



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



Ta Nea

Volume 3
OCTOBER 2020

Return to selective confinement

Dear Reader,

With the approach of the rainy days, our windows will probably close but not our thoughts nor our hopes for better days! In the absence of effective solutions to our problems, while learning to live with them, adaptation is essential. Despite all the difficulties, the official exams of the Greek language were able to take place, the lessons continue for the new year, and life goes on, with new habits, face masks and disinfectant gels while respecting social distancing.

In this issue, we thought it would be important to retrace some stories from the past that haunt our present thoughts, such the meaning of the "OXI" day, that all Greeks celebrate on October 28th, the looted marbles of the Parthenon mixed with new events related to the Lebanese actual situation.

Enjoy your reading and stay safe!

What is behind the "OXI" day story?

"OXI" day on October 28, 1940, commemorates the anniversary when former military general and Prime Minister of Greece Ioannis Metaxas said: "OXI" (NO) to an ultimatum made by Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini. Metaxas' NO has taken on mythical proportions. It is said that at 3:00 am on October 28, 1940, an ultimatum was handed to Ioannis Metaxas at his home in Kifissia by the Italian Ambassador of Athens, Emanuele Grazi. The ultimatum required the free passage of the Italian army through the Greek-Albanian border and thus began the occupation of some strategic areas of Greece.



When he entered the house of the prime minister, the Italian ambassador handed over to the Greek Prime Minister the ultimatum in which the fascist government of Italy blamed the Greek government for the tolerance shown towards the British military operations in Greek territorial waters. According to the Ambassador Emmanuelle Grazi who wrote in his book titled "The beginning of the end - the operation against Greece", the description of the moment was a bit different than what we know. "We just sat down, and because it was a few minutes after 3, I immediately told him that my Government had instructed me to personally handle a text, which was nothing more than Italy's ultimatum to Greece, in which the Italian Government demanded the free passage of its troops into Greece, from 6:00 am. of 28/10/1940. Metaxas started reading it. Through his glasses, I could see his eyes watering. When he had finished reading he looked me in the face, and in a sad but steady voice said to me, "Alors, c'est la guerre" (Well, we have a war). In this meeting, according to Metaxas' daughter, the following verse tale followed, which Grazi does not mention:

-Grazi: "Pas nécessaire, Excellence", meaning not necessarily Your Excellency

-Metaxas: "Non, c'est nécessaire", meaning no, it is necessary.

At the time, Metaxas expressed Greek popular sentiment, which was the denial of allegiance. This refusal was passed through to the Greek press with the word "OXI" that was first presented as a title in the main article of the newspaper **Greek Future** on October 30, 1940. Locals all over Athens ran through the streets yelling "OXI"!

October 28 represents a spirit of bravery that is still celebrated by Greeks worldwide. Winston Churchill commented at the time of the Greco-Italian war and famously said, "Hence we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks."

August 4th, 2020

The aftermath

IKARIA 2nd Expedition

On the occasion of its second expedition to Beirut, the Greek Navy ship IKARIA delivered 180 tons of construction material, medical and pharmaceutical supplies, generators and dry food intended to the Lebanese people, the Saint George Hospital and many other NGOs, including "Beit El Baraka". Note that additional aid had been collected by the Lebanese Embassy in Greece as well as an additional shipment sent by the Greek Lebanese Cultural Union by sending 51 pallets and 41.000 kg of material. The provisions were collected as a result of cooperation between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the private sector in Greece. According to the National Defence General Staff and following Cyprus' request, the Greek gunship loaded material from the port of Limassol, a Cyprus' offer to the government of Lebanon. The Lebanese Army who collected the load has done the necessary for distributing the aid in accordance with the request of the Greek authorities. Meanwhile, a plane coming from Cyprus landed in Beirut International Airport with 8 tons of humanitarian aid and dry food.



