

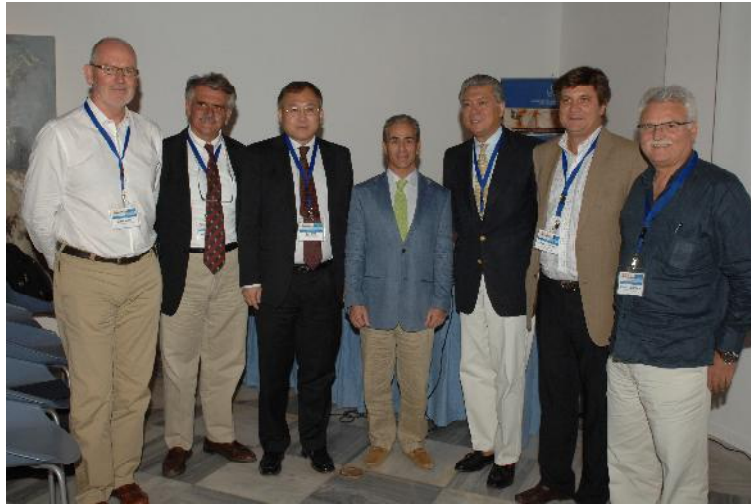
## 5<sup>th</sup> SHIPPING CONFERENCE - THE FRATERNITY OF THE ATHENIAN HYDRIOTS

*Maritime Greece in the Privatization Era -*

*Challenges and Opportunities of the China – Greece Cooperation*

Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, Historical Archives – Museum of Hydra

*In the aftermath of the Greek sovereign debt crisis and in the era of privatization, the China-Greek cooperation faces great opportunities for development.*



**From left to right:** Nigel Lowry – Greek Correspondent, Lloyd’s List, Manolis Vordonis, Sun Liwei – Commercial Attaché of the Chinese Embassy in Greece, John Sahinis – President of the Fraternity of the Athenian Hydriots, Panayiotis Michalos – Secretary General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation at Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, George Xiradakis – Managing Director, XRTC Business Consultants and Kyriakos Dermatis – Chairman, Intermodal Shipbroking.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Shipping Conference was organized with great success by the Fraternity of the Athenian Hydriots ([www.ava.com.gr](http://www.ava.com.gr)) for the fifth consecutive year, on Saturday 14, 2013, in Hydra, at the Historical Archives – Museum of Hydra. This institutional conference, held at the greatly commemorated island that bears an extremely important nautical history, gathered a large audience of distinguished Greek and foreign personalities of the shipping, business, diplomatic and political scene, covering a wide range of critical issues concerning the Sino-Greek cooperation and the prospects created for further development.

The catalytic role of the Greek shipping industry in the recovery of the Greek economy, the crucial contribution of Greek-Chinese cooperation, the performance of business activities and the prospects of industrial partnership between the two countries, were the main pillars of interest. Keynote speakers such as the Secretary General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation at the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Panayiotis Michalos** and the Commercial Attaché of the Chinese Embassy in Greece, **Sun Liwei**, attended the conference, as well as: **John Coustas** – President

& CEO, Danaos Corp.; **Kyriakos Dermatis** – Chairman of Intermodal Shipbroking; **John Dragnis** – CEO, Goldenport Holdings; **Nathanael Mauclair** – Deputy Director - International Listings, NYSE Euronext, Inc.; **Martin Stopford** -President, Clarkson Research Services Ltd.; **Manolis Vordonis** – ex General Manger of Thenamaris and **Haisheng Zhou** - General Manager, China Classification Society. A significant number of distinguished executives of the Greek shipping market and related businesses participated in the discussion, declaring this conference as the first institutionalized “free thought and pratique”. Apart from the speakers, everyone had the opportunity to speak and express their views.

Mr. **John Sahinis**, Chairman of the Fraternity of the Athenian Hydriots, briefly presented in his opening speech the objectives of the Fraternity. These objectives, among others, are to promote the maritime history of Hydra, to attract young people to maritime professions, pioneered in Hydra, and to link researchers, senior managers, institutes and organizations of international shipping. The large audience was welcomed by Major of Hydra, **Mr. Angelos Kotronis**, who congratulated the organizers for their five years of continuous effort to establish the institution of maritime conference in naval Hydra.

