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Suffering

Louis A. Palivos



do good things happen to bad people? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do little children suffer horrific diseases? Why do accidents cause suffering to good and bad people? Why are some people able to have spontaneous remission? Why are some people gifted with a miracle of healing? Why are some people gifted with good health? Why is there any suffering? Why is there death for humans and for animals? Do parents cause suffering? Do governments cause suffering? Does the human soul suffer; because, of mental illness, physical disease or spiritual entities? Does evil exist? Does Satan cause suffering? Does God cause suffering? Do we trust in ourselves, science and/or God?

Holy Scripture

He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Is. 53:3

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Gen. 50:20

Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Job 1:10-12

Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. II Cor . 12:7-10 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. I Pet. 4:1-19.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28

Suffering and evil entered the world not because God's will it but because man is responsible for sin and suffering. Holy Scripture clearly states that through man and through sin, death came into the world. Human and animal DNA were affected at least twice: because of the disobedience of Adam and

[\(Continued p. 2\)](#)

Mitsotakis: Shanghai expo 'excellent opportunity to showcase Greece-China ties'



The second China International Import Expo (CIIE) is an excellent opportunity to showcase the strong Greece-China relationship despite future global uncertainties, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in an interview.

The Greek leader, whose country is one of the guest countries honored at this year's expo, said he will be in Shanghai on November 2-5, with a business delegation of 68 companies representing the most dynamic sectors of the Greek economy. Greece's influence throughout the centuries in the Western world in arts, science and politics has been well documented. Today Greece is recognized worldwide as a welcoming country that inspires visitors by sharing its culture, wisdom and vision, Mitsotakis said.

"The Greek 'spirit of sharing' expresses the country's readiness to bridge the geographical distance between Greece and China by building long-term relationships, at a time when Greece is restoring its position on the global business map as an extrovert country, open to trade and investment," he said. Mitsotakis said Greece and China have established a powerful and enduring friendship based on mutual respect for each other's cultural legacies, as well as a strong trade and economic relationship. The global supply chains flow through Greece and China, and both countries depend on a robust and expanding world trade, he added.

"The sectors for which we would like to see further improvement in our co-operation with China include the agricultural sector, investment in transport and infrastructure, the maritime sector, energy, telecommunications, innovation, research and technology and of course tourism," he said when asked about Greece's expectations for the forthcoming expo. The second CIIE runs from November 5 to November 10 in Shanghai with a larger scale than the first one. Over 500,000 buyers and visitors from home and abroad are expected at the expo, according to China's Ministry of Commerce. Greece-China relations are now at their highest point ever and continue to develop, Mitsotakis said, adding that Greece will continue to intensify political exchanges at the highest level, while preserving the growing momentum of bilateral relations in all fields of cooperation. Greece looks forward to further promoting the two countries' relationship through events like the Ancient Civilizations Forum, which the two countries jointly launched in 2017, he said.

"I want to reassure you that my government is committed to creating an enabling, business friendly environment for all investors, regardless of whether they are domestic or foreign. Chinese investors are welcome in Greece, and we will keep working on improving an already favorable environment," he underlined. The Greek prime minister also congratulated the People's Republic of China on the 70th anniversary of its founding and its important achievements, saying the country has risen again and "claimed its pivotal role in the international system" within the 70 years.

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THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

Suffering

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Eve, Gen. Ch. 3, and of the mixing of humans and animals with fallen angels, Gen. Ch 6. Thus, sin affected humanity and nature. Man voluntarily sinned and suffered the consequences for sinning. The ultimate act of God was His creation of man and woman and to give them free will for eternity. Free will to love God or free will to reject God. If humans did not have free will, then they would be a programmed robot or a machine.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given glimpses to understand suffering; because, He suffered to the end. St. Paul suffered to the end. Righteous Job suffered. St. Peter suffered to the end. Adam and Eve suffered.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of two incidents that gave glimpses of suffering and repentance. Pontius Pilate had ordered the killing of some Galileans who were offering sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple. Jesus Christ stated that the Galileans were sinners who suffered. Jesus Christ also spoke about another incident. The Tower of Siloam had fallen and killed 18 people. Again, the Lord Jesus Christ stated these 18 were sinners who had suffered like the Galileans. Then he stated “unless you repent you will likewise perish.” Lk. 13:15. Therefore, evil and suffering are part of life but humans have the option to repent.

