



The new year brings to most of us positive thoughts, hopes, new goals and an improved mood and outlook on the matters that each of us is dealing with. For many, this is the best period to discuss new visions and projects, to lay out roadmaps and to inspire people to rally behind bold endeavors.

I believe that now is also the best time to have a substantial debate and dialogue and to take decisions on how we envision the future of this country.

2018 is a turning point for Greece. According to the latest data, our country is set to exit its bailout program in August this year, and as such it will be eligible, under certain conditions, to return to international markets. I mention conditions because the end of the bailout program alone is not enough to allow Greece to claim competitive and low interest rates. A new set of policies is necessary to push forward with the transformation of the Greek economy, encourage investments, and drive the implementation of a few basic but obvious reforms that will further increase the level of confidence towards Greece.

It is now more obvious than ever that our country's economic and entrepreneurial model is in need of substantial restructuring that will take into consideration current international trends in global commerce, finance, corporate and state governance, and definitely in education. We need to adopt new standards that will fully utilize new and advanced technologies as well as the cooperative productive and economic models that are spreading fast worldwide. Our new paradigm must be based on producing real wealth and on meaningfully utilizing all of Greece's advantages. This can be achieved through entrepreneurial and investment initiatives that will take place within a clear framework of principles and rules applicable to all—a framework which the state will be responsible for monitoring and upholding.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce will take the lead in this crucial debate that we believe will result in a roadmap that will be useful to all in contributing to this endeavor. Through various events and activities such as conferences, round-table discussions, private working meetings, surveys and studies, business seminars, and exhibitions, we will continue their work serving the Chamber's mandate and goals.

In closing, I would like to remind you all that the United States will be featured as the honored country in the upcoming Thessaloniki International Fair in September 2018, where our Chamber is proud to be organizing the U.S. Pavilion.

I wish you all a happy, creative and prosperous New Year.

**ELIAS SPIRTOUNIAS**  
*Executive Director*

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## THE AMERICAN-HELLENIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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### A DYNAMIC, PROACTIVE CHAMBER

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce was established in 1932 and is one of the largest, most active, and dynamic American Chambers in Europe. Virtually all American companies that do business in Greece and Greek companies that engage in trade with the United States are members of the Chamber.

The Chamber's membership is comprised of more than 1,000 proactive companies that seek to expand business horizons, create new business partnerships, and take advantage of trade and investment opportunities in today's global economy.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce is an active mem-

ber of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington D.C. and the European Council of American Chambers of Commerce (ECACC).

### MISSION STATEMENT

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce strives for continuous improvement of American-Hellenic commercial and financial relations, through increased membership and through the organization of top-quality events, exhibitions, fora, seminars, and congresses on both sides of the Atlantic.