



2022 KOREAN-HELLENIC MARITIME COOPERATION FORUM

On the occasion of [Posidonia 2022 International Shipping Exhibition](#)

Opening Remarks | 08.06.2022

H.E. Jung Il Lee, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea

H.E. Ioannis Plakiotakis, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy

Mr. Takis Thomopoulos, Chairman of the IOBE

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honor to welcome you and deliver my appreciation to your presence at the third Korean-Hellenic Maritime Cooperation Forum. I would also like to deliver my sincere gratitude to the prestigious think-tank IOBE for its hard working to co-host this Forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have waited so long for this forum, haven't we? During the last two years, we have experienced an unprecedented COVID-19 situation. Although it is not over yet, we have managed to move a step forward and to gather here today.

For us, this forum will undoubtedly offer a valuable chance to further promote cooperation between Korea and Greece by addressing diverse matters, namely shipbuilding, financing, equipment and environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Korea and Greece have many things in common. We are located at 38 degrees north latitude and are peninsula and a maritime nation. Historically, we have walked through the same path of colonization, independence, civil war, military government, and democratization.

The Korean War was the most difficult period in modern Korean history. When the war began, Greece had not yet fully recovered from its own civil war and furthermore, we had no diplomatic ties by then. However, Greece dispatched the fifth largest number of troops under the UN flag. Korea has not and will not forget a single drop of blood and tear of Greek Korean War Veterans who spilled and shed in the course of protecting freedom and democracy. In this regard, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea maintains to hold commemorative ceremony every year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Odysseas Elytis, a very well-known Greek Nobel Prize winner for literature, once said

"If you take Greece apart, one by one, then ultimately you will be left with 3 items, firstly an olive tree, second a vineyard, and lastly a boat. That means, if you have these 3 items, you can reconstruct Greece again."



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Here, he righteously emphasized the importance of shipping to Greece, which is also today's core theme. In this respect, I am very much pleased to note how Korea and Greece have been developing a close and mutually beneficial partnership through "boats".

Korea's ship-building industry thrived by receiving its first order from Greece in 1971. Today, our two countries have formed robust partnership in this field. For example, about more than 70% of the total Greek ship orders are going to Korean shipbuilders. With these strong ties, the two countries are thriving; Korea as the best ship-builder and Greece as the best shipper with its more than 5,700 fleets.

Our two countries are expanding the scope of cooperation, such as in the field of shipping equipment, and especially in mutual recognition of the seafarers signed between our two countries at the end of last year. This mutual recognition makes it now possible for both of our seafarers to get on board of the ships of both countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Currently, climate change is also high on the agenda in the field of shipping. We are facing a daunting and unavoidable challenge of achieving the global goal of carbon neutrality. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is gradually tightening greenhouse gas emission regulations. The European Union also announced the 'Fit for 55' package in July 2021 and included shipping emissions in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) for the first time. Once again, it is high time that our two countries are to work together to safeguard international regulations and to shape good practices.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I wrap up, I would like to take this special opportunity to inform you on Korea's candidacy to host the 2030 World Expo in Busan.

Busan is the second-largest city and maritime capital city of Korea. Busan is a twin port city of Thessaloniki. Busan already successfully held various international events such as the Asian Games, the APEC Summit, and the Busan International Film Festivals.

I can proudly say that Busan is a city, which fully meets qualifications and possesses capacity to successfully host the World Expo. Let our maritime cooperation further develop by holding the Expo at the maritime capital of Korea.

Efharisto - Thank you.