



## DESMOS

THE INTERNATIONAL LINK  
OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SCOUTS

LE LIEN INTERNATIONAL  
DES SCOUTS CHRETIENS ORTHODOXES

## DESMOS COMMITTEE MEETING February 14-17, 2013. LARNACA, CYPRUS

### MINUTES

The Committee Meeting of The International Link of Orthodox Christian Scouts DESMOS was held in the premises of the Onissilos hotel, in Larnaca, Cyprus, February 14-17, 2013. The Committee meeting was held with the significant support of the NSO - Cyprus Scouts Association and with the blessing of His Beatitude The Archbishop of Nea Justiniana and All Cyprus, Chrisostomos II.

Present:

**Marko Petrovic**, Desmos President

**Vassilis Birtsas**, Desmos Vice-President

**Maher Sahlieh**, Desmos Treasurer

**Naaman Shahada**, Desmos Committee member

**Nicolaos Mitsides**, Desmos Committee member

**Georges Abboud**, Desmos Secretary General

**Christos Papageorgiou**, Honorary Desmos Committee member

**George Bahow**, Honorary Desmos Committee member



Appologies:

**Saeed Daoud**, Desmos Committee member

**Dusan Masoničić**, Desmos Committee member



The official opening of DESMOS Committee meeting took place on February 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2013, in the premises of the Onissilos Hotel, in Larnaca, Cyprus.

The Committee members from Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Palestinian Authority and Serbia took part at the Meeting, as well as Secretary General Georges Abboud.

Desmos Committee had the pleasure to welcome at the Meeting the guest from the **National Scout Organization** of Cyprus - Mr. **Christos Marneros**, former DESMOS Treasurer and actual Cyprus NSO's Board member.

The Committee, highly appreciating the presence of Mr. Christos Marneros, expressed gratitude for all he did for DESMOS so far and for great support in preparation of this Committee Meeting.



The proposed Agenda was distributed to all participants of the Meeting.

At the beginning of the Meeting, DESMOS Committee members had the Prayer.

The Prayer was said by Desmos Vice-President, Vassilis Birtsas.

## P R A Y E R

Thank you God,

because today You gave us the joy to face the daylight and praise Your name for what you give to us all.  
Please, enlighten our minds to kind thoughts, lead our steps in good deeds,  
bless us to feel the joy of Scouting in our daily life  
in order to become precious Scouts, useful citizens in society.  
Guide our meeting to decision for the sake of young generation.  
Guard us, almighty Lord, from anything that would prevent us to praise your Holy name.

## THE MEETING AGENDA:

The proposed Agenda was as follows:

1. Address of Desmos President / From Kiev to Larnaka  
**Marko Petrovic**
2. Address of Desmos Vice-President  
**Vassilis Birtsas**
3. Report of DESMOS Treasurer  
**Maher Sahlieh**
4. Report of the Secretary General  
**Georges Abboud**
5. Minutes of the previous Desmos Committee Meeting  
**Marko Petrovic**
6. - Change in DESMOS Committee (co-opting of the new Committee member)  
- Other administration issues  
**Georges Abboud**
7. Report on the meeting of the World Scout Inter-religious Forum, Geneva, September 2012  
Information about the 4<sup>TH</sup> World Scout Inter-religious Symposium - WSIS Korea 2012  
**Vassilis Birtsas**
8. Report on the 3rd Ecumenical Encounter, Assisi, October 2012  
**Marko Petrovic / Georges Abboud**
9. Agreed - Realized (Commitments for 2012)  
**Marko Petrovic / Open discussion**

10. World and Regional events in 2013
  - 14th World Scout Moot, August 8-18, 2013, Canada
  - 21st European Scout Conference, August 17-21, 2103, Berlin, Germany**Marko Petrovic / Vassilis Birtsas**
11. Reports on Desmos activities on a national level in particular countries  
**Desmos Committee members / representatives of member countries**
12. Funding of DESMOS Committee activities  
**Marko Petrovic - V. Birtsas - Maher Sahlieh - George Bahow / Open discussion**
13. Desmos Newsletter - Do we need it! Do we want it! How to move on?  
**Introduction: Marko Petrovic - Vassilis Birtsas / Open discussion**
14. Discussion on activities foreseen in the forthcoming period
  - Regional conferences
  - 40th World Scout Conference 2014, Slovenia / 7th DESMOS Conference
  - 23rd World Scout Jamboree, July 28 - August 8, 2015, Kirara-Hama, Yamaguchi, Japan
  - DESMOS future events**Introduction: Marko Petrovic - Vassilis Birtsas / George Bahow / Open discussion**
15. Miscellaneous / Hosting of the next Desmos Committee Meeting in 2014  
**Open discussion**

The Committee accepted the proposed Agenda.

The Committee agreed to discuss the Item Ad. 12 after the Item Ad. 3, in order to keep the discussion within the same topic.

#### **Ad. 1 - ADDRESS OF DESMOS PRESIDENT / FROM KIEV TO LARNACA**



DESMOS President, **Marko Petrovic**, welcomed all to the Committee Meeting and expressed gratitude for personal efforts the Committee members made in order to come to Cyprus.

The President extended a big THANK YOU to the NSO of Cyprus for accepting to host the event and for all logistic and other support.

