



**DESMOS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**October 14-15, 2010**  
**Inter-Orthodox Center, PENTELI**  
**Athens, Greece**



**ΣΩΜΑ**  
**ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ**  
**ΠΡΟΣΚΟΠΩΝ**



## MINUTES

The DESMOS Committee Meeting was held in the premises of the Inter-Orthodox Center of The Church of Greece, Penteli (Πεντέλη), Athens, Greece, where The International Link of Orthodox Christian Scouts was established back in June 1997. The Committee Meeting was held with the blessing of His All Holiness The Ecumenical Patriarch, and with a significant support of Soma Hellinon Proskopon – Scouts of Greece.

Present:

**Christos Papageorgiou**, Desmos President,  
**Maher Sahlieh**, Desmos Vice-President  
**Nicolaos Mitsides**, Desmos Treasurer  
**Georges Abboud**, Desmos Committee member  
**Zoran M. Petrovic**, Desmos Committee member  
**Naaman Shahada**, Desmos Committee member  
**Marko Petrovic**, Desmos Secretary General  
**Vassilis Birtsas**, Desmos PR and Communications Commissioner  
**George Bahow**, Desmos Committee Honorary member  
**Constantinos Costas Tsantilis**, Chairman of the Friends of Desmos in Greece  
**Octavian-Cristian Bodea**, member of the National Spiritual Dimension Team, Romania  
**Dimitrinka Didi Todorova**, Bulgaria

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The official opening of the Desmos Committee meeting took place on October 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2010, in the premises of the Holy Monastery Penteli of the Orthodox Church of Greece, in Athens. Eight countries were represented.

The participants of the meeting accepted Secretary General's proposal to have audio-recording of the Meeting.

The proposed Agenda was distributed to all participants of the Meeting, as well as the Programme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter, which was scheduled after Desmos Committee Meeting.

At the beginning of the Meeting, Desmos Committee members had the Prayer. The Prayer was said by Desmos Secretary General, Marko Petrovic.

Desmos Committee had the pleasure to welcome Mr. **Constantinos Costas Tsantilis**, Chairman of the Friends of Desmos in Greece, former World Scout Committee member, who had significant role in founding of The International link of Orthodox Christian Scouts DESMOS.

### **The Meeting Agenda:**

It was decided to proceed according to the initially proposed Agenda, as follows:

1. Welcome and Address of Desmos President  
**Christos Papageorgiou**
2. Welcome and Address of Desmos Vice-President  
**Maher Sahlieh**
3. Report of the Secretary General / DESMOS 2009-2010.  
**Marko Petrovic**
4. The 6<sup>th</sup> Desmos Conference / The 39<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference, Brazil, January 2011  
**Information: Marko Petrovic**
5. Meeting of the World Scout Inter-Religious Forum / Faith and Belief Zone at WSJ 2011.  
**Information: Christos Papageorgiou / Vassilis Birtsas**  
Desmos participation at the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden  
**Introduction: Christos Papageorgiou / Open discussion**
6. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter, Greece 2010 / preparatory activities  
**Information: Christos Papageorgiou / Nassos Efstathiou / Vassilis Birtsas**
7. Report on the visit to the association "Scout National Orthodox", Lebanon  
**Christos Papageorgiou - Marko Petrovic**
8. Reports on Desmos activities on a national level in particular countries  
**Desmos Committee members / representatives of DESMOS member countries**
9. Enlarging Desmos / Membership growth / How to attract and retain new member-countries  
**Introduction: C. Papageorgiou - M. Petrovic / Open discussion**
10. Funding Opportunities  
**Introduction: Maher Sahlieh / Nicolaos Mitsides / open discussion**  
Friends of Desmos – Greek example of good practice  
**Information: Christos Papageorgiou / Nassos Efstathiou / Vassilis Birtsas**
11. Discussion on Desmos promotional materials for the forthcoming events  
**Introduction: Vassilis Birtsas / Open discussion**
12. Discussion on the activities foreseen in the forthcoming period  
**Desmos Committee members / Open discussion**
13. Various issues / Hosting of the next Desmos Committee Meeting in 2011  
**Open discussion**

## Ad. 1 – WELCOME AND ADDRESS OF DESMOS PRESIDENT, Christos Papageorgiou



Desmos President **Christos Papageorgiou** welcomed all the Committee members, Chairman of the Friends of DESMOS in Greece and one of the founders of The Link, Mr. Constantinos Tsantilis, and member-countries' representatives and expressed special thanks to all those who helped us get the opportunity to have the DESMOS Committee meeting in the holy environment of the Inter-Orthodox Centre of the Orthodox Church of Greece – Monastery Penteli – which is very important for the history of DESMOS, where our Link had its Founding Assembly. He expressed special gratitude to the Inter-Orthodox Centre of the Church of Greece for offering Desmos excellent accommodation and meals and excellent conditions for work.

Christos said the decision to have two events one after the another – DESMOS Committee Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter – was inspired by the will to economize on expenditures for all of us, but also to give the opportunity to larger number of people to take part in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter, which DESMOS is hosting this year.