Special Aid to Saint George Hospital

After the devastating explosion of August 4, a member of the board Committee of our community, deeply moved and shocked by the destruction of the Saint George Hospital, (which suffered damages of several million dollars) has deployed all his means to find a solution. Being a Knight of the Congregation of the Order of the Knights of Saint John, he has asked for help the head of his order in the United States .

As a response to his request, around 500 kilos of medical supplies were shipped by air cargo from the US as a donation from the Order of St. John, Knights of Rhodes and Malta, also known as the Knights Hospitalliers who have traditionally cared for the sick and needy.

"To lend a helping hand to St. George Hospital was a simple duty towards an institution that has also a long history of caring for the sick and needy in Lebanon" explained the benefactor member.



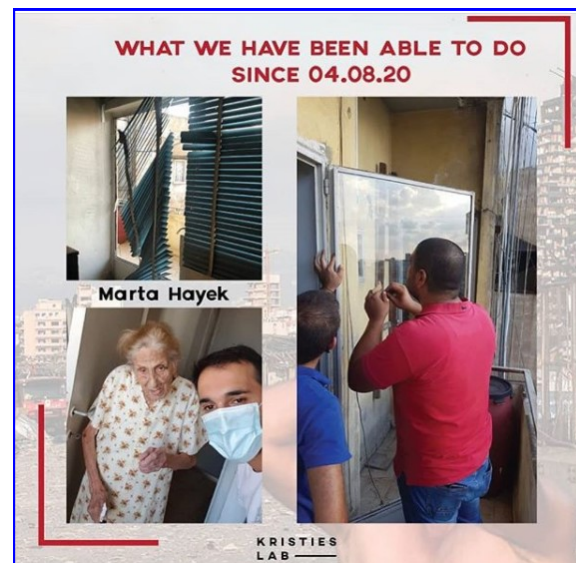
“One Home At A Time”

Kristies Lab, a dynamic agency, launched an initiative to help the most vulnerable in this unprecedented crisis and created an active NGO that initial goal was to repair 50 houses in the devastated area .

ONE HOME AT A TIME aim was to stand in unity with those worst affected by repairing damaged homes and helping vulnerable citizens live with some dignity. *“The reconstruction of Beirut needs our help, and we will dedicate all of our resources to help rebuild the city **One Home At A Time!**”* explained Mrs. Christina Khater who runs **Kristies Lab** and initiated this project. *“Our team is made of young Lebanese architects, interior designers, coordinators/foremen, engineers, and a long list of volunteers who have united to rebuild the homes of the most vulnerable affected by the blast”.* Their immediate goal was to ensure that every citizen of Beirut had access to secure shelter, and ultimately to help them return to their homes, by repairing doors, windows and damaged walls. The process started few days after Beirut Port blast and up to date 67 damaged houses were fixed. All the donations collected were used to purchase construction materials, paint and windows.

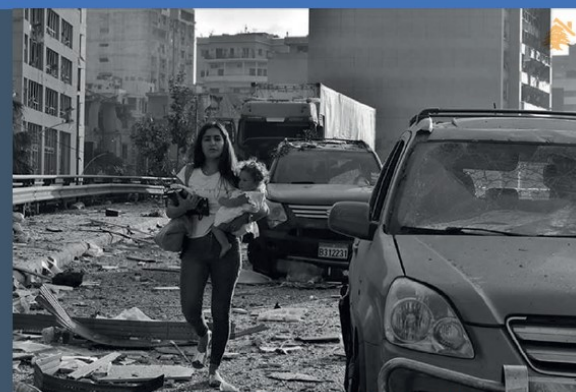
*For donations, kindly visit GoFundme Page: <https://gf.me/u/ypz5kj>

To check about their daily updates, visit their Instagram account @onehomeatimelebanon



OUR MISSION

- 1- Repair doors and windows, and repaint damaged walls.
- 2- If demolition is necessary, we ensure families are put in contact with the appropriate NGOs to seek further help and advice.
- 3- We put families in contact with the appropriate NGO for any other urgent needs.
- 4- Advice from interior designers and architects to help rebuild Beirut homes.



