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## **Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden's Greeting at the SONE Event**



1000 Participants on Stage Held at the Ioannis Vellidis Conference Center

Thessaloniki, 4 March 2023

V. Rev. Iakovos, Representative of His All-Holiness Metropolitan Anthimos of Thessaloniki,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Clergy,

Honorable State and Local Government Officials and Members of the Armed Forces,

Members of the Academic Community,

Honored Guests,

My beloved brethren,

Amidst this period of national mourning that we are all going through at the present time, having traveled from Scandinavia to Greece's co-capital and being afforded the exceptional honor of representing His All-Holiness Ecumenical

Patriarch Bartholomew, whose warmest congratulations and blessings I convey to you, I feel that as I stand here today, before all of you, something theoretically impossible has taken place.

Tonight, we see the result of something more than just a remarkable initiative. We bear witness to the dynamism of collaboration, as we are about to enjoy the melody of over 1,000 participants who have all come together on stage under the direction of maestro Mr. Evangelos Arabantzis, SONE's (Youth Symphony Orchestra of Greece) conductor, a modern-day "Apollo leading the Muses," to whom I express, together with all the young musicians and singers, members of the choirs, philharmonic orchestras, and musical schools from all across Greece and Cyprus, the heartfelt congratulations of myself and all the other spectators gathered here!

The words of Igor Stravinsky ring true tonight: "Like all of man's creative abilities, music is the search for unity, communication, a connection with our fellow man and with our Creator."

Over one thousand musicians will now perform works by Theodorakis, Loizos, and Savvopoulos. All of the aforementioned, who are famous for the innovations they brought to Greek music, each from their own standpoint, succeeded in achieving the creative integration of the values that have been safeguarded by our tradition. They continue to inspire emotions and awaken the senses, which is why their music serves as an inalienable part of our collective identity; a reference-point of our society and era.

I believe that the adage uttered by the famous tragic playwright Euripides has been fully realized at tonight's gathering: "I hope I'll never be without songs." Therefore, let us fill our hearts with the melodies of this concert, dedicated to the memory of our brethren who tragically perished in the train collision at Tempi.

And you, performers, continue to combine your artistic contribution with philanthropy. Sincere congratulations are also due to the President of MAZI Ms. Alexandra Gogousi and the board of directors for helping to make tonight's musical event possible.

Warm congratulations are also due to all of you! You ,1,000 ambassadors of our history and tradition, have made Greece proud, both inside our nation's borders and beyond them as well. Thank you.

Photo credit: SONE, Benedict & Tania Svedberg.

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