The President pointed out that he considers the year 2009 as the most fruitful for DESMOS because of two training events on spirituality and religiosity in Scouting, which we realized in Madaba, Jordan, for our leaders from Middle-East member-countries and in Monastery Soko Grad, Serbia, for our leaders from Balkan member-countries. Christos repeated DESMOS' thanks to the Jordanian Orthodox Scouts of Amman for hosting the training event in their country and for the efforts to cover practically all expenditures, and reminded that DESMOS did express gratitude to The Patriarch of Jerusalem for His blessing and to Archimandrite Innokentios, who welcomed the Training participants in St. George's Orthodox Church in Madaba. Christos also expressed thanks to the Scout Organization of Serbia and to Serbian Orthodox Church's Bishop Lavrentije for enabling DESMOS realize the Orthodox Leaders' Training in the Monastery Sveti Nikolaj Srpski, in Soko Grad, in Serbia. Christos pointed out the success of both training events, especially emphasizing positive outcomes of the event in Jordan, considering the overall political situation in that part of the world.

DESMOS President then informed the Committee members about one of the significant achievements of the Inter-Religious Forum, resulting in the new brochure "Guidelines on Spirituality and Religiosity in Scouting", which has been issued by WOSM practically the day before.

Christos Papageorgiou invited Costas Tsantilis to address the Committee members.

**Constantinos Costas Tsantilis**, the actual Chairman of the association Friends of Desmos in Greece, one of the key persons that played the decisive role in the birth of The International link of Orthodox Christian Scouts, addressed participants of the DESMOS Committee meeting, welcoming all to Greece.

Costas told participants of DESMOS Committee meeting the story on how it all started. He explained in warm words the steps preceding the creation of DESMOS, emphasizing the positive role of former WOSM Secretary General, Jacques Moreillon.

Costas said his various engagements do not leave much free time to him, but he's with DESMOS with all his heart and he will continue to support The Link as much as possible. Costas did wish to the Committee a very successful meeting.



Secretary General **Marko Petrovic** expressed thanks to the President for the welcoming address and to Costas Tsantilis for his contribution, reminding all that the text called Desmos Facts written by Costas Tsantilis can be found on Desmos web site and recommended everybody to read it or to read it again.

Secretary General also thanked the guests – **Didi Todorova** from Bulgaria who was strongly involved in Desmos activities for a number of years, and **Octavian-Cristian Bodea** from Romania, for whom this is the first time to take part in a Desmos event. Desmos Secretary General said thank you to all Committee members who made efforts and found the time and money to travel to Athens and take part at the Meeting, and a big thank you to the Greek hosts, first of all to Vassilis, but also

to others who helped in organizational matters including the visa issue for some of the Committee members.

Secretary General informed the Committee that there was a lot of interest for this Meeting, indicating that 22 more people from Africa - from Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia were keen to come to Athens and take part, but unfortunately, the problems with visas made it impossible.

Secretary General, then, asked the Committee if the proposed Agenda is acceptable and, since there were no other suggestions, he invited Desmos Vice-President, Maher Sahlieh, to take the floor.

## Ad. 2 – WELCOME AND ADDRESS OF DESMOS VICE-PRESIDENT, Maher Sahlieh



Vice-President, **Maher Sahlieh**, welcomed the Committee members, whose presence was the key condition for the Meeting to be held, he welcomed the guests from Bulgaria and Romania, he expressed thanks to the President for the Welcome Address and expressed special gratitude to Costas Tsantilis, indicating Costas' way of communication with Desmos members as an example of good communication, reminding that Costas regularly communicates on the occasion of The Thinking Day, but also whenever there is something interesting he wants to share with Desmos people.

Maher said a big thank you to the host association Somma Hellinon Proskopon, reminding that it's not easy to organize the event like this one.

Maher Sahlieh pointed out the importance of Christos Papageorgiou's engagement in our Link and his very active role concerning all Desmos issues since the beginning. Maher pointed out Christos' huge contribution to the development of The Link and reminded that the end of Christos' mandate in 2011 should not mean his retirement from Desmos.

On the contrary, Maher said, we must find the way to keep Christos actively engaged in Desmos, since we do know Christos can still offer to our Link through his precious knowledge, numerous connections in the world of Scouting and beyond and good reputation.

Desmos Vice-President said - he has great expectations of the Meeting and he believes all the participants of the event would gain very much by taking part in both the Committee Meeting and the 2nd Ecumenical Encounter, which follows afterwards.

Desmos President, **Christos Papageorgiou** asked the floor for a brief note and pointed out once again that we do need to express a big thank you to the Inter-Orthodox Centre of the Church of Greece for giving us the opportunity to have our meeting in such a Holy place, with such a good conditions for work and with quite a moderate expenditures.

## Ad. 3 – REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL - DESMOS 2009 - 2010. - Marko Petrovic

Secretary General, Marko Petrovic, started his report reminding that the previous Desmos Committee meeting was in Romania, more than one and a half year ago. He said that, although in the meantime there were not very many activities of Desmos as the organization, but the events we had were very important.