At One Home at a Time, our immediate goal is to ensure that every citizen of Beirut has access to secure shelter, and ultimately to help them return to their homes.

Beit El Baraka an active NGO

Beit el-Baraka is working towards helping those in need, especially senior citizens. The NGO has refurbished and restored many small apartments. In addition to home renovations, the NGO has opened a community supermarket in Karm El Zeitoun. *“Here, people do not pay for their products. Instead, they collect them and take them home gracefully and with dignity.”* explains Mrs. Ibrahimchah the founder. Beit el-Baraka works on three levels: the supermarket, the apartments that are restored for free and medical treatments, which include surgeries, medications and dental care that doctors who support the association, provide to patients.

After the terrible blast of August 4 that destroyed a large part of Beirut, Beit El Baraka has been able to help rebuild and fix the homes of over three thousand people, providing food, water, and shelters through independent funding and donations. All the team has worked immediately unabatedly and multiplied their efforts to provide an emergency home rehabilitation programme that aims to repair as many houses as possible around the Beirut harbour. They were able to fix 3,011 homes and rehabilitated 168 small shops and filled their shelves with free merchandise. But the work is far from done and without international aid, the people of Beirut will never be able to return home. *“International funding is a must. It is impossible to repair an entire city with private donor money. We have severe structural damages, and 300,000 people have been left homeless”* explains the founder, Mrs. Ibrahimchah. Her voice was heard and Beit el Baraka has received donations and international aid, specifically from Greece.



When children are using their talents to support Beirut with an art exhibition at “Beit Beirut”

The Beirut Port explosion affected everyone in the country. Among those who were deeply heartbroken after the blast are the children of Lebanon who had to witness this awful disaster. Despite everything, a group of brave kids in Lebanon used their talents to the challenge to aid their city, Beirut, and its people, with a fundraising exhibition. The event was organized by Aurore Ezzedine, a Beirut-based jewelry designer, and Lama Alamah to support **“Sawa 4 Beirut”** (Together For Beirut), an organization that is helping small businesses affected by the Beirut blast to get back on their feet.

These kids expressed themselves through their paintings and drawings to good use with the clear objective to aid the affected people by the blast.

“One look at this new generation of children will show you that a better future is coming indeed! Until now we continue to receive paintings from children from all regions of Lebanon” said Aurore Ezzedine. *“Our idea at the beginning was purely psychological in order to help our children and their friends to express themselves. No suggestion of any subject had been made. It was only later when we collected their works that we realized that most of them had expressed their feelings about the August 4th explosion. The money collected from the sales will be used to help the victims”.*



News from our Greek Language Center

We are proud to announce that Greek language courses have started on October 1st. Due to the strict restrictions imposed by Covid-19 pandemic, we had to take measures to respect social distances. In a double classroom space, a maximum of 20 students were allowed. Classrooms are disinfected before and after each course. All instructions are respected such as wearing a mask, taking the temperature, and using hand gel. This year, 4 levels are taught to adults and 2 levels to children.



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 Exams

Official exams, sent by the office of the Greek Ministry of Education were held at the Cultural Center from October 13 to 16.

As usual, the copies were sent sealed to Greece where they will be corrected. The exams consist of two parts, a written test and an oral test that is also recorded and sent to Greece.



Greek Ambassador to Lebanon HE. Mrs. Catherine Fountoulaki at the Greek Community Cultural Center

On October 7th, HE Mrs. Fountoulaki, Greek Ambassador to Lebanon, accompanied by the Military Attaché Mr. Costantinos Antonatos were received by the Board Committee at the Cultural Center of the Greek Community.

Mrs. Fountoulaki attended the Board Meeting where several subjects were raised especially the next centenary of the Greek Community as well as the bicentenary of the Greek Revolution of 1821. She then met and discussed with the Greek language students who were attending their class, wishing them good luck for their school year, congratulating them for taking this step with words of encouragement. She felicitated their teacher Mrs. Athina Makri who has been teaching Greek for five consecutive years.