The President extended special GRATITUDE to the Orthodox Church of Cyprus and to His Beatitude the Archbishop of Nea Justiniana and All Cyprus, Chrisostomos II, for the Blessing and for the support to The Link.

The review of events and activities was presented to the Committee through PowerPoint presentation.

The key points of the President's presentation were:

- ❖ Lack of Communication (Committee)
- ❖ Change within DESMOS Committee
- ❖ The link at the crossroads / DESMOS needs strong commitment
- ❖ 2012 - Not so busy year for DESMOS
- ❖ Participation at International Events in 2013
- ❖ Reflections on future Intl. Events

The President emphasized the issue of lack of communication within the Committee and said that once-a-year communication at the Committee meetings is not enough.

The Committee members should be in contact throughout a year, using first of all the E-mail as an excellent means of communication, which is quick, which offers wide range of possibilities and which is practically free of charge. He mentioned the possibility of using SKYPE well, thus having the possibility to make Skype conferences as well.

The President informed the Committee that unfortunately the Committee member from Romania, Roxana Boltasu, is not able to continue her work with the Committee for personal reasons, which has already been announced to the Committee earlier last year. For formal reasons, this issue will be discussed within the Item 6 of the Agenda.

The President pointed out the difficult situation that many NSO's DESMOS members are facing, especially in terms of financial capacity, which automatically generates a difficult situation for our link as a whole. In this context, there is an urgent need to start searching for possible solutions.

## Ad. 2 - ADDRESS OF DESMOS VICE-PRESIDENT

DESMOS **Vice-President, Vassilis Birtsas**, expressed a great appreciation to the hosting NSO, Scouts of Cyprus, for the efforts invested in organization of the Committee Meeting, and welcomed the Committee members pointing out the importance of commitment and full involvement in work of the Committee.

Vassilis said that DESMOS needs dedicated people, that there are many things to do within the Link and that human resources are indispensable element for a success.

Vice-President emphasized that we need to be open, to pass the message of DESMOS to as many scouts of Christian Orthodox Faith as possible and to promote the good name of our Link.

Vassilis reminded that our Link has the Consultative Status with WOSM and pointed out the importance of such status, indicating at the same time that it is something to be deserved through a dedicated work in line with the policy of world scouting and through appropriate activities, which our Link respected and has to respect in future as well.



## Ad. 3 - REPORT OF DESMOS TREASURER



DESMOS Treasurer, **Maher Sahlieh**, expressed gratefulness to the Scouts of Cyprus for accepting to host the event. He also welcomed all the colleagues from the Committee and thanked them for coming to Cyprus for the Meeting.

Reporting to the Committee on the financial issue, Maher said that, unfortunately, his presentation on the matter would be rather short since there is no money. Maher emphasized that besides being aware of the overall financial crisis, we have to set some objectives and make efforts in order to reach them, thus trying to resolve the issue.

Maher also said he was fully aware of the fact that some countries are not able to support our Link as they did in previous period. Therefore, he pointed out the need to set up an appropriate strategy and find necessary funding for financing DESMOS activities.

## Ad. 12 - FUNDING OF DESMOS COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Within this item of the Agenda the Committee discussed the issue of funding of DESMOS Committee activities, but also funding of DESMOS presence at regional and world activities generally.

Marko Petrovic, Christos Papageorgiou, Maher Sahlieh and Nicolaos Mitsides took part in the discussion.

**Marko Petrovic** made a short introduction reminding how important is to be present at different international events, especially at world scouting events, and gave the example of the concrete negative result of the financial weakness of our Link is DESMOS - absence from the 4<sup>th</sup> World Scout Symposium held in Korea, in August 2012. The fact is that most of the faith organizations in scouting were present there. If you're not at such an important event - Marko said - you're not participating in exchange of ideas and in creation of conclusions... You just can't keep pace with what is happening, you're not involved. And it's not good for the Link and for its image in world scouting.

**Christos Papageorgiou** reminded how much the association Friends of Desmos in Greece helped our Link, emphasizing the fact that FoD in Greece didn't support only the Greek members of the Committee but DESMOS generally.

Christos said that, unfortunately, the situation in Greece changed and became very difficult, so FoD in Greece is not able to support our Link financially anymore.

Therefore, we need to find funding for the coming years from other resources. He quated a number of important events that are coming in 2013, 2014 and 2015, in which DESMOS should be present.



**Maier Sahlieh** agreed with Marko's and Christos' discussion and concluded that the Committee needs to make a list of priority events in which DESMOS presence would be needful, in order to define the necessary budget. Maier said we have to explore all possibilities of funding and try more options, like different donors and sponsors, possible aide of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and churches in DESMOS member-countries, some specific activities like preparing and selling Easter eggs... etc.

Maier suggested that the Committee prepares the appropriate letter explaining DESMOS Mission and Vision, objectives of the Link and activities that we plan, which could be sent to all orthodox church patriarchates. The Committee members should visit the orthodox church patriarchates in their countries, present the Letter and ask the financial support for DESMOS.

**Nicolaos Mitsides** said that we should surely open the issue with His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch, who could certainly help us at least by giving us a good advices how to proceed in resolving the financial issue and directions on concrete steps.