Secretary General said he was sending regularly the detailed reports and information to the Committee members. However, he briefly repeated the information about the events since the previous Committee meeting, indicating first of all that the Committee meeting in Romania itself was very well organized thanks to big efforts invested by Roxana and enthusiastic young people from her team. Secretary General, then, cited the most important events:

- **Seminar on Spiritual Dimenzion in Scouting, Madaba, Jordan, July 2009.**
- **Orthodox Leaders' Training, Soko Grad, Serbia, October 2009.**

Since the detailed reports have already been sent to the Committee members and could be found at Desmos web site as well, Secretary General only emphasized very positive effects and excellent atmosphere on both events and expressed gratitude to the Orthodox Scouts of Amman and to the Scout Organization of Serbia for excellent hosting of those events.

- **European Scout Conference, Brussels, July 2009,**

in which Desmos was not officially represented due to the extremely high fee and other expenditures and due to the Agenda, which actually did not foresee real involvement of faith organizations.

Christos Papageorgiou confirmed the reasons why Desmos was not officially represented there, and reminded that the last time Desmos took part at one European event was in Dublin, in 2003.



There was a discussion between the participants of the Meeting, with the contributions of Zoran Petrovic, Christos Papageorgiou, Costas Tsantilis, Maher Sahlieh.



The Committee member, **Zoran Petrovic**, who participated at the last European Scout Conference in his capacity of delegate of the Serbian NSO, briefly informed the participants of the Meeting about ESC in Brussels and confirmed that there were no activities or specific items on the Conference Agenda concerning faith organizations in Scouting. Indeed, Desmos was indirectly present there through presence of the delegates of some NSOs from Desmos member-countries, like Greece, Cyprus, Serbia, Romania, Macedonia (FYRO), Bulgaria ...

The conclusion was that we need to react together with other faith organizations and suggest that certain face-to-face platforms, where faith organizations could discuss the issue of Spiritual dimension in Scouting, should be organized on the European level. The Committee agreed that the first opportunity to discuss the issue would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter, which follows the next day, here, at the same venue.

- **Desmos Newsletter,**

issued in the meantime, since the previous Committee meeting.

Secretary General said we have the Newsletter thanks to Vassilis Birtsas, who made efforts in order to prepare it and emphasized the importance of getting as many as possible interesting information from Desmos member-organizations. He invited all Committee members to send to Vassilis the info on Orthodox scouts' activities and events in their countries.

In this regard, Secretary General stressed upon the importance of good communication within the Committee and between Desmos countries generally and invited all to contribute to improving of this issue.



- **Study visit to SNO of Lebanon, in April 2010.**

The President and the Secretary General suggested to use this opportunity and have the presentation, which was prepared and offered to the SNO Orthodox scouts of Lebanon.

The presentation gives basic info on World Scouting as a Movement, generally, but also on faith organizations including our Link – Desmos.

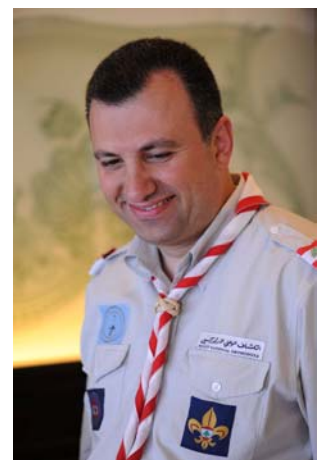
It was suggested to use the Presentation in Desmos member-countries, to translate it to local languages, since it contains official WOSM positions on various important issues.



Along with the PPT presentation, The President and the Secretary General informed the participants of the Meeting about this excellently organized visit and its outcomes and pointed out that the efforts invested by Georges Abboud, his colleagues from the leadership of Scout National Orthodox and SNO scouts involved, deserve respect and appreciation.

The Committee member, President of SNO, **Georges Abboud**, offered to the participants of Desmos Committee Meeting more details and explanations about the Study Visit, about the contacts Desmos President and Secretary General had in Lebanon, about the positive outcomes and about the benefits SNO had of the Visit.

Secretary General reminded that the very detailed on this visit Report has been sent to all Committee members and that it is available at Desmos web site as well.



Since within this Agenda Item the Committee was presented PPT presentation, photos and detailed explanations related to the Study Visit to Lebanon the Committee concluded that the Agenda Item no. 7 was practically covered

#### - **New Desmos members**

Secretary General informed The Committee that in the period between the two Committee meetings Desmos welcomed two new members – **Uganda** and **Montenegro**.

During the short break, Costas Tsantilis told the participants of the Meeting the very interesting story about the extraordinary scout project PEACE CRUISE, which was realized back in August 1999.

### **Ad. 4 – The 6<sup>th</sup> Desmos Conference / The 39<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference, Brazil, January 2011**

Secretary General informed the Committee that in 2011. Desmos needs to organize its 6<sup>th</sup> Conference. Following the previous practice, Desmos Conference should be organized one day prior to the 39<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference, which will be held in Curitiba, Brazil. In that regard, Secretary General contacted Brazilian hosts and requested info on conditions and costs in order to be able to inform The Committee at this meeting.

The committee was presented the information about the venue, available premises, cost of the room and equipment, cost of refreshments / coffee breaks, as well as about range of expected traveling expenditures, which all together appeared to be quite a big expenditure for The Link and for individual delegates.

After discussion in which all the Committee members took part, the conclusion was that a very expensive arrangement might be a serious problem, resulting in small number of member-countries' delegations for the Conference, which in such case would not be able to bring decisions.

