

**ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΙΑΣ ΥΝΑΝΠ
ΣΤΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΟ-ΚΟΡΕΑΤΙΚΟ ΦΟΡΟΥΜ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ
(KOREAN - HELLENIC MARITIME COOPERATION FORUM)**

(Αθήνα¹, 08/06/2016 (10.00-14.30))

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a great pleasure for me to address the Korean – Hellenic Maritime Cooperation Forum, and I would like to thank the organizers for their kind invitation. I am convinced that the today's forum constitutes a further proof of the strategic relationship established during the last decades between the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Greece, focusing on marine and maritime affairs in total.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2. Greece and Korea are countries, whose history, culture and modern economy are intrinsically linked with the oceans. It is no secret that Korea and Greece are major powers in the maritime domain. In particular, Korea is being a major maritime power and, a major supply force when it comes to new building of vessels, while Greece is the largest shipowning community worldwide, a quality shipping service provider and a vigorous maritime cluster.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. The shipping industry is facing various challenges and continuous changes. The unstable economic global environment, the geopolitical developments and the significant crisis of the world dry bulk market segment have not left maritime transport unaffected.

4. However, Greek shipping continues to maintain its leading role in the international shipping industry providing maritime transport services of high quality with a renewed fleet to a significant extent, guided and operated by up-to-date management methods and techniques.

5. The Greek Shipping Registry accounts for 770 ocean-going vessels of 41 million gt, which ranks second in the EU and first in terms of ownership controlling 50% of the European fleet in terms of carrying capacity². Moreover, the Greek-owned fleet steadily keeps the first place internationally, with a fleet comprising out of 4.585 ships of 341 millions dwt³.

6. Since the late 1960s, Piraeus, the largest port and transport hub of the country, and the wider area, is the nucleus of Greek and Greek-owned shipping. In the

¹ Ξενοδοχείο Sofitel Athens Airport (Αίθουσα Kallisto Hall)

² EEE, Annual Report, May 2016

³ GSCC, An information paper, based on data provided to the GSCC by Lloyd's Register- Fairplay, March 2016

maritime center of Piraeus, productive synergies are developed between shipping and supportive activities, creating a robust maritime cluster. Above all, the specialized human capital of Greek shipping offers its services and accumulated knowledge within the maritime cluster of Piraeus, serving Greek shipping with consistency and effectiveness.

7. On this basis and the long-standing Greek maritime tradition, most of the foreign shipping companies, chose to manage their fleet from their 1358 offices in Piraeus, highlighting it as a worldwide maritime center and creating incomparable expertise in technical and commercial management of vessels. According to recent data, 200.000 people are employed, either directly or indirectly, in the Greek maritime cluster giving a refreshing impetus to employment and growth⁴. The significant contribution of shipping to the national economy is also depicted in the foreign currency inflow, which for 2015 amounted to 9.97 billion euros.

Ladies and gentlemen,

8. At this point, allow me to underline that the development of Greek shipping is indispensable linked with the trade and shipping of our partner friend country Korea. The Greek-owned fleet, which represents the 19.6% of the global overall capacity in dwt of the world fleet, holds a leader position in providing maritime services and constitutes a key factor of the world trade operation, while serves in great degree the transport of raw materials, mineral fuels, equipment and products to and from Korea.

9. Furthermore, I would like to emphasise the long standing first choice of the Greek maritime community to build new ships in the Korean shipyards. The numbers speak on their own: During 2015, despite the world economic crisis and low freight rates in some shipping segments, Greek ship-owners had ordered 171 new-buildings of approximately 21 million DWT in Korean shipyards.

10. The abovementioned facts are definitely an excellent basis for strengthening our maritime ties even further on the basis of the existing solid and credible legal framework regarding bilateral cooperation on maritime affairs. Firstly, the strategic cooperation in the field of maritime transport, is based on the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force in 2011, and improves the conditions under which the maritime freight transport is performed from the European Union to Korea and vice versa, for the benefit of both parties' economic operators. Secondly, the 2006 Maritime Agreement between Greece and Korea, functions as a means for both sides to confirm their commitment to safe, environmental friendly and secure shipping, the provision of efficient maritime transport services, as well as their respect to the fundamental principles of accessible markets and fair competition in international shipping.

11. The strategic maritime relationship between our countries is also evidenced on the "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Marine and Ship Technology" which was signed in 2014. This MOU has a strong focus in particular on: (a) cooperation, exchange of know-how and experience, (b) establishment of links and

⁴ EEE, Annual Report, May 2016

networking, and (c) performing joint activities in areas of common interest, between stakeholders in the field of marine and ship technology.

12. Given that economic growth through maritime activities is amongst our strategic priorities, building on the existing legal framework is of paramount importance especially through encouraging new partnerships and investments in the maritime sector. To this extend, we look forward that the dedicated MoU in the field of Marine and Ship Technology will provide the vehicle for promoting co-operation between the Greek marine equipment companies, companies designing and producing innovative and reliable high quality products, and the Korean shipyards.

13. Moreover, we believe that we could further explore any potential for expanding our bilateral cooperation in additional areas of maritime relations such as the port and freight and logistics sector in a mutually beneficial way.

14. We look forward to continuing and strengthen our fruitful cooperation and constructive collaboration also at international level, especially within the framework of IMO, aiming at the adoption of global, efficient and effective rules and standards for international shipping, as well as at the implementation of the fundamental principles of free and fair competition in international maritime transport.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. The sea is part of the identity for Greek and Korean people. Greeks, just like the people of Korea, developed friendship and cooperation ties with other peoples, cultures, religions through the ways of the seas.

16. On the basis of maritime cooperation, the two peoples can come closer together and build a brighter future. This exactly is the added value of the Korean – Hellenic Maritime Cooperation Forum, which brilliantly promotes concretely the cooperative spirit in the shipping and ship-building relations of the two parties.

17. In this context, I would like to highlight the added value of this initiative being promoted alongside with the Posidonia Exhibition. A diverse range of challenges and issues confronting global shipping is being tabled by industry leaders and debated by delegates at this year edition of the Posidonia Conference. The significance of the Posidonia Conference Programme for the global shipping community is underlined by the numerous conferences, seminars, workshops and press conferences covering every aspect of shipping, the presence of distinguished industry's decision makers, analysts and the media, as well as the high profile presence of Mr Lim Kitack, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and Mrs Violeta Bulk, Commissioner for Transport.

18. With these thoughts, I would like to thank once again the organizers and the government of our friend country, Korea, for its kind invitation, and I wish every success to the works of the Forum for delivering fruitful results.

Thank you.