**George Bahow** agreed with Nicolaos Mitsides regarding the contact with His All Holiness and suggested the visit to The Patriarchate as soon as possible, but he also pointed out the importance of the issue of the Fee to be paid by DESMOS member-countries, reminding that this is the constitutional issue.

**Georges Abboud** agreed that respecting of this constitutional obligation would be of great help for the Link, but he also said that we have to be aware of possible negative response of majority of the member-countries. He suggested to set a small amount, for instance 100,-€, which we could ask from all DESMOS member-countries, as the contribution to DESMOS budget. He said we should also think of the possibility to collect some money by selling different DESMOS promotional material (small badges, pins,...etc) to our children.

Georges Abboud also suggested to renew contacts with BSA, which is formally a member of DESMOS although completely inactive practically since the founding of the Link. Georges reminded that BSA is large and powerful organization in every aspect and might be supportive for DESMOS , but we need to approach them and discuss the possibilities. Georges said he believes the approximate annual budget needed would be around 5.000,-€

**Naaman Shahada** pointed out that we need to do something quickly. He said it's a pity that our seven countries participating in the Committee are not able to collect through joint efforts at least 2.500,-€



#### Conclusions on Items Ad. 3 and Ad.12:

The Committee agreed on the following conclusions regarding the funding issue:

- Organize visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate  
(the task to be realized by: Vassilis Birtsas, Nicolaos Mitsides, Christos Papageorgiou)
- Prepare the Letter for orthodox church patriarchates  
(the task to be realized by: Marko Petrovic, Georges Abboud)
- Visit to orthodox church patriarchates in member-countries, present the Letter and ask for financial support  
(the task to be realized by: the Committee members)
- Contact BSA, explore the possibility of DESMOS visit to USA in order to encourage BSA's active participation in DESMOS and to ask support for the Link  
(the task to be realized by: Marko Petrovic, Vassilis Birtsas, Georges Abboud, Christos Papageorgiou)

#### Ad. 4 - REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Secretary General, **Georges Abboud**, expressed a high appreciation to the National Scout Organization - Scouts of Cyprus, for hosting this meeting and welcomed the Committee members thanking all for commitment and efforts that made this meeting possible.

Georges reported to the Committee on activities between the two Committee meetings and emphasized that it was not so busy period, since there were only two events in which DESMOS took part:

- **Inter-religious Forum**, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in September 2012 (attended by Vice-President Vassilis Birtsas)
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Ecumenical Encounter**, held in Assisi, Italy, in October 2012 (attended by President Marko Petrovic and Secretary General Georges Abboud)



Georges said that in performing our duties in DESMOS we need to work with the belief in our hearts and that if we do so we shall succeed. He said he is ready to continue with commitment.

#### Ad. 5 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN BELGRADE ON APRIL 30, 2011.

DESMOS President briefly presented the Minutes of the previous Committee Meeting held in Kiev, Ukraine, reminding that the document was distributed to all Committee members earlier last year, after the Committee Meeting.

DESMOS Committee members unanimously accepted the Minutes of the previous Committee Meeting held in Kiev on March 27, 2012.

#### Ad. 6 - CHANGE IN DESMOS COMMITTEE (co-opting of the new Committee member)



The President informed the Committee that the Committee member Roxana Boltasu formally requested to be released of the duties in the Committee, due to personal reasons and family issues.

Roxana sent the letter of resignation explaining that she can't perform the duty of the Committee member any longer due to family obligations, indicating that she remains sincerely loyal to DESMOS, to its Mission and Vision, and ready to contribute to further development of The Link within available free time.

Considering the given situation, the President and the Secretary General suggested to the Committee to accept Roxana's Letter of Resignation and to proceed in accordance with the Article XII, Point 2, of The Statutes of DESMOS, and co-opt/appoint the new Committee member - Nicolaos Mitsides, from Cyprus.

The President said he believes that the feeling shared by all The Committee members is that Nicolaos Mitsides is more than welcome in The Committee and that we are looking forward to working with Nikkos.

The Committee formally voted and unanimously accepted the Resignation of Roxana Boltasu and the co-opting of Nicolaos Mitsides.

**The Committee expressed high appreciation for the work of Roxana Boltasu in the Committee but also for her entire engagement in the Link over a number of years, hoping that Roxana will remain sort of an informal member of the team and will be with the Committee in the forthcoming period within available free time.**

**The Committee formally welcomed Nicolaos Mitsides from Cyprus as the new Committee member.**

## Ad. 7 - REPORT ON THE MEETING OF WSIF / INFORMATION ABOUT 4TH WSIS

DESMOS Vice-President, **Vassilis Birtsas**, presented to the Committee the Report on the Meeting of the World Scout Inter-religious Forum, held in Geneva, in September 2012.

Vassilis reminded that the Committee members have already received the WSIF Report-Minutes document, by e-mail. He briefly repeated the main points from that document.

Vice-President presented to the Committee more details on some topics discussed at the WSIF meeting: the project Messengers of Peace, as well as the forthcoming world events in 2013 - the 30th Asia Pacific Region Jamboree in Japan as the test event for 23rd World Scout Jamboree in 2015, and the World Scout Moot in Canada.



Vassilis also presented to the Committee the information on the 4th World Scout Inter-Religious Symposium, held in Korea in August 2012, in which DESMOS unfortunately did not participate, due to funding problems.

