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A NEW BEGINNING

A Strategic Leap
Forward

AMCHAM GREECE ESTABLISHES
US OFFICE IN WASHINGTON DC

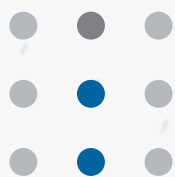
Thought Leaders
Future Tense
The Corporate Governance
Era Ahead

Leadership With Purpose:
Nikolaos Bakatselos on
Serving AmCham Greece

AmCham Greece
Organizes the USA Pavilion
at DEFEA 2025

2025 Tax Strategy
and Policy: The 13th
Thessaloniki Tax Forum

The 9th WIB
Forum Leads as
a Rule Breaker



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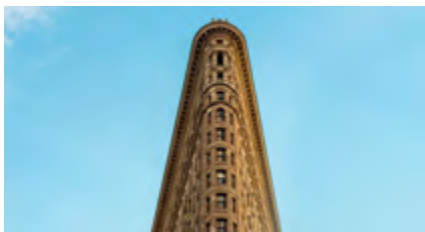
A Business Partners Special Feature
Driven By Saracakis Group Of Companies



THOUGHT LEADERS

Future Tense: The Corporate
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DIRECTOR'S DESK



As we move into the summer season, we find ourselves celebrating a major milestone for our Chamber: the official opening of our new branch office in Washington DC. An important initiative, this new office fulfills our longstanding goal to establish a permanent presence in the United States, giving AmCham Greece a solid foothold in the nation's foremost hub of policy and influence. Aimed at enhancing bilateral trade and investment between Greece and the United States at a time when relations between our two countries are stronger than ever, the new Washington branch will

serve as a strategic platform, supporting AmCham Greece members and Greek businesses seeking entry into the US market, while also offering US companies a direct link to opportunities in Greece. You can read more about the initiative in this issue's special feature on our newest branch.

Over the past two months, our Chamber has also been exceptionally active in organizing events and taking part in key meetings, not least our recent participation in the AmChams in Europe (ACE) US Delegation 2025, to Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington DC. These visits provided opportunities for valuable engagement with United States administration officials and offered fresh insight into the current state of Euro-Atlantic negotiations. It is evident that transatlantic relations remain of critical importance, not only in terms of the economic data, which continues to show robust growth, but also due to the deep-rooted alliance between our nations—an alliance based on shared democratic values and mutual interests. In June, we are proud to host several major events: our annual Women in Business (WIB) Forum, the Corporate Governance Conference, and notably, the 2nd AmChams Regional Economic Summit (ARES). Bringing together representatives from 15 AmChams across the region, along with more than 100 business leaders and senior government officials, ARES 2025 is a testament to our Chamber's ongoing commitment to promoting regional cooperation, investment, and strategic partnerships.

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the outgoing President and the members of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors for their outstanding collaboration and valuable contributions during this term. Their efforts have added significant value to AmCham Greece's longstanding legacy of success. At the end of June, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce will hold an election to elect a new President and Board, and together we will continue—with vision and determination—to address future challenges, forge new paths forward, and ensure that our institution maintains its exceptional trajectory and fulfills its important mission.

Elias Spirtounias
Executive Director

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce

Dynamic. Proactive. Global.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (AmCham Greece), founded in 1932, is one of the largest and most active American Chambers in Europe. With over 700 members—including nearly all U.S. companies operating in Greece and many Greek firms trading with the U.S.—the Chamber plays a key role in strengthening transatlantic business ties.

An independent, non-profit organization with no government funding, AmCham Greece is dedicated to advancing U.S.–Greece economic relations. Its dynamic member network drives business growth, fosters partnerships, and capitalizes on global trade and investment opportunities.

In April 2025, AmCham Greece expanded its presence to the United States with the opening of a Washington, D.C. office. This strategic move supports deeper bilateral engagement, promotes Greek business outreach, and encourages U.S. investment in Greece.

The Chamber is an active member of both the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. and the European Council of American Chambers of Commerce (ECACC).

Mission Statement

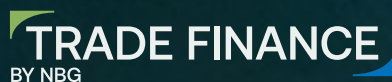
AmCham Greece is dedicated to the continuous advancement of U.S.–Greece economic and business relations. Through the expansion of its membership base, effective advocacy, and the organization of high-level events, exhibitions, fora, seminars, and congresses on both sides of the Atlantic, the Chamber fosters dialogue, cooperation, and sustainable growth.

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One Bridge Countless Possibilities

ALEXANDROS COSTOPOULOS

Founder & CEO of FORESIGHT Strategy & Communication
Secretary General & Candidate for the Presidency of the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce

My vision for the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is to forge a living evolving bridge between Greece and the U.S. - a bridge of opportunity, talent, investment, and innovation that delivers real value to our members every day.



I see a Chamber fostering strategic and sustainable business growth across the Atlantic, unleashing the potential of our country while propelling forward the lasting bonds that unite Greece and the United States.

For the past 25 years, this has been the core of my professional journey - working across both sides of the Atlantic, engaging with enterprises, governments, institutions and decision-makers, to facilitating opportunity and building trust where it matters most.

I've built trust, reshaped perceptions, facilitated conversations, and helped turn shared interests into long-term partnerships.

Along with a team of remarkable professionals from leading U.S. and Greek companies, aiming to serve at the next Board of Directors of our Chamber, we are now ready to blend experiences, expertise, networks and insight and activate a fully developed strategic plan, built on clear objectives and practical implementation.

We are not merely establishing a vision but a detailed roadmap that reflects our commitment to delivering measurable

results and real value to our members, while advancing our Chamber's capabilities, reputation and influence.

This is a long-distance commitment - one that demands structure, institutional continuity, and a forward-looking strategy that rises above electoral cycles, global volatility and self-centered interests.

In this unique period of unprecedented volatility, performative leadership and ultra complex challenges, the AMCHAM can and will:

- Deliver real value and practical services to our members aligned with emerging trends and needs
- Catalyze new U.S. investments and synergies in key sectors of the Greek economy
- Empower Greek businesses to seize the vast opportunities in the U.S. market
- Build on Greece's earned trust and momentum, to foster positive change, partnerships and initiatives for collective growth

This is our purpose. This is our responsibility.

CHAMBER NEWS AND EVENTS



Congressional Delegation in the chairmanship of Vern Buchanan Congressman, Chairman, HDP (R-FL) meets AmChamGR Members

AmCham Greece Meeting with US Congressional Delegation in Athens

On April 17, 2025, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce held a high-level meeting between Chamber members and members of a visiting United States Congressional Delegation at the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens. The discussion covered a range of pertinent topics across key areas of bilateral cooperation, including trade, investment, health, IT, energy, and innovation. The meeting served as an opportunity to reaffirm the strong economic and strategic ties between Greece and the United States, with AmCham Greece expressing its continued commitment to strengthening transatlantic collaboration and fostering a business environment that supports sustainable growth and mutual prosperity.



The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce extends its sincere appreciation to the members of the United States Congress for their visit and their interest in deepening the US-Greece partnership.

Medical Devices and Diagnostics Committee Pharmaceutical Committee

Breakfast Meeting with Minister of Health Adonis Georgiadis

On April 30, 2025, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce hosted a working breakfast with Minister of Health Adonis Georgiadis at the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens. The meeting was attended by members of the Chamber's health committees, the Medical

L. Barbetakis, A. Georgiadis, N. Bakatselos



Devices and Diagnostics Committee and the Pharmaceutical Committee, who enjoyed the opportunity to discuss current issues of interest with Minister Georgiadis as well as to voice their concerns and perspectives.



IN MEMORIAM

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is deeply saddened by the passing of former US Ambassador to Greece Thomas M.T. Niles, who passed away on April 30, 2025. Ambassador Niles had a distinguished 36-year career in the United States Foreign Service, that included three key ambassadorial appointments—to Canada (1985-1989), Greece (1993-1997), and the European Union (1989-1991)—as well as serving as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Canada (1991-1993).

His contribution and guidance during his tenure as US Ambassador to Greece have left a lasting impact on the endeavors of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. We extend our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones.



Panos Pantelis, Kalligeros John, Politopoulou Marianna, Prodromou Elisabeth, Kotionis George, Miropoulos Artemis, Xytaki Maria, Emirzas Ioannis, Papadogianni Efi, Rabbat Vassilis, Saracakis Alexandros, Zaimis Leonidas, Vassilakos John, Griveas Polychronis, Grammatidis George, Dikeoulia Angeliki, Xidou Ritana, Gerogiannis Dimitris.

Leadership Committee

Leadership Committee Visit to Aegean Hangar B56

On May 14, 2025, the Leadership Committee of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce visited Aegean's technical base in Athens, where they enjoyed a private tour led by Dimitris Gerogiannis, CEO of Aegean. Located at Athens International Airport, this is Aegean's main technical base and is home to the company's maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) operations and its CAE flight training center.

During the visit, the participating Leadership Committee members had the opportunity to learn more about Aegean's history over more than a quarter of a century, witness the outstanding expertise and attention to detail involved in MRO

operations and find out about how pilots and crews are rigorously trained to handle high-pressure scenarios with cutting edge simulators, including a full size cabin emergency evacuation trainer (CEET).

Taxation Committee

Breakfast Meeting with Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance Georgios Kotsiras



Vassilis Kafatos, Ioannis Stavropoulos, Georgios Kotsiras, Nikolaos Bakatselos

On May 19, 2025, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce held a closed working breakfast with the recently appointed Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Georgios Kotsiras. A marked success, the meeting took place at Makedonia Palace Hotel in Thessaloniki and was attended by senior executives of a number of AmCham Greece member companies from across northern Greece, as well as members of the Chamber's Taxation Committee. The discussion centered on current issues in taxation and on government initiatives in the area of tax policy, and Chamber members had the opportunity to put forward considered proposals on further improving the country's tax landscape and boosting business competitiveness in Greece.



CHAMBER NEWS AND EVENTS



AmCham Greece at Special Committee Meeting at Hellenic Parliament

On May 8, 2025, AmCham Greece VP Vassilis Kafatos and Education, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (EIE) Committee Chair Litsa Panayotopoulos represented the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce at the joint meeting of the Hellenic Parliament's Special Permanent Committee on Research and Technology and the Standing Committee on Production and

Trade, which was convened with a focus on the topic of "Chambers promoting innovation" and attended by representatives of all political parties. In addition to AmCham Greece, other chambers of commerce represented at the meeting were the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the Association of Businesses of the Industrial Zone of Thessaloniki (SEVIPETH), the German-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, and the Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce.

AmCham Greece Treasurer Litsa Panayotopoulos and Vice President Vassilis Kafatos at the Special Standing Committee on Research and Technology & the Standing Committee on Production and Commerce chaired by Stratos Simopoulos.



AmCham Greece at 10th HAEE Energy Transition Symposium

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce was present at the 10th HAEE Energy Transition Symposium, which was held on June 3-5, 2025, at Maroussi Plaza Centre in Athens. The symposium was organized by the Hellenic Association for Energy Economics and convened under the theme "A Decade of Energy Transition: Adapting for Tomorrow." In addition to being one of the event's institutional partners, AmCham Greece was represented at the Symposium by Executive Director Elias Spirtounias, who moderated a panel discussion titled "The Elephant in the Room: EU Industry Competitiveness" on June 3. Featuring Vassilis Tsaitas, Group CFO at Helleniq Energy, Kostas Axaroglou, Dean of Alba Graduate Business School, and Konstantinos Eleftheriadis, Partner and Energy, Resources and Industrials Leader at Deloitte Greece, the panel addressed the pressing issue of maintaining EU industrial competitiveness amidst escalating energy costs and stringent climate policies and explored key issues including the impact of high energy prices on European manufacturing and heavy industry, how to navigate the tension between decarbonization goals and industrial resilience, and the policy and market mechanisms needed to sustain competitiveness in a low-carbon economy.

E. Spirtounias, V. Tsaitas, K. Axaroglou, K. Eleftheriadis



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CHAMBER NEWS AND EVENTS



Yiannis Emirzas, Artemis Miropoulos, Nikos Kostopoulos, Nikos Negas, Elias Spirtounias, Pantelis Panos, Maria Xytaki, John Saracakis, Panagiotis Giannakis, Eleni Chrona, Dionysis Tsitos, George Grammatidis, Ritana Xidou, Maria Kastritsiou

Leadership Committee Leadership Forum

On May 29, 2025, the AmCham Greece Leadership Committee held its latest “Talking with Young People About Professional Opportunities and Entrepreneurship” Leadership Forum at the premises of TGI Fridays in Syntagma Square, in the heart of Athens.

Designed for young people aged between 17 and 28, the latest Leadership Forum

gave its young audience the opportunity to learn about upcoming trends, challenges and professional opportunities in the Greek market, directly from senior executives working at some of Greece’s top companies. Talks by Leadership Committee members were followed by a group discussions and mentoring session as well as a talk by a guest inspirational speaker, the legendary former basketball player and coach Panagiotis Giannakis. The event subsequently ended with a networking cocktail reception.

Nikolaos Bakatselos



Artemis Miropoulos, Dionysis Tsitos



Nikos Negas, Panagiotis Giannakis, Elias Spirtounias



AmCham Greece Announces New Defense and Security Committee

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the launch of its newest committee, dedicated to promoting collaboration and innovation within the defense and security industry. The announcement was made by AmCham Greece President Nikolaos Bakatselos in the context of DEFEA 2025. The new committee will be chaired by Nikolaos Papatsas, Senior Partner at EFA Group, whose leadership and vision will be instrumental in shaping the committee’s agenda and further strengthening US-Greece cooperation in this vital sector.

Upcoming Events

Annual General Assembly

June 30

HOTEL GRANDE BRETAGNE, ATHENS

Hellenic Pavilion at AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition 2025

October 13-15, 2025

WALTER E. WASHINGTON
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23rd Corporate Responsibility Conference *Omnia: Universal Values Lead Progress*

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AMCHAMS AROUND THE WORLD

ACE US Delegation 2025

Strengthening Transatlantic Ties in a Changing World

In an era defined by evolving geopolitical dynamics, rapid digital transformation, and mounting pressure on global trade, transatlantic cooperation remains a bedrock of stability, innovation, and shared prosperity.

