

**Welcome speech by Stevica Carapik , President  
of the Macedonian International Forwarding Association – MIFA  
organized by the Economic Chamber of Macedonia  
on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association's establishment**

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Esteemed guests,  
Esteemed forwarding agents, proprietors and media representatives,

WELCOME TO THE CELEBRATION CEREMONY OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE MACEDONIAN  
INTERNATIONAL FORWARDING ASSOCIATION ORGANISED BY THE  
ECONOMIC CHAMBER OF MACEDONIA

It is great honour and pleasure in the name of the Macedonian International Forwarding Association to welcome everyone present on today's ceremony,

Esteemed guests,

We've gathered here today to celebrate together the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association and to shortly recall the most significant moments since its establishment, its roots and its role in the economic life of the Republic of Macedonia.

This unique type of organisation in Macedonia bears the epithet of a national association of the forwarding industry in the country and as such it has become a member of the largest freight forwarding and logistics non-governmental organisation, known as FIATA.

In accordance with Article 26 of the Rulebook on Organisation and the work of the Association of Transport and Communications, the General Assembly of the Association of Transport and Communications on its session held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1993 brought a Decision for establishing an Association of Forwarders, as a closer way of connecting and organising enterprises - members of the Association of Freight Forwarders.

Today, when we're celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment, I am proud to state that for a short period of time the Association became a real representative of the forwarding industry in the country, achieving high rating and being treated by the society in a way which the Association genuinely deserves.

Even though the Association is a young organisation, considering the time aspect, through its activities it achieved significant results not only for the industry it represents, but also for the wider economic community.

From the very beginning, the Association was welcomed by all economic entities in the forwarding industry and, as time passed; its activities related to promoting certain conditions in the forwarders' economic life were justified and accepted in its real sense.

Since its establishment the Association has proved to have been the most substantial promoter of activities for enhancing all foreign trade relations in order to improve the international transport and forwarding, and for

removing the obstacles for free international movement of people, goods, capital and ideas, thus fighting mainly with the largest enemy of today's economy, the so-called "administrative inertia".

In the last few years, the forwarding agents were largely influenced by the major changes in the society, the politics and the economy which lead to fluctuations in the numbers of active freight forwarders.

Throughout these years, the Association's activities mainly consisted of sessions and meetings among its members, as well as of significant meetings with local and foreign governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions.

The primary activities were mainly focused on enhancing the cooperation with the customs and enforcement bodies, while at the same time, permanently working on improving the internal organisation among the forwarders, in accordance with the market needs.

I will only mention few of the activities accomplished in the past 15 years:

- 42 sessions of the Association bodies were held on which many significant decisions and conclusions related to forwarders' activities were made;

- At the very beginning the Association prepared and brought the General Terms and Conditions for the work of the international forwarders,

- Active participation in all 8 Balkan Congresses of International Freight Forwarders, on which the representatives of the Association contributed with their presentations on various topics, thus sending messages to the authorised state authorities of the Balkan national economies to permanently improve the situation of the international transport and freight forwarding;

- By closely following the current issues and the needs resulting from the new legal provisions related to the customs – forwarding activities, the Association decided to meet the needs of the forwarding agents and organised training courses in order to prepare them for the exam for obtaining customs broker's license.

Therefore, 80 three-hour lectures for 360 participants from 192 companies were organised in Skopje and in the larger towns in Macedonia.

- Considering the main objectives and tasks, including the objective for proper presentation and protection of the interest of its members and the forwarding industry, the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation and Partnership between the Macedonian International Forwarding Association and the Customs Administration of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as the establishment of a Customs-Forwarding Committee as an operative body for implementing the provisions of the Memorandum, laid the foundation for more substantial and more immediate cooperation in order to improve the work in the customs-forwarding area.

- Bearing in mind the same objective, a Memorandum of Cooperation and Partnership was signed with the State Market Inspectorate, while the documents for establishing operational cooperation and partnership with the Food Directorate and the Phytosanitary and Veterinary Inspectorate are being prepared at the moment.

- Striving to present itself in the society as an association which will apply the institutional method of acting and will adhere to the legislation and

show ethical and moral behaviour of its members, the Association prepared and brought a special Code of Conduct, and its acceptance from the members is one of the requirements for their membership in the Association.

- In order to meet the needs of its members and to increase their contribution, the Association has created a web site – namely, [www.mifa.org.mk](http://www.mifa.org.mk)

- The organisational setting and the activities of the Economic Chamber of Macedonia allows for the independence of the Association to be constantly supported and developed.

Therefore, there are two separate accounts in the Economic Chamber for financing the Association's activities, and its funds may be used only by the members in accordance with their decision.

- The functional aspect of the Association has been based on scientific grounds by enhancing the cooperation with significant scientific institutions in the country.

Therefore, Mr. Aleksandar Nikolovski PhD Professor, has been acknowledged as an honorary member of the Association's Board of Officers, as one of the best science achievers who has largely contributed to the development of the forwarding industry in our country.

- The success and the right way taken by the Association were internationally recognised by receiving an appropriate international acknowledgement. Therefore, the Association was granted the honour to host the 9th Balkan Congress of International Freight Forwarders, which will be held in Ohrid next year. Not only will forwarding representatives from the Balkan attend this congress, but also many representatives from the Eastern European region are expected to arrive.

Being a co-ordinator of the activities held between the two congresses, in October last year, the Association hosted a meeting of the Coordinative Committee of the Balkan International Forwarding Associations which convened in order to prepare a presentation of the issues and problems of the Balkan International Forwarding Associations to the delegates of the World FIATA Congress held in October in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

- However, the activities do not stop here. The Association has permanently been involved in the process of preparing and issuing new and amending existing legal regulations in the country, as well as in the promotion of its own acts.

Large number of opinions, recommendations, initiatives and requests have been submitted to the authorities in order to facilitate the daily work of around 300 active and some less active members.

The Association supports the state's efforts to harmonise the legislation with the EU legislation in order to improve the overall legal environment, to facilitate the administrative procedures, to prevent corruption, crossborder crime and bureaucracy and to establish a dialogue between the industry and the government's administration. Therefore, in the name of everyone present today, allow me to send a clear message to the state institutions to take more responsibilities in creating a better business climate in the state, in adopting an approach which will increase the working flexibility, as well as in establishing a real partnership relations with all business entities, thus avoiding the practice of unnecessary overloading of the import and transit procedures when the government has implemented a 'bureaucratic guillotine'.

In addition, I would also like to address the Forwarders and send them a message to be unified in their joint long-term efforts and in their intentions to improve the overall work of the freight forwarders.

At the end, once again I would like to greet everyone present on this ceremony and I will use the logo of the Economic Chamber of Macedonia "We are expecting You – Membership is power" as a recommendation for further enhancement of the Association's positions.

Thank you for your attention, enjoy the celebration