Vice-President also stressed upon importance of DESMOS presence at international events.

## Ad. 8 - REPORT ON THE 3RD ECUMENICAL ENCOUNTER, ASSISI, ITALY, OCTOBER 2012



President **Marko Petrovic** and Secretary General **Georges Abboud** presented to the Committee the Report on the 3rd Ecumenical Encounter, held in Assisi, Italy, in October 2012.

The 3rd Ecumenical Encounter was held in the premises of the **Oasi Sacre Cuore**. The host, ICCS, offered excellent conditions for work and the entire environment was very inspirational.

The central theme:  
"LORD, MAKE ME AN  
INSTRUMENT OF YOUR  
PEACE"



### The objectives:

- To encourage the continuous dialogue on religiosity and spirituality in Scouting.
- To collect the experiences and good practices from different Associations in favor of Peace.
- To present and share documents and tools produced by the Associations related to the Peace education.
- To support the Associations in developing the Spiritual and Religious dimension within the Scout Program.

The representatives of The International Link of Orthodox Christian Scouts actively participated at the event. The details on DESMOS contribution at the event are given in the written Report, which was presented to the Committee.

Besides the working part, the hosts organized sight-seeing of **Assisi** and **Spello**, beautiful towns in the Province of Umbria, and a visit to a number of churches and historically significant places.

## Ad. 9 - AGREED - REALIZED (COMMITMENTS FOR 2012)

The Committee made a short analysis of the Agreed-Realized issue, related to some conclusions from the previous Committee meeting, which could not be realized, although being accepted as commitments for 2012.

The Committee concluded that the main obstacle for achieving agreed tasks was lack of funding, which was discussed in details within Ad.3 and Ad.12.

The Committee agreed the priority remains the visit to His All Holiness and that it should be realized as soon as possible.

## Ad. 10 - WORLD AND REGIONAL EVENTS IN 2013

The President informed the Committee about the world and regional events in 2013:

- 14<sup>th</sup> World Scout Moot, August 8-18, 2013, Canada
- 21<sup>st</sup> European Scout Conference, August 17-21, 2103, Berlin, Germany



Respecting already agreed position on importance of participation at as many world and regional events as possible, and considering on the other hand the very limited funding opportunities, the Committee agreed that the priority should be participation at the 14th World Scout Moot, where the spiritual dimension will be covered through a programme segment similar to Faith and Belief Zone realized at world scout jamborees and participation at the regular annual meeting of the Inter-Religious Forum, where DESMOS has always had an active role, since the time that body was established.

**Christos Papageorgiou** once again emphasized that DESMOS has to be present at such events and take part in the activities on the world level, otherwise we shall end by losing the consultative status with WOSM. Regarding the Moot in Canada, he said that we need to find the person in the Committee who would accept the challenge. For the Moot, it is necessary to start with preparations as soon as possible, since there's a lot of work to do, including getting in touch with His Eminence Metropolitan Sotirios (Athanassoulas), the Metropolitan of Toronto.

The Committee asked the Vice-President, **Vassilis Birtsas**, to represent DESMOS at the 14th World Scout Moot, to be held in Canada, August 8-18, 2013. The Committee highly appreciated Vassilis' successful engagements within DESMOS participation in FaB Zone, at previous world scout jamborees in United Kingdom and in Sweden, and concluded that he would be the most appropriate person for such task.

Vassilis accepted the challenge in principle, indicating, however, that he would need a few weeks before being able to confirm his participation. He emphasized that it's first of all the matter of money, but also the matter of time needed for preparation and efforts to define DESMOS presentation. Vassilis invited the Committee members to get involved and suggest what could be DESMOS workshop at the Moot.

The Committee members suggested several ideas, but the conclusion was that the best would be to contact the local orthodox church and find out some examples of good practice for the Moot participants age and then decide.

The funding issue was resolved after acceptance of the Greek Orthodox Scouts Association of Israel to support financially participation of DESMOS representative at the Moot and Inter-Religious Forum.

**Naaman Shahada** said his Association is ready to cover the expenditures for the Moot and Inter-Religious Forum in the amount up to 2.000,-€.

Regarding the 21<sup>st</sup> European Scout Conference, the Committee considered the expenditures for the event extremely high. Accordingly, the Committee concluded that it won't be possible to provide funding for participation at that event, although it would be good and important to have a representative in Berlin.

## Ad. 11 - REPORTS ON DESMOS ACTIVITIES ON A NATIONAL LEVEL IN PARTICULAR COUNTRIES

The Committee members presented their associations' activities on national level.



**Maher Sahlieh** informed the Committee about activities of the Palestinian Orthodox Scouts.

Maher said his association now holds two very important positions in Palestinian NSO, since after the elections, which they had on the national level, Mr. Salim Zeidan is the International Commissioner and Mr. Tawfiq Salem is the Vice-President of the Palestinian NSO. Both of them are members of the Orthodox Scouts of Palestine.

Maheer also informed the Committee on OSP leadership, emphasizing that Mr. Mr. Mahfouz Qahoush is the President of his association Mr. Mahfouz Qahoush and that he himself is the International Commissioner.



Maheer informed the Committee about scout activities in Palestine, indicating that all their scout groups had numerous activities.

