

[Home](#) > [The Ministry](#) > [Missions Overseas](#) > [News From Mission Overseas](#)**Speech by Ambassador Zou Xiaoli at the Seminar "The New Silk Road of China: One Belt, One Road (OBOR) and Greece"**

(From Chinese Embassy in the Hellenic Republic)

2016/03/30

Ambassadors, professors, representatives from the business community, dear friends,

It is my honour to address today's conference. In a couple of days COSCO and TAIPED, the privatization fund of Greece, are going to sign the agreements on the purchase of 67% majority stake of PPA, which has drawn wide attention from the media of Greece, China and worldwide. So the timing is optimal for in-depth discussions about "the New Silk Road and Greece". On behalf of the Chinese Embassy in Greece, I would like to express high appreciation of the five prestigious Greek academic and research institutes for organizing the conference, and sincere thanks to all the participants present here!

The COSCO Piraeus project, a key link of the "Belt and Road", has achieved remarkable progress and showed broad prospects of development, which enables us to better interpret and understand the rich spectrum and far-reaching significance of the Initiative itself in comprehensive and concrete terms and from a higher perspective of view. With this in mind, we will feel more confident and energetic in pushing for more progress to bring benefit to peoples of our two countries and make new contribution to world peace and development.

The COSCO Piraeus project has best showcased the five pillars of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, namely policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds. It also reflects the principle of joint consultation, co-construction and sharing.

In terms of policy coordination, the COSCO Piraeus project has enjoyed great care and support from leaders of both countries. It is a consensus of the two sides that the project conforms to the fundamental interests of China, Greece and the region. In spite of the changes in the political scene of Greece in recent years, which caused some ups and downs in the COSCO Piraeus project, the two sides have never stopped forging ahead. China has always tried to understand and accommodate the concerns of Greece. It is China's consistent position that Greece should stay in the Euro zone and the EU should step up cooperation with Greece to jointly deal with the European debt crisis. China has provided assistance to Greece to the best of its ability through real actions. On the Greek side, the message is clear that Greece sees China as a reliable strategic partner. It is this sound relationship of mutual respect, equality, mutual trust and mutual help that provides solid political foundation for the continuous expansion of cooperation in Piraeus Port. Going forward, the two sides should make the best use of high-level visits to strengthen communication and coordination on development planning and relevant policies of the two countries from a medium and long-term perspective on the basis of the COSCO Piraeus project.

As for facilities connectivity, the COSCO Piraeus project will serve as a "dragon head", as we Chinese call something that has a leading effect. The Hungary-Serbia Railway, which connects Budapest with Belgrade, the construction of which started last year, is due to be completed in 2017. This new railway and the Piraeus Port will constitute the European part of the China-Europe Land-Sea Express Route. Currently, there are 9 freight trains a week that go to Central and Eastern Europe from PCT. The number is likely to multiply in the future. COSCO, based on its operation in Piraeus, is stepping up port cooperation with countries along the Mediterranean and the Black Sea in an effort to integrate resources and build a more internationally competitive maritime transportation network. Encouraged by the prospects of the development of PPA, many Chinese businesses and businesses of other countries are considering investing in the airports, railways, and ports in Greece, which will further optimize the transportation facilities of land, sea and air and consolidate the position of Greece as a transportation hub in the east Mediterranean.

In terms of unimpeded trade, the China-Europe Land-Sea Express Route, with the Port of Piraeus as the hub, will bring down remarkably the cost of time, energy, and capital for the flow of commodities between China and Europe and between Asia and Europe. The Express Route will also link the new Maritime Silk Road with the Silk Road on land and strongly boost economic and trade cooperation among China, Russia, Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Europe, West Asia and North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Countries along the "Road and Belt" can well become a new driving force for world economic growth in the coming decades. It is objective to point out that the increase of the throughput of the Port of Piraeus will not necessarily cause the shrink of throughput in other ports. On the contrary, if countries along the "Belt and Road" continue to promote trade liberalization and facilitation among them so as to create a more favorable environment, the development of the Port of Piraeus will lead to the build-up of common prosperity of the whole region.

In terms of financial integration, the COSOC Piraeus project will serve as a landmark event in Greece's efforts to attract foreign investment. Some visionary Greek politicians, business and opinion leaders have come to realize that the importance of the COSCO project does not lie in the 368.5 million Euros for the purchase of the 67% stake of PPA, nor limited to the 5 billion Euros that COSCO and other companies will invest in the coming decades, according to the estimation of the media. The real significance of the COSCO project is highlighted by the opportunity it offers to Greece to return to the international capital market, which is vitally important for Greece to walk out of the crisis and realize revitalization. In order to support the development of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, last year, China, together with over 50 founding member states, established the US\$100 billion Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the US\$ 40 billion Silk Road Fund. China and the EU are also considering the feasibility of setting up a China-EU joint investment fund. These new financing platforms, together with existing multilateral investment institutions, will jointly promote the connectivity of infrastructure of Asia and Europe and the implementation of the "Belt and Road" projects, from which Greece will also stand to benefit. The China Development Bank, which has long-term cooperation with Greek business communities, has also expressed its willingness to strengthen cooperation with Greece in support of the growth plan the Greek government is formulating now.