For the Lord Jesus Christ and for the Apostles suffering was part and parcel of everyday life. Clearly, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, God’s will was for men and women to repent. Even in the face of human suffering, God does not wish for not even one person to perish. The cry is heard over and over in both the Old Testament and New Testament, “Turn from your evil ways.” Ez. 33:11 and for “everyone to come to repentance.” II Peter 3:9. Thus, God sends no one to hell. God sends no one to Heaven. Man and woman choose their final destination.

Through the revealed truth in Holy Scripture, humanity knows it is not alone. There is an enemy. The enemy is revealed as a Serpent. Gen. Ch 3. The Serpent deceived Eve by calling God a liar that if she eats of the fruit, “she will not surely die.” Gen. 3:4. Later the Prophet Isaiah is revealed “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning.” Is. 14:12. Further, the Prophet Ezekiel is revealed that Satan was “the seal of perfection full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.” Ez. 28.12. “You were the anointed cherub who covers.” Ez. 28:14. “You were perfect, till iniquity was found in you.” Ez. 28.15. Clearly, something went terribly wrong! Clearly, free will was exercised toward iniquity!

God made Satan the most beautiful of all His creation. Satan had free will and for eternity. Satan rebelled against God and he set the pattern for humanity. Does humanity exercise free will toward obedience or toward iniquity?

Believers are revealed that Satan has limited power. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Jam. 4:7. What about unbelievers who invite the devil and his demons into their lives? May Almighty God have mercy on them, the lost. May our Lord Jesus Christ “help those who are being tempted,” Heb 2:18, are suffering, and either intentionally or unintentionally are worshipping demons.

Greek Philosopher

The Greek Philosopher Epicurus, 341-270 B. C. quoted by the Philosopher Lactantius, 260-340 A.D., is supposed to have written that:

God either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or he is able and

unwilling; or he is either willing nor able, or he is both willing and able. If he is willing and is unable, he is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if he is able and unwilling he is envious, which is equally at variance with God; if he is neither willing nor able he is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if he is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? Or why does he not remove them?¹

Both Epicurus and Lactantius seem to question whether God is Almighty? Both seem to question if God can destroy evil.

Evil and suffering are extremely difficult issues to wrap our minds around philosophically but thank be to God that humanity has been revealed, in part, some guidance in the Holy Scripture and in Holy Tradition. An Orthodox recent Saint, St .Paisios, stated, “the blows of life’s trials are essential for the salvation of the soul, for the soul is refined through them.”² Holy Fathers and Mothers suffered so that grace may abound! I Cor. 1:5.

The Lord Jesus Christ suffered, St. Paul suffered, St. Peter suffered and millions of Believers in history have suffered. Thousands are suffering today. The hope is that, “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devils work”. Jn. 3.8. Until the Second Coming, humanity will continue to have sickness, suffering, toil, accidents, disastrous, and pain. Contrary to what is being pushed today by “wise men” “neo-Christians”, the wellness and prosperity Gospel, both Scripture and Holy Fathers and Mothers quite clearly teach that as we approach the Second Coming, “life on earth will move more and more away from the Law of God and in respect to morality men will fall lower and lower.”³ A father or mother who watch their child doing his/her will in disobedience, must hope for their child’s return to righteousness. Likewise, our Heavenly Father must agonize for humanity to return to righteousness by repenting. In moving forward, in hope and in faith Believers must put their trust in Jesus Christ. Passengers must put their trust on the pilot on an airplane going through turbulence. Believers must cope and like St. Paul, come to a realization that His grace is sufficient to overcome. II Cor. 12:9. Believers who suffer must cope, pray and ask others for their prayers which may heal them. It is extremely hard to live faith in adversity, but Believers must hold on to hope and to faith so as to inherit what is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” I Cor. 2:9

Conclusion

Here is an imperfect summary for suffering:

1. Free will allows the possibilities of evil and suffering.
 2. Evil and suffering can be related to man’s choices.
 3. Follow-up with doctors and science; because, even Jesus Christ stated that the sick should visit a physician. Matt. 9:12.
 4. God allows some judgment; because, behind suffering may be hidden blessings.
 5. God allows Satan limited power to cause suffering.
 6. Some pain is a good defensive mechanism.
 7. Some suffering is good for the soul’s character and the striving toward Theosis.
 8. The Lord Jesus Christ has provided the way of escape for man by His suffering and death on the cross but men must labor and struggle, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” Jn.16:33.
- In the end, there are two kinds of people, those who say to God “your will be done” or those to who God says “your will be done.” Is sin and suffering explained by Darwin’s idea that the fittest survive? In suffering trust God and release it to the Lord Jesus.

