

الجمعية الخيرية اليونانية في بيروت
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΒΗΡΥΤΟΥ
GREEK COMMUNITY OF BEIRUT

Resumption of Greek language courses

Year 2020-2021

The Greek Community of Beirut announces the resumption of Greek language courses at its premises, Dekwaneh, "Parallel Towers", Block A, 2nd floor, on **Thursday October 1st**

Registrations will take place until Wednesday September 30, 2020

For any additional info, you can reach us by phone 01-493467/8 Monday to Friday, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

E-mail: stephanie@greekcommunity.org.lb

Website: greekcommunityofbeirut.org

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Email : info@greekcommunity.org.lb

Dekwaneh - Parallel Towers 232 - Bloc A - 2nd & 3rd Floor- Tel. : +961 1 493467/8. Fax : +961 1 493469



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Ta Nea

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SEPTEMBER 2020

Wishing you a good start this fall

Dear Member,

Few weeks ago, the Port explosion occurred while we already face many crises in addition to difficult living conditions that have deteriorated after this catastrophe. It was followed by a fire that destroyed the rest of the Free Zone. Thus, Beirut needs huge support to rise again from the ashes. How can the buildings, hospitals, schools and churches be rebuilt without assistance? How will schools be able to open their doors in few days? Donations are pouring into Lebanon from all over the world to restore life in the devastated capital but during these difficult days, prayer remains the only source of strength and hope.

With the centenary of the announcement of Greater Lebanon, we had to retrace the history simultaneously as the Greek bicentenary of 1821.

Enjoy your reading and stay safe.



A century ago the State of Greater Lebanon was proclaimed

The State of Greater Lebanon was declared on September 1st, (1920) following Decree 318 of 31 August 1920, as a League of Nations Mandate under the proposed terms of the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon. General Henri Gouraud, from the porch of the official residence as French High Commissioner in Beirut, proclaimed the establishment of the state with its present boundaries and the city of Beirut as its capital. The term *Greater Lebanon* refers to almost double of the size of the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate, the existing former autonomous region, as a result of the incorporation of the districts of Tripoli and Sidon as well as the Bekaa Valley. The new territory was granted a flag, merging the French flag with the Lebanese cedar. "*Le Grand Liban*" (in French terms) was first used by the Lebanese intellectuals Boulos Noujaim and Albert Naccache, during the buildup to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.

Noujaim was building on his widely read 1908 work *La question du Liban*, a 550-page analysis which was to become the foundation for arguments in favor of a Greater Lebanon. The work argued that a significant extension of Lebanon's boundaries was required for economic success. The boundaries suggested by Noujaim as representing the "*Liban de la grande époque*" were drawn from the map of the 1860-64 French expedition, which has been cited as an example of a modern map having "*predicted the nation instead of just recording it*". Following the establishment of the State of Greater Lebanon, the French turned to deal with the rest of their mandated territory in the Levant. On May 23rd 1926, the State of Greater Lebanon received a Constitution which transformed it into the Lebanese Republic.



Historical and symbolic gesture: arm raised, General Henri Gouraud proclaims the creation of Greater Lebanon. On his left: the representative of the Church, the patriarchal vicar, Mgr Paul Akl and the Grand Mufti of Beirut.

August 4th, 2020

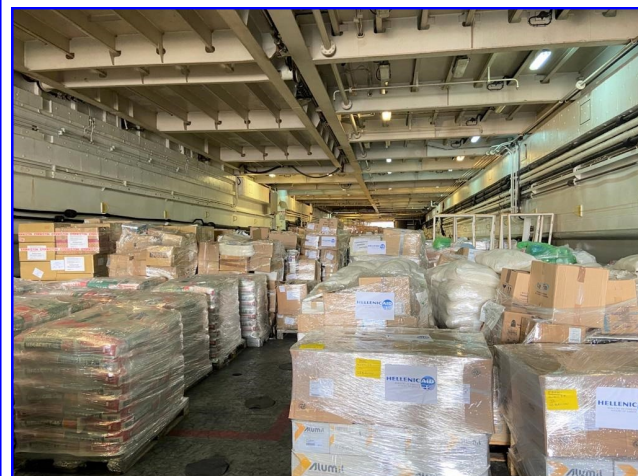
The aftermath

Greece sends us a new shipment of aids

Following the deadly explosion that struck the port of Beirut on August 4, 2020 and its catastrophic consequences in human losses, thousands of injuries and incalculable material and environmental damage, Greece has been one of the first countries to express its active solidarity to the Lebanese people. The Hellenic Republic responded immediately to the call for assistance of the Ministry of



Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Lebanese Republic, by offering selected items of humanitarian aid. Today the Greek Navy ship "Ikaria", on its second trip to Beirut after the explosion, is delivering further significant quantities of food, medicine, medical equipment and construction materials, totalling over 145 tons (372 pallets, total weight:145.469,74 kg). The

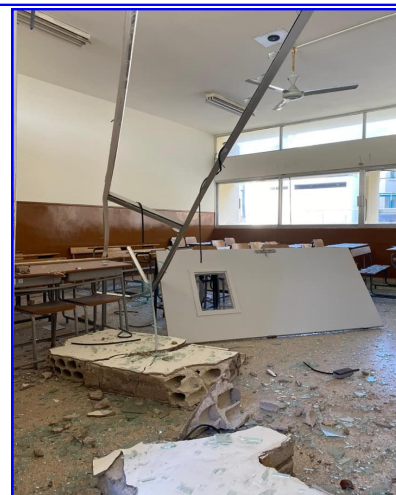


provisions were collected as a result of cooperation between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the private sector in Greece, in solidarity with the Lebanese people. This unprecedented mobilization proves one more time the strong bonds that tie the two countries and their people. The Greek Lebanese Cultural Union contributed significantly to the collection, storage and transport of an additional 51 pallets and 41.000 kg of material. In total, over 180 tons of humanitarian assistance are being delivered today at the port of Beirut.

*Press release from the Embassy of Greece in Lebanon, 09/17/2020.

UNESCO promises "considerable aid" for education and heritage in Beirut

The United Nations Culture and Education Organization UNESCO, will organize two international conferences with a view to ensuring "considerable" funding dedicated to schools and cultural heritage in Beirut announced the director Audrey Azoulay, during a tour of the disaster areas of Beirut, including a school heavily damaged by the explosion of the Port. "The first, in the immediate future, will be a meeting of the World Coalition for Education devoted to Lebanon."



According to UNESCO, around 160 schools were destroyed or damaged in the explosion that devastated entire neighborhoods. The education sector was heavily impacted, as the explosion led to the partial or complete destruction of about 70 public schools and 50 private schools in Beirut and neighboring areas. Such devastation threatens to disrupt the new academic year and deprive students enrolled in these schools of their right to education. The director of UNESCO said at least 85,000 children had been directly affected by the destruction. According to a preliminary assessment, the reconstruction of damaged schools will require a budget of 22 million dollars. A second conference will also be organized, probably early October, to raise funds for the benefit of the architectural heritage of Beirut and the cultural world. The objective is "to mobilize international funding for culture, which often in reconstruction operations comes only after. But this must happen now, there are a lot of historic buildings destroyed or damaged requiring the mobilization of considerable resources", pleaded Mrs. Azoulay.

Welcome to our Ambassador Mrs. Catherine Fountoulaki, Greek Ambassador to Lebanon

Born in Athens, Mrs. Fountoulaki studied law at the University of Athens (Ethnikon & Kapodistriakon), then joined the Centre for Diplomatic Studies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1993. Two years later, she was Attaché at the Department of Political Relations with Cyprus and Turkey. She was appointed Secretary of Embassy in Cyprus from 1996 to 1999, and in Vienna from 1999 to 2003. From 2003 to 2006, she was appointed Counselor at the Office of the General Director of Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from 2006 to 2010, she assured the Permanent Representation of Greece to the European Union in Brussels. In 2010, she was back at the Diplomatic Office of the Alternate Minister for European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 2012 at the Department of Political Relations with Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From 2013 to 2017 she assured the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations in New York, while in 2016 she was promoted to Minister Plenipotentiary Second Class, Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations in New York.

From 2017 to 2019 she was Deputy Director at the Department of Political Relations with Turkey.

In 2020, she was promoted to Minister Plenipotentiary First Class and was Director of the same Department until the 9th of July when she arrived to Beirut to assume her functions as Ambassador of Greece to Lebanon. Mrs Fountoulaki speaks fluently English and French.