Taking place on May 12-16, 2025, this year's AmChams in Europe delegation to the United States organized by AmCham Greece in its capacity as ACE Secretariat—ACE US Delegation 2025—saw 47 senior representatives from 31 AmChams travel across the Atlantic for a week of strategic engagement in Washington DC and Atlanta, Georgia. The delegation met with key political and economic leaders, visited government institutions and corporate

headquarters, and participated in a series of high-level dialogues that explored the future of US-European economic relations, global leadership, and the role of innovation in addressing common challenges. With a varied program that included policy roundtables, briefings, networking opportunities, and industry site visits, the trip highlighted the enduring values and mutual interests at the heart of the transatlantic alliance and

reaffirmed the commitment to transatlantic cooperation.

In Atlanta, the delegation visited a series of key companies and organizations, including the Coca-Cola's global headquarters, Delta Air Lines, and the Georgia Institute of Technology, where they had the opportunity to explore different perspectives on innovation and sustainability, the role of enterprises as agents of social impact, and how research institutions can drive resilient entrepreneurial ecosystems. Meanwhile, engagements with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Department of Economic Development offered delegates a closer look at how the state supports and cultivates a competitive global trade and investment landscape.

In Washington DC, the delegation met with senior officials across the US government and business community—including the US Department of State, US Department of Commerce, Office of the US Trade Representative, and US Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Atlantic Council—and discussed a wide range of crucial topics, from trade policy, digital governance, and artificial intelligence to energy security and



The ACE Delegation with Courtney Austrian, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and Robert Garverick, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs



The ACE Delegation with Ashok Pinto, Acting Assistant Secretary for Global Markets and Director General of the Foreign Commercial Service at the U.S. Department of Commerce

the critical role of the private sector in fostering global stability. Bipartisan meetings on Capitol Hill confirmed strong political consensus, reaffirming that the transatlantic partnership is not just an economic imperative but a strategic necessity—essential to global peace, prosperity, and democratic resilience.

“The values that unite us—democracy, freedom, cooperation—require more than rhetoric. They demand relationships, investment, and persistence,” said Elias Spirtounias, Vice Chair of AmChams in Europe and Executive Director of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. “That’s why we are here. That’s why we believe in the power of partnership.”

The ACE US Delegation 2025 stands as a powerful testament to what is possible when business, policy, and shared values converge. As a trusted connector between Europe and the United States, AmChams in Europe continues to amplify transatlantic voices, align priorities, and help shape a more connected, resilient, and prosperous future. 🇺🇸



The ACE ExCo with Congresswoman Dina Titus, Member, U.S. House representing Nevada’s 1st Congressional District

By the Numbers: A Partnership of Impact

The US and Europe are each other’s largest trading partners, collectively forming the world’s most expansive and affluent market. The scale and significance of the US–EU economic relationship are undeniable:

- \$1.9 trillion in annual trade
- \$7.4 trillion in mutual direct investment
- 64% of foreign investment in the U.S. originates from Europe
- 56% of U.S. foreign investment flows to Europe
- 16 million jobs supported across both continents

These figures represent more than just economic exchange. They underscore the tangible benefits of a partnership grounded in shared values and longterm collaboration.



The ACE ExCo with Congressman Vern Buchanan, Member, U.S. House representing Florida’s 16th Congressional District & Vice Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

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DEFEA 2025

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USA Pavilion

AT DEFEA 2025

Proudly organized by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce for the third time running, the USA Pavilion at this year's DEFEA – Defence Exhibition Athens was once again one of the event's key highlights, hosting top US defense companies, showcasing innovative defense and security solutions, and promoting networking, business partnerships, and stronger defense ties between Greece and the United States.

On May 6-8, 2025, leading international defense and security companies and stakeholders came together in Athens for DEFEA 2025, the high profile international defense exhibition held biennially in Athens under the auspices of the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence, and organized by ROTA Exhibitions Greece in cooperation with the Hellenic Manufacturers of Defense and Security Material Association (SEKPY) and with the support of the Hellenic Aerospace Security and Defense Industries Group

(HASDIG) and the Hellenic Association of Space Industry (HASI).

The hugely successful DEFEA 2025 was attended by senior defense and security officials, government representatives, top decisionmakers, industry leaders, and a host of manufacturers, distributors, and buyers from Greece, across the region, and beyond. In total, this year's exhibition welcomed 98 delegations from 45 countries, hosted 436 exhibitors from 37 countries, and featured 18 national pavilions—not least the much

anticipated USA Pavilion, which was organized for the third consecutive time by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, with the full support of the US Embassy in Athens and in association with the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Hellenic Chapter.

Greece stands as a critical NATO ally in a region where defense, deterrence, and diplomacy converge. In today's increasingly complex security environment, the deepening cooperation between the United States and Greece is not just timely—it is essential. It is a relationship built on shared values, mutual trust, and a common vision for regional and global stability.

- Nikolaos Bakatselos, President, AmCham Greece

Without a doubt one of DEFEA's top highlights, the USA Pavilion featured 28 exhibitors, including top US defense and security companies, and showcased the best of US defense technology and cutting-edge systems. The pavilion's official inauguration and ribbon cutting ceremony, which took place on May 6, was

conducted by Nikolaos Bakatselos, President of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, joined by Maria Olson, Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Athens, as well as General Dimitrios Choupis, Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff (HNDGS); Tom Coradeschi, Assistant Program Executive Officer International for the U.S. Joint Program Executive Office Armaments & Ammunition (JPEO A&A); Sandy Long, Senior Advisor for Defense Exports at the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Defense Exports and Cooperation (DASA DE&C); and General Andrew P. Poppas, Commanding General of the United States Army Forces Command. The ceremony was attended by numerous senior government and armed forces officials from Greece and the United States, as well as top representatives of defense and security industry companies, who also had the opportunity to tour the pavilion and meet the exhibitors.

Exhibitors' Breakfast Briefing

Earlier in the day, exhibitors had participated in a special breakfast briefing hosted by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and the US Embassy in Athens, designed to afford them key insights into Greece's political, economic, and trade landscape.



T. Coradeschi, S. Long, N. Bakatselos, M. Olson, Commanding General A. Poppas, General D. Choupis

“As always, our goal with the USA Pavilion is to provide a platform, not just for showcasing cutting edge land, sea, and air technologies but also for creating meaningful connections across the defense and security community. Connections that lead to partnerships, innovation, and longterm cooperation,” said AmCham President Nikolaos Bakatselos in his opening remarks, going on to talk about the strength of the US-Greece relationship that's built on the shared values of democracy, freedom, and the rule of law and a common commitment to peace and stability. “This year's DEFEA takes place at a critical juncture in global affairs. As strategic challenges grow more complex, defense

collaboration becomes more essential,” he noted. “Greece remains a pillar of stability in Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, a reliable NATO ally and one of America's most trusted regional partners. Our cooperation in defense and security is deeper than ever, and together we are building the foundations for a more secure and resilient transatlantic future.”

Additional welcome remarks were delivered by Captain Sokratis Karamoutas HN, DDPPC Director at the General Directorate of Defense Investments and Armaments (GDDIA) at the Ministry of National Defense; Colonel Michael Tobias, Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation at the US Embassy in Athens; and Captain Mark Imblum, Defense Attaché – Senior Defense Official at the US Embassy Athens. The briefing was conducted by the US Embassy's Jami-la Baraka, Deputy Chief at the Office of Defense Cooperation; Dawn Bruno, Commercial Attaché; Chris Dostal, Deputy Political Counsellor; and Aaron Easlick, Economic Officer.

USA Pavilion Reception at the historic Floating Naval Museum Averof Battleship



USA Pavilion Reception

On the evening of May 7, 2025, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and the US Embassy in Athens honored the USA Pavilion exhibitors and the US government representatives and dignitaries with a memorable reception held aboard the historic Floating Naval Museum Battleship Georgios Averof at Marina

DEFEA 2025

Floisvou in Athens. The exclusive event brought together key defense leaders and exhibitors to celebrate US innovation and the strong international defense relationship between the two nations.

“This year’s Pavilion reflects both continuity and progress. It is not only larger in scale but also broader in scope — showcasing the full spectrum of American defense innovation and strengthening the platform for business, dialogue, and strategic cooperation,” said AmCham Greece President Nikolaos Bakatseolos in his address to the reception’s distinguished guests. “We thank our exhibiting companies for their trust in this initiative and for their commitment to advancing US-Greece defense ties. Your work matters. It drives innovation, enhances interoperability, and fosters the kind of industrial cooperation that underpins a resilient alliance.”

Exploring New Prospects in Cybersecurity and Defense

On May 8, 2025, AmCham Greece shone the spotlight on emerging opportunities in the key fields of cybersecurity and defense with a key event titled “New Prospects on Cybersecurity and Defense Industrial Cooperation, Investments,



B. Morris, J. Saracakis, N. Bakatseolos, M. Olson, A. Smith, G. Koutsogiannis

and Extroversion,” which took place at Metropolitan Expo, Conference Hall C1, sponsored by the Public Power Corporation (PPC/DEI) and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

Kicking off with insightful addresses by AmCham President Nikolaos Bakatseolos, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tasos Chatzivasilieiou, and Israeli Ambassador to Greece Noam Katz, the event featured two engaging panel discussions that sparked valuable dialogue on technological sovereignty, innovation-driven growth, and the alignment of cybersecurity with national resilience and industrial competitiveness.

A. Tassouli, A. Costopoulos, G. Oren, G. Nounesis, Col. D. Zampakolas



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Panos Xenokostas, President and CEO of ONEX Shipyards & Technologies Group presenting the National Vessel



Cpt S. Karamoutas, A. Costopoulos, N. Bakatselos, J. Baraka, Cpt D. Filiagkos, J. Saracakis, E. Spirtounias

The first, titled “The role of cyber defense on critical infrastructures for national and economic security,” focused on how Greece’s current national policy framework for protecting critical infrastructure from cyber threats is evolving to meet the growing complexity of modern cybersecurity challenges that not only threaten national security but also have significant implications for economic stability and growth. The second, titled “Empowering the Greek defense industry,” focused on the key factors required to enhance its global competitiveness, including the need to establish a robust ecosystem to link small, medium, and large enterprises and enhance collaboration, drive innovation, and improve supply chain integration, and the need to attract greater investment through joint ventures and private capital.

“We live in an era where threats have expanded beyond land, sea, and air into the digital realm,” noted President Nikolaos Bakatselos. “Cybersecurity is no longer just a technical concern—it is a matter of national sovereignty and economic survival. Protecting critical infrastructure demands urgent, coordinated action, strategic investment, and a forward-looking mindset.”

Looking ahead to AUSA 2025

A dedicated info session that took place on May 8, 2025, in the USA Pavilion’s seminar area saw AmCham Greece proudly announce that it will be organizing, in collaboration with Enterprise Greece and the Ministry of National Defense’s

GDDIA, the 12th Hellenic Pavilion at the upcoming AUSA 2025 Annual Meeting and Exposition, which will take place on October 13-15, 2025, in Washington DC. Speaking at the info session, Nikolaos Bakatselos, President of AmCham Greece, Major General Ioannis Bouras, General Director of GDDIA, and Marinis Giannopoulos, CEO of Enterprise Greece, discussed the strategic importance of a strong Greek presence at AUSA’s Annual Meeting and Exposition, which is widely hailed as the world’s foremost land power exhibition, and invited Greek defense and security companies to take part in this key international initiative. The speakers outlined the significant partnerships and opportunities for Greek companies that the Hellenic Pavilion has resulted in over the years and highlighted the value of extroversion, transatlantic cooperation, and the promotion of Greek innovation and manufacturing capabilities on the global stage.

“We are confident that our participation in AUSA 2025 will once again mark a powerful step forward, enhancing the international visibility of Greece’s defense industry, strengthening our strategic relationship with the United States, and showcasing our national capabilities on a global platform,” said President Nikolaos Bakatselos, while Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director of AmCham Greece, contextualized this latest endeavor in the wider context of the Chamber’s efforts to promote Greek business in the United States: “With the recent opening of our

new office in Washington DC, we are taking a significant step toward deepening our outreach and engagement in the United States. Our goal is to actively inform American companies about the strengths and capabilities of the Greek defense and security industry and to foster meaningful collaborations that benefit both sides,” Spirtounias said. “This initiative reflects our longterm commitment to supporting Greek companies in expanding their international footprint and forging strategic partnerships.”

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce would like to thank all the exhibitors, sponsors, participants, and attendees for their invaluable contribution to the success of the USA Pavilion at DEFEA 2025. 🇬🇷

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A STRATEGIC LEAP FORWARD

AMCHAM GREECE ESTABLISHES US OFFICE
IN WASHINGTON DC

Drake Behrakis, Elias Spirtounias, Katerina Sokou, Vassilis Kafatos, Nikolaos Bakatselos



On May 22, 2025, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce celebrated a significant milestone with the official inauguration of AmCham GR-US in Washington DC. This new venture realizes the Chamber's longstanding vision to establish a permanent presence in the United States, fortifying bilateral trade relations during a pivotal moment of historic highs in US-Greece relations.

A Legacy of Purpose and Partnership

Since its founding in 1932, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (AmCham Greece) has served as one of the most enduring and dynamic business institutions in Greece. With a mission to strengthen economic, trade, and investment ties between Greece and the United States, AmCham Greece has consistently worked to foster dialogue, open markets, and support business-friendly reforms and opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic.

Over the course of more than nine decades, the Chamber has built bridges—between companies, governments, industries, and ideas. It has advocated for transparency, innovation, and extroversion in Greek entrepreneurship. It has forged a trusted relationship with US government institutions, including the US Embassy in Athens and the US Chamber of Commerce, and maintained an unwavering commitment to advancing shared values of democracy, rule of law, and open markets.

Today, AmCham Greece boasts an extensive and ever-growing base of more than 1,000 member companies, including leading Greek enterprises, US multinationals, SMEs, startups, and professional organizations. Through its 25+ committees—covering sectors from energy and education to healthcare, real estate, tax policy, and innovation—the Chamber serves as both a thought leader and a platform for action. It facilitates public-private dialogue, supports policy reform, and creates strategic business opportunities.

But AmCham Greece has never been content with resting on its accomplishments. For many years, its leadership envisioned a more direct presence in the United States—one that would mirror the strength of US-Greece relations, respond to member needs, and provide a permanent gateway for business collaboration in the world's largest and most influential market.



