

Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias' address at the online event "GREECE-GCC countries e-Business Gathering", organized by the Arab – Hellenic Chamber (Athens 15.06.2021)

"Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a special honour and pleasure to be here with you today, even online because of the circumstances, especially in the light of the current positive geopolitical and regional developments between Greece and the Gulf countries.

I welcome and encourage the continuation of your already constructive cooperation with the competent services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a set of actions. These actions strengthen the strategy of extroversion promoted by our country, especially towards the Gulf countries, with which our relations are deepening and expanding rapidly.

This event forcefully demonstrates the multilevel work carried out by the Arab-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Development. For more than forty years, it has served to promote economic and trade relations between Greeks and Arabs in all business sectors primarily in construction, manufacturing, agri-foodstuffs, health, energy, technology and tourism.

Determining factors for its successful presence and operation are:

- the response of the businesses that are its members
- the excellent relations with the Greek bodies, and
- the entrepreneurial spirit of cooperation between Greek and Arab businesses

This entrepreneurial spirit of cooperation has been demonstrated by many targeted business missions of Greek associations, bodies and chambers. Indicatively, I mention the missions to: United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, as well as the reception of several business missions from the Arab countries to Greece.

The successful exchange of business delegations has a multiplier effect on the strengthening of our financial relations, as well as on the cooperation in the field of investments.

We aim to further strengthen these contacts, as the transformation of our countries' economies offers even more opportunities for cooperation. After all, the traditional Greek business presence in many Arab countries is a very solid foundation on which we can build our future economic and trade cooperation.

However, I would also like to emphasize the important presence of Greek businesses in international exhibitions held in Arab countries. In the same spirit of cooperation, we will welcome even greater participation of Arab businesses in the international exhibitions planned to take place in Greece in the future.

Arab businessmen are convinced of the high quality of Greek products, the know-how of Greek businesses and the perfect execution of construction projects, but also of the high level of services in the shipping, tourism and real estate sectors.

Undoubtedly, the current unfavorable situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the temporary suspension of relevant business missions and activities. Soon, however, with the gradual return to normalcy, we estimate that they will be repeated successfully.

Moreover, the recent economic reforms and national strategies adopted by the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council are creating favourable conditions for economic recovery and a climate for investment.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to actively support any initiative to further enhance economic and trade relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and strengthen our traditional, friendly ties.

I warmly thank you"