

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Fragogiannis' speech at the launching ceremony for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Greece and the Republic of Korea (Athens, 10.03.2021).

«Excellency, Dear Guests,

It is my pleasure to host the launching ceremony for the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Greece and the Republic of Korea.

Our two countries have long been bound by deep and outstanding ties of friendship, which were sealed through our common struggle and sacrifice for Freedom, Democracy and Peace during the Korean War. Ever since, we have remained steadfast in nurturing and promoting our common democratic values, as well as our adherence to International Law. At the same time, we continue to be active and sincere proponents of international and regional peace, security, stability and prosperity, demonstrating, at every opportunity, our commitment to the resolution of differences through dialogue and cooperation.

Since the establishment of our diplomatic relations in April 1961, our bilateral relations have developed steadily in all areas. The Embassies in Seoul and Athens play a pivotal role in upholding and further developing these relations and I would like to seize this opportunity to commend you, Ambassador Lim, for your own personal contribution to our bilateral relationship during your term in Athens.

I would like to make particular note of Greece and Korea's traditionally strong economic relations, which are naturally focused on cooperation in the field of maritime transport and shipbuilding. Bilateral trade flows have improved substantially, by almost 75% over the last decade. This is due to the almost fully complementary economic profiles of our countries, as well as to the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement between European Union and your country.

More specifically, the maritime sector is an area where both our countries thrive. In celebrating this 60th Anniversary of our Diplomatic Relations, it would be remiss not to highlight the fact that Greek Shipowners were [among] the first to have shown their trust in Korean Shipyards; it was a happy coincidence that the same period of time marked the start of Korea's impressive transformation and economic development.

Today, both our countries have made many leaps forward in this and various other fields. As such, we have every reason to take stock of our common accomplishments and further intensify our joint efforts.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, the 60th Anniversary of our diplomatic relations also coincides with a little over a year since the world was hit by the COVID pandemic. Both our countries took swift and effective action to confront this unprecedented challenge in an effort to safeguard the health of our citizens and mitigate its many effects on our societies.

We have not and should not allow this global threat to stand in the way of our efforts for further enhancing our cooperation in the various fields of common interest. On the contrary and in parallel to our common endeavors aimed at bringing an end to

the pandemic, we should continue and even intensify our work, seeking out new ways of bringing our countries and peoples closer together.

It is my conviction that we can work together toward a shared vision for the future, based on our aforementioned common values and principles, to the benefit our countries and peoples, our immediate regions and the international community as whole. The road ahead can also be characterized by more trade and investment flows between Korea and Greece, a higher number of tourists when conditions allow, as well as cooperation in other new areas of common interest that have yet to be explored.

By capitalizing on our already impressive accomplishments thus far, I am confident that our relations can reach even greater heights in the years to come.

Thank you.».