



Rome, 25 – 30 June 2017

## 24<sup>TH</sup> I.A.O. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Main subject «The Christian understanding of global crisis and ways to overcome it»

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) was realized in Rome with the participation of delegations from twenty five Parliaments and groups of parliamentarians from different countries.

The works of the General Assembly were held at the Italian Parliament following the initiative of Mr. Edoardo Patriarca, Member of the Italian Parliament.

The opening of the General Assembly was declared by the Senator Mr. Lucio Malan, representative of the President of the Italian Senate Mr. Pietro Grasso.

Mr. Lefteris Christoforou, Member of the European Parliament, conveyed greeting message of the Vice President of the European Parliament Mr. David-Maria Sassoli

Greeting message on behalf of the Chairman of the Russian State Duma Mr. Vyacheslav Volodin was read by the Deputy Chairperson of the Russian State Duma Ms. Irina Yarovaya, greeting message of the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament Mr. Nikolaos Voutsis was read by Mr. Stavros Arachovitis, Member of the Hellenic Parliament and greeting message of His Holiness Pope Francis was read by Bishop Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity

The Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Mozambique Ms. Veronica Natanael Macam Dhlovo read greeting message of the President of the Pan-African Parliament Mr. Roger Nkodo Dang, while Ms. Catherine Constantinides, Goodwill Ambassador for the Environment, South Africa addressed the General Assembly.

Greeting messages were sent by: His All Holiness The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of



Alexandria and all Africa, His Holiness The Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Beatitude Daniel Patriarch of Romania.

Representatives of international organisations participated at the works of the General Assembly, ie. the World Council of Churches Rev. Fr. Daniel Buda, PABSEC Secretary General Mr. Asaf Hajiyev, as well as the President of the “Movement for Politics & Policy for Unity (MppU)” Ms. Letizia de Torre.

Finally, Mr. Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner on Education, Culture and Youth Sports participated and addressed the works of the General Assembly.

Special guests – speakers on the main subject:

- Ms. Elisabetta Gardini, Member of the European Parliament, Member of the EPP Group on Intercultural and Religious dialogue in the EP
- Dr. Cesare Zucconi, Secretary General of the Community of St. Egidio
- Mr. Sergio Valzania, Writer, Journalist with subject: “*Political representation and respect for human beings*”
- Mr. Damien Kattar, Former Minister of Finance of Le
- Prof. Alberto Melloni, Foundation for Religious Studies, Bologna (FSCIRE) with subject: “The Second Mile: Churches’ Communion and/or Interreligious Dialogue among religions”
- Mr. Ioannis Voulgarakis, Political Scientist, University of Crete, with subject: “The economic crisis in Greece and Refugee solidarity. The role of state and church in supporting the weak”
- Mr. Imre Vejkey, Member of the Parliament of Hungary



The Members of the I.A.O. visited the Byzantine Holy Monastery of St. Nilus at Grotta Ferrata, district of Rome, where in the presence of the

Father Superior, the Mayor and local authorities, they participated at a welcoming ceremony in honour of the members of the General

Assembly, they were guided through the premises of the Monastery and its Library.

*The Exarchic Monastery of Santa Maria in Grottaferrata, also known as the Greek Abbey of Saint Nilus, was founded in 1004 by a group of monks from Calabria led by St. Nilus of Rossano, a charismatic leader and a very important figure of his time. When St. Nilus, the monks' spiritual father, died shortly after founding the Abbey, St. Bartholomew the Younger, his favourite disciple and cofounder of the monastery, assumed their leadership. The monks who follow the teachings of St. Nilus and St. Bartholomew still live and work within the walls of this ancient Abbey. They are Catholics of the Byzantine-Greek rite and belong to the Order of Basilian Monks, established by the Catholic Church for all Byzantine-rite monasteries in Italy. Today, Grottaferrata is the last of the many Byzantine-Greek monasteries that dotted Sicily, southern Italy and Rome itself in the Middle Ages. It is also unique in that, having been founded fifty years before the Great Schism that divided Catholics and Orthodox, it remained in communion with the Church of Rome while preserving the Byzantine rite and monastic tradition of its founders.*

A delegation of the I.A.O. International Secretariat realized a short visit to the seat of the Focolari Movement and had a meeting with the President of the Movement Ms. Maria Voce

The members of the General Assembly had the chance to attend the 'Vespers' ceremony at the Basilica of Santa Maria - St. Egidio Community (Trastevere) and a relevant delegation had a meeting with representatives of the Community.

Finally, the members of the General Assembly attended the Divine Liturgy at the Vatican (St. Peter's Square) on Thursday, 29 June, for the celebration feast of Apostles Peter and Paul, patron saints of Rome, while they had the opportunity to exchange best wishes and festive greetings to His Holiness on Wednesday, 28 June.