



EASTERN MACEDONIA (Greece)

The Kavala Locale

Kavala, as well as its surrounding areas, is flourishing as far as business activity is concerned. The great infrastructure works and the entrepreneurial drive that has characterized recent years, combined with its strategic location, have all contributed to placing the area on an equal standing with similarly sized cities in other areas of Europe. In this way, the potential investor is offered the appropriate climate and ideal location for new investments and conquering new markets.

The suitability of Kavala's locale is not a new phenomenon for in its centuries of history the area has known periods of great progress. The city's roots are in antiquity when the fertile and beautiful land, rich and welcoming, became home to the Greeks who were taking their first strides on the Hellenic peninsula. Every important milestone in the history of the European continent has left its mark on the area: from the city of the Macedonian King Philip who united the Greeks and from which Alexander the Great began his campaign in the East, to the Romans and the battle of Philippi in 42 BC which opened the way for the creation of the Roman Empire, the spread of Christianity and the first European Christian baptized by the Apostle Paul; from the Byzantine walls to Venetian conquests and then to Muslim monuments; and from the agro industrial revolution in the world tobacco markets which started in Kavala to the gateway for modern-day industrial life and economic development to which it led.

An European and Mediterranean Metropolis

A crossroad of culture and commerce, the area is both a modern European region on the one hand, and a significant Mediterranean center on the other. It is the second largest city in Northern Greece and has one of the most important ports in the Balkan peninsula. The city is an important metropolitan center on the journey from the Eastern Mediterranean towards the Black Sea and from Europe towards the Middle East, West Central Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Its strategic location and the facilities, which it has to offer for transportation to the European inner continent and the East, are positive elements that have led to many close contacts in both the commercial and cultural spheres. An excellent example of this area's double identity as a European and at the same time a Mediterranean center, is the city's port where goods from all Mediterranean countries are received. Through this port, and by various transport means, many of these goods make their way to the European hinterland.

Kavala is an important focal point for the commercial and economic system, which is dynamically developing in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is a key point of reference offering a homogeneous economic base, steady climatic conditions and a geographical position, which in the past has served as the cradle of European civilization. Today this location is a doorway to new markets and it is at the same time preparing to be a dynamic presence in the European continent. This strategic positioning in the economic space of the Eastern Mediterranean, in combination with its steady and constantly developing infrastructure base, allows Kavala to be a bridge between the Mediterranean, the Middle East, the new economies in the Balkans and the Commonwealth of Independent States for the benefit of Greece and the other member states of the European Union. The city's economic vigor and active cultural life confirm the fact that it is a forerunner in the area, a role that it has played since ancient times.

KAVALA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Geographically the location of Kavala presents many advantages, making the town among the most attractive in Greece. The site is naturally fortified and of singular strategic importance since it sits atop hills and gazes deep into the protected port. It is also a crossroad of civilizations bridging together Thrace with Macedonia and also the sea with the country's hinterland, rich agricultural lands and forests that in the past produced gold and silver.

This promising land attracted settlers from very early on; the city became inhabited in the Neolithic Period (3.000 BC). Magnificent findings from many settlements adorn the halls of the museums of Kavala and Philippi. These include treasures from the settlements in Antisara and Krinides. Oesympi, an ancient settlement by the shore, is mentioned by Homer, while cities such as Neapolis, Skapti Yli where Thucydides lived and wrote, Philippi, Thassos and Amphipolis flourished during the Classical Age. The city's strategic location, its many assets and natural bounties, were the reasons for its world-renown fame during ancient times. Precious metals, timber, fertile soil and the fact that it has been a transport centre as well as a meeting point for civilizations and races, are elements that today impart special significance to the area.