He pointed out the work of Orthodox scouts in Gaza strip area, stressing upon importance of those activities because of extremely difficult conditions in which Gaza orthodox scouts work.

**George Bahow** presented to the Committee the detailed information on the activities of the Greek Orthodox Scouts Association of Israel.

The annual activities of the Orthodox Scouts Organization in Israel are spread upon three levels:

**A) Activities performed by all the Scouts Troops sponsored by the Association and its guidelines, such as:**

1. Training courses to qualify youth leaders from 9th grade up to 12th grade.
2. Symposiums for the coordinators and leaders in order to coordinate the activities among the troops & train young leaders.
3. Holding initiatives for the senior and junior leaders in courses of "road caution & safety", in which the members' parents participate, as well.
4. The "Elderly Project" – to care for and help elderly (old people) by annually voluntary activities.
5. On Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012, two new troops were established, one Orthodox troop in Kfar-Ysif village and one Islamic troop in the city of Lod.

The Greek Orthodox Scouts Association decided to take on itself to help and establish new Islamic troops enabling them to enrol and intervene directly in the Arab & Druze Scouts Movement in Israel, beside the Orthodox Scouts and the Druze Scouts. The new Islamic troops refuse to join the Islamic Scouts Organization because they do not get any financial support. Up to date, 16 Islamic troops have joined the "Arab & Druze Scouts Movement".



**B) The troops of the Greek Orthodox Scouts Association implement and offer annual scouting and educational programs, such as:**

1. **The Summer Camps:** 9 camps were held in the summer of 2012, 3 moving camps (different area everyday) and 4 camps for children under 5 years old. The summer camps are considered to be one of the most significant activities carried out by the troops because it needs very large and important preparations. These camps are carried out under the control of the Education, Health and Police (Internal Security) ministries.
2. **Annual trips as detailed bellow:**
  - Walking trips (for one day only), aiming to see and observe natural places/ areas and to get to know the nearby environment.
  - Trips to visit holy places and ancient sites of historical relics or visit factories and educational centers and public facilities.
3. **Holidays & special occasions parties**, such as:
  - Local parties, in which, the scouts' members participate together with their parents.
  - Public parties for scouts and a large number of people.
  - Specific programs on the occasion of the "World/ International Scout Day"
  - Concerts.
4. **Scouts' Parades:** each troop chooses one or more holiday (Christmas, Easter, and the Holly Cross Day etc.), in which it performs a scout parade in its hometown, as well as, a special inclusive carnival on the occasion of the "International Child Day".
5. **Mutual meetings** between the troops in order to know more each other, as well as, to perform joint scouting activities.
6. **Annual girls' instructors/ leaders meeting:** once a year, girls' instructors from all the organization's troops meet together in order to discuss a significant educational issue and take decisions regarding that issue.
7. **Sports** and entertainment activities.



**C) The Israeli Scouts Federation plans and implements scouting programs and courses**, involving all Scouts organization in Israel, Jews and Arabs. The Greek Orthodox Scouts Association has an important and effective role in these activities for the following reasons:

1. Mr. Naaman Shehadeh is the Vice President of the Israeli Scouts Federation.
2. Mr. Naaman Shehadeh is the deputy general coordinator of the Scouts Federation courses.
3. 75% of the instructors of these courses come from the Greek Orthodox Scouts Association.
4. The largest number of members participating in the courses is from the Greek Orthodox Scouts Association.

The courses are:

1. The "Wood - Badge" course which is held once every two years for the leaders aged 25 years old and more.
2. The "Scouts – Badge" course for 5 days, which ends with granting the member this Badge and it is held for members aged 14-17 years old.
3. The "Marine-Badge" which is granted for boys' leaders or instructors.

The Co-Existence meetings between Arabs & Jews from all Scouts Association all over the country. The meetings are held quarterly, hosted by one of the participating associations. 15-20 members of each association participate the meeting, boys and girls aged 14-20 years old.

The full presentation including a number of nice photographs was offered to the Committee members.

**Georges Abboud** informed the Committee on what was happening in his association Scout National Orthodox, S.N.O. in the period between the two Committee meetings.

Georges Abboud said that two months ago the orthodox population in his country was faced with the big loss. Head of the Greek Orthodox, Ignatius IV Hazim, the Patriarch of the Levant and Antioch for 33 years, died. He was a man of moderation and consensus, who believed in Inter-Religious dialogue, as well as in coexistence rather than extremism and isolation. S.N.O. scouts took part in the funeral and paid tribute to the great religious and spiritual leader.



Georges informed the Committee that he was elected in the NSO's National Board and that he intends to run for presidency next year.

He also informed the Committee on the new S.N.O. leadership.

Georges Abboud said the S.N.O. scout groups, besides their regular activities normally realized throughout the year, took part at all NSO's events and activities, as they usually do.

Georges informed the Committee that S.N.O. scout leaders are very committed in their work and gave the example of the scout leader Joseph Chamy, who insisted on strong involvement of parents, offering them a sort of a scout role and believing that the results achieved would be much better.

Georges also informed the Committee that the postal scout stamp was issued in his country on the occasion of Centenary of Arab Scouting.

**Nicolaos Mitsides** used the opportunity to extend to the Committee the greetings of his NSO's President, who was not able to join the Committee himself, and who wished to the Committee a successful meeting and a pleasant time in Cyprus.

