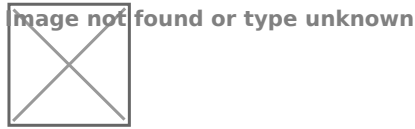


Children from Romania visit the Ecumenical Patriarchate



On Tuesday, 7 July, a group of children from Romania, currently participating in the Patriarchal Children's Camp on the Island of Proti, visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where they were received by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

According to an official report issued by the Camp, the day's excursion included visits to several historic and spiritual landmarks in Constantinople.

The group departed early in the morning by ferry to Kabataş, before continuing by bus. Their first stop was the picturesque waterfront district of Ortaköy (Mesachorio), where they offered prayers at the marble Church of Saint Phocas. Following a brief guided tour, they proceeded to Eminönü Square and the historic Egyptian (Spice) Bazaar.

The pilgrims then visited the Church of the Panagia of Balino, recently restored through considerable effort. There they learned about the history of the church and its ongoing ministry. The campers expressed their gratitude to Mr Symeon Soltaridis, President of the Community, and his collaborators for their warm hospitality, generous refreshments, and for providing transportation.

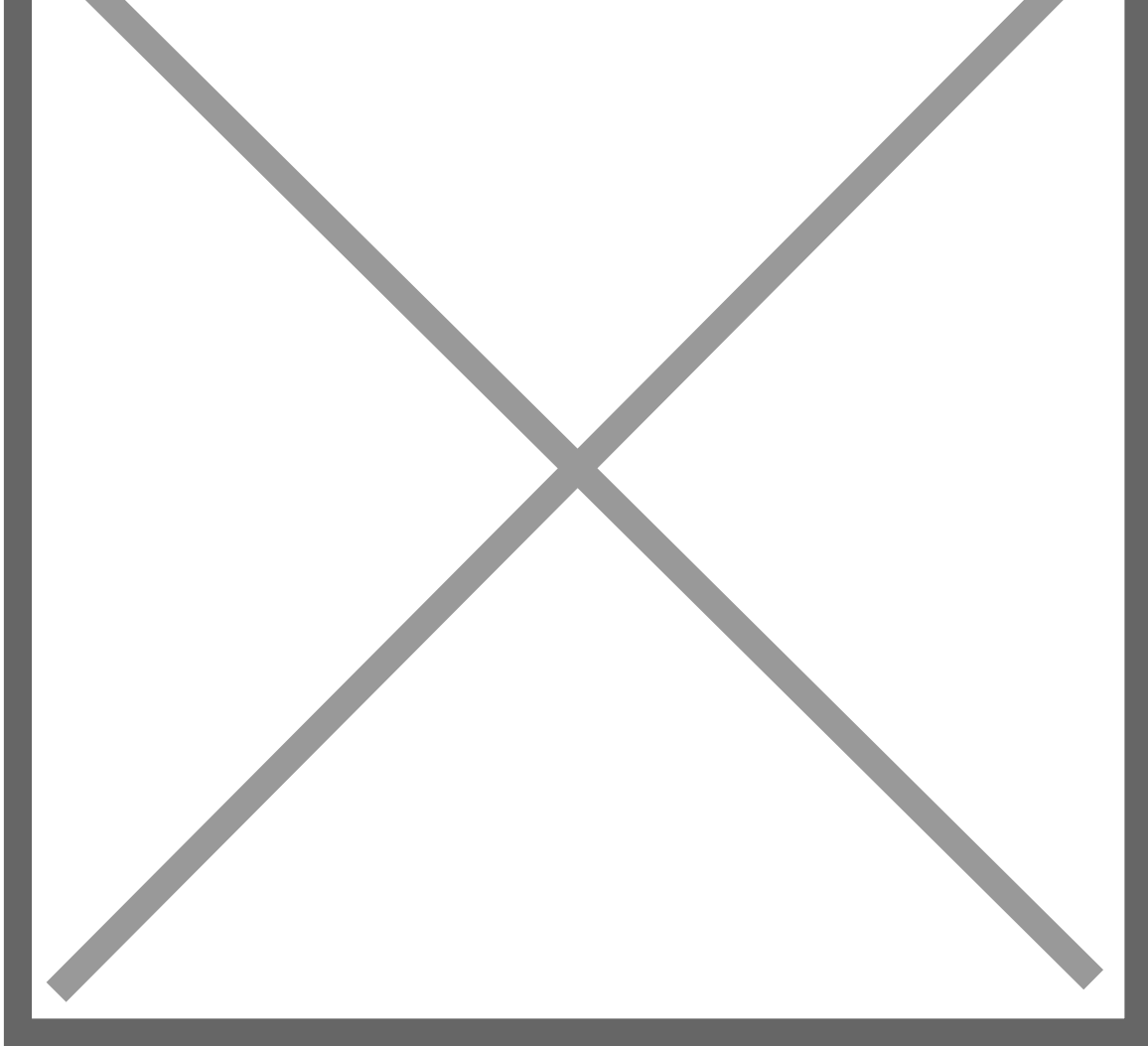
The next destination was the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with a brief stop at the historic Patriarchal Great School of the Nation. After learning about the history of the Greek Orthodox community of Constantinople and the life of its historic communities, the children toured the Patriarchal Church of Saint George before being received by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in the Patriarchal Throne Room, where they expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the hospitality extended to them by the Mother Church of Constantinople.

