JULY-AUGUST 2026

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN-HELLENIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Corporate Governance Conference 2026

PLUS

AmCham Greece in the USA

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PLEASE RECYCLE

DIRECTOR'S DESK

As we cross the midpoint of the year, geopolitical developments, technological advancements, economic uncertainty, and changing regulatory frameworks are increasingly redefining how organizations operate and compete. Against this backdrop, agility and adaptability are emerging as fundamental necessities for survival and growth. For Europe, competitiveness remains a defining challenge, requiring enhanced productivity, accelerated innovation, improved energy security, and an investment- and entrepreneurship-supportive regulatory environment to ensure longterm resilience. This is shifting the focus from managing change to building the conditions to thrive within it.

Greece has made significant strides in strengthening its international standing and attracting investment, but sustaining this momentum requires continued reforms, robust institutions, technological integration, and public-private collaboration—the foundations of sustainable growth and prosperity.

AmCham Greece is actively aligning its strategic direction to support this momentum. During our Annual General Assembly in June, we reflected on another year of high-impact advocacy and unveiled our rebrand, signaling our commitment to remaining an agile, forward-looking organization that anticipates member needs while strengthening the Greece–US strategic partnership.

This commitment drives our recent initiatives: Our business mission to Washington DC further deepened the bilateral strategic dialogue in the critical fields of energy, investment, technology, and infrastructure. At the 3rd AmChams Regional Economic Summit (ARES) in Sofia, regional leaders reaffirmed that cross-border cooperation remains a primary driver of competitiveness and resilience. Closer to home, our 12th Corporate Governance Conference demonstrated our commitment to fostering high-level dialogue and collaboration on the issues shaping tomorrow's economy.

The Chamber's forward-looking vision is directly embodied in our newly established AI Task Force, which brings together expertise from across the board to promote responsible AI adoption, strengthen AI literacy, and help our members—particularly SMEs—harness the opportunities AI presents and maintain competitiveness.

While these efforts span sectors and industries, they share a common objective: helping businesses navigate a complex world through knowledge, innovation, partnerships, and responsible leadership.

Looking ahead, Greece is poised to capitalize on its strengths, deepen strategic partnerships, and expand its role as a premier investment destination—and AmCham Greece remains dedicated to bringing together business, government, academia, and international partners to help shape this next chapter.

On behalf of AmCham Greece, I wish all our members, partners, and readers a restful and enjoyable summer. May the weeks ahead provide the space to recharge, reflect, and return with renewed drive for the opportunities ahead.

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 900 members–including nearly all US companies operating in Greece and many Greek firms trading with the US–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 US-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, DC office. This strategic move supports deeper bilateral engagement, promotes Greek business outreach, and encourages US investment in Greece.

The Chamber is an active member of both the US Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC and the European Council of American Chambers of Commerce (ECACC).

Mission Statement

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce aims to serve its members and support their growth by strengthening economic ties between Greece and the United States, representing their interests through effective advocacy, fostering capability development, and providing them with information and opportunities to build relationships on both sides of the Atlantic, acting as an impartial and trusted partner.

Καινοτομούμε από την πρόληψη ως τη θεραπεία
ώστε να ξεπεράσουμε τις ασθένειες μαζί

NP-GR-NA-COCO-260003 – ΙΣΧΥΣ / VALID: 04.2026 – 04.2027

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CHAMBER NEWS AND EVENTS

Annual General Assembly 2026

John Kyriakides, Chryssos Kavounides, John D. Saracakis, Elias Spirtounias

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce convened its 2026 Annual General Assembly on Monday, June 29, 2026, at the InterContinental Athenaeum in Athens. As this was the second call of the General Assembly, the required quorum was achieved in accordance with the Chamber's bylaws.

The meeting brought together the AmCham Greece Board of Directors, Executive Committee, core team, and membership for a review of the Chamber's activities over the past year and reflection on its plans and prospects for the future. Elias Spirtounias, Executive Director of AmCham Greece in Athens, presented the management report for 2025. Katerina Sokou, Executive Director of AmCham Greece in Washington DC, presented the activities of the Chamber's Washington office. Chryssos Kavounides, AmCham Greece Treasurer, presented the annual financial report for 2025.

In his address to the assembly, AmCham Greece President John D. Saracakis referred to the Chamber's long history and legacy and to the strategy and rebranding that will carry it into the future. "An organization with a heritage as rich as that of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce must do more than just manage the present—it must also shape the future," Saracakis said. "This is the core message of today's assembly: Together, we are now launching the next chapter of AmCham Greece. This is the natural evolution of a long journey, and we move forward with respect for our history, confidence in our members, and a bold vision for the role we can play in the years ahead."

United States Ambassador to Greece Kimberly Guilfoyle referred to US-Greece business relations and the excellent collaboration between the US Embassy in Greece and the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. "Our work will ultimately be measured not by words, but by tangible results and meaningful achievements. Together, we have already secured major energy agreements and reached historic milestones that demonstrate what energy security in action truly means. We are seeing equally important progress in artificial intelligence, critical minerals, resilient supply chains, and investment cooperation," said Ambassador Guilfoyle. "Organizations such as yours are indispensable partners on this journey. Your leadership, engagement, and commitment help turn shared ambitions into lasting progress. Our challenge to you is a simple one: Let us do more."

Representing the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), Rania Ekaterinari, President of the Executive Committee and Vice Chair of the Board at SEV, referred to the key factors required for success and competitiveness in the coming years: "Productivity is the country's defining challenge for the next decade. To succeed, we need more investments, faster adoption of technology, thriving innovation ecosystems, and strategic partnerships," Ekaterinari said. "The strong economic ties between Greece and the United States are about much more than trade and investment. They serve as a channel for the transfer of knowledge, technology, and innovation, strengthening the country's competitiveness. In this context, the collaboration between SEV and the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce takes on particular strategic importance."

New Leadership Across AmCham Greece Committees

AmCham Greece has announced new leadership appointments for three of its committees: Thymis Efthymiadis, Vice President of Redestos - Efthymiadis Agrotechnology Group, as Chair of the Agrotechnology Committee; Polychronis Griveas, Chief Strategy and Business Officer and Group Hotel General Manager at Divani Collection Hotels, as Chair of the Leadership Committee; and Mina Zoulovits, Managing Partner at Zoulovits-Kontogeorgou (ZK) Law Firm, as Chair of the Business Environment and Legislative Affairs Committee.

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ΦΑΡΜΑΣΕΡΒ

Όλα ξεκινούν με μια υπόσχεση
να κάνουμε τη ζωή των ανθρώπων καλύτερη

Προτεραιότητά μας είναι να παρέχουμε υψηλής ποιότητας φαρμακευτικά ιδιοσκευάσματα σε όσους τα έχουν ανάγκη, αλλάζοντας τη ζωή και τις προσδοκίες τους. Να δίνουμε ελπίδα στους συνανθρώπους μας που πάσχουν από σοβαρές και εξουθενωτικές ασθένειες εξασφαλίζοντας έγκαιρη πρόσβαση σε καινοτόμες θεραπευτικές επιλογές. Να προσφέρουμε υπεύθυνη επιστημονική ενημέρωση & να ανταποδίδουμε στην κοινωνία μέσα στην οποία δραστηριοποιούμαστε.

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CHAMBER NEWS AND EVENTS

Northern Greece Committee

AmCham Greece Meeting with US Congressional Delegation

Building on the growing momentum of US-Greece economic ties, AmCham Greece was delighted to welcome a bipartisan congressional delegation, comprising 10 US Congress members and their staff, to Thessaloniki on July 15, 2026, for a meeting on further strengthening bilateral trade and investment between the two countries.

Led by Representative Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), the delegation met with members of the Chamber's Northern Greece Committee and distinguished members of the region's business community. AmCham Greece Vice President Vassilis Kafatos outlined the Chamber's strategic priorities and briefed the delegates on the region's booming tech and innovation ecosystem, highlighting key US investments as well as the growing attraction for US capital. This sentiment was echoed by US Consul General in Thessaloniki Jerry Ismail, who spoke about Thessaloniki's history and significant progress across key areas including business and education and noted the city's deep historic ties to the US. Reaffirming the close and enduring partnership between Greece and the United States, Congressman Bilirakis stressed the value of firsthand diplomatic engagement and of delegates seeing for themselves the region's economic dynamism and potential.

K. KOUKOUNTZOS, V. KAFATOS, J. ISMAIL, J. JOYCE, M.J. MILLER-MEEKS, G. BILIRAKIS, P. VLAHOS

The meeting, which was organized by the Chamber's Northern Greece Committee and hosted by Deloitte, was an excellent opportunity to showcase the region's role as a strategic hub for trade, energy, and innovation. It further highlighted the region's robust potential as a key gateway for connectivity and growth in Southeast Europe.

Upcoming Events

10th Southeast Europe Energy Forum
September 4, 2026
MET HOTEL, THESSALONIKI

—

25th HealthWorld Conference
September 14-15, 2026
DIVANI APOLLON PALACE & THALASSO, ATHENS

—

10th Women in Business (WIB) Forum
September 30, 2026
THE ELLINIKON EXPERIENCE CENTRE, ATHENS

—

13th Hellenic Pavilion @ AUSA AME 2026
October 12-14, 2026
WALTER E. WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER, WASHINGTON DC

—

24th Corporate Sustainability Conference
October 20, 2026
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CULTURAL CENTER – LIGHTHOUSE, ATHENS

—

22nd Athens Tax Forum
November 6, 2026
THE ATHENS CONCERT HALL

Find out more and stay up to date with our latest and upcoming events at amcham.gr/amcham-events/

New Members

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce welcomes its newest members

Boxly
24/7 drive-up self-storage
www.boxly.gr

Eco Hellas
renewable energy sources
www.eco-hellas.com

Interworks
cloud services and software distribution
www.interworks.cloud

Kaminaris, Vasileios
audit and assurance executive

Nosilia
NPO providing free, home-based palliative care to patients
www.nosilia.org.gr

Premium Audit
provision of high-quality audit services
www.premiumaudit.gr

Sidiropoulos, Kyriakos
director of technology – financial sector, fund management, asset management, banking

Strategic Board Leadership
sustainable corporate governance and board excellence services
www.strategicboardleaderhsip.eeamarket.gr


Πάντα υπάρχει κάτι περισσότερο
που μπορεί να γίνει
Η βελτίωση της ζωής των ανθρώπων με σοβαρές ασθένειες αποτελεί δέσμευσή μας. Η δουλειά μας δεν σταματά όταν κλείσουμε την πόρτα του εργαστηρίου ή όταν αναλύσουμε το τελευταίο δείγμα. Ψάχνουμε πάντα για την επόμενη ανακάλυψη, την επόμενη καινοτομία - τώρα και για το μέλλον.
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Ημερομηνία προετοιμασίας: Φεβρουάριος 2026

AMCHAM GREECE IN THE USA

Launched in May 2025, AmCham Greece's office in Washington DC affords the Chamber a permanent presence in the United States, allowing it to work on the ground, at the heart of US and global decisionmaking, to deliver value for member companies and fortify bilateral trade relations.

American Trojan – A Book Talk with Dr. C. L. Max Nikias

AmCham Greece – USA had the pleasure of hosting Dr. C. L. Max Nikias, President Emeritus of the University of Southern California (USC), at its Washington DC office for a fireside chat about his new book, the memoir *American Trojan: Leadership, Resilience, and the Renewal of Higher Education*.

The conversation focused on Dr. Nikias's journey as an immigrant to the United States and how his bold vision transformed USC into one of America's most elite universities: During his time as president, he worked to build bridges between USC's two campuses and sought to position the university for leadership in the increasingly challenging landscape of higher education, driving key decisions that helped USC's reputation soar and implementing a record-breaking fundraising campaign that secured resources for groundbreaking research and lifechanging student scholarships.

Further discussion centered on the future of higher education, looking at its current crisis and the core problems facing universities today, and exploring the need for renewal and Dr. Nikias's recommendations for how universities can reclaim and fulfill their role in transmitting knowledge, driving technological progress and societal impact.

Born in Cyprus, Dr. Chrysostomos L. Max Nikias served as the eleventh president of USC, a position he held from August 3, 2010, to August 7, 2018. He is currently President Emeritus and a Life Trustee of the university and the holder of the Malcolm R. Currie Chair in Technology and the Humanities. He is recognized internationally for his pioneering research on digital signal processing, digital media systems, and biomedicine. The US Department of Defense has adopted a number of his innovations and patents in sonar, radar, and communication systems.

C.L.M. Nikias, K. Sokou

Exploring the Role of the Greek Diaspora

AmCham Greece – USA participated in the ACG in Conversation – Washington DC 2026 event, which was organized by the American College of Greece under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece in the USA and held at the University Club in Washington DC. Looking at the role of the Greek diaspora in promoting Greece's longterm, sustainable growth, the event focused on how talent, investment, and international partnerships can strengthen Greece's future.

