

Mr. Prime Minister,
Ministers,
Your eminence,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) and Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos, we would like to thank you for the invitation to today's event. Health is a key area of the Foundation's grantmaking, and EKAV—and its first responders—are valued partners, as the work they do is vital to wellbeing for all of us.

Since 1996, the Foundation has made grants totaling €593 million to support the health sector in Greece, culminating in the ongoing SNF Health Initiative, which includes the creation of three new hospitals in Komotini, Thessaloniki, and Sparta. The hospitals will be delivered to the public at the end of 2025 and integrated into the Greek National Health System. The aim is to improve access to high-quality health services for everyone who needs them—regardless of income, social background, or nationality.

The project to build these three hospitals did not come out of nowhere. To arrive at this major initiative, over the last 26 years, we have worked to build a relationship of trust with everyone who works hard in this sector. We recognize their dedication, their effort, and their sacrifice.

This relationship was built through a range of grants and partnerships, such as the one with the Mobile Medical Units, implemented by the nonprofit Regeneration & Progress. The Mobile Medical Units provide health care services to remote islands and regions across Greece and have already successfully completed more than 100 missions.

Our grant to procure twelve linear accelerators at eight public hospitals in Greece, totaling €20 million, brought us into contact with medical staff in the field of radiology. We have great respect for the work they do and are proud to stand by them.

The Foundation's grant for the renovation of Pediatric Intensive Care Units across the country, almost ten years ago now, was a precursor to the recent renovations to create space for 175 ICU and HDU beds in 15 public hospitals across Greece. This grant was implemented in 2020 as part of our global COVID-19 relief initiative and was completed swiftly in the midst of the pandemic. Furthermore, the honorarium given to more than 4,700 doctors, nurses, and cleaning staff working in COVID-19 referral hospitals is representative of the importance we place on supporting those on the front line of the health care system.

This is clearly reflected in our Health Initiative, which includes 17 individual infrastructure, equipment, and training projects that are being implemented to

address a wide range of health-related needs. Always seeking to empower humanity—particularly medical students and nursing staff in Greece—we have also supported educational programs on trauma, in-hospital infections, nursing, and intensive care. Another integral part of the Health Initiative is strengthening mental health services for children and adolescents—and, of course, our collaboration with the National Center for Emergency Care (EKAV).

The first time we officially collaborated with EKAV was about ten years ago. But indirectly, through the Foundation's grants to other public sector organizations (such as EKAM and the Hellenic Fire Corps), the benefits of this partnership, for society as a whole, have spanned a period of 20 years.

In 2001, the Foundation made a grant, totaling over €14 million, for the purchase of a Super Puma helicopter, which has since been used extensively both for firefighting and for airlifting patients from islands and inaccessible regions.

In 2017, we implemented a grant for the procurement and maintenance of 143 state-of-the-art ambulances to serve the entire country. The grant also included a digital upgrade for EKAV's Operations Center, which may not be visible to the average patient, but is extremely important, demonstrating the commitment of EKAV's staff to improving its services. In the spring of 2021, as part of our Health Initiative, two state-of-the-art helicopters and two airplanes equipped with advanced air navigation and rescue instruments landed in Greece. From June 2021 to January 2022, they provided 111 air transports, contributing to a crucial component of EKAV's operational efficiency.

To implement the grant for the procurement of these aircraft, the Foundation collaborated with the Ministry of Health, EKAV, and the Air Force.

We are grateful to all our partners for making this complex grant possible. We will be honored to have them join us in participating in the Foundation's annual conference, which will be dedicated to the topic of health this year and will take place on June 23 and 24 at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center.

As SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos so aptly put it: "Access to health care should be a fundamental right for everyone, everywhere. Timely health care should not depend on who a person is, or where in the country they live." Our grants to EKAV are based on this belief, and we are grateful for the important and challenging work that all first responders do every single day.

Thank you very much.