

## **Strengthening Ties: Department of Greek Education Meets with Ministry of Education in Greece**



This meeting was significant as it marked the first time a director from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was invited by the Ministry of Education. It provided a crucial opportunity for attendees to better understand the challenges faced in preserving our language and culture in the United States. Dr. Anastasios Koularmanis, Director of the Greek Education Department, and Fr. Gregory Stamkopoulos, Co-Director, participated in discussions with Deputy Minister of Education, Religion, and Sport, Mrs. Zetta M. Makri.

Deputy Minister Makri welcomed the attendees and expressed her gratitude for their visit. She specifically acknowledged the vital contributions of Greek teachers working in American schools and Greek-language departments. The Minister listened attentively as the Greek delegation outlined the challenges faced by educators in these institutions.

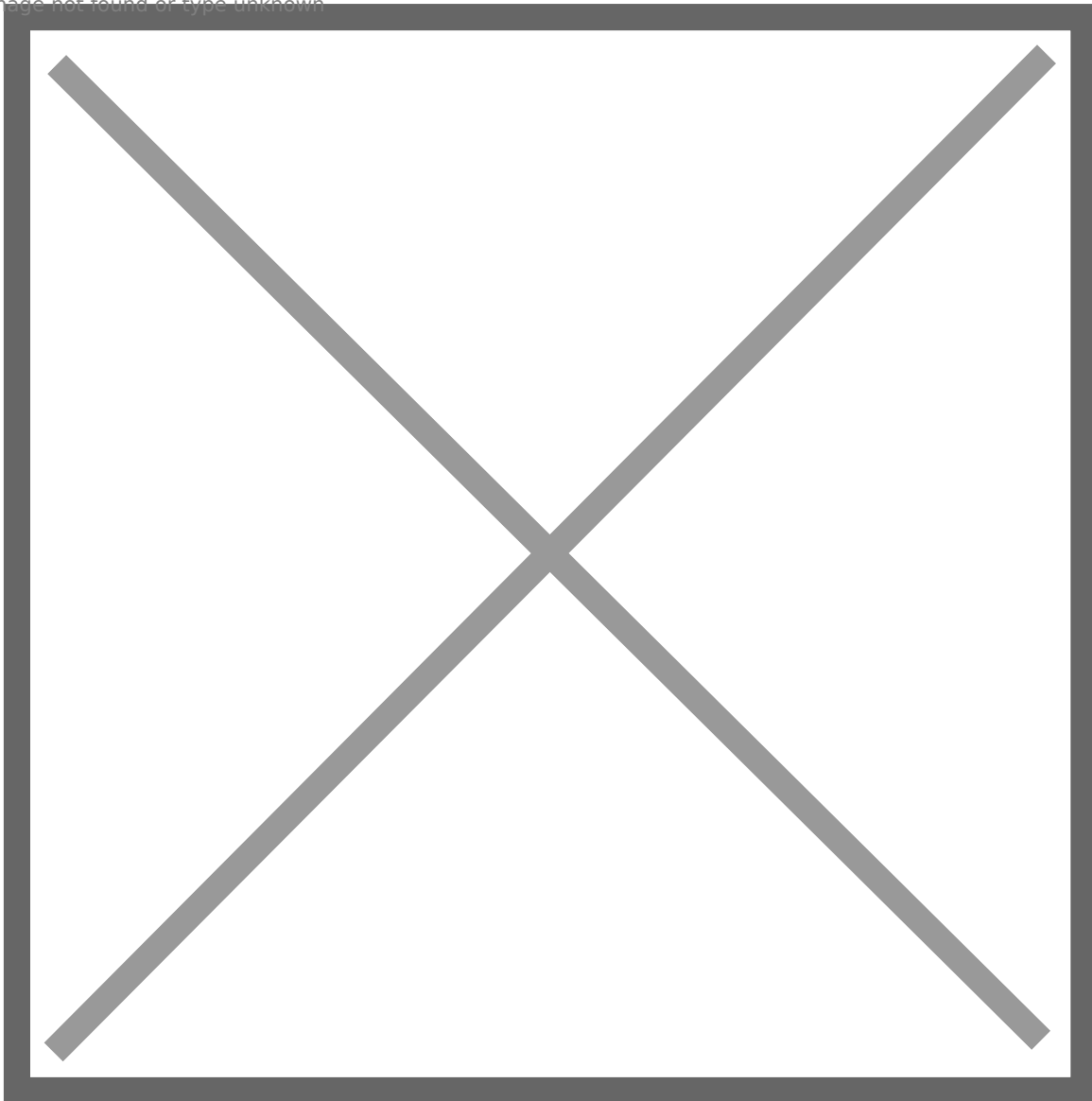
Dr. Koularmanis stated, "This meeting represents a crucial opportunity for collaboration. By sharing our experiences and challenges, we can work together to enhance Greek education and ensure that our language and culture thrive in the United States."

Makri emphasized that the Ministry's primary focus is to ensure the effective operation of educational units abroad. This includes the timely staffing of Greek-language education programs in accordance with the recommendations of the responsible Foreign Education Coordinators. During the meeting, the Undersecretary of Education invited the representatives to share their proposals and concerns, promising to review their requests and provide feedback aimed at enhancing cooperation in promoting Greek language and culture in the United States.

Following this, Dr. Koularmanis and Fr. Stamkopoulos met with Mr. George Kalantzis, Secretary General of Religious Affairs of Greece. The discussion was very

fruitful, focusing on potential future partnerships with the Department of Greek Education and how they can collaborate effectively moving forward.

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During both meetings, Dr. Koularmanis shared materials produced by the department aimed at teaching the Greek language, culture, and faith. This presentation highlighted the ongoing efforts to preserve our language abroad. There was also a fruitful discussion on how this material could be utilized globally to enhance Greek education.

Both Mrs. Makri and Mr. Kalantzis expressed their profound love, support, and respect for His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, conveying their desire to continue supporting his educational mission. Their heartfelt commitment underscored the importance of unity in advancing the educational objectives of the Greek community.

Also present were Mr. Panagiotis Passas, General Director of International and European Education for the Hellenic Diaspora; Ms. Vassiliki Bernikou, Director of Intercultural, Expatriate, European, and Minority Education; Mr. Vasilios Bairaktaris, Head of the Department responsible for Schools and Students in Greek schools and Greek language courses abroad, along with his associate, Mrs. Eleni Chrysikaki; and Mr. Vasilios Kalogerakis, Head of the Human Resources Department for Greek Educators abroad, accompanied by his associate, Ms. Vaia Koumpogianni. This gathering marked an important step toward strengthening the ties between Greek education in America and the Ministry of Education in Greece.

Photos: GOARCH/Department of Greek Education.

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