



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Υπουργείο Κλιματικής Κρίσης  
και Πολιτικής Προστασίας



## Ομιλία Χρήστου Στυλιανίδη στο London Business School

Σε εκδήλωση του **London Business School** για τις επιπτώσεις της κλιματικής αλλαγής παγκοσμίως, μίλησε ο Υπουργός Κλιματικής Κρίσης και Πολιτικής Προστασίας, **Χρήστος Στυλιανίδης**.

Στην εκδήλωση, στην οποία ήταν συνδιοργανωτής το **Wheeler Institute for Business in Development**, ο κ. Στυλιανίδης αναφέρθηκε στη νέα, δυσχερή, πραγματικότητα που έχει δημιουργήσει η κλιματική κρίση και στη σημασία της συλλογικής δράσης για την από κοινού αντιμετώπιση των μεγάλων προκλήσεων.

Παράλληλα, ανέδειξε -μεταξύ άλλων- τη σύνδεση της Κλιματικής Κρίσης και της Πολιτικής Προστασίας, ενώ υπογράμμισε τη σημασία του Ευρωπαϊκού Μηχανισμού Πολιτικής Προστασίας και του rescEU στην αντιμετώπιση των συνεπειών της κλιματικής κρίσης.

Ακολουθεί ολόκληρο το κείμενο της τοποθέτησής του:

*“Dear colleagues, dear friends,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Let me first say a big “thank you” to Professors Elias Papaioannou, Yiannis Ioannou and Tiago Ivo Martinho and the Wheeler Institute for Business and Development for inviting me to speak here at the very prestigious London Business School.*

*On a really special occasion: to celebrate Earth Day 2023.*

*An opportunity to reflect on the challenges our planet faces today to build a sustainable environment.*

*An opportunity to reiterate our commitments.*

***But also an opportunity for a pragmatic look into how we deal with the hard reality.***

*I am really very grateful for this opportunity. Because it was something we had discussed with Yiannis before.*

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*So, I am very pleased to join you today. In my capacity as Minister for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection of Greece. But also, as a former European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.*

*Dear friends,*

*The work that the Wheeler Institute is doing to promote sustainable and inclusive development is, no doubt, “first-class”.*

*I approach this event as a “brain storming” among knowledgeable and concerned individuals.*

*A distinguished group of students, academics, professionals, experts, journalists. The vast majority of you being more knowledgeable than me!*

*So, I am not here to lecture you. Or give you all the answers. I am here to put on the table the hard questions and dilemmas. And share my thoughts about the best ways to address them in a realistic framework.*

*So, I look forward to a constructive conversation.*

### ***The Big Picture***

*Allow me, first, to start with the big picture.*

*To lay out the political aspects which underline the strategy towards a greener and more sustainable future.*

*The hard reality is that climate change, climate crisis, is one of the most pressing challenges for our planet. Maybe the most pressing!*

*As we all know, climate change is causing more frequent and severe natural disasters: wildfires, severe floods, and droughts.*

*Extreme weather phenomena are the “new normal” all across the globe.*

*The facts speak for themselves.*

*So, the challenge is huge. The dilemmas are hard. In politics, we have to make difficult choices. Based on our principles. But also grounded on realism and rationalism.*

*There is no question that our strategic goal is to fully implement our commitments identified in the European “Green Deal”. But also our global commitments under the Paris Agreement.*

*But to achieve our common strategic goal we need flexibility. We need readiness to adjust our interconnected – and sometimes “controversial” – policies.*

*This is dictated by geopolitical and socioeconomic developments. And by real life. By the everyday life of the ordinary people.*

*Let me explain:*

*The war in Ukraine has destabilized the geopolitical system. This is a war within Europe.*

*This new geopolitical environment creates unrepresented uncertainty.*

*Inflation, fluctuating energy prices, and higher interest rates. All create a volatile environment.*

*An environment which puts pressure both on governments but also on the society.*

*So, we recognize that governments and societies find it very difficult to implement commitments.*

*We are at cross-roads. At a critical juncture.*

*That’s why, as Prime Minister Mitsotakis said at his address to COP 27, “we need radicalism as well as realism”.*