Therefore, the Committee decided to abandon the idea of having the next Desmos Conference in Brazil and to find out the alternative option(s).

There were two proposals – to have it in Cyprus or in Serbia.



The Committee member from Cyprus, Desmos Treasurer **Nicolaos Mitsides**, explained that his NSO would not be able to organize the event in 2011. Nicolaos said Cyprus could perhaps organize a Desmos event in 2013, since The Cyprus Scout Association celebrates the Centenary of founding of their association. He said he can discuss such idea with their President.

The Committee member from Serbia, **Zoran Petrovic**, said the Scout Organization of Serbia could accept the challenge, and would be happy to organize the 6<sup>th</sup> Desmos Conference in 2011, which is the year in which Serbian NSO celebrates the Centenary of Scouting in Serbia.

Secretary General, **Marko Petrovic** supported Zoran's opinion and accepted to work together with Zoran in preparing the concrete proposal containing the programme and the cost of the event, which would be sent to the Committee members by e-mail at the very beginning of 2011.



The Committee discussed possible dates for the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference and it was suggested to fix the following dates: the second weekend of April (8-10).

### **Ad. 5 – Meeting of the World Scout Inter-Religious Forum /Faith and Belief Zone at WSJ 2011.**

Desmos President, **Christos Papageorgiou**, informed The Committee about the activities at the World Scout Inter-Religious Forum, which took part in Ahusgarden, Ahus, Sweden, 4-6 June 2010.

Christos Papageorgiou explained that, as the Chair person of the World Scout Inter-Religious Forum changes each time, now it's the turn for Desmos to Chair the next one. 'Considering the fact that I finish this year my term in the Desmos Committee' – Christos said – 'if the Committee appoints me I can chair the WSIF, if not, it will be someone else from Desmos'.

There were three topics –The evaluation of WSIS in Uganda, The forthcoming World Scout Jamboree in Sweden and the Spirituality in the Jamboree Programme, The Fourth World Scout Inter-Religious Symposium.

Starting with the last one, Christos said the **4<sup>th</sup> WSIS** will be organized by Won Buddhists from the Republic of Korea, in 2012. The detailed information will follow and there will be enough time to prepare Desmos participation at that event.

Christos, then, reported on the **3<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Inter-Religious Symposium**, which took part in Speke Resorts Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda, 21-25 October, 2009.

He emphasised the extremely difficult conditions in which the people of Uganda live, including scouts. He said that, in spite of it, they did their best to properly host the Symposium.



The communication with the Orthodox scouts of Uganda and their understanding of Desmos mission and vision as explained by **Christos Papageorgiou** and **Vassilis Birtsas** proved to be excellent, since shortly afterwards the Orthodox scouts of Uganda officially joined Desmos.

Regarding the forthcoming **World Scout Jamboree in Sweden** and Desmos engagement in **Faith and Belief Zone**, Christos said the Committee needs to decide what kind of workshop Desmos could prepare in order to be at least equally successful as on the previous World Scout Jamboree in UK, since Desmos workshop in UK was experienced as one of the best in Faith and Belief Zone. And we also need to remember that some 3.800 kids passed through Desmos tent there. Also, the Committee needs to agree who will be running Desmos stand.

The activities of other faith organizations in Scouting have been analyzed, as well.

The fruitful discussion took place and all the participants of the Meeting presented a variety of different interesting ideas – to make the same thing like in UK, since it proved to be very successful; to use the same idea with certain modifications; to be more creative and try to find out something different.

After all, the focus was on Orthodoxy and the Environment, so one of the conclusions was that we should certainly use natural materials for whatever activity we choose for our workshop.

The majority thought the most appropriate would be to have the workshop with the following activities: children visiting Desmos stand will have the opportunity to make the Mosaic following the pre-prepared layout drawing and using different colours natural grains, which they will be able to take with them as a precious souvenir made by themselves. In addition, all participants will be given a Desmos gift – small wooden Holy Cross from the Holy Land, provided that Maher finds the way to get 3.000 pieces of a small wooden Holy Cross from Jerusalem with the name of Desmos written on it.

Volunteers in Desmos tent at WSJ FaB Zone - Christos, Serge + 1 from Lebanon, 2 girls from Palestine. George Bahow and Naaman will inquire if it would be possible to send someone from their association.

## **Ad. 6 – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter, Greece 2010 / preparatory activities**

Christos Papageorgiou and Vassilis Birtsas informed The Committee about the preparations and the proposed programme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter.

Christos briefly reminded to the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Encounter organized by ICCS in Canterbury in England and said that the three main topics for the 2<sup>nd</sup> event that starts the next day in the Inter-Orthodox Centre will be:

- Christianity and Environment
- Continuous Dialogue between Christians in Scouting
- Getting our Youth Back to the Church



Christos said the letter on behalf of Desmos has been sent to **His All Holiness, Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch**, in which we asked His support, in terms of His formal support letter to the participants of the event, in terms of appointing of His official representative, and in terms of eventual financial support.

His All Holiness, as He always did so far, sent us the Letter of support, which will be presented to the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter (Appendix).

His All Holiness appointed, as His representative at the event, Most Rev. Joseph, Metropolitan of Prikonissos, who will be the Key-Note speaker.