The conference covered key institutional issues of present and future economic and trade cooperation between Greece and China, highlighting the added value this brings to the development of the Greek economy and shipping in general. The speech of Mr. **Panayiotis Michalos**, Secretary General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation at Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on “*the new government agreements in the development of Greek-Chinese relations in the business environment and their importance in the development of the economy*”, was of particular interest. Mr. Michalos emphasized the critical factor of developing a coherent national strategy for marine and maritime trade, which will link Greece with global growth.

Of particular value was the insight offered by Mr. **Sun Liwei**, Commercial Attaché of the Chinese Embassy in Greece, into important facts of the Greek-Chinese cooperation, further noting the developments that Chinese entrepreneurs expect to happen in Greece.

The stock market sectors developed by China in order to meet the future requirements of international shipping companies and the subsequent reaction of NYSE in the face of these recent news, were analyzed by Mr. **Nathanael Mauclair** – Deputy Director - International Listings, NYSE Euronext, Inc.

Mr. **Manolis Vordonis**– ex General Manger of Thenamaris - highlighted the driving force between Greece and China. Specifically, Mr. Vordonis focused on the cultural ties between these two nations, highlighting the importance of fostering and encouraging similar dynamic action plans and collaborative activities.

**Mr. Kyriakos Dermatis** – Chairman of Intermodal Shipbroking and member of the board of directors of the Chinese-Greek Chamber - invited the attendees in co-commitment to widen the cooperation of

relevant institutions; something particularly necessary on this critical economic period,. *“A small country like ours has the power of global shipping, and this can become our bargaining chip. In faraway China we have found a friend and ally; we have found a partner that by building our cooperation can give a helping hand to the economy of our country”*.

**Mr. George Xiradakis**, representing the Greece-China Association, pointed out the important work of the Association, the oldest organization that connects the two countries. He explained an important dimension of the change now taking place; the union of the two richest historically and culturally countries in the world. *“The Greek bonds of friendship start from our cultural relationship and grow in all other areas, including business relations. Our Chinese friends are open to the possibility of investing in Greece and furthermore the corresponding development of Greek business in the P.R. of China”*.

The big question addressed in this conference was Greece’s ability to attract Chinese capital and Chinese entrepreneurs. Mr. Michalos presented the need for a coherent strategy by the Greek side, which he named *Blue Strategy*. The shipping industry is a leading parameter of this strategy, since it plays the major role in the international business activity of the Greek economy, leading Greece to become a worthy partner of the large Chinese market.

Mr. **Sun Liwei**, who urged Greece to accelerate all necessary measures and procedures for restructuring the country’s investment and development model in order to absorb Chinese investments, answered the question of Mr. Harris Petrakakos about the deficit of Greek investments in the Chinese Shipbuilding industry compared to the Chinese investments in Greece. Sun Liwei also mentioned how effective for Greece the investment of Cosco Terminals at the port of Piraeus was. Furthermore, highlighted the strong Chinese interest and help by the Chinese Embassy in Greece, that will continue to assist in this direction. Finally, Mr. Liwei pointed out that China and Chinese investors have always wanted equal rights in the profits of both parties, and added that for this reason the Chinese shipbuilding industry has made strides in delivering good quality ships at competitive prices to Greek ship-owners.

Mr. **Haisheng Zhou**, the General Manager of the China Classification Society, presented a positive outlook of the shipbuilding industry in his country, highlighting the importance of C.C.S in this momentum. To counter the many incentives offered by its competitors, the shipbuilding industry in China is strongly supported by government policy and Chinese banks. In an effort to grow even more, great emphasis is placed on new technologies and the market of a new environmentally-friendly type of ship. Mr. Zhou emphasized the rapid penetration of Chinese shipyards into the Greek shipping market, and the steadily increasing acceptance of C.C.S. by Greek ship-owners. Reiterating his country’s position, he identified the need to improve the services offered as an obligation for them; one that will, in turn, decide the future of Greek-Chinese relations.

Of particular interest was the **afternoon session**, in which the main goal was **the targeted investigation and analysis of data relating to the maritime market.**



**From left to right:** *John Dragnis, Nathanael Mauclair, John Sahinis, John Coustas, Martin Stopford, George Xiradakis, Yannis Panou, Manolis Vordonis, Haisheng Zhou and Nigel Lowry.*

The anticipated overview of the Shipping Market by Mr. **Martin Stopford** - President, Clarkson Research Services Ltd. - was detailed and informative. Summarizing the shipping markets, Mr. Stopford stressed out that shipping has entered a long, circular process, with adverse factors affecting profitability. This requires a particular strategy to address the high prices in fuel and the necessary structural changes in regulatory matters, such as the environment. He also pointed out that many ship-owners turn to new technologies, particularly energy markets (offshore), as well as new financial structure strategies. He described all of the above as “new lessons to be learned” in the shipping market, furthermore adding that information technology becomes of great importance to changes in the shipping industry. Mr. Stopford emphasized that Greek ship-owners will decidedly continue to expand their operations in China, since the service quality offered is steadily improving.

