



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



Ta Nea

Merry Christmas...Καλά Χριστούγεννα

Volume 3
December 2020

Dear Reader,

Christmas and the end-of-year celebrations will be different this year, in Lebanon and almost everywhere in the world. It is a fact that in Lebanon we are facing the pandemic but also the economic crisis and galloping inflation. On the other side we give more importance to spirituality and charity, rather than materialistic matters. The world is changing and so are we! But it must be said that our adaptability has been severely tested since last fall! From the economic crisis to the pandemic to the blast, 2020 has been a tough year for everyone, even Lebanese businesses. After the 4th of August blast, businesses and organizations around the world mobilized to raise funds for Beirut, and many that can still afford it have continued to do so. So let's remember that Christmas is about hope, love and sharing, cherishing our loved ones by giving back to our community, helping local associations stay on the ground and donating to families in need. Shopping locally can help in supporting our crippling situation, helping a chain of people who are struggling to make ends meet. Besides, many essential goods from basics to luxury items are actually made in Lebanon and available from Lebanese producers and manufacturers.



In this issue, you will find the message addressed by Mrs. Catherine Fountoulaki, Greek Ambassador to Lebanon to the members of our Community, some news related to Greece and Lebanon, and updates related to our Greek Language Center.

Enjoy your reading and stay safe,
with our Best Wishes for Christmas and the New year.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GREEK CITIZENS

Kindly contact our Center by phone or email informing us about any change of address, phone number or social status helping us to keep our data list updated.

Official news from the Greek Embassy

This section has been specially created by the Greek Community of Beirut with the kind collaboration of the Embassy of Greece in Lebanon.

New Year Address from the Ambassador of Greece to Lebanon, Mrs Catherine Fountoulaki, to the members of the Hellenic Community of Beirut



**EMBASSY OF GREECE
IN BEIRUT**

New Year Address from the Ambassador of Greece in Lebanon, Mrs Catherine Fountoulaki, to the members of the Hellenic Community of Beirut

Dear members of the Hellenic Community of Beirut,

As the holiday season is approaching, the Ambassador and the staff of the Embassy of Greece in Beirut would like to extend their warmest wishes to the members and friends of the Hellenic Community of Beirut.

We are leaving behind a year that has been challenging on many levels. The pandemic has forced us to reshape the way we work and live. The economic crisis has continued affecting the Lebanese people. The 4th of August marked each and every one of us.

Still, just like in the legend of Pandora's box, what remains after all the challenges is the hope that encourages us to keep on, to find solutions and to spare no effort for addressing the difficulties.

There also lies the most human trait of all, solidarity. We witnessed moving images of people helping each other in coping with the destructive impact of the blast in Beirut. It is in this spirit of solidarity that Greece sent twice humanitarian assistance to Lebanon as well as a search and rescue team in the aftermath of the explosion, showing once and again the strong ties between our countries, our communities and our peoples.

Now that 2020 is giving its place to the new year, it is up to us, individually and collectively to build a vision that will guide us.

Hope, Solidarity, Vision.

2021 will mark the 200-year anniversary of the Greek revolution. There again, despite all odds, hope, solidarity and vision led the Greeks to claim their independence from the Ottoman Empire. It is an important year, for it symbolises what we have achieved within these two centuries, and makes us be here together, forming this wonderful community.

Merry Christmas to all of you and a very happy New Year.

Catherine Fountoulaki
Ambassador of Greece

**Stay tuned on our twitter account where you can also find news of our Embassy, announcements as well as information on current events: @GreeceinLebanon.*

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2021, the bicentennial of the Greek revolution

As part of the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Greek revolution of 1821, we dedicate this section presenting each month a success story or a famous person who actively contributed to creating the actual Greece.



The Cultural Programme of Contemporary Art 2021 at the former Public Tobacco Factory – Hellenic Parliament Library and Printing House.

On December 14, the **Hellenic Parliament** and the **NEON** Culture and Development Organization presented at the Senate Hall of the Hellenic Parliament the implementation of the **2021 Cultural Program of Contemporary Art**, that will take place at the former Public Tobacco Factory – Hellenic Parliament Library and Printing House, at 218, Lenorman Street (Athens), from June to December 2021.

Mr. **Constantine Tassoulas**, President of the Parliament, Mr. **Dimitris Daskalopoulos** the founder of NEON and Mrs. **Elina Kountouri** the director of the organization presented the spirit, content and goals of this collaboration. The cooperation of the two bodies, in the context of the events of the anniversary year 2021, aims to highlight at national and international level the dynamics of democratic institutions in the challenges of today's social reality, through the prism of contemporary artistic creation.

The Tobacco Factory, a historic site, a symbol of the country's industrialization and progress, emerges as a modern cultural hub and is the ideal "stage" for the development of new artistic ideas with reference to historical landmarks, social change, the concept of freedom, the new state of humanity, in an ever-changing world due to modern challenges and global threats.