Mrs. Catherine Fountoulaki presented Friday, 21 August, her credentials to President of the Republic Michel Aoun.



Souvenir photo taken at the Embassy of Greece during the board committee's visit to Ambassador Catherine Fountoulaki wishing her a warm welcome, best wishes in her mission and their full support.

Ferryboat captain rescues three years old girl in the open sea

A little girl, aged three, who played in the sea in the Peloponnese region, clung onto her flotation device, a little unicorn, alone out to the open sea. Greek ferryboat captain Grigoris Karnesis, spotted the girl. Without thinking, the captain of the ferry Salaminomachos brought his boat alongside the girl and rescued her as she screamed in the open seas. He managed to steer the huge vessel close enough to the child for someone to grab her and had to also ensure that the unicorn would not get caught up in the backwash of the ship's engine. He lowered the ramp at the back of the ferry, used to load cars, so that his brother Vasilis Karnesis was able to scoot to the edge and snatch the young girl, saving her life. The parents were grateful but declined to respond to the multitude of interview requests after receiving fierce criticism for letting the girl out of their sight. They told the captain that they had tried to swim to the girl but were unable to reach her. People at the sea had grabbed a nearby dinghy and tried to row out to her but the current was too strong. Greek authorities had reached out to Mr Karnesis as his ferry was the closest to the scene. By the time he arrived, the girl had been floating for around 20 minutes.

*To watch it live, follow this link: <https://youtu.be/1xYOr1iYe-O>



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A fire near Agamemnon's tomb was brought under control without causing damage to the site

Mycenae, (Ancient Greek: *Μυκῆναι* or *Μυκῆνη*) is an archaeological site near Mykines in Argolis, north-eastern Peloponnese. It is located about 120 km south-west of Athens. It is the most important and richest palatial center of the Late Bronze Age in Greece. A wildfire that broke out near the Tomb of Agamemnon in the ancient site was brought under control before it caused any damage. Up to 50 firefighters, four aircraft and two helicopters were brought in to fight the fire.

The commander of the southern Peloponnese region's fire brigade, Thanassis Koliviras explained that the fire had gone through "a section of the archaeological site and burnt some dry grass without menacing the museum". However, according to the local press, certain areas within the archaeological site were affected, specifically, the East Wing of the Palace, the Northern Warehouses, the area of the archaic temple at the top of the hill, the upper western slope of the Acropolis, the south-west District and the area of the Religious Center of Mycenae, as mentioned by the Greek Reporter.



2021, the bicentennial of the Greek revolution

As part of the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Greek revolution of 1821, we dedicate a new section. Each month we will present a story and a famous person who actively contributed to creating the actual Greece.



THE BATTLE OF NAVARINO

The **Battle of Navarino** was a naval battle fought on 20 October 1827, during the Greek War of Independence, in Navarino Bay (Pylos), on the west coast of the Peloponnese peninsula. Allied forces from Britain, France, and Russia decisively defeated Ottoman and Egyptian forces trying to suppress the Greeks. The battle is notable for being the last major engagement involving only sailing ships, and also a decisive step in the journey towards Greek and eastern European independence.

Throughout the 19th century the Ottoman Empire was known as "the sick man of Europe." The decline of this empire was a source of concern for the British and French, with Russia poised to capitalize on this weakness. Greece was the jewel in the Ottoman crown, dominating trade and industry in the Empire, and the response of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II was savage. The Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V was seized upon after mass and publicly hanged by Turkish soldiers. Unsurprisingly, this escalated the violence, which erupted into a full-scale war.

In July 1827 Britain France and Russia signed the Treaty of London, which demanded a cessation of Ottoman attacks and full autonomy for the Greeks. It was proof that the Greeks now had the support that they desperately needed. The Ottomans rejected the Treaty, and as a result a British naval force under Admiral Codrington was sent off. With this fleet approaching Greek waters by September, the Ottomans agreed to cease the fighting as long as the Greeks did the same. However, the Greek armies continued to advance, and the truce broke down. In response, Ottoman commander Ibrahim Pasha continued to commit civilian atrocities on land. With a fight seemingly inevitable, French and Russian squadrons joined Codrington on October 13th. Together, these fleets took the decision to enter Ottoman-held Navarino bay on the 18th. Navarino was the base of the Ottoman and Egyptian fleets, and a well-protected natural harbour. Ibrahim Pasha demanded the Allies leave the bay, but Codrington replied that he was there to give orders, not to take them. The Ottomans sent fireships into the enemy, but failed. Just two hours after the battle started, all the Ottoman ships of the line had been dealt with, leaving the smaller ships at anchor, which were savaged in the ensuing fighting despite Codrington's attempts to end the battle. The battle was a crushing victory for the Allies, who did not lose a single vessel.