HE. Mrs. Fountoulaki surrounded by the board members during the Board Meeting.



HE. Mrs. Fountoulaki discussing with the students and Mrs. Makri about the Greek Language courses and the teaching of the Greek language.



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 MARBLES OF THE PARTHENON

The **Parthenon Marbles** (Γλυπτά του Παρθενώνα), are a collection of Classical Greek marble sculptures made under the supervision of the architect and sculptor Phidias. They were originally part of the temple of the Parthenon and other buildings on the Acropolis of Athens. The collection is now on display in the **Duveen Gallery** at the British Museum of London.

Two centuries of controversy.

While most people are aware that these ancient treasures – half of the friezes that once decorated the upper edge of the Parthenon – lie in the British Museum, the tale of how they got there is worth telling.

Earl Elgin known as Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Elgin, was an aristocrat with a deep interest in antiquity and the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. At the time in question, this included Greece, which was unfortunately under Turkish occupation force that cared little for the history of Greece and even less about preserving its heritage. From 1801 to 1812, agents of Elgin removed about half of the sculptures of the Parthenon, as well as sculptures from the Propylaea and Erechtheum. The Marbles were transported by sea to Britain. To facilitate transport, the columns' capitals and many metopes and frieze slabs were either hacked off the main structure or sliced into smaller sections, causing irreparable damage to the Parthenon itself. One shipload of marbles on board the British brig *Mentor* was caught in a storm off Cape Matapan in southern Greece and sank near Kythera, but was salvaged at the Earl's personal expense; it took two years to bring them to the surface. Elgin later claimed to have obtained in 1801 an official decree (firman) from the Sublime Porte of Selim III, the Turkish Sultan. This firman has not been found in the Ottoman archives despite its wealth of documents from the same period and its veracity

is disputed. The Acropolis Museum displays a proportion of the complete frieze, aligned in orientation and within sight of the Parthenon, with the position of the missing elements clearly marked and space left should they be returned to Athens. Elgin sold the Marbles to the British government in June 1816 for 35,000£. They were then passed to the British Museum, where they are now on display. Since 1832, Greeks began a series of projects to restore its monuments and retrieve looted art. International efforts to repatriate the Marbles to Greece were intensified in the 1980s by then Greek Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri, and there are now many organizations actively campaigning for the Marbles' return, several united as part of the International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures. The Greek government itself continues to urge the return of the marbles to Athens so as to be unified with the remaining marbles and for the complete Parthenon frieze sequence to be restored, through diplomatic, political and legal means.



The missing parts

The Parthenon Marbles acquired by Elgin include some **21** figures from the statuary from the east and west pediments, **15** of an original 92 metope panels depicting battles between the Lapiths and the Centaurs, as well as **75 meters** of the Parthenon Frieze which decorated the horizontal course set above the interior architrave of the temple. As such, they represent more than half of what now remains of the surviving sculptural decoration of the Parthenon. Elgin's acquisitions also included objects from other buildings on the Athenian Acropolis: a Caryatid from Erechtheum; four slabs from the parapet frieze of the Temple of Athena Nike; and a number of other architectural fragments of the Parthenon, Propylaea, Erechtheum, the Temple of Athene Nike, and the Treasury of Atreus.

