

**GREEK-ALBANIAN COOPERATION  
IN THE ENERGY SECTOR  
Tirana, January 15, 2009**

**Opening Speech by  
Dr. Raphael Moissis  
Chairman, Hellenic National Energy Strategy Council**

Your Excellencies, Minister Ruli, Deputy Minister Alibani, Ambassador Pazios. Ladies and gentlemen

My main assignment this morning is to convey on behalf of the Hellenic Ministry of Development, congratulations, greetings and regrets.

**Congratulations** to all those on the Albanian and Greek side who conceived and organized this Conference.

**Greetings** to all attendees, particularly the Ministers, and good wishes for success of the Conference and its important goals and

**Regrets** for the fact due to the recent Government reshuffle, the political leadership of our Ministry was not able to be present here in Tirana this morning.

On a personal level, it is, of course, a privilege and a pleasure for me to attend this conference on Greek Albanian cooperation in the Energy Sector. Looking at the conference program I find almost every Session and Topic in the Agenda of particular interest to the organization that I am heading, namely the National Energy Strategy Council of Greece. It is also a most welcome opportunity and honor to meet again with the Albanian Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy. I first had the privilege of meeting Minister Ruli in Athens some years ago, when he had just become responsible for the energy sector

and therefore was, as he confided himself, still “green” on energy matters, green in the sense of freshness, i.e. according to the English expression that implies a newcomer. I hope he continues to be green but in another sense, that is as a supporter of inexhaustible energy sources!

At that time Minister Ruli developed a personal positive relationship with then Greek Minister of Development and present President of Parliament, Dimitris Sioufas. That relationship was extended and cultivated under Minister Christos Folias with whom you had meetings and with whom you set up the basis for an expanded cooperation between Greece and Albania in the various forms and sources for energy, electricity, gas renewables and so on. Minister Folias has asked me to convey his personal good wishes and regards to you and his greetings and wishes for success for all participants to this conference.

Mr. Folias, and I believe that Minister Ruli also, recognize that the energy sector, in addition to its self evident importance as a pre-requisite for economic development and well being, has also evolved as an important tool of diplomacy. Energy diplomacy has come to be a major constituent of foreign policy for all our countries with ever increasing significance, as very recent events have come to prove.

Minister Chatzidakis is a newcomer in the Energy field but, of course, not in newcomer in politics and development economics. In addition to conveying his personal greetings and wishes to this conference, I thought it would be appropriate to share with you the thoughts that he expressed at the Ministry of Development on the occasion of assumption of his new duties. In a really clear statement of policy and intentions, the new

Minister described the four pillars, at he called them, on which his priorities at the Ministry of Development will be based.

**Energy**, which is of particular interest in our conference, is one of his important pillars. (The other three, also of relevance to us here, are **competitiveness, entrepreneurship and creativity and technological innovation**).

Talking about **Energy** the Minister underlined the importance of energy agreements between local energy entities as well as international. The latter, aim at making countries less dependent on single or unique sources of energy. As you know Greece has already entered into important agreements in the Energy sector with Russia, with Turkey, with Bulgaria and our other neighbors, Albania of course not excluded. Greece has been able to put its mark on the world energy map even though we are not an energy producer. The energy networks that we are proceeding to develop, establish common interests and a network of stability, security and peace in our region. We are pursuing a long-term strategic plan based on our stable relations and cooperation with all our friendly nations, within the European Union and also in our immediate neighborhood.

This is the reason why energy cooperation with Albania is an issue that we approach with particular interest and an open mind. The Minister and all his associates, look forward to the results and particular opportunities and ideas that will emanate from your deliberations.

In his acceptance speech and already on other opportunities, Minister Chatzidakis made clear his personal preference among the various sources of energy and this is what he calls green energy. Although personally I sometimes have trouble with the definition of green, clearly there is no such doubt in Minister Chatzidakis's mind. His preferences are the inexhaustible

sources, with which Greece is particularly blessed, the sunshine, winds that are abundant in the mainland and islands of Greece. I am certain, therefore, that the Minister would be pleased to see that in the context of this meeting, there is a special session devoted to renewable energy sources. Hand-in-hand with development of renewables come conservation and rational use of energy.