* Kevin Carter was conflicted after taking this photograph and ended his life.

1. Dr. Ed Murphy, *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., Nashville, Tenn., 1992.
2. Pemptousia, “Why pain and suffering,” June 28, 2017.
3. Archbishop Averky Taushev and Father Seraphim Rose, *The Apocalypse, in the Teachings of Ancient Christianity*, St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1995.

Bond rally scares some traders away

The milestone reached by Greek bonds on Thursday, with their yields dropping below those of Italy, appeared to scare traders away, with some firms warning that it was too much.

The result of this was a strong increase in Greek yields on Friday, as they climbed to 1.37 percentage points from Thursday’s 1.21 percentage points, with the Greek-Italian spread reverting to positive territory.

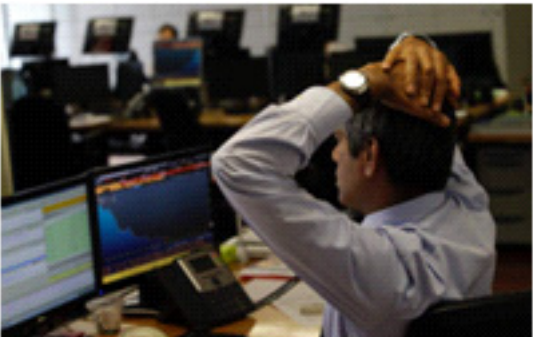
The last time Greek bond yields fell below those of Italy was in 2008, when Greece was still rated as investment grade. This convinced several firms to

advise their clients and investors to sell Greek securities on Friday, with Societe Generale even saying it sold its positions. This was clearly reflected in the market and the strong sell-off recorded.

The fact that the Greek market is small and has very low liquidity means that it is vulnerable to investor moves that can lead to a swift rise or drop

in yields.

Societe Generale noted that while it is in favor of eurozone periphery bonds, it considers the Greek rally excessive, adding that after the rating upgrade by Standard & Poor’s Greece will have to wait for quite some time for its next review.



Gov't rules out large social dividend

Deputy Finance Minister Theodoros Skylakakis said, ‘First we count and then we speak.’



Expectations of a Christmas handout were dashed on Friday by Deputy Finance Minister Theodoros Skylakakis in an interview on Skai TV. It followed an assurance by a government official on the fringes of Thursday's Eurogroup

that the distribution of a “social dividend” was being discussed with the country’s creditors and would not take them by surprise.

Skylakakis said that plans for a large handout have been abandoned, as was evident from what minister Christos Staikouras had said last week. Skylakakis said that no great primary surplus overrun is anticipated, and that part of it will be maintained as a safety cushion anyway.

“There is no 4 percent, that’s finished,” the deputy minister stated, asked whether this year’s primary surplus would close at 3.5 percent of gross domestic product or climb to 4 percent. “The government’s policy is that we will not produce any excessive surpluses,” he stated.

The motto of the State General Accounting Office is “First we count and then we speak,” said Skylakakis, adding that if there is any fiscal space it will be utilized according to what the prime minister says, reiterating that the fiscal leeway for Christmas was spent in May, by the previous government.

Ο λαογραφικός όμιλος Ορφέας σας προσκαλεί στην εκδήλωση για τον εορτασμό της επετείου των 30 χρόνων από την ίδρυση του συλλόγου. Η μεγάλη αυτή εκδήλωση θα λάβει μέρος το Σάββατο 23 Νοεμβρίου στο φημισμένο **Arlington Park στο Arlington Heights** από τις 6 μμ -12 τα μεσάνυχτα. Η βραδιά θα περιλαμβάνει ένα εκλεκτό πρόγραμμα με μοναδικούς μουσικούς της δημοτικής και λαϊκής παράδοσης, παραστάσεις από τα χορευτικά τμήματα του Ορφέα, πλούσιο γεύμα με μπουφέ, ελληνικά γλυκά, εκθέματα με οπτικοακουστικό υλικό και πολλές άλλες εκπλήξεις.

