



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Interior
(Sector Macedonia Thrace)

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PRESS RELEASE

Press conference for Balkan Forum on “Digital transformation, networking, collaborations and convergences in the Balkans” (Balkan Forum 2022)

Kalafatis: “We want to lead all of us to the Balkans faster, more organized, in the new digital era”

“We want to capture the current level of the technology ecosystem in the Balkans. We want to develop networking and collaborations. To improve the technology ecosystem that currently exists. May we all, both us and our neighbors, move faster and more organized into the new digital era”, emphasized the Deputy Minister of Interior, responsible for Macedonia and Thrace, Mr. Stavros Kalafatis, during the press conference held in the “Nikolaos Martis” hall of Dioikitirio, in Thessaloniki, in view of Balkan Forum on “Digital transformation, networking, collaborations and convergences in the Balkans” (Balkan Forum 2022), which is organized on Wednesday, October 5, 2022, at “Emilios Riadis” Multipurpose Hall of TIF Helexpo.

In his presentation, Mr. Kalafatis highlighted the changes that have taken place in Greece in recent years, in the field of digital reform:

“Digital transformation is a major challenge for both the private and public sector of any country. In our country, a real revolution in the digitization of the State is taking place. The benefits for the citizen, the public administration, the economy, are tangible and measurable.

It is worth-mentioned that digital reform did not slow down, despite the pandemic but also the energy crisis that subsequently arose. Digital services have reached 1500 from 500 that were initially provided. Besides, online transactions have increased from 9 million to 566 million at the moment. The main service of the country is the single portal “gov.gr” which hosts more than 1370 digital public services”, he mentioned.

Regarding the Digital Transformation “Bible” for the years 2020-2025 that was presented by the Ministry of Digital Governance in 2020 and became law on July 5, 2021, Mr. Kalafatis pointed out that:

“It sets the strategic roadmap for digital transformation over the next 5 years. The strategy covers six axes:

- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Digital state
- Digital enterprise
- Digital innovation and
- Incorporation of digital technologies to all economic sectors”.

Regarding the importance of Digital Transformation in the daily lives of citizens, he noted: *“The citizen now notices, in his daily life, the improvement of services. From the Health Wallet, where he can have every certificate and doctor’s prescription he needs on his mobile phone, to the electronic ID and the electronic driver’s license. Thus, citizens’ quality of life is improved. Our fellow citizens are saved from endless hours of waiting in queues for public services”.*

Sessions of Balkan Forum 2022

Balkan Forum on “Digital transformation, networking, collaborations and convergences in the Balkans” (Balkan Forum 2022) consists of three thematic sessions:

1st Session: Digital Transformation, convergences and networks in the Balkans of business operators.

Moderator: Dr. Dimitrios Tzovaras, Chairman of the Centre for Research and Technology-Hellas (CERTH), Greece

2nd Session: Digital Transformation, convergences and networks in the Balkans of public and self-governing bodies.

Moderator: Mr. Agis Papadopoulos

3rd Session: Digital Transformation, convergences and networking in the Balkans of scientific bodies.

Moderator: Mr. Spyros Ignatiadis

Analyzing the 1st Session, on behalf of moderator, the General Director of Ministry of Interior (Sector Macedonia Thrace), Mr. Theofilaktos Papadopoulos underlined:

“Digital Transformation brings many and big changes across the spectrum of economic activities in a horizontal way. It is not only about digitization and automation of business operations of individual companies but also about structural changes in the properties of business models, consumer behavior, supply chain, etc. The Balkan countries, which are characterized by many heterogeneities (political, economic, technological, etc.) have a different starting line and adaptability to the modifications imposed by the Digital Transformation.

The relevant European and national policies aim to manage these differences and technical challenges such as infrastructure interoperability and services required for Digital Transformation across Europe. At the same time, these actions operate

appropriate investment frameworks, regulations and financial tools for the smooth digital transition of Balkan businesses”.

Prof. Agis M. Papadopoulos, Chairman of the Board EYATH S.A., moderator of the 2nd thematic session, pointed out:

“Many people think that digital transformation is about technologies. This is only a part of reality. Transformation is about organizational structures and changing mindsets. It is interesting to note that the public sector which is considered by some to be unwieldy, heavy and not user-friendly has in recent years evolved in an impressive way, running much faster according to citizen needs. In the second thematic session we will see what is happening in Greece, in Europe and in our wider region and that is why there are speakers who represent the public sector, but also officials of the Commission, of the local government. The session will allow them to see what everyone else is doing so they can adopt good practices for the benefit of all”.

Moderator of the 3rd thematic session, Mr. Spyros Ignatiadis, Strategic Planning & Operations Manager of IDS Consulting, emphasized:

“Digital transformation is now a key issue for the development of the digital transition in the knowledge economy, in society and in all areas of our lives. The session expects to highlight the needs, issues and collaboration perspectives of the scientific bodies for the transition to the Digital transformation in the Balkan states. The distinguished speakers who come from the academic, scientific and also productive fields will shed light with their suggestions on how this goal can be achieved. Besides, what synergies and networking should be carried out in the immediate future to achieve the goal, as well as the speed of adaptation to conditions of digital transformation, which is also the question. The transition to Digital transformation concerns all of us and is not the work or responsibility and care of Technology people. The strategy towards Digital Transformation, our readiness, the synergies that will arise will also be the comparative advantage or disadvantage for our transition to the new era”.