Geoffrey Pyatt, Drake Behrakis, Alexandros Costopoulos, David D. Miller, Nikolaos Bakatselos, John D. Saracakis, Vassilis Kafatos, Chryssos Kavounides, Elias Spirtounias

Vision Becomes Reality

On May 22, 2025, that vision became a reality with the official inauguration of AmCham GR-US, the Chamber's permanent US office in Washington DC. The new office represents a strategic leap forward—one that reflects the Chamber's ambition, agility, and enduring relevance in a rapidly shifting global economic landscape. The new office's opening ceremony was attended by a distinguished roster of guests, including prominent members of the Greek-American business and diplomatic communities and former US Ambassadors to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt and David D. Miller—both strong supporters of the Chamber's work and of the growing strategic partnership between the United States and Greece.

“This is more than a new location. It's a strategic leap forward, expanding our role in strengthening the economic and strategic partnership between Greece and the United States. We knew we had to be present at the heart of global decisionmaking—not just to observe, but to engage.”

- Nikolaos Bakatselos, President of AmCham Greece

“A giant leap into the future, Into THE future. Expanding its activities in the United State by actually opening this wonderful place, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce in the capital of the United States, in Washington, DC.”

- Ekaterini Nassika, Ambassador of Greece to the United States

Indeed, Washington DC, as the nerve center of global policy, diplomacy, and influence, offers unparalleled opportunities for engagement, advocacy, and visibility. The Chamber's presence in the US capital reflects a sophisticated understanding of today's economic diplomacy and the importance of strategic presence in global affairs.

Nikolaos Bakatselos and Ekaterini Nassika cut the ribbon



A NEW BEGINNING

"This new chapter is the culmination of a longterm strategy to enhance our international presence and better serve our members in both countries. It reflects our commitment to evolving with the times while remaining true to our founding mission: to promote and strengthen Greek-US economic relations. The Washington office will give us direct access to the US policy and business ecosystem and will help amplify Greece's voice at the global level."

- Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director of AmCham Greece in Athens

Years in the making, the new office was made possible thanks to the Chamber's committed work and determination and with the steadfast support of key members of the Greek-American community. Notably, longtime Chamber ally and prominent Greek-American leader Drake Behrakis played an instrumental role in facilitating the establishment of the Washington office, generously helping secure and support the premises that now house AmCham GR-US. His commitment to advancing US-Greece ties and empowering institutions that bridge the two nations stands as a testament to the enduring impact of diaspora leadership.

A Platform for Access, Advocacy, and Entrepreneurship

The establishment of AmCham GR-US is not merely symbolic; it is operational, purposeful, and designed to deliver concrete value for member companies. The new office will serve as a platform for business facilitation, advocacy, and strategic partnerships, offering Greek



John D. Saracakis, Nikolaos Bakatselos, Katerina Sokou, Elias Spirtounias

and US-based organizations direct access to networks, resources, and institutions on both sides of the Atlantic.

For Greek companies, AmCham GR-US will provide crucial support in navigating the US market, whether through market entry strategies, regulatory insights, introductions to potential partners, or participation in targeted events and forums. For US companies and institutions, it offers a direct link to Greece's business ecosystem and to broader opportunities in Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The new branch will also act as a Center for Hellenic Entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on fostering innovation, investment, and cooperation between Greek businesses and the successful Greek-American community—many of whom are active in business, academia, research, and philanthropy across the

United States. These diaspora connections represent a powerful and underutilized asset in Greece's economic diplomacy, and AmCham GR-US is uniquely positioned to help activate them.

"Offering a new, premium platform for our member businesses, professionals, and nonprofit organizations seeking opportunities in the United States and Greece, we aim to bridge the most dynamic and extrovert part of the Greek business world with the successful Greek-American community."

- Katerina Sokou, Executive Director of AmCham GR-US



With a background in journalism, policy analysis, and international political economy—and more than a decade of experience in Washington DC—Katerina Sokou, the newly appointed Executive Director of AmCham GR-US, brings deep expertise and strong networks to the role. Her leadership will be instrumental in shaping the branch's focus and aligning its initiatives with the priorities of the respective governments and business communities in the United States and Greece.

Future Goals: Strategy, Engagement, and Growth

AmCham GR-US enters the US policy and business landscape at a time of tremendous momentum in US-Greece relations. Strategic cooperation in defense, energy, and technology is at an all-time high. Greek exports to the United States are growing, tourism between the countries is booming, and joint investments in sectors such as infrastructure, logistics, and renewable energy are accelerating.

Looking ahead, AmCham GR-US has outlined an ambitious agenda:

Strategic partnerships: The office will actively promote US-Greece cooperation in high value sectors such as defense and security, clean and renewable energy, digital technologies, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing. It will act as a facilitator for bilateral business partnerships, trade delegations, and sector-specific forums.

Policy advocacy: As a recognized voice of the Greek business community, AmCham GR-US will engage directly with US institutions, think tanks, and policy stakeholders to ensure that Greece's perspectives and priorities are well represented. This includes promoting Greece as a stable, innovative, and strategically located partner within the European Union and the broader region.

Diaspora engagement: AmCham GR-US will seek to activate and collaborate with the vibrant Greek-American community, working closely with Greek-American organizations, universities, and en-

trepreneurs to foster innovation and promote investment in Greece.

Member services: The new office will provide tailored support to AmCham Greece members, including market briefings, regulatory updates, business introductions, and curated events. It will also serve as a landing point for delegations and Greek companies exploring expansion in the United States.

Partnership with institutions: The office will strengthen collaboration with the US Chamber of Commerce, fellow AmChams across Europe, and key institutions such as the US Department of Commerce, SelectUSA, and Enterprise Greece to promote joint initiatives and elevate Greece's economic profile internationally.

A Legacy That Begins Again

The inauguration of AmCham GR-US is more than the opening of a physical office: It is the continuation of a strategic vision for AmCham Greece's role in the 21st century. As the presidency of Nikolaos Bakatselos comes to a close, he leaves behind a living legacy of strategic boldness, extroversion, and forward-looking leadership.

"This office represents everything we've worked toward as a Chamber: presence, purpose, and progress."

- Nikolaos Bakatselos, President of AmCham Greece

As AmCham GR-US begins its journey in Washington DC, it stands ready to connect, empower, and represent the Greek business community with professionalism, credibility, and ambition. It is a natural evolution of a Chamber that has always seen beyond borders and always believed that the best way to shape the future is to be present in it. 🇬🇷

THE INTERVIEW



Leadership today
demands both
resilience and
adaptability

LEADERSHIP WITH PURPOSE

NIKOLAOS BAKATSELOS
ON SERVING AMCHAM GREECE



With his second and final term as President of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce coming to a close, Nikolaos Bakatselos stands out as a leader whose tenure has marked one of the most dynamic and impactful periods in the Chamber's history. From steering AmCham Greece through crises and transformations to championing extroversion, innovation, and transatlantic cooperation, he leaves a legacy of vision, trust, and renewed purpose. Interviewed by Alexandra Loli for Business Partners, he reflects on the journey, the people, the challenges, and the values that defined his presidency.

Reflecting on your two terms as President of AmCham Greece, what would you describe as the most defining moments or milestones—events or decisions that shaped the Chamber's identity and direction?

As I reflect on these past years, I am filled with gratitude, pride, and a deep sense of purpose. This journey has been defined by extraordinary challenges, but also by tremendous growth—for the Chamber, for our voice, and for our role in Greece and beyond.

From the very beginning and throughout my presidency, our main goal was to elevate the Chamber's role in advancing the strategic U.S.–Greece relationship. During the COVID-19 pandemic—a true test for all of us—we made a conscious decision not to pause or scale back the Chamber's activities, but to go fully digital, and in doing so, we expanded our reach, our relevance, and our ability to lead conversations across industries. In fact, we held more events than ever before, turning adversity into momentum.

Innovation and extroversion became defining principles of our strategy. We embraced digital tools to communicate, influence, and connect more powerfully, both within Greece and across borders. We grew not just more visible, but more impactful.

Another milestone was our active repositioning within the AmChams in Europe (ACE) network. Hosting a major gathering with representatives from across the region helped

reinforce Greece's voice within the broader transatlantic business community—a voice that is now stronger, more respected, and more present than ever.

Just before concluding my term, we proudly opened AmCham Greece's new office in Washington DC. This step was both symbolic and strategic, a permanent bridge connecting us to decisionmakers, partners, and stakeholders in the United States and a lasting testament to our commitment to deeper bilateral engagement.

The Chamber's two newest committees, the Crete Committee and the Defense Committee, also mark significant milestones, further solidifying our commitment to regional engagement and strategic priorities, ensuring the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce continues to evolve and address emerging challenges effectively.

Throughout this journey, we also embarked on numerous strategic missions—across Europe, the US, Asia, and Africa—to share Greece's story, build partnerships, and open new doors for our business community. These were not simply trips; they were purposeful, targeted efforts to elevate the Cham-

ber's international standing and to promote Greece's transformation.

Each of these milestones helped shape not only the identity of the Chamber but also its direction for the future. And for that, I feel truly honored.

AmCham Greece has a unique and critical role to play in reinforcing the US–Greece partnership

THE INTERVIEW

You led AmCham Greece through a period marked by significant global challenges, from the pandemic to geopolitical shifts. How did these experiences shape your leadership approach?

These challenges taught me that leadership today demands both resilience and adaptability. The pandemic, in particular, was a turning point. It disrupted everything, and yet it also revealed the strength of the AmCham Greece community.

I learned to listen more, to act decisively but thoughtfully, and to prioritize connection over perfection. We embraced digital transformation, deepened our policy engagement, and stayed close to our members when they needed us most. We became a hub not only of advocacy but of reassurance.

Crises have a way of testing values. I am proud that we never compromised ours. Transparency, collaboration, and service remained our compass, and that made all the difference.

Strengthening transatlantic ties has been a cornerstone of your leadership.

What impact do you believe AmCham Greece has had in enhancing US-Greece relations during your tenure?

Strengthening transatlantic relations has been at the heart of everything we've done during my presidency. We believed—and I still firmly believe—that AmCham Greece has a unique and critical role to play in reinforcing the US-Greece partnership, not only at the governmental level but also in the spheres of business, investment, innovation, and civil society.

We've worked consistently to build trust, to create platforms for dialogue, and to showcase Greece as a credible, strategic partner in Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. We've brought together public and private sector leaders from both Greece and the United States to explore opportunities, solve challenges, and advance mutual goals—whether through flagship events, targeted initiatives, or quiet, behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

The opening of our permanent office in Washington DC is, to me, the culmination of that longterm vision. It provides us with a physical presence at the very heart of US policymaking and thought leadership, allowing us to deepen our engagement, build institutional bridges, and advocate more effectively for our members and for Greece.

And just as importantly, it reflects something fundamental about the Chamber: We are a steady force. Governments may change, presidents may come and go, policies may shift—sometimes radically—but our mission remains

Transparency,
collaboration,
and service have
remained our
compass, and
that's made all the
difference

consistent. Especially in uncertain times like these, when international norms are being challenged and geopolitical tensions are on the rise, AmCham Greece stands firm. We are committed to continuity, to values-driven leadership, and to being a reliable partner for both sides of the Atlantic.

You've often spoken about Greece's potential and role on the global stage. How do you see Greece evolving in the coming years, and what role can institutions such as

AmCham Greece play?

Greece is at a pivotal moment. We are emerging as a more extroverted, resilient, and digitally forward country with a growing role in energy, logistics, technology, and regional stability. But this potential must be continuously cultivated. Institutions such as the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce are essential to that process. We bring together stakeholders, ideas, and perspectives that fuel sustainable progress. We act as bridges—between business and policy, between Greece and the United States, between innovation and implementation.

I am confident that Greece can further position itself as a regional hub for clean energy, for talent, and for entrepreneurship. But that will require longterm vision, bold reforms, and continued international engagement. AmCham Greece is uniquely placed to support that journey.

What has kept you personally inspired and driven throughout these years? What values have guided you as president? And what is your message to your successor, and the wider Chamber community, as AmCham Greece enters its next chapter?

What inspired me most were the people: our members, our board of directors, our committees, and our dedicated team at the Chamber. They are the reason AmCham Greece has flourished. Their trust, ideas, and commitment motivated me every day.

The values that guided me were service, integrity, and respect. I always believed that leadership is not about titles — it's about responsibility. About building trust and being present.

To my successor, I would say: stay grounded, bold, open, and humble — and always put the community first. The Chamber is more than an institution. It is a living network of people, businesses, and shared purpose. Nurture that, and you will go far. And to the AmCham community: Thank you. It has been a privilege to serve you. I leave with a full heart and a strong belief in the future we have built together. 🇬🇷



The Next Chapter

STRENGTHENING AMCHAM GREECE'S
TRANSATLANTIC IMPACT

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce stands at a decisive crossroads—one shaped not by circumstance, but by vision. As global challenges grow more complex and transatlantic ties more essential, AmCham Greece is entering a new era of strategic engagement, one defined by presence, purpose, and proximity to power.

By John D. Saracakis

Vice President, American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce

In May 2025, following meticulous planning and preparations, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce formally opened its first branch in the United States. The inauguration of this new office in Washington DC is more than a ceremonial expansion. It is a bold statement of intent, a practical and symbolic milestone that signals the Chamber's evolving role as a conduit of influence between Greece and the United States. From the heart of the American capital, we are strengthening our capacity to engage meaningfully with US policymakers, business leaders, opinion shapers, and diaspora communities. This move is not simply geographic; it is strategic. By embedding the Chamber within one of the world's most consequential political and economic ecosystems, we are opening new channels for dialogue, investment, and cooperation. It is a natural evolution of our mission to serve as a trusted bridge between nations, institutions, and ideas and a critical step toward shaping a more impactful future.





AmCham Greece in Washington: A Strategic Move

The decision to establish a permanent presence in Washington DC was not taken lightly. It reflects a growing recognition that Greece's voice must be heard—and felt—at the core of transatlantic decisionmaking. The new AmCham Greece office will serve as a dynamic platform for engagement, advocacy, and partnership, reinforcing our commitment to a future grounded in substance and sustained by relationships.

“The Washington office marks a new era for AmCham Greece: an era of direct engagement, deeper partnerships, and daily influence.”