AmCham Greece was represented at the event by Katerina Sokou, Executive Director of the Washington DC office, who moderated an engaging panel discussion titled "Empowering Greece's growth through education, innovation, and entrepreneurship." The panelists—which included Michael Printzos, Country Director for The Hellenic Initiative (THI) in Greece; Marcos Veremis, partner at Accolade Partners; and Dr. Ed Wingenbach, President of The American College of Greece—discussed the role of international academic and technological partnerships in strengthening Greece's future and supporting sustainable growth and explored the contribution of the diaspora in advancing education, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Greece.

A view of the panel discussion

Showcasing Greece as a Life Sciences and Biotech Hub

AmCham Greece – USA joined forces with Enterprise Greece, Hellenic Biocluster (HBio), and a delegation of nine elite Greek startups, scaleups, and innovation platforms during their visit to California, where they traveled to showcase Greece's considerable potential as Europe's new, emerging biotech and life sciences hub.

On June 26, 2026, AmCham Greece – USA Executive Director Katerina Sokou

A snapshot of the presentation


The delegation outside the Greek Consulate General in San Francisco

was among a handful of distinguished individuals invited to speak at “Greece – Redefining the Future of Life Sciences,” a special business and investment networking event hosted by the Consulate of Greece in San Francisco for the Greek mission. Highlighting the impressive capabilities of Greece’s biotech and life sciences industries, Sokou noted that the Chamber’s Washington DC office has observed growing US interest in the Greek biotech ecosystem, as investors seek to capitalize on the opportunities for transatlantic partnerships and European market access that Greece offers in its positioning to scale up its global life sciences.

The curated gathering was attended by select Bay Area investors, VCs, biotech executives, research institutions, and other ecosystem stakeholders who had the opportunity to find out more about the work of the nine participating Greek companies operating across the fields of precision diagnostics and liquid biopsy, oncology and regenerative medicine, AI-enabled drug repurposing, therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases, CRO and regulatory services, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and biotech infrastructure and innovation support services.

K. Sokou addressing the CBS Alumni Club of New York event

Energy Security and the Vital Role of Greek Shipping

AmCham Greece – USA had a chance to present the Chamber’s Washington DC office at a Columbia Business School (CBS) alumni event in New York. The timely panel discussion, titled “When Chokepoints Close: The New Art of Energy War, Shipping, and Supply Chains,” was organized by Niovi Christopoulou, Chair of the Global Business and Tech Committee of the CBS Alumni Club of New York. The event featured a panel discussion followed by a networking reception.

The event’s speakers were Olga Khakova, Nonresident Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global Energy Center; Diego Rivera Rivota, Senior Research Associate at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA); Dr. Nikos Tsakos, CEO of Tsakos Navigation; and Alex Whittington, Director of International Affairs at Cheniere Energy. Moderated by Yavuz "Vincent" Arik, Energy Consultant at Blend, the panel discussion centered on the weaponization of energy and the energy crisis resulting from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Key takeaways included the importance of securing the supply chains to alleviate future energy crises and the vital role of shipping in the global energy supply, particularly the role of Greek shipping in moving US LNG into Europe.

During the event, AmCham Greece – USA Executive Director Katerina Sokou argued that Greece is a reliable US partner able to play an even bigger role as part of a secure supply chain for international and transatlantic trade and investment in strategic sectors including defense, technology, energy, and shipping.

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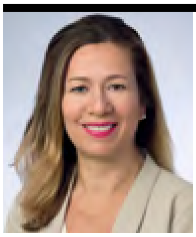
AMCHAM GREECE IN THE USA

A Partnership Fit for the Future

By collaborating with the Greek American community, AmCham Greece can help unlock the potential of US-Greece economic ties.



By Katerina Sokou
Executive Director,
AmCham Greece – USA

The Greek American community is one of the most vibrant and influential ethnic communities in the United States. Every critical intervention or key moment in US-Greece relations has arguably been facilitated by one, and usually more, Greek Americans.

When the Greek financial crisis of 2010 erupted, the resulting economic malaise and social cost mobilized the Hellenic community, which rallied to support philanthropic and entrepreneurial projects in Greece. Today, with Greece's strong recovery underway and attracting investors from around the world, the diaspora is also participating in projects and partnerships that are contributing to the transition of the Greek economy toward a more extroverted, innovation-oriented growth model. For its part, the Greek government has created incentives to repatriate the skilled expats lost to brain drain during the crisis years and to attract foreign talent, including from the Greek diaspora.

Functioning as a bridge between the two nations, the Hellenic community's networks and organizations in the United States have long driven people-to-people ties and institutional connections between the US and Greece. Successful Greek Americans are no longer just restoring their ancestral village properties. They are also mentoring startups, supporting philanthropic organizations, and actively investing in and working from Greece, unveiling the diaspora's potential as an agent of positive economic change.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce appreciates the strategic value of the Greek American community and is focused on strengthening its economic ties to Greece. Shortly after the inauguration of our US office in Washington DC, we sent a letter to the largest Hellenic organizations inviting them to collaborate toward our common goal of a closer partnership between Greece and the United States. To this end, in May 2026, AmCham Greece signed a memorandum of understanding with the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce, a strong New York-based business network that connects Greek and American business, culture, and education.

> AmCham Greece's expansion into the United States represents a historic opportunity to work with the Greek American community

Our Washington DC office is also broadening its membership to include the Greek American community, bringing new US members into our dynamic business network in Greece and providing access to our global AmCham resources, including the United States Chamber of Commerce. We are engaging top talent and resources, making connections for academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and startups, and facilitating business partnerships to drive technological and business innovation across emerging as well as traditional sectors. At the same time, we are also advocating for policies that foster seamless brain circulation, supporting the creation of a more competitive Greek economy and promoting closer US-Greece economic ties.

Recognizing the diaspora's work in preserving Hellenism and promoting bilateral relations, AmCham Greece President John D. Saracakis noted in his letter to the Greek American organizations that it is an honor for the Chamber to join their critical mission. Our Washington DC office is committed to serving both our Greek and US-based members, and our expansion into the United States represents a historic opportunity to work with the Greek American community to realize the full potential of a well-integrated diaspora to the mutual benefit of Hellenism, the Greek economy, and bilateral relations between our two countries.


Innovation opens up new therapeutic pathways. We guide them here.
Three decades ago, we were able to see further ahead. We recognized that the future of medicine started to change, and we created the first Greek biopharmaceutical company.
Every step of the way, we have been constantly observing science opening up novel pathways, managing to effectively treat diseases that were previously incurable, fulfilling the promise of a better and longer life.
Our own mission remains consistent. We work tirelessly, so that these new pathways can lead here, to our country, through partnerships with leading international pharmaceutical companies that develop cutting-edge therapies.
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AMCHAM GREECE IN THE USA

Investing in Innovation

Accelerating Greece's life sciences ecosystem

Dr. Simos Simeonidis, Managing Partner and Co-Founder of life sciences VC firm Kos Biotechnology Partners, talks to *Business Partners* about the promise and future of Greece's life sciences and biotech landscape and why the time is now to invest in it.

Greece has long produced exceptional scientific talent, much of which has historically built careers abroad. What conditions are needed today to transform Greece into a globally competitive biotechnology hub?
We believe that all the building blocks are in place right now for Greece to start building a strong ecosystem in the life sciences. First, we have a new generation of young scientists who are eager to develop their skills and compete not only in academic research but also in entrepreneurship and the translation of that research into companies.

> All the building blocks are in place right now for Greece to start building a strong life sciences ecosystem

In addition, for the first time, we have dedicated funding for investment in this field, and we have knowledgeable, professional fund managers with experience in the US biotechnology and capital markets arenas who can help make the right investments and then help these new companies grow. We also have, for the first time in decades, a stable political situation, with an administration that believes in and invests in innovation, with a special focus on the life sciences.

What distinguishes the life sciences from other areas of innovation, and why do you believe this is the right moment to invest in biotech in Greece and SE Europe?
The life sciences are unique compared to other areas of innovation, including the technology sector. The main difference stems from the level of complexity involved: understanding biological processes and solving biological problems to create new medicines is multiple orders of magnitude more challenging than solving problems involved in technology and other less technical fields. Consequently, the amount of time, the level of investment required, and the success rates are substantially different from other sectors. Therefore, the levels of expertise and sophistication required to be successful are exceedingly high. On the other hand, the financial rewards

for the few who do succeed are very substantial, and thus the sector has always attracted significant capital. Ultimately, we will always need what this sector produces: new medicines to improve and extend life.

How are AI, computational biology, and data-driven research changing the future of life sciences, and where can Greece position itself within this global transformation?
We believe that the newest advancements in these technologies will substantially improve outcomes across the life sciences because they offer both immediate and future applicability in multiple areas; for example, they bring improvements in the way we design and test therapeutic molecules that are better, faster and cheaper. In addition, AI methods can result in faster and better selection of the right patients in clinical trials, which will, in turn, result in faster drug development and lower associated costs.
On the other hand, we also believe that while AI provide real benefits in the life sciences, it also comes, as expected with most new revolutionary technologies, with a lot of hype and overpromising. Many companies that have been funded will never produce meaningful results and are just benefiting from the current wave of excitement. In this environment, the key will be separating the few viable companies with real solutions from the vast majority of ultimately uninvestable companies.

AmCham Greece can play a pivotal role in catalyzing investment in innovation

Based on your international experience, what lessons do you believe are most relevant for strengthening Greece's research and entrepreneurship landscape?
Greece has a strong, talented young workforce in the fields involved in the life sciences, and particularly in biotechnology—namely physicians, biologists, chemists, engineers, and biostatisticians. What the country is missing, however, is real knowhow in biotechnology—in drug discovery and drug development. We believe that it is imperative to bridge this knowledge gap, and this can only be achieved by engaging real experts from abroad, especially from the United States, which is the current leader in biotechnology, to help bring this knowhow back home.
There are several misconceptions about Greece's biotech landscape. We often hear about a vibrant and strong biotechnology ecosystem in the country, but unfortunately, this is not yet the case. People also tend to think, based on a few successes they've seen in tech, that this is fairly easy to build. Yet while there are similarities between the two, there are also many significant differences, as mentioned earlier. We have to build the biotech ecosystem from scratch, and this will take time, money, patience, and, most importantly, the right people with the right type of expertise. We strongly believe that this can be done, and that is exactly why we are investing here.

What value does joining AmCham Greece bring to you, and how can such platforms help foster stronger connections between innovation, investment, and transatlantic cooperation?
Our decision to join AmCham Greece is twofold: First, we know the organization's senior leadership well and are very impressed by their vision, drive, and professionalism. Second, we believe that AmCham Greece and other organizations like it can serve a very important role in connecting important stakeholders in Greece and the US, bringing new ideas forward, and highlighting potential synergies between them. I believe they can play a pivotal role in catalyzing investment in innovation across both markets.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION STORIES

AI-Assisted Digital Transformation

Business Transformation Stories v.5

AmCham Greece's BTSv5 brought together leading voices from across business, tech, and government to discuss the game-changing potential of AI and its role in the new growth era.

On June 18, 2026, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce was delighted to convene its fifth Business Transformation Stories event, titled "AI-Assisted Digital Transformation," which took place at Mikro Hrimatistirio, the historic old stock exchange building, in Athens. Spearheaded by the Chamber's Education, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (EIE) Committee and organized in partnership with NBG Business Seeds, the event focused on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence and the challenges and opportunities that AI is creating for business, employment, and the Greek economy.

Business Transformation Stories v.5 kicked off with welcoming remarks from AmCham Greece Executive Director Elias Spirtounias and EIE Committee members Dr. Spyros Arsenis, Director of NBG Business Seeds and Head of Business Innovation Development at the National Bank of Greece, and Barbara Mergou, attorney at law, followed by introductory addresses from John D. Saracakis, President of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, and Vasilis Karkatzounis, Special Secretary for AI and Data Governance at the Ministry of Digital Governance and Artificial Intelligence. The agenda then featured two special-focus panel discussions—titled "Transforming Business with AI" and "Transforming the Workplace with AI"—and a fireside chat with Stavros Kalafatis, Deputy Minister of

Labrina Barmpetaki, John D. Saracakis, Stavros Kalafatis, Litsa Panayotopoulos

> Greece must accelerate the adoption of emerging technologies while also investing in the skillsets and human talent needed to unlock their full potential. Because AI is not just about technology—it is also about strategy, leadership, education, and collaboration. And that is what will determine Greece's competitiveness in the years ahead.
>
> **- John D. Saracakis, President, AmCham Greece**

> AI is a new industrial revolution, perhaps the most impactful yet. The changes it brings are deep and swift, affecting every sector of the economy and society and making agility, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous learning essential.
>
> **- Stavros Kalafatis, Deputy Minister of Development Responsible for Research and Innovation**

John D. Saracakis

Elias Spirtounias

Spyros Arsenis

Development Responsible for Research and Innovation, while the evening closed with a networking cocktail reception.