Nikkos informed the Committee on the scout events and activities in Cyprus. He reminded that 2013 is the Centenary year for Scouting in Cyprus and said that all the activities actually have the centenary dimension. He mentioned a number of events and activities, such as:

- The Post of Cyprus issued the stamp dedicated to the Centenary of Scouting in this country.
- The scouts organized blood donations in all the districts.
- Throughout Cyprus the scouts and leaders are renewing their Scout Promise
- The Association will have a traditional celebration for St. George's Day
- The WoodBadge Course is planned to be held by the end of September
- National Jamboree will be organized in the period July 27 - August 4, partly by the sea coast, partly in the mountains



Nicolaos Mitsides informed the Committee that a special Press Release will be issued on the occasion of DESMOS Committee Meeting in Larnaca and that the appropriate information will be put on the official web site of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus.

Nikkos said he believes the visit to Nicosia, which is planned to be realized during the Scout Day and the renewal of the Scout promise, will be a special experience for the Committee members.

**Vassilis Birtsas** informed the Committee on the events and activities in Greece.

Vassilis said a number of scout events and activities in his country is rather large, but he preferred to focus on the events and activities with spiritual dimension.



He mentioned as one of such events the traditional event related to bringing the Holy Light from Jerusalem to Athens, which attracts lots of attention of SHP scouts.

Vassilis said the Greek scouts have been engaged in conservation and renovation of monasteries throughout Greece, which offered them the opportunity to examine and further strengthen their religiosity and spirituality, doing at the same time an important job for monasteries.

In previous period Greek scouts have also been very much engaged in collecting aid for people in need. All the collected aid have been delivered to the Church, which then organized and effectuated the distribution to those who needed that aid the most. Scouts of Cyprus supported this initiative as well by collecting and freight a container of clothes and food to be delivered by Scouts of Greece to where most needed.

A number of Greek scout groups realized a visit to Constantinople and visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

**Marko Petrovic** informed the Committee about scout activities in Serbia.

Marko said that besides the usual scout activities being realized according to the NSO's annual plan, the focus in 2013 will be on the activities related to the celebration of 1700 years of the Edict of Milan. He explained that the Christians celebrate this year 17 centuries of the proclamation of the Edict of Milan, legal document, which put a historical end to the three centuries-long persecution of Christians and ensured "the authority of every person to profess the religion that he or she preferred.

The scout groups from Nis, town in south-east Serbia, will be particularly involved and will take part in different activities planned to be held on the occasion of this great Jubilee, because the Edict of Milan was issued by Emperor Constantine the Great, ruler of the Roman Empire, who was actually born in Nis (Naissus).



Marko also informed the Committee about the international camp "Feel the Nature", which will be organized in the eastern part of Serbia, not far from the border with Bulgaria. The invitation with detailed information and programme will be sent to all DESMOS countries and the scouts of Serbia will be happy to welcome brothers and sisters scouts from different countries.

Marko informed the Committee colleagues that his NSO believes the exchange of young people is important for better understanding of different approach to Scouting, as well as for establishing new friendships and strengthen the existing ones. This could be an issue for the Committee to work together in the forthcoming period and to encourage NSOs DESMOS to join the idea.

Another idea, which could improve contacts between scouts from different DESMOS countries, is to encourage and facilitate group-to-group projects. Such projects could be jointly realized by scout groups from different DESMOS countries, offering participants the opportunity to get to know each other better and establish close links through such particular partnership.

**Uganda Orthodox Christian Scouts** sent by e-mail the information about an interesting activity they organized. DESMOS President Marko Petrovic presented the information to the Committee.

Uganda Orthodox Christian Scouts (DESMOS-Uganda), in partnership with Makindye Cycling Club have organized a Recreation/Fun cycling tour was realized on 26th January 2013. at Bule Island-Mubanda Subcounty, Mukono District.

This Fun ride tour will enhance the awareness/sensitization of HIV/AIDS and Drug abuse in the communities around the Island of Bule-Mubanda Sub-county found in Mukono District.

All scouts/Youth had the opportunity to participate in a number of activities such as Fun rides, Football, Volley balls, Hiking, Beach games, and Charity work in these communities among others.



These activities are intended to boost their development as individuals as well as to facilitate development of their communities.

All these activities have been done with an aim of unifying and promoting the spirit of togetherness among the Youth from different areas/communities.



#### Ad. 13 - DESMOS NEWSLETTER - DO WE NEED IT? DO WE WANT IT? HOW TO MOVE ON?

DESMOS **President** said that the question - how to proceed in order to have a regular NewsLetter - was on the agenda of almost all Committee meetings during the last several years and yet we still have the same situation. And the reason for such situation is always the same - week response of member-countries, which are normally the main source of information, the key resource.

The **Vice-President** also pointed out that the lack of information from associations DESMOS members makes the preparation of DESMOS NewsLetter impossible.

Both **Marko Petrovic** and **Vassilis Birtsas** invited once again the Committee members to be cooperative and launch the initiative in their associations for sending materials that could be used for DESMOS NewsLetter. Furthermore, DESMOS should encourage all its member-countries to send information about religious/spiritual activities of orthodox scouts in their countries.