— **John D. Saracakis, Vice President of AmCham Greece;**
Washington DC, May 22

Washington is where global priorities are shaped. It is where policy intersects with business, where diplomacy meets innovation, and where alliances are built through constant, credible presence. For the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, this new foothold

THE NEXT CHAPTER STRENGTHENING AMCHAM GREECE'S TRANSATLANTIC IMPACT

offers unparalleled access to critical US institutions: Congress, the administration, think tanks, and leading industry associations.

More importantly, it offers a daily seat at the table, something that cannot be achieved from afar. Whether advancing investment opportunities, promoting bilateral cooperation, or helping shape the transatlantic agenda on energy, technology, defense, or trade, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is now positioned not just to respond, but to lead.

Our strategic expansion into Washington marks the beginning of a more agile, engaged, and internationally focused Chamber, one poised to forge impactful partnerships and act as a trusted interlocutor between Greece and the United States in real time.

Political Influence and Public Policy Alignment

AmCham Greece's ability to shape conversations at the highest levels of policymaking is no longer aspirational—it is real, respected, and growing. Through regular engagement with US and Greek political leaders, including members of the US State Department and Congress, we are increasingly seen as a constructive and credible interlocutor in transatlantic relations. Leaders such as



“Engaging with John on how to keep U.S.–Greece relations strong, forward-looking, and bipartisan, was very insightful. The Chamber’s leadership clearly understands the importance of this responsibility..”

– Representative Nicole Malliotakis (NY); New York, May 21

members of Congress Rep. Gus Bilirakis (Florida) and Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (New York), as well as Rep. Chris Pappas (New Hampshire), Co-Chair of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, have played pivotal roles in ensuring that Greek-American perspectives remain visible and impactful in Washington. Their commitment to US-Greece relations is not only consistent but deeply rooted in shared democratic values and cultural heritage.

“AmCham Greece’s presence in Washington represents a strategic maturity in US–Greece relations. It’s a necessary step for serious policy influence.”

– Charles Ries, former US Ambassador to Greece; during a meeting to discuss geopolitical strategy in US-Greece relations, Washington DC, May 15

Former US Ambassador to Greece Charles Ries, a long-time friend of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, offers a powerful example of how diplomacy and trade intertwine to shape stable, opportunity-rich bilateral relations. As we move forward, AmCham Greece must sustain and expand these institutional

“Exchanging views with John on how principled leadership can deepen U.S.–Greece ties, gives purpose. His presence reflects a commitment to the shared democratic values that define our bilateral relationship.”

– Representative Gus Bilirakis (FL); Washington DC, May 15





“John represents AmCham Greece with clarity and purpose. The Chamber’s growing presence in the U.S. shows it’s ready to contribute meaningfully to transatlantic dialogue.”

– Representative Chris Pappas (NH); New York, May 21

bridges, maintaining not only access but influence. Our contribution to bilateral conversations must be deliberate, firm, and with an eye to the future, grounded in both business acumen and geopolitical awareness.

Business and Industry Leadership

The American-Hellenic Chamber has long served as a trusted convener of business leaders and a dynamic engine of trade. In recent years, that role has evolved to include deeper engagement with innovation ecosystems, clean energy, and digital transformation. From US CEOs to Greek-born startupers and from legacy industries to emerging tech sectors, our network is more diverse and dynamic than ever. Peter Tichansky, President and CEO of the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), is a prime example of

“John understands that diplomacy and business are two sides of the same coin—especially when building trust across borders. His approach reflects the values we need in today’s global business environment.”

– Peter Tichansky, President and CEO of BCIU; during a meeting on international business diplomacy, New York, May 19

the kind of outward-facing leadership and strategic alignment the Chamber seeks. His work in promoting international business diplomacy resonates deeply with our own mission to foster cross-border collaboration. To succeed in today’s rapidly evolving landscape, AmCham Greece must continue to attract leadership fluent in both the operational rigor of traditional industry and the agility of tech-driven innovation. The future lies in cross-sector fluency—and our role is to enable, connect, and lead.

The Greek-American Diaspora: A Strategic Ally

No conversation about strengthening transatlantic ties is complete without recognizing the Greek-American diaspora—a formidable force in business, politics, culture, and philanthropy.

Individuals such as John Catsimatidis, Chairman and CEO of Red Apple Group and a major voice in New York’s civic and philanthropic life, and George Stamas, founding board member of The Hellenic Initiative (THI) and a senior partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, exemplify the diaspora’s unmatched capacity to amplify Greece’s relevance on the global stage.

Whether investing in startups, supporting youth and education in Greece, or opening doors in Washington, the diaspora community is deeply committed—but





“Discussing John’s vision on what Greece truly needs to attract long-term investment, was energizing. It’s not about appearances—it’s about stepping up to lead with purpose and push for real progress.”

– **John Catsimatidis, CEO of Red Apple Group; New York, May 20**

still underleveraged. Alexandra Spyrou Mitsakis, Executive Director of the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce in New York (HACC), also represents the next generation of diaspora leadership, strengthening institutional links and promoting business-to-business partnerships.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce must work deliberately to tap into this reservoir of strategic capital. Doing so is not a matter of outreach alone—it requires trust, cultural fluency, and the ability to align longterm interests. Here, too, lies vast untapped potential.

Interfaith and Cultural Diplomacy

AmCham Greece’s impact extends beyond boardrooms and ministries. In an era of polarization and global uncertainty, soft power matters more than ever, and the moral voice of cultural diplomacy carries weight.

Meetings with high-ranking members of the Orthodox Church, including Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, affirm the Chamber’s commitment to values-based diplomacy. The Archbishop’s influence as both a spiritual leader and a respected voice in political and civic dialogue enhances the Chamber’s ability to navigate spheres of moral authority with credibility.

Father Alexander Karloutsos, known for his decades of service as an advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch and for his unique presence across religious and diplomatic

“It was encouraging to see John embrace the idea that the future of the Greek Diaspora lies with those who build bridges—between generations and across borders. Continuity, identity, and connection matter more than ever.”

– **Father Alex Karloutsos; during a meeting on diaspora cohesion, New York, May 19**

circles, embodies the kind of leadership that transcends boundaries. His work with the Order of Saint Andrew and his role in interfaith dialogue have contributed to shaping Greece’s global cultural footprint.

Interfaith engagement is not symbolic; it is strategic. It affirms our commitment to inclusive values, shared history, and bridge-building. As we look to the future, AmCham Greece must retain the gravitas to operate in these spaces—with humility, clarity, and purpose.

“Connecting with John and exchanging views around the idea that business leadership, when rooted in ethics and service, becomes a force for unity, was very meaningful. That ethos is clearly shaping AmCham Greece’s evolving mission.”

– **Archbishop Elpidophoros; during a meeting on the role of interfaith diplomacy in strengthening transatlantic bonds, Boston, May 16**



Vision in Action: Stronger Together

Across all fronts of the Chamber's expanding transatlantic presence—political, business, cultural, and civic—a consistent force is driving momentum: a new kind of leadership rooted in connection, conviction, and continuity.

The individuals behind AmCham Greece's recent advances are not simply reacting to opportunity; they are cultivating it. Through deliberate relationship-building, purposeful engagement, and a deep understanding of both the Greek and US business and policy landscapes, they are shaping a more assertive, visible, and confident Chamber.

Recent months have seen a coordinated effort to forge new alliances and elevate the Chamber's role in strategic dialogue. Meetings with US policymakers are no longer occasional—they are ongoing. Discussions with thought leaders, diaspora influencers, and industry innovators are not just symbolic—they are actionable. These developments stem from a leadership philosophy that values presence over proclamations and results over rhetoric.

The result is a sense of alignment and forward movement—within AmCham Greece, across the transatlantic community, and among stakeholders who see this new chapter not as a shift but as a natural evolution. Stronger together, and stronger by design.

This is the Chamber's most globally engaged era to date, built on decades of credibility and energized by a renewed sense of purpose



A New Day, A Trusted Direction

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is not merely adapting to change; it is helping define it. With its presence now firmly anchored both across Greece and in the United States, the Chamber stands ready to operate at a new level of international relevance. This is the Chamber's most globally engaged and influential era to date, built on decades of credibility and energized by a renewed sense of purpose.

The opening of the Washington office is not the culmination of a journey, but the beginning of a more ambitious one. One that demands steady vision, deep-rooted relationships, and the

ability to inspire confidence on both sides of the Atlantic. The Chamber's upcoming elections mark a pivotal moment. At stake is not just continuity, but momentum. Not just structure, but spirit. The next chapter of AmCham Greece's story will require leadership that is forward-looking yet grounded, dynamic yet respected, and capable of stewarding this new direction with clarity and commitment.

The course has been set. The foundation is strong. The future is within reach—and in trusted hands.

DRIVEN BY SARACAKIS GROUP OF COMPANIES

In the runup to the Chamber's general assembly and election in June 2025, presidential candidate John D. Saracakis embarked on a week-long strategic engagement trip to the United States. His meetings spanned congressional offices, religious and diaspora leadership, international think tanks, and business diplomacy institutions, culminating in the inauguration of AmCham Greece's Washington DC office on May 22. The individuals referenced and perspectives shared in this article reflect the insights and relationships cultivated by John D. Saracakis during his personal meetings and engagements over the course of this trip.

DRIVEN BY **SARACAKIS GROUP OF COMPANIES**





A DYNAMIC AND PROACTIVE CHAMBER

Established in 1932, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (AmChamGR) is one of the largest, most active, and most dynamic American Chambers in Europe. AmChamGR aims to serve its members and support their growth through reinforcing Greek-US economic ties, representing them with effective advocacy, supporting them in their capability development, and providing them with the information and opportunities to build relations on both sides of the Atlantic as an impartial, trusted partner. Being a wholly autonomous, not-for-profit organization, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce receives no subsidy from any government body. It is an active member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington D.C. and AmChams in Europe (ECACC), the umbrella organization for 50 American Chambers of Commerce (AmChams) from 48 countries throughout Europe and Eurasia.

AMCHAMGR

MEMBERS BENEFITS

Broadening Business Horizons

Creating New Business Partnerships

Taking advantage of trade and investment opportunities

Being part of the American Chambers global network

N **C** **A** **G**
E **O** **D** **R**
T **N** **V** **O**
W **N** **O** **W**
O **E** **C** **T**
R **C** **A** **H**
K **T** **C**
I **I** **Y**
N **O**
G **N**

20
COMMITTEES

Advocating on key issues for the development and competitiveness of the Greek economy

60+
ACTIVITIES PER YEAR

Organized throughout Greece, the United States, Southeastern Europe and the East Mediterranean

700
MEMBERS

Including leading Greek and multinational companies

25k
PARTICIPANTS

C-Suite executives, entrepreneurs, academics, governmental officials engaging in AmChamGR activities

450
BUSINESS LEADERS

Analyzing, disseminating and formulating policy proposals via participating at AmChamGR Committees and task forces

90+
YEARS

As an institutional leader in promoting and fostering economic and business relations between the U.S. and Greece

200+
SPONSORS

Supporting yearly initiatives and projects

10+
PUBLICATIONS

Briefing the business community on key business, trade, investment and policy developments

THOUGHT LEADERS



FUTURE TENSE

THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ERA AHEAD

By Alexandra Loli, Ph.D.

In an era defined by rapid transformation, rising stakeholder expectations, and mounting global uncertainty, corporate governance is no longer just a matter of compliance—it is a strategic imperative. Today's leaders must navigate complex regulatory landscapes, ensure organizational resilience, and drive sustainable value creation, all while upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability. This evolving reality sets the stage for AmCham Greece's upcoming 11th Corporate Governance Conference and for this issue's Thought Leaders special, which features insights from distinguished governance leaders, policy experts, and business executives and explores the key forces shaping the future of governance, locally and globally. From the rise of AI in decisionmaking to the intricacies of board dynamics, crisis preparedness, and sustainable regulatory frameworks, these contributions reflect the urgent need for forward-thinking leadership and meaningful reform. As we look ahead, the conversation on governance is more relevant than ever—and your voice is a vital part of it.



The Evolving Corporate Governance Framework in Greece: A Comprehensive Approach

This new corporate governance framework empowers boards to make more informed and objective decisions



By Maria Theodoulidou
Group Procurement and Corporate Governance Director, BoD Secretary, Fournalis Group of Companies; Chair of the AmCham Greece Corporate Governance Committee

July 17, 2021, marked the beginning of a new era for corporate governance in Greece. For the first time in over 25 years of legislative developments in this area, the issue was approached comprehensively, offering clarity, coherence, and a clear roadmap for implementation.

At the heart of this transformation was the enhanced role of the Board Nomination Committee, which now plays a pivotal part in shaping suitability policies for board members and ensuring the integrity of the candidate evaluation process. However, it is ultimately the Board of Directors that holds the most critical responsibility. The board not only determines its own structure and composition but also proposes its members to the General Assembly. One of the most consequential decisions within this process concerns the number of independent members, particularly whether they constitute a majority. Equally vital is the board's commitment to diversity. Beyond gender balance, diversity in knowledge, experience, age, and even nationality brings significant value. Boards that include women and members with backgrounds in sustainability, corporate governance, technology, cybersecurity, and shareholder engagement are better positioned to adopt and implement best practices, which in turn generate meaningful, measurable benefits.

This new governance framework reinforces the board's central role in directing and supervising a listed company. It empowers boards to make more informed and objective decisions—free from conflicts of interest—based on reliable financial and non-financial information. It also enables more effective oversight, as companies are now expected to operate with clear strategies and business goals, robust risk management, regulatory compliance systems, internal controls, and a fully integrated governance structure. The result is a stronger foundation for trust, transparency, and longterm value creation in the Greek corporate sector, one that aligns with international expectations and prepares companies to meet the challenges of a fast-evolving global business landscape.

THOUGHT LEADERS

An Investment in Transparency and Sustainability



By John Apsouris
Group General Counsel, HELLENiQ ENERGY S.A., Vice Chair of the AmCham Greece Corporate Governance Committee

While political changes in the US by late 2024 led to strong criticism of ESG principles, impacting other nations, the EU and other countries in the world continue to push for ambitious sustainability initiatives. The fact is that despite political rhetoric, real decisions are made through corporate strategies aligned with investment priorities.