*Our actions must shield our societies from populist forces. Both in Europe and in the US (for example Trump).*

*And – at the same time - address more thoroughly – more in depth - key issues such as:*

*How are we going to engage the whole society in this effort? Demand drives Supply after all!*

*How can we give sufficient – real - incentives to the business sector to invest in a greener future? Incentives which are additional and beyond the Corporate Social Responsibility actions.*

*How can policymakers promote Research and Development in new greener technologies?*

*Dear friends,*

*While we remain focused on our strategic goal, we must demonstrate the necessary reflexes. And be flexible. Adjustable.*

*For example, discuss short-term measures, like increasing lignite production as we did in Greece, until we overcome the energy crisis.*

*We need to safeguard the present, to build a sustainable future. And to achieve that we need:*

*First, society on our side.*

*And second, inclusive governments and political leaders with a vision. Who can build bridges.*

*Governments that adopt realistic policies to:*

*Promote greener investments in new technologies such as hydrogen.*

*Engage the consumers. The society overall.*

*Adapt to the consequences of climate change.*

### ***Climate Crisis and Civil Protection***

*Dear colleagues,*

*Now let me turn to a more specific issue: the link between climate crisis and civil protection, which is part of my current portfolio as Minister.*

*Which is the core feature of the newly established Hellenic Ministry for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection.*

*A link which I believe is of outmost importance.*

*The Hellenic Ministry for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection was created to meet the new needs in disaster risk management.*

*Our main goal is to bridge the traditional approach to disaster risk management - which focuses on response - with three key pillars:*

*Prevention*

*Preparedness, and*

*Resilience*

*This is our new 'dogma', which guides all our actions and initiatives.*

*A holistic approach aiming to enhance our adaptation efforts and strengthen our country's climate resilience.*

*An approach which puts emphasis on collaboration and synergies.*

*On a global, European, national, regional and local levels.*

## **European Civil Protection and rescEU**

*Last summer's wildfires in Europe showed – once again - the hard way, that no country alone can respond effectively to wildfires and natural disasters in general.*

*I also remember the devastating floods in Western Germany some years ago, but also recently the case of Pakistan.*

*The only way to address the consequences of climate crisis is to work together. The answer is collective action!*

*We need all stakeholders on board. And of course, this cannot be done overnight!*

*This may sound trivial. Or a “cliché”.*

*But the global, the European and our experience from last year in Greece made clear that: increasing preventive measures and structures (in relation to response) is a gradual process.*

*It is not automatic.*

*It cannot be done over-night.*

*We are building our prevention capacity but at the same time we secure that our response capacities remain robust and effective.*

*Let me – at this point - elaborate more on the specific pillars of prevention, preparedness, and response:*

**Prevention:** *We need to increase our focus on prevention measures and activities. And, of course, to financially support them.*

*Forest clearing, for instance, shouldn't take place on an ad hoc basis. It must be part of a strategic multiannual program. Including removal of accumulated fuel on the ground and forest management.*

*Synergies need to be created with other Ministries. Several sectors of the economy need to be engaged. For example, farmers. Who can help us in these efforts to reduce forest fuel.*

**Preparedness:** *For the first-time last year, European firefighters from France, Romania, Germany, Bulgaria, Finland, and Norway, were based in Greece and participated in a “pre-positioning” pilot project.*

*Our experience showed that the pre-positioning modules assisted substantially the local firefighting forces. Bringing added value in terms of capacity and exchange of expertise.*

**Response:** *we are working with our European partners to strengthen further the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the rescEU mechanism.*

*Under rescEU, the EU has established a reserve that can be deployed in the event of an emergency in any EU Member State.*

*This reserve includes firefighting aircraft, medical equipment, and specialized search and rescue teams.*

*Dear friends,*

*Let me conclude these initial remarks.*

*The times are challenging. The dilemmas are hard. The cost of inaction is higher than ever.*

*But let me repeat: action must be grounded on realism. Characterized by pragmatic policies. Engaging with society.*

*Thank you for your attention. And I am looking forward to our discussion.”*