



Athens, 27 June 2018

IAO Declaration on its 25th anniversary

We, members of delegations of the parliaments participating in the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O) or groups of MPs or individual parliamentarians, having taken part in the 25th anniversary annual General Assembly held in the Greek Parliament, from 25 to 27 June of 2018 on the specific subject: "*Parliamentary Democracy and Christian values: 25 Years of Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O)*",

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the I.A.O, the only international interparliamentary institution that aims to promote the role of Orthodoxy and Christian values in the international field, we salute every citizen, every Orthodox Christian, the world over, as well as every fellow parliamentarian.

Remaining true to the principles and values of the statutory texts and declarations adopted since the First Meeting in Ormylia in 1993 to date, which we consider to be of relevance,

Stressing the hitherto considerable promotion of the role of the Orthodox Christian Tradition in international affairs and the need for more substantive and dynamic involvement of the I.A.O in the international socio-economic developments and considering the importance of international cooperation,

Having ascertained that in recent years and mainly because of the economic and general crisis, the rights of workers and socially vulnerable groups are being violated and human values are being systematically ignored,

Recognizing the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as places for encounter of cultures and collaboration for the welfare of their peoples,



Endorsing the Declaration of the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in St. Petersburg "On Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue", as well as the points of the Declaration in Moscow of the International Forum "Development of parliamentarism", concerning the need of opening channels of international cooperation in order to deescalate confrontation and limit conflicts, strengthen cooperation to eliminate the emerging threats against world peace,

Denouncing the ongoing occupation of parts of Cyprus and Palestine and the blood shedding events in the broader area of the Middle East,

Supporting the efforts of the Churches for unity and condemning the schisms and persecutions in the area of their canonical service (diakonia)

Contemplating the future of the Organization with optimism and faith,

We declare that the I.A.O, in its 25-year journey:

Highlights its Statutory objectives, i.e independent Parliamentarism and the Orthodox Christian Tradition, makes parliamentary discourse and interparliamentary dialogue meaningful and effective, consolidates the principles and values of international cooperation and advocates the protection and preservation of the world's cultural heritage and the religious and cultural identity of the peoples,

Strengthens cooperation among parliaments of the countries where the three monotheistic religions prevail (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) and promotes interfaith dialogue and cultural diversity as elements sine qua non for a peaceful and harmonious coexistence of all peoples based on mutual understanding and respect for the difference of the other,



Welcomes, in particular, the fruitful cooperation with the Interparliamentary Union, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Interparliamentary Assembly of C.I.S. (Commonwealth of Independent States) and the Pan-African Parliament, and hopes for a fruitful cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN),

Expresses its concern over the rise of migrant and refugee flows caused, inter alia, by wars and poverty, and stresses the need for international cooperation in order to address the movement of populations in compliance with international law and eliminate its root causes

Endorses the commonly accepted principles, the rules of international law and democratic legitimacy as well as the declarations addressed to strengthening spiritual-moral and cultural values. Contributes in containing any attempt to reemergence of Nazism and eliminating phenomena of extremism, racial, national and religious intolerance, while advocating the safeguarding of compatibility between national law and the international imperatives for protection of human rights and the rights of religious minorities,

Considers the practice of obstructing and restricting any sort of parliamentary activity as unacceptable, undermining the foundations of interparliamentary cooperation and contrary to the rules of international law and the spirit of parliamentarism,

Follows with particular interest the advance of modern technology and welcomes its positive effects on the facilitation of people's lives. In parallel, it expresses its concern over the uncontrollable spread of artificial intelligence and robotics, as well as the general negative consequences they may have on the environment and the freedom of expression and personality, especially of young people,



Strives for the progressive expansion of independent parliamentary representation and for a more direct and free, participatory and coherent democratic society, while at the same time consolidating dialogue and consultation at the heart of its effort to raise public awareness of issues relating to the role of Orthodox Tradition on the international stage, supporting any effort of the Christian Churches to forge an expression of the single Orthodox Tradition,

Rejects all expression of fanaticism and extreme dogmatism in regard to religious faith and contributes in releasing critical thinking, which is necessary for contemporary people who are overwhelmed by uncontrollable and unverifiable information,

Opposes any speech or/and act that, one way or another, incite any terrorist activity, and maintains its position on the establishment of an International Anti-Terrorism Coalition, under the auspices of the UN, with a view of preventing terrorism and extremism.

Today, here in Athens, on the tribune of Paul, Apostle of the nations, on the hill of Pnyx and under the shadow of the Acropolis, we declare our intention to further engage in international affairs and to further promote forms of international cooperation and partnerships, to make universally understandable the importance of the values of Christianity, especially Orthodoxy, in the consolidation of Democracy and Peace throughout the Planet.