

## **Greek extractive industry: Resilient amid pandemic**

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At the end of 2019, there was a very positive momentum in terms of the Greek economy; at the start of this year, the emphasis had shifted to growth, modernization, and strengthening competitiveness and extroversion.

A few months later, given the strong global economic turmoil caused by the health crisis, these thoughts seem far away. In addition to the challenges that pre-existed, the need to maintain employment and stimulate investment in an environment of declining demand and supply as well as a significant disruption of the supply chain is added.

The demand for many commodities remains low with a lower near-term demand outlook. The pandemic struck the European economy, the key export partner of the Greek extractive industry, when it was on an anemic growth path and still vulnerable to new shocks. Given the severity of this unprecedented worldwide shock, it is now quite clear that the EU has entered the deepest economic recession in its history.

In our country, response to the health crisis is considered successful so far, compared to what is happening in other countries. At the same time as the imposition restrictive measures to respond to the public health aspect of the crisis, several economic measures were introduced to support affected employees and businesses.

In these challenging times, the Greek extractive industry has shown resilience, has given special attention to the health of its employees and associates, supported the national health system and local communities, and is preparing to contribute, to the best of its ability, to the recovery of the Greek economy.

During the years of economic crisis, our industry maintained its production capacity, mainly due to its high extroversion, but this great advantage is expected to shrink significantly due to the impact of the pandemic and the consequent reduction in demand for raw materials.

The support of the extractive industry is vital for the rapid recovery of the Greek economy and it is positive that the companies of the sector have been included in the second framework of support and aid.

In this business environment, it is essential to speed up the necessary transformation that will ensure judicial due process and expedience, support the liquidity of the industry, and enhance the competitiveness of the Greek extractive industry by reducing the energy cost, rationalizing the working time settlement, optimizing the depreciation schemes and further reducing the indirect labor cost.

This year, the extractive industry will focus on mitigating the effects of the health crisis and the rapid recovery of the industry in a highly demanding international economic climate, ensuring high levels of safety and hygiene for our staff and partners and with an emphasis on actions and proposals which will ensure the maintenance of our production capacity and competitive position in the international arena.