

# Greece plans larger bilateral role with friendly Kuwait

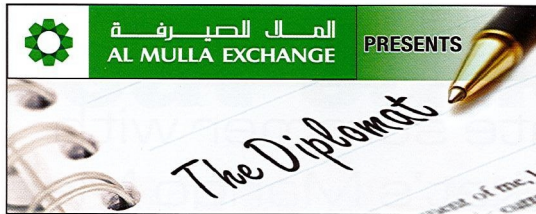
H E Ambassador Dr Theodoros J Theodorou

By Reaven D'Souza  
Managing Editor

“You see Ambassador spouses have multifaceted roles but two important ones. First she is a wife and mother to the children and secondly she doubles up in meeting people, arranging get together at home and attending functions on her own in what is known as track II diplomacy. So we both have developed a beautiful synergy especially she being a writer of such a great repute” the Ambassador said with a smile.

Speaking to him made it clear that Ambassador Theodorou is a man of immense experience and knowledge in diplomacy, having invested three decades in the foreign ministry.

He holds a PhD in Tourism, where his thesis was on Expanding Tourism period throughout the year. In addition to his impressive academic achievement, Ambassador Theodorou also studied Multilateral and Bilateral diplomacy at the



*If marriages are made in heaven, the idiom applies aptly to the Ambassador of Greece H E Dr Theodoros J Theodorou, posted in Kuwait, as he and his wife by their individual interests are made for each other. Besides his education in Management and International Relations, the Ambassador also holds a degree in Tourism. Madam Ambassador is an author of repute especially on culture and tourism and has recently completed her book as a travelogue on Syria where they were posted till 2010. The highly acclaimed book will also be translated in Arabic, Ambassador Theodorou proudly told The Times in an exclusive interview.*



relations with Kuwait and will celebrate 50 years of relations next year. We plan to have a series of cultural and business events to mark this occasion,” he stated. Of strategic importance is the fact that Greece will also take over the Presidency of the European Union next year.

Since Greece is the closest nation from Middle East to Europe, it shares similar traditions and attitudes. Some of our eating habits are also the same he noted. “We also have a Muslim minority and for this reason we even follow the halal procedures of our meat products,” he noted

Soft spoken and friendly Ambassador Theodorou has a deep sense of pride and love for his nation. “Wherever I am I try to improve political relations,” he says with humility.

Elaborating on trade, Ambassador Theodorou explains that while the figures at this point may not reflect the great friendship between the two nations, trade is on the upswing as there are several Greek food products from feta cheese, honey, olive oil, jam and processed food that are well known in Kuwait. “Our aim is to increase our presence in Kuwait and provide high quality products in this market,” he noted.

Pointing out that Kuwaitis love to

travel, Ambassador Theodorou says the demand to visit Greece has gone up tremendously, even for weekend travel, as his country provides an ideal relaxation opportunity for the entire family. At present Greece receives a few thousand visitors a year from Kuwait and the number has been steadily rising. Since Greece is part of the European Union, applicants have to adhere to Schengen rules for applying the visa, which he assured, is a very easy process.

Ambassador Theodorou revealed the new law on property that Kuwaitis and foreigners could take advantage of. Anyone buying property exceeding 250,000 Euros was eligible to get a residence permit for 5 years.

On Kuwaiti investment in Greece, Ambassador Theodorou met with high ranking officials in Kuwait Investment Authority and had a very interesting exchange of ideas. “I have given KIA the new legal framework for investment in Greece and also promised to get back to them specific

proposals for their consideration.” he noted pointing out that the areas for investment would be in food sector, energy and pipeline, shipping and tourism.

The last high level visit between the two countries took place two years ago when ambassador Theodorou was part of the delegation with the Vice President. “I had the opportunity to meet H H the Amir and high ranking officials from various ministries then,” he pointed out

There are around 400 Greek nationals working in Kuwait particularly as doctors and professionals, contributing to the growth and development of Kuwait Ambassador Theodorou noted. “We have regular meets with our diaspora in Kuwait and it is with their support we plan to bring Greece close to Kuwait by showcasing our culture and traditions”

Ambassador Theodorou was extremely optimistic that relations between the two nations would take off to the next level.

diplomatic institute in Vienna.

Thereafter he served in Germany, United Kingdom, Turkey, Brussels, Geneva, Syria while also being the spokesman for the foreign ministry and also serving in the office of the Cabinet Minister and Vice-president before taking up a posting very dear to him in Kuwait.

“Two years ago when I visited Kuwait as part of the Vice-President delegation, I instantly fell in love with this beautiful country and hoped someday to serve here. My minister honoured me with this posting and I am extremely gratified to be here,” Ambassador Theodorou exclaimed.

Kuwait has a very good reputation among diplomats and it is a much sought after posting, Ambassador Theodorou remarked. Kuwait’s strategic position overlooking the entire Gulf gives it a unique perspective of the region as well. “In Kuwait you can communicate very easily with the authorities and the most impressive part is the people to people contact,” he said. People are ready to meet and interact with diplomats on a personal level, unlike so many countries; this is what makes Kuwait a friendly and warm country for diplomats.

“Greece has long standing



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