Ελάτε να υποστηρίξετε τον λαογραφικό όμιλο Ορφέα που για 30 τώρα χρόνια παρέχει αξιόλογα ελληνικά πολιτιστικά προγράμματα τα οποία έχουν αναγνωριστεί για την ποιότητα και τα αποτελέσματά τους.

Τα εισιτήρια είναι \$75 και \$45 για παιδιά κάτω από 12 χρονών. Δωρεάν και άφθονο πάρκινγκ. Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες και εισιτήρια επισκεφθείτε την ιστοσελίδα του Ορφέα στο www.ohfs.org ή τηλεφωνήστε στο 630-291-0661. Σας περιμένουμε το Σάββατο 23 Νοεμβρίου για να γιορτάσουμε και να υποστηρίξουμε μαζί έναν από τους πιο αξιόλογους οργανισμούς της ελληνικής κοινότητας.

2019 HAWC Annual Conference in Chicago

The 26th Annual Hellenic American Women's Council National Conference in Chicago was, by all measures, an event of great splendor. It was attended by a diverse group of about 100 professional women from different parts of the Country.



The elegant Welcome Reception on Friday evening, November 1st at Cite with its panoramic view of the City was generously hosted by its owner, Dr. Evangeline Gouletas. It provided a friendly environment for women to socialize and network.



The Conference on Saturday, November 2nd at the Union League Club was an enjoyable learning experience; the theme of the Conference was “ Learn, Laugh, Thrive A Fulfilling Life .” The panelists’ presentations explored the theme in an inspiring and thought provoking manner. In particular, the discussion included the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle. Diane Kochilas, one of our guest speakers, is a Goodwill Ambassador of the traditional Greek cuisine and culture. She spoke about the renowned stress free lifestyle and longevity on the Greek Blue Zone island of IKARIA, where people know how to live, and forget to die. The audience



found the discussion fascinating. Dr. Evangeline Gouletas was so enthused that she proposed HAWC's next year's Annual Conference be held in IKARIA.

During the luncheon, Maria Pappas the Cook County Treasurer, was presented with the Aristeon Award and was the keynote speaker.

The Conference concluded with a joyful Laughter yoga session directed by Lynda Tourloulakis that created a delightful sense of euphoria among the participants. Incidentally, Mrs. Ekaterina Dimakis, the Greek Consul General in Chicago, was pleasantly surprised at the end of the luncheon when she was presented with a beautiful Greek Flag donated by one of our members.

We attended the recent 26th Annual HAWC National Conference and were so impressed and inspired by the diverse group of Hellenic American women in the organization! There were so many women who are trailblazers in their fields and their hard work and dedication to their careers, family, friends, overall communities, and special projects really resonated with us and the values that we Greeks hold dear! We look forward to participating in the ongoing projects and as the Greek Media of the Chicago Area, we will try hard to help future HAWC initiatives!

Greece making its presence felt in East Med



In a sign of its growing military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece last week launched the Medusa 9 joint military exercise with Egypt south of Crete and the Peloponnese, while Greek fighter jets prepare to take part in the multinational Blue Flag drill which begins on Sunday in the Uvda region of southern Israel.

Moreover, in a rather rare move, two Greek F-16 fighter jets on Friday escorted a US B-52 bomber from an area over western Greece to Nicosia's Flight Information Region (FIR) off eastern Cyprus, where they parted ways.

The American aircraft continued on an east-bound course to Syria, while the Greek jets returned to their base at Souda on the island of Crete.

The B-52 had taken off from Royal Air Force Fairford in England, from where B-2 bombers had also been launched in previous days as part of the US Global Thunder exercise.

Meanwhile, the joint exercise between Greece and Egypt, with the participation of Cyprus, will continue until November 8.

It is being attended by observers from 15 countries, including the US, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and others.

Greece is taking part with three frigates, two missile boats, a submarine, a landing ship, an early warning aircraft, eight F-16s, three Chinook helicopters, four Apache attack helicopters and special forces units.

Egypt is participating with a helicopter carrier, a frigate, a missile boat, a submarine, six F-16s and special forces units.

Tsipras refuses to replace MPs ejected from House panel



The leader of the main opposition Alexis Tsipras said on Monday he will not replace the two SYRIZA lawmakers who were removed from a parliamentary panel probing alleged meddling by former alternate justice minister Dimitris Papangelopoulos in the Novartis investigation.