Looking further into the Conference Agenda, I am happy to see that electricity and gas are also in their proper important positions. Electrical interconnections and bilateral agreements have a long and fruitful history between Albania and Greece. Clearly we see greater opportunities and we want to see a lot more happening. The presence of PPC, the Greek Public Power Corporation, represented here at its top level by Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Takis Athanasopoulos, underlines the importance that ΔΕΗ assigns to the development of Albanian-Greek cooperation in electricity. Possibilities are truly impressive and I hope that we will become more aware about prospects and possibilities as we listen to the presentations prepared by distinguished officers from both sides of the border.

Gas, of course, is another form of energy that offers great possibilities for cooperation. Greece, although not endowed with deposits of natural gas, possesses a unique competitive advantage, the east-to-west gas corridor. This is indeed a great asset for Greece and it is no coincidence that at this very moment, three major projects wanting to use this corridor are being discussed in international fora. I am referring, of course, to the Turkey – Greece - Italy, (in the most advanced stage) the South Stream and the Trans- Adriatic- Pipeline. Added to these, interest is being expressed for using Greece as a Hub for Liquefied Natural Gas transportation from sources in the South and East to consumers in the West. This offers important

possibilities for Greece and for Albania also, as transient countries, receivers or hubs of natural gas.

I think we should explore possibilities in the natural gas sector, each country from its own perspective but the two countries together for common interests that are existent and strong, without unjustified preference in favor of one, or prejudice against another.

Session 4 of this conference is devoted to Long Term Energy Strategy and I am happy that my colleague Mr. Dimitris Beis will talk about our deliberations at the National Council for Energy. But on the issue of long-term strategy and before concluding, I want to share with you some thoughts that came to mind as I was looking over this Conference Agenda.

I quickly realized that this Agenda would probably have been exactly the same if this Conference were held a year ago.

What was the World picture a year ago?

- Great expectations for world economic growth, speared in particular by the developing economies, large and small.
- High-energy prices with almost certain tendency to keep increasing. Volumes of theories were written on this certainty.
- Abundant financial resources, with the International Banking system, eager to lend money to prospective investors in the energy field almost indiscriminately, in spite of some “clouds” that had just started to appear in the sky of housing loans in the USA.
- Great prospects for alternative energy sources, conventional or high financial risk, encouraged by the high oil and gas prices.

Today, hardly a year later:

- The world at large is hit by an unprecedented depression, with unemployment and loss of savings for countries and individuals.
- Collapsing energy prices to a degree that make oil and gas producing countries worry about their bread and butter!
- Financial liquidity: Where did all that money go???
- Invest in energy? In what forms, with what money, with what possibly expected rates of return?

What am I getting at? Could I be interpreted as suggesting that we should abandon plans for investments in energy, for expanding our interconnections and interrelations?

Far from it.

Our plans should continue as they were before the financial crisis. After all, the crisis may be severe and painful to all, but in the extended time frame of energy planning, it must be a relatively short interval.

However, in the face of uncertainty, while we need to continue to invest in hardware, in pipelines, terminals, and power stations, we also must pay greater attention and subscribe to some other elements that are certain, not subject to unforeseen change and cost little money: I refer to solidarity, common language, common trust, good neighborhood.

- Solidarity, so that each of us can look and rely upon the other in case of crises.
- Common language, figuratively but sometimes even literally, in the sense of better understanding of each other's situations and problems and common understanding of such things as contractual and bi-lateral treaty terms or the European Union codes.

- Common trust and good neighborhood that for countries like Albania and Greece take long to cultivate but once established, are invaluable.

I conclude with my sincere thanks for the hospitality that has already been extended to us and wishes for the success in the works of this Conference. I feel confident that it will provide us with useful conclusions, valuable material for constructive thinking, good ideas and realistic implementation policies. I firmly believe that synergy is the key that opens the gate to a better, safer future that both our countries and the wider neighborhood need and deserve.