#### Ad. 14 - DISCUSSION ON ACTIVITIES FORESEEN IN THE FORTHCOMING PERIOD

The Committee discussed possible DESMOS participation at the forthcoming regional and world events:

- Regional conferences
- 40th World Scout Conference 2014, Slovenia / 7<sup>th</sup> DESMOS Conference
- 23rd World Scout Jamboree, July 28 - August 8, 2015, Kirara-Hama, Yamaguchi, Japan
- DESMOS future events

The introduction was offered by DESMOS President and Vice-President. After discussion in which took part all the Committee members, the Committee concluded as follows.

##### Regional scout conferences

Regarding regional scout conferences, it was agreed to attend such events whenever possible. Since it was already concluded that it wouldn't be possible to get funding for participation at the European Scout Conference, the Committee recommended participation at the regional Conference of the Arab Scout Region, by one of the Committee members from the Middle East, if the financial issue could be resolved.

## The 40<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference 2014, Slovenia / 7<sup>th</sup> DESMOS Conference

The Committee is aware that next year our Link has to organize the 7<sup>th</sup> DESMOS Conference. As we used to do before, except for the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference, we should organize the 7<sup>th</sup> DESMOS Conference prior to the World Scout Conference, which will be held in Slovenia, August 11-15, 2014. Accordingly, we need to plan DESMOS Conference for Sunday, August 10, 2014.



The Committee concluded that serious and timely preparations should be made in order to have a successful Conference. The Conference also means that we shall have the elections for the new Committee, so we need to get the nominations from member-countries.

This is the issue the Committee should focus on in the forthcoming period. The Committee shall further discuss this issue through e-mail exchange in order to have grounds for decisions until the next Committee meeting.

## The 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree, July 28 - August 8, 2015, Kirara-Hama, Yamaguchi, Japan

Although there's two and a half years before the start of the next World Scout Jamboree, which will be held in Japan, in August 2015, we need to start thinking about DESMOS participation at the largest world scout event. At the last two world scout jamborees, in UK and in Sweden, DESMOS had a very successful workshops within the Faith and Belief Zone, so we need to do our best to continue the trend and offer young participants another interesting workshop, thus contributing to the development of the spiritual dimension in Scouting and further promoting our Link.



The Committee members shall think in the meantime about possible options for DESMOS workshop, in order to come out at the next Committee meeting with concrete proposals.

We also need to find someone who would accept to run the workshop in Japan, as well as to motivate and recruit the volunteers for the Workshop activities.

### DESMOS future events

The Committee discussed possible DESMOS future events.

- The next DESMOS Committee Meeting is the event we should have in the first quarter of the year 2014. It is an important event, since it precedes the 7<sup>th</sup> DESMOS Conference.
- The event already successfully realized - Celebration of the Thinking Day in the border area between neighbouring DESMOS countries - is the event we should consider as a standard event. We should encourage our member-countries to realize such projects and give the example of good co-operation.
- Next year, as already said earlier, DESMOS has its 7<sup>th</sup> Conference, the most important DESMOS event, which requires serious and timely preparations.  
The Committee agreed on the need to mobilize all the resources of our Link, in order to well prepare and conduct the Conference.

## **Ad. 15 - MISCELLANEOUS**

- Within this last Item of the Agenda, **Christos Papageorgiou** informed the Committee about the concerns of World Scout Bureau related to demeanour of faith organizations in Scouting and the necessity of keeping their activities in line with the WOSM Constitution.

Christos explained it was the main reason why the central theme of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Scout Inter-religious Symposium was "Growing Scouting with Families and Faith Communities".

The Symposium was designed in a way to offer participants the opportunity to share perspectives on family and community as important aspects of the lives of young people and adults and to reflect as a learning organization on how attention to these realities can help grow the movement.

Indeed, DESMOS didn't have a representative at that important event, but it's momentous for the Committee members to know the what was the focus of that world event.

- At the end of the meeting, the Committee members discussed different options regarding hosting of the next Committee meeting. As the solution has not been found, it was agreed that The Committee needs to find the host/venue for this meeting the latest until the end of 2013, in order to enable the Committee members make timely planning.

**DESMOS COMMITTEE EXPRESSES GRATITUDE  
TO HIS BEATITUDE THE ARCHBISHOP OF NEA JUSTINIANA AND ALL CYPRUS,  
CHRISOSTOMOS II  
TO THE SCOUTS OF CYPRUS - ΣΩΜΑ ΠΡΟΣΚΟΠΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ  
AND TO Mr. CHRISTOS MARNEROS  
FOR EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION OF THE DESMOS COMMITTEE MEETING,  
FOR WARM HOSPITALITY AND WONDERFUL TIME IN CYPRUS!**

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## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The annual DESMOS Committee Meeting was held in Larnaca, Cyprus, February 14-17, 2013.

The working part of the Meeting took part in the premises of Onissilos Hotel, in Larnaca. The Committee worked following the items of the proposed and adopted Agenda and the relevant Minutes will be available as a separate document.

The host NSO, the **Cyprus Scouts Association**, celebrates this year the great anniversary, the Centenary of Scouting in Cyprus.

Besides the working part of the Meeting, DESMOS Committee members had the opportunity to enjoy in a rich additional programme prepared by the host NSO.