The committee voted to eject MPs Pavlos Polakis and Dimitris Tzanakopoulos, both former ministers, due to their status as witnesses in the investigation, which was deemed to be a potential conflict of interests.

"With my responsibility as leader of the main opposition to uphold the Parliament's rules and the Constitution, I am not allowed to consent to an unlawful decision by a majority of the committee and thereby be part of the denigration of the national delegation," Tsipras said in a letter to Parliament Speaker Konstantinos Tasoulas.

"Nor would I participate in depriving representatives elected by the Greek people of their rights," he added.

Last week, Tsipras had called on Tasoulas to restore "parliamentary order" by reinstating the two leftist MPs, describing their exemption from the panel as "illegal" and a "brute deprivation of their parliamentary rights." His request was rejected.

Tsipras did not clarify in his latest letter whether he will insist on Polakis and Tzanakopoulos joining the sessions of the committee, which is to convene again soon.



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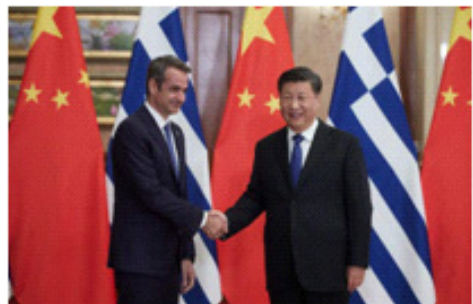
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NEWS FROM GREECE

Greece determined to attract foreign investment, Mitsotakis tells Chinese president



Greece is determined to do all it can to attract foreign investment, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said during a meeting in Shanghai with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"Today in Greece there is a government that is determined to facilitating foreign investors, to attracting foreign capital and creating wealth and prosperity for all Greeks in a way that is sustainable and protects the environment," Mitsotakis told Xi.

The Greek premier said his visit, which was accompanied by a large business delegation, underlined the "extreme importance" that his conservative government lays upon bilateral relations which, he stressed, have their roots in close ties between the two countries' ancient cultures.

Mitsotakis noted too that the first major overture to China took place under a New Democracy government. "I am glad now that as prime minister I can take this economic relationship to a special level," he said.

There are numerous opportunities for cooperation, he said, referring to the investment of Chinese shipping and logistics giant Cosco in particular whose headquarters he visited. "We had promised to approve the master plan within two months. And we did it," he said, referring to an "emblematic investment."

Xi, for his part, noted that Mitsotakis' visit gave "new momentum to our strategic cooperation."

He described the Shanghai trade fair that Mitsotakis visited - the second China International Import Expo - as "a step for the Chinese market to open to the rest of the world," adding that Greece was invited as an honored country so that it could also promote its products, referring to a "win-win situation" for the two countries.

Eight out of 10 young couples in Greece would like to have a large family, but cannot afford to, according to a new study concerning the causes of infertility in the country, conducted in January-February 2019.

In brief, poverty is the biggest obstacle to higher birth rates among Greek households.

The research was carried out by the Department of Statistics and Insurance Science at the University of Piraeus in collaboration with HOPEgenesis, a non-profit organization whose aim is to raise Greece's low birth rates by providing

comprehensive medical care and treatment for women.

Low birth rates are described by experts as a "time bomb" in the foundations of Greece's development prospects.

One in two Greeks (52.9 percent) say that the high financial cost of pregnancy (prenatal screening and childbirth) and the upbringing of a child are the most significant hurdles

Excavations on the Chrysi islet south of Crete have yielded ruins of a 3,800-year-old Bronze Age settlement of the Minoan period. The Culture Ministry said the compound contained bronze talents, which was a common unit of currency in antiquity, as well as gold jewels and glass beads – some of them of Egyptian origin. Archaeologists, who have been digging at the site for a decade, also uncovered fish tanks and broken seashells that produced a prized purple pigment. The ministry said the shells point to a very early production of the dye in the Mediterranean.

Greece adopts IHRA's definition of anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial

Greece is adopting the working definition of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial as formed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced Friday.

The news was announced in a meeting he held with the President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS) David Saltiel, and the head of the Greek Delegation to the IHRA, Dr. Efsthios Lianos Liantis, at his office.

The definition has been adopted by many countries members and non-members of the European Union as well by the European Parliament, which has called its member-states to incorporate it into their national legislations, through a relevant directive.

However, Greece becomes the first country to adopt the working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion, "in an act of great historical importance," the prime ministers's office said.

