



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
REGION OF ATTICA

Ref. Ares(2017)4446402 - 12/09/2017

A GREEN ATTICA FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT
Preserving the Planet and Protecting Its People

September 1, 2017

His Excellency Karmenu Vella
Commissioner of Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Your Excellency,

We would like to invite you to be a presenter during the thematic session on at the forthcoming international ecological symposium in Athens, Greece, from June 5-8, 2018. The official opening of the symposium, entitled "A GREEN ATTICA FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT: Preserving the Planet and Protecting its People," will take place on Wednesday morning, June 6, 2018. The President of the Hellenic Republic will be in attendance, while the President of France has been invited to open the symposium in the presence of other distinguished environmental and governmental leaders.

Thematic session panels will last two hours and will include speakers, respondents, and a moderator. The moderator will give a ten minute introduction of the session. Speakers will present for fifteen minutes, each followed by a ten minute response from the correlating respondent. The last twenty minutes will be reserved for interactive dialogue with all symposium participants.

Over the last three decades, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has highlighted the religious and spiritual roots of the ecological crisis, while emphasizing that the necessary spiritual transformation of human beings and their attitude toward creation requires the collaboration of all social sectors and scientific disciplines. Moreover, we have pioneered diverse international, interdisciplinary and interfaith initiatives for environmental sustainability, organizing symposia, seminars and summits, while inspiring and motivating theologians and scientists, political and business leaders, as well as activists and journalists from all over the world. This is why we were personally involved in the process leading up to the historic Paris Agreement adopted in December 2015.

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At the same time, the current Administration of the Region of Attica has emphasized environmental and public health issues in national and European level, participating in numerous environmental EU projects concerning the awareness raising issue and taking part in the COP 21 conference. Furthermore, the Region of Attica, having in mind the great importance of the migration/refugee phenomenon for the local societies, tries to address the issue of reception and social integration of migrants/refugees in terms of respecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Both the government and people of Greece have extended their hospitality to refugees from the Middle East and Northern Africa as a result of war, violence and poverty.

Therefore, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is organizing this symposium in association with the Region of Attica to explore the pressing environmental problems of the region and its islands, examining the connections between ecology and economy, particularly in the context of pressing social and environmental challenges of our time.

We are convinced that your presence is crucial for the success of this symposium to affirm a collaborative response to the ecological crisis, while advocating for a sustainable planet as a sacred legacy for all people and especially our children. You will be accommodated on a ship traveling through the picturesque Saronic Islands and will be our guest throughout your stay in Athens.

In fervent anticipation of a favorable response to our invitation, we remain

Sincerely yours,



Bartholomew
Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch



Irene Dourou
Regional Governor of Attica