Greek News

Striking new Acropolis lighting

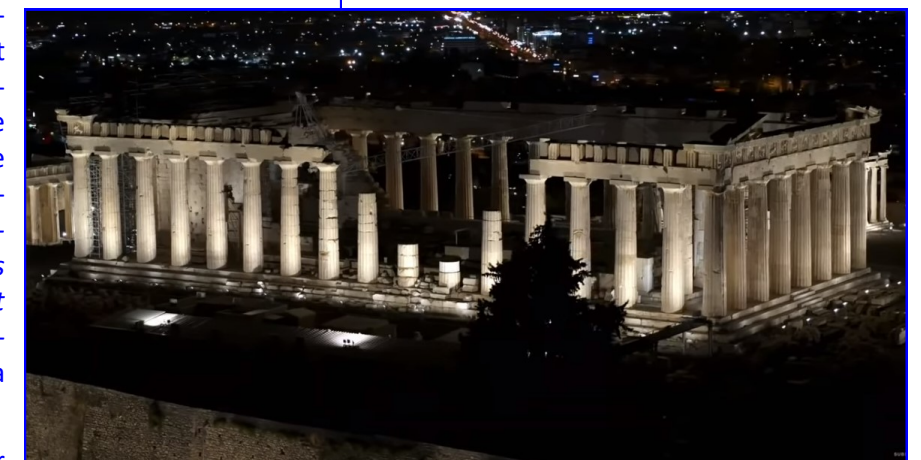
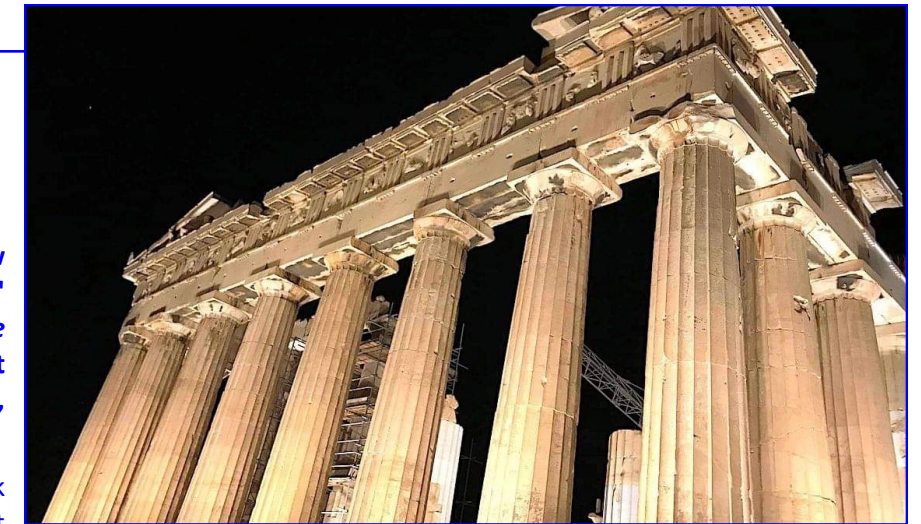
The Acropolis of Athens has a new "three-dimensional illumination" aimed at "revaluing the image of the sacred Rock", an emblematic ancient site in the historic center of the capital, according to the Ministry of Culture.

The inauguration of the project took place on Wednesday September 30, at 8:00 pm. in the presence of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and President of the Republic Katerina Sakellaropoulou. The event was broadcast on the ministry's website and on the website of the Onassis Foundation, which sponsors the project. "In the midst of a pandemic, it is very important that Athens offers its inhabitants and visitors, but also across the planet, an improved image of the Sacred Rock," Minister Lina Mendoni said in a statement.

The new lighting is signed by designer Eleftheria Deko, who designed the lighting for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Athens Olympic Games in 2004.

The new show "offers shades of white on the exterior and interior parts of the site's monuments and shows their relief surface, their depth and their plasticity. Additionally, as part of the technical upgrade, any light pollution created by the lighting has now also been reduced." explains Eleftheria Deko.

In addition to the Parthenon temple, dedicated to Athena, goddess of Antiquity, many ancient monuments which are on the Acropolis of Athens and around the site, are illuminated in their own way to "reflect their volume and their geometry", according to the ministry.



Microsoft announce One billion "Cloud" investment in Greece

After nine months of negotiations with Greece, Microsoft Corp. announced "GR for GRowth" initiative, a significant step for Greece, with technology as a catalyst for growth, providing people and businesses the tools and expertise to thrive and innovate in the digital era.