The Greek IHRA chairmanship, which coincides with the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution, will promote a network of academic, educational and cultural activities focusing on the role of education and social media in preserving Holocaust Remembrance, as well on promoting the two-thousand-year-old history of Greek Jews.

Mitsotakis assigned the oversight of this project as well as the coordination and supervision of the integration of

the definitions into domestic legislation and education to the government Vice-President Panagiotis Pikramenos.

The news comes on the eve of the Night of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht) anniversary, when a pogrom carried out by SA paramilitary forces and civilians was unleashed against Jews throughout Nazi Germany in 1938.

Commenting on the news, the Israeli embassy in Greece hailed the move, noting it is a "clear statement of commitment and moral standing."

"The Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his government are showing leadership and setting an example in fighting anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia," it added.

IHRA's working definition, as adopted on 26 May 2016, is the following: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Xi eyes deeper cooperation on occasion of visit to Greece

In an exclusive article for Kathimerini on the occasion of his official visit to Athens, which started Sunday and will conclude on Tuesday, Chinese President Xi Jinping has underlined the need to boost cooperation between Athens and Beijing on all levels.

"It is our duty to upgrade our current cooperation in all sectors," he wrote in the article which appeared in Sunday's Kathimerini, noting that existing investments should be expanded and referring to Cosco's presence at the port of Piraeus as "the dragon's head."

Xi, who is to meet on Monday with Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, added that China and Greece should take lessons from "the deep wisdom of their ancient civilizations" and jointly foster the creation of "a new type of international relations based on respect, justice and mutually beneficial cooperation."

Xi also called for deeper cooperation in the context of Beijing's One Belt, One Road initiative – China's plan for a modern Silk Road of railways, ports and other facilities linking East Asia with Europe – highlighting Greece's favorable geographical location and "particular advantages" in the shipping sector.

He added that China is willing to boost imports of quality Greek agricultural products.

During his visit to Athens, Xi aims to explore a new plan for bilateral cooperation, he wrote, noting that the two countries have already pursued "mutually beneficial" projects in the trade and infrastructure sectors.

Last week, on the sidelines of a trade exhibition in Shanghai, Xi and

Mitsotakis discussed Greek agricultural goods and further cooperation in the fields of energy, transport, telecommunications, tourism and the possibility of Greece becoming a center of logistics.

In his article for Kathimerini, Xi wrote that Piraeus is "emerging as the biggest port in the Mediterranean."

Authorities smash major trafficking racket with 29 arrests

Greek authorities on Saturday announced the breakup of a large human trafficking racket believed to have been producing forged travel documents for migrants and smuggling them to other European countries.

With the help of Greek Police special forces officers, Piraeus Port Authority officials arrested 29 suspected racket members including the two alleged ring leaders, aged 32 and 36. Police said they were all of "Asian" origin.

A raid on a suspected safe house in the Athens neighborhood of Kypseli believed to have been used by the racket led to the discovery of 27 undocumented migrants who had been awaiting their transfer out of Greece.

Searches of the suspects' homes turned up 17 forged passports, numerous stamps and equipment used to forge passports and bank notes.

Israel-Hellenic Forum starts in Jerusalem on Tuesday

The Israel-Hellenic Forum will hold its first gathering in Jerusalem from Tuesday to Thursday.

More than 30 prominent journalists and academics from Greece and Cyprus will take part in the meeting, which will focus on the strategic importance of regional alliances, economic developments in the wider area, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, US-Israeli ties, Israel's relationship with Arab states, Greek-Jewish relations, innovation, tourism and humanitarian aid.

"It is our firm belief that the challenges facing Israel, Greece and Cyprus make it incumbent upon those who seek to promote a peaceful, inclusive and tolerant Eastern Mediterranean to promote this notion to civil society, in academia and to the public at large," the director of the B'nai B'rith World Center in Jerusalem, Alan Schneider, said.

PICTURES OF THE WORLD



Deep in the remote reaches of Patagonia, a shimmering glacial lake holds a spectacular geological marvel.



Every year in the remote wilderness of Colombia, an ordinary river erupts into a spectacular rainbow-coloured waterway.



Rising sharply from the East China Sea, a maze of smooth basalt columns forms a surreal stone forest.



Norway’s stunning marvel of engineering The 8.2km-long Atlantic Ocean Road connects Averøy to mainland Norway, revealing extraordinary views as it hops from island to island.

