

Honorable President of the Hellenic Parliament,  
Your Eminence Metropolitan of Monemvasia and Sparta,  
Honorable Mayor,  
Honorable Secretary General,  
Dear Mr. Varvitsiotis,  
Dear friends,

First of all, I would like to express, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), the great pleasure of being here with you today at this wonderful celebration for the city, the culture, the residents, and the visitors of Sparta. Representing an important chapter in the city's history, the House of the Mosaics now officially occupies the place it deserves in the history of the country—and beyond.

Our Co-President, Andreas Dracopoulos, who was unable to attend today's event as he is abroad, would first of all like me to convey his warmest regards, love, and respect to your Eminence Metropolitan of Monemvasia and Sparta.

And asked me to convey, on his behalf, the following words:

“We often talk about the power of working together and how much we can accomplish collectively. Today is an opportunity to celebrate the power of the one—the individual—something we don't get to do often. Today we get the chance to talk about how, sometimes, one person is able to change things. To showcase the strength, determination, courage and, allow me to say, the modern-day quixotic grit of a man who chose to fight a battle that, in most people's eyes, looked like a battle against windmills. He managed to set aside obstacles of all kinds and, in the process, engage other people, including us, with his passion, in order to accomplish—on an individual and, at a later stage, on a collective level—what initially seemed impossible: to bring to light and give to the public mosaics of unique archaeological value that had remained buried for decades. As you may have already realized, we are of course talking about Mr. Ioannis Varvitsiotis. And on that note, I would like to convey the personal thanks of Mr. Dracopoulos, as a citizen of Greece, to Mr. Varvitsiotis, not only for this project, but for all that he has offered all these years for the good of our country.”

Lastly, and on behalf of everyone at SNF, I would like to mention that beyond our collaboration and mutual respect, we are linked to Mr. Varvitsiotis by our common heritage, as Laconia is also the birthplace of our founder, the late Stavros Niarchos. Stavros Niarchos is the reason why, even as our work extends to every corner of the world, our heart beats loudly here in Laconia, and specifically in Sparta, with three major projects: the creation of the new SNF General Hospital of Sparta as part of our ongoing Health Initiative and upgrades to the Archaeological Museum of Sparta, which both carry the signature of internationally renowned architect Renzo Piano, as well as the construction and outfitting of the School of Byzantine Music and Hagiography in



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STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

collaboration with His Eminence Metropolitan Efstathios. Just a few kilometers away, in the village of Vamvakou, we have found ourselves supporting a group of young people—Anargyros, Eleni, Tassos, and Haris—who are attempting to breathe new life into the mountain village that, until recently, only had nine inhabitants, and who, against all odds, seem to have made great progress in that direction.

Today, however, we have not gathered here to talk about ourselves, but to celebrate what inspires our work: words translated into action by people who breathe life into “romantic” ideas. For as long as and in any way we can, we will be here to support you.

Congratulations to Mr. Ioannis Varvitsiotis and to all those who worked together for the successful completion of the project.

Thank you!