In the context of the debate between competitiveness and sustainability, on February 26, 2025, the European Commission proposed an Omnibus package to simplify and streamline

EU sustainability regulations, particularly those related to corporate reporting and due diligence (CSRD, CSDDD, Taxonomy, and CBAM). The objective is to reduce administrative burdens on businesses

while maintaining or improving sustainability standards. The Omnibus package aims to enhance the competitiveness of EU companies in global markets by facilitating compliance

with sustainability requirements. On April 3, 2025, certain proposals under the stop-the-clock mechanism were approved, while others are still pending a vote.

Despite the simplifications, the core objectives of these regulations remain unchanged. They continue to apply to non-EU firms as well, ensuring that external companies also meet the EU's sustainability standards.

What can we expect for ESG soon? Here are some predictions:

- AI and blockchain will simplify ESG reporting and audits.
- The gap between US-Europe and Asia will widen, impacting multinational boards.
- Corporate activism will increase due to polarized ESG attitudes among shareholders and stakeholders.

In conclusion, ESG's narrative is evolving. Despite media backlash, investment in sustainability and transparency persists. Businesses face challenges but also opportunities if they adapt quickly, innovate, and comply with regulations.

ESG's narrative is evolving

Crisis Management Governance



By Vassilis Kaminaris
Partner, Head of Audit, KPMG in Greece

The global environment and marketplace have become increasingly complex, volatile and unstable, making crisis management crisis an important element of organizational resilience. Events that may require effective crisis management could involve natural disasters, cyberattacks, financial scandals, regulatory interventions, and others.

The board of directors is instrumental in providing strategic guidance and leadership which is essential in ensuring the organization's preparedness, survival, and recovery as the organization is called to navigate effectively through crises.

Effective crisis management requires a proactive approach, encompassing preparation to effectively manage and respond to these events. It also requires setting up a crisis governance structure with appropriate response plans, defined roles and responsibilities, timely assessment of impacts, development of stakeholder communication strategies, regular training and simulations, clear and transparent communication, and aiming to achieve effective collaboration and coordination.

Preparing plans to address potential crises involves risk

assessments to identify gaps, establish response teams, develop response protocols, and perform training programs and simulations. Swift and decisive action is essential. Responding to a crisis also requires clear communication to stakeholders of mitigation plans to maintain trust and credibility. In the aftermath of a crisis, restoring normality requires an evaluation of impacts, a deep understanding of what went wrong and of any lessons learned.

Crisis management and board-level preparedness are essential components of organizational resilience

Crisis management and board-level preparedness are essential components of organizational resilience. By adopting proactive strategies, fostering a culture of preparedness, and providing strategic oversight, boards can help organizations navigate through crises and emerge stronger.

Bridging the Communication Gap



By Vassilis Monogios
Managing Partner,
AMiD / GRC-ESG

Effective communication and relationship management between the board of directors (BoD) and the members of senior management is a prerequisite for the proper exercise of the board's responsibilities. However, in many cases, senior management participates in the BoD with only one or two members (usually a CEO, COO, or CFO). It is quite common for communication points to be very limited; for example, when an expense needs BoD

approval, and even then, the relevant submissions are usually presented by the CEO to the other BoD members. Let's consider the missing opportunities if the responsible sales director, production manager, IT and technology manager, HR manager, procurement manager, logistics manager, HS&E manager, etc. never or rarely have the opportunity or the duty to communicate with the board of directors and its committees. Not even a SWOT analysis for their operating units.

Looking a little further at the root causes of such a communication gap, we can see:

- weaknesses in organizational culture, with senior managers thinking that the less they communicate with the BoD, the easier it is for them to hide issues, and the BoD thinking that the less they call senior managers to BoD meetings, the fewer problems they'll have to deal with;
- a tendency to rationalize the weakness (e.g. a "no news is good news" mentality); and
- increased self-confidence in the CEO, with an augmented sense of knowing the company very well and being able to answer whatever the non-exec board members want.

Part of the solution to close the communication gap seems to be (a) holding periodic meetings and (b) establishing a formal ExCo (executive committee or management committee). However, effective communication and relationship management mainly starts with accepting the benefits of proactive communication for all parties.

Effective communication and relationship management starts with accepting the benefits of proactive communication

Governance 2.0

Steering Organizations Through Complexity with Transparency and Agility



By John D. Saracakis
Vice President,
AmCham Greece

Good corporate governance practices establish a comprehensive framework that fosters trust across all stakeholder relationships. By implementing transparent decision-making processes, clear accountability structures, and ethical leadership standards, these practices create confidence among employees, clients, suppliers, and shareholders. When stakeholders trust that organizations operate with transparency and accountability, it

creates a virtuous cycle that enhances reputation, reduces risks, and drives sustainable performance.

The future of corporate governance is being reshaped before our eyes. Once seen primarily as compliance-focused, governance now sits at the heart of organizational strategy and resilience. In a world of exponential technological change and shifting stakeholder demands, governance must evolve or risk irrelevance.

Modern governance is about cultivating trust and enabling agility. Transparency and accountability remain foundational, but must be paired with flexible structures that allow leadership teams to anticipate change, embrace innovation, and respond swiftly to emerging challenges. The integration of AI and data analytics into governance processes represents a profound shift. These tools enhance decision-making accuracy, uncover systemic risks early, and improve stakeholder engagement through real-time insights. Yet technology alone isn't sufficient. Diverse, ethical

leadership remains indispensable to interpret data, balance competing interests, and embed purpose alongside performance. Tomorrow's governance shifts from reactive to proactive approaches, anticipating risks and opportunities rather than simply responding to crises. For organizations like AmCham Greece, this requires viewing governance as a strate-

gic enabler of trust, innovation, and growth rather than a back-office function.

The path ahead is clear: governance must be bold, fair, and forward-looking to build resilient organizations capable of thriving in tomorrow's complex world.

Modern governance is about cultivating trust and enabling agility

THOUGHT LEADERS

Governance for Sustainable Growth

From Compliance to Competitive Advantage



By Athanassios Savvakis
Chairman of the Energy Exchange Group, Executive Director, BioSolids S.A.

In today's fast-evolving regulatory environment, corporate governance must be more than a compliance mechanism—it must be a catalyst for longterm, sustainable growth. Across Europe and globally, we are witnessing a decisive shift: Regulatory frameworks are no longer just reactive instruments but proactive enablers of economic and environmental resilience. As Chairman of the Energy Exchange Group and founder of BioSolids S.A., I've seen firsthand how aligning strategy with evolving

ESG standards and regulatory expectations transforms risk into opportunity.

Effective governance today requires boards to embed sustainability into the core of decisionmaking, balancing fiduciary duties with stakeholder accountability, climate risk oversight, and transparent performance metrics. However, implementation remains uneven. The gap between policy and practice widens when organizations treat sustainability reporting or carbon neutrality targets as siloed responsibilities rather than enterprise-wide imperatives. Governance structures must be retooled, bringing together regulatory insight, technological agility, and cultural alignment across the board-executive spectrum. Governing for sustainable growth is ultimately about foresight. It demands that we anticipate—not just respond to—regulatory shifts, and that we view these shifts not as burdens, but as blueprints for resilience and relevance in a transitioning global economy. To lead in this environment, we must rethink governance itself—not as a constraint, but as our most strategic asset.

Aligning strategy with evolving ESG standards and regulatory expectations transforms risk into opportunity

Understanding Board-Executive Relationships and Accountability



By George Vlachos
International Group Director for Board Advisory Services, Stanton Chase

In today's complex governance landscape, the strength and quality of the relationship between the board of directors and executive management can make—or break—organizational success. What is more, with governance expectations on the rise from all stakeholders, the boundary between strategic supervision and operational interference becomes increasingly nuanced.

In this context, it is crucial to explore the evolving dynamics of board-executive interactions, focusing on how trust, transparency, corporate governance leadership principles, and structured communication underpin accountability, strategic alignment, and effective oversight and execution. We must examine how to build board-executive relationships that are both collaborative and appropriately challenging, that empower board members to ask the tough questions and allow executives to feel confident enough to respond with clarity and candor.

Board, CEO, and executive committee evaluations are critically important in assessing these relationships, and indeed, such reviews can play a key role in fostering mutual understanding and driving improvement. Other areas deserving special attention include Chair-CEO partnerships, board-executive committee engagement with key executives, and agendas and protocols that enhance transparency and efficiency.

Reviews can play a key role in fostering mutual understanding and driving improvement



GROWTH FOR BUSINESS

National Bank of Greece

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Trade finance solutions by NBG allow you to obtain modern and flexible financial products, tailored to your own business needs

which boost not only their competitiveness but also their profitability.

Leveraging its position as one of the top banking and financial services institutions in the Greek market, and building on its considerable experience, know-how, and expertise in trade finance, the National Bank of Greece (NBG) serves as a strategic partner for businesses seeking to expand their export activities and trade internationally.

NBG invests in the potential of Greek exporters and supports their entry and growth in international markets through a wide range of specially designed solutions and services. Specifically, the National Bank of Greece:

- provides custom tailored imports and exports services and flexible financing tools to enhance liquidity;
- offers specialized consulting services focused on entry and increased penetration in new markets;
- actively participates in financing and

guarantee programs of major international institutions;

- works with recognized international trade bodies and maintains an expansive network of partner and correspondent banks; and
- enables businesses to easily, quickly, and securely manage all their international trade transactions in real time through its Trade Finance by NBG platform, part of NBG's digital banking services for businesses.

Year after year, for over a decade, the National Bank of Greece has been recognized as the "Best Trade Finance Bank" in Greece by top global awarding bodies—accolades that are attested to by steadfast consumer confidence and trust in the bank. This sustained recognition, by individuals, companies, and international institutions alike, is a testament to NBG's ongoing commitment to excellence and to providing outstanding solutions and services. 🏆

STARTUP TOOLKIT



Entrepreneurship and Growth

The Future Perspective

On April 28, AmCham Greece celebrated 10 years of its highly regarded Startup Toolkit initiative with a special event that highlighted key efforts to empower aspiring entrepreneurs and the opportunities that digital transformation is opening up for the country's younger generations.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce celebrated entrepreneurship, innovation, and a decade of its impactful Startup Toolkit with a special event that took place on April 28, 2025, at the historic Megaro Mela in the center of Athens. Held under the title

“Entrepreneurship and Growth: The Future Perspective,” the event was spearheaded by AmCham Greece’s Education, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (EIE) Committee and organized in collaboration with the National Bank of Greece. Distinguished guests and stakeholders

from across the fields of entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology joined top academics, government representatives and public officials, and members of the country’s younger generations,

The Startup Toolkit was designed to offer practical advice and tools to new entrepreneurs, bridging what one must do and how one must do it, in a society in which innovation is no longer a choice but a necessity.

- Nikolaos Bakatselos, President of AmCham Greece

N. Bakatselos, J. Rizopoulos, N. Porfyris, B. Mergou, E. Paraskevopoulou, A. Papapanagiotou, A. Costopoulos, O. Azilazian, S. Mousavere, S. Arsenis, T. Kotsanis, L. Panayotopoulos





S. Mousavere, P. Ketikidis, S. Arsenis, L. Panayotopoulos



M. Argyrou, F. Makantasi, A. Costopoulos, J. Rizopoulos

I've followed the Startup Toolkit initiative closely and can attest to the added value of this endeavor that first and foremost brought together the private and public sectors to promote innovation.

- Niki Kerameus, Minister of Labor and Social Security

including students and future entrepreneurs, for an evening that celebrated Greek startup entrepreneurship and showcased the contribution of AmCham Greece's Startup Toolkit in the ten years since its launch.

Welcoming guests to the event, Ernestos Panayotou, General Manager of Transformation, Strategy and International

What tool would be useful for a team endeavoring to develop its business idea? Without a doubt, a comprehensive guide with answers on the Greek startup ecosystem, forming a business, and intellectual property rights. In all of this, the Startup Toolkit is an indispensable assistant for anyone who wants to put their idea into practice. We know this firsthand as we have used it with all the teams we have supported over the last 10 years.

- Emeritus Professor Nikolaos Milonas, Academic Advisor at the Archimedes Center of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)

Activities at the National Bank of Greece, noted that the Toolkit, which has been presented and taught at numerous educational institutions, has already contributed to the education of a first generation of entrepreneurs, while Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director of AmCham Greece, pointed out that the Toolkit itself is a successful example of a startup initiative with tangible and quantifiable results.

Following brief keynote addresses by Nikolaos Bakatselos, President of AmCham Greece, and Stavros Kalafatis, Deputy Minister for Research and Innovation at the Ministry of Development, the event featured a series of engaging panel discussions, with key themes including the considerable opportunities arising from digital transformation and globalization as well as the strategic importance of investing in human capital and the younger generations while promoting

innovation, creativity, and sustainable business practices.

The first panel, led by EIE Committee Chair Litsa Panayotopoulos, focused on the Startup Toolkit initiative, its history and its impact on the Greek startup ecosystem. Spyros Arsenis, Head of the Business Innovation Development Unit of the National Bank of Greece and Director of NBG's Business Seeds program, hailed the Toolkit as an important initiative with a considerable impact, noting that "It's

The primary need is to establish a new culture. If we are to solve the multifactorial equations that keep coming up, we must embrace innovation and healthy entrepreneurship.

- Stavros Kalafatis, Deputy Minister of Development

E. Panayotou, S. Kalafatis, N. Bakatselos, N. Kerameus, A. Costopoulos, L. Panayotopoulos



STARTUP TOOLKIT

something everyone can have in their library and refer to when they have questions about the relevant legal framework and the innovation ecosystem.” Professor Pananyotis Ketikidis, President of Alexander Innovation Zone in Thessaloniki, said that “When it was launched ten years ago, the Toolkit was a real gamechanger, and today, three editions later, it continues to be highly relevant and essential,” while Sonia Mousavere, Head of Communications and PGA at Bayer Hellas, pointed to the role of startups in driving and accelerating business innovation, underlining the considerable potential of partnering with startups.

A second panel discussion looked at entrepreneurship as a key component of Greece’s new growth model. Michael G.

a matter of education—in its broadest and most fundamental sense” and going on to underline the need to focus on soft skills, which, he stressed, aren’t just relevant to entrepreneurs, but to all of us. Fay Makantasi, Research Director at diaNEOsis, noted the speed at which change is now taking place and identified the ability to adapt and evolve as critical to success. “The new era also necessitates digital skills—and when it comes to these, our country lags behind,” she added. “We must empower people to embrace these technologies.”