The cost of remodeling will amount to 1 million euros and is being funded exclusively by NEON and its founder Mr. Dimitris Daskalopoulos.

Part of this historic building is being upgraded to improve its infrastructure and function. The works conducted by NEON have been approved by the Parliament's Technical Services and the competent departments. In particular, in addition to general construction work, repair, renovation and painting, the spaces are being equipped with modern infrastructures. House will be showcased as a prestigious modern, cultural and social space, open to all, and it will become a dynamic center for meetings and idea exchanges.

From June to December 2021 it will host the **"Portals"** contemporary art exhibition, organized by NEON and curated by Mrs. Elina Kountouri, NEON Director and Mrs. Madeleine Grynstejn, Pritzker Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Using the anniversary year 2021 as a springboard, "Portals" will develop messages, ideas and concerns around the new reality that is shaped through revolution and reversal. A total of 40 artists from Greece and abroad – including newly commissioned works – will explore this different reality through themes such as Movement, the Communal, Connection and Home. **"Portals"** will include programmes regarding the Tobacco Factory building and its history, which will be developed in cooperation with the Parliament's services. Furthermore, there will be discussions and educational programmes, along with an online platform on internet presenting the works.

Mr. Constantine Tassoulas, President of the Hellenic Parliament, highlighted the importance of this partnership: *"The Hellenic Parliament which has represented the Greek people since 1844 participates actively in these events. This initiative of knowledge and honour has its artistic aspect. The objective is to highlight how Greece, its history and its prospects inspire the contemporary, domestic and international avant-garde. This is how Greece, besides its irrefutably inspiring past, can also establish an inspiring present and future."*

In the historic area of the Tobacco Factory, a symbol of industrialization of the country, but also a modern cultural core of the capital, the Greek Parliament will host the new ideas that will be developed by the creative dialogue of artists, with reference to the teachings of History and the messages of the modern, universal and changeable world.

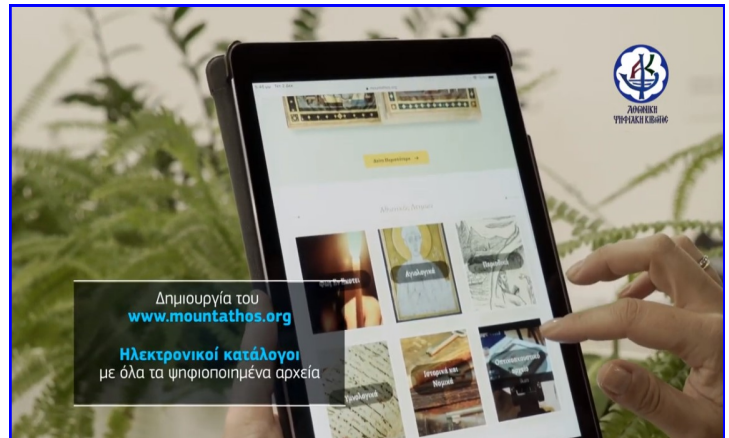


The Mount Athos reveals its treasures online

Implemented by the **OTE Group** on behalf of the **Holy Community of Mount Athos**, the project aims to preserve, protect and present the cultural wealth of the Athonite State, through the digitalization and documentation of the historical archive and works of art, as well as their distribution to the world community via the internet.

The **“Athonite Digital Ark”** is the largest project in Greece in the field of digital culture. It is an ark of knowledge that includes in digital form the cultural stock of the Holy Monasteries of Mount Athos. *“This project took four years to be realized, opening the doors of Mount Athos to the world by putting the Athonite State in the new digital age and on the global cultural map”* explained Konstantinos Patseas, Planning Manager and Project Coordinator of the project. The President and CEO of the OTE Group, Michalis Tsamaz, stated: *“The spiritual and historical heritage of Mount Athos is invaluable. It is our honor to have contributed to its preservation and promotion through the creation of the Athonite Digital Ark”*.

Countless objects from all fields of artistic creation and Orthodox Christian art such as documents, manuscripts, rare books, sculptures, mosaics, portable icons, metalwork and textiles, religious utensils, vestments, coins and architectural drawings, were digitized representing more than 500 hours audio-visual material, as well as almost 25,000 pages of modern, original and unpublished material. The OTE Group also created the web portal www.mountathos.org, in five languages, Greek, English, Bulgarian, Russian, and Serbian, which, with over two million digital illustrations, brings together all aspects of the cultural stock of the Holy Monasteries and gives the opportunity for everyone to enter the sanctuaries of the Holy Land and discover the rare wealth of the Athonite State, through virtual tour services, electronic catalogs with digitized material and educational applications.