Considering the public expected to be present at the opening of the event, The Committee agreed to run at the event the PPT presentation, which includes the info on World Scouting, faith organizations in Scouting and, of course, Desmos presentation.

## **Ad. 7 – Report on the visit to the association "Scout National Orthodox", Lebanon**

The Committee agreed that this Item was completely covered within the Item no. 3.

## Ad. 8 – Reports on Desmos activities on a national level in particular countries

The Committee members informed about the activities in their countries in the period between the two Desmos Committee meetings.

Vice-President, **Maher Sahlieh**, informed about activities of Palestinian Orthodox scouts.

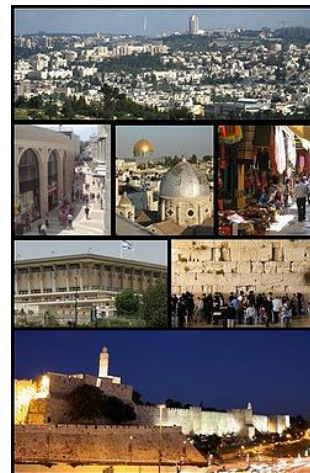
Maher pointed out that the previous year was a special year for Jerusalem, since Jerusalem was acting as the City of Culture for 2009. The event was attended by almost 3.000 Orthodox scouts. The activities were mostly cultural – music, dances, ... and the scouts were very active and visible for society.

Another activity organized by Palestinian Orthodox scouts was the camps. The theme of the camps in 2009 was “Collaboration / Working / Success”. The theme of the national scout camp in 2010 was “Once a Scout – Always a Scout”.

Palestinian Orthodox scouts were very engaged in preparation and realization of Christmas and Easter parades, as well. Thus, the scouts took part in lighting the Christmas Tree in Bethlehem.

There were some connections and networking with charities, like “The Daughters of Homeless Charity”, and the scouts made significant contributions. Palestinian Orthodox scouts also had a joint event with the scouts from the Golan Heights and it was a rover event.

Maher said there was lots of other activities, but he pointed out only the main ones.



Honorary Committee member, **George Bahow**, and the Committee member, **Naaman Shahada**, informed about the activities of Israeli Orthodox scouts in the period between the two Committee meetings.

They said they will mention only the main activities.

On 26th September 2010, the Orthodox scouts had the Annual Scout Festival – Scout Parade in the town of Ebelein and the next day they celebrated The Holy Cross Day.

At the same town, Ebelein, the Anniversary of 30 years of establishing of the local Orthodox Scout Group, with 1000 participants – Orthodox scouts, but also Catholic and Moslem scouts, with a number of important guests, including the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, leaders of the Israeli Youth Movement and Jewish Scout Association.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010, the association celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Israeli Orthodox Scouts. There were more than 600 people, in the town of Kfar Yassif.

Another activity – Co-existence Meeting, when the scouts from different associations, and of different faith, meet, every three months, meaning four time a year. The aim is to promote co-existence, tolerance and cooperation between scouts regardless their origin and religion.

We also had training courses. We usually have three courses every year.

In July, 250 girl-leaders met in the town of Lud to discuss important issues. The last time the topic was smoking and drugs-addiction among young people.

We had a number of summer camps. The theme was “Road Precautions”.

We have also visited Jordan for the celebration of the 100 years Anniversary of St. George Church in Fuheis.



The Committee member, **Zoran Petrovic**, informed about the activities of Serbian scouts in the period between the two Committee meetings.

The main activity in Serbia was The Cub Scouts Day, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2010, in Belgrade central park “Kalemegdan”, with around 700 participants, most of them cub scouts. The also event had several workshops, including the workshop on spiritual dimension in Scouting.



The NSO was very much engaged in preparatory activities for the 8<sup>th</sup> Serbian Jamboree and the celebration of the Centenary of Scouting in Serbia. The Jamboree, which will be organized in the town of Šabac, Western Serbia, in the period August 10-20, 2011, will have in its programme some kind of Faith and Belief Zone, since it is planned to offer a tent to each interested denomination we have in Serbia – Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, Moslems.

The Scout Organization of Serbia organized in August 2010, on a regular basis, the Woodbadge Course, 1<sup>st</sup> Level training, which was an international event with participation of leaders from Serbia, Macedonia (FYRO), Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

During the last weekend of November 2010, Serbia organized the new training event – the Woodbadge Course, 2<sup>nd</sup> Level training, for the scout leaders from Serbia, Macedonia (FYRO), Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

**Octavian-Cristian Bodea**, member of the National Spiritual Dimension Team in Romania, said they certainly had activities related to spiritual dimension in Scouting. He mentioned the big event with lots of candles, but he said he would rather not speak about the activities, since being a guest at this Meeting, he has no official capacity of country-member representative.

**Georges Abboud** informed about the activities of Lebanese Orthodox scouts in the period between the two Committee meetings. He estimated the Study Visit of Desmos President and Secretary General as the most important activity for their association. He said the SNO scouts have very good relations with the Orthodox scouts from Syria and they have mutual visits, exchange and join activities very often. Georges further said he was also invited to visit Jordan for the celebration of the 100 years Anniversary of St. George's Church in Fuheis.



