

GREETING of Professor Stavros Katsios
INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

On the occasion of the completion of 140 years since the birth of Nikos Kazantzakis and 35 years since its foundation, the International Society of Friends of Nikos Kazantzakis (IFNK)

"MEETINGS AND TEXTS OF KAZANTZAKIS
FOR NON-GREEK WRITERS AND ARTISTS"

Saturday 25, Sunday 26 November 2023
Thessaloniki History Center

Thank you for the invitation. It is an honor for the UNESCO Chair of the Ionian University to support such an important conference on Nikos Kazantzakis.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

Although Nikos Kazantzakis, the writer and philosopher, is best known to the Greek public for his significant contribution to literature and his profound influence on modern Greek culture, through the distinguished speakers of this important conference, we will engage in a holistic approach to the incredible impact of his presence in letters and philosophical currents around the world.

For me, as the holder of the UNESCO Chair on Threats to Cultural Heritage and as a Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpreting, at the Ionian University in Corfu, the personality and work of Nikos Kazantzakis extend beyond the great writer and philosopher. He was a translator of great caliber and a man whose life and work personify UNESCO's central mission: to cement peace in the minds of women and men in the world.

In the summer of 1946, Kazantzakis, on his last trip to Europe, stayed briefly in England, later moving to Paris, where he was appointed literary consultant and head of the UNESCO Translation Bureau until his resignation in March 1948 and his permanent settlement in French Cote d'Azur.

Although Kazantzakis' direct involvement with UNESCO has not been the subject of extensive research, his ethos and body of work are undeniably fully aligned with UNESCO's statutory mission of promoting peace, cultural diversity and education, with an emphasis on cultural exchange and understanding. His award of the Peace Prize in 1956 in Vienna confirms this.

His translation work of leading philosophical and literary texts also reflects his deep belief in the dialogue between cultures and the role of education. In this way he not only made these key works as translations accessible to Greek readers, but revealed to them the importance of intercultural communication and knowledge exchange – principles that govern UNESCO's work.

In addition, the humanitarianism that pervades all of Kazantzakis' work and his systematic engagement with critical universal issues are reflected in the contemporary priorities for achieving UNESCO's sustainable development goals in the context of Agenda 2030. The uniqueness of his literary legacy continues to inspire its readers around the world, overcoming cultural and language barriers, as does UNESCO's efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and the consolidation of peace through education, science, and culture.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude by wishing you every success at your conference.