Looking at the very real impact of AI across sectors and industries, the discussions explored the ways in which it is redefining business operations, boosting competitiveness, and driving sustainable growth. Emphasis was given to the considerable speed and scale of developments in the field and to how successful adoption requires readiness at the technical, operational, and human levels. Highlighting the need to transform processes, mindsets, and organizational culture, the discussion underlined the critical significance of continuous adaptability, agile mindsets, ongoing learning, and strategic flexibility. Cooperation between the private and public sector and academia and striking the right balance between regulation and innovation at the European level were also stressed as essential to success.

This marks our fifth successful Business Transformation Stories event, and we remain committed to fostering dynamic dialogue and collaboration, showcasing best practices and promoting the transition of businesses to a sustainable and competitive future.

- Litsa Panayotopoulos, Chair of the EIE Committee, AmCham Greece

Notably, while acknowledging that AI is becoming a business necessity that is driving change across industries and at all levels of operation—from business models and executive decisionmaking to value creation and employee and customers experiences—speakers also emphasized that human judgment, critical thinking, and evaluation skills remain irreplaceable, and that businesses benefit most when they deploy AI as an accelerator, rather than a replacement, of human expertise.

Through engaging discussions and speaker insights, Business Transformation Stories v.5 showed that more than a new technology, AI is a crucial strategic factor that is decisively influencing the future of businesses and the Greek economy, and highlighted that the true value of technological advancements lies in their capacity to not only benefit businesses, workers, and society, but also drive sustainable development. The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce remains committed to supporting initiatives that enhance innovation, promote cooperation between the private and public sectors, and contribute toward a modern, stronger, and more competitive Greek economy.

Fotis Panagiotopoulos, Spyros Arsenis, Litsa Panayotopoulos, Gregory Gousis, Apostolos Ioakeim

Launched in May 2023, Business Transformation Stories is an initiative of the Education, Innovation, Entrepreneurship (EIE) Committee of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. Convening events in Athens and across the country, it aims to explore the impact of digital transformation on companies and workplaces, promote good business transformation practices, facilitate knowledge transfer, and foster synergism between fledgling startups and established businesses, leveraging the unique strengths of companies at drastically different stages of their development to support business growth and success.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Lead with Strategy, Govern with Impact

Corporate Governance 2026

From board evaluations and succession planning to the impact of emerging technologies, AmCham Greece's 12th Corporate Governance Conference gathered leading experts, distinguished business executives, and top policymakers to share their insights on key themes and developments in today's corporate governance.

Natassa Stamou, Mark T. Uyeda, Vassiliki Lazarakou, John D. Saracakis, Maria Theodoulidou, Michail Fekkas

Sofia Kalomenides, Mark T. Uyeda, Vassiliki Lazarakou

Chris Hodge

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce successfully convened its 12th Corporate Governance Conference on July 13, 2026, at the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens. Organized by the Chamber's Corporate Governance Committee, the conference was held under the auspices of The Institute of Internal Auditors Greece.

Centered on the theme "Lead with Strategy, Govern with Impact," Corporate Governance 2026 delivered an outstanding experience, reaffirming its reputation, built over more than a decade, as one of the country's foremost platforms for public dialogue on corporate governance.

Prominent representatives from the business and investment communities and public agencies came together in the Greek capital to discuss the evolving role of corporate governance in an environment that is being rapidly reshaped by technological advancements, geopolitical shifts, escalating regulatory requirements, and changing expectations from investors and society alike.

> Corporate governance is about the kind of economy we want to build—an economy that is resilient, credible, competitive, and geared toward longterm value creation.
>
> **- John D. Saracakis, President, AmCham Greece**

> A robust corporate governance system is pivotal for operational resilience, transparency, and stakeholder trust. It lays the foundation for longterm success.
>
> **- Maria Theodoulidou, Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee, AmCham Greece**

"The constant pressure for competitiveness is altering the way companies generate value. Corporate governance is the mechanism that helps them make better decisions, manage risks effectively and, ultimately, create value. We are moving from process to outcome—not merely complying, but producing value," said AmCham Greece Executive Director Elias Sirtounias in his opening remarks.

Taking the podium next, John D. Saracakis, President of AmCham Greece, and Maria Theodoulidou, Chair of the Chamber's Corporate Governance Committee, echoed these sentiments in their welcome addresses. They highlighted the scope of impact of corporate governance, noted the steady progress in adopting best practices, and emphasized the importance of pushing forward with

Ioannis Apsouris, Iordanis Aivazis, Giorgos Liakopoulos, Spyros Rasias, Michalis Tsibris

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Vasileios Kaminaris, Lilian Georgopoulou, Ioannis Papadimitriou, Ioannis Karagiannis, Thanos Markantonis, Aris Dimitriadis

> Corporate governance is embedded in our daily operations; it's not a mere tick-the-box exercise. For a public agency to succeed, it must take full ownership of its mandate, utilizing methodologies and workflows developed internally and integrated into its operating model. The same applies to accountability. Responsibility must be clear-cut and absolute; it cannot be diluted."
>
> **- George Pitsilis, Governor, Independent Authority for Public Revenue**

these efforts while also embracing the capabilities of new technologies.
A discussion between Vasiliki Lazarakou, Chair of the Hellenic Capital Market Commission (HCMC), and Mark T. Uyeda, Commissioner of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, set a high-level tone for the day. The two highlighted the crucial role corporate governance plays in driving investor confidence and market credibility and underlined the need for clear, standardized metrics to facilitate this process.
In his keynote address, Chris Hodge, Director of Governance Perspectives Ltd, addressed the fundamental transformations reshaping corporate governance and responsibility. He noted how key factors including growing regulatory demands, technological disruption, and ongoing geopolitical and societal unpredictability are significantly increasing the burden placed on boards.
The remainder of the day featured six thematic panel discussions:
"Targeted Corporate Governance and Effectiveness: How Are They Connected?" focused on how targeted corporate governance—which aligns specific leadership behaviors, transparent reporting, and risk management with strategic company goals—can significantly drive business effectiveness. Panelists explored how this enhances performance by fostering ethical accountability, optimizing resource allocation, mitigating legal risks, and attracting capital through improved stakeholder trust, directly contributing to longterm sustainability and higher valuations.
"Euronext Athens: The Next Chapter of the Greek Capital Market on the Global Stage" examined how the inclusion of the Athens Stock Exchange in the Euronext Group and Greece's upgrade to Developed Market status mark a new era for Greek listed companies. Focusing on the strategic implications of the transition to Euronext Athens, panelists

> What gives markets credibility is the corporate governance of the companies within them.
>
> **- Mark T. Uyeda, Commissioner, US Securities and Exchange Commission**

Konstantinos Noulas, Nancy Verra, George Vlachos, Dora Varvarigou, Katerina Vracha


Theodosis Anagnostopoulos, Maria Theodoulidou, Christina Tsironi, Natassa Stamou, Xenofon Avlonitis


Eirini Pothitou, Dimosthenis Anagnostopoulos, Christos Tarantilis, Alexandros Paterakis, Maria Psyllaki

Giorgos Kerameus, Giorgos Pitsilis, Alexandra Rogkakou, Michalis Doumpos, Vasilis Monogios

Meaningful, company-specific reporting enhances transparency and strengthens investor confidence.

- Vasiliki Lazarakou, Chair, Hellenic Capital Market Commission

discussed the opportunities it creates for attracting international institutional capital, enhancing market liquidity, and boosting competitiveness, as well as the heightened expectations surrounding corporate governance, transparency, and the international investment profile of Greek businesses.

"Succession Planning: How Does It Impact Corporate Sustainability? Best Practices and Key Considerations" analyzed succession planning as a strategic tool for boards and nomination committees to ensure organizational sustainability, leadership continuity, and operational resilience. The discussion explored the impact of timely and systematic successor preparation on mitigating business risks, facilitating smooth transitions, and supporting strategic growth. Panelists also shared best practices for identifying and developing talent, assessing leadership capabilities, and aligning succession planning with corporate objectives to create sustainable value for all stakeholders.

"Board Evaluations and Remuneration: Key Findings and Insights" focused on how high-performing boards approach evaluation processes responsibly. The discussion centered on establishing mechanisms to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for development in a targeted and practical manner aligned with the evolving needs of the organization. Emphasis was also placed on developing appropriate remuneration systems that reflect the qualifications, skills, and experience of board members while underscoring their value in relation to the organization's activities and strategic priorities.

Boards today carry far greater responsibilities. The regulatory environment has become more demanding and increasingly prescriptive. Technology has become a major force shaping how companies operate and make decisions. And the world itself has become far more unpredictable—not only from a business perspective, but across the broader geopolitical and societal landscape.

- Chris Hodge, Director, Governance Perspectives Ltd

"Corporate Governance in Public Organizations and State-Owned Enterprises: Are Improvements Being Made? What Developments Are Coming?" turned the spotlight on the unique characteristics of governance in the public sector. Addressing the pronounced need for continuous improvements in governance in public agencies dedicated to serving citizens, panelists noted the progress achieved to date, acknowledged the inherent systemic challenges and limitations that often impede optimal implementation, and looked at upcoming developments across key areas of the public sector.

"Artificial Intelligence – Cybersecurity – Digital Transformation: Are Boards Ready for What Comes Next?" examined corporate governance against a backdrop of accelerating AI adoption, intensifying cyber threats, and sweeping digital transformation across industries. The discussion examined how boards are preparing to oversee AI integration, manage technological risk, and navigate constant disruption and regulatory pressure. Panelists reflected on whether boards currently possess the digital literacy required to protect enterprise value, ensure business continuity and resilience, and translate digital transformation into sustainable growth.

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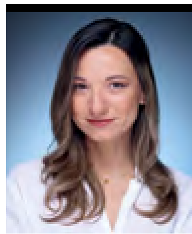
BUSINESS INSIGHTS

AI Adoption Starts with Culture

Everyone treats AI adoption like a technology problem. It isn't. The much harder question is whether organizations are actually ready to adopt AI, scale it, and use it responsibly. Most aren't, and most don't know it yet.



By Elena Barla
Co-Founder and CEO, future brAIn and CEO+

Individually, people are already good at using AI. They write with it, research with it, summarize, analyze and save themselves hours. But that personal fluency doesn't automatically translate to organizational capability. What works brilliantly for one person at their desk can fall apart the moment it has to cross teams, systems, data flows and layers of leadership. Individual skill was never the hard part.

The barrier is culture. In organizations run on gut instinct, politics, thick hierarchy or siloed teams, even a genuinely good AI-generated insight goes nowhere. It can be completely right and still not matter, because the organization is too slow, too cautious or too fragmented to act on it. In low-trust environments, people don't experiment; they hide, afraid of being judged for making mistakes or for using AI at all. So people either opt out or use it quietly; either way, the organization learns nothing.

Leadership is the other half of this equation, and it can't be delegated down. AI adoption has to be run as a strategic transformation, not handed to IT as a side project. Leaders need to be honest about what they are trying to achieve—productivity, cost, better decisions, innovation, employee experience, or growth—because each objective pulls in a different direction and carries its own risks and its own way of measuring success.

Vague ambition is where most AI strategies quietly die. How leaders behave sets the tone for everyone else. If people are expected to experiment, they need to feel safe enough to say "I tried it, and it worked," and just as safe saying "It didn't work" or "I'm not sure this is the right use case." Take that away, and adoption stays cosmetic, a slide in a deck rather than something real.

> The real competitive advantage doesn't come from the AI model itself but the culture around it

Performance systems need to catch up too. Reward speed alone, and AI will just help people produce more, not better. The question worth asking isn't how much someone shipped or whether they used AI, but whether they used it well: Did they check it, challenge it, use it responsibly? That's harder to measure than volume, which is why most haven't acted on this yet.

Meanwhile, the next shift is already underway. AI agents are starting to sit inside everyday workflows, not just as tools but also as participants in decisions and delivery. As people and AI agents work side by side, a new hybrid culture takes shape around them, built on how people validate AI outputs, how openly they disclose using AI, how much they trust an AI-assisted decision and how accountability gets split when something goes wrong.

Which means the culture metrics most companies rely on, such as engagement, collaboration, and leadership effectiveness, are no longer enough on their own. Organizations need a new set built specifically for the agentic workplace: trust in AI, human-AI collaboration quality, responsible experimentation, accountability, ethical use, data confidence, and whether AI is genuinely improving decisions or just their speed.

Managers sit right in the middle of this shift. Their job is moving away from controlling tasks toward orchestration, helping people work out what's theirs to own, what goes to an AI agent, what needs a second look before it's trusted, and who's accountable for the final decision. As AI becomes part of the daily work, leaders need an ongoing, honest read on how culture and decisionmaking are shifting, not a one-off survey that's outdated by the time it's presented.