He pointed out that SNO is in good relations with Amman Orthodox Scouts and said he visits them regularly on behalf of his association, indicating that he plans to go there already the next week, because it is evident that they have lots of problems and SNO feels the need to help them overcome the problems.

Georges Abboud said his association is currently working on organization of one encounter of all Antioch Orthodox scouts (Lebanon and Syria), which will be managed by his association and himself personally. He informed that Desmos Vice-President, Maher Sahlieh with his family, was in private visit to Lebanon and that it was the opportunity to introduce Maher to Georges' colleagues - SNO Committee members and to discuss the Desmos issues.

Georges informed The Committee that, unfortunately, the Jamboree he announced at the Committee meeting in Romania, which was scheduled for the summer of 2010, had to be cancelled, due to the financial problems.

**Vassilis Birtsas** informed about the activities of the Greek scouts in the period between the two Committee meetings.

Vassilis firstly emphasized the very good relations the Scouts of Greece have with local churches.

He said there have been numerous activities on local level throughout of Greece, but he would mention only the national level ones.

Vassilis informed about the opening of the National Scout Centre in the Island of Mytilene. The inauguration was done by **His All Holiness The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartolomew** and the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, **His Beatitude Hieronymos II**. This information was published in SHP National Magazine, and can be also seen at the SHP web site - International Dpt. page.



The Scouts of Greece celebrated in 2010 the Centenary of Scouting in Greece. One of the events was the National Jamboree, where a number of workshops was organized, including ones on spiritual dimension in Scouting. There was a problem with the capacity of the Jamboree site, so it was not possible to welcome all the scouts who wanted to take part.

On the national level, the seminar was organized in Heraklion on the Island of Crete, with participation of representatives of the local Church. It should be said that local groups are in very good connections with local churches and they have good cooperation.

Vassilis also said that the Committee of the Scouts of Greece has consultations and exchange with the Church of Greece on a regular basis.

The general observation of the Desmos President, in regard to Desmos activities on national level, was that it is obvious there were many activities in all Desmos countries, so the question is why the information about those activities are not coming to Vassilis, in order to enable him prepare the Newsletter with more details on different national activities in Desmos member-countries.

The Committee Treasurer, **Nicolaos Mitsides**, informed about the activities of the Cypriot scouts in the period between the two Committee meetings.

Nicolaos emphasized as one of the most important events the celebration of the St. George's Day. As he prepared the PPT presentation, he offered the Committee members the opportunity to get acquainted with that event and with other activities of Cypriot scouts.

Nicolaos Mitsides also informed the Committee members about his visit to The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in Istanbul, when he had the opportunity to meet His All Holiness The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartolomew I. Nicolaos said The Patriarch had only kind words and praises for Desmos and it was obvious that He was very well informed about Desmos Mission, Vision and activities.

The Scouts of Cyprus awarded the highest decoration of their National Scout Organization to His All Holiness.

Nicolaos pointed out very good relations the Cypriot scouts have with the Church, which supports them.

The scouts of Cyprus are seriously preparing for the celebration of the Centenary of Scouting in their country, in 2013, since they plan to have a series of events.



## **Ad. 9 – Enlarging Desmos/Membership growth / How to attract and retain new member-countries**

The Committee members discussed in open panel the issue of - how to attract and retain new members. The Committee is aware of the fact that the way to attract new members is not an easy one and that it requires lots of patience and persistence.

Regarding the specific countries as potential candidates for Desmos membership, the Committee discussed the example of Syria, which seems to be quite complicated, because of the fact that the Orthodox scouts in Syria act in totally independent scout groups not connected with the NSO, which is a newly recognized WOSM member, neither they are linked between themselves in terms of any kind of an umbrella association.

The conclusion was to try to organize in the forthcoming period the meeting with The Patriarch of Antioch in order to analyze together the actual situation, The Patriarch's eventual support and possible steps towards Syria's membership in Desmos.

Regarding other potential candidates for Desmos membership, Christos said Desmos is in continuous dialogue with Zimbabwe, Cameroon and the Orthodox scouts of Egypt. He explained that in Egypt there are two Greek Orthodox scout groups, in Alexandria and in Cairo, which they are making efforts in order to get the permission of the NSO of Egypt to join Desmos. So, as soon as they get the permission, Egypt can become the new Desmos member-country.

Georges Abboud said that we need to be aware of the fact that the proper way is to establish contact with the associations, not only with individual persons, regardless their position, since the persons are changing positions and we must ensure the continuity of Desmos contacts with member-countries and potential member-countries.

Secretary General pointed out the importance of not only attracting new members but also retaining newly accepted members. There is a number of member-countries, which are not active at all.

Georges Abboud emphasized that one of the ways to retain members is to insist on paying the fee, which was supported by other Committee members, although the conclusion was that it won't be an easy task to fulfil.

The Committee is aware that the issue of Desmos membership Fee it is not a new issue and that it has been raised many times at the Committee meetings, but the realization of this statutory obligation has never been put into practice. If we could get positive response from member-countries it would make Desmos functioning much easier, since even the humble financial means would mean a lot. On the other hand, it would strengthen the commitment of our member-countries and their feeling of belonging to The Link.

