



PROGRAMME

<p align="center">Executive Forum on National Export Strategies The International Competitiveness of Economies in Transition – The Untapped Potential: A Challenge for Business and Government – Sofia, Bulgaria Wednesday, 12 November</p>	
09.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Tour
17.00	<p>Official Opening: Introduction to the Debate</p> <p>J. Smadja Deputy Executive Director, ITC</p> <p>P. Luciri Ambassador of Switzerland to Bulgaria</p> <p>L. Shouleva Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Bulgaria</p> <p>R. Bozadzhiev Deputy Minister of Economy in charge of Foreign Trade, Bulgaria</p> <p>D. Ivanovski Deputy Minister of Economy, Bulgaria</p> <p>T. Shishkova Executive Director, Bulgarian Trade Promotion Agency (BTPA)</p> <p>B. Danev Chairman and Executive President, Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA)</p>
18.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Photograph
19.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception



Thursday, 13 November

<p>09.00 – 12.00</p>	<p>First Session: National Competitiveness: Issues, Constraints and Strategic Implications</p> <p><i>This session will set the scene for the entire debate. Transition economies face particular challenges, such as integrating with the multilateral trading system and preparing for EU accession. Teams will identify, and endeavour to prioritize, the issues that currently interfere with, and will in future determine, their international competitiveness.</i></p> <p>ITC Moderator: J. Smadja</p> <p>ITC Commentator: F. von Kirchbach</p> <p>Team Commentators: Romania Team Commentator Serbia & Montenegro Team Commentator</p> <p>Table Discussion Open Debate Summary and Conclusions</p>
<p>12.00 – 15.00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch • Consultations on ITC Tools
<p>15.00 – 18.00</p>	<p>Second Session: A Strategic Approach to Competitiveness: Scope, Focus and Process</p> <p><i>Previous Executive Forum debates have clearly established that a strategic approach to export development is essential.</i></p> <p><i>The debate will focus on determining the ‘best practice’ strategic approach to competitiveness and export development. It will deal with issues relating to scope, prioritization and process. ‘Best practice’ will be discussed in the context of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>sector-level strategies should be at the ‘heart’ of national export strategy;</i> • <i>the value-chain approach to sector-level strategy represents the most suitable method of sector-level strategy design and management;</i> • <i>business associations should initiate and lead the prioritization process;</i> • <i>a public-private sector partnership is a critical feature of the strategic process; strategy makers often fail to give this key aspect sufficient attention.</i> <p>ITC Moderator: S. Piskolti</p> <p>ITC Commentators: B. Barclay A. Said</p> <p>Team Commentators: Belarus Team Commentator Ukraine Team Commentator</p> <p>Table Debate Open Debate Summary and Conclusions</p>



Friday, 14 November

09.00 – 12.00

Third Session:

A Strategic Response to Services Exporting

The importance of the services sector to export performance and the associated need to create alliances among service providers will be highlighted. National strategy makers need to look beyond traditional services exports to maximize opportunities that exist in the international marketplace. The following will be debated:

- *although tourism remains a vital source of foreign exchange earnings, the sector's commercial and sustainability objectives are potentially in conflict. 'Best practice' scenarios for an export-oriented tourism strategy will be presented and debated;*
- *maximizing the services sector's contribution to export performance requires a strategic approach. Competitiveness constraints and the principal elements of a successful services export strategy will be discussed to identify 'best practice'.*

ITC Moderator:

H. Roelofsen

ITC Commentator:

S. Rodas

Team Commentators:

Bulgaria Team Commentator

Romania Team Commentator

Serbia & Montenegro Team Commentator

Table Debate

Open Debate

Summary and Conclusions

12.00 – 15.00

- **Lunch**
- **Consultations on ITC Tools**

15.00 –18.00

Fourth Session:

A Strategic Balance: FDI and In-Country Business Alliances

Most national strategy-makers seek to create new export capacities, and to upgrade skills and technology, primarily through FDI. Little attention is given to programmes that promote in-country business alliances, such as industrial clusters and export consortia. The following will be debated:

- *in-country business alliances generate new national capabilities (capacities and competencies) that broaden the export base and lead to new levels of international competitiveness;*
- *strategy-makers should strike a more equitable balance between promoting FDI and supporting in-country business alliances;*
- *although such alliances need to originate from the private sector, the public sector has the role of catalyst in promoting and fostering in-country business alliances; what are the implications for the national strategy maker?*

ITC Moderator:

A. Said

ITC Commentators:

F. von Kirchbach

B. Barclay

Team Commentators:

Albania Team Commentator

Bosnia & Herzegovina Team Commentator

Bulgaria Team Commentator

Table Debate

Open Debate

Summary and Conclusions



Saturday, 15 November

<p>09.00 – 11.00</p>	<p>Fifth Session: Structuring the Trade Support Network</p> <p><i>The session highlights the importance of a trade support network that is responsive to client needs. The session addresses the following issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>business advocacy from trade support institutions (public and private) is essential. The business community has a role in initiating and influencing trade negotiations, and for structuring the national trade support network according to its needs, and to make it more internationally competitive;</i> • <i>coordination of the trade support network is essential to avoid duplication and maximize the impact of limited resources. The debate will then deal with the issues of 'who' coordinates the network and 'how' it is coordinated;</i> • <i>creating and maintaining efficiencies in the trade support network is critical to ensure its sustainability and that performance targets are met. 'Best practice' scenarios will be presented and debated.</i> <p>ITC Moderator: H. Roelofsen</p> <p>ITC Commentators: S. Piskolti B. Barclay</p> <p>Team Commentators: Bosnia & Herzegovina Team Commentator Moldova Team Commentator</p> <p>Table Debate Open Debate Summary and Conclusions</p>
<p>11.00 – 12.00</p>	<p>Sixth Session: Trade Related Technical Assistance: Where Should the Future Focus Be?</p> <p><i>This session will start by referring to the First Session on national issues, constraints and implications. Moderator will invite some of the tables to review their earlier inputs following the course of the debate. This will lead to identification of different kinds of technical assistance that economies in transition need. The following will be debated:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For TRTA to be effective, it needs to be focused on enhancing the competitiveness of the business sector. To achieve this, TRTA must address the trade policy level, the level of the trade support network, and the enterprise level;</i> • <i>TRTA must be tailored to specific national requirements. "Off-the-shelf" tools and solutions are not enough, but need to be adjusted by local specialists;</i> • <i>A strategic approach to export development and competitiveness is fundamental. What are the tools that national strategy maker should have to lead the strategy design and management process?</i> <p>ITC Moderator: J. Smadja</p> <p>Open Debate Summary and Close of the Debate</p>
<p>12.00 – 14.00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch
<p>14.00 – 18.00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations between individual team members and ITC staff
<p>19.30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gala Dinner