The event’s third and last panel discussion focused on how innovation shapes, and takes shape in, the future of entrepreneurship. Professor Georgios Doukidis, founder of the ELTRUN

Research Group at the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), stressed the need to minimize risk for startups; “In terms of funding, we are at about EU average,” he said. “Our main problem, however, is that we lack the appropriate tools for those first, critical stages of a startup’s development. So while our research is outstanding, leveraging it remains limited.” Michalis Kassimiotis, Managing Director for Greece and Cyprus at Hewlett Packard Enterprise, underlined the importance of emerging technologies, noting that “Innovation today means AI,” while Nikos Maniatis, Partner and Head of Technology and Innovation at KPMG in Greece, highlighted the need to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets and noted

Being honored for my contribution to the Startup Toolkit underscores the importance of connecting academic knowledge with real-world entrepreneurship. The Toolkit has consistently bridged this gap, equipping young innovators with the tools to thrive. As a university professor, I see it as a vital platform that promotes education-driven growth, creativity, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

- Professor Aristeidis Samitas, Vice Rector of Finance at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)

Arghyrou, Head of the PM’s Economic Affairs Office, spoke about the impact of AI on entrepreneurship, saying that “AI is a huge artificial shock to productivity—but it’s a positive shock. What matters now is data and how we manage it.” Alexandros Costopoulos, Secretary General of AmCham Greece, underlined the importance of promoting the right skills and culture, pointing out that “It’s

The use of AmCham’s Startup Toolkit in higher education has had a meaningful impact by promoting practical, real-world learning. It equips students and educators with valuable resources that bridge academic knowledge with business practices, fostering critical thinking, innovation, and professional readiness. By integrating industry-relevant tools into the curriculum, the Toolkit enhances the educational experience and better prepares graduates for the demands of a global economy.

- Professor Spyros Kintzios, Rector of the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA)

T. Papadopoulos, L. Panayotopoulos, S. Kalafatis, N. Bakatselos, M. Kassimiotis





N. Bakatselos, V. Vasdekis, A. Samitas, S. Kintzios, N. Mylonas, L. Panayotopoulos



J. Rizopoulos, G. Doukidis, M. Kassimiotis, N. Maniatis, I. Papakirillou

For the past ten years, the Startup Toolkit has been a valuable resource in fostering an entrepreneurial culture, offering practical guidance that helps young entrepreneurs turn their ideas into sustainable businesses.

The Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) places great emphasis on promoting entrepreneurship by actively supporting the initiatives of the Athens Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (ACEin), including entrepreneurial skills training, technology transfer activities, the creation of spin-offs, business acceleration, and educational seminars for students and entrepreneurs.


We would like to thank the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce for this award, which provides us with strong motivation to continue advancing and evolving Greek entrepreneurship.

- Vasilios Vasdekis, Rector of the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB)

the Startup Toolkit's contribution in this direction: "Innovation cannot be imposed," he pointed out. "It has to come freely from each individual's willingness and genuine commitment." Meanwhile, Ismini Papakirillou, CEO of the Hellenic Development Bank, discussed the opportunities and support available today to aspiring entrepreneurs and startups in Greece. "There is now an extensive range of tools that support the financing of innovation as well as other entrepreneurial activities, such as educational programs focused on developing and promoting innovation," she said, adding that these tools open up new possibilities for entrepreneurs and boost innovative development.

The panel discussions were followed by a special awards ceremony during which the organizers recognized the distinguished members of the academic community and the authors who have significantly contributed to the

development and continued impact of the Startup Toolkit over the years.

The event's Grand Sponsors were Bayer and National Bank of Greece – Business Seeds, and its Sponsors were Cisco, Evia Intelligent Performance, Google, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and KPMG. 

Thank You Note from the Chair of the EIE Committee

On behalf of the Education, Innovation & Entrepreneurship (EIE) Committee of AmCham Greece, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the Toolkit. Your presence, insights, and support reaffirm the power of collaboration in nurturing innovation and empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs. We are proud to continue shaping a vibrant ecosystem where education meets opportunity, and ideas are transformed into impact.

- Litsa Panayotopoulos

Startup Toolkit

An initiative of AmCham Greece's Education, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (EIE) Committee, the Startup Toolkit was originally initiated in 2014 with the aim of developing the business skills of the country's budding startup community. Full of valuable tips and insights, the Startup Toolkit is a practical guide that empowers aspiring entrepreneurs, offering direction, sparking innovative thinking, and strengthening the vital link between entrepreneurship and the real economy. The much anticipated third edition, Startup Toolkit 3.0, was published in April 2024, with the support of the National Bank of Greece–NBG Business Seeds and Bayer. Revised and enhanced, it is designed to guide and support entrepreneurs at every step of their journey, from developing and showcasing business ideas to launching a new company and growing a business. Startup Toolkit 3.0 is available to download at www.amcham.gr/publications/.

TECH TALK



6G: The Next Frontier in Connectivity

As the global appetite for connectivity continues to grow exponentially, the wireless communications industry is already looking beyond 5G. Enter 6G, the sixth generation of mobile networks, which is still in the early stages of development but poised to revolutionize not only how we communicate but how we live, work, and interact with technology on a daily basis.

More than just an incremental upgrade, 6G promises to be a paradigm shift. Offering data speeds up to 100 times faster than 5G, virtually zero latency, and the capacity to support massive volumes of connected devices, 6G will usher in a new era of digital transformation. From autonomous vehicles and holographic communication to real time industrial automation and immersive extended reality, the possibilities are as profound as they are promising.

Why 6G and Why Now?

While 5G is still rolling out globally, the drive to 6G stems from the exponential growth in data generation, the proliferation of connected devices, and the increasing demand for real time, intelligent digital services. Experts anticipate that 500 billion devices will be connected

to the internet by 2030. Managing this unprecedented scale of digital activity will require a communication infrastructure that is faster, smarter, and far more efficient than what is currently available. 6G will answer this call. It will not only provide the necessary bandwidth and reliability to accommodate this digital explosion but also introduce fundamental changes in how wireless networks are designed and operated.

Key Features and Capabilities

The technological leap from 5G to 6G will be defined by several groundbreaking characteristics:

Ultra-high data speeds: With anticipated speeds of up to one terabit per second (Tbps), 6G will be capable of downloading an entire high-definition film in less than a second.

Near-zero latency: Latency could drop to under one millisecond, enabling applications that require instant responsiveness, such as remote robotic surgery or real time drone coordination.

Advanced spectrum utilization: 6G will explore the use of sub-terahertz and terahertz frequency bands, vastly expanding the capacity for data transmission.

Massive device connectivity: 6G is expected to support massive machine-type communications (mMTC), allowing billions of devices to operate concurrently in smart cities, factories, and homes.

Built-in artificial intelligence: Unlike previous generations, 6G will integrate AI and machine learning into the core of network architecture, allowing for real time optimization, autonomous management, and smarter resource allocation.

Applications That Will Redefine the Norm

What makes 6G more than a technical marvel is its transformative potential across sectors:

Healthcare: Beyond remote diagnostics, 6G could support remote surgeries using tactile internet technologies, providing the ultra-reliable, low-latency communication essential for precision.

Transportation: 6G will power autonomous vehicles, drones, and smart traffic



6G

systems, enabling faster decisionmaking and coordination in real time.

Manufacturing: Smart factories will benefit from 6G's support for simultaneous control of thousands of sensors, robotics, and logistics platforms.

Education and training: With 6G-enabled extended reality (XR), immersive and interactive learning experiences could become the global norm.

Entertainment and media: Holographic communications and ultra-high-definition streaming will create new possibilities in media consumption and virtual events.

The Role of AI in Network Intelligence

6G will not just support AI-powered applications; it will itself be powered by AI. The integration of AI at the network level means:

Predictive maintenance: Networks will be able to self-diagnose and repair, minimizing downtime.

Dynamic resource allocation: Real-time adjustments to bandwidth and spectrum usage based on predictive models.

Autonomous network operation: Reduced need for human oversight in network management, enhancing efficiency and scalability.

This deep AI integration ensures that the network becomes a proactive partner in

the delivery of digital services, rather than a passive conduit.

Toward Standardization and Commercialization

Developing a global standard for 6G is a critical task now underway. Organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) are collaborating with academic institutions and private sector leaders to lay the groundwork for technical standards and interoperability.

Early trials and research programs are already producing insights into spectrum behavior, antenna design, and AI integration. Commercial rollout of 6G is expected around 2029 to 2030, with some nations aiming for earlier pilot deployments.

The journey to 6G is not just about technological readiness but also about strategic foresight. Nations and enterprises that are investing now in R&D, talent development, and infrastructure upgrades will be the ones best positioned to lead in a hyperconnected world.

Strategic Implications for Business and Society

6G will act as a foundational layer for the next phase of digital innovation,

impacting industries far beyond telecommunications:

Economic growth: 6G could contribute trillions to the global economy by enabling new markets and business models.

Digital equity: Its high capacity and adaptability can help bridge digital divides by offering robust connectivity to remote and underserved areas.

Sustainability: Smarter, AI-driven networks will enable more efficient energy use, contributing to environmental goals.

National security: As connectivity becomes critical infrastructure, 6G will also play a role in cybersecurity, data sovereignty, and resilience against hybrid threats.

Although 6G may seem like a distant horizon, the work to shape it is happening today. The choices made now—in policy, investment, and collaboration—will determine not just the speed of our future downloads, but the pace of global innovation itself.

For businesses, governments, and civil society, preparing for 6G is not just about staying competitive; it's about shaping the connected future of our world. The sixth generation of wireless mobile networks will be faster, yes, but more importantly, it will be smarter, more inclusive, and more transformative than anything we've seen before. 🌐

THESSALONIKI TAX FORUM

2025 Tax Strategy and Policy: Balancing Innovation and Compliance

The 13th Thessaloniki Tax Forum

A point of reference for developments in tax policy and practice, AmCham Greece's Thessaloniki Tax Forum once again brought together leading tax practitioners, policymakers, and experts for a day of insightful discussions and analysis of the most recent developments, challenges, and opportunities facing the field today.

Nikolaos Bakatselos





Ioannis Stavropoulos, Georgios Kotsiras



Stavroula Minasidou, Riana Zanni, Ariel Manika

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce proudly convened its 13th Thessaloniki Tax Forum, TTF 2025, on May 19, 2025, at the Makedonia Palace Hotel in the city of Thessaloniki in northern Greece. Organized by the Chamber's Taxation Committee, the forum was held under the title "2025 Tax Strategy and Policy: Balancing Innovation and Compliance" and featured a strong lineup of distinguished speakers and an engaging agenda that explored the most pressing and relevant topics in taxation today. TTF 2025 turned the spotlight on the strategic role of tax policy and compliance play both in shaping the country's fiscal policy and in business decisions, and it also focused on the tax strategies for 2025, innovation, digitalization and transparency, the adoption of AI tools, and tax dispute resolution mechanisms.

Taxation isn't static. It reflects the society we aspire to. The 13th Thessaloniki Tax Forum, featuring the participation of leading experts, business executives and senior public officials, academics, and other stakeholders, is making a meaningful contribution to shaping a vision of tax policy that supports growth, promotes justice, and enhances administrative efficiency.

- Nikolaos Bakatselos, President,
American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce

Greece's international image has changed radically. The country now stands for stability, seriousness, and consistency. This is the result of considerable reforms and a concerted move toward extroversion, the digitalization of public administration, institutionality, steady planning, and sustainable growth.

- Georgios Kotsiras, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance

TTF's speakers included distinguished experts from across the field of taxation—representing government, public agencies, and business, as well as academia, and providing a broad range of perspectives and insights—while its audience comprised senior tax professionals

and executives and representatives of northern Greece's thriving business community.

On the morning of the forum, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce hosted a closed working breakfast with the Deputy Minister of Economy and

Hara Strati, Georgios Vanidis, Dimitris Lakasas, Christos Blougouras



THESSALONIKI TAX FORUM

Finance Georgios Kotsiras, which was attended by members of the AmCham Greece Taxation Committee and senior representatives of a number of AmCham Greece member companies from across northern Greece and which gave participants the opportunity to discuss current issues in taxation and government initiatives in the area of tax policy.

The 13th Thessaloniki Tax Forum formally kicked off at noon with welcoming remarks from AmCham Greece Executive Director Elias Spirtounias and an address from AmCham Greece President Nikolaos Bakatselos, who both underlined the forum's contribution to fostering productive dialogue and shaping a more just and efficient tax policy in Greece.

First on the agenda was a discussion between Georgios Kotsiras, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, and Ioannis Stavropoulos, Chair of the

Thessaloniki Tax Forum has proved, over the years, that it is not only a knowledge-sharing conference but also a laboratory for policy and practical solutions.

- Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director, American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce



Thomas Paramythas, Natassa Iliadou, Rania Krayem, Nikoletta Merkouri, Dimitris Diamantidis

Approximately four million tax returns have already been filed — one million more than last year — indicating that things have gone well this year, particularly with regard to tax incentives. Responsibility has been legitimized, and it has become clear that the old regime of endless extensions is over and done. Together, we are changing our attitude toward taxation. We all have to do the right thing, at the right time.

- George Pitsilis, Governor, Independent Authority for Public Revenue (IAPR)

Chamber's Taxation Committee, who noted the transformative impact on Greece's taxation landscape and international standing of the reforms implemented over the past years.

The rest of the day was organized in two parts and featured a series of panel

discussions on key topics of interest: In Part I, topics included VAT in the digital era and electronic invoicing, the role of tax incentives in bolstering Greek business and entrepreneurship, challenges and opportunities for exports-focused Greek businesses amid

Omiros Fanariotis, Haris Georgarakis, Christos Kodos, Konstantinos Kounadis, Spiros Mavrikakis



Dimitris Karavas, Stelios Papademetriou, Valia Michalopoulou, Petros Pantazopoulos, Aspasia Malliou





Efsthathios Bakalis, Panagiotis Daveros



Dimitrios Panozachos, Dimitrios Kousias, Aggelos Sfaelios

growing geopolitical tensions and trade wars, and the role of taxation as a strategic support for growth in the Greek economy. In Part II, topics included tax considerations of business transformation, the introduction of group taxation in Greece as an opportunity for growth, jurisprudential developments in taxation, the emerging needs of financial departments in the context of today's tax demands, and what the use of AI in taxation can mean for businesses.