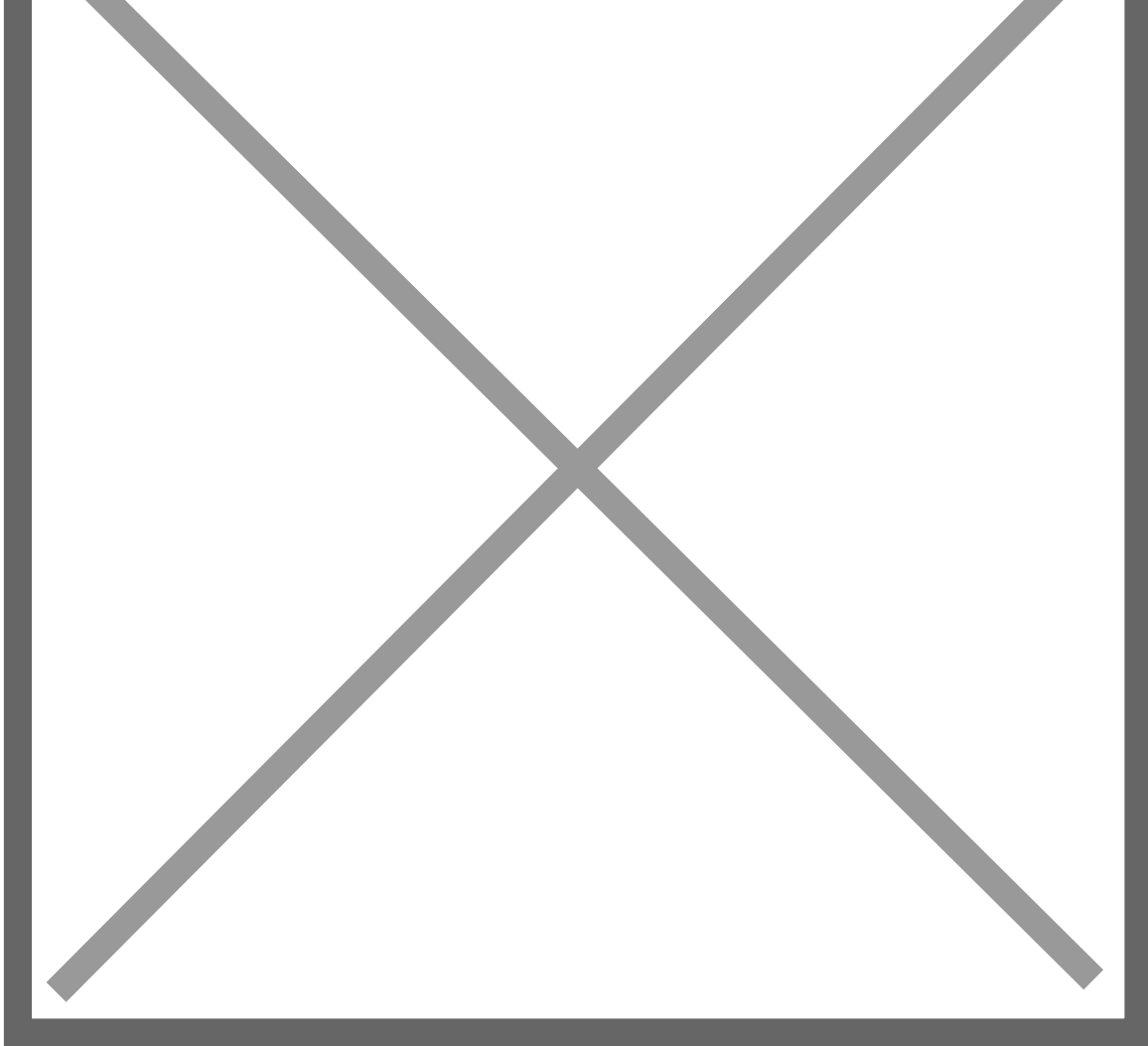


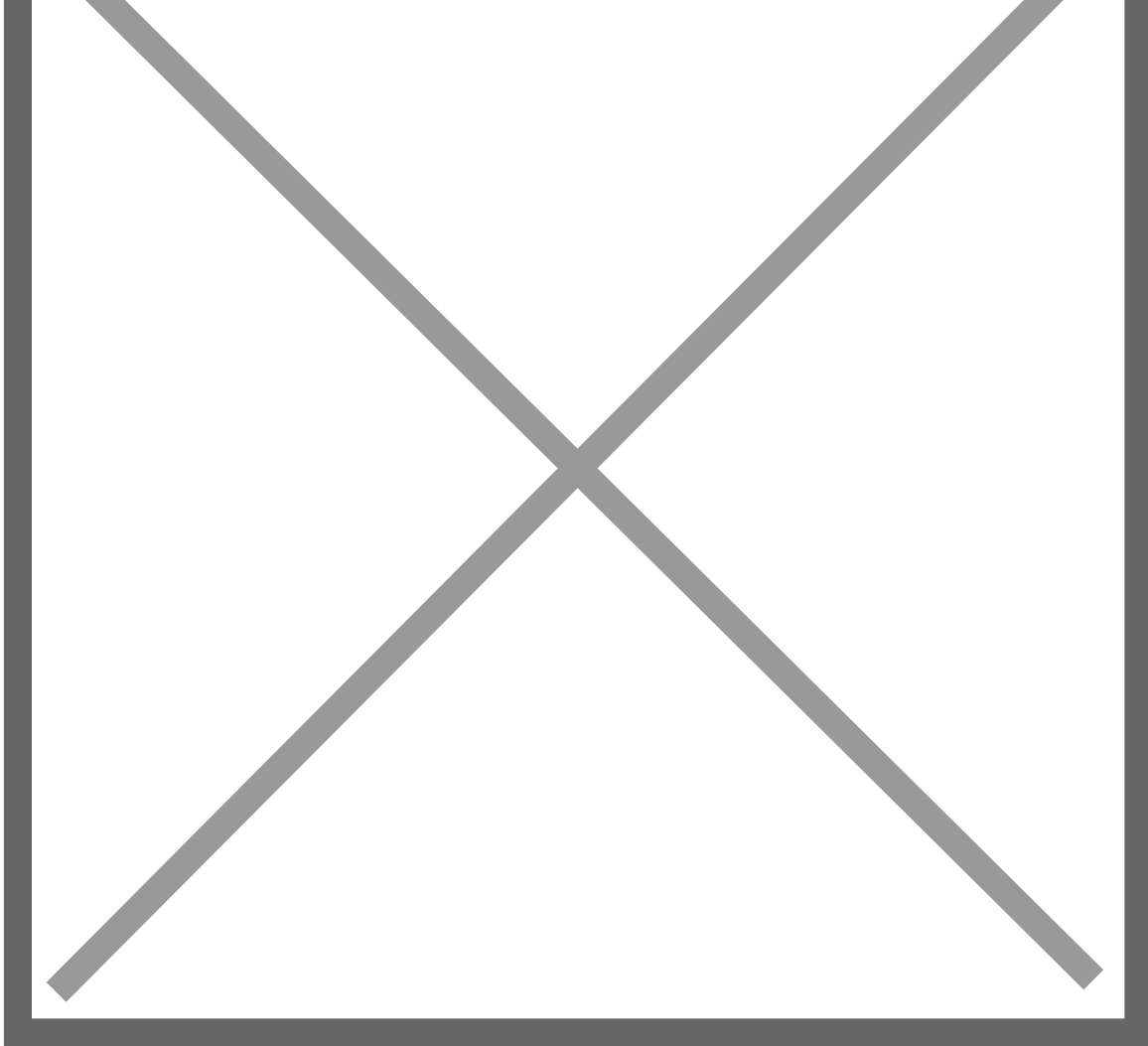
At the conclusion of the audience, the children presented a programme of traditional Greek dances, which greatly impressed His All-Holiness and those accompanying him. Also present was the President of the Coordinating Council of the Patriarchal Children's Camp, His Eminence Elder Metropolitan Apostolos of Derkoi.