Salaries for part-timers remain low



The average monthly salary of part-timers in Greece amounts to the particularly low figure of 404.5 euros gross. This is based on the latest available data from the Single Social Security Entity (EFKA) as declared by employers. The end-April data also show that 28.66 percent of the country’s workers earn part-time salaries, and that there has been an improvement both in the average salary and in the number of people employed on an annual basis. The total figure of employed workers came to 2,352,294, up 9.5 percent from a year earlier. There was an increase of 10.86 percent in full-timers and a 6.93 percent advance in part-timers on annual basis. The average salary for workers at all companies rose 5.48 percent in a year to reach 1,170.73 euros. The daily wage grew 3.47 percent to reach 51.38 euros, EFKA data show. Men have the upper hand in full-time jobs while women dominate part-time work: Men account for 53.5 percent of all jobs at corporations, 56.28 percent of full-time employed staff, and 44.7 percent of part-time employment.

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Kerameus pledges to implement court rulings on religious education



Greece's Education Minister Niki Kerameus pledged to abide by two court rulings regarding the way religion is taught at the country's public high schools and the procedure to seek exemption from the course.

“The ministry will address in a coherent manner all the issues raised by the recent court decisions. In this context, it goes without saying that the religious curriculum and the system of exemption from the course will also be changed,” Kerameus said.

On Thursday, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) announced in a ruling that the Greek system for exempting schoolchildren from religious education classes is in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights, because it forces parents to reveal information from which it can be inferred that they and their children adhere, or do not adhere, to a specific religious dogma.

It also said the existing system can even deter parents from making an exemption request, the court said.

In an older ruling, Greece's Council of State deemed unconstitutional changes introduced by former education minister Nikos Filis to the course, which sought to scrap the catechistic character of religious classes.



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Trump impeachment inquiry:



Mr Trump says he called his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 25 July to congratulate him on his recent election victory. Mr Zelenskyy, a former TV star with no political experience, was elected president in a landslide win in April.

But an anonymous whistleblower, reported to be a CIA official, felt there was something more serious in their exchange. They filed a formal complaint on 12 August explaining why they were so concerned. In their letter, the whistleblower admitted that they had not directly witnessed the call but said accounts shared by other officials had painted a consistent picture. For context, about a dozen people are reported to have listened in on the conversation, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

It's important to note that the call occurred days after Mr Trump blocked \$391m (£316m) in military aid to Ukraine. Critics argue this was used as a bargaining chip to pressure the new government in Kyiv, but Mr Trump denies this. The whistleblower's complaint alleges the president used "the power of his office to solicit interference from a foreign country" in next year's presidential election (more on this later). They also allege White House officials were "deeply disturbed" by the call and acted to "lock down" all details of it.

Amid the growing controversy, Mr Trump promised to release a "complete, fully declassified and unredacted transcript" he said would prove the call had been "totally appropriate". But the details disclosed by the White House were notes of the conversation. It was not a full, verbatim, account and it did little to quell the spiralling controversy. The whistleblower's complaint was made public shortly after. The transcript of the call showed Mr Trump had urged Mr Zelenskyy to investigate discredited corruption allegations against former Vice-President Joe Biden, a 2020 Democratic frontrunner, as well as Mr Biden's son.

Mr Trump and his allies have been suggesting that Mr Biden, as Barack Obama's vice-president, encouraged the firing of Ukraine's top prosecutor in 2015 because he had been investigating an energy company which employed Hunter Biden.

At the time, by working closely with foreign-owned entities while his father was in the White House, Hunter Biden was criticised for leaving his father exposed to suggestions of a possible conflict of interest. But no evidence has emerged that Mr Biden took any action to intentionally benefit his son.

Hunter Biden denies wrongdoing. Officials in Kiev have said there is no evidence to support the allegations. Mr Trump has pointed to a boast Mr Biden made in 2018 about how as vice-president he had threatened to withhold a billion dollars in aid from Ukraine unless the prosecutor was fired.

But motivation is key here. Mr Biden wanted him removed because he was failing to crack down on corruption. And the vice-president was not acting alone, but rather as the focal point of a wider anti-corruption drive in Ukraine backed by the US government, European allies and the International Monetary Fund.

