Dutch Chamber of Commerce was born. My idea was based on the need that I experienced to create a better image of the Macedonian business environment in the Netherlands."

How did the Dutch Chamber of Commerce develop in the two years of its existence?

"In the beginning it was very difficult to get the organization running, since there was not any start-up capital. But with the support of many of people such as former ambassador Wolfs of the Netherlands Embassy and the head of Consular Affairs Mr. Jerry Chundro the start was made."

"Now when **Mr Bob Smit** and **Mr Ljupco Todorovski** joined, the project had a foundation to become reality. Both of them have different skills in international and local business management which has been proven as we grew and realized several projects. Still, everything was realized with a minimum of funds. With special support from **Mr Svetozar Janevski**, without whom we would not even be here, we got important members and even an advisory board. The advisory board is advising us how to target our activities."

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In December 2004, the Dutch Chamber of Commerce organized an informal meeting of all members in Aleksandar Palace to celebrate the first year of existence. The Deputy Head of Mission of the Royal Netherlands Embassy addressed the members and Mr Simon Naumovski spoke on behalf of the Advisory Board. Mr Todor Mirovski represented the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in The Hague at this meeting.

The event was covered by the news bulletin of Macedonian public television, Kanal 5, Sitel television and also by the newspapers Dnevnik and Utrinski Vesnik.

What do you want DCC to be in three years from now?

"Many things will happen, but nothing we cannot oversee! This means we need to listen to the demands of our members, to persuade them to be more active as we need to know their demands for this fast growing market. Since the Netherlands is an important economic partner for Macedonia, lots of fields should still to be researched and matchmaking will be one of our prime targets.

Investment will be so much easier as the law is changing from January 2006 in a fast and easy registration of foreign companies willing to invest in Macedonia. We also are building up our data bank to serve our members and for them to be able to search in our server 24/7/365!

But we need to expand with more dynamic people at our office as we have currently only one full time staff member, Bob Smit. Also we need to have a general assembly and to elect new executive board members to help us with the fast growing demands."

What are the best opportunities for Dutch companies in Macedonia?

"There is a very long tradition between Macedonia and Holland. This is still a very good base in further developments. Agriculture, food industry, textile, IT business, tourism but also development in healthcare, recycling and education could be for Dutch companies and organizations a very interesting investment.

For Dutch companies giving out licenses in branding will be very wise as Macedonia has an excellent infra structure and a central eastern location. Duty free exporting to lots of former Yugoslav and Russian countries is a strong point to be looked at!"

What is the competitive value of Macedonia, compared to other countries with cheap labor force?

"Macedonia has high skills potential employees and the labor is still very cheap! An excellent support from the government of Macedonia will hand out lots of extra's to the new Dutch company in Macedonia. Many universities that are very well connected with the international know how. Macedonia gives extra help in tax reducing cost for companies willing to employ Macedonian staff."