Gregory V of Constantinople

Gregory V (Γρηγόριος, born as Γεώργιος Αγγελόπουλος, 1746 – 22 April 1821) was Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and was responsible for much restoration work to the Patriarchal Cathedral of St George, which had been badly damaged by fire in 1738. At the onset of the Greek War of Independence, as Ethnarch of the Orthodox Millet, Gregory V was blamed by Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II for his inability to suppress the Greek uprising. This was in spite of the fact that Gregory had condemned the Greek revolutionary activities in order to protect the Greeks of Constantinople from such reprisals by the Ottoman Turks. After the Greek rebels scored several successes against the Ottoman forces in the Peloponnese, these reprisals came. During Holy Week in April 1821, Gregory was taken out of the Patriarchal Cathedral on 22 April 1821, Easter Sunday, directly after celebrating the solemn Easter Liturgy. He was accosted by the Ottomans and was taken out of the cathedral, still in full Patriarchal vestments. He was hanged, being left for two days on the main gate of the Patriarchate compound, all by order of the Sultan. This was followed by a massacre of the Greek population of Constantinople. The Patriarch's body was eventually interred in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens. He is commemorated by the Greek Orthodox Church as an *Ethnomartyr* (Εθνομάρτυρας). In his memory, the Saint Peter Gate, once the main gate of the Patriarchate compound, was welded shut in 1821 and has remained shut ever since.



News from our Greek Language Center

Greek language courses are starting on the 1st of October and finish by the end of May, being equivalent to one teaching school year. Registrations start on July 1st until the end of September 2020.

For registrations please contact us by Email: stephanie@greekcommunity.org.lb or by phone on 961 1 493467/8

Adults' classes:

Level A1 (2 years)

Level A2 (1 year)

Level B1 (2 years)

Kids' classes (8-12 years old)

Level A1a Saturdays from 16:00 to 17:30

Level A1b Saturdays from 17:30 to 19:00

Greek Language Official exams

The official exams of May have been postponed to the following dates:

Level A1: 13th of October 2020 (morning)

Level A2: 14th of October 2020 (morning)

Level B1: 15th of October 2020 (morning)

Kindly note that the schedule might be subject to change due to the COVID—19 developments and possible measurements.

Memories, memories...

A wink from the past, bringing back memories alive!

Some of us might have lived those moments, some others may be too young. This section dedicated to the past helps the new generation discover how their parents or grand parents used to live.

In this issue, we have selected from our archive, a photo taken in 1974 on the occasion of the National Day during a play performed by students.



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New fashion trends generated by the Covid -19 virus

A new trend has appeared in Lebanon as well as in Greece. Since we will all have to wear a mask for quite a long time, we might as well choose a theme that we like.

In Lebanon, after the devastating explosion of the port, many patriotic masks bearing the name of Beirut or the Lebanese flag appeared on the faces in the streets. Several charities have created them and the income from their sales is used to help the victims.

Acknowledging the current need for their widespread use, The Greek Ministry of Culture is now marketing fabric face-masks inspired by Ancient Greece, protecting people from Covid-19 spread while promoting Greek history. The face masks, with patterns featuring iconic images from Greece's most important periods from its ancient history, will be sold in the shops of all archaeological museum and sites across the country. They come in seven different high-quality fabrics, all inspired by objects found in Greece's many archaeological museums or sites, including Cycladic statues and the Phaistos Disc. Soon, when all this is over, these masks will undoubtedly become collector's items, witnesses of a period that no one will forget.



Protect yourself and those you care for

As we all know, Covid 19 is spreading everywhere !

In the absence of an effective prevention strategy such as a vaccine, it is therefore recommended to actively remember barrier gestures in order to protect yourself and loved ones.

Worldwide, new statistics show that the most affected currently, even if they are asymptomatic, are adolescents and young people. Therefore, it is recommended to wear a face mask, use gel or cleaning hands, respect social distancing and avoid public spaces. Stay safe.

