



## Improving European Dialogue for Business

### Job Shadowing Event, Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry

### REPORT ON THE JOB SHADOWING (4.1)

The report must be sent to the Project Office within one week after the exchange. Please use the template below to write your report. Please write in English.

|   |
|---|
| Name of the Participant: Mert Yüksek – Hüseyin Güreñ        |
| Position in the Çerkezköy CCI: Project Specialist           |
| Hosting Institution: Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry |
| Date of the Exchange: 17.11.2019 – 23.11.2019               |

## REPORT

1. PROGRAMME OF THE JOB SHADOWING
2. THE HOSTING INSTITUTION
3. THE EUROPEAN ASPECT
4. THE BENEFITS OF THE JOB SHADOWING
5. SUGGESTIONS





## Improving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 17 November 2019 – Drama CCI

Lamprianidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### Programme

|       |                                    |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 21.00 | Departure from Çerkezköy to Drama. |
|-------|------------------------------------|



## Improving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 18 November 2018 – Drama CCI

Lamprianidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### Programme

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 08.00 | Arrival to Drama.  |
| 09.00 | Hotel Check in.  |
| 10.00 | <b>Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry</b><br>Monitoring of general chamber structure |
| 15.00 | <b>Overtime</b>  |





## Improving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 19 November 2018 – Drama CCI

Lamprianidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### Programme

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 07.30 – 15.00 | Monitoring the functioning of the Chamber Registry Department. |
|---------------|--|



## Improving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 20 November 2018 – Drama CCI

Lamprianidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### Programme

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 07.30 – 15.00 | Monitoring the functioning of the Chamber Registry Department. |
|---------------|--|





## Improving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 21 November 2018 – Drama CCI

Lamprianidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### Programme

|               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 07.30 – 15.00 | Monitoring of project department. |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|



## Improving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 22 November 2018 – Drama CCI

Lamprianidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### Programme

|               |                                      |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 07.30 – 15.00 | Monitoring of accounting department. |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|





## **İmproving European Dialogue for Business, Job Shadowing Activity 22 November 2018 – Drama CCI**

Lampranidou Lambrou 40, Drama 661 00, Yunanistan

### **Programme**

|       |                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 18.00 | Hotel Check Out                   |
| 22.00 | Departure from Drama to Çerkezköy |





## 2.THE HOSTING INSTITUTION

### History

When the Chamber was established some fifty years ago it was an organization respected in the business community but without the resources to meet many of that community's needs. Nowadays the Chamber is as highly respected as ever, but now has at its disposal a whole host of support tools, means of assistance, support actions, advisory services, expert knowledge, training schemes, etc – all available to help the local businessman. The Chamber is also now engaged in supporting local economic growth, promoting the business strengths of Drama companies and showcasing the many excellent products on global markets, in the face of international competition. In brief, it now operates as a development enterprise, a business consultancy and a source of knowledge and information for local businessmen.

### Legal Status – Structure and Operation of the Chamber

The Drama Chamber of Commerce & Industry is one of 58 Chambers across Greece, responsible for the Prefecture of Drama.

Together with the country's other Chambers it forms part of the Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UHCCI), an organization acting as a national mouthpiece for Greek chambers – and, by extension, for the Greek business community.

The Chamber is a public-law legal entity. Any concern engaged in business activities in the Prefecture of Drama is legally obliged, under Law 2081/1992, to register with the Chamber and pay a subscription proportionate to its taxable income.

The Chamber has four sections: the Industrial Section, with 44 members; the Light Manufacturing and Crafts Section, with 1636 members; the Services Section, with 1998 members, and the Trade Section, with 1640 members.

The Chamber is administered by a Board, consisting of 21 directors and elected every four years. Votes are cast in each section of the Chamber and the successful candidates selected by the simple proportional system. Once elected the Board appoints a five-member Administrative Committee, consisting of the Chairman, the 1st and 2nd Deputy Chairman, the Financial Overseer and the General Secretary.