Kavala

In the area where Kavala proper is today situated, on the fortified peninsula of Panagia, settlers from Thassos established the colony of Neapolis (New City) in 650 BC. This colony was able to control the passage connecting Macedonia with Asia, and the Aegean with the Thracian hinterland. In the year 500 BC, having established a great deal of wealth because of the gold and silver mines and the port-related activities, the city was able to become independent and it issued its first coin. In the 1st century AD Apostle Paul passed through the city and made his first stop on European soil. After experiencing years of prosperity, and being renamed Christoupolis, by the 9th century the city was already in decline.

During the Middle Ages, Christoupolis lived through turbulent times and its castles changed hands between the Byzantines, the Normans and the Lombards. The city was last fortified in 1306 by a Byzantine Emperor, Andronicus II Paleologos and by the end of the 14th century it had fallen into the hands of the Ottomans, at which time it became deserted. In the 16th Century, and with the name "Kavala", it was settled by Greeks, Turks and Jews from Hungary. Suleiman the Magnificent refortified the city, built a new mosque and constructed one of the most impressive structures in his empire: the aqueduct (today's "Kamares").

Slowly, and with the increase in trade, more Greeks settled in Kavala. In the 18th century Mehmet Ali, founder of the Egyptian dynasty and a native of Kavala, acted as a benefactor to the city building large works such as the Imaret seminary and poorhouse. At the same time, the first commercial relations with the West were established. By the end of the 18th century French, Venetian and British consulate offices were established in the city. During the next century, the city's population was about 4000 to 5000 residents. The Greek element became dominant as the tobacco trade

established itself as the main entrepreneurial activity for the entire area. By the beginning of the 20th century, this Greek city had acquired a particularly cosmopolitan character as a result of the international tobacco trade.

With the help of the Greek Army, Kavala gained its independence in 1913. Today, the city is a thriving commercial centre which has managed to maintain unaltered many elements from its past. It has large squares and modern buildings alongside old, traditional houses with roofed verandas and gardens that are nestled along stone-paved roads. It offers modern facilities for tourism activities, as well as nightclubs and taverns for a pleasurable and comfortable stay. The port is particularly scenic with its quaint fishing vessels and the view of the Byzantine castle overlooking the city. Other points of interest include the walls, the church of the Holy Virgin (Panagia), the old town in the castle district, the aqueduct (Kamares), the colourful market in the area of St. Nicholas and the Imaret, as well as the beautiful beaches. The visitor must not overlook the town's Archaeological Museum, the house of Mehmet Ali, nor the Municipal Museum with its rich collection of folk art objects and works by the Thassos sculptor, Vagi.

Philippi

The city came into existence at the end of the 4th century BC when the settlers from Thassos founded the colony of Krinides. The area is called Datos or Daton, a name reminiscent of the valley's rich bounties. Philip the Second, King of the Macedons, populated the city with new dwellers in order to fortify it and, at the same time, he gave the city his name. Thassos' colony of Krinides becomes the Macedonian city of Philippi.

Eventually, the city fell to the Romans. Under their rule it flourished, becoming a very important Roman colony. The battle of Philippi, an event of worldwide historical significance, took place in the area in the year 42 BC. The democratic forces of Brutus and Cassius lost to Mark Anthony, marking the beginning of the Roman Empire with Octavius as its first Emperor. The city further developed with the construction of via Egnatia, the road which reached from Diracchion to Byzantium and crossed through Philippi.

In the year 49 AD yet another historic event took place in the area. The apostle of all nations, Apostle Paul, preached Christianity for the first time on European soil and baptized the first European citizen, Lydia, thus creating the first Christian church on the European continent. The transfer of power from Rome to Constantinople marked the end of Philippi as a Roman colony and the beginning of its existence as a significant Byzantine town.

The modern day visitor can see the public and private structures that once existed in the town. The ancient theatre, the initial construction from the 4th century BC, has been restored and is used even today. Another site which can be visited is the impressive Agora and the Roman Forum which is dated to the time of Marcus Aurelius (161-175 AD). Also accessible are the Paleochristian basilicas whose imposing mass adorns the archaeological site. They are among the first Christian churches in the area. Finally, folk tradition has it that the Roman cistern inside the town was the place where Apostle Paul was imprisoned.

