



SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING

ARSAKEIA SCHOOLS OF PATRAS

Agias Paraskevis – 26504 PLATANI RIO

Τηλ. 2610 995842

1ST International MUN Student Conference

The **1st International MUN Student Conference (ATSMUN) “Xenophobia and Racism”** organized by the **Arsakeia Schools of Patras** on 19-20-21 February on the school premises was successfully completed.

350 junior high school and high school students from all over Greece and the world participated in the conference in the role of diplomats (delegates), accompanied by 30 teachers (MUN Advisors). There were 40 students participating as delegates from the Arsakeia Schools of Patras and another 40 of them taking part as volunteer administrative staff.

The conference was a simulation of a United Nations conference. More specifically, there was a simulation of the General Assembly Committees, the Security Council, the UN Council on Fighting ISIS, the Ad Hoc Committee, the Historical Committee, the International Court of Justice and the EU Council. According to the rules of procedure, the students engaged in discussions representing a country which was not their own, in the way a real diplomat would in the framework of a real UN Conference. Delegates debated and negotiated in order to reach a generally agreed solution to the issues presented in the agenda.

The educational purpose of this Conference was to raise awareness of young people concerning global issues of political, humanitarian, social, cultural, and environmental interest. In addition, students were given the chance to improve their rhetoric skills, perfect their knowledge of English which was the official language of the conference, and accept dialogue and negotiation as the only means of resolving a conflict.

Day 1

The first day of the conference (Friday February 19, 2016) started with the **opening ceremony** which took place in a festive spirit of excitement in the morning of that day in the Conference and Cultural Centre of the University of Patras, in the presence of Prof. **Georgios Babiniotis**, President of the Society for the Promotion of Education and Learning (Philekpaideutiki Etaireia).

The keynote speech was given by **Anastasis Kardamakis**, a student graduate of the Arsakeia Schools of Patras and now a Law student, who welcomed the delegates and talked about the importance of the MUN conference.

Next was the President of the Society for the Promotion of Education and Learning (Philekpaideutiki Etaireia), Prof. **Georgios Babiniotis**, who expressed his thoughts on the central subject of the conference which was “Xenophobia and Racism”.

The following speech was delivered by the renowned lawyer and ICJ Coordinator in THIMUN Mr. **Robert Stern**, who focused on the importance of the whole procedure and the preparation for it as being extremely valuable for the delegates.

Speeches were also delivered by Mr. **Georgios Aggelopoulos**, Vice Rector of the University of Patras, **Vassilis Kyriakopoulos**, the Dutch Ambassador, **Stephen John Taylor**, Cambridge University Examination Consultant in South-Eastern Europe, and **Aspasia Kontogianni**, coordinator of the English Departments of Arsakeia Schools of Greece and MUN Director.

On behalf of the Society for the Promotion of Education and Learning (Philekpaideutiki Etaireia), the ceremony was attended by Prof. **G. Babiniotis**, the General Secretary **Ioannis Paraskevopoulos** and the Superintendent of the Schools Mrs. **Vassiliki Papapetrou – Moursela**. The following were also present: Mr. **Georgios Aggelopoulos**, fr. **Nikolaos Skiadaresis**, the Art Director of Patra’s Municipal and Regional Thetatre (ΔΗΠΕΘΕ) Mr. **Kostas Kazakos**, the English Consul Mrs. **Marie - Jean Morphy – Karatza**, the Austrian Consul Mr. **Fanis Georgopoulos**, the German Consul Mr. **Andreas Papadopoulos**, the Consul of Luxembourg Mr. **Georgios Lagopanagiotopoulos**, the Consul of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, Mr. **Konstantinos Christopoulos**, the Italian Consul, Mr. **Michael Dimopoulos**, the Korean Consul, Mr. **Spyridon Filippakis**, the Dutch Consul Mr. **Vassilis Kyriakopoulos**, the Consul of Hungary Mr. **Nikos Douros**, the Romanian

Consul Mrs. **Marianna Kratsioun**, and the Consul of Philippines Mrs. **Anastasia Manolopoulou**, together with the 350 delegates and their advisors.

At the end of the conference, all the attendants watched an inspiring video made by a student graduate of our schools, **Pavlos Pettas**, while an excellent impression was also made by the music band of student graduates who played music throughout the ceremony.

