

THE ENVIRONMENT IN EVERY SOCIAL NATIONAL AND PRIVATE INITIATIVE

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I would like to stress the importance of this conference relative to the importance of the bio-environment in all aspects of human activity. This conference is related to industrial activity and profit is related to the environment. The relationship between these two subjects is self-evident and I would like to congratulate Mrs. President, as well as everyone who has had the initiative to participate in this conference.

Environmental problems are becoming increasingly vast and serious. It is, therefore, interesting to become aware of the point-of-views from which these problems shall be analysed and the ways in which we must and can confront them.

I would like to make three points. First, the environment forms our life and our life forms our natural environment. All ages, all activities, all people should possess an awareness of this fact. I stress this because it is interrelated with the work and the mission of this conference. The importance of the environment needs to be in the front of our consciousness, in order to be analysed and understood, so that we can begin to develop necessary conclusions regarding human activity and confront environmental problems.

With reference to this point, I would like to stress the importance of the work being done in schools. The awareness of the environment and its effects upon our lives and activities, is being presented in schools through work that was developed by the Biopolitics International Organisation. Our children must possess a continuously growing awareness of the environment; they must respect it, support it and care about it to the degree that they feel it is possible. Young people, our children, must understand the significance of the environment and the reason why we must take care of it. Because we live in it and our life is affected by the protection of and the respect for the environment. This educational work, being carried out by the Biopolitics International Organisation and Dr. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, is to be highly commended.

The second point is connected, directly, with this conference in Athens. The environment, the analysis of problems and the ways in which to correct them, constitute a collective responsibility, including that of the State. The State has a responsibility for the protection and care of the environment. All disciplines must look in all directions to discover the causes of the undermining of the environment and the ways, in which, we can deal with them.

Environmental science is a practical science. It is a science that analyses public activity, as well as, social activity for the protection of the environment. It also examines ways we might benefit from "the goods" of the environment, that define and give a deeper meaning to our lives. There is a third point, to this discussion, which is connected, directly, to the two previous ones. It is the international aspect of the protection of the environment. It is impossible to succeed in the protection of the environment, if the project is not connected with the efforts, the politics and the work of other nations. From this point-of-view, the international meetings, the international exchange of ideas and, especially, the international conferences, like the one taking place today in Athens, are of great importance. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers of this conference, and to recognise the presence here of representatives from many countries. Together, we can confront the problems of the environment and emphasise the interrelationship of business activity, profit and the environment regarding the protection of the environment.

The awareness of environmental problems and the need for a political support for the environment, are quite alive and deeply defined in the European Union. At the recent October meeting of the European Congress, the problems of the environment and the necessary formation of a European "political protection" of the environment, were basic subjects of discussion. It should be stressed that in all directions of European politics, there is a need for analysing the effects, on the environment, of every decision and activity supported by the European Union.

Next, comes the in-depth analysis of the effects of every social, public or business initiative to the environment. This matter is not a simple one, since the definition of the effects, either positive or negative, is a complicated scientific procedure. The European Union, today representing 15 European nations, will be, tomorrow, representing 25 or 30 nations, since the number of European nations is expected to double in the following years. The environment is one of the most serious matters that must occupy the basic elements of the European Union, meaning the European Commission and, of course, the European Council which expresses the political power of the countries comprising the European Union.

Research has demonstrated that every business activity and every social activity, is connected to a threat or an alteration of the environment. This amounts to almost 2% or maybe 3% of the costs connected with the activity. The results and the effects should be pointed out and studied. This brings the message that every type of activity has an environmental effect, and one of the results or effects is that we must acquaint precision in knowledge and in weighing and evaluating the effects of every social, national or private initiative to the environment.

These are the broad boundaries in which it is logical and necessary to study the problems of the environment. As we witness the rapid increase in the population of the world, the increase in the density in our lives and the density of societies, the problems of the environment are acutely brought to our consciousness and we recognise the need for them to be confronted in a responsible and effective way. This need becomes heavier, stronger and more and more important. This is also the reason why this conference is of great importance and I am certain that the points which I have highlighted briefly, will become the topic for a fruitful exchange of ideas.

I would like to publicly express my enthusiasm for the presence of representatives from other countries. The exchange of ideas on the international level is of utmost importance. I would like to especially emphasise the significance of the work of the Biopolitics International Organisation, in the way it has been defined by Dr. Vlavianos-Arvanitis. I would also like to congratulate the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which in the context of its various activities, welcomes this conference, the significance of which is self-evident.

Professor **John Pesmazoglou**, President of the Academy of Athens, holds a Ph.D. in Economic and Political Science from the University of Athens and a Ph.D. in Economics from Cambridge University. He was Professor of Political Economy at the University of Athens from 1967-1970, Vice-President of the Bank of Greece from 1960-1967, President of the Greek Committee for European Co-operation from 1962-1965, Minister of Economics from July - October 1974, Member of Parliament from 1974-1989 and Member of the European Parliament from 1981-1994. Honorary Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Commandeur de la Legion d' Honneur (French Government), he has also been awarded Greek (King George I and Phoenix) and German Government Decorations of Merit, as well as the Decoration of Merit for the Yugoslav Peoples (Gold Star). Author of numerous articles and books on economic and political science, Professor Pesmazoglou has published extensively in French, English, German and Greek.