Ultimately, the organizations that get the most out of AI won't be the ones with the best models. They'll be the ones that keep building, deliberately, the conditions for people and AI to work together with trust, clarity and shared accountability. It is the harder work, but it is also where the real competitive advantage will come from. Not the model itself, but the culture around it.

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THE INTERVIEW

Innovation everywhere means prosperity for all

FROM RESEARCH TO IMPACT

BUILDING GREECE'S INNOVATION ECONOMY

Research, innovation, and technology are strategic drivers of economic growth and societal progress. As Greece seeks to strengthen its position within the global knowledge economy, it must successfully translate high-quality research and scientific knowledge into real-world applications and commercial opportunities.
Here, Stavros Kalafatis, Deputy Minister for Development Responsible for Research and Innovation, discusses government efforts to strengthen the country's innovation ecosystem and create the conditions for knowledge to generate tangible economic and social value.

Greece has made notable progress in research performance over the past decade, yet commercialization remains a challenge. What can be done to ensure that innovation generates greater economic and societal impact?
Greece achieves outstanding performance in scientific research, proving that investing in research pays off. From 2018 to 2024, Greece's R&D expenditures increased from €2.2 billion to €3.7 billion, strengthening our capacity with 20,000 new high-specialization jobs. The major challenge now is to convert this knowledge into marketable high-value-added products and services, cultivating a horizontal culture of innovation that allows our youth to create here, in their own country.
To bridge this gap, we are moving along three main pillars:
Research – Innovate 2021–2027, our €300 million flagship initiative, funds partnerships between businesses and research organizations. It focuses primarily on the commercialization of research results, as per Intervention III of the initiative, providing the necessary working capital to bring a patent from the laboratory to the market.
Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) have been established in universities and research centers to support researchers in patenting and commercially exploiting their work through existing companies or spin-offs. Concurrently, shared structures, such as incubators and accelerators, are being developed to turn ideas into startups.

> Our priority is to shape a new knowledge-based production model, enabling Greece to play a leading role in the era of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies

Lastly, Greece's Smart Specialization Strategy (RIS3) for 2021–2027 uses an entrepreneurial discovery process to focus on eight critical sectors with a competitive advantage (such as agrifood, environment, digital economy, materials/construction), ensuring that produced research addresses real market needs.
Our central priority at the Ministry of Development is to shape a new knowledge-based production model, enabling Greece to play a leading role in the era of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. We bring the world of science closer to the market through joint projects, institutions, and incentives. In this way, knowledge born in Greek laboratories is transformed into tangible innovative products, benefiting both the economy and society as a whole.

How do the government's regional innovation hubs promote innovation and growth across the country?
We have drafted and put into effect a specific strategy regarding the creation of 13 Regional Innovation Hubs, local growth poles developed in cooperation with the respective administrative regions, with a core focus on new technologies. Our goal is to better coordinate and interconnect regional innovation ecosystems across the country, creating synergies between scientific and academic institutions, research centers, and businesses.
The philosophy behind these hubs is based on the

THE INTERVIEW

decentralization of innovation: They create local synergy, bringing local universities, research institutes, productive enterprises, and local government together at the same table. They highlight local advantages, with each hub specializing in the needs of its region; for example, in Crete or Western Greece, the focus is on agrotech and energy, while in Northern Greece, we leverage the dynamics of institutions like CERTH (Centre for Research and Technology Hellas) to develop practical solutions such as smart urban mobility management. Crucially, they also support talent retention (brain gain), ensuring that young scientists and entrepreneurs do not need to relocate to Athens or move abroad to access high-level infrastructure. By investing in human capital across Greece, we are enhancing regional competitiveness and creating highly specialized jobs.

We want the Regional Innovation Hubs to act as catalysts for development, reducing regional disparities and fostering the growth of local communities. For our government, investing in research and innovation is a strategic choice that is central to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis's policy agenda for a new, socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable development model. Innovation everywhere means prosperity for all.

What tools are available to help startups and innovative SMEs access funding, technology, research expertise, and growth opportunities, particularly outside the major urban centers?

Startups and SMEs are key catalysts for changing our production model. The Elevate Greece platform offers a mature ecosystem that provides targeted angel investor tax incentives and facilitates access to venture capital. Meanwhile, a suite of tools is being implemented to boost innovation throughout Greece.

Regional startups and SMEs can use innovation vouchers to purchase research services from universities and research centers to improve their products.

The Hellenic Development Bank of Investments (HDBI) is channeling liquidity to the regions through new co-financed venture capital funds. This is the foundation for EquiFund II, a new national fund-of-funds backed by EU structural funds and national resources to develop the domestic venture capital and private equity ecosystem to finance innovative projects. Beyond capital, however, corporate culture is also shifting.

With the new Development Law and the super-deduction of R&D expenses reaching 315%, investment in research is transformed into an absolute prerequisite for growth, positioning Greece as an important innovation hub in Southeast Europe. Finally, the 13 new Regional Innovation Hubs serve as physical incubators and co-working spaces, directly connecting regional startups with international markets and major industries.

These tools serve as a lever to shift business culture and significantly improve the landscape for companies investing in innovation.

Greece is not merely observing developments; we are actively co-shaping them

How can AI contribute to economic growth and public-sector modernization and what are the government's priorities in this area?

Our strategy for AI constitutes a structural driver for the transformation of the Greek economy and daily life. Greece, as one of the first countries with a national strategy aligned with the European AI Act, mobilizes its top scientific talent through eight Sectoral Scientific Councils

(SSC) of the National Council for Research, Technology, and Innovation (NCRI).

National priorities focus on five main axes:

High-performance national infrastructure – A top priority is the completion of the Daedalus supercomputer, the heart of the Pharos AI factory, which establishes Greece as a technological hub in Southeast Europe. This investment is complemented by the creation of the new national AI infrastructure in Kozani and CERTH's new AI Nucleus research center in Thessaloniki, turning the country into a regional data hub.

Bridging research and the market – We interconnect research centers such as CERTH with local entities, municipalities, and chambers of commerce so that applied AI research directly solves daily problems faced by SMEs.

Regulatory control and safety – Through the Special Secretariat for Artificial Intelligence and Data Governance, we ensure the ethical development of technology with absolute respect for personal data.

Public sector modernization – We integrate AI tools to reduce bureaucracy, ensure faster citizen service, and analyze data in healthcare and civil protection, such as for the early prediction of natural disasters.

Boosting entrepreneurship – In cooperation with bodies such as SEV, the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises, we help businesses integrate AI, targeting a 15–20% increase in their productivity and an enhancement of their international competitiveness.

These upgrades to the national innovation ecosystem are reflected in the trust shown by global tech giants such as Google, OpenAI, and Mistral AI, validating our domestic talent and infrastructure. AI serves as a strategic tool for social and economic cohesion across Greece's regions. After all, in 2025, Greece ranked first in the EU in the use of AI tools by young people (83.5%), proving that our human capital is our strongest asset for the future. Our country is not merely observing developments; we are actively co-shaping them.

With €300 million in RRF funding allocated to upgrading research infrastructure, how will these investments transform Greece's research capabilities, boost international competitiveness, and attract talent and investment?

The allocation of resources exceeding €300 million from the Recovery and Resilience Facility to upgrade the country's research infrastructure represents a historic opportunity, marking the largest injection of public investment into research in recent decades.

The expected results are tangible, beginning with infrastructural and technological modernization that will see the country's 11 major research centers (including CERTH, Demokritos, FORTH, the National Hellenic Research Foundation, and Athena Research Center) acquire world-class laboratories, cutting-edge scientific equipment, and modern facilities.

The funding will also drive a national brain regain, attracting and retaining talent, and motivating Greek scientists to return from abroad, through a combination of competitive salaries and modern infrastructure where they can conduct cutting-edge research without obstacles. This upgraded innovation landscape is already attracting international investments, with major multinational technology companies increasingly choosing Greece to establish their regional R&D hubs, thanks to the country's world-class ecosystem of modern infrastructure and specialized personnel.

> By eliminating administrative silos, we are creating a common research fabric aligned with European and international best practices

How can the planned integration of academia, research, and innovation under one ministry help bridge the gap between academic research and market application to deliver real-world solutions and drive economic growth?

The creation of a new, unified ministry that will bring higher education, research, and innovation under one roof, as announced by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, will constitute a structural, institutional reform that the research community itself has been demanding for years.

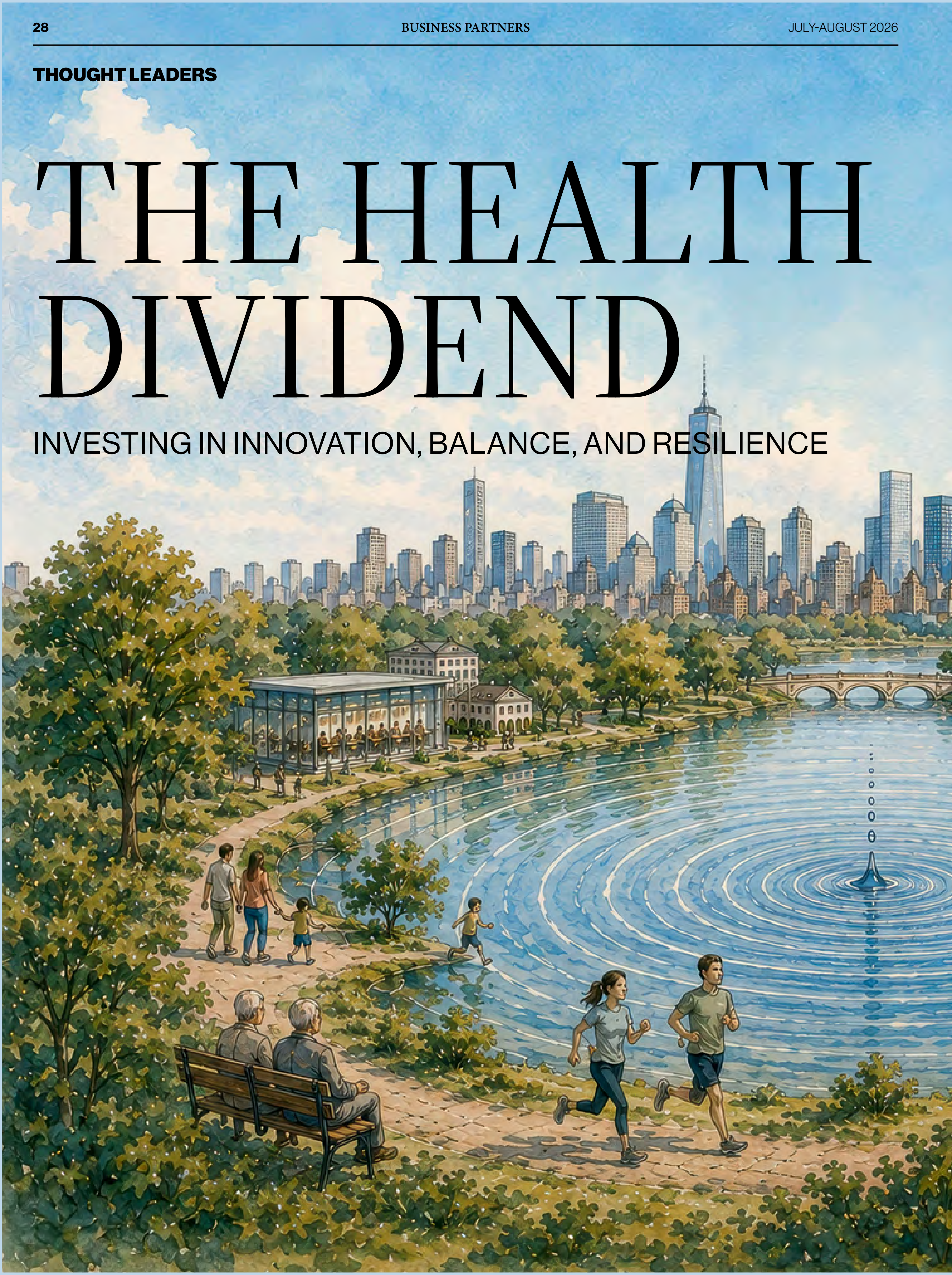
The special task force established to oversee this transition—and in which I have the honor to participate—is working intensively on setting up this new entity following the elections. The objective is to unify the fragmented research space under a common structure that will allow universities and research centers to connect directly with the economy, thereby boosting the country's international competitiveness.

By eliminating the silos between higher education institutions and research centers, we are creating a common research fabric aligned with European and international best practices. This administrative unification will enable the formulation of a single, coherent national strategy for research, accelerating program calls and reducing the structural bottlenecks that used to delay the absorption of funds.

