

Opening remarks by Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias in the online event of “The Hellenic Initiative Canada” (31 March 2021)

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and thank you for hosting me at your event.

It is a great honor to participate in this teleconference on behalf of Prime Minister Mitsotakis.

I would like first to congratulate and thank “The Hellenic Initiative Canada” for its role of promoting Greece in Canada;

As always has been the case throughout our long history the Greek Diaspora played an essential role in supporting our country.

Last week we celebrated the bicentennial anniversary since the beginning of the Greek Revolution.

Given the constraints due to the pandemic, I was so happy to see the novel ways that Greek-Canadians, in cooperation with our diplomatic authorities, devised to celebrate this great event.

Lighting in our national colors emblematic buildings in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Regina and elsewhere showed how widely extended, enthusiastic and dedicated the Greek Canadian community is;

But what really made headline news in Greece and the world was the displaying of our national colors on the Niagara Falls.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Mitsotakis attended last Sunday a special session of the House of Commons for our Anniversary;

He reiterated our sincere bonds of friendship and common values.

He paid special tribute to Greek Canadians who are contributing greatly to both Canada and Greece.

Our Diaspora Communities exercise a distinct form of “soft power” diplomacy, which bounds together their new homeland and Greece.

At the same time, Greece is emerging as a regional leader with a positive influence in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea region, the Middle East and Africa.

Our positive role is acknowledged by constantly more important global and local players.

This is due to our geographic position, as well as our ancient long dedication to principles of democracy, human rights, rule of law and international norms.

Our possibility to be an honest broker for many conflicts in our troublesome area is highlighted by:

- our firm belief that International Law should be strictly followed by all,
- our adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and

Moreover, the long-term good relations we enjoy with most countries in the broader neighborhood has enabled a series of mini alliances;

We call them trilateral schemes of cooperation, that allow a more effective approach to the many challenging issues in the region.