The forum ended with a discussion between George Pitsilis, Governor of the Independent Authority for Public Revenue (IAPR/AADE), and Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, which highlighted the significant achievements made so far in Greece as well as our shared responsibility to push forward with the necessary reforms and transform the culture around taxation in our country. 🇬🇷

The bill on business transformation, the shift from stamp duty to digital duty, and the finalizing of the date for submitting tax returns are among the measures contributing to a more stable and predictable tax environment.

- Ioannis Stavropoulos, Chair of the AmCham Greece Taxation Committee

Elias Spirtounias, George Pitsilis, Ioannis Stavropoulos



13th Thessaloniki Tax Forum Sponsors

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WOMEN IN BUSINESS**9th WIB Forum**

Impact Unleashed

Lead as a Rule Breaker

Angela Boyatzis, Betty Kazakopoulou, Peggy Velliotou, Agnes Mariakaki, Anastasia Dritsa, Myladié Stoumbou, Peny Retsa, Elias Spirtounias, Teti Tsekoura, Maria Tzelepi, Martha Mylona



In a world that no longer plays by the old rules, the 9th Women in Business Forum was an urgent and exhilarating call to arms for those ready to challenge convention, embrace nonlinear thinking, and forge new paths to meaningful growth.



Nikolaos Bakatselos



Elias Spirtounias

On June 4, 2025, visionary thinkers, bold leaders, and innovative disruptors came together at The Ellinikon Experience Centre, on the Athens Riviera, to explore what it truly means to break the script and lead with trust, values, and vision. Organized by the Women in Business (WIB) Committee of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, and held under the title “Impact Unleashed – Lead as a Rule Breaker,” the 9th Women in Business Forum was a dynamic gathering of minds unafraid to question the status quo, challenge outdated systems, and chart untrodden paths toward impact-driven leadership. Abuzz with positive energy and a sense of purpose, the event offered partici-

True transformation happens when voices connect—not just to agree, but to synthesize and create something greater than what anyone could build alone. That is the deeper mission of this year’s WIB Forum: to build bridges—across ideas, experiences, people, and perspectives. And on those bridges, to reimagine and redesign tomorrow.

- Nikolaos Bakatselos, President, AmCham Greece

purpose: to decode what it means to lead in times that defy tradition and demand transformation.

The conversations were raw and real, with panelists reflecting on key themes such as uncertainty, trust, and inclusion, as well as the power of culture to shape both mindsets and markets. The role of

failure, the weight of responsibility, and the courage to lead from a place of purpose all took center stage. It wasn’t about glorifying disruption for disruption’s sake. It was about redefining impact, beyond titles, policies, or processes.

The 9th Women in Business Forum highlighted the value of autonomy in

The most powerful transformations do not come from those who shout the loudest, diminish values, or promise quick fixes, but from those who notice what others overlook... and dare to build differently.

- Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director, AmCham Greece

pants and attendees a day of fearless dialogue, cross-disciplinary insights, and a genuine commitment to human-centered leadership. Trailblazers from across the fields of business, academia, civil society, and the creative industries came together with a shared

Myladie Stoumbou



WOMEN IN BUSINESS

the workplace, the crucial role of a moral compass in decisionmaking, and the transformative potential of rule-breaking leadership—not as rebellion, but as vision-led evolution. Across sessions and stories, a powerful narrative emerged: When people are trusted to act with independence and purpose, creativity flourishes and progress accelerates. True

One of the things that is uniquely Greek is the ability to challenge the rules. Disruptive leadership means thinking beyond disciplines and beyond expectations. It's about empowering people to act autonomously, to find joy in what they do, to build meaningful connections, and to reimagine what's possible. Most importantly, it requires embracing failure and constantly asking: Are our institutional practices aligned with the core values of our organization?

- **Athena Aktipis, Associate Professor of Psychology, Arizona State University**



Elena Barla, Peggy Velliotou, Natasha Covas-Kneiss, Fotini Karageorgi

Leadership with impact means having the courage and willingness to rethink what we once took for granted.

- **Myladie Stoubou, Chair, AmCham Greece Women in Business (WIB) Committee**

innovation demands not only bold ideas but also environments that encourage experimentation, welcome failure, and foster psychological safety.

Leadership, the forum revealed, is no longer about control from the top. It is about clarity of values, consistency in message, and the courage to dismantle systems that no longer serve. Many discussions focused on the deep need for trust: trust in people, in timing, and in the messy, nonlinear process of change.

And a consistent thread ran through every perspective—that transformation happens not when we conform to outdated standards, but when we dare to challenge assumptions, reimagine the rules, and build structures rooted in inclusion, purpose, and adaptability.

In a world where disillusionment runs high and traditional models falter, the call was clear: Leaders must be architects of trust, designers of meaningful cultures, and champions of ideas that cut across

Athena Aktipis



Elis Kiss





Agnes Mariakaki, Maria Vakola



Tasos Zachos, Theodore Cotionis

Autonomy is the foundation of creativity. In leadership, I choose to trust my people and give them room to act independently and grow. This is how we break free from centralization and cultivate true innovation. At the same time, I remain resolutely customer-centric—listening, observing, and daring to disrupt when it drives real progress.

- Odisseas Athanasiou, CEO, Lamda Development

silos, disciplines, and expectations. Not just to disrupt, but to rebuild, reframe, and rehumanize the way we lead.

As voices rose, perspectives shifted, and new questions emerged, the 9th Women in Business Forum became more than a conversation. It became a catalyst, a powerful reminder that leading as a rule breaker is not about tearing things down, but about building differently—and in a better way—for a future that demands nothing less. 🌱

Niki Lymperaki, Odisseas Athanasiou



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The Hidden Gaps in Innovation Culture

Rule Breaking Leadership Survey Results

In the run-up to the 9th WIB Forum this June, AmCham Greece's Women in Business Committee conducted a survey on a sample of 245 business employees, with the support of the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) and Mindsearch Research Consulting. The findings showed that despite a widespread belief in the value of innovation, there is striking inconsistency between aspiration and action within organizations. While 70% of respondents claim their companies value innovative thinking in leadership, only 9.1% say experimentation is always encouraged and just 19.7% feel completely safe proposing unconventional ideas. This gap between perception and lived experience is especially pronounced between senior and junior staff. This highlights a fragile culture of psychological safety. Risk-taking is supported in symbolic and theoretical terms, but it is structurally unsupported, with many employees citing fear of failure (42.1%) and lack of resources (39.0%) as key blockers. According to the study, the qualities to cultivate in future leaders are: creativity (55.9%), visionary thinking (48.0%), and teamwork (47.2%). These traits emerge not just as soft skills, but as survival traits for the future as businesses transition from industrial-era execution to imagination-age value creation.

- Agnes Mariakaki, Research Psychologist

EMPLOYING POTENTIAL



Demographics in Crisis

A Corporate Mission with National Impact

In an exclusive interview for Business Partners, Michalis Vlastarakis, Group Chief Marketing Officer at Eurobank, speaks with Dr. Venetia Koussia, Chair of AmCham Greece's Employment Committee, about one of Greece's most critical longterm challenges, the demographic crisis, and about how Eurobank has made demographic sustainability a core pillar of its corporate responsibility agenda. A seasoned executive with deep insight into strategic communication and social impact, Vlastarakis reflects on the scope and urgency of the issue, the role of the private sector in supporting young families, and Eurobank's initiatives to help reverse negative demographic trends, while he also shares his thoughts on how meaningful change can be achieved through collective responsibility and longterm vision.

In your role as Group Chief Marketing Officer, you're at the forefront of shaping Eurobank's public image and social footprint. How did the issue of Greece's demographic challenge emerge as a strategic priority for the bank?

Eurobank's "Moving Family Forward" initiative which addresses demographic issues, was launched in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the start of the Greek Revolution. Our goal is to invest in something meaningful for all Greeks and create a lasting, cumulative impact. I firmly believe that we could not have done anything more impactful than our demographic initiative. The declining birth rate and population, as well as population aging, affect everything including gross national product and state revenues. The sustainability of the national social security system, pensions, and even education are also affected. Eurobank is a bank of development and progress. It goes without saying that we are concerned about conditions and trends that may impact the dynamics of the economy, and we want to actively contribute to reversing them.

The declining birth rate and population affect everything, from gross national product and state revenues to pensions and education

With such far reaching longterm implications for the economy, the labor market, and the very social fabric of our country, the demographic crisis is one of the most pressing issues facing Greece today. What's your perspective on the essence and urgency of this problem?

Four years ago, in June 2021, we definitely knew that this was one of the most serious problems for Greece in the medium and long term. It was evident that the decision of young couples not to have children—or to delay the decision to have children—was related to the financial crisis and the economic insecurity people were experiencing. Many were wondering how they would manage and whether it was fair to bring a child into the world. They didn't feel they can provide it with the life it deserves. Today, while this interpretation still holds true, we also recognize many additional dimensions to the issue. On the one hand, the problem is particularly acute in Greece due to the country's geography. Many small villages and islands with limited access to infrastructure and services.

Residents of these areas feel that starting a family there is very difficult. They need help, support and encouragement. Jobs are also needed in remote and rural areas. A young person who cannot find decent employment is likely to leave and seek a better future elsewhere, rather than to stay in their hometown and start a family.

And there's something else: Demographic decline is not unique to Greece. It is a major concern across the Western world. Research shows that young people today prioritize other aspects of life over family and children, and this is a mindset that is very difficult to change. It is important for us as a society to understand that parenthood brings great fulfillment, and that it can be combined with personal growth, a career, and life experiences such as travel, which people today value highly.

From a corporate responsibility perspective, what are some of the most significant initiatives Eurobank has undertaken to support young families and address demographic decline?

Eurobank's initiative to address the demographic issue in Greece is multifaceted and grounded in research, scientific studies, and our participation in public dialogue over these past four years. Our approach is, first and foremost, inclusive. We aim to support individuals who wish to have children but are unable to do so. That's why we collaborate with NGOs that apply social criteria to support new families on their journey toward parenthood. As part of this effort, for example, 60 children have been born through IVF with the specialized medical support of Be-Live and funding from Eurobank—children who likely would not have been born under other circumstances.

Secondly, we focus on supporting the country's remote and rural regions, especially those near the eastern border, from Evros to Kastellorizo. We want to help young people and families in those areas feel that they're not forgotten, that a supportive net exists to help them raise their children and provide them with opportunities and prospects. Last year, for example, with the help of Apostoli S.A., we sent educators to five very small islands. These teachers supplement public education after school hours and engage students in meaningful and enjoyable activities such as music, dance, and robotics.

Finally, we strongly believe that a good professional life is a prerequisite for starting a family. In this direction, we are launching a new initiative in Evros to support entrepreneurship among the unemployed, employees, and freelancers. Through our collaboration with AFI

We want to enable those who wish to have children but cannot



Microfinance, we believe we will create opportunities and many wonderful success stories in this uniquely special part of Greece.

Do you believe that the private sector, and financial institutions in particular, can play a transformative role in reversing demographic trends, or is their contribution more complementary to state efforts?

We are under no illusion that a single company—even a large bank—can solve this problem alone. However, together with others, we can make a difference. Eurobank

has consistently supported its employees who have or want to start families, offering generous child benefits, special leave, family insurance plans, low interest housing loans, and much more. We want to be a role model in the private sector and encourage others to support and help their staff the way we do.

And on the other hand, four years ago, the majority of citizens did not view the demographic issue as the most pressing challenge we face. Today, thanks to all

the work we have done in collaboration with the state and other companies, the issue has risen high on the public agenda. Isn't that something truly significant? 🐾



Investing in the Future

Dr. Michael Tsikerdekis is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA, and also serves as a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and Chair of the Public Infrastructure Security Cyber Education System (PISCES) Technical Advisory Committee. His work is situated at the intersection of computer science and social systems, while his research interests revolve around detecting and preventing online deception and related social engineering attacks, as well as cybersecurity, data mining, and machine learning.

Here, Tsikerdekis talks to Business Partners about his experience as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar in Greece and shares his thoughts on the program's potential to help shape a better tomorrow.

Tell us a bit about your journey into academia and how you came to specialize in cybersecurity.

My journey into academia was unplanned. Like many in computer science, I initially saw myself in a traditional IT or software engineering role. While pursuing my PhD at and still working for IBM in Czechia, I assumed I was on a professional track. But opportunities to teach—first through presentations, then guest lectures, and eventually full courses—sparked an unexpected passion. Teaching felt almost magical, and combining it with research quickly became a clear path for me.

My early research explored social media platforms and the design factors

influencing user behavior. After joining the University of Kentucky as an Assistant Professor, I began applying this knowledge to detecting online deception, from fake news to bots, which led me deeper into cybersecurity. Over time, my focus shifted toward network security, where I now work on securing systems through a blend of automation and human oversight.

As a Fulbright US Scholar in Greece, you have a dual affiliation with the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki and the Ionian University in Corfu. What is the focus of your work during this time with the program?

The core focus of my work in the Fulbright program is to help launch free

security operation center (SOC) analysis services provided by universities to local municipalities. A secondary goal is to study the effectiveness of teaching students using live data and to identify any cross-cultural differences between the US and Greece throughout this process. Back in the United States, I am involved in a nonprofit called the Public Infrastructure Security Cyber Education System—PISCES, which began operations in 2018 and is funded by various organizations including the Department of Homeland Security. PISCES acts as a liaison connecting universities with local municipalities that otherwise lack the resources to monitor their networks for security threats. My primary role in the organization is to serve as academic lead for developing the curriculum that universities use and to help onboard instructors who wish to teach students on live network data.

In Greece, my colleague Professor Ioannis Mavridis and I have been teaching a similar program at the University of Macedonia using real world data, and I'm also collaborating with Dr. Stylianos Karagiannis and Professor Emmanouil Magkos at Ionian University in Corfu to establish a similar initiative there. These efforts position universities to provide critical SOC services. The next

Fulbright invests in the future through exchange and by building links between the two countries

step is to seek support from the Greek government, particularly the Ministry of Digital Governance. Projects like this are increasingly important for European governments, especially under the NIS2

directive, which emphasizes training the next generation of cybersecurity professionals and strengthening network infrastructure security.

What are some of the key takeaways from your experience as a Fulbright scholar?