On their return journey, the group made a pilgrimage to the Church of Saint Nicholas at Cibali. There they were guided around the church by volunteer Sotiris Nikolaos Kiosker, who lives with his family in the church's residential quarters. The family warmly welcomed the visitors and treated them to homemade delicacies prepared by his mother.

The day concluded with the group returning to the hill of Proti Ierani at sunset, bringing to a close a memorable day of pilgrimage, fellowship and spiritual enrichment.







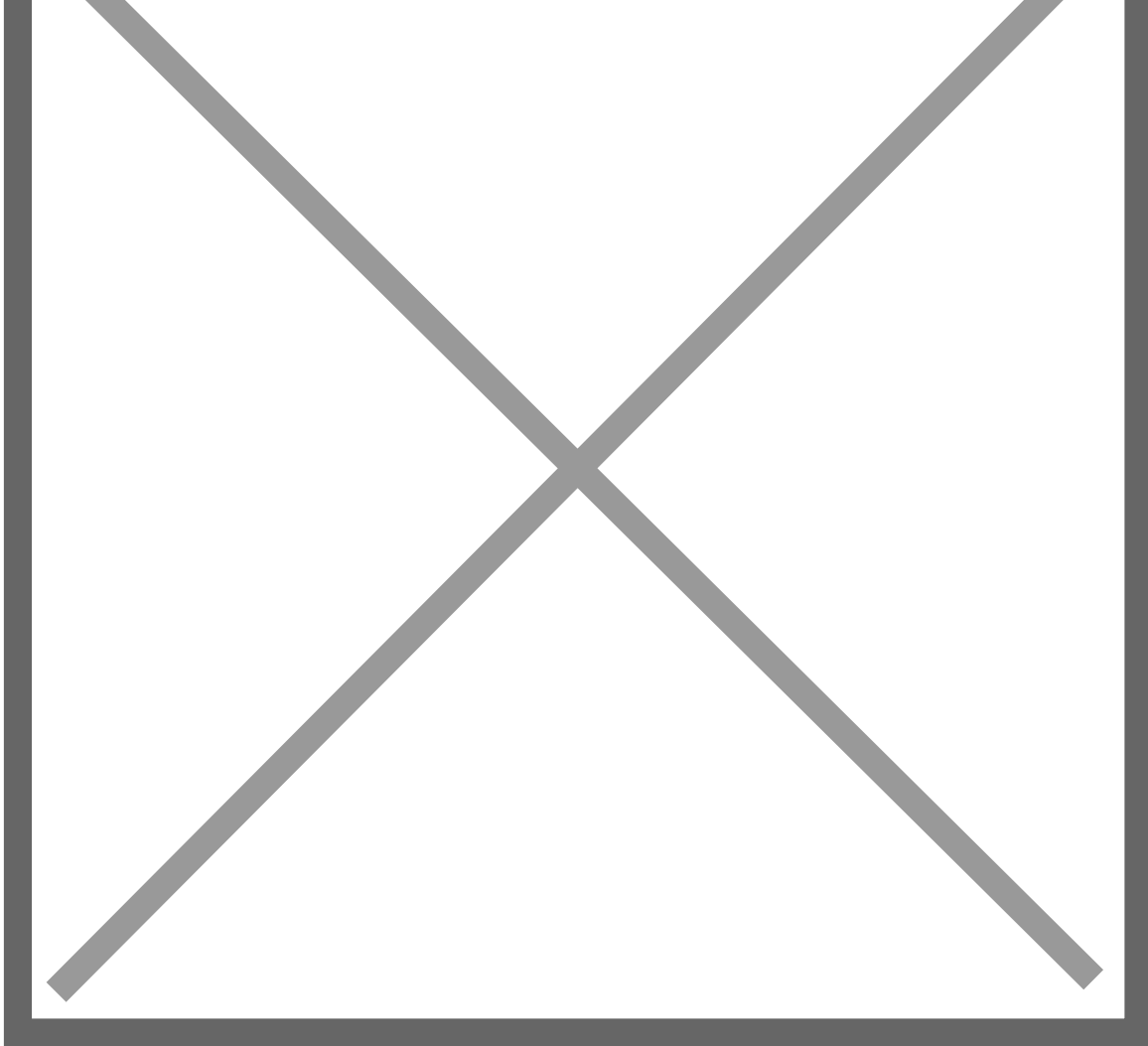
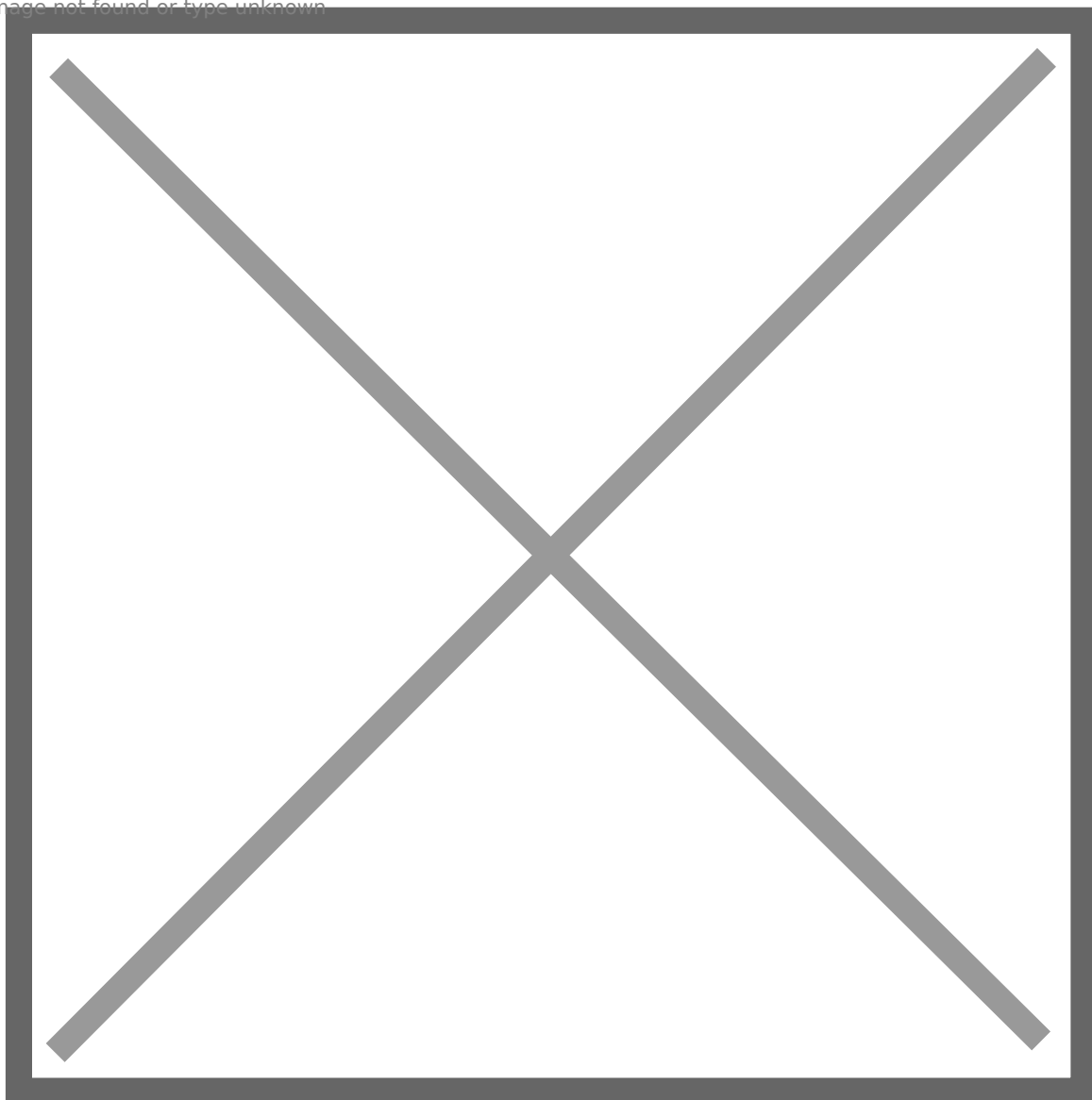


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