As for people-to-people bonds, the COSCO Piraeus project is an extraordinary proof of the traditional friendship between the two peoples. It will also serve as a catalyst to further boost mutual understanding, mutual trust and win-win cooperation between our two countries. As the COSCO project grows, China-Greece relations are also flourishing in the fields of tourism, culture, education, science and technology, press and media, and academic studies. Today's conference is a good case in point. In China there is an increasing trend to learn about Greece, to come to Greece, and to collaborate with Greece. In the past two years, the number of Chinese tourists to Greece has maintained double-digit growth. Last year, Beijing Foreign Studies University sent 24 students to Greece to learn the Greek language for three years, which is unprecedented. Since the beginning of this year, "Happy Chinese New Year", China Contemporary Art Exhibition, China-Greece Poets' Exchanges have successfully taken place. Tianjin Nankai High School and 30 institutes of higher learning from Zhejiang province have visited Greece. China is speeding up its efforts to open the Chinese Cultural Center in Athens. Cultural heritage preservation, underwater archaeology, the Marathon race, the Olympic culture and cultural industry cooperation will be the key areas of cooperation for this year, which is hoped to be a year of cultural exchanges and cultural industry cooperation. The day before yesterday, I had the special honour to be invited to speak at the signing ceremony of the cooperation protocol on the establishment of the "Amphictyony of Ancient Greek cities". I assured the Greek mayors of my commitment as the Chinese Ambassador to bridge the Greek cities with the Chinese cities in order that the peoples and local authorities can play a bigger role in the further expansion of our bilateral relations. I am deeply convinced that cultural and people-to-people exchanges, together with economic and trade cooperation, will add strong wings to China-Greece relationship so that it will take off in the tailwind of the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

Professors, ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

China is still a developing country with 70 million people living under the poverty line. The majority of the poor population live in the central and western parts of China, places that used to be on the ancient Silk Road. The Chinese economy is facing downward pressure. Further efforts are needed to make the Chinese economy more balanced, coordinated, and sustainable. The biggest contribution that China can make to the world is to manage its own affairs well and use its development to promote the development of the world. We are firmly convinced and fully confident about that. So, I would like to put it this way, the "Belt and Road" Initiative is a great blueprint for China's development. It is also a Chinese solution to the common development of the whole world. Since Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the "Belt and Road" Initiative in 2013, it has been widely welcomed by the international community. So far over 70 countries and organizations have expressed the wish of cooperation and over 30 countries have signed cooperation agreements with China for joint development of the Initiative. China is ready to work with all parties, which are willing to support and participate in the Initiative, to share opportunities, jointly shoulder responsibilities, and achieve great prosperity of mankind. As the cradle of Western civilization, Greece, in its long course of history, made outstanding contribution to the cultural integration and mutual learning between the East and West through the ancient Silk Road.

Today, the COSCO Piraeus project has once again placed Greece at an important knot of the Silk Road, a new Silk Road formed by the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century". It provides a once-in-a-thousand-year opportunity for China and Greece, the two ancient and great nations, to join hands in promoting the progress of human civilizations. I hope and believe that, with the relentless efforts of our two countries and two peoples, we will succeed in building the COSCO Piraeus project into a shining example of the "Belt and Road" Initiative. China and Greece will realize common development and prosperity, and the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Greece will bear more fruits for the benefit of our two countries and the world at large.

To conclude, I want to thank once again the organizers and the participants present and wish the conference a big success.

Thank you.

 Suggest to a friend	<input type="text" value="Please enter E-mail"/>	<input type="button" value="Submit"/>	 Print	<input type="text" value="Please enter keywords"/>	<input type="button" value="Go"/>
---	--	---------------------------------------	---	--	-----------------------------------

#### Related News:

- [Speech by Ambassador Zou Xiaoli at the Signing Ceremony of the Cooperation Protocol on the Establishment of the "Amphictyony of Ancient Greek Cities"](#)
- [Wife of Chinese Ambassador Zou Xiaoli Organizes Visit to PCT by Women Representatives of Athens](#)
- [Speech by Ambassador Zou Xiaoli at the Reception at PCT for Women Representatives of Athens](#)
- [Ambassador Zou Xiaoli Meets with Officials of the Hellenic Cultural Ministry](#)
- [Ambassador Zou Xiaoli Meets with Member of the PB of the CC of the KKE](#)

Chinese Ambassador Zou Xiaoli Meets with First Deputy Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament

Chinese Ambassador Zou Xiaoli Visits the City of Aspropyrgou and Meets with Mayors of Cities Around Piraeus

Chinese Ambassador Zou Xiaoli and Wife Attends the Spring Festival Gala Held by the Greece-China Association

---

Copyright©1998-2014, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China

Contact us Address: No. 2, Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 100701 Tel: 86-10-65961114