At the end of the opening ceremony, all delegates were transferred to the school premises, where Committee sessions started in the assigned rooms according to schedule. More specifically, the (simulated) International Court of Justice started under the presidency of Mr. **Stern**, while in all other committees there formed the necessary alliances between different countries, so as to prepare for the debates of the following day.

DAY 2

According to the conference schedule, all committees were in full session on Saturday February 20 based on the alliances made on the previous day, in an atmosphere of great excitement and enthusiasm.

More specifically, the following issues were discussed:

- **Disarmament and International Security Committee:** 1. Eradicating bio-terrorism and the proliferation of biochemical weapons. 2. Suppression of piracy in Somalia
- **Special Political and Decolonization Committee:** 1. The question of Nagorno Karabakh 2. The situation in South China Sea
- **Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee:** 1. Reviewing the status of Human Rights in the Republic of Turkey 2. Combating the human rights violations by the Boko Haram militant group in Nigeria.
- **Legal Committee:** 1. Criminal accountability of UN Peacekeepers, Mission experts and peacekeepers 2. Establishing an International Legal Framework to prevent individuals' privacy rights violations via New Information Technologies.
- **ECOSOC:** 1. Coordinated economic growth strategies; global initiative to deal with tax evasion and tax fraud. 2. Legitimacy of economic sanctions under international law.

- **Security Council:** 1. The situation in Palestine. 2. The situation in Central African Republic.
- **UN council on fighting ISIS** (consisting of G8 countries)
- **Advisory Panel:** The situation in DPR Korea.
- **Historical Committee:** The First World War/The Great War (1914-1918)
- **International Court of Justice:** Ecuador vs Colombia
- **Ad Hoc Committee on the elimination of xenophobia and racism:** 1. Creating a framework of interstate religious tolerance and respect to tackle religious extremism. 2. Combating the rise of nationalism and xenophobia in Europe.
- **European Council:** 1. The EU counter-terrorism strategy for effectively tackling the threats of the Islamic State and other Jihadist groups. 2. Forging new EU alliances and external partnerships in the eve of ongoing geopolitical events.

During the second day of the conference, the MUN advisors and chaperones of the delegations were offered a guided tour around important sights of the city of Patras. Specifically, they visited the Rio-Antirrio Bridge, the Archaeological Museum of Patras, St. Andrew's Church, and the Achaia Clauss Winery, in all of which they were provided with detailed information and tours.

DAY 3

On February 21, according to the conference schedule, the resolutions of the negotiations taking place in the committees during the previous day were submitted.

After the completion of the conference procedures, there followed the closing ceremony in the amphitheatre of the Centre of Science. In the ceremony, all the Committee Chairs had the chance to briefly greet the audience, followed by the Headmaster of Arsakeio High School Mr. **Emmanouil Petrakis**, the Headmistress of Junior High School, Mrs. **Aikaterini Georgiou**, and the MUN Advisor of the Dutch delegation, Mr. **Kees Jansen**. A video with highlights of the conference was then shown which was made by the press team and music was played by a band of student graduates of Arsakeia Schools of Patras.

The conference was overall an ambitious and challenging attempt to which students responded efficiently and the cornerstones of the MUN conference were established so that it so that the MUN conference is repeated and established as an institution in the Arsakeia Schools of Patras.

The School Managers would like to warmly thank all those who participated and contributed to the impeccable organization of the conference, and especially our sponsors (LOYX, SUNBRELLA, DICKSON, ERGODYNAMIKH PATRON A.T.E., ASTIR HOTEL PATRAS, CARAVEL PATISSERIE, COFFEE ISLAND, EMPHASIS ADV, ENTELVAIS, GERYFA, KRINOS, KTEL ACHAIAS, PATRAS PALACE HOTEL, PATRAS CATERING, SKIADAREISIS, TRIAINA AE., HEIEBRAND N. SOFOPOULOS, PELOPONNHSOS, PELOP.GR, THEBEST.GR) who supported financially this conference that was indeed a costly undertaking, which nevertheless gave multiple benefits to the city and the wider region.

For further information, please visit the conference official website:
<http://atsmun.arsakeio.gr>

Photographs of the conference can be seen at:
<https://www.facebook.com/atsmun2016>