



Opening remarks

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Chairman of the Board of IOBE

2016 Korean-Hellenic Maritime Cooperation Forum

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 2016 Korean-Hellenic Maritime Cooperation Forum, organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research IOBE. The objective of this event is to present the state and the prospects of the shipping industry, to outline the latest technological and other advances in the sector of shipbuilding and repair, and to highlight the opportunities for commercial and financial cooperation between Greece and Korea in the maritime sector.

This is not the first, and certainly not the last event that our Foundation is organising on the potential for cooperation between Greece and Korea. We believe that the commercial ties between the two countries can be strengthened further. We also believe that the two countries can learn a lot from each other's experience.



Let's not forget that less than a century ago Korea had a predominantly rural economy. Today, despite the devastating wars six decades ago and the severe financial crisis less than two decades ago, the Republic of Korea has one of the most advanced economies in the world, topping the global charts in the fields of technology, innovation and education. The astonishing progress of Korea in these fields make the country very well positioned to face the challenges that the future will bring. That is why we believe that Greece can benefit significantly from the exchange not only of goods, but also of ideas, with the Republic of Korea.

The focus of today's event is on maritime cooperation between Greece and Korea. As both countries have an extensive coastline, the sea has a special significance for our nations that runs deep in our history. Today, the maritime sector is a core element of the economy and the social life of both Korea and Greece.

As a number of IOBE studies have highlighted, the maritime sector has a significant contribution to the Greek economy. Greece continues to be the largest ship-owning country worldwide, accounting for 15 to 20 percent of the world fleet in the past few years. Ocean-going shipping is a major exporter of services for the Greek economy, with a very significant contribution to the balance of payments of Greece. In addition, it is also an important source of investment capital, as a



significant part of domestic industry and services was initially funded with equity capital from Greek ship-owners. Furthermore, coastal maritime transport acts as a backbone to the Greek tourist industry, transporting visitors and goods to and from the Greek islands.

Shipping is a sector with strategic importance for Greece, but its potential is not fully realised, as our studies have shown. The ecosystem of economic activities that can support a global maritime centre is weak in Greece. The on-board employment of Greeks has been falling over the past few decades. Regulatory and other obstacles prevent the coastal maritime transport, the shipbuilding and repair activities and other elements of the maritime ecosystem to be internationally competitive and to prosper. The tight credit conditions that prevail in the country also create a significant barrier to the proper functioning of the maritime ecosystem in Greece today.

Stronger links with Korea can help us overcome these obstacles. Just a few decades ago, Busan and Ulsan were small fishing wharfs on the Southeastern corner of the Korean peninsula. Today, these two harbours have grown into an international centre for commerce and industry, forming the second largest metropolitan area in Korea. Busan, in particular, has become the world's third largest trading harbour in terms of total cargo volume. The region today hosts one of the most



technologically advanced shipbuilding yards worldwide, together with a great number of other economic activities, including car manufacturing and other industry. The Korean experience of developing its maritime clusters can be very valuable for the efforts of Greece in this direction.

We anticipate the 2016 Korean-Hellenic Maritime Cooperation Forum to contribute to the partnership of the two countries in the maritime sector, a partnership that can have catalytic effects on the development of the maritime ecosystem and the wider economy in Greece.

Thank you for your attention.