



† Ο ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ
ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ

**ADDRESS OF H.B. THE ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS
CHRYSOSTOMOS AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE OFFICE
OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHURCH OF CYPRUS TO
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Your Eminence, Bishop of Eumeneia, Representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,
Your Eminences and Graces, representatives of the sister Orthodox Churches,
Dear Representatives of other Christian Churches,
Dear Mr. Kyprianou, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus,
Dear Mrs Androulla Vasileiou, Commissioner of the European Union,
Honourable Ambassadors,
Esteemed Members of the European and other Parliaments,
Dear brothers and sisters and children in Christ,

We would like to express our joy and gratitude, to our most merciful God, with whose grace and infinite Mercy, we have achieved today the return, of the most ancient church to its homeland.

In 45 AD the first European Official, the Roman governor of Cyprus Proconsul Sergios Pavlos (Paul) embraced Christianity. From that moment, through Cyprus, the gate way of Christianity has opened to Europe. Since then Christianity has brought a very positive way of life to the European citizens.

At first, the concept of the European Union began with the aim of economic benefit, but soon, it was realized that just this aim was not the safe foundation for the unification of Europe. Therefore, it is correct to believe that the European unification will be established mainly on the basis of diachronic principles and values.

Today, dear brothers and sisters, the Church of Cyprus is establishing its Representation in order to work on these same principles

and values. Furthermore, our Church will convey the Orthodox spirituality and a real meaning of Christian love which its people have.

The purpose of our office here is to get acquainted with the representatives of all member-states of the EU and to cooperate for the achievement of peace, progress and the spirit of love in all the world.

Unfortunately our efforts cannot remain in these ideological purposes only, since our own country, as you know, has suffered one of the worst kind of invasions resulting to the Turkish occupation of the island, with thousands of dead, missing and displaced persons. Therefore we cannot remain indifferent vis-à-vis this unacceptable act and situation and the plunder of our cultural heritage. It is our moral duty to report to all institutions of the European Union on the continuous Turkish occupation of the 37% of the territory of Cyprus, member-state of the European family. Hence it is our obligation to consistently update our European partners on the unceasing destruction, looting and desecration of our monuments by the Turkish military forces and the illegal pseudo-state.

Our churches have been looted and destroyed and we are not allowed to repair them even with our own expenses, despite all our efforts. On the contrary, their own sacred monuments on the free regions have been maintained by our government. In addition the Turkish-Cypriots are allowed to use these mosques whenever they wish. We even offered to provide them any facilitation they need, which they bluntly rejected.

The Turkish army, the settlers, the sacrilegious and illicit dealers in antiquities have let to the theft of 50,000 icons, frescoes, religious mosaics and other religious relics from the places of worship which were there until 1974. Fortunately many of these religious treasures were located in European and other auction houses. After coordinated efforts by the Church and the Republic of Cyprus they have been repatriated, after we had paid huge amounts of money.

As church we believe that if Turkey wants to have a European course, it has to allow us, Orthodox Christians, to repair our destructed churches and give us the opportunity to visit them whenever we wish, in order to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and all the Holy Sacraments of our Christian religion. These occupied regions are of great religious and historical importance for us and are identified with our religious tradition from the onset of Christianity, and later, that is to say for two thousand years.

Consequently Turkey should not be seen only as a big economic market and we should not satisfy all their demands. Instead it should be treated as a country which must comply with the European supreme ideals and institutions. Only then, Europe will achieve its objectives and convey the message to any candidate member-state that if it wants to have a European course it should behave in a European manner.

At this point I would like to emphasize that, if Turkey continues to ignore our requests, then we will be obliged to address to the European Court of Human Rights and claim all legal remedies with respect to our inalienable rights.

Dear friends,

I would like to express our deepest thanks to all those who contributed in the realization of the establishment of these offices. I address my thanks and my sincere gratitude especially to His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his precious support in the operation of our offices, which are within his spiritual jurisdiction.

I also thank H.E. the Metropolitan of Belgium and dear brother in Christ Mr. Panteleimon, for his precious assistance. We also thank one of the Vice Presidents of the European Parliament, the honourable Mr. Mario Mauro, the Commissioner of Health of the European Union, Mrs Androulla Vassiliou, for their respectable greetings and the Byzantine choir for the religious hymns which will be chanted.

We warmly thank the Representative of the Church of Cyprus Bishop of Neapolis and dear brother in Christ Mr. Porfyrios, who has undertaken the responsibility and achieved, in a very short period, the realisation and the operation of our office that we now have the pleasure of inaugurating. We also express thanks to his worthy colleagues who have demonstrated a spirit of positive cooperation to carry out the work.

I wish to express my gratitude and give thanks to God for his blessings to the Church of Cyprus.

Finally, I pray to the Lord from the bottom of my heart that He may bestow upon you a lot strength and blessings for all the work of the office that we inaugurate. I also pray for the success and fulfilment of the sublime visions of the European Union for the establishment of the world Peace, Justice and Freedom.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

With warm thanks.

Brussels, 18th of March 2009.