

3rd IPR Conference

On July 6, the Chamber held its 3rd IPR Conference at the King George. The Conference, titled “The Fight Against Smuggling and the Illicit Trade: Growth Incentive for the Greek and European Economy,” was organized by the Chamber’s Intellectual Property Rights Committee and focused on illicit trade, a major and growing problem worldwide. The speakers presented the various aspects and the main causes of the problem in Greece and the relationship between taxes and smuggling. They stressed that governments are losing billions of dollars in tax revenues and that structural reforms and action are prerequisites for a return to growth, while a synergy between the private and public sector is imperative on a national and international basis. It was also clear that the role of the enforcement authorities—and in particular customs authorities in control of imports in the Greek and EU territories—is crucial in the fight against illicit products. Greek enforcement authorities presented the results of their successful operations against smuggling and illicit trade.

The President of the Chamber, Simos Anastasopoulos, in his opening speech, spoke about the prospects for the economy and the future of the country that present themselves today, which can be optimistic provided they adhere to strict conditions. Among the distinguished speakers were George Pitsilis, Governor of the Independent Authority for Public Revenue; Stavros Thomadakis, Secretary Special of the Greek Financial and Economic Crime Unit; Konstantinos Christou, General Secretary against Corruption; and Cathy Haenlein, Research Fellow in Serious and Organized Crime at RUSI (the Royal United Services Institute), a UK-based think tank engaged in cutting edge defense and security research. The conference was sponsored by Papastratos.



SIMOS ANASTASOPOULOS PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL DISCUSSION



STARTUP TOOLKIT LAUNCH EVENT

On July 5, the Chamber presented at the Athens Stock Exchange a Startup Toolkit Manual. In essence, it is a basic toolkit that includes information on legal considerations, finance, intellectual property rights and tax issues useful to all startup companies. The toolkit is an initiative of the Education, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Committee that aims, among other things, to act as a useful tool for young entrepreneurs in their first steps in entrepreneurship by providing, in a simple, concise and, most importantly, enlightening way, the knowledge and experience that up-and-coming entrepreneurs need, whether they are postgraduate students of Greek universities, or just interested in creating their own new business. According to AmCham President Simos Anastasopoulos and the authors of the manual, Greece needs an environment that encourages, facilitates and at the same time promotes business initiatives that contribute to the improvement of the Greek economy and the creation of new jobs. The toolkit is sponsored by the Athens Exchange, the National Bank of Greece and Cisco Hellas and it is available as a PDF download on the Chamber website.

Corporate Governance Conference

On May 25, the Chamber held at the Hotel Grande Bretagne its 6th Corporate Governance Conference that focused on Radical Changes in Corporate Governance and Financial Information. The event drew hundreds of delegates and numerous speakers who addressed a variety of issues that companies face today to meet their requirements and responsibilities in governance. Topics included the enforcement of corporate governance, corporate responsibilities, the legal framework, corporate culture, governance in the digital era, as well as specific topics related to the banking and insurance sectors. Simos Anastasopoulos, the President of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, said: “It’s about time to come to some conclusions, painful but necessary, and to review our practices. And because they have to do with business operation, I cannot imagine a better opportunity than today to talk about the need to develop a new framework for targeting and operating entrepreneurship beyond any governmental decisions and initiatives.” The conference was sponsored by Hellenic Petroleum, Fourlis and EY.



SIMOS ANASTASOPOULOS PANEL DISCUSSION

Chamber Annual General Assembly

On June 25, the Chamber held its Annual General Assembly at the Electra Metropolis Hotel. The meeting’s agenda proceeded smoothly and all motions were carried, including the formation of a new Auditors Committee, the motions of the previous General Assembly, and the acceptance of new Chamber members. Chamber President Simos Anastasopoulos chaired the meeting, at which he reviewed the events and accomplishments of the previous year and stated: “We started the second term of this Board of Directors last summer with the addition of new members, and we all worked to confirm the leadership of our Chamber by continuing and expanding our activities and events. The lengthy reference to the events, conferences and the work of the many Committees shows only part of the Chamber’s work, as we did not refer to the almost daily presence of the President and the other members of the Management Committee in particular in meetings with investors, public officials, politicians and professional bodies as well as our presence and active participation in multiple events of other organizations. I believe that the time and effort we have devoted has contributed greatly to the universal recognition of the leading role of the Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce in the country’s economic scene and has allowed us to attract new members, maintain the support of our donors, increase the number of events, and broaden our resonance in society.”