Mr Trump pressing a foreign leader to investigate the discredited allegations against Mr Biden is significant. This is because Mr Biden is the current favourite to win the Democratic nomination and, if chosen, he would be the man facing Mr Trump for the presidency in November 2020.

As Mr Biden is his biggest rival for the presidency, it opens Mr Trump up to claims he was working with a foreign power to influence the election. This - crucially - is against the law.

Who listens in on a president's phone call? Ukraine has 'no jurisdiction' to investigate Bidens. How easy is it to impeach a president?

This is not the first time Mr Trump has been scrutinised over his foreign connections. His 2016 election campaign was investigated over its alleged ties to Russia. The inquiry did not establish a criminal conspiracy to influence the election, but it also did not exonerate the president of obstructing justice. The Democrats have launched a formal impeachment inquiry and have spared no time in getting to work. A number of officials have been called to testify, including the US government's special envoy to Ukraine Kurt Volker who has turned over a trove of text messages and other relevant communications. The acting ambassador to Ukraine, Bill Taylor, also told Congress that Mr Trump had made the release of the military aid conditional on Ukraine opening an investigation into the Biden's dealings. He also said there was "an irregular, informal channel of US policy-making" in the country more generally. The White House denies this was the case.

The president's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, was subpoenaed for documents relating to Ukraine. Mr Giuliani has been central in pushing the allegations against the Bidens. Secretary Pompeo was also served with a subpoena.

So how does the impeachment process work?

Impeachment is the first part - the charges - of a two-stage political process by which Congress can remove a president from office. If the House votes to pass articles of impeachment, the Senate is forced to hold a trial.

A Senate vote requires a two-thirds majority to convict. As it stands, this is unlikely given that Mr Trump's party controls the chamber. Unlikely, but not impossible.

School parades and religion classes



School parades and religion classes are two of the thorniest issues in Greece's education debate and are well-suited to grandstanding and unfounded declarations about what must or must not be done. One person will express frustration at parades, saying they are ridiculous and forced, while another will say they inspire pride and emotion. How should children be taught about religion at school? What would happen if religion classes were made completely optional? What would happen at Greek schools if the number of non-Orthodox Christian pupils were to increase significantly?

The European Court of Human Rights condemned Greece this week after the parents of two schoolgirls on the islands of Milos and Sifnos filed a suit, saying that in order for their daughters not to have to attend religion classes they would have to provide school authorities with solemn declarations claiming that they weren't Orthodox Christians. The judges ruled that the authorities have no right to oblige citizens to reveal their religious beliefs or lack thereof.

For years, the Greek state has squirmed at taking a position on sensitive educational issues, mindful of public pressure and seeking to keep a balance. Any minister who has ignored the powerful interests and pressure groups behind these issues, meanwhile, has quickly fallen out of favor. The rock is populism and the hard place is clientelist expediency.

The point, however, is whether we can expect to have a functional educational environment without clear rules. Between its tendency to flatter some and dismiss others, between two extremes, the Greek state has an obligation to take a stand and make tough decisions. And the longer that it fails to step up, the more the endless talk, the often toxic talk, will fill the vacuum.

Right now, Education Minister Nikis Kerameus is juggling the two burning issues of parades and religion classes. They fell into her lap in the form of Gordian knots that need decisive action in order to be addressed, action that will inevitably come at a high political price.

The resurgence of the immigration crisis has already upset some of the sensitive balances in the education system and more turbulence lies ahead. This is no time for foot dragging or the usual proclamations that may sound good but mean very little. Times are tough, not least because there are so many other problems besetting education and they are only getting worse the longer they are allowed to fester. And they're going to get tougher the closer we get to the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence in 2021, an event that is expected to unleash patriotic sentiment and its more extreme expressions.

Teachers in the north up in arms over hijab



Turkish Cypriot educators in the Turkish-occupied north are up in arms over the appointment of a teacher who showed up at her school wearing a hijab.

According to Turkish Cypriot media, teachers at a high school in Lapithos/Lapta refused to enter their classrooms as a sign of protest against their new colleague's appointment. The female teacher was assigned by the Turkish Cypriot administration to her duties on October 25, according to daily Yeni Duzen, while other media reported that officials tried to accommodate demands by protesters but without making it clear whether the appointment had been rescinded.

KTOEOS teachers trade union chairwoman Selma Eylem, who said the issue was not about the dress code, pointed fingers at what she described as attempts by Turkey to impose "political Islam" onto the Turkish Cypriot community.