



August 29, 2020

Greeting message of the I.A.O. Secretary General and Member of the Hellenic Parliament Dr Andreas Michailidis to the participants and guests of the IV philanthropic festival of the Christian culture "*Russia-Greece: together through the centuries*"

Dear participants and guests of the Festival,,

With great pleasure and honor I greet today from the position of the Secretary General of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, the IV philanthropic festival of Christian culture "*Russia-Greece: together through the centuries*" dedicated to the celebration of the friendly relations between Greece and Russia. It is an institution, which is organized annually with joint festivity events, referring to the millennial friendship that unites both peoples.

When referring to the relations between Greece and Russia we should not forget that these two countries have common historical origins, common cultural tradition, common religious feeling and in many cases a solidarity course in the depths of the centuries.

Already from the Hellenistic period, but in general during the Byzantine Empire, both nations were engaged in building friendships and alliances, as well as in the conclusion of close commercial and cultural relations. The strong presence of the Greek element on the shores of Russia to the Black Sea is also demonstrated by the Greek names given to the riparian cities, namely the cities of Feodosia, Evpatoria, and Sevastopol. But also in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, a significant portion of officers and scientists from Russia travelled to Greece, and they remarked unique progress. In addition, the role of Imperial Russia in the liberation of Greece from the Turkish yoke was also of great importance.

After all, we should not forget that the Christianity in Russia was spread by the Byzantine Empire, while the wave of Slavic Christianization of the 10th century, and the creation of the Slavic alphabet by Saints Cyril and Methodius upgraded the relations of both nations and offered the opportunity to build a common fraternal path based on the orthodox Christian tradition.



I would like also to turn your attention to the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque by the Turkish authorities a few days ago, which is a historical regression and is interpreted as “neo-Ottoman barbarism”.

With these words I wish to close my short greeting message with warm thanks and wishes that the results of the annual Festival be once again fruitful for the deepening of the Greek-Russian cooperation.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
The Secretary General

Dr Andreas Michailidis
Member of the Hellenic Parliament