

INVESTING IN THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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For many decades, the relationship between profit and the bio-environment has been one of the main problems that have preoccupied, created tension and fostered many divided opinions among specialists, business people and environmentalists, as well as, between governments and citizens. The experience ascertained from the many business efforts around the world, by those who have invested in the protection of the environment, leads to the conclusion that, finally, the relationship between profit and the bio-environment is not contradictory. Presently, the development of technology allows for the activities of the business world to respect and protect the bio-environment, while still resulting in significant profits.

This conference, organised in conjunction with the Biopolitics International Organisation, aims to approach these exact issues and analyse them in order to finally offer instructive conclusions and goals, as to ways in which enterprises can perform with regard to the environment. We also need to consider what the Greek government should do in order to support businesses that are interested in investing in the protection of the environment.

This effort is significant, because the environment is a matter, on which, the future of humanity depends. The environment will define the framework in which enterprises will adapt and plan their future. We should not forget that we live in a country where many environmental problems exist which, if not directly and effectively confronted, will result in a great deal of damage to many important aspects of our financial life, and severely affect our quality of life.

Today, the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Biopolitics International Organisation have initiated a discussion on environmentally-compatible business strategy and have high expectations that this discussion will lead to the establishment a uniform strategy for both enterprises and the State.

On behalf of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I would like to thank all the participants of this Conference and all the exceptional and distinguished speakers for their precious contribution to this effort.

President of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, since 1994, **John Papathanasiou** holds a degree in Electrical Engineering from the National Technical University of Athens. He is also President and Managing Director of I.D. Papathanasiou S.A., as well as, Member of the Board of Directors for Ergodata S.A. and Ergoleasing S.A.. Mr. Papathanasiou has also served as Advisor to the Minister of Industry and Energy (1991-1992), Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Public Gas Company (1993) and General Secretary of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1988-1993).