The hosts arranged and organized the visit to the Holy Archbishopric in Lefcosia (Nicosia), where the delegation of DESMOS Committee members was received by **His Beatitude Chrysostomos II**, Archbishop of Nea Justiniana and All Cyprus. His Beatitude Cypriot Archbishop had a long cordial conversation with DESMOS President and members of the Executive Committee and expressed his full support to DESMOS in achieving its aims and objectives and in fulfilling its Mission. During the visit to the Holy Archbishopric, the Committee members were also enabled to visit the special part of the complex with the premises and personal belongings used by MAKARIOS III, the former Cypriot Archbishop and the first President of the Republic of Cyprus.



This museum-part of the complex is normally open to visitors only once a year, but the members of the Executive Committee of DESMOS, as distinguished guests, were offered the opportunity to make an extraordinary visit.

Within the same complex DESMOS Committee members also visited the Byzantine Museum with the impressive collection of beautiful Orthodox icons painted on different materials and with different techniques, originating from all periods of the history of Cyprus. It was a guided visit, so DESMOS Committee members heard lots of information and details about the Exhibition.

The second visit to Nicosia was planned and organized with the idea to offer DESMOS Committee members the opportunity to be part of a series of festive events related to celebration of the Centenary of Scouting in Cyprus. On Saturday, March 16, 2013, Nicosia was full of scouts of all age sections, in colorful uniforms, who performed a rich and divers programme.



The Cubs and Brownies, Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts, Scout Leaders and Scout Veterans, all of them very proud and very enthusiastic about the great anniversary of The Movement in their country, enjoyed in sharing their enthusiasm with the people of Nicosia, singing, playing different games and performing music, on a beautiful sunny day, which was embracing the capital of Cyprus.

On that sunny Saturday the old part of the town of Nicosia was indeed marked with a Scouting label. For DESMOS Committee members it was a real pleasure and a privilege to be there, amongst those young people and to share with them the wonderful moments.

Songs, dances and scout parades through the streets of the old part of Nicosia were an excellent introduction to the final event, which gathered all categories of Nicosia scouts who, in accordance with the tradition that their NSO carries on each year, renewed their Scout Promise



On that very special occasion, DESMOS President was offered the opportunity to address the scouts and scout leaders, to extend them warm greetings of The International Link of Orthodox Christian Scouts DESMOS and to wish them lots of pleasure, joy and new friendships in their scout life.



DESMOS President addressed the audience and used the opportunity to offer the appropriate memo-plaque to the Scout Commissioner of Nicosia, **Mr. Panayiotis Kinigos** and to **His Grace, the Bishop of Mesaorias, Gregorios**, who also addressed the scouts and scout leaders and expressed his admiration and support to DESMOS.

After the ceremony of renewal of the Scout Promise, His Grace The Bishop of Mesaorias, Gregorios, invited DESMOS Committee members for a coffee and conversation, at nearby restaurant on the square where the ceremony took part.

That was the opportunity to inform His Grace about DESMOS activities and to have an exchange on the issue of spirituality and religiosity in Scouting.

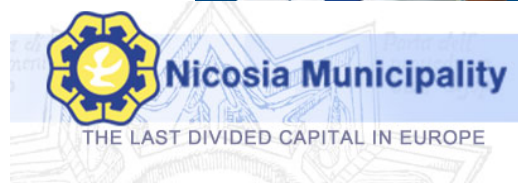
During the stay in Cyprus, DESMOS Committee members had a meeting and friendly exchange with Chief Commissioner of the Cyprus Scouts Association, **Mr Andreas Lambrou**, in the premises of the Club of Nicosia Scout and Guide Fellowship. Chief Commissioner informed DESMOS delegation about the activities they have regarding the celebration of the Centenary of Scouting in Cyprus, and on behalf of all members of The Link, DESMOS President extended congratulations for the great NSO's anniversary.



DESMOS Committee members were offered a nice lunch, hosted by President of Cyprus SGF **Mr. Photis Mamides** and President of Nicosia SGF **Mr. Yiannakis Xenides**. The encounter was held in a very open and friendly atmosphere.

DESMOS delegation also visited the Club of Larnaca Scout and Guide Fellowship, had a very nice dinner offered by President of Larnaca SGF **Mr. George Antoniou** and members of Larnaca SGF, and spent a very pleasant evening.

During the visit to Nicosia, DESMOS delegation was received in the City Hall by His Excellency the Mayor of Nicosia, **Mr. Costantinos Yiorkadjis**.



The Mayor of Nicosia presented to DESMOS Committee members the short history of the capital of the Republic of Cyprus and pointed out some major points in development plans for this city.

Mr. Yiorkadjis pointed out the fact that a large number of young people lives in Nicosia and amongst them lots of scouts.

The Mayor joined large number of citizens who were following events and activities on the streets and squares of old part of Nicosia and shared with them the joy expressed by boys and girls, scouts and leaders of the Cyprus Scouts Association.



DESMOS Committee members will certainly keep wonderful memories of their stay in Cyprus and of all events and activities in which they had the opportunity to take part, of all meetings with the Church and NSO officials, and especially of the encounters with young people, scouts of all age sections and their leaders.

Finally, warm impressions remain even warmer because of the beautiful weather in this sunny and hospitable Mediterranean country.