



Thessaloniki, 4 – 8 July 2016

23rd General Assembly of I.A.O.

Ματv Subject: «**Fundamental Global Changes– Christian Orthodox Perspective**»

RESOLUTION – CONCLUSIONS

The 23rd General Assembly of the “Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy” (I.A.O) that convened in Thessaloniki from July 4 until July 8 on the central subject «Fundamental Global Changes – Christian Orthodox Perspective»:

- Addresses warmly and cordially every citizen of the world and extends its members’ wishes for a better future for mankind.
- From a political perspective, stands by the side of every person who feels weak and powerless in the face of the global political situation, every refugee, every unemployed person, every citizen on earth who is in need, persecuted or in mental and physical suffering. Every free person who seeks justice and meritocracy in his life, every jobless young person struggling for his future.
- Declares that, in relation to the acute European problems and the crisis of the European idea that has entered an advanced and visible stage, it believes that a strong Europe is a common cause for all of us. The rise of radical euroscepticism and anti-European trends in several European Union member-states evidences an economic and political crisis in European Democracy. Lately, we have been experiencing the European problems more acutely. While we had the sense that implementation of free movement of persons, goods and capital within the EU has been, and still is, a powerful vehicle for peace, prosperity and national cohesion, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, many citizens feel that both their personal freedom and their security are threatened. It is exactly for this reason that this fear needs to be responded to, by enhancing the security policies. Given the crisis in democratic legitimization, this actually means creating a common vision for the future of European integration. A community of citizens is not just about living in compliance with the law and the principles of economy. It is principally about living with the sense of belonging in a political community as a place they have chosen.



As a response to this crisis, the I.A.O. invites peoples to safeguard and show determination for combating discrimination among individuals and all forms of violence, even religious one. We need to learn from the past. The I.A.O. invites all the Orthodox to reinforce and prove their spiritual unity, which characterizes our religious identity and faith. Our cultural struggle is a fight for the values and principles, for defending traditional ethics and identity.

The I.A.O. is determined to contribute in every possible way to the research and scientific processes conducted by scientists in Europe in order to study and display sustainable policies of economic growth.

The aftermath of the crisis can only be addressed by strengthening the competitiveness of economy and, in parallel, supporting the poorer classes.

Egalitarianism and distribution of justice are institutional manifestations that need to be enhanced. Simple citizens must regain their lost trust in every democratic and participative institution.

The key founding principles of the Union must urgently revive and define the relations among member-states, as well as the functioning of institutions.

We must not forget that Europe is a shell of institutions, an excipient whose active substance are the policies followed.

We need a European plan with specific and direct interventions that will improve citizens' life, inspire peoples and reinforce their faith in the European structures and the vision of United Europe, where politics will regain precedence over the technocrats, where its peoples will have the first say. With a pivotal role in the exchange of ideas, the control of the state, as well as in the reactivation of public dialogue.

Furthermore, we have to make it clear to working people that Europe is able and is indeed trying to improve their life, and it is a warranty of peace, prosperity and Democracy. The challenges of today's world are too big to be addressed by individual states. Only by joining forces can Europe safeguard its peoples' interests in the current worldwide competition. The idea of European integration has been and is still an idea of peace, open horizons and dialogue. So, let us give more and better opportunities to the youth. We owe it to them. Let us contribute in their effort to develop their creativity, let us help them to dream of a better world. For this Europe, it is worth continuing to fight and struggle for our common future.



Moreover, the 23rd General Assembly of the I.A.O.:

- Expresses its concern over the ongoing destruction of the Christian monuments in the East and elsewhere. It is particularly concerned over the consequences altering the character of the church of Aghia Sophia in Istanbul, as a monument of world cultural heritage and of high symbolic value for the Christian world. It invites the general secretariat of UNESCO to take all necessary measures for the protection of Aghia Sophia, and the Government of Turkey to abstain from supporting such acts, respecting its international obligations.
- Appeals for termination of the Israeli occupation and recognition of the Palestinian state at the borders of 1967 with eastern Jerusalem as its capital, as the only way towards the implementation of the two-state solution and for permanent peace among all peoples of the region. To provide all means and assistance to allow for the existence of Christian communities in their homelands in Eastern Mediterranean, especially in Syria, Iraq and Palestine.
- Reaffirms its support to the struggle of the Cypriot people for freedom and justice. The IAO invites Turkey also to respect the relevant UN resolutions, terminating the occupation and settlements. It also invites this country to contribute substantially in finding a fair and sustainable solution, based on the principles of international and European law. In parallel, it invites the international community to exert substantial pressure on Turkey to respect the human rights of all Cypriots, including the religious and worship rights and freedoms of Greek-Cypriots who have been entrapped or become refugees, as well as to stop destroying the cultural and religious heritage in the Turkey-occupied part of Cyprus.
- Is concerned over the unprecedented deterioration of the situation along the contact line between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh. The night of the 1st of April 2016, the army of Azerbaijan commenced large-scale hostilities. The use of large quantities of heavy equipment, shootings against civilians, evidence the short-sighted efforts to resolve the issue by military means. We invite the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk group to influence in a concrete and proper manner the situation created, by applying all the interception mechanisms to prevent further escalation of the tension and steps destabilizing the region.