



Athens, 28 May 2015

Announcement - Statement on the ancient town of Palmyra at risk of destruction

The civilized world is following with horror and abhorrence the events in Palmyra.

Massacres of innocent citizens, enslavement of elderly people and children, plundering of cities make up the scene of war, destruction and suffering, while, at the same time, the systematic destruction of historical monuments and archeological sites in the Middle East in the name of religion is a major loss, which will be adversely affecting local societies for ever.

While the ancient town of Palmyra is currently threatened by destruction, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has been the cross-roads of several cultures, with the art and architectural blend of Greek, Roman and Persian influences, we are frustrated to see the international community being unable or refusing to intervene in order to stop the looming tragedy.

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.):

- Adds its voice to every suffering citizen and addresses an international appeal to all bodies expressing social interests to request immediate cessation of cultural crimes and persecutions in Syria and Iraq. Organizations must, at last, be sensitized in terms of managing the risk of destructions and assume responsibility for the protection of cultural heritage, both for its intrinsic value and because of its role in preserving the identity of local communities.
- Asks for cessation of migration and displacement of big parts of the area's population who are forced to abandon their ancestral homes and become refugees
- Expresses its solidarity to all citizens of any faith, Christians or Muslims, who are persecuted, imprisoned, exiled and led to despair.