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PRESS RELEASE



EC MATCHMAKING SCHEME BRINGS NEW BUSINESS SUCCESS TO EUROPEAN COMPANIES AT HOSTMILANO

The European Commission sponsored 'Business Beyond Borders' event at HOSTMilano (20-21 October) facilitated over 200 matchmaking meetings between European businesses in the hospitality & catering sector and potential international partners. In all, more than 240 companies representing 53 countries (including New Zealand, USA, Jordan and Honduras) attended the BBB sessions, with many valuable business partnerships being agreed immediately.

Federico Maria Bega, Head of Strategic Areas at PROMOS, considered the BBB initiative "a significant added-value to the exhibition" and "the right accelerator and integration platform for fostering business between micro, small and medium-sized enterprises".

Speaking after HOSTMilano's official opening ceremony, Mr. Bega also expressed his satisfaction with the evolution and relevance of the fair, which celebrates its 40th edition this year: "One of the most critical factors for the success of this edition is the current international dimension of the trade fair. The Ho.Re.Ca. sector is growing faster than in previous years – some world regions show a double-digit growth rate in comparison with the European market. There are many opportunities and HOSTMilano provides good connections from which SMEs can benefit."

Stefano Baldi, Client Executive of the Italian-based company BEXA, considered the BBB matchmaking sessions to be very positive for his company: "This event is extremely useful for micro and small enterprises, because otherwise we wouldn't know how to get in touch with overseas companies. Through BBB, we are meeting potential partners from all over the world and doing business with them, which is wonderful."

Fredi Yanes Machado, General Manager of Hondurian coffee production company Corporación Yama, also shared his positive feedback: "I have been looking for a company specialising in coffee equipment to process my raw materials, and I found the perfect business partner here. If companies come to future BBB matchmaking events, it will be great for them: they will find the right company for their international partnerships".

The potential for entering international markets, particularly considering the recent EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), was highlighted by enthusiastic comments from Dirk Vantuyghem, Head of Operations at EUROCHAMBRES,

during BBB's International Conference at HOSTMilano: *"SMEs in the food and hospitality sector often have a very high-quality product to sell, but may not have thorough technical and legal knowledge of markets such as China, USA or Canada. There is a market for EU products and now, with CETA, the ideal conditions are also in place also for accessing the Canadian market. I believe that the added-value of BBB in this sector is very high: we inform, train and guide SMEs in this internationalisation process."*

Joining Mr. Vantygheem at the International Conference were Simona Piccioni, expert on food and beverage exports; and Sandra Bonanni of CAN Trade. SMEs and clusters had the opportunity to learn more about exports to third markets as well as best practices from companies in the industry.

Ms. Bonanni also emphasised the increasing potential for transatlantic food and hospitality business deals: *"With the CETA agreement in place, tariffs will go down and prices will become more accessible. I see a lot of potential for SMEs, and I recommend this kind of B2B sessions for companies seeking to internationalise. If they do their homework beforehand – find out who they're meeting with and the potential for a business match – they can really make the most of it"*.

Business Beyond Borders supports businesses, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Clusters, to operate internationally. During selected trade fairs around the world, BBB facilitates the participation and meetings between relevant potential trading partners from Europe and abroad with the aim of assisting them in the conclusion of business deals.

The next BBB matchmaking event will take place on 28th -30th November at TRUSTECH Cannes, France, and will focus on companies operating in ICT and digital services sector. To find out more about how European businesses can benefit from this opportunity to grow across borders with a complete package of professional support, visit the Business Beyond Borders website at www.businessbeyondborders.info

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Photos of the Business Beyond Borders (BBB) matchmaking event at HOSTMilano are now available at [BBB's official Flickr account](#).

For an overview of the previous BBB events, check the [official BBB brochure](#), updated after each matchmaking session.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Business Beyond Borders (BBB): BBB is a European Commission initiative to help EU businesses, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Clusters, operate internationally with the ultimate goal of increasing economic growth within and outside Europe. A series of matchmaking events are being organised at international trade fairs to bring together SMEs and representatives from relevant clusters, with potential trading partners from Europe and abroad with the aim of assisting businesses to access new international markets.

The Business Beyond Borders Consortium is represented by:

- **EUROCHAMBRES:** The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million businesses in Europe – 98% of which are SMEs – through members in 43 countries and a network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.
- **EMECA:** The European Major Exhibition Centres Association unites 22 leading exhibition venues in Europe. They provide businesses with an excellent infrastructure and outstanding information networks. The 22 EMECA Members organise and host 1,769 exhibitions a year, both in Europe and all over the globe, with more than 350,000 exhibitors and over 41,5 million visitors.
- **UFI:** The leading global association of the world's tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations. UFI represents 700 member organisations in 83 countries around the world. Over 900 international trade fairs bear the UFI quality label.
- **LOWeurope:** A strategic communications consultancy based in Brussels, with a network of associates across Europe. We specialise in creating policy-rich events; managing complex programmes; PR and all types of marketing communications; and EU related public affairs.

For more information visit the website www.businessbeyondborders.info

HOSTMilano: HOSTMilano has established itself as the leader in the Ho.Re.Ca, food service, retail, mass distribution channel and hotel industries. HOSTMilano is a must-attend hub for all professionals who work in the hospitality industry, and a privileged destination to check the latest innovations from companies and for understanding the latest market trends.

This is the favourite event of top players for offering a preview of technologic innovations in food equipment, food products (ingredients, semi-prepared items), the world of coffee as well as in design and lifestyle solutions. It is also a unique marketplace for doing quality international business with carefully selected professionals with a high-level purchasing power. The main sectors covered by HOSTMilano are hospitality equipment, food and coffee, food service, retail and mass retail, hotel industry.