

**Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests,**

**Thank you for joining us here today, for this joyful event, the handing over of the Spyros Louis Cup by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation to the Acropolis Museum for one year, so that we may share it with the general public.**

**A cup that is also a symbol, a testament to a great Greek success, a testament to our History, our heritage, our endurance, our resilient spirit.**

**A cup that links the historic Greek victory over the Persians in Marathon with another important Greek victory in the first modern Olympic Games of 1896 in Athens.**

**A cup that is unique as an Olympic prize, since a cup was never again awarded to a winner of the Olympic Games.**

**A cup that broke the record for Olympic heirlooms at the auction held by Christie's this past April.**

**A cup won by a Greek and, 116 years later, our Foundation has ensured that it will remain in Greek hands and will be shared, with everyone. Our actions were motivated by a sense of duty towards Greek history and towards our founder, my uncle, Stavros Niarchos.**

**A big, a very big thank you to Michel Bréal, a Frenchman born in Bavaria, a Philhellene, a true European (we are short of such Europeans these days), to whom we are all indebted, both for his idea to include the Marathon race in the Olympic Games, and, of course, for the cup itself. Bréal himself was unable to attend the awards ceremony in Athens in 1896, but today he is represented by members of his family, namely his granddaughter and his great granddaughter, along with her husband, and we would like to thank them warmly for being here with us.**

**In these hard times for our country, all Greeks must draw from the strength, the endurance and the determination that drove Spyros Louis to victory, not in order to "become Spyros Louis", as the [Greek] expression goes, which means to disappear fast, to abandon a situation as fast as possible, but in order to work hard, with virtue, strength and dignity, not for the purpose of winning another cup, but of getting back on our feet, once again, with the pride that befits us. We need to work to save our country, with respect towards our history, so that we become once again worthy descendants of those who created such unparalleled works in the history of humanity, exhibited in this Museum of extraordinary treasures. We have to reach the point at which we can say "we have won" as well.**

**We would like to thank the Acropolis Museum, as well as its President, Professor Pantermalis, for a wonderful collaboration for the common cause of finding the best possible way to turn our wish to share the cup with the general public into reality. As I read in a recent statement by Mr. Pantermalis, the Spyros Louis Cup is of equal value to the other, priceless creations exhibited at the Acropolis Museum, which should always serve as our inspiration for rediscovering our true selves and getting through the true Marathon race called "life".**

**Finally, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, the construction of which will begin shortly, will also be the Cup's final destination, adding another link to the chain that connects the successes of the Greek nation, from antiquity until the present day.**

**Thank you.**