The aspect of the shipbuilding sector as a challenge to the Greek shipping companies was revealed by Mr. **John Dragnis** - CEO, Danaos Corp.- highlighting the rapid growth of Chinese shipbuilding and giving the assurance that there is even greater scope for development, mainly in terms of specialized ships. He also pointed out that there can be no comparison between the current products and past ones. Finally, Mr. Dragnis stressed the need for the shipbuilding industry to be supported by Chinese banks, something they did in the past and common in all shipbuilding countries.

Dr. **John Coustas** - President & CEO, Danaos Corp. - referred to the great potential of the Chinese shipping market in all active Greek ship-owners sectors, highlighting the possibility of finding common ground for cooperation between Greece and China. Dr. Coustas described the business environment of China as historically safe, since the spread of the Chinese economy in the international arena assures reciprocal benefits for all parties involved. “*The so-called model of business cooperation ‘win win’ is gaining ground in the international markets*”, said Dr. Coustas, while foreseeing further development

in Greece and internationally. During the Major sponsors' presentation session, Mr. Yannis Panou - CEO of United Guards Services - outlined the current developments in the fight against piracy, and presented the superb services of his company. Similarly, Mr. Haisheng Zhou introduced the China Classification Society, outlining its long history and its march towards its current international presence. Mr. Zhou stressed the important role that CCS has to play within the shipping industry in China, and most specifically in the shipbuilding market and the ship-financing arena.

One of the **parallel events** was the three-day screening of the **film “The boy on the Dolphin”**, starring Sophia Loren, that led waves of tourists to Hydra and Greece in general when aired in 1957. The same night, receptions were thrown in honour of the speakers on yachts owned by friends of the Fraternity, in the port of Hydra.

On Sunday morning, all participants were invited to participate in the **Treasure Hunt**, part of the Fraternity's campaign to promote internationally “*The Footpath System of Hydra*”, whereby Hydra's numerous assets were showcased. The Fraternity organized these parallel activities, in collaboration with local entrepreneurs, who became beneficiaries as part of a greater effort to develop winter tourism; a common objective of all Hydriots.

Conference coordinators were Mr. **George Xiradakis** – Managing Director, XRTC Business Consultants - and Mr. **Nigel Lowry** - Greek Correspondent, Lloyd's List.

Among others, the conference was attended by representatives of the local community; the Naval Attaché of the U.S., Commander **Jonathan E. Schwartz**; the former Head Consultant for the development of Commercial Ports and Marinas and Managing Director of Danaos Port Development Ltd.; Mr. **Apostolos Kamarinakis**, President & CEO of Freeseas Inc.; Mr. **Ion Varouxakis**, Financial Director of Metrostar; Mr. **Michalis Sapountzoglou**, President of Hellenic Shortsea Shipowners Association; Mr. **Charalampos Simantonis**, Purchasing Division Manager of Hellenic Seaways; Mr. **Nestos Tsantis**; representatives of the China Development Bank; Mr. **Guo Peng** and **Lu Yu**, executives of the Chinese Embassy in Greece; members of the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean; and by descendants of historic families of Hydra such as Mr. **Stamatis Boudouris** and Mr. **Spyros Lazarimos**.

*The conference was placed under the auspices of the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean; the Ministry of Tourism; the Hellenic-Chinese Association; the Hellenic-Chinese Chamber and the Association of Banking and Financial executives of the Greek shipping industry.*

*Major sponsors were: Cotommatae, Erasmus S.A, Freeseas, Hellenic SeaWays, Intermodal, Istomedia, Kyvernitis Travel, Paragon Shipping Inc., Poseidonion Grand Hotel, Prelium Investment Services, Selonda, Skipper Coffee-Restaurant.*

*\*For further information, to read the speeches and to view the photos, please visit The Fraternity's site: [www.aya.com.gr](http://www.aya.com.gr)*