Microsoft Corp. has agreed to build a series of new data centers in Greece, in a move the Greek government says will boost entrepreneurship and encourage other major companies to invest in the country. The agreement also includes digital-skills training programs for some 100,000 government and private sector workers as well as educators and students. The "ongoing" investment will be the biggest by the U.S. technology giant in its 28 years of operations in Greece.

going economic recovery. It's not something we do in every country" Smith said.

With this agreement, Greece becomes the first country in southeastern Europe to host a Microsoft data centers. The company is already working on an artificial intelligence project for the ancient city of Olympia, scheduled to be ready early next year.

"This significant investment is a reflection of our confidence in the Greek economy, in the Greek people and the Greek government," Microsoft President Brad Smith said at a ceremony held at the Acropolis Museum Monday October 5, where he was joined by Greece Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Theodosis Michalopoulos, general manager of Microsoft for Greece, Cyprus and Malta. "In part, this reflects confidence that our world-leading datacenter technology can help enable innovation and growth across Greece's economy. In addition, this large investment reflects our optimism about Greece's future, its forward-leaning government and the country's on-

Microsoft will accelerate digitization of the public sector and businesses with access to local cloud services . The new data center region in Greece will bring Microsoft's announced cloud regions to 63 covering 140-plus countries. Companies will get local access to Microsoft's Azure cloud platform and services, Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365 and Power Platform.



THE STORY OF KING MINOS RING

The debate on the famous ring of King Minos", discovered in 1928, was settled, after it remained lost for 73 years until it was given to the authorities in 2001. According to the Higher Council of Greek Archeology and the Greek & International Committee, after careful examination, they proved the authenticity of the seal from the 15th century BC.

The story starts in 1928, when a boy, Michalis Papadakis found a ring by accident at the archaeological site of Knossos. Two years later, Emmanouil, the boy's father, handed it over to the village priest, Father Nikolaos Polakis. Yet, before giving it away, he carved a line on the ring with his knife in order to mark its originality . Father Polakis asked archeologists about its authenticity and later on presented it to an English archaeologist with the intention of selling it. It was declared false because one of the archaeologists decided it was not the original . The ring was therefore returned to the priest.

The story of the ring was forgotten for decades. In 2001, Giorgos Kazantzis, a retired police officer, inherited the house of the priest who was the last person in Greece who had had possession of the priceless ring. Kazantzis found the ring in the fireplace and again handed it over to the relevant Greek archaeological authorities who declared the ring to be authentic. Kazantzis received the modest sum of 400 Euros for his find. The actual monetary value of the ring was estimated to be €400,000, although its cultural value is incalculable.

Official news from the Greek Consular Office

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This section has been specially created by the Greek Community of Beirut with the kind collaboration of the consulate of Greece in order to better serve Greek citizens who wish to have information on all administrative formalities before presenting their requests.

Consular Office can be reached by email at grcon.bei@mfa.gr

Consular fees

Consular Office of the Embassy of Greece in Lebanon will accept payments for consular fees in USD only.

Prices will be calculated at the beginning of each month, on the basis of the Euro-USD exchange rate.

You are kindly requested to provide the exact amount in USD.

Consular Fees
October Exchange Rate (To Be Confirmed on September 30th): 1 EURO=1,2 USD

Services	EURO	USD
VISA C	80	96
VISA D	180	216
Greek Passport (Adults)	84.40	101.28
Greek Passport (Minors)	73.60	88.32
GREEK/EU Citizen signature legalisation	10	12
Third Country Citizen signature legalisation	30	36
Legalisation of Lebanese Foreign Ministry stamp (on official Lebanese documents)	30	36
Power of Attorney	60/sheet	72/sheet
Marriage Registration	10	12
Birth Registration	10	12
Date of Birth Act	10	12
Domicile Transfer Exemptions Certificate	120	144
Permanent Resident Certificate	50	60
Any other certificate	10	12
True copy of the Original Consular Act	10	12