



Hellenic Parliament  
MAXIMOS CHARAKOPOULOS  
Member of Parliament for Larissa-NEW DEMOCRACY

Chania, July 22, 2021

**Speech by the I.A.O. Secretary General Dr. Maximos Charakopoulos  
Member of the Hellenic Parliament with Topic:  
“The world’s future, the future of Europe after the pandemic”.**

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Members,

I would like, once again, from the podium of the General Assembly, to welcome you to Greece and Crete. We managed in a very difficult coincidence, which has been caused for more than a year and a half by the pandemic of COVID-19, to be close to this hospitable and beautiful Greek island with a rich history.

We would certainly like the situation to be more favorable. Wishing we have left behind us the nightmare of the pandemic, the sanitary measures of restraint and protection, the masks, and the precautions. We wish we had already entered the post-COVID era. We wish we could use optimism that always comes to people at the end of a war, to carve the plans of tomorrow.

To look at the new horizons that we could travel with the confidence of victory over an enemy which, although invisible to our eyes, managed to cause millions of victims and undermine our normal lives, our daily lives, our social relationships, our financial transactions.

Unfortunately, we cannot feel that way, at least not yet. Even though the global vaccination program may have been in full progress for many months, this famous wall of immunity that will protect the health of citizens and societies may gradually rise, deaths and hospitalizations may have been reduced, but the threat is still present.

The virus continues to infect our fellow human beings, patients continue to be admitted to hospitals, and fear continues to oppress us.



It is obvious that the wall we created is still imperfect, with flaws. And these flaws are the vaccination deniers, who are either victims of an unbridled conspiracy of theories that permeate social media, or of an inmost and irrational fear.

In any case, the result is alarming, and in conjunction with the virus mutations, they postpone the long-awaited exit from the tunnel of this trial, multiplying its negative consequences.

But what can our future be as a Europe after this crisis? What are the horizons that open up before us, that we, as European citizens can we turn to?

And what can be the proposals for this common future by us parliamentarians who are Orthodox in religion, with the common cultural background defined by the common religious faith, the common traditions, the common, to use a nice expression, tacit agreements, the common codes of understanding between us?

In order to contribute to the debate that will take place these days and as food for thought, I will refer to a few points, which lie both in the current situation and in the general consideration on the future of Europe.

I begin with the wise teachings that the pandemic leaves us and which we must assimilate and transform our lives with actions. In order for humanity to face the threat of death from this tiny enemy, it required coordination and had to act jointly. It had significant successes, using actions to the greatest extent.

Interdependence is obvious, as if black holes remain on the planet, the entire planet is in danger. And this interdependence leads fatally to solidarity with our fellow human being, to other peoples and to other states that need help according the scriptural passage “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:37-39).

The moral proposal, however, in order to be consolidated in European societies, must not only remain at the level of external rules, but become an inner experience. The European area, however, has been affected for decades by an attempt by some circles to detach from its culture, the basic pillars of its existence, without which it will cease to be European and will probably cease to be a distinct culture.

I am referring, of course, to the Christian tradition, which in combination with the ancient one, classical literature and Roman law shaped the European culture, and the European human being. This attempt to destroy the roots of Europeanism will cause the European tree to wither away along with its flowers.

It is a known fact that the issue of Europe’s Christian identity was also raised during the drafting of the European Constitution in 2005, but some secular European countries in Western Europe raised objections and the reference to European Christian roots was put on the back burner.



The I.A.O. considers that the opportunity that was lost at that time, is given anew to map the Christian coordinates of Europe again in a verbal way, but also in practice. Obsessive ideas about the European future have prevailed to some people. Replacing the vision of communist society, from which the Christian tradition was also ostracized, and which ultimately led to tragedies in the eastern European part, today there is talk of an unclear multicultural vision.

A vision in which pure European characteristics must recede, if not disappear, in order to achieve the coexistence of people of different cultural origin, without any disposition to integrate into the European way of life.

We are already monitoring the mismatch of these expectations. Modern babels often appear where these logics have prevailed, sometimes transformed into focal points of intolerance, fanaticism and violence, which in turn feed totalitarian ideologies, which we hoped had been erased from European history forever.

Yes, Europe cannot be an enclosed continent – after all, that would be a utopia in the age of globalization – but it cannot be unfortified, much less subjugate the flag of its values, cancel its identity in the name of coexistence and of an unclear multiculturalism.

As the well-known philosopher Francis Fukuyama recently highlighted in an interview in an Athenian newspaper: “Europeans must not fool themselves that they can assimilate the millions of Africans who migrate to Europe. It is not politically realistic.”

He adds, “If you want to have open borders within Schengen, you have to have secure external borders. Europe does not have them.”

Also important are two points that will determine not only the future of Europe, but of the whole world: the protection of the environment and the relationship of man with technology.

Regarding the first, it is now clear that if man does not respect every form of life, if he or she does not stop working greedily and thoughtlessly destroying – for the sole purpose of profit – the environment, then the environment itself will take revenge.

As for the omnipotence of technology that has undoubtedly made our lives easier, we must eliminate the dangers arising from its use, without moral and humanitarian principles.

Finally, I would like to point out the threat of intra-European division, a remake of the Cold War that has plagued our continent for decades. The resurgence of old contradictions and the emergence of new ones, which may even reach to a military confrontation, is unacceptable for the European area in the 21st century.

ΔΙΑΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΕΥΤΙΚΗ  
ΣΥΝΕΛΕΥΣΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑΣ  
ΔΙΕΘΝΗΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΑ  
МЕЖПАРЛАМЕНТСКАЯ  
АССАМБЛЕЯ ПРАВОСЛАВИЯ  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СЕКРЕТАРИАТ



INTERPARLIAMENTARY  
ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY  
INTERNATIONAL SECRETERAT  
ASSEMBLÉE INTERPARLEMENTAIRE  
DE L'ORTHODOXIE  
SECRETARIAT INTERNATIONAL

Instead, turning to the teachings of the fathers of the United Europe, such as General de Gaulle, chancellor Adenauer and others, including Constantine Karamanlis, a genuine European politician, we must choose unity.

The vision of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, means a strong Europe, an independent Europe, a prosperous Europe for its peoples and nations, in which each will offer its own spiritual heritage, its own historical imprint, its own identity, to eventually achieve a creative and hopeful synthesis.

We want to believe that the I.A.O. also contributes towards this direction working consistently and decisively for 28 whole years, aspiring to contribute to the best of its ability, to this united, democratic, humanitarian Europe that we envision.

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Members,

We look forward with great interest to submit your views, your proposals, your concerns and all together to achieve the best synthesis of political initiatives that we will try to implement in the near future.

Thank you for your attention.