Although I identify as a Greek-born American, I had never developed a professional connection with Greece until recently. As an early-career academic in the US, much of my time was spent building my research profile and contributing domestically. Now, after 12 years in academia, I've finally found both the desire and opportunity to expand my collaborations internationally—and the Fulbright program has been the perfect vehicle for that.

Conducting research and teaching in a language I speak but had rarely used professionally has broadened my perspective. Observing operational differences between universities in the United States and Greece has given me valuable insights into how to foster more effective international collaborations. Some of the most memorable moments of my Fulbright experience have come from engaging with students in the classroom. Much like when I first began teaching during my PhD, I was initially nervous about how the students would respond. I'm happy to say they were enthusiastic, engaged, and eager to participate—making the experience both meaningful and rewarding.

How can academic exchanges such as the Fulbright Program contribute to stronger ties between Greece and the United States, particularly in STEM fields?

While the Fulbright Program clearly offers valuable research and educational opportunities, I believe its most significant longterm impact, at least in my experience, is that it invests in the future through exchange and by building links between the two countries. Today's students will become tomorrow's professionals, managers, and investors,



Educational diplomacy doesn't just build understanding – it creates pathways for sustainable, mutually beneficial economic relationships

making early exposure to international collaboration especially important. The United States has long maintained

a strong labor market with a demand for highly skilled talent. Greece, emerging from its economic crisis, presents a promising landscape for foreign investment, particularly in the IT sector. Trust is a foundational element in commerce, and programs like Fulbright, which foster direct exchange and knowledge sharing, help lay the groundwork for that trust. In this way, educational diplomacy doesn't just build understanding—it creates pathways for sustainable, mutually beneficial economic relationships.

I may be slightly biased, but when it comes to investment opportunities in Europe, Greece stands out. It has a highly educated workforce in the IT sector and is, in both professional practices and cultural outlook, often closer to the US than many other countries in the region. 🇬🇷

Fulbright Faculty Exchange Expanding knowledge , Building bridges

The Fulbright Scholar Program brings together leading U.S. and Greek faculty and researchers through short-term placements – U.S. scholars are hosted by Greek institutions, while Greek scholars conduct research or teach at institutions in the United States. These exchanges foster lasting academic and professional collaborations that often continue beyond the grant period. Through teaching and research, Fulbright scholars create a multiplier effect – shaping future generations and advancing both local and global knowledge.

To learn more visit www.fulbright.gr

ART AND CULTURE



70 YEARS

Athens Epidaurus Festival

Greece's Timeless Cultural Beacon

In a world constantly chasing the new, few cultural events manage to celebrate both continuity and reinvention quite like the Athens Epidaurus Festival—a cornerstone of Greek and European cultural life that is not only a celebration of artistic mastery but also a living reflection of Greece's deep historical and creative roots.

As the curtain rises on the 2025 edition, the festival celebrates its 70th anniversary and reaffirms its identity as a nexus where the ancient and the avant garde converge, a bridge between memory and imagination, offering audiences experiences that are both timeless and timely.

Founded in 1955, over the past seven decades, the Athens Epidaurus Festival has evolved into one of Europe's most esteemed cultural events. Held annually during the summer months, it hosts a diverse variety of performances, from classical theater and opera to modern dance and avant garde installations. The festival's venues are as iconic as its performances, with events staged at renowned historic sites, including the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus in the Peloponnese and the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens, and other select locations.

A Festival Born from Revival

The Athens Epidaurus Festival was born of a broader effort to position Greece as a global cultural destination in the aftermath of World War II. The idea was simple, yet bold: bring ancient Greek drama back to the theater for which it was written—the spectacular open air Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus—while also reviving the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens as a major stage for classical music, opera, and ballet.

What emerged from this effort wasn't just a festival, but a movement. Over the years, the Athens Epidaurus Festival became a pillar of modern Greek identity and a showcase for the global arts scene, hosting legends such as Maria Callas, Mikis Theodorakis, Rudolf Nureyev, and Leonard Bernstein. Today, it stands as one of the longest-running performing arts festivals in Europe and a testament to Greece's cultural diplomacy.

A Theatrical Homecoming

At the heart of the festival lies the Epidaurus program, dedicated to ancient Greek drama, staged at the world-famous 14,000-seat, 4th-century-BCE theatre. Known for its near-perfect acoustics and architectural beauty, Epidaurus serves not only as a performance venue but also as a powerful symbol of the continuity of civilization and storytelling.

The 2025 program opens with *Antigone*, directed by acclaimed German director Ulrich Rasche, whose stark, minimalist interpretations of Greek tragedy have earned praise throughout Europe. His approach—featuring a massive, rotating iron stage—transforms the chorus into a mechanized, almost ritualistic presence, a reflection of fate grinding inexorably forward. It's a modern take on a timeless story of resistance, morality, and civil disobedience that resonates as deeply today as it did in antiquity.

Athens Reimagined: A Festival City

While Epidaurus pays homage to Greece's classical heritage, Athens hosts the festival's more experimental side. From industrial warehouses to ancient ruins—not least the majestic Odeon of Herodes Atticus at the foot of the Acropolis—venues across the city are transformed each summer into spaces of wonder and discovery. Theater, opera, music, dance, and other hybrid forms of performance come together in programs that celebrate diversity, innovation, and important contemporary voices.

A Global Audience, a Greek Soul

Though deeply rooted in Greek culture, the Athens Epidaurus Festival speaks an international language. Its audience is remarkably diverse, with visitors from around the world making the pilgrimage each summer to see works that connect the past with the present. Sur-titled performances, bilingual programs, and English-language guided events make the experience accessible and enriching for global travelers.

Moreover, the festival increasingly serves as a hub for cross-cultural collaboration. In 2025, joint productions with institutions such as Berlin's Schaubühne and Paris's Théâtre de la Ville demonstrate the power of artistic diplomacy, even at a time of geopolitical complexity.

Business Meets Culture

The festival also provides a compelling platform for public-private partnerships in culture. It is supported by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, the City of Athens, and various cultural institutions, and it is sponsored by leading businesses and charitable foundations. In recent years, the Athens Epidaurus Festival has shown how investment in the arts not only fosters cultural prestige but generates significant economic value, boosting tourism, supporting local creative economies, and enhancing Greece's global image.

For business leaders and investors, the festival is a case study in cultural infrastructure with enduring return on investment. As interest in experiential tourism and cultural branding grows, the Athens Epidaurus Festival remains a jewel in Greece's soft power arsenal.

Athens Epidaurus Festival 2025

The 70th Anniversary Edition

Running from June 27 to August 23, the 70th anniversary edition of the festival features a fantastic variety of performances that honor its storied past while also looking ahead to the future. Under the direction of Katerina Evangelatos, the festival's Artistic Director, the 2025 program emphasizes inclusivity, innovation, and a deep respect for cultural heritage. Highlights include:

Sophocles' Antigone: Directed by renowned German director Ulrich Rasche, this production will inaugurate the festival at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus. Rasche's interpretation is anticipated to offer a fresh perspective on the classic tragedy, utilizing a motorized revolving stage to enhance the narrative's dynamism.

Subset Festival: A segment dedicated to contemporary music, featuring artists such as Lyra Pramuk and Ryoji Ikeda. These performances aim to bridge the gap between traditional compositions and modern soundscapes.

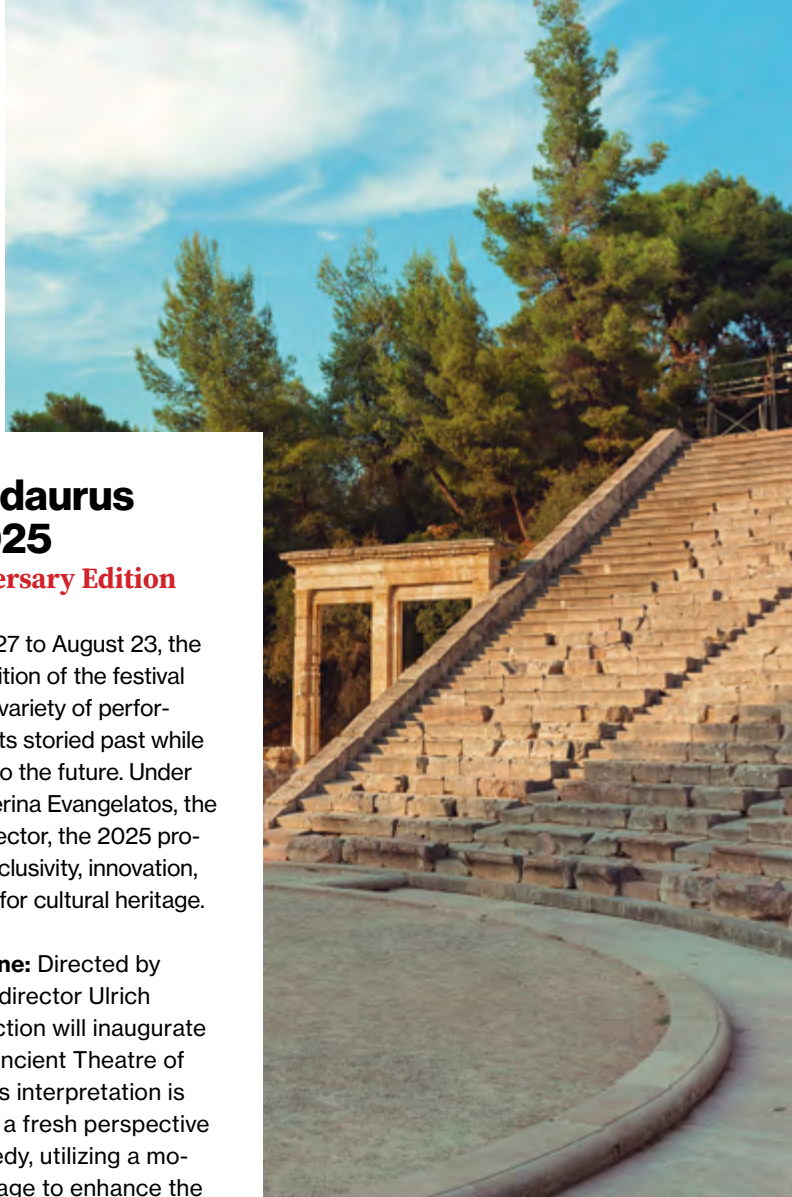
GRAPE (Greek Agora of Performance): This initiative spotlights emerging Greek artists, providing them with a platform to present innovative works that challenge and inspire audiences.

To find out more about the Athens Epidaurus Festival and to access the full program, visit the festival's website at aefestival.gr.

A Living Legacy

Seventy years since its establishment, the Athens Epidaurus Festival continues to redefine what a cultural festival can be. It honors its legacy without being beholden to it. It cultivates audiences as much as it cultivates art. And it does so in the most magical of settings—where history is not just remembered, but relived. As Greece stands proudly at the crossroads of its ancient past and dynamic future, the Athens Epidaurus Festival serves as a living testament to the enduring power of art

and creativity. Whether seated under the stars in Epidaurus or immersed in an experimental work in downtown Athens, audiences this summer will become part of a story seven decades in the making—and far from finished. 🐼



VIEWPOINT



Human Connection in an AI World

Why Warmth and Authenticity Matter

Is being polite to AI an unnecessary luxury?

There are those who argue that saying “hello,” “please,” or “thank you” to an AI chatbot is a waste of time, money, and computational resources. At first glance, the logic may seem sound: If AI is a tool for speed and efficiency, why add anything extra? The truth is that efficiency should never come at the cost of human connection. Bringing warmth, authenticity, and care into our AI interactions, not only preserves our humanity but often helps us achieve better outcomes. The push toward “prompt efficiency” emerged as AI became integrated into large scale business operations. With thousands, even millions, of prompts sent to AI models, even small inefficiencies quickly added up, and companies began optimizing interactions, trimming away anything deemed unnecessary: pleasantries, context, even emotional nuance. At scale, this made some sense. Clarity and brevity are essential in high-frequency, automated environments. But somewhere along the way, a critical misunderstanding took hold: that to be “correct,” all AI interactions, even personal or creative ones, must be stripped of human tone. This misguided notion risks turning our relationship



By Alexandra Loli, Ph.D.

with technology into something sterile and diminished.

Issuing cold, bare prompts, reinforces a version of communication that is purely functional, devoid of empathy, creativity, and collaboration—precisely the qualities that define meaningful human interaction. More than politeness, hellos and thank yous in personal conversations are a way of setting the emotional temperature, of saying “I see you. I value this exchange.” The same is true even with AI. Choosing cold or warm prompts when interacting with AI models can give different results. Composing prompts with warmth and intention sets a collaborative tone, invites better understanding, and encourages richer, more thoughtful results. Politeness and tone can actually improve the quality of AI-generated responses. Why? Because when we include mood, intent, and human context, gives AI models a clearer framework for generating results that align not just with our

requests but with their spirit, helping us move faster toward the right results.

As AI continues to advance and become more prevalent in our daily lives, how we choose to interact with it matters more than ever. True innovation lies not in asking ourselves how much more we can squeeze out of each interaction, but in how much more meaning we can build into them.

Efficiency without humanity is not progress; it's impoverishment. AI was never meant to replace our humanity. It was meant to support it. To help us think bigger, create better, and connect more widely. The more we bring our full selves—our warmth, our curiosity, our intentionality—into our interactions with technology, the more technology will rise to meet us there.

Small gestures like saying “hello” and “thank you” to AI, speaking with kindness and clarity, aren't inefficient relics of a slower time. They are active choices that reaffirm what it means to be human in a digital world. Insisting on communicating with respect and authenticity, even with AI, doesn't cost us efficiency. It enriches the journey. And in a future where human-machine collaboration is only set to deepen, that kind of enrichment may turn out to be the most valuable efficiency of all, ensuring that at the end of the day, we remain human. 🌱

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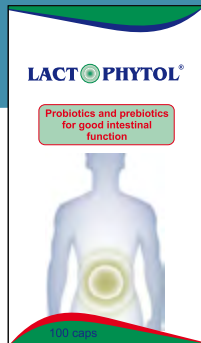
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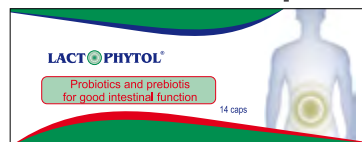
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