THOUGHT LEADERS

THE HEALTH DIVIDEND

INVESTING IN INNOVATION, BALANCE, AND RESILIENCE



By Alexandra Loli, Ph.D.
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

The relationship between health and prosperity has never been more evident. Around the world, healthcare is increasingly recognized not only as a social imperative but also as a strategic investment—one that influences economic performance, workforce productivity, business competitiveness, and societal resilience. The quality of a nation's healthcare system is closely linked to its ability to innovate, attract investment, support sustainable growth, and improve quality of life.

At the same time, the healthcare sector itself is undergoing a profound transformation. Advances in life sciences, digital technologies, artificial intelligence, precision medicine, and data-driven healthcare are reshaping the way care is delivered, managed, and experienced. New opportunities are emerging alongside new challenges, requiring stronger collaboration among policymakers, healthcare providers, industry leaders, researchers, and innovators. Against this backdrop, *Business Partners* presents "The Health Dividend: Investing in wellbeing, innovation, and resilience," bringing together distinguished voices from across the healthcare ecosystem.

The perspectives featured in this Thought Leaders feature reflect the diversity, expertise, and forward-looking vision of companies that are helping shape the future of healthcare. While their viewpoints and priorities may differ, these companies share a common understanding that investing in health creates value far beyond the healthcare sector itself. It strengthens economies, supports innovation, enhances resilience, and contributes to more sustainable and inclusive growth.

As AmCham Greece prepares to host HealthWorld 2026 under the theme "Health Is Wealth," Business Partners is pleased to provide a platform for leaders in healthcare to share ideas and practical insights on the opportunities that lie ahead.

THOUGHT LEADERS

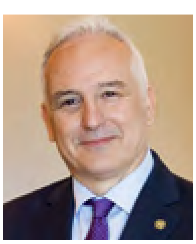
By John D. Saracakis
President,
AmCham Greece

Few sectors have a greater impact on the future of a nation than healthcare. Beyond its obvious social dimension, healthcare influences economic performance, workforce participation, investment attractiveness, innovation capacity, and overall quality of life. Countries that succeed in building modern, efficient, and forward-looking healthcare systems are ultimately better positioned to compete, grow, and prosper.

Greece enters this new era with significant advantages. A highly skilled scientific community, internationally recognized healthcare professionals, strong pharmaceutical and medtech industries, and an increasingly dynamic innovation ecosystem provide a solid foundation for future growth. The challenge—and the opportunity—lies in bringing these strengths together through collaboration, investment, and a shared longterm vision.

The companies represented in this Thought Leaders feature are helping drive that progress. Through research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and patient-centered solutions, they contribute not only to better health outcomes but also to a stronger and more resilient economy.

As the theme of HealthWorld 2026 reminds us, investing in health is ultimately an investment in our collective future—in people, innovation, and the longterm wellbeing and prosperity of our society.



By Elias Spirtounias
Executive Director,
AmCham Greece

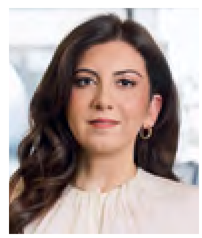
For more than two decades, HealthWorld has served as one of Greece's leading forums for dialogue on healthcare policy, innovation, access, sustainability, and the future of care. Its enduring value lies in its ability to bring together voices from across the healthcare ecosystem—government officials, industry leaders, healthcare professionals, patient representatives, and other sectoral experts—to exchange ideas, share experiences, and explore solutions to common challenges.

This year's theme, “Health Is Wealth,” reflects the growing recognition that health is a shared responsibility and a strategic priority and that meaningful progress requires collaboration, trust, and a commitment to continuous improvement across the board. In this context, the articles featured in the following pages offer valuable insights into the opportunities, challenges, and priorities that will define the health sector in the years ahead.

On behalf of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, I would like to thank all speakers and contributors whose participation makes HealthWorld a meaningful platform for dialogue and progress.

Health is Wealth

A Strategic Opportunity for Greece and Europe



By Labrina Barmpetaki
Chair of the AmCham Greece Pharmaceutical Committee; First Vice President, AmCham Greece; Managing Director and BoD Chair, AbbVie Greece, Cyprus, and Malta

Healthcare is increasingly shaping the future of economies, societies, and nations. Across Europe, governments are navigating a complex landscape defined by demographic change, rising healthcare needs, financial pressures, technological transformation, and growing expectations from the public. At the same time, healthcare has emerged as one of the most important drivers of innovation, productivity, investment, and longterm resilience.

This evolving landscape calls for a broader perspective. Health policy can no longer be viewed in isolation from economic policy, competitiveness, or sustainable growth. The countries that succeed in attracting investment, accelerating innovation, and building resilient healthcare systems will be better positioned to thrive in an increasingly demanding global environment.

For Greece, this discussion takes on particular significance as the country prepares to assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2027. The months ahead offer a valuable opportunity to contribute ideas, shape priorities and strengthen Greece’s voice on some of the most important healthcare challenges Europe is facing. The upcoming HealthWorld conference is a platform to elevate the conversation among all involved stakeholders around the future of health policy and explore how Greece can contribute meaningfully to the European healthcare agenda.

Meaningful progress depends on our collective ability to connect policy with innovation, ambition with execution, and national priorities with a broader European vision

As Europe prepares for its next chapter of healthcare transformation, collaboration is essential. Meaningful progress will depend on our collective ability to connect policy with innovation, ambition with execution, and national priorities with a broader European vision.

By 2035, the leading healthcare systems will be those that use innovation to deliver earlier, smarter, and more accessible care. That is the real meaning of readiness.

From More Healthcare to Better Health

By Spyridon (Spyros) Gkikas-Panousis
Chair of the AmCham Greece Medical Devices and Diagnostics (MD&D) Committee; General Manager for Greece, Cyprus, and the Balkans, GE HealthCare

The healthcare sector has spent the past few years strengthening resilience. The next priority is readiness: the ability to anticipate demand, use resources wisely, and improve outcomes before pressure reaches breaking point.

Demographic change and chronic disease are already reshaping healthcare needs. Expanding capacity will remain important, but it cannot be the only answer. Greece, like many countries, will need to focus more strongly on earlier diagnosis, faster clinical decisions, and more efficient care pathways. This requires a shift in how progress is measured. Activity alone does not define success. A healthcare system creates greater value when it detects disease earlier, helps clinicians act sooner, and reduces the need for more complex interventions later.

Technology can support this shift when it is connected to real clinical needs. Artificial intelligence, advanced imaging, and digital solutions should help clinicians work more effectively, reduce unnecessary delays, and improve patient experience. Their value lies in practical impact: better decisions, better workflows, and better use of limited resources.

> The focus needs to shift to earlier diagnosis, faster clinical decisions, and more efficient care pathways

Greece has already made important steps through digital health initiatives, infrastructure investments, and ongoing reforms. The next phase should bring these efforts together around a clearer objective: improving health outcomes while strengthening the healthcare system's productivity and sustainability.

The Architecture of Prevention

Moving Greece from proactive healthcare policy to sustained health investment

By Siete Braak
Managing Director, Roche Diagnostics Hellas

Advanced diagnostics are the foundation of any resilient healthcare system. As the gatekeeper of proactive care, modern screening and diagnostic tools provide the vital insights needed to detect diseases early, personalize treatment, and intercept conditions before they escalate. Ultimately, timely diagnostics save lives, reduce longterm hospitalizations, and optimize public health spending.

Acknowledging this value, the Ministry of Health has made commendable strides in shifting Greece toward proactive care through the national prevention program "Prolamvano". This vision gained crucial institutional weight with the Prime Minister's recent commitment to extend the program, transforming preventative screening from a public health initiative into a longterm national policy.

> We must commit to prevention as a compound, high-yield investment

Yet, a policy is only as strong as its fiscal foundation. To capitalize on this momentum, we must commit to prevention as a compound, high-yield investment. Securing dedicated and expanding funding streams is critical—not just to protect existing screenings but to scale them into high-burden, unaddressed therapeutic areas like neurology. In an aging society, intercepting neurodegenerative diseases early is no longer just a clinical goal; it is a macroeconomic imperative.

As a trusted partner to the Greek state, we are committed to bringing world-class innovation, digital solutions, and cutting-edge diagnostic infrastructure to the ecosystem. By combining sustained public funding with our advanced diagnostic expertise, we can successfully expand the boundaries of prevention, ensuring a healthier, more sustainable, and patient-centered future for Greece.

THOUGHT LEADERS

Innovation Done Right

Unlocking the health dividend for sustainable systems

By Lizzie Champion
BoD Chair and General Manager, GSK Greece

Healthcare systems, including Greece's, are evolving amid demographic shifts, rising chronic disease, and expectations for timely access to innovation. These pressures are reshaping innovation's role in building sustainable healthcare systems.

Innovation is not a cost. It is an investment in better health, stronger societies, and economic resilience. With the right conditions, it delivers value, strengthening productivity and contributing to longterm societal wellbeing.

Leveraging innovation requires a shift to value-based pricing and reimbursement. A modernized HTA framework, aligned with the evolving European HTA framework and reflecting the requirements of the Joint Clinical Assessment, to ensure timely access, transparency, and consistency.

> Innovation is not a cost; it is an investment in better health, stronger societies, and economic resilience

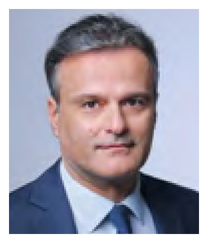
However, access to innovation cannot be sustained through assessment alone. It depends on a funding environment that allows the system and industry to plan with confidence. In a system reliant on clawbacks and rebates, a capped clawback mechanism is essential to support planning, investment, and access to innovation.

A more predictable system also creates space to shift from managing pressure to preventing it. Prevention through vaccination plays a central role. It protects populations, reduces vaccine-preventable diseases and the associated burden, and alleviates pressure on healthcare systems, freeing resources that can be reinvested in improving access to innovative treatments and vaccines, while also delivering returns of up to 19 times the initial investment through avoided healthcare costs and wider economic impact such as improved productivity and economic resilience.

In this evolving landscape, GSK Greece, and I personally as General Manager of the company and as a member of the board of directors of the Pharma Innovation Forum, are committed to advancing innovation, supporting policies that enable sustainable and predictable funding, strengthening prevention through vaccination, and leveraging technology and AI, while partnering with all stakeholders to collectively shape a resilient healthcare system that delivers value for patients, society, and the economy.

Sailing to the Edge of a Flat World

When temporary crisis measures become permanent policy, Greece risks turning away innovation and compromising patient access



By Savas Charalampidis
General Manager for Greece, Cyprus, and EDM, Gilead Sciences

For centuries, we believed our world was round, rational, governed by logic and shared rules. In Greek pharmaceutical policy, that belief no longer holds. We have sailed to the edge. And the world, it turns out, is flat.

Mandatory paybacks were introduced as an emergency measure during the financial crisis. More than a decade later, they have not only survived—they have grown, expanded, and been extended further into the future. A temporary tool has become a permanent tax on innovation.

There is no logic in a system where companies discover what they owe only after they have already delivered. There is no reason in a model where the state underfunds healthcare and then demands that the industry absorb the gap. There is no commitment in promises to reduce clawbacks that are quietly postponed, re-engineered, or replaced with new burdens.

> A sustainable system requires a map, a compass, and the courage to prioritize, fund, measure, and honor commitments

And yet, the course remains unchanged. The instruction is always the same: keep sailing. But there is nowhere left to go. When paybacks consume most of the value, the conversation is no longer about efficiency, partnership, or reform. It is about whether innovation will continue to reach Greek patients at all. A sustainable system requires a map and a compass. It requires courage to prioritize, fund, measure,

and honor commitments.
Today, we do none of these. We sail on—confidently, collectively—toward an edge we refuse to name. The fall will not be loud. It will be silent.

Advancing Greece's Healthcare Future Through Innovation, Value, and Collaboration

By Babis Diamantopoulos
Country Coordinator and Finance Manager for Greece, Cyprus, and Malta, Boston Scientific

Healthcare in Greece is entering a decisive decade. Demographic shifts, rising chronic disease, and fiscal constraints must be faced through a meaningful solution such as the implementation of value-based, outcomes-driven care. This transition is not only necessary but also an opportunity to unlock a meaningful health dividend for patients, the economy, and society.

At Boston Scientific, we see innovation as the key enabler. Advances in minimally invasive therapies, combined with digital health and data-driven insights, are transforming how care is delivered, enabling earlier intervention, shorter hospital stays, and better patient outcomes. Our focus is not only on developing breakthrough medical technologies but also on supporting clinicians and health systems to optimize entire care pathways.

> Medtech innovation can play a pivotal role in addressing system inefficiencies while improving access and equity

For Greece, medtech innovation can play a pivotal role in addressing system inefficiencies while improving access and equity. However, scaling these benefits requires strong public-private collaboration. By working closely with policymakers, providers, and industry, we can accelerate the adoption of high-value solutions and ensure that investment in healthcare is recognized as a driver of productivity and longterm economic growth.

Sustainability is also integral to this transformation. Efficient therapies that reduce complications and resource utilization contribute to both financial sustainability and environmental responsibility.

By combining innovation, collaboration, and a relentless focus on patient outcomes, we can help build a more resilient and future-ready healthcare system in Greece, one that delivers measurable value and lasting impact for patients and society.

The Next Frontier of Access Is Not Discovery — It Is Who Pays for It

By Spyros Filiotis
Vice President and General Manager, Pharmaserve Lilly

We have grown used to a comforting story: Science breaks through, a therapy reaches the patient, and lives improve. But that chain has a missing link we rarely name. Between the laboratory and the bedside stands a question that increasingly decides outcomes: not whether we can treat the patient, but who will finance the treatment.

For decades, the public system carried that burden alone. It was designed for a different era of medicine—one of broad, low-cost interventions, not gene therapies, precision oncology, and treatments that cure rather than manage. As innovation accelerates, a system built for the old model strains under the new one. The result, too often, is the most painful inequity of all: a therapy that exists but cannot be reached.

Here, a new protagonist must take the stage. Private insurance and complementary payers are not threats to public healthcare; they are its necessary partners. Such a layered model—a public foundation paired with private supplements—spreads financial risk, shortens waiting times, and opens wide the door to innovation.

> The question that increasingly decides outcomes is not whether we can treat the patient, but who will finance the treatment

Consider the value for each side: For patients, it means faster, fairer access. For insurers, it means healthier members and lower longterm costs through prevention. For the state, it means a sustainable system that endures. One architecture delivering

THOUGHT LEADERS

value for all—not one party's gain at another's expense.
We are entering an extraordinary decade of medical progress. Whether that progress reaches people will depend on what we can invent and on whether public and private resources can learn to carry the weight together.

Bringing Health Home

From returning talent to regional healthcare progress

By Evangelos P. Kalamakis
Managing Director, SofMedica

At SofMedica, our mission is to make life-saving innovation available to as many patients as possible. This mission starts with patients but also touches a critical dimension of healthcare progress: the environment in which medical professionals choose to build, return to, and continue their careers.
Highly skilled physicians and surgeons need more than opportunity. They need access to advanced technologies, continuous education, strong clinical ecosystems, and institutions that allow them to perform at the highest standards. When these conditions exist, returning home becomes more than an emotional decision. It becomes a professional possibility.
This is where SofMedica's role becomes meaningful. By supporting healthcare professionals and institutions with innovative technologies, training, and longterm partnerships, we help create the conditions in which medical excellence can grow locally.
For countries across our region, this matters. Talent should not only leave smaller or developing markets to strengthen more advanced healthcare systems abroad. Talent should also be able to return, connect, and perform at home.
When medical talent is connected across borders, individual expertise becomes shared progress. Countries grow stronger, healthcare systems become more resilient, and patients benefit from the combined strength of a connected region.

When medical talent is connected across borders, individual expertise becomes shared progress

Healthcare systems gain strength when progress is built together across borders, rather than developed in isolation.
Across the countries where SofMedica is active, this means linking medical talent, clinical expertise, education, and innovation into a regional ecosystem where knowledge travels, professionals collaborate, and patients benefit.
At SofMedica Group level, this also means supporting a broader healthcare vision: personalized and preventive medicine through early diagnosis, imaging, and genetics; lifelong learning for healthcare professionals; and encouragement of healthtech and medtech startup initiatives.
This is the future SofMedica believes in: one where innovation finds its way home, knowledge becomes shared strength, and medical excellence can grow closer to the patients who need it most.

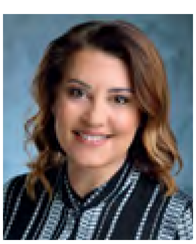
From Breakthroughs to Outcomes

Realizing the true value of healthcare innovation

By Yannis Kokkotos
Head of Immunology for SE Europe and Country Lead for Greece, UCB

Healthcare innovation has entered a new era. Breakthroughs in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and data science are expanding the boundaries of what medicine can achieve for patients living with severe and chronic diseases. However, the real challenge is no longer scientific discovery itself—it is ensuring that innovation delivers measurable value for patients, healthcare systems, and society. The true health dividend emerges when scientific progress is translated into better outcomes, greater resilience, and sustainable longterm growth.
Across Europe, a growing gap is emerging between what science can deliver and what healthcare systems can absorb. While medical innovation continues to accelerate, healthcare budgets remain constrained, populations are aging, and demand for care is increasing. As a result, access to innovation is becoming one of the defining policy challenges of our time.
This is where the concept of the health dividend becomes particularly relevant. The value of healthcare should not be measured solely through expenditure or short-term budget impact. It should be assessed through the broader outcomes it generates: healthier populations, greater workforce participation, improved productivity, and more resilient societies.

Accelerating Patient Access to Innovation in Greece



By Dena Nikolaidis
Country Head Patient Access and Health Policy, Novartis Hellas

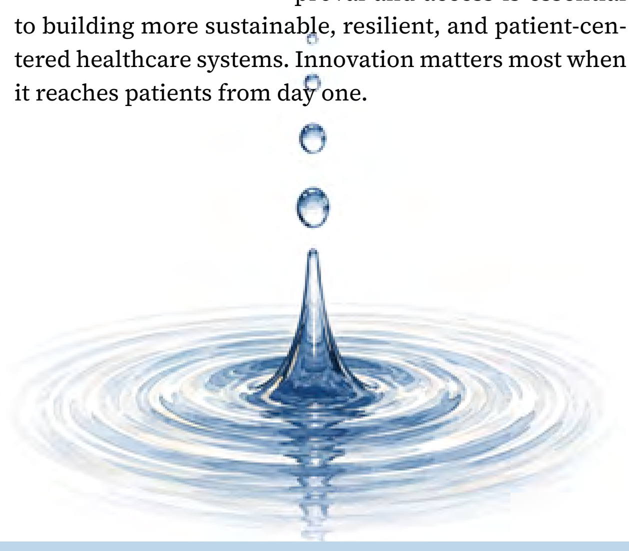
Scientific progress is reshaping the future of healthcare. Across many disease areas, innovation is creating new possibilities for patients, clinicians, and health systems. Yet the true value of innovation is realized only when it reaches the people who need it, on time. Delayed access remains one of the most important challenges for healthcare systems across Europe, including in Greece. Despite important improvements in recent years, patients still face delays between European regulatory approval and the actual availability of new treatments. According to EFPIA's Patient W.A.I.T. Indicator 2025 study, of the 168 innovative medicines approved by the European Medicines Agency between 2021 and 2024, only 69 are available to patients in Greece. The average time to availability reaches 641 days, compared with 597 days across Europe.

These figures raise an essential question: Are our health system, access pathways, and reimbursement processes designed to bring innovation to patients quickly enough? Addressing this gap requires a modern, predictable, and collaborative framework. The concept of Access from Day 1 offers a practical direction. It does not mean lowering scientific or health technology assessment standards. Rigorous evaluation must remain central. Rather, it means enabling patients to access approved medicines while value assessment, reimbursement, and negotiations continue in parallel.

> Closing the gap between approval and access is essential to building more sustainable, resilient, and patient-centered healthcare systems

Achieving this requires collaboration across the healthcare ecosystem: policymakers, authorities, healthcare professionals, patient communities, and industry. It also requires predictable access pathways and a shared commitment to recognize innovation as a longterm investment in health outcomes and system sustainability, allowing reimbursement and value assessment to progress in parallel where appropriate.

At Novartis, we believe that closing the gap between approval and access is essential to building more sustainable, resilient, and patient-centered healthcare systems. Innovation matters most when it reaches patients from day one.



New technologies, including artificial intelligence, can help healthcare systems operate more effectively, support earlier diagnosis, and improve decisionmaking. However, technology alone cannot solve structural challenges. Progress requires trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment among policymakers, healthcare professionals, and patient organizations.

> The real health dividend is realized when scientific progress becomes better outcomes for patients and measurable benefits for society

For countries such as Greece, the opportunity is significant, but so is the challenge. While medical innovation continues to advance rapidly, ensuring timely and equitable access to new therapies remains a critical priority. Delays in patient access, budgetary constraints, and increasing healthcare demands can limit the benefits that scientific progress is capable of delivering. By creating a policy environment that supports innovation, accelerates access to breakthrough treatments, and promotes sustainable healthcare financing, Greece can improve health outcomes while strengthening its longterm economic and social resilience.

The future healthcare debate should therefore focus not only on how to generate innovation, but on how to capture its full value. The real health dividend is realized when scientific progress becomes better outcomes for patients and measurable benefits for society.

THOUGHT LEADERS

From Innovation to Value for Patients

Building resilient healthcare on collaboration, access, and scientific advancements

By George Orthopoulos
Commercial and Site Lead, Amgen Hellas

Healthcare today stands at the intersection of science, sustainability, and social progress. For Greece, the question is no longer whether innovation matters, but how we translate it into value for patients, the health system, and society through predictable, value-based frameworks that focus on outcomes and efficiency.

A resilient healthcare system cannot be built through fragmented decisions or short-term measures alone. It requires a shared agenda between the state, healthcare professionals, patient representatives, and the pharmaceutical industry, focused on timely access, responsible investment, and agreements that recognize both the short-term budget impact of innovation and its long-term contribution to system efficiency.

At Amgen Hellas, we believe that scientific progress delivers its full value only when it reaches the patients who need it, at the right time and through sustainable pathways of care. This means supporting policies that improve prevention and early diagnosis, accelerate access to innovative therapies, and strengthen care pathways in high unmet need, while assessing innovation through its ability to improve outcomes and reduce avoidable burden.

Collaboration with the authorities is essential. As partners in the healthcare ecosystem, we can contribute evidence, international experience, and constructive policy proposals that help balance patient access with system sustainability. Innovation should not be perceived only as expenditure; when integrated within predictable value-based frameworks, it is an investment in productivity, resilience, longterm efficiency and societal wellbeing.

> Scientific progress delivers its full value only when it reaches the patients who need it, on time and sustainably

The health dividend will be realized when Greece turns dialogue into implementation, with patient-centered policies and partnerships that enable scientific advances to become real improvements in people's lives.

Health Changes Everything

Unlocking the health dividend

By Daniel Paksy
Managing Director, Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine Greece Romania

At the heart of every thriving society lies a healthy population. As countries across Europe navigate demographic pressures, workforce challenges, and economic uncertainty, better health is increasingly becoming a strategic advantage. Healthy populations are more productive, healthcare systems more sustainable, and economies more resilient.

To fully realize this health dividend, a more forward-looking approach is needed. Too often, healthcare decisions are assessed through the lens of short-term costs rather than the long-term value they generate. The choices we make today will shape not only the trajectory of healthcare but also the strength and prosperity of our societies. Recognizing health as an investment rather than an expense is essential to unlocking this broader value.

> At the individual level, health empowers lives; at the societal and economic level, it is a catalyst for growth, resilience, and stability

At Johnson & Johnson, we believe health is one of the most powerful catalysts for societal and economic progress. We champion policies and investment decisions that prioritize prevention, foster innovation, and expand access to care, recognizing the broader value health creates for patients, healthcare systems, societies, and economies. Innovation will continue to unlock new possibilities, from breakthrough medicines and emerging technologies to more personalized and data-driven approaches to care. Realizing its full potential, however, requires collaboration across the healthcare ecosystem, forward-looking policies, and a shared commitment to sustainable progress.

Because health changes everything. At the individual level, it empowers lives. At the societal and economic level, it is a catalyst for growth, resilience, and stability. Investing in health is ultimately investing in people, prosperity, and the future.

GILEAD

Creating Possible

CREATING A BETTER, HEALTHIER WORLD.

GILEAD is a research-based biopharmaceutical company that discovers, develops and delivers innovative therapeutics for people with life-threatening diseases.

At Gilead, we set and achieve bold ambitions in our fight against the world's most devastating diseases. We are driven by our purpose of making the world a healthier place for all people. That means delivering innovative therapies that offer new hope for patients. Our ambitions have led us to a cure for hepatitis C and to transforming the treatment and prevention of HIV. Our innovation is helping people with diseases and conditions that include cancer, viral hepatitis, HIV and COVID-19.

By investing in world-class science, driving access to our medicines, addressing societal barriers to care and building a culture where our employees can make a real impact, we will continue to confront the biggest public health challenges of our day for the benefit of generations to come.

Gilead is a global company of over 17,000 employees with 26 currently marketed therapies. Gilead entered the Greek market in 2001 with innovative medicines to treat HIV, Hepatitis B, D and C, Haematology/Oncology, Covid-19 and Invasive Systemic Fungal Infections as well as Cystic Fibrosis. Today, Gilead Sciences Hellas occupies 52 people focusing on medical, regulatory and commercial activities.

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AMCHAMS AROUND THE WORLD

AmChams Regional Economic Summit 2026

Bringing together participants from across SE Europe, West and Central Asia, and the MENA for two days of high-level discussions and B2B meetings, ARES 2026 once again proved the initiative's role as a unique platform for promoting cross-border collaboration, stimulating growth-oriented dialogue, and fostering business and investment opportunities.

With energy security and system resilience among its central themes, the 3rd AmChams Regional Economic Summit, aka ARES 2026, took place on June 25-26, 2026, in Sofia, Bulgaria. It was co-organized by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, the American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria, and AmCham Türkiye and held under the aegis of Bulgaria's Ministry of Economy, Investment, and Industry.

Building on the success of the inaugural 2024 summit in Istanbul and the 2025 summit in Athens, ARES 2026 was convened with an expanded scope and strategic focus, reinforcing the importance of regional cooperation in addressing today's rapidly evolving economic landscape and shaping a prosperous and resilient future.

> Businesses today are navigating geopolitical uncertainty, technological disruption, energy transition, supply chain realignment, changing investment patterns, and new questions around competitiveness, all at the same time. As AmChams, we are uniquely positioned—representing business communities that value entrepreneurship, open markets, and innovation—and we are committed to strong transatlantic ties.
>
> **- John D. Saracakis, President, AmCham Greece**

Welcoming delegations from AmChams across Southeast Europe, the MENA region, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, the summit was a testament to the growing strength of the broader AmCham network and to the region's considerable potential for business development and investment. More than 300 participants from 18 countries —government officials, business leaders, development agencies, investors, and representatives from the wider AmCham network—came together in the Bulgarian capital for two days of engaging talks, insightful expert-led discussions, strategic networking, and structured business matchmaking sessions.

With a focus on sustainable economic growth and on strengthening the regional business and investment ecosystem, ARES 2026 explored developments and identified opportunities and challenges across key sectors and industries, from energy and digital transformation to infrastructure and manufacturing, with an eye to promoting trade and investment, enhancing regional competitiveness, and fostering public-private cooperation as a critical element of longterm development, growth, and prosperity in the region. The summit further facilitated more than 200 [T.2.1]targeted B2B meetings designed to foster business partnerships and advance cooperation across the region.

On the eve of the summit, AmCham Bulgaria also organized an official ARES 2026 reception and Freedom 250 celebration, which was held at the Hilton Sofia on June 24, 2026, and hosted by H. Martin McDowell, Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Bulgaria. The

ARES 2026 group photo

Only working together, creating new products and services, and improving the investment climate not only in one country but in clusters and regions can benefit our countries, our societies, and every single citizen. On the eve of the 250th anniversary of US independence, ARES 2026 takes on a symbolic element: We are united for sustainable growth, determined for better regional connectivity, and we strive to make every person's life better.

- Tommy Ver Elst, President, AmCham Bulgaria

reception highlighted the shared values of freedom, democracy, partnership, and transatlantic cooperation and reaffirmed the strong ties between the United States and the wider region, as well as the role of AmChams in advancing dialogue, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

As a co-organizer of the ARES initiative, the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is proud to contribute to the summit's continued development as a strategic platform that encourages meaningful dialogue between the private and public sectors, strengthens business networks, promotes innovation and cross-border investment, and fosters economic growth in one of the world's most dynamic regions.

We are living through a period of geopolitical uncertainty, supply chain disruptions and rapid technological change. In such an environment, platforms such as the AmChams Regional Economic Summit are more important than ever. They bring together governments, businesses, and investors to exchange ideas, identify new opportunities, and work collectively toward sustainable growth.

- Emre Karter, Chair, AmCham Türkiye

AmCham Greece extends its sincere appreciation to its co-organizers, AmCham Bulgaria and AmCham Türkiye, as well as to the institutional partners, sponsors, speakers, partner AmChams, and all participants whose contribution ensured that ARES 2026 marked another successful edition of the Summit. A special thank you goes to AmCham Bulgaria for its outstanding hospitality, excellent organization, and leadership in hosting ARES 2026.

ARES

Launched in 2024, the AmChams Regional Economic Summit (ARES) is an initiative of the American Chambers of Commerce in Greece, Bulgaria, and Türkiye. It serves as a premier platform connecting ambassadors, government officials, and senior business leaders to drive a shared vision for longterm regional development, promote regional trade and investment opportunities, foster policy and economic dialogue, encourage B2B networking, and advance cross-border collaboration.

FULBRIGHT ALUMNI CORNER

A New Outlook

Rewiring Vision

John S. Pezaris, Ph.D., is the principal investigator and director of the Visual Prosthesis Lab in the Department of Neurosurgery at Massachusetts General Hospital and an assistant professor of Neurosurgery at Harvard Medical School. With degrees in computer science from MIT, a doctorate in computational neuroscience from Caltech, and a post-doctoral fellowship in neurobiology at Harvard, since 2007 Pezaris leads a team developing a thalamic visual prosthesis, a groundbreaking brain-machine interface to correct acquired total vision loss.

What inspired you to explore deep brain stimulation as a means of restoring functional vision to the blind?

As with many things in science, the original motivation was mostly serendipity. While working as a post-doc with Prof. Clay Reid at Harvard Medical School, we used fine electrical stimulation of a brain area called the lateral geniculate nucleus (LGN) to subtly interfere with normal vision, so that we could understand the different signal paths in fine detail and understand more about how we see. That study confirmed that the more complicated visual responses of cells in the primary visual cortex were built from combinations of responses from cells in the LGN.

But then, we thought, does this electrical interference we are using actually create a visual experience, or is it too unnatural, too different from normal input from the eye? So, we trained a macaque monkey to tell us the answer.

Now, monkeys can't talk, so we needed to have them perform some behavior we could associate with electrical stimulation of the LGN. We hypothesized that a small, focused electrical stimulus would create a small, focused point of light. We took advantage of the natural primate behavior to look at suddenly illuminated dots when placed in a dark room, and reinforced that behavior by rewarding them with drops of juice. They quickly learned to look at dots shown on a computer monitor, and we measured their eye position to know that they were actually looking at each dot. Then, instead of showing the dot of light on the monitor, we occasionally passed electrical current through an electrode implanted in the LGN, and immediately, the animals looked to a consistent point on the screen that varied depending on the precise location of the electrode: We had succeeded in making them see something that wasn't physically present in their environment.

With that proof-of-concept, the next step was to put in many electrodes, each creating one pixel, and create the ability to see shapes. We call each pixel a phosphene, and when shapes are shown by stimulating different patterns of phosphenes, we call it form vision, because the animal can see forms.

When I started my lab at Harvard Medical School's Mass General Hospital, we trained monkeys to recognize shapes used in standard eye charts so that we could compare the results with regular clinical measurements of visual ability. We were successful with our first implant of 128 phosphenes, and we're now working on a second generation with 2,000 phosphenes.

Our goal is to provide vision that approaches the threshold of legal blindness

How close are we to seeing visual prostheses become a widely accessible clinical reality?

There are many causes of blindness, and each will have a slightly different treatment. The target population for our work is people who have lost sight from glaucoma or traumatic eye injuries, as well as those who are completely blind from the end stages of diseases such as retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration. For other causes, there are

Scientific leadership is ensured by recruiting talent, building relationships, and sharing our knowledge with the world

better approaches that are less invasive or, with early treatment, have the hope of reversing blindness.

My collaborators think we can perform the first human tests of our approach in late 2027. I think that timeline is optimistic, but it shows that progress is accelerating. From the first-in-human demonstrations, the process to get a device approved for widespread use can take five to ten years, mostly because we have to show longterm safety, but also because the evaluation process is inherently slow. We will not be the first to create a visual prosthesis, however, as a handful of devices have already made it to market. These devices did not fare well and resulted in commercial failure because of various technical shortcomings, largely because the technology was prematurely commercialized; we are learning from those mistakes and have a goal to provide vision that approaches the threshold of legal blindness.

How important is interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex health challenges?

The most effective teams are often no larger than about half a dozen people. This is less about problem complexity and more about the limits of human knowledge, ability, and communication. We are at the cusp of a radical change in those limits through the advent of AI, and while effective team sizes may not shrink, I expect the complexity of tractable problems will increase. It has been many years since a single person could possess all the necessary talents to solve any deep problem. The question now is not whether we need interdisciplinary approaches to things like antibiotic-resistant pathogens, curing cancer, or understanding the brain, but how radical a change automated agents will bring.

As a Fulbright alumnus, what are your thoughts on the role of international educational exchanges?

With my Fulbright grant, I spent four months at the University of Athens, teaching and doing research. Those four months were the most productive of my career and directly led to six scientific publications with my students there that have shaped my thinking about blindness and restoration of vision. It deeply strengthened my professional ties to Greece by building relationships with the faculty in Athens and at other institutions as well, as each relationship leads to additional opportunities.

It is difficult to overstate the value of international educational exchanges; talent lies everywhere across the globe

My colleague Nicholas Hatsopoulos and I had already been running AREADNE, a biennial neuroscience conference held on the island of Milos, for a decade when I did my sabbatical in Greece, and the Fulbright experience helped us continue development of that meeting. We just celebrated our 20th anniversary session, with our most scientifically impressive conference yet.

It is difficult to overstate the value of international educational exchanges. Talent lies everywhere across the globe, and while the US enjoys being a scientific powerhouse, the only way to ensure we continue to hold that advantage is by recruiting foreign talent, building international relationships, and sharing our knowledge with the world through exchanges like those supported by Fulbright.

How can organizations such as AmCham Greece help translate scientific breakthroughs into real-world impact?

Every step in the long chain from scientific insight to public impact has a chance of failure. The funding and regulatory environment specific to each country poses individual challenges that influence the rate of success. By bringing together representatives from every stage of idea-to-product, organizations like AmCham Greece can help identify those barriers and influence political leadership to address them through changes in law and policy. From my perspective, the three ways to accelerate progress are to increase the pool of grants for basic research, to speed up the grantmaking process while ensuring it remains politically blind, and to streamline the procedures for approval of safe and effective treatments as clinically available therapies.

For more information visit www.fulbright.gr

GROUP OF COMPANIES

THE PHARMACEUTICAL INNOVATIVE INDUSTRY IN GREECE

WHICH IS MEDICHROM

The pharmaceutical industry MEDICHROM has been active in the medicine market for more than 50 years (1974), with constant and successful presence of its pharmaceutical patent medicines on the Greek and the foreign market. The Departments of Production, Finance, Legal Affairs, Commerce and Storage are accommodated in the company owned building of 8,000 m2 in a site of 20,000 m2.

WHAT GIVES THE COMPANY ITS ADVANTAGE?

The National Organization of Medicines in Greece has provided MEDICHROM with a license of manufacturing pharmaceutical products with original compositions, patented and with clinical trials demonstrating safety in use and excellent results for human use.

Products of the highest quality are manufactured and packaged, in the production units of the Pharmaceutical Industry MEDICHROM, according to the Iinternational standards of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). The National Organization of Medicines regularly checks all the Production units, Quality Control Department and storage units according to the EMEA requirements.

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MEDICHROM S.A. is a Greek Pharmaceutical Research and Development Industry. Our goal is to create innovative products in the field of Pharmaceutical Cosmetic - Herbal products along with Food Supplements.
R & D Department of the company is working on the development of new generic pharmaceuticals, in order to produce new products and Facon in accordance with our clients' demands in Greece and in abroad.

WHICH IS THE BUSINESS ACTIVITY

The basic sector of MEDICHROM business activity is manufacturing Pharmaceutical Patent Medicines, in various forms (solid dosage forms as tablets and capsules, liquid dosage forms as syrups and oral solutions, powder for liquid formulations, gels, creams and ointments), distinguished in their categories, (antibiotics, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antipyretic, anxiolytic, antibacterial, anti-viral, bronchodilator, ant lipidic, aantitussive, cholinesterase inhibitors, treatment of psoriasis, acne, sun damaged skin etc.).

WHAT IS THE KEY TO KEEPING UP WITH MARKET TRENDS AND ALWAYS STAYING ONE STEP AHEAD?

The company got ahead by adopting a new business model. It is always an asset to have a flexible approach.
The last 15 years, MEDICHROM S.A. began to enter into the field of Nutritional supplements and Botanical Products with the aim of creating organic products, which strengthen and enhance the human body, distinguished in the following categories:

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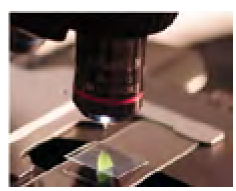
- FARMELLAS ENTERPRISES LTD CYPRUS
- MEDICHROM S.A. INTERNATIONAL
- MEDICHROM S.A.
- FARMACHROM S.A.
- RALDEX ENTERPRISES LTD CYPRUS
- MTF HOLDINGS LTD CYPRUS
- ASSOSFARMA CYPRUS
- FARMIN BUSINESS MON. IKE
- GEFA BROKERS CORPORATION MON. IKE
- FORMOZA DEVELOPMENT MON. IKE



INNOVATION

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PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS

IMPROVING LIFE
WITH THE POWER OF NATURE

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MEDICHROM S.A. INTERNATIONAL
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BUSINESS STORIES

Investing in Passion

Turning his lifelong passion into a successful business, Orestis Nikou is the founder and owner of Nikou Fine Classics, specialists in classic vehicle restorations, appraisals, and investment advisory services.

What does the classic vehicles market in Greece look like today?
Greece's classic vehicle market is still at a relatively early stage of development and lacks the institutional maturity, established auction systems, and well-developed investment culture that mature foreign markets benefit from. Yet this is precisely where the opportunity lies, as emerging markets often offer significant advantages to early participants. For the sector to mature, we need to promote public awareness, establish credible valuation standards, and pursue stronger integration with international markets.

What makes classic vehicles stand out as investments?
Classic vehicles are classed as alternative assets—assets that are not directly correlated with the fluctuations of traditional financial markets. They can demonstrate remarkable longterm appreciation, in some cases outperforming more conventional investment classes.
What makes the classic vehicle market unique is that it embodies qualities traditional markets cannot replicate: history, authenticity, rarity, and cultural significance. Original parts, documented maintenance history, and verified provenance are key factors in determining investment value.

How does Nikou Fine Classics create added value for clients?
Nikou Fine Classics operates across three interconnected pillars: We restore classic vehicles, particularly classic BMW and Harley-Davidson motorcycles, to factory standards, with a level of authenticity that preserves historical integrity and enhances longterm value. Our professional, certified appraisals help clients understand the true market value of their vehicles and are essential for acquisitions, sales, insurance purposes, and legal matters. We also offer investment consulting services, guiding clients throughout the entire lifecycle of an acquisition. Each pillar reinforces the others, creating a comprehensive ecosystem of expertise around the classic vehicle market.
Furthermore, we are the official representatives in Greece of Classic Analytics, a subsidiary of Hagerty, the world's leading insurance and investment organization dedicated to classic vehicles. Building on Hagerty's expertise and internationally recognized valuation methodology, we are introducing a framework of objectivity and international standardization into a market that has historically lacked structured valuation practices. This allows us to provide clients with internationally credible documentation that establishes the value of their vehicle with precision, transparency, and professional impartiality.

How do US trends shape the global classic vehicle market?
The United States is unquestionably the heart of the global classic vehicle market. Major US auction houses shape international benchmarks, highlight emerging collector trends, and define the restoration standards adopted worldwide. Equally important is the market's increasingly dynamic transatlantic nature: US investors actively seek European models that are rare in the US and prized among collectors.
By closely monitoring these developments and delivering outstanding quality, Nikou Fine Classics connects the Greek market to the wider international classic vehicle ecosystem, leveraging the expertise, networks, and standards that define leading markets of both Europe and the United States.

How does AmCham Greece membership support the company's vision?
The classic vehicle industry is inherently international, and Nikou Fine Classics has maintained an international outlook from the very beginning. AmCham Greece represents the type of environment we identify with: organizations that operate beyond national boundaries and share a common language of credibility, professionalism, and longterm vision. In an industry where trust is arguably the most valuable form of capital, participating in an institution of such caliber is a statement of intent. We are building for the longterm, and relationships form an essential foundation for that vision.

TECH SHIFT

The Next Interface of Business

Why voice AI is reshaping customer experience and enterprise operations

Artificial Intelligence is no longer an emerging technology. It is becoming an operational necessity, with conversational and voice AI poised to transform the way businesses communicate and build customer relationships.

By Apostolos Ioakeim
CEO, Voice Logica

> Successfully deployed, voice AI becomes a force multiplier rather than a substitute for human talent

While the first wave of AI focused on improving individual productivity through content generation, data analysis, and personal assistants, a new phase is now unfolding. AI is moving from the desktop into the core of business operations, transforming the way organizations interact with customers, employees, and partners.

At the heart of this transformation lies communication. Every business runs on conversations. Customers ask questions, schedule appointments, request support, place orders, report issues, and seek guidance. Until recently, these interactions depended almost entirely on human availability. Today, advances in voice AI are redefining what is possible.

Modern AI voice agents can understand natural language, maintain context throughout a conversation, access business systems in real time, and complete meaningful tasks, not simply answer predefined questions. They can book appointments, retrieve customer information, qualify sales leads, update CRM records, initiate workflows, and seamlessly transfer conversations to human agents whenever needed.

This represents far more than automation. It marks a fundamental shift in how organizations deliver service and scale their operations. Across industries, we are witnessing a clear change in mindset. Businesses are no longer asking whether AI is mature enough. Instead, they are asking where it can create value first. Customer service, appointment management, sales qualification, collections, internal help desks, and citizen services have emerged as some of the most impactful starting points.

One lesson has become particularly clear through real-world implementations: Successful AI projects are not driven by technology; they are driven by business objectives. Organizations achieve the greatest results when they begin by identifying repetitive, high-volume processes that limit growth, consume valuable resources, or negatively affect customer experience.

Equally important is recognizing that AI should not be viewed as a replacement for people. The most successful deployments demonstrate the opposite. AI handles repetitive interactions, provides immediate responses, and remains available around the clock, allowing employees to focus on higher-value activities that require empathy, creativity, critical thinking, and relationship building. In this sense, voice AI becomes a force multiplier rather than a substitute for human talent.

For business leaders, this creates an opportunity to rethink customer communication altogether. Instead of designing processes around staffing limitations or operating hours, organizations can build customer experiences that are always available, consistent, personalized, and scalable. The result is not only improved efficiency but also stronger customer relationships and greater organizational agility.

Looking ahead, I believe we are entering an era where every organization will operate with a hybrid workforce, people working alongside intelligent AI agents. Just as websites, email, and cloud platforms became standard business infrastructure over the past two decades, conversational AI will become an essential component of every modern enterprise.

The question is no longer whether AI will transform business communication—it is already doing so. The organizations that embrace this transition thoughtfully, placing equal emphasis on technology, people, and customer experience, will be the ones best positioned to lead in the years ahead.

BEYOND TIF

The Business Culture of Resilience

What Greece can learn from Japan's long view

As Japan prepares to take its place as the honored country at the 90th Thessaloniki International Fair, the occasion offers more than a celebration of bilateral ties, technology, culture, and investment. It creates an opportunity to reflect on a deeper question: What can Greece learn from a country that has built its global reputation not only on innovation but also on patience, precision, continuity, and resilience?

The 90th Thessaloniki International Fair arrives at a symbolic moment. As Greece looks toward its next chapter of growth and transformation, Japan returns not simply as an honored country, but as a living example of what it means to build prosperity over generations rather than cycles.

The long view as a competitive advantage

Japan's participation is inspired by the philosophy of *takumi*—mastery achieved through dedication, precision, craftsmanship, and profound respect for continuous improvement. It is an idea that transcends manufacturing or design. It reflects an entire approach to economic development, one that prioritizes excellence over expediency and endurance over immediacy.

In today's world, that may be one of the rarest competitive advantages of all. Modern economies reward

By Alexandra Loli, Ph.D.
Publisher and Editor in Chief

The challenge is not to choose between tradition and innovation—it is to allow one to reinforce the other

speed. Markets react by the hour. Political horizons are increasingly short. Innovation is often associated with disruption, scale, and rapid transformation. Yet some of the world's most resilient societies have been built according to a different principle: that meaningful progress requires patience, trust, and the willingness to think beyond the next quarter. For Greece, this lesson could not be more timely.

Innovation rooted in identity

Japan offers a powerful reminder that innovation does not require the abandonment of tradition. On the contrary, some of its most advanced industries draw their strength precisely from cultural continuity. Ancient craftsmanship coexists with robotics. Family enterprises become global brands without losing their local character. Technology serves human needs rather than replacing human values.

This is perhaps where Greece and Japan find common ground. Greece does not need to replicate another country's development model. Its future competitiveness will emerge from the intelligent modernization of its own distinctive assets: maritime leadership, tourism, culture, food and agriculture, energy, health, life sciences, and, above all, its people.

The challenge is not to choose between tradition and innovation. It is to allow one to reinforce the other. The economies that succeed in the decades ahead will not be those that become indistinguishable from one another, but those that leverage their identity as a source of trust, creativity, and resilience.

Resilience is not simply the ability to withstand shocks, but the capacity to learn from them, adapt, and emerge stronger

Demographics, productivity, and human capital

Both Greece and Japan are facing a defining challenge of the twenty-first century: demographics.

Aging populations, talent retention, workforce participation, and skills development are no longer social issues alone. They have become fundamental questions of economic competitiveness.

Yet demographics should not be viewed exclusively through the lens of decline. Japan's experience demonstrates that demographic pressure can also become a catalyst for reinvention. It encourages investment in productivity, lifelong learning, automation, flexible work models, and the more efficient use of human potential.

For Greece, the conversation must increasingly move beyond growth in absolute numbers and toward growth in capability. The country's greatest strategic asset is not geography, natural resources, or even tourism. It is human capital. The challenge before us is to create an environment in which talent chooses to remain, to return, and to flourish.

The culture of continuous improvement

Perhaps the most enduring lesson Japan offers is that productivity is not merely an economic metric. It is a cultural practice. It depends on trust in institutions, investment in education, organizational discipline, and a collective commitment to doing things better every day.

The principle of *kaizen*—continuous improvement—captures this philosophy with remarkable simplicity. Transformation is not achieved through isolated moments of brilliance or grand declarations. It emerges from countless small advances pursued with consistency and purpose.

For Greece, this may prove more valuable than any single reform agenda. The future will not be built through dramatic leaps alone. It will be built through stronger institutions, better governance, deeper collaboration between academia and industry, more productive businesses, and a culture that rewards excellence over short-term gain. Resilience, after all, is not simply the ability to withstand shocks. It is the capacity to learn from them, adapt, and emerge stronger.

The question before Greece now is what kind of country—and what kind of economy—we wish to leave behind for those who follow

Toward the future

As Thessaloniki welcomes Japan this September, discussions will naturally focus on investment, innovation, energy, health, technology, tourism, and new business opportunities. All of these are important. Yet the most valuable contribution may be something less tangible.

Japan invites us to reconsider the very nature of progress. Not as acceleration for its own sake, but as the patient construction of institutions, capabilities, and trust. Not as a race toward the next headline, but as a commitment to future generations.

The question before Greece, therefore, is not merely what we seek to achieve in the coming year, nor even by the end of this decade. It is what kind of country—and what kind of economy—we wish to leave behind for those who follow.

In an era defined by speed, uncertainty, and constant disruption, perhaps the most courageous strategic decision is to take the long view. And perhaps there is no more fitting sentiment with which to welcome our Japanese partners than the expression *mirai e*—toward the future. Not as a destination, but as a shared journey built on resilience, craftsmanship, and the quiet confidence that the best achievements are those designed to endure.

ESCAPE

The Executive Summer Puzzle

Some of the most important investments are not measured in quarterly reports.

Before you disconnect for the summer, find the words that define a well-earned break – and perhaps a better balance for the year ahead.

V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	B	Z	Q	E	U
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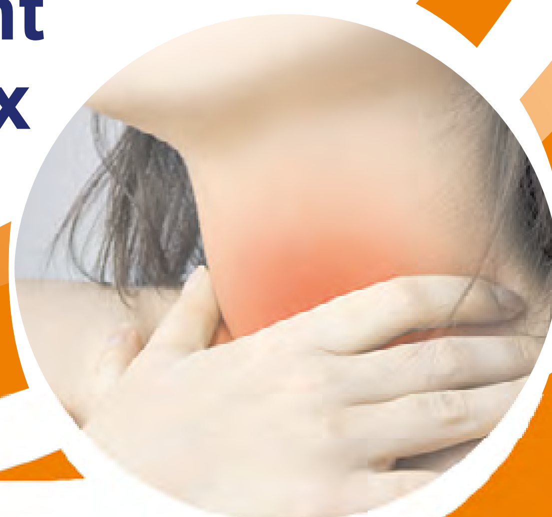

- Tonsillitis
- Pharyngitis
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- Stomatitis

«MEDICHROM S.A. - FARMELLAS LTD»
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PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES

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Για περισσότερο από έναν αιώνα βρισκόμαστε στην πρώτη γραμμή της έρευνας, ανακαλύπτοντας φάρμακα, εμβόλια και καινοτόμες λύσεις υγείας που κάνουν τη διαφορά στη ζωή εκατομμυρίων ανθρώπων. Ακούμε τις ανάγκες των ασθενών και λειτουργούμε υπεύθυνα ώστε να διασφαλίζουμε πως οι θεραπείες μας είναι προσβάσιμες σε όσους τις χρειάζονται.

Δεσμευόμαστε ότι θα συνεχίσουμε να εργαζόμαστε για ένα υγιέστερο, φωτεινότερο μέλλον για όλους.

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