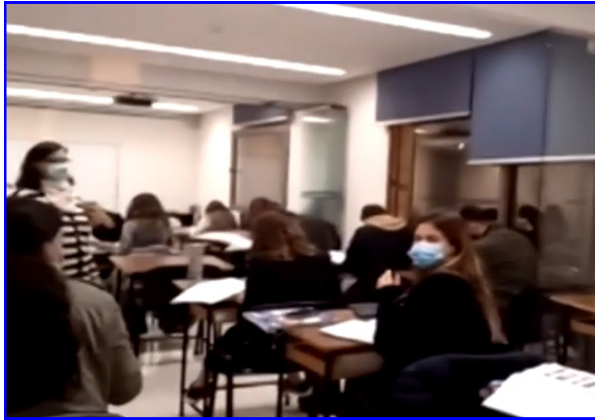


218, Lenorman Street, the story of The Public Tobacco Factory

Lenorman Street in Athens with a length of 2.2 Km, starts from Metaxourgio and Achilleos, passes through Kolonos and ends in the district of Kolokynthos, on Kifissos Avenue. Its landmark, which does not go unnoticed, is the Public Tobacco Factory, located at the 218 of the street; a building of the interwar period, in which tobacco factories were co-located during the 20th century, while today it houses parts of the Library of the Greek Parliament. The road was named after the French philhellene archaeologist Charles Lenorman, who made excavations in Eleusis and the Holy Road, while a monument exists on the hill of Kolonos. The Public Tobacco Factory occupies an entire city block, covering a total area of approximately nine acres. Built between 1927 and 1930, the factory was based on plans by civil engineer, N. Gavalas, designed by civic architects Pavlos Athanasakis and Antonis Ligidopoulos. Its two floors were constructed in a square pattern, surrounding a ground-level patio, and covered by a glass roof atop an iron framework. Over the years the building housed approximately 25 tobacco companies in quick succession. In 2000 the building was transferred in its entirety to the Hellenic Parliament and listed as a historic monument. The restoration of the facades was completed in 2008 and the atrium’s metal roof in 2016.



We are very pleased to announce that our school is back on track, with both virtual and real classes, for adults and kids. Our center remains Covid-19 free; a monumental achievement for all of us, students and staff, considering the circumstances. Our students have been exemplary in demonstrating respect for our protocols and we count on each one of us to continue to do so. We must continue to keep our guard up to be sure we all remain safe.



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. Therefore, it is a must to wear a face mask, use gel or cleaning hands, respect social distancing avoid public spaces and limit gatherings mainly during holidays. The way we celebrate this year must change to avoid spreading the virus to our family and friends. Stay safe and Merry Christmas.

“A TABLE!” an initiative of “A Tout Cœur”

“À Tout Cœur”, a non-profit organization founded by Danielle Eléfériadès, accompanied by many volunteers, has worked tirelessly since its creation to meet the most urgent needs of needy elderly neglected people. A Tout Cœur is especially keen to ensure all residents of these homes dignified living conditions, both physically, medically and morally. The association has published an easy cookbook written in three languages called “À table!” Its format is convenient, bound with spirals, so that the book can be folded easily. Accompanied by photos, it offers personal recipes, shared by the ladies of “À Tout Cœur”. 1,200 copies were sold in 12 months and will be sold during the association's Christmas Expo at ABC Achrafieh, from December 18 to 23, at a price of 7,000 LL.



Christmas in Beirut, a message of hope.

Beirut, clinging to hope, is determined to take the appearance of a colorful city. Thus a huge Christmas tree was set up in Sassine Square as part of the 'Christmas Village' in a tribute to the victims of the August 4 explosion. The names of the martyrs are engraved on a wooden plaque placed next to it. One can see two typical Lebanese facades in memory of the



largely destroyed historic district of Gemmayze integrated in the Christmas tree. Sassine will host Christmas activities until the end of December. The streets of Mar Mikhael and Gemmayzeh have worn the festive attire and are preparing for the rival of Christmas markets, the Beirut Chant concerts, and several environmental and social activities, thanks to the efforts of its people, residents, and individual initiatives.

Launched in Mar Mikhael, the Christmas activities under the title ***Solidarity Christmas Village***, has offered a free concert performed by the graduates and students of the Holy Spirit University of Kasslik. Daily activities are included from 5pm to 10pm. “***In Action Events***” has organized a Christmas Fair on Saint Nicolas Street in Tabaris launching its 7th edition, with music, games, food and drinks.

Recycling Beirut' blast shattered glass into useful products.

Shattered glass was part of the debris seen everywhere in the destroyed areas of Beirut after the devastating blast of August 4. In fact, no glass resisted the hellish explosion transforming windows, curtain walls and glass doors in millions of pieces.

A Lebanese industrial engineer, Ziad Abi Chaker, lead an initiative to transform shattered glass into beautiful and affordable glassware. Along with a group of volunteers, he has saved hundred tons of shards and sent them to be recycled in the North and the South of Lebanon. **Danmission NGO** took the initiative to partner up with Ziad Abi Chaker to collect the broken glass that has been sent to Denmark where twelve thousand colored glass beads were transformed into key chains sold at **Danmission' Webshop**. The collected funds are meant to help rebuilding Beirut” affected regions and support the victims.