## Ad. 10 – Funding Opportunities

Desmos Vice-President, **Maher Sahlieh** said that this issue has already been discussed many times, both the internal and external funding, but unfortunately without significant progress. Maybe we did not find the right way, perhaps we did not use the correct channels. Except Greece and its Friends of Desmos example, there was no progress at all.

In Palestine, we tried a number of things including the idea of Friends of Desmos, direct approach to certain companies and institutions, but there was no result. So, we need to be creative.

Maher said we need to generate the income in order to assure covering of expenses of the Committee members by The Link instead of paying from our own pockets and to assure the sustainability of Desmos.

We are facing two major obstacles – failure to collect the membership fee and failure to assure external funding.

This is so important and we need to reserve 2 or 3 hours at the next Committee meeting for a brainstorming session on this particular issue in order to get usable ideas on how to resolve the problem.

Also, the crucial step would be our visit to His All Holiness, The Ecumenical Patriarch, which would be, among other, the opportunity to present to Him this problem, with good chances to get His support in this matter and guidelines and practical advice on how to act in future.

Desmos Treasurer, **Nicolaos Mitsides**, proposed to try to approach to local churches and ask small contributions for Desmos. He said this could be fruitful especially if we could provide the letter of support of His All Holiness, The Ecumenical Patriarch.

Desmos President, **Christos Papageorgiou**, supported Maher's idea about the visit to His All Holiness, The Ecumenical Patriarch, and reminded to the fact that the countries we, as Desmos representatives, had the opportunity to visit, are now constantly present and quite engaged in all our activities. This means that it is very important to create funds, which would enable us to travel to the countries, explain in direct contacts our Mission and Vision and ask for their commitment in regard to our Link.

Christos suggested that we leave defining of the period of the visit for the next Committee meeting in Belgrade, and then to proceed with formal steps in order to schedule the meeting with His All Holiness, The Ecumenical Patriarch.

## Ad. 11 – Friends of Desmos – Greek example of good practice

**Christos Papageorgiou**, emphasized once again how important for The Link was and still is the support of Friends of Desmos in Greece. He pointed out that, without Friends of Desmos in Greece, Desmos simply could not function at all. This association helped Desmos very much for practically all the travels and participation at world scout events, where Desmos was officially represented.

Christos informed The Committee members about the way the association Friends of Desmos in Greece is functioning, about gala-diners and other activities organized in previous period.

Desmos President encouraged The Committee members to try to establish similar associations in their countries and reminded that former Committee Treasurer, **Christos Marneros**, invested efforts and translated into English the Statute of the Friends of Desmos in Greece, which can be used as a model for other countries.



## Ad. 12 – Discussion on Desmos promotional materials for the forthcoming events

Secretary General said the initial input for this item of the Agenda should be given by **Vassilis Birtsas**, Desmos PR and Communications Commissioner, but invited also the others to take part in discussion and give their contributions as well.

Vassilis said one of the promotional materials is certainly Desmos Newsletter. He said the News Letter is at the moment issued twice a year, indicating that it's a good promotional material, which can be used in our local communities. Vassilis said we had the opportunity during this meeting to hear about some very interesting events and activities in practically all member-countries the Committee members come from. The point is we need to get the information with some photos, so it can be put in the Newsletter and published. This is something that requires the initiative of the Committee members in their own associations. It actually costs nothing and all that is needed is good will and a very short time to write down a paragraph or two and attach some photos.

Of course, the promotional material we used so far and we could use in the forthcoming period are the badges, the pins, the calendars, but again, this the issue closely connected with the available money. Desmos Leaflet, which we currently use for the big scout events – conferences, jamborees - is made with a help of the Scouts of Greece. Their Design department helped us a lot, not only for the Leaflet, but also for different logos we used so far.

Christos Papageorgiou emphasized that the problem of promotion is closely related to the problem of communications. We could even have three or four Newsletters a year if we could get more information, of course in English, about the activities.

We know that some NSOs like in Cyprus always have at least one article related to Desmos in their national scout magazine. If we could get such articles translated to English, it would be good.

For the last World Scout Jamboree, we got the contribution of **Georges El Ghorayeb** from Lebanon, which enabled us make several thousands of small calendars that we distributed to scouts passing through our Workshop in Faith and Belief Zone, in UK.

Desmos Vice-President, **Maher Sahlieh**, gave his personal donation of 100,-USD to cover the production of the Desmos small calendars for the Jamboree in Sweden.

**Zoran Petrovic** accepted to organize the quality printing of the calendar at a very low price. He suggested to have a calendar for 2012. **Maher** supported Zoran in this regard, since thus the scouts would have the calendar with them for a longer period.

**Georges Abboud** said he will try to provide a thousand or two thousands of Desmos badges, as well as a couple of thousands of stickers and possibly a thousand of pens with Desmos name printed - also for the Jamboree in Sweden.

**Christos Papageorgiou** said Vassilis and him will prepare the new Leaflet, probably with more pictures and information, and bring it to the next Committee meeting in Belgrade, and if the Committee agrees with the new design, the Leaflet can be printed in large number of copies.

**Didi** proposed to think about the possibility to have the appropriate postal stamp.

## Ad. 12 – Discussion on the activities foreseen in the forthcoming period

Secretary General invited the Committee members to indicate the activities foreseen in their countries, especially the activities where the Orthodox scouts from other countries can be invited.