The Board is responsible for formulating the overall framework for policy and activities of the Chamber and for approving the management finances. The Chairman and Administrative Committee draw up the programme and oversee the everyday workings of the Chamber.

The income relied on by the Chamber to finance its activities comes from the obligatory subscriptions of the members, from EU programmes and from national funding. The Chamber is a public-law legal person, subject to the general rules for management of public finances under the financial control of the state.

All Greece's Chambers are ultimately accountable to the Ministry of Development.

The more general responsibilities and powers of the Chamber are as follows:

- Protection and development of commerce, industry, crafts and professions in the region, in the context of the interests of the national economy
- Provision of expert opinions on issues affecting the economic interest of the Drama region, seeking the economic growth of the prefecture and its business community
- Provision of information to members on matters of economic interest, and the development of entrepreneurship
- 

More specifically, the Drama Chamber of Commerce

**IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED**, through its representatives, in the work of 60 local committees engaged in the economic and cultural life of the Prefecture of Drama

**PROVIDES** information on the economic development of businesses, and on import/export procedures

**KEEPS** a special register for exporters, insurers, silversmiths and goldsmiths

**PREPARES** expert opinions

**KEEPS** full records of the trading names of all its members

**MAINTAINS** an archive of all copies of the Government Gazette dating from 1976

**ORGANIZES** lectures, conferences, meetings and special training seminars for business executives in the Prefecture

**PUBLISHES** a four-monthly newsletter, distributed free to members





**ISSUES** the necessary certification to vehicle repair shops wishing to apply for an operating license from the Ministry of Transport

**INSPECTS AND CERTIFIES** the articles of association of companies to permit legal use of their company name and trading name

**ISSUES** to its members the certification required by the local tax offices

**CONFERS AWARDS** on businessmen and individuals who, through their work, have supported local development and helped raise the profile of the Prefecture

**PROVIDES** information on international trade fairs to be held in Greece and elsewhere

**PROVIDES** information on demand for Greek products by foreign companies, and on foreign companies wishing to market their products in Greece

**ORGANIZES** delegations of businessmen to international fairs and conferences

**PARTICIPATES** in organized delegations of businessmen attending general and sector fairs held here and abroad

**ISSUES EXPERT OPINIONS** and submits studies and memoranda on all aspects of commerce and manufacturing

**MAINTAINS** a business information site which provides free promotion for all the Prefecture's businesses through the internet and global search engines

**OFFERS** interested businesses the opportunity to add their own pages to the Chamber website, or to expand their own websites into a well-organized collective portal.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CHAMBER**

The Chamber is a driving force for development in the Prefecture of Drama, playing a vital and active part over recent years in development and support programmes for its member businesses. The Chamber is now much more than an office where businesses register or request documentation to meet their tax obligations, It is a now an agency offering advisory services, supporting development, providing consultancy for businesses wishing to grow their business activities. The Drama Chamber is gradually evolving into a real support centre for private initiative – like a hypermarket bringing together an abundance of information and advice on all sorts of issues and problems faced by the businessman. It is an organization created by industry and commerce, funded by industry and commerce – and working to support industry and commerce.







The Chamber is administered by elected representatives of all the businesses – large and small – in the Prefecture of Drama. The Board is made up in such a way as to reflect the balance of trade, industry, crafts and professional activity in the region. The Administrative Committee appointed by the general meeting of elected representatives deals with all the day-to-day matters involved in the smooth running of the Chamber.

The main operating objectives of the Chamber are as follows:

- Promotion and support for business activities in the Prefecture, with provision of advisory services
- Support for business activities through provision of information and specialist back-up
- Implementation and application of rules and regulations to ensure the smooth functioning of the market, the rules of commerce and business activity.
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The Chamber's role is to support trading, manufacturing and business; it also seeks to influence government policy decisions on economic activity and the world of business. This influence is most frequently directed towards the local or regional authorities, although it is not unusual for the Chamber to make representations to central government. In recent years the Drama Chamber has been recognized by the European Commission for its work in promoting competitiveness, and it has often been invited to send representatives to Brussels to sit on development planning and programming committees. It also undertakes a whole range of initiatives to promote trading, manufacturing and professional activity in the region.

#### Advisory services

One of the key tasks of the Chamber is the provision of advice and consultancy – either on its own initiative or when requested by interested parties – and the making of representations to the authorities. In this way the Chamber seeks to bridge the gaps between the administrative authorities and the interests of the region's industry, crafts, professional activities and trade. Sometimes the Chamber's intervention is straightforward and involves local issues such as participation in expert committees. Other problems may be more complex and difficult to resolve, such as requests to central government for special development measures for the local economy and to support local businesses.





## Guidance

Another of the Chamber's roles – of particular importance for SMEs – is the guidance it offers in various support programmes. The Chamber has extensive knowledge of issues involving the private sector and the mechanisms involved in its development. It offers a wealth of knowledge for its members, in such matters as subsidies, grants and development legislation, EU regulations, potential export markets and suppliers of raw materials. It also provides information on the legal status of businesses and the regulations followed in business procedures in various different states, as well as international commercial conditions and procedures. An ever-growing number of businessmen are now exploring the Chamber's databases or regularly attending the various informational events it organizes.

## Support Services for Members

A third – and equally important – function of the Chamber is to promote the smooth functioning of the markets. Through various measures, advice, the issuing of licenses, certification, etc. the Chamber ensures that the market functions smoothly. In recent years the computerization of the Chamber's activities has made it much easier for its experienced staff to provide rapid and direct services to local businessmen.

This service is the primary objective of the administration of the Chamber. Great importance is attached to making the Chamber responsive to the needs of every single member. It coordinates the work of its permanent staff and managers so that any request from a businessman will be met with a response and any call for help will be answered with the appropriate support.

It is a key objective of the Chamber's administration to ensure that as much assistance as possible is available to local businesses wishing to benefit from funded business support programmes. Many companies in the Prefecture are entitled to seek – and should seek – inclusion in the programmes being implemented under the 3rd CSF.

## Specialist Services

Coordinated efforts in this area are broken down into many sectors, specifically:

1. The provision of information on request
2. The organization of events
3. Participation in national and European programmes
4. The provision of special services for programmes of financial support for SMEs
5. The conducting of research and studies, the development of informational material
6. The participation of Chamber representatives in various committees
7. Activities in the '28 Chambers' network
8. The organization of seminars





The Chamber receives huge numbers of requests for rapid provision of well-grounded information, mainly in the following areas:

a) Funding opportunities through:

- 3rd CSF
- Operational Programme 'Competitiveness'
- Support for Entrepreneurship among Women
- Support for Entrepreneurship among Young People
- Tourism and tourist accommodation
- Programme for Greek Cuisine
- 'GoOnline' Programme
- Leader
- E-business Programme ('e-peixeirite')
- Energy
- Interreg III
- Phare

b) Business collaborations in south-eastern Europe (mainly with Bulgaria)

c) Preparation for business changeover to Euro

d) Community Programmes and European Commission issues

e) EU operational policy and internal market issues

A variety of clients seek the support of the Chamber, including:

- Existing businesses
- New businesses
- Private agencies
- Public agencies
- Students

The services offered by the Chamber are continually expanding to meet the ever-growing requirements of society and business. Globalization of trade and internationalization of markets are of significant interest to the Chamber and the business community of Drama. The Chamber seeks to assist businesses to branch out beyond the narrow boundaries of the Prefecture and expand their commercial and export activities into the markets of the Balkans and the broader region of eastern and central Europe, the European Union and beyond.





## **THE DRAMA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY – A BUSINESS ADVISOR**

The Chamber appreciates that its future as an organization depends on the provision of advisory services and specialist support programmes to local businesses. Gradually – through the coordination of a variety of actions, through securing specialist personnel, adopting development programmes and implementing national and European programmes – the Chamber is evolving into a contemporary service and information agency, the kind of organization required to meet the challenging and competitive conditions of the modern world, following the same path as other chambers in other EU member countries.

### **Commerce – Electronic Commerce Centre**

The Chamber provides robust support for the Drama business community. It works closely with the representatives of that community, providing them with offices in the Chamber building, supporting and assisting commercial activities and forwarding their demands to national and international agencies.

As part of the EU programme for development of e-commerce, the Chamber has set up an E-Commerce Centre in Drama. It provides a network linking various members, who may be other businesses, associates, collective agencies, state enterprises, consumers and clients. Businesses linked to the network can choose from among various options offered by the Centre depending on their needs and activities, while at the same time – through the community role of the Chamber – they can obtain reliable information at very low cost.

### **Industry-Manufacturing**

This is the most important sector in the economic life of the Prefecture to receive direct support from the Chamber. Drama has a number of large and well-known companies with an international presence and dynamism, as well as many smaller but equally dynamic businesses. The Chamber demonstrates the same level of interest and support for both categories.

Some of the main issues of concern to the prefecture's industries are securing new investment, introducing contemporary technology and ensuring free and untrammelled competition.

The Chamber seeks to upgrade infrastructures and the industrial zone, to create light manufacturing zones and parks, to provide services and information for businessmen on contemporary business methods and plans, to monitor trade fairs and promote products, to solve problems that may arise with national or European agencies, to support the inclusion of local businesses in new investment schemes and, finally, to have the region itself included, on favourable terms, in economic development programmes.





The Chamber is closely involved in the work of the Drama Development Enterprise S.A., whose remit is to promote the development of the prefecture.

In its endeavour to find a solution to the high cost of meeting business needs for new investment, the Chamber has played an active part in efforts to create the Drama Cooperative Bank.

### **Studies**

Other support actions by the Chamber include the commissioning of various studies and research projects to assist industry, manufacturing and entrepreneurship in the prefecture, such as the study for a Drama Exhibition and Conference Centre, and those for the Drama Light Manufacturing Park, the Drama Freight Centre, etc.

### **Tourism Businesses and Feasibility Study for the Creation of Synergies in the form of Clusters**

The Chamber has taken the initiative of compiling a feasibility and viability study for the creation of a network of synergies in the form of Clusters for businesses in the tourism sector in Drama. Businesses engaged in accommodation, catering, the food supply chain, the production of tourist goods, the cleaning industry, tourist agencies, guides, tracers and so on can sign up to an economic synergy scheme to create improved cooperation and more effective service provision.

The creation of this kind of service provision network would ensure:

- ◆ Provision of satisfactory, high-specification services to visitors;
- ◆ Effective operation of the businesses involved;
- ◆ Increased competitiveness; and
- ◆ The creation of scale economies.

For effective completion of this project the Chamber is collaborating with businesses in the tourism sector and with the Agency of Local Development of Drama (ANED SA), while it has also enlisted the services of qualified consultants.





## **Export trade**

Developing the exports of local businesses is a serious priority, to which the Chamber attaches much importance. Exports are, of course, a matter for individual businesses themselves, but where the Chamber can help is in promoting the Prefecture, inviting foreign delegations to introduce them to local products and businessmen, and organizing trade missions to other countries to promote and showcase our products. A sustained effort has been made recently to develop good contacts with sister agencies, like the Trieste Chamber, other EU chambers and agencies in central and eastern Europe. The Chamber is also making maximum use of trans-border cooperation programmes to promote the region.

## **Labour market – Vocational Training and Specialization**

This is an issue of great sensitivity in the Prefecture of Drama, given the downsizing of the labour market in recent years through the movement to Bulgaria of many labour-intensive businesses in the garment industry. The Chamber works closely with local businesses to create new jobs, especially in more highly skilled areas using contemporary technology, to strengthen the local labour market.

An issue directly linked to the labour market problem is the need for vocational training and a more highly specialized workforce. The Chamber has certified classrooms for the organization and operation of training programmes; it also works closely with businesses to ascertain their needs in terms of skilled staff. It also cooperates with the Vocational Training Centres to offer the specialist training required to meet the needs of local businesses.

## **Conference Centre**

The Chamber Conference Centre is located on the third floor of the building. It was created with co-funding from the Community Initiative INTERREG II. It is a state-of-the-art conference centre with CCTV, interpretation services, presentation facilities, etc. It is widely used by the community and has become the Prefecture's main venue for meetings and the organization of events.

When the proposal under the CI INTERREG IIA is implemented there will be funds for the renovation of the Conference Centre and the upgrading of its technical equipment.





## **SME Support Agency – DESMOS S.A.**

DESMOS S.A. was established some years ago in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace to function as an intermediate agency supporting the investment plans of the Region's businesses. It runs a branch office within the Drama Chamber to provide a closer service for local businesses.

### **'Growing together with Europe'**

This is a specialized programme which helps SMEs in the region to minimize the dangers inherent in the process of European enlargement and, at the same time, to capitalize on the opportunities and benefits offered by an enlarged market. The main purpose is to make the region's SMEs more competitive.

This is a pilot programme, approved by the European Commission, involving a network of 28 chambers along the external borders of the EU, with countries awaiting accession. Thus the network includes chambers from Germany, Austria, Italy and Greece. The Drama Chamber is the only Greek chamber in the network, known as ARGE28.

The general purpose of the pilot programme **Support for SMEs in the Border Areas** is to strengthen the international competitiveness of SMEs in these areas and in the sectors of the economy most affected by the socio-economic impact of the EU enlargement and the accession of candidate countries from eastern and central Europe.

More specifically, the following targets have been set for the programme:

- 1) Briefing SMEs on the parameters of the enlargement process of special significance to their own competitive positions, and providing them with opportunities **to recognize the opportunities, challenges and risks** created by the changing socio-economic environment.
- 2) Supporting SMEs in **adapting to the changing environment**, helping them elaborate and implement new business strategies and activities, including taking measures to improve management and staff training methods.







3) Supporting trans-border cooperation between SMEs and/or small groups of SMEs on the one hand and SME support agencies on the other; in the medium and longer term **maximizing the reciprocal benefits of enlargement.**

### **NESTOS – MESTA EUROREGION: ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS (AEBR)**

The Nestos-Mesta EuroRegion is an initiative by the Drama Chamber originally designed to support business activities with neighbour Bulgaria. It has now developed into an organized form of trans-border cooperation – a ground-breaking scheme for this region. It embraces the Region of Eastern Macedonia – Thrace in Greece and the Region of Blagoevgrad in the south-eastern corner of Bulgaria. As its name suggests, this is a natural geographical area centred on a river, the River ‘Mesta’, which flows down from the Rila mountain range in Bulgaria and then out into the Aegean Sea under its Greek name: ‘Nestos’.

In its Bulgarian section the EuroRegion is bounded by a wide and fertile valley, the Mesta valley, which is surrounded by the lofty Pirin, Rila and Rhodope mountain ranges. The region includes **8** municipal areas – those of Bansko, Belitsa, Garmen, Gotse Delchev, Razlog, Satovcha, Hadzhidimovo and Yakorouda. The total population of the EuroRegion numbers some **130,000** – most of them engaged in industry, agriculture, forestry and tourism.

In its Greek section the EuroRegion covers more or less the same ground as the Prefecture of Drama. The population is more or less the same as that of the Bulgarian area. The surface area is roughly the same, and the geographical characteristics are not strikingly different, with the tall mountain ranges of Falakro, Menikio, Lekani and Pangaion surrounding a broad and fertile plain – the plain of Philippi. Among the main occupations of the people of the Prefecture of Drama are agriculture, industry, marble quarrying, the processing and trading of timber, services and tourism.

The Chamber currently holds the executive secretariat of the EuroRegion, and maintains its head offices.

Through this activity the Chamber has been included in the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), a Pan-European network of border regions designed to promote and develop such regions and support them within EU structures. The Chairman of the Chamber is in fact an elected Vice President of the organization, and one of its senior officers is an elected member of the network’s Executive Committee. In these capacities Chamber representatives have direct access to decision-taking bodies on trans-border cooperation issues within the EU institutions.







It should be noted that at the invitation of the Chamber the General Meeting and Annual Conference of AEBR for the years 2000 and 2005 were held in Drama, offering the Prefecture an excellent opportunity to promote itself on the pan-European level.

As already mentioned, the Chairman of the Drama Chamber has been elected Vice President of AEBR while another senior officers is an elected member of its Executive Committee. This represents a major international success and a recognition of the substantial and methodical work done by officers of the Chamber in aspects of trans-border cooperation. This is a level of recognition without parallel in Greece, certainly without parallel for our Region.

### **Association of Young Businessmen and Scientists of Drama**

The Chamber recently supported the creation of a new institution in the Prefecture of Drama, the Association of Young Businessmen and Scientists. It is expected that this new agency, which has evolved into a non-government, non-profit-making agency seeking development and support for new business activities, will play an energetic role in the growth of the Prefecture. The Association already has 40 registered members, and the events it has organized have been attended by more than 100 people. This new organization – remarkable for its dynamic attitude, appetite for hard work, reliability and high-level services – was established with the encouragement of the Chamber and is housed in the same building.

### **Drama Cooperative Bank**

The cooperative bank is an initiative launched by the Chamber in order to create a financial credit agency which could support the local economy. The Chamber has offered substantial support to this new activity, providing the bank with office space within its own premises. The intention of the Chamber was to offer a solution to the major problem faced by companies seeking finance for their investment plans, since the cost of borrowing from commercial banks is too often prohibitive.

The Drama Cooperative Bank is now up and running and offering the whole range of credit services to the businesses of the Prefecture and its members. The bank plays a key role in the development of the region, offering specially designed banking products and meeting needs that cannot be met by the other commercial banks.





## **Advisory Services to the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe**

Having secured a substantial international presence, the Chamber is now in a position to act as advisor to both the European Commission and Parliament in matters of trans-border cooperation, regional development, SME support, etc. Officers of the Chamber, headed by its Chairman, are often invited to sit on special advisory committees and share their experience and views on issues involved in European integration.

Here are some of the committees in which Drama CCI officers have participated:

- European Convention
- Committee for 3<sup>rd</sup> report on cohesion
- European Parliament committee on support for SMEs in border regions of the EU
- INTERREG II evaluation committee
- Committee to develop a system of devolved management for trans-border programmes after 2006
- Council of Europe committee on development of trans-border cooperation

## **Advisory Services to trans-border cooperation agencies in Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace**

Because of the wealth of experience the Chamber has acquired in its many years of involvement in aspects of trans-border cooperation, they have often responded to requests by other agencies in the Region – and beyond – to help them develop similar activities.

For example, officers from the Chamber have provided their expertise in the creation of the following trans-border cooperation agencies:

- EuroRegion Evros-Maritsa-Merits
- Trans-Border Cooperation Network of Cities in Eastern-Western Thrace
- EuroRegion Delta-Rhodope
- EuroRegion Strymon-Strouma (Region of Central Macedonia)
- EuroRegion Prespa-Ochrid (Region of Western Macedonia)

They have also helped to secure the following programmes of trans-border cooperation in the context of the enlargement programmes:

- Cooperation among Greek-Turkish agencies for agencies in cities of Eastern-Western Thrace (a programme funded by the EU mission in Ankara)
- The LOOK EAST and PAVE programmes in chambers of the region (programmes for enlargement)





## **Association of Border and Trans-Border Agencies of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace**

The Association has its offices at the Drama Chamber and the Chairman of the Chamber is the elected President of the Association. Its members are all the statutory agencies of trans-border cooperation in the Region (four in all), as well as the General Secretariat of the Region, represented by the Regional Finance Office.

In essence the Association is a statutory body of the General Secretariat of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace for implementation of all trans-border cooperation activities in the region.

The Association has already secured inclusion in a large and powerful network of agencies implementing actions in an approved CI INTERREG IIIC programme. It is the only association in Greece to have secured inclusion in a programme of this kind.

### **Techno-genesis**

This is a programme funded by the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The Drama Chamber is the only one in the Region to participate in the programme as a support agency. The programme is designed to promote the technological development of businesses in the Prefecture of Drama.

### **Promotion of local products**

Twice a year the Chamber organizes a well coordinated campaign to showcase and promote products from Drama. These events, held in spring and autumn, are something like a 'Drama products week', but with certain differences. The spring event takes the form of a tasting, in which visitors are invited to sample the products available from local producers. The autumn event takes the form of a campaign to raise the public awareness of the advantages of local produce.

The purpose of these events is to support local, traditional businesses, to showcase their products in Drama and elsewhere, and to introduce the public to local products so that they can familiarize themselves with them and prefer them to other products, thereby reinforcing local production and, as a consequence, strengthening the economy and prosperity of the prefecture.





This is a dynamic intervention designed to encourage businessmen and traders to attach special importance to local products, and to persuade consumers to buy the superb products of the Drama region, thereby strengthening the local productive economy. The action is directed and implemented by a committee – coordinating working party made up of the members of the Board of the Chamber Messrs Grigoriou, Zachariadis, Pappos and Patkas, with the support of the Chamber Director Mr. Haralambos Alexandridis and the officers of the Chamber.

In recent years the actions have achieved significant results. According to a survey conducted following completion of the actions, local producers who had taken part in the campaign during the promotion week saw an increase in sales of around 15%. In quarterly measurements the increase was around 9%, and after nine months an increase of 5% was seen in local markets.

### **PAVE Programme**

This is an integrated support programme for entrepreneurship in the border regions of the EU. It is being implemented by a network of agencies from 22 EU countries, as well as non-member states, and is funded by the special action line for enlargement. The goal of the programme is to strengthen business activities through well organized events at which businessmen can meet.

As part of the programme the Chamber has participated in well-organized meetings for businessmen held in Graz, Austria and Turku, Finland.

### **Participation in trade fairs**

presentation

### **Measure 4.3 of the Operational Programme 'Rural Development – Regeneration of the countryside 2000-2006'**

The Chamber is receiving funding under Measure 4.3 of the Ministry of Agriculture, which is intended to showcase and promote food products and encourage their export.

With a total budget of 98,217.95 Euro, and with a subsidy of 76%, their proposal was approved for strengthening and promotion of exports of local wines and dairy-cheese products of the Prefecture of Drama.





Through actions in this measure they have already supported businesses in the sectors to attend major trade fairs abroad such as the biannual SIAL in France, while in 2005 the Chamber will be represented at the major sector fair ANOUGA, organized every second year in Germany. Attendance at these fairs promotes not only the businesses represented, but also of course the Chamber and the Prefecture itself.

They also help businesses attending fairs in other ways, such as preparing literature, offering special advisory support, and so on. Some of the other activities envisaged in Measure 4.3 to promote exports include attendance at other international trade fairs in the food and drinks sector, the preparation of complementary actions, such as identifying potential customers or associates, the organization of business meetings, management of the results of the fairs and coordination of businesses and activities.

### ***Epiheirein* newsletter**

The Chamber's newsletter, published under the title *Epiheirein* [Doing business] is issued at regular intervals and provides concise, reliable and easy-to-read information covering the following subject areas:

- Chamber events: announcements of coming events and reminders of those already scheduled
- Chamber news: concise descriptions of recent events at the Chamber, and news of interest to the business community
- Announcements: brief details for members of events, conferences, meetings, international trade fairs, demand for products, etc.
- Funding programmes: details of invitations to tender for national and European funding programmes
- Finance: ministerial and public sector news, with new laws, circulars, ministerial decisions or more general information
- Business news: special items on businesses and their activities in the Prefecture

### **E-communication for members**

The Chamber has broken new ground in keeping members informed electronically through the creation of a database which offers news in an attractive and efficient format through the pages of the Chamber website. The idea is to ensure the fullest possible dissemination of information material and issues of interest to the business community, making optimum use of the possibilities of the internet and e-mail.





The system allows rapid, reliable dissemination of information material, circulars, proposals for cooperation, details of events. It communicates information rapidly on issues of business interest like invitations to join programmes, announcements of projects and calls to tender.

### **Information through TV broadcasts**

A pioneering idea by the Chamber to provide direct information to its member businesses as well as the general public of the Prefecture. In collaboration with a local TV station the Chamber has organized a weekly informational broadcast covering issues concerning the economy, development, business support, Chamber events, business promotion and other related matters. Every week the programme hosts various executives, specialists and businessmen who discuss aspects of the economy and development of the Prefecture.

This is the only TV programme in Greece put out by a chamber on a regular basis.

### **Action for women entrepreneurs**

The Chamber wished to support women entrepreneurs through the integrated actions organized by the Central Association of Greek Chambers in its participation in the EU programme 'Women in business and the decision-taking process'. The coordinating partner in the programme is the Euro-Chamber, in association with the Association of Italian Chambers, the Commercial Chamber of Hamburg and the Cypriot Commercial and Industrial Chamber.

Within the framework of this programme the Central Association of Greek Chambers has undertaken to carry out research to identify the level of participation of Greek chambers in actions to promote female entrepreneurship and record the level of participation of Greek businesswomen in decision-taking bodies. An important part of the research is the identification of special problems and needs of Greek businesswomen.

### **3. THE EUROPEAN ASPECT**

Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry is in accordance with European Union Standards, the only Greek Chamber in the program known as ARGE28 approved by the EU commission with the slogan of growing with Europe. The overall objective of the pilot program is to support SMEs in the border areas and to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs in these areas.

The Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry has adopted the principle of promoting, developing and expanding the commercial volumes of entrepreneurs in Bulgaria through the NESTOS MESTA program.





Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry has used its experience with cross-border cooperation in the establishment of the following agencies;

- 1 - EuroRegion Euros-Maritsa Ratings
- 2 - Cross-border cooperation network in East-West Thrace
- 3 - EuroRegion Delta - Rhodope
- 4 - EuroRegion Strymon - Strouma (Central Macedonia Region)
- 5 - EuroRegion Prespa - Ochrid (Central Macedonia Region)

It also provided cooperation between Greek and Turkish agencies for agencies in East-West Thrace cities in the context of enlargement programs (a program funded by the EU mission in Ankara). They helped secure the LOOK EAST and PAVE programs in the regional chambers.

Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry, together with the PAVE program, is part of an agency network of 22 EU countries and aims to strengthen business activities. In this context, Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry participated in events organized in Graz - Austria and Turku - Finland.

Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry shares the details of the “Epiheirein” newsletter and invitation to tender for National and European funding programs.

Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry The Italian Chamber of Commerce, the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce and the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, together with the “Women in business and decision-making process” program, support women entrepreneurs.

#### 4. THE BENEFITS OF THE JOB SHADOWING

It has been provided that the staff shadowing the job learn the functioning of the chamber of commerce and industry of a member state of the European Union, evaluate the differences, observe their good practices, learn the projects they have done, and increase their capacity with the opportunity to compare both chambers.





## 5. SUGGESTIONS

In the observed business shadowing event, Drama Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided the seamless and fast transfer of all services to its members with the advanced computer service.

The merger of the trade registry and chamber registry departments, ie the execution of both departments by a single department, has saved members time.

Using the electronic signature, it enabled the members to perform their work remotely without coming to the room.

Local television, product promotion fairs, cooperative bank are examples of good practice suggestions.