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GREEK JUDICIAL SYSTEM

On July 12, the Chamber organized an event at the Electra Metropolis Hotel, where the results of a study by the National Center of State Courts in regards to the effectiveness of the Greek judicial system were presented by Keith R. Fisher, Professor of Law and Principal Consultant & Senior Counsel for Domestic and International Court Initiatives of the United States National Center of State Courts, and Konstantina Vagenas, lawyer and Director and Chief Counsel of Access to Justice Initiatives of the same center. AmCham President Simos Anastasopoulos and John Kyriakides, Partner at Kyriakides Georgopoulos Law Firm and President of AmCham’s Legislative Reform Committee, gave the opening speeches. The findings were based on responses to targeted polls on the perception of corruption in the judiciary system. It is interesting that, according to the findings of the survey, the Greek judicial system does not appear to have an extensive problem of corruption. However, long-term delays often raise suspicions—especially in foreign investors—regarding the transparency that governs the citizens’ relationship with the judiciary system. Some of the solutions proposed to make the Greek judiciary system more effective were the establishment of specialized courts for cases related to technical and complex objects such as intellectual property and international trade, the promotion of alternative dispute resolution institutions such as arbitration and mediation, the introduction of judicial management to rationalize the administration of the courts, and the exploitation of new technologies.



IDDBA SHOW 2017



SFFS 2017

TradeUSA Business Delegations in the USA

Loyal to its mission, the TradeUSA Department of the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce organized two trade delegations during the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Show (IDDBA) and the Summer Fancy Food Show (SFFS).

IDDBA SHOW 2017

The industry-leading trade show of the foodservice industry in the USA took place on June 4-6 in Anaheim, CA and stood out for the expertise and the high profile of its participants. The 10,280 visitors were buyers, merchants, executives, food producers, brokers, distributors and other industry professionals who gathered in order to shape the future of the industry. The Greek National Pavilion hosted Delta Foods and Barba Stathis, which were among the 2,048 booths from 30 countries. Both Greek companies presented new product lines aligned with American consumer trends. Alongside showcasing their product lines, both companies participated in B2B meetings organized by the TradeUSA Team with American importers/distributors/brokers who had already expressed their interest in sourcing Greek delicacies.

SFFS 2017

The largest trade show in the US Specialty Foods sector brought together producers from all over the world as well as buyers, importers, and distributors from all over America, with more than 180,000 products presented and 21,000 visitors and 2,600 exhibitors from a total of 46 countries coming together under one roof. The largest international exhibitors came from Italy, Spain, France, Greece and Turkey, with the latter being the honored country for 2017.

In the context of SFFS17, Team TradeUSA hosted a trade delegation focused on organizing customized B2B meetings based on companies' product portfolios. The participating companies were Aegean Naturals, Pallas Confections, PAMI, Rodoula SA and World Excellent Products (Ladi 5), all of which had the opportunity to attend B2B meetings with American importers, distributors and brokers. They met with 24 American companies in total, having the opportunity to not only enter into trade agreements but also to obtain extremely useful information on the structure and market dynamics of the markets and demographics their products target.

THE COLLABORATION AGREEMENT: AMCHAM GR – SFA

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (AmCham GR) and the Specialty Food Association (SFA) orally agreed to partner and jointly organize a series of activities in Greece. The specifics of the collaboration agreement will be finalized during Q4 of 2017. However, the main sections are (1) trade networking and certification, (2) training and (3) market research. With this agreement, AmCham Greece, via its TradeUSA Department, expands its ability to actively support on a multi-sectorial level all Greek companies in their efforts to trade in the USA.

For further information, contact tradeusa@amcham.gr.



GEORGE KATROUGALOS

LABOR AND INSURANCE WORKSHOP

On June 7, the Chamber held a Labor and Insurance Workshop organized by AmCham's Insurance, Social Security & Labor Affairs Committee with the participation of representatives of the political, academic, and business communities at the Hotel Grande Bretagne. The workshop focused on "Social Security, Business Environment, and Labor Relations," and aimed at contributing to the realistic depiction of the business environment and trends in the insurance and employment sectors, also offering practical proposals for the reorganization of insurance and labor relations in order for the country to return to a path to development.

CHAMBER CALENDAR

September 7 Alexandroupoli, International South East Energy Conference

September 12 Thessaloniki, TradeUSA Workshop

September 14 Thessaloniki, Leadership Values from Ancient Greece Workshop

October 4-5 Athens, Athenaeum Intercontinental Hotel, 16th HealthWorld Conference

October 6 Kavala, TradeUSA Workshop

October 9-11 Washington, AUSA 2014 Annual Meeting & Exposition-Hellenic Pavilion

October 16 Athens, 2nd Athens Culture Symposium