**Christos Papageorgiou** insisted once again that all the Committee members should send to Vassilis the information about activities in their countries. The good example would be to put in our Newsletter the information about religious and spiritual activities, or the environmental activities. It can give the idea to the others to organize similar things in their own associations.

Christos said Desmos should suggest organization of the **Training on Spiritual Dimension in Scouting for the EurAsia region**. It is important because most of the countries from that region are the members of Desmos, but again, almost all those countries are not active. The training on Spiritual Dimension in Scouting would be the opportunity for the Orthodox leaders to find out more about this important segment of the scout programme, but also to get acquainted with Desmos, with the philosophy of our Link and with all our activities. One such event would certainly increase their commitment and we could count on their better involvement in future.



Christos encouraged realizations of common activities between Desmos countries on **The Thinking Day** is something we have been discussing before, but it is always actual and inspiring.

Christos suggested organization of specific activities of offering service to the local community, for The Thinking Day, emphasizing the importance of the link between

Scouting and the community. He said it would be an excellent opportunity for the promotion of Desmos and for increasing its visibility.

**Maher Sahlieh** supported this opinion and said in Palestine they have each month one activity as the community service.

Secretary General, **Marko Petrovic**, said The Scout Organization of Serbia has the National Jamboree in 2011, which will actually be an international event with participation of several hundred foreign scouts from a number of countries, and the scouts from Desmos countries are more than welcome.

Marko said the Jamboree will be held in the town of Šabac, in the period August 10-20, 2011, and the event makes part of the celebration of Centenary of Scouting in Serbia. Marko presented the basic details about the Jamboree in Serbia and the promotional video was played for The Committee members.

Marko explained that the date of the event was set taking into account the time of the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden. Thus, all those who will be participating at the WSJ in Sweden and still would like to join us at the Serbian Jamboree, will be able to come to Šabac and take part, since tje ESJ in Sweden ends on August 7, 2011.

Besides the traditional scout activities, the Jamboree programme will foresee different workshops including the one on Spiritual Dimension in Scouting. The detailed programme will be communicated to all interested associations and individuals.

Marko said the scouts of Serbia would be very happy to welcome their scout friends from Desmos countries and to live together an extraordinary adventure.



### Ad. 13 – Various issues / Hosting of the next Desmos Committee Meeting in 2011

**Vassilis Birtsas** raised the issue of Statistics related to Desmos web site, since it would be interesting to know how many people visited our web site. It was agreed to check it with the web site administrator, which will be done by Marko Petrovic.

**Christos Papageorgiou** proposed to put on Desmos web site some of the messages of His All Holiness The Ecumenical Patriarch. Christos said there are precious Messages of His All Holiness related to the environment and other issues, which would be interesting and useful for our membership and for all those who are visiting our web site.

Since a number of additional issues have already been discussed within the other items of the Agenda, and since there were no other particular discussions within this Item of the Agenda, Secretary General suggested to close this Item of the Agenda.

Secretary General concluded that the Agenda of the Committee Meeting was fulfilled.

Desmos President, **Christos Papageorgiou**, and Desmos Secretary General, **Marko Petrovic**, invited all The Committee members to be cooperative in terms of communication, as it is indispensable for normal functioning of The Link and, in addition, it is the guarantee for successful work in the forthcoming period.

DESMOS COMMITTEE EXPRESSES GRATITUDE  
TO HIS ALL HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH, BARTOLOMEW I  
TO PROFESSOR MARIOS BEZGOS  
TO THE PENTELI INTER-ORTHODOX CENTER OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE  
AND TO THE SCOUTS OF GREECE - SOMA HELLINON PROSKOPON  
FOR EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION OF THE DESMOS COMMITTEE MEETING,  
FOR WARM HOSPITALITY AND WONDERFUL TIME IN ATHENS!



## MESSAGE

By

His All Holiness

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew  
For the Scout Conference of "Desmos"  
(Athens, October 15-17, 2010)

\* \* \*

Beloved scout members of "Desmos" and conference participants,

It is with sincere delight that we have been informed of your forthcoming conference organized by the International Link of orthodox Christian Scouts at the Inter-Orthodox Center of Penteli Monastery in Athens between October 15-17, 2010.

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter convened by "Desmos" following the successful gathering two years ago in Canterbury, England, in an effort to draw together representatives of Scouts from the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox Churches.

Your aim in seeking to establish and maintain an ongoing spiritual conversation with young and responsible members of society is truly admirable, and we wholeheartedly bless your intent to discuss such topics as dialogue with youth, Christianity and the environment, as well as ways and means of returning our youth to the Church.

Conversation and communication are perhaps the two keys to securing greater understanding, global peace, and religious tolerance in an age when the planet is plagued by misunderstanding, tension, and ecological degradation. Indeed, our generation knows that it cannot possibly succeed in reversing the troubling trends of our world without involving the education and participation of our youth, the generation that will inherit the world that we leave behind.

May the grace of God kindle your hearts. May the light of God inspire your discussions. And may the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2010

Your fervent supplicant before God

✠ BARTHOLOMEW  
Archbishop of Constantinople,  
New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch