Stelios STAVRIDIS

Culture and geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean: Greek parliamentary diplomacy and the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association (WHIA)

22/2020

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PELOPONNESE

EU - Middle East Series

THE JEAN MONNET PAPERS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY

Lifelong Learning

EUMENIA

This paper has been prepared by the author as part of the Jean Monnet Research Network on EU-Middle East Relations (EUMENIA), co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the EU. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.
Since December 2007, **Dr. Stelios Stavridis** has been an ARAID Senior Research Fellow in the ZEIS/Research Unit on European & International Studies, University of Zaragoza (Spain). He is also currently an Associate Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Policy Analysis, Department of Political Science & International Relations, University of the Peloponnese. He has held several research/teaching jobs in the UK, Belgium, Italy, Cyprus and France, where he last was a Visiting Professor at Sciences-Po Lyon (March 2019). His most recent publications include: (with R. Havlová) “Civilian Power Europe” and the Syrian Conflict'. *European Foreign Affairs Review* 24(4): 469–490 (2019).
Culture and geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean: Greek parliamentary diplomacy and the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association (WHIA)

Executive Summary

There is little academic research on Greek parliamentary diplomacy. The growth of the role of parliamentary actors worldwide is now well documented. This paper tries to bridge the existing gap on the Greek Parliament (Vouli). It focuses on the specific case of the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association, a forum initiated by the Greek government but steered by the Greek Vouli. This paper is a pilot-study. The goal is to raise attention to a neglected dimension of Greek foreign policy.

Introduction: the wider context

Over the past few decades, there has been a massive increase in the participation of individual parliamentarians and of parliamentary entities in international affairs.

This is not “new” in the sense that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was set up in 1889 - over 130 years ago now: its initial objective was to find a format that would facilitate international understanding and cooperation, i.e. to try and preserve peace at a time of heightening tensions. It comes as no surprise that two of its founders received the Nobel Peace Prize (Frédéric Passy and William Randal Cremer. See Vázquez 2002: 261). Other parliamentarians also made similar endeavours: see for instance those by French parliamentarians just prior to the start of World War One,
thus showing as well the limits of these efforts (Guieu 2017 covers the 1903-1914 period from that particular perspective).

This parliamentary approach – especially through the setting up of Inter-Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) - gained strength after 1945 (mainly in Western Europe and later on in Latin America and in Africa), and in particular since the Cold War end in the early 1990s (Sabic 2008; Puig 2008; Kissling 2011; Costa, Dri and Stavridis 2013; Crum and Fossum 2013). There are now about 130 IPIs worldwide which take various forms and structures, perform a variety of functions and roles, consist of elected or appointed parliamentarians, and include some time links with non-parliamentarians, etc. (for details, see Cofelice 2019).

Thus, parliamentary diplomacy (see below) has always been part of an effort to find irenic solutions to a world full of often very violent conflicts - falling therefore square and well into the wider objectives of diplomacy: a method and an institution that intends to facilitate dialogue between international actors, mainly but not only states (Watson 1982). Thus, diplomacy amounts to “solving problems through conversation” (in the words of former Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim as quoted in Meyerfeld 2020).

Of course, this does not mean that the international system is no longer dominated by states. Just that the traditional role of a diplomat (communication, reporting, analysis, negotiation and representation) is not exclusively and solely performed by professionals of the state. There is a multiplication of actors that means that there is a plethora of qualifications next to the term “diplomacy” - such as economic, cultural, digital, religious, scientific, humanitarian, military, gastronomic, celebrities, or sports. Special attention is also paid to the “paradiplomacy” of sub-state regions (but also big cities) as many of them are sometimes bigger than many a small state, or aim at gaining independence and become a state (the so-called protodiplomacy, including an important parliamentary dimension). All these processes have also been further facilitated thanks to a multitude of technological advances, including new social media.
There are also other dimensions linked to parliamentary diplomacy that will not
developed here for reasons of space, but are worth mentioning in order to
contextualize what follows: a growth in public diplomacy (see Melissen 2011) in
general, with a multiplication of “diplomatic actors” (see essays in particular in Part 4
of Constantinou, Kerr and Sharp 2016)\(^2\), leading many to speak of a
“democratization” of diplomacy (Melissen 2011: 2) that also favours “soft power”
approaches in international affairs (on soft power, see Nye 2004; 2019). This is
particularly true for Europe where there is a proliferation of parliamentary actors
(see Raube, Müftüler Baç and Wouters 2019) - but also where the process of
integration itself has led to a “democratization” of EU diplomacy (Bátora 2005: 61).

It is within that multi-layer context that parliamentary diplomacy should be
addressed as will be seen more particularly in the case under study below. This paper
consists of 4 sections, dealing with: 1. parliamentary diplomacy; 2. the international
relations of the Greek Parliament or Vouli; 3. the World Hellenic Inter-
Parliamentary Association (WHIA); and, finally, 4. the WHIA’s 2019 Session in
Athens.

1. Parliamentary Diplomacy

There exist now many definitions, here are the main ones, starting with the most-
often quoted of them all:

“[T]he full range of international activities undertaken by parliamentarians in order
to increase mutual understanding between countries, to assist each other in
improving the control of governments and the representation of a people and to
increase the democratic legitimacy of inter-governmental institutions” (Weisglas and

\(^2\) Surprisingly enough, this collection of essays does not include any study on parliamentary
diplomacy.
Or “the action in diplomatic matters of parliamentary figures, even small parliamentary groups, such as friendship groups.”, or even more broadly “combining the means of action of parliamentary assemblies and international relations” (Maus 2012: 15-16).

In short, any declaration or activity of a diplomatic nature that involves at least one parliamentary actor (individual or entity), and that tries to impact on an international matter or an internal on with international implications (Stavridis 2019, combined with the views expressed by then ex-President of the Camera dei deputati Luciano Volante, as quoted by Giménez Martínez