

PM Mitsotakis concludes historic visit to ethnic Greek districts in southern Albania



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Thursday pledged to do whatever he can to resolve issues affecting the Greek ethnic minority in Albania, speaking during a tour of the Adriatic country's south, and specifically from the town of Dervicani.

Mitsotakis first arrived at the historic coastal town of Himare by helicopter, before travelling to Livadhe and then on to Dervicani.

The occasion marked the first visit by a standing Greek prime minister to southern Albania, home of an indigenous Greek ethnic minority, since his father Constantine visited as prime minister in 1991.

During the one-day visit, the Greek premier was accompanied in part by Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, who quoted the late Greek prime minister and father of the current premier, by saying "...the Greek ethnic minority is a bridge of friendship between the two countries...what was true 31 years ago still holds true today."

Both leaders visited a secondary school in Dervişani and the Holy Cathedral of the Dormition of the Theotokos, where they were greeted by the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania's Metropolitan of Gjirokastr, His Eminence Demetrios.

A children's choir later sang Christmas carols for the visiting delegations.

Mitsotakis reiterated his government's support for pupils studying at ethnic Greek schools, where they are taught three languages – Greek, Albanian and English.

“We want to work together with these children, so they can stay at their homeland, to prosper in their own country. And as Albania prospers, so will the Greek ethnic community prosper.”

He also reiterated his support for Albania's future accession to the European Union.