

THE ONE-DAY EVENT WITH THE THEME "THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM THROUGH COLABORATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY" WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!!! (November 11, 2017)

The One-Day Event about the Development of Tourism through Greek and Turkish Partnerships has attracted the interest of the Greek and Turkish tourism business and community. The event was organized by **Hellenic-Turkish Chamber of Northern Greece** in collaboration with **MARLAB** (the Marketing Laboratory of the Department of Business Administration of University of Macedonia) and the support of the Consulate General of Turkey in Thessaloniki. The event took place on Saturday, November 11th 2017, at the Conference Center Nicholas Germanos (Hall A) at TIF-HELEXPO (Pavilion 8). The event was held during the Tourism Fair, Philoxenia 2017, and the declaration of 2017 by the United Nations as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism and Development.

The **President of the Greek-Turkish Chamber of Northern Greece, Mr. Dimitrios Symeonidis** opened the event, followed by the **Director of the Department of International Relations of the Greek Foreign Ministry, Mr. Dimitris Papandreou**. Mr. Papandreou referred to the central role that Thessaloniki could acquire in the development of tourism in North Greece and set the date for the next High Council of Greek-Turkish

Cooperation, in three months.



Addressing the event, **Deputy General Director of Tourism and Culture Promotion of the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Mr. Cengiz Aydin**, noted that 1 million Turkish tourists visited Greece in 2016, while nearly 600,000 Greeks traveled to Turkey. He invited Greeks to visit Turkey and Kanakale in 2018 which has been declared as the Year of Troy.

According to **Mr. Orhan Yalman Okan**, the **Consul General of Turkey in Thessaloniki**, there is an urgent need for a direct flight between Athens and Ankara, as well as charter flights between Macedonia Airport and Cappadocia. Also **Mr. Orhan Yalman Okan**, underlined the advantages of achieving a faster rail link between Thessaloniki and Istanbul and vice versa. The benefits of such actions are imminent for tourism on both sides.

Subsequently, the **Director of MARLAB Marketing Laboratory, Professor Rodoula Tsiotsou**, presented a survey research regarding **“The image of Turkey as a Tourism Destination as Perceived by the Greeks”**.



Representing Greek tourism organizations/associations, statements were made by **Mr. Spyros Pegas**, Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, **Mr. Vyron Theologis**, President of the Association of Tourism Agencies of Macedonia-Thrace and **Mr. Andreas Mandrinos**, President of the Thessaloniki Hotels Association. Their view on tourism issues between the two countries presented **Mr. Timur Bayindir** President of the Turkish Hotel Association (TUROB), and **Mr. Gulberk Asyapar**, of the department of Corporate Affairs of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAD).

More than 250 people attended the event, including executives, journalists, students, owners of tourism businesses, and representatives of tourism associations from both Greece and Turkey. The presence of high-ranking executives and agents from Turkey was impressive. More specifically the event attended the President of the Association of Tourist Agencies of Turkey, **Mr. Orhan Cebi**, also the President of the Edirne Chamber of Commerce and Industry, **Mr Recep Zipkinkurt**, the President of the hotel chain RAMADA in Turkey, **Mr. Yalcin Algur**, and the Director of Strategy and Coordination of the Investment Department of Izmir, **Mr. Mehmet Ensarioglu**.

The results of the MARLAB survey presented at the event were published both conventional press as well as digital press with extensive reporting. The Athenian and Macedonian News Agency published the full results of the MARLAB survey at the

following

link

<http://www.amna.gr/home/article/204037/I-eikona-tis-Tourkias-os-touristikou-proorismou-opos-tin-antilambanontai-oi-Ellines>.

It worth mentioning that also the Turkish media published the MARLAB survey!!



The MARLAB volunteers contributed significantly to the organization of the event and once again were distinguished for their consistency, professionalism and organizational skills. Indeed, **Mr. Orhan Yalman Okan**, the Consul General of Turkey in Thessaloniki, congratulated personally the volunteers for their excellent work in organizing the conference!

