



## Scientific Council Meeting – Chios

23-24 November 2012

### **Press Release**

The International Congress under the theme “Our response to the fires – Working together for a better Chios”, organized by the “Maria Tsakos” Foundation – International Center of Maritime Research and Tradition N.G.O., under the auspices of the Ministry of Mercantile Marine and the Aegean, held at the Homerion Cultural Center of Chios concluded its works successfully on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

The aim of the Congress was to analyse and examine the impact on the flora and economy of Chios following the devastating fires of last August; and to make recommendations for the recovery of the island and the healing of its wounds therefrom. At the same time, the Congress aimed at contributing to the creation of strong infrastructures for the prevention, response to, and diminution of similar calamities in the future, as well as for the rehabilitation and further economic development and growth of the island.

The programme of the Congress provided for sessions totalling 20 speeches, which were delivered by prominent scientists and other experts from Greece and abroad, including representatives of the United Nations Secretary – General, the European Union Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy matters and the Ecumenical Patriarch.

In addition to the founders of the Foundation, (Captain Panagiotis N. Tsakos, his wife Dr. Irene Saroglou-Tsakos and their son, Mr. Nikos P. Tsakos), the Congress was attended by the Minister of Mercantile Marine and the Aegean, Mr. Kostis Moussouroulis, the former President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr George Vassiliou, the Chairman of the Foundation, Mr. Efthymios Mitropoulos, who chaired the meeting, and the Bishop of Chios, Psara and Oinousses, Mr Marcos. The Congress was also attended by representatives of co-competent Ministries, i.e. Mr Ioannis Spilanis (Secretary – General of the Ministry of Mercantile Marine and the Aegean), Mr Serafim Tsokas (Secretary – General of the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructures, Transportation and Network), Mr Georgios Amorgianiotis (Special Secretariat of the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change) and Mr Athanasios Panagiotopoulos (Secretary – General of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food).

Mr Kostas Triantafyllos MP, the Mayor of Chios Mr. Polydoros Lamprinoudis and the Vice-Governor Mr. Constantinos Ganiaris also participated in the Congress delivering speeches.



The scientific session was chaired by Professor Christos Zerefos, member of the Academy of Athens and the Ministry of Mercantile Marine and the Aegean representative at the Experts Commission for the Chios fires, while the first introductory session was chaired by Mrs Maria Tsakos-Kouimanis, member of the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Dr George Gratsos, President of the Hellenic Chamber of Shipping, Professor Kostas Grammenos, Mr. Symeon Palios and Mr. Thomas Zafeiras, Vice-Presidents and Member of the Board of Directors, respectively were also present.

In his introductory speech, Captain Panagiotis N. Tsakos urged the chairpersons, speakers and participants to contribute, as substantially and effectively as possible to the works of the Congress, expressing also his belief that its success would have positive results for Chios, the islands of the Aegean and the Greek and International Community, who had promptly expressed their sympathy and solidarity.

At the end of its deliberations, the Congress adopted unanimously three Resolutions:

- The first, scientifically documented, contains conclusions and recommendations addressed to the Government and the private sector to ensure that Chios can face effectively similar situations in the future and, in short-term, to take all necessary measures for the recovery of the island's economy (particularly as far as the mastic production, the beekeeping and the livestock are concerned);
- The second Resolution aims at recognizing the selfless acts committed by volunteers during the fires by mostly young people from Chios, Mytilene, Samos and Ikaria. Through this resolution, the Foundation is invited to establish annual Awards of Recognition of volunteering acts committed in Chios and throughout the Greek territory; while
- The third Resolution aims at the protection and preservation of specific trees and plants in certain areas of Chios and their proclamation as Natural Monuments.

Commenting on the successful outcome of the Congress, Captain Panagiotis Tsakos said: "I am very satisfied that the Congress was crowned with undoubted success in meeting and responding to its objectives. The high level of co-operation among all those who participated in its planning, organization and running deserves a special mention. The same spirit of close and admirable cooperation prevailed during the Congress and this has resulted in the meeting making decisions that I have no doubt will benefit Chios and all the Aegean and Ionian Sea islands which might face, in the



future, emergency situations, such as those we witnessed in this truly and deeply maritime island last August. Our Foundation will stand by every activity needed and initiative taken for this purpose.”