



## DECLARATION

We, the undersigning this declaration, having attended the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary annual General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) convened in the Hellenic Parliament from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 on the subject: “**Parliamentary Democracy – Christianity – Orthodoxy: values and concepts**”, address cordially every citizen, every Orthodox Christian, throughout the world, as well as every colleague MP of Orthodox religion.

Furthermore, we feel the need to underline the following:

- The objectives stated in the I.A.O. statutory texts of 1994 and 1995, in Athens and Moscow, as supplemented by decisions of the annual General Assemblies, always remain topical and make a decisive contribution in religious mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among peoples, as well as in cooperation among their churches and religious expressions in general.
- I.A.O.’s operation is evidently essential and beneficial for the worldwide parliamentary reality, supportive of democracy, mutual understanding and rapprochement among parliamentarians from across the world. Cooperation Agreements concluded with Parliaments and MPs of other religions become useful and essential in many different aspects, the same as its relations to the Pan-African Parliament, the C.I.S. Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, as well as the member-states of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (P.U.I.C.)

Through its 20-year action, I.A.O:

Consolidates its presence as an interparliamentary organization that promotes noble spiritual values through democratic institutions,

Achieves the rapprochement among all parliamentary – political figures of Christian Orthodox religion worldwide, by creating a permanent structure of communication and information, and enabling the political world to share the problems of the Orthodox,

Brings to the forefront the unity in diversity of Orthodox Christians, as the main pillar in the field of Education and Culture, bypassing prejudice related to national or partisan identity.

Highlights the principles and values of Christianity and Democracy, stressing our obligations to preserve and further promote these values, people's rights, equality, the right to work and learning, the protection of human life and the environment.

Continues building peaceful and creative contacts, as well as relations with all Churches, by sharing their problems. The conferences and meetings organized by I.A.O., as well as its annual General Assemblies, have discussed contemporary opinions and views on a series of issues that are critical and essential for parliamentarism, the legislative work performed by parliaments, but also for the entire society. I.A.O. has taken frank and courageous views on the problems that concern contemporary men and their daily life.

Today, here in Athens, from the podium of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Nations, on the hill of Pnyx under the shadow of Acropolis, we declare our solidarity to any person persecuted or suffering because of their religious views and beliefs throughout the planet. Here, recalling Saint Paul the Apostle to the Nations, we profess and share the values he had preached, which have now been universally acknowledged.

We also declare, amidst the crisis, the need for society and state institutions to stand by the side of every suffering person, showing solidarity to the peoples and regions of the earth that are plagued by poverty, starvation and natural disasters.

Athens, 29 June 2013