

## **Open Letter of Greeks Abroad in the Face of Increasing Turkish Aggression**

To:

Dr. Kostas Vlasis, Deputy Minister of Greeks Abroad

Cc:

The President of Greece and the President of Cyprus

The Prime Minister of Greece

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Greece and Cyprus

The Ministers of National Defence of Greece and Cyprus

The Archbishops of the Church of Greece and Cyprus

The Chiefs of the Army of Greece and Cyprus

The Presidents of the Political Parties of Greece and Cyprus

The Presidents and Deputies of the Parliaments of Greece and Cyprus

The Deputies of Greece and Cyprus in the European Parliament

The Media of Greece and Cyprus

30/12/2019

Honourable Deputy Minister Dr. Kostas Vlasis,

Congratulations to you on your recent appointment as Deputy Foreign Minister of Greeks Abroad. We wish you a successful tenure in this sensitive and important position which coincides with a crucial juncture for Hellenism. It is because of these critical times for our country that we are sending you this letter as a reminder and confirmation that Hellenism is much bigger than the borders of our small country and we, the Hellenes abroad, are here and present, ready to respond to the needs of our homeland.

Greece and Cyprus have been facing escalating Turkish aggression the details of which you are well aware of. Distinguished specialists, experienced politicians and even the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Panagiotopoulos, stress that the possibility of military conflict cannot be ruled out. We would all wish to remain prudent and calm so that military conflict is avoided. However, Turkey's continued aggressive actions – of unforeseeable extent – indicate that conflict is perhaps closer than during the Imia crisis. Therefore, within the context of defending the sovereign rights of our country, we strongly feel that we should all be ready for any eventuality. We, the diaspora Greeks from all four corners of the world, are living cells of Hellenism and ambassadors of a great civilization that resonates globally to the present time. Our relationship with our homeland is not only emotionally felt, but within us is rooted a deep sense of duty. Many diaspora Greeks have been important benefactors or have given their lives in battle to defend our nation.

Today, when Hellenism is in a phase of demographic contraction and has been tested for years - particularly in the economic field – a new range of challenges and risks finds us relatively weakened. At such a juncture, a call to all Greeks is required for assistance. Diaspora Hellenism is equal to about a second Greece in population, thriving and proud. Many in the diaspora have reached high positions in academic institutions, business, political parties, and others enjoy a worldwide reputation for their artistic work. Thousands of volunteers, within associations and parishes around the globe, help keep our traditions alive, while many others cultivate philhellenism in many countries.

**In view of the above, there is the possibility of activating a multilevel mechanism that can assist the State in defending our national interests whenever necessary.** But the thousands of individuals that make up this mosaic of organized communities and prominent personalities should be utilized in the right place, at the right time. In other words, a centralized, well-thought-out strategic plan, guided by national interest, is required in order to benefit our nation to the fullest extent.

Our assistance will be twofold, both from abroad and from within Greece. Joining the effort will be academics, influential international personalities who can lobby members of government, artists, business leaders and entrepreneurs, and others whose talents can be utilized, even at the eleventh hour, to collaboratively support the work of the government. In the armed forces, retraining of reserve officers who live abroad—in compliance with their status of citizenship abroad—as well as other willing Greeks, could be organized immediately. Lists of professional specialties by country, especially medical personnel should be established and coordinated by our embassies and consulates. The creation of a secure communication platform and updating directories of associations of Greeks, philhellenes and other players, to conduct effective consultation in case of urgent need for action must be accomplished. Of course, worldwide Greek communities have their own internal organization and already have ways of interacting with each other. You can be encouraged by existing global Hellenic infrastructures that could be further improved with the assistance of specialists.

It is worth stressing that the activation of international Hellenism will send multiple messages across Greece and beyond. These messages of encouragement, determination, and confidence to our compatriots in Greece and towards those who threaten us are one more weapon in our arsenal to boost our deterrent effect and not just by military means.

We therefore encourage you, through your institutional role, to work (together with other ministries and the military forces) for this purpose as soon as possible, as developments leave no room for complacency. It is our desire for Greece and Cyprus to prosper in peace and security and we, diaspora Greeks, to work alongside institutional agents - who are the guardians of prosperity – as we have always done.

Such times require vigilance, responsibility, planning, ingenuity, courage and faith. We will be at your side and will assist you in any way possible in a process of comprehensive and coordinated action. We will also be constructive, rigorous judges of your work. As you know, expatriate Greeks place partisan or other allegiances aside, putting homeland above all else. That is why the decision was made to write to you in the hope that you will lead in this effort.

Our best wishes for success in this endeavour.

Respectfully yours,

(Signatures)