The visitor to the archaeological site must not neglect to visit the Archaeological Museum where notable works of art depicting life in the city, from the Paleolithic era to the first centuries of Christianity, are displayed.

Thassos

The island's capital, Thassos, is on the northern shore, at the site of the ancient city. The glorious history of the island has left its imprint on the marble ruins and monuments that can be visited even today. Amongst these ruins are the walls surrounding the entire ancient city (7th to 5th centuries BC), the Acropolis, with a panoramic view of the area's lush surroundings full of olive trees and pine trees, the agora, the theatre, the temple of Pythian Apollo, the Choregic monument within the sanctuary of Dionysus, etc. The Archaeological Museum in the city is also worth a visit since it boasts vessels from various eras, a kouros, statues, archaeological findings, coins, etc.

Amphipolis

Conquered by the Athenian general Agnon in 437 BC, Amphipolis was the most important Athenian colony in Northern Greece. From its very founding, this city played an important role in the ancient world since it attracted business interests. It was a point of contention between the Athenians, the Lacedaemonians, the Macedonians and the Chalkideans. For Alexander the Great it was a naval base during his campaign in Asia. It became a fort and a coin mint for the Macedonian State and, finally, as the capital of the first administrative region of Macedonia, Amphipolis became an important political, military, economic and cultural centre.

With the construction of via Egnatia, the major Roman road artery, the city became an important urban centre and maintained this position until 692 AD when it was known to be the seat of the bishopric and counted among its assets magnificent Paleochristian basilicas, impressive buildings and ornately decorated public spaces.

Today's visitor to Amphipolis can view the fortifications of the city including the famous bridge, technically a very impressive structure given that it has survived over 2.400 years. Also on view are the magnificent houses, the temple of the Muse Cleo, the Necropolis, the Macedonian tombs, the basilicas, the bishopric and, finally, the renown tombstone from the 4th century BC, the "Lion of Amphipolis", which was restored in 1938 and now graces the estuary of the Strimon river, the natural westward boundary of Kavala.

KAVALA: SOUND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A MODERN ECONOMY

The Overland Network

The existence of a sound infrastructure is one of the most important factors for the development of a vigorous economic life in the area of Kavala.

Land transport is based mainly on a network of well-conceived roads which are constantly being maintained and improved. This network branches out to all directions and reaches the most important economic centres in the rest of Northern Greece. It is connected to the main road arteries of the Balkans leading to the countries of Western Europe and to the Commonwealth of Independent States. At the same time, on an easterly direction, one can reach the Middle East, Caucasia and West Central Asia.

Beyond these main road arteries, a well-conceived national road system connects Kavala to the surrounding areas of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.

Not far from Kavala, in the town of Toxotes or the cities of Drama or Xanthi, one can find the national railway network, through which large volume goods can be transported. It is expected that soon the region's new port will be connected to the nation's railway network.

The Port

Historically, the city's port has been an important factor for the economic development of the area and, to this day, it continues to be the key to the region's commercial success.

Second only to the port of Thessaloniki, it is Northern Greece's largest and most significant port, servicing the transport of goods and persons arriving in or departing from the city. The port of Kavala services the broader geographical region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and links the city and the region to the rest of the world.

Beyond the commercial significance of the port and the fact that it is a key transfer point for travelers, the port is also one of the largest and most important fish piers in the Mediterranean where a huge volume of fish is traded. Finally, the port's harbour includes facilities for cruise vessels and yachts for travelers visiting the many beautiful sites in the Aegean during the summer months.

Very soon, and with the support of the European Union, an even deeper harbor and a larger, technologically more advanced port area will be available east of the town and outside of the historical center. The port, which is currently under construction, will be able to accommodate large quantities of goods and to store and transport cargo in various forms-containers, dry goods, solid and liquid fuels, etc. With its advanced technological equipment it will be one of the most important ports in the Mediterranean.

The Airport

The new airport, named Alexander the Great, services the entire region with its facilities. Thanks to its proximity to the town and the frequent public transportation which connects it to Kavala, and also to the fact that it is naturally protected

thereby allowing it to operate year-round, it is an economic mainstay of Kavala.

The airport services daily flights from Athens and frequent flights from abroad, mainly charters which, during the summer months, transport visitors from Western and Northern Europe to the area's beautiful sites.

Energy

Within the next few years the Industrial Zone of Kavala, and in fact the entire city, will be connected to a natural gas pipeline currently being developed for the entire nation. Heavy industry and consumers will use the natural gas alike in an effort to provide inexpensive and clean energy.

An International Presence

Transnational firms are well-represented in Kavala, exhibiting the area's appeal to investors who wish to use the city as a base for their entrepreneurial activity, for their European as well as international operations.

A City for Foreign Investors

Kavala is a small oasis within the broader geographical region for non-Greek residents who live and work in the town. It is easy to find residents who speak foreign languages, mainly English and German, thereby facilitating matters for the foreign resident who shops and enjoys leisure activities in Kavala. It is a fact that there are more Europeans and Americans living in Kavala than in any other provincial Greek town.

Telecommunications

Among the services available to the potential investor are the most advanced telecommunications networks in Northern Greece. The new digital lines provide access to national and international telecommunications networks. Also available in the city is cellular communication.

The Cost of Property

By international standards, the cost of land and housing in Kavala is at a very attractive level. Pricing is at a fraction of what it is in Athens or Thessaloniki, or Naples, Barcelona or Porto. The value of property, on the other hand, can be a positive incentive to the prospective investor.

KAVALA: INDUSTRY, CONSTANTLY ADAPTING TO NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Industrialization in Kavala began in the last quarter of the 19th century. The first industries of that era were in the field of tobacco processing, salted fish, foodstuff, leather and textile products. Industrialization continued to develop into the 20th century, at a very rapid pace. The strong international market for tobacco created capital markets, an accumulation of wealth, an internationalization of commercial activities, dynamic trading and further industrialization in other sectors. This phenomenon occurring in Kavala was the first of its kind to take place in Northern Greece at the time.

Soon afterwards, various other industries started to develop, all of which tapped into the area's comparative advantages. The food industry, which processed goods from the sea and from the agricultural land, developed at a very rapid pace.

Marble extraction became the reason for Kavala's being pushed into the limelight of international commerce once again (the first time being for the world renowned tobacco trade), with particular significance being placed on the quality standards of the finished products.

After the Second World War, industry in the area sought alternative forms of production. The mechanization of tobacco processing permitted a large percentage of the work force to seek other areas of employment while, at the same time, new investments were being made in the area. Kavala begot one of the largest fertilizer production plants in Europe. With the creation of an Industrial Zone, in close geographic proximity to the fertilizer industry, smaller but equally important industries began to develop such as plastics, light metal work, woodworking, furniture, etc.

The textiles and clothing industries began to develop just a few decades ago, but at a very rapid pace since foreign entrepreneurs invested heavily in the area, taking advantage of all the region's comparative advantages. Today, the area's ready-to-wear sector is the most important in Greece, receiving international recognition for its brand-name, high quality clothing produced by skilled workers and sold to fashion establishments in Europe and throughout the world.

The discovery of oil in the bay area, unique in Greece, put Kavala in the limelight once again. Its subsequent exploitation provided a significant boost to industrial development. Along with the new exploration and processing equipment that has been installed in the area have come new employment opportunities.

At the end of the 20th century, during a time of drastic technological changes, Kavala's industries find themselves in a strong position, thus able to face competition head on. This is due to many factors, among them the fact that industry has been in a constant state of adaptation to market needs by developing new designs, differentiating production and combining traditional industries with new production technologies. This flexibility exhibited by the industrial world over the years has allowed Kavala to develop, to respond dynamically to new forms of competition and to penetrate international markets.

KAVALA: COMMERCE, TOURISM AND OTHER SERVICES

The economic importance of Kavala as a business centre extends beyond its strict geographical boundaries and includes entire areas of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, islands in the Northern Aegean, as well as areas outside of the nation's northern borders such as the Mesta valley and the region of Smolian in Bulgaria - areas that have exhibited a deep commitment to economic cooperation with Kavala. This has resulted in Kavala being transformed into an important service centre for the region, servicing persons and companies alike. In fact, about 40% of Kavala's population is employed by the service sector.

Kavala's commercial sector extends into the old part of the town where one can find some of the most charming stores in the city. Along with more contemporary types of retail outlets such as shopping centres and supermarkets, the city's market offers a wide variety of Greek and imported items.

Kavala is also a financial centre for the broader geographical area. Because of the city's strategic location and business activity, most all Greek banks and insurance companies have offices in Kavala for regional representation. Large technical services, management consulting firms, architectural design companies, financial brokerage houses and branch offices for multinationals in the service sectors are all based in Kavala.

Kavala is also an important tourist location and has many hotels of various categories. The area has many interesting places to visit that are of historical, artistic and commercial significance. There are also many ways to enjoy leisure activities. A large number of tourists visit the beautiful and clean beaches in the area, since Kavala's shores are on a par with those of many vacation spots along the Mediterranean coast. In fact, it has much more beautiful, cleaner beaches than many exclusive resort areas that have developed in the Western Mediterranean. While in many areas the saturation point has been reached and tourism is already in decline, Kavala is as yet undiscovered. An aggressive campaign to develop a first class tourist season is under way. New investments are being sought since, as far as international standards are concerned, Kavala is still developing in terms of tourism.

KAVALA: ART AND LIFE

Kavala's centuries of history provide ample inspiration for artistic expression and cultural life. The city indeed has much to offer in terms of art. Ancient Greek treasures are displayed in the Archeological Museum. A mere walk along the via Egnatia, the Roman road built 2.000 years ago, can stir emotions deeply. A visit to a Byzantine castle from the Middle Ages or to the Muslim labyrinth-like structures can challenge sensibilities. A walk through upward sloping narrow passages can offer a magnificent view of Macedonian architecture and neoclassical structures. The large tobacco warehouses from the beginning of the century are being renovated and turned into art galleries. The Municipal Folk Art Museum is yet another gem, both for the renovated building structure itself, and also for the lovely displays. Along the coastline of the city one has the opportunity to observe the ancient art of fishing as contemporary mariners take care of their nets. The entire city is a museum with endowments from history and nature.

The city has a rich cultural life. In the Greek arts and letters there are many writers and poets that have lived in and were inspired by Kavala. A series of artistic and cultural events such as theatre productions, ballet performances and concerts are organized throughout the year. During the summer, in the ancient theatre of Philippi, one has the opportunity to enjoy ancient tragedies and comedies in the exact same marble stone seats where audiences sat almost 25 centuries ago! Art symposia, poetry conferences, concerts, exhibitions, lectures and a variety of other events are always open to residents and visitors alike.

Finally, besides the arts, Kavala offers its dwellers, visitors, tourists and the new investor a qualitative and calm way of life. The city has much to offer those who chose it as their home such as: safety, cleanliness, facility in getting from one's place of residence to one's place of work, comfortable work conditions, pleasant new residential neighbourhoods, seafront suburbs, natural beauty, the infiniteness of the sea as viewed by almost every window in the amphitheatrically built town, a good climate with fine weather conditions and smooth changes between seasons, a rich variety of fresh

foodstuff (especially fish), as well as many other positive features. For these reasons, one can observe an increase in the general population in recent years whereby many former residents who had moved abroad or to large urban centres in Greece are returning to their place of origin.