

Address

**of the General Director  
of the Institute of Federation of Industries of Greece**  
*Christos E. Georgiou, PH.D.*  
**for the conference: "Doing Business with Latin America"**

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Thessaloniki, 27 June 2022

**Your Excellency, the Ambassador of Uruguay,  
Dear Consul of the Embassy of Argentina,  
Honorable Delegates from Brazil, Mexico and Peru,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of our President, mr. Athanasios Savvakis, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Thessaloniki. The Federation of Industries of Greece is proud to have collaborated with the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Greek-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Greek-Latin American Business Council and the Greek Exporters Association on this event.

Today's initiative aims to expand and deepen our business relations with your countries and it is our firm belief that the aforementioned institutions can be the catalysts in this venture.

In these times of increased uncertainty and rising geopolitical tensions globally, Latin American countries hold a positive outlook for growth. This is why Greek enterprises are turning their focus in these markets and explore establishing common ventures with companies from your countries; both for the potential for growth and the strong commodity production in Latin America, but also for capitalizing the solid experience of building strong international collaborations and being part of the common European market.

This is why we, at the Federation of Industries of Greece, believe that now is the time to do business –or should I say, do more business - with Latin America.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is our privilege to introduce you to the Federation of Industries of Greece, which was founded in 1915 and has been constantly operating for the past century. Since 2018, the Federation is recognized as a social partner by the Greek Government, representing the manufacturing sector, mainly from regional Greece. At present, the Federation numbers more than 400 members from all over the country, including the largest manufacturing enterprises in Northern Greece.

The main aims of SBE's development strategy have, for many years, been based on overall regional growth and development, as well as on the industrial development and international competitiveness of Greek industries, and on Balkan and Black Sea economic co-operative ventures.

In this context, we - the Greek manufacturing enterprises - have set our sights on the market of neighboring countries; firstly Southeastern Europe and then the Middle East. These countries compose a market of approximately 600 million consumers. In addition, these countries have great potential and their resources may provide valuable business opportunities.

In that regard, Greek businesses have established a strong presence in the region. However, we believe that these relationships can be further improved and can contribute to the social and, above all, the economic development of the countries involved, augmenting prosperity rates in the region. Therefore, at the Federation of Industries of Greece, we help and support all business initiatives in this area.

Our members are highly extroverted and have an outward – looking business orientation. Moreover, Northern

Greece and specifically the area of Thessaloniki, present parameters that leverage the entrepreneurial capacity.

Thessaloniki boasts:

- The largest port in Northern Greece, which functions as the main gateways to Central and Southeastern European markets,
- The largest industrial area in Greece,
- Two of the top-ranking universities in Greece,
- One of the largest trade fairs in the Balkans,
- The highest concentration of incubators and technology parks in the country.

In addition to the above, we would like to point out some key attractiveness factors of Northern Greece, such as:

- The skilled workforce
- The high educational level,
- The open and positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship
- The dynamism of the economy.

The above are crucial assets for our enterprises and our partners, especially when taking into account today's fragmented business model. For these reasons, Greece and especially the area of Thessaloniki, apart from being an origin of investors, is also an attractive destination for joint business ventures.

We would like to underline, that the international activity of our enterprises has led us to adapt to new business models, resulting in products of high added value and integrating successfully to the global supply chain. Thus, our enterprises:

- Produce and offer products and services of the highest quality,
- Meet the highest standards of developed markets, such as that of Western Europe and the US,
- Compete successfully in the global marketplace.

The proof of these factors are the flagship investments that are implemented in the city of Thessaloniki in the past few years.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Greek industry may be moderate in technological intensity, but it incorporates something far more important: reliability and trust. In this respect, our cooperation with our international partners is based on the most sophisticated business terms, providing mutual benefits.

Initiative such as this one is a challenge for economic cooperation. And this is the most important contribution this workshop can make. We can get to know each other and consolidate our strengths, creating new partnerships and successfully go together to new markets.

In conclusion and having high aspirations for the prospect of a meaningful and mutually beneficial cooperation with the countries of Latin America, we would like to wish you a pleasant and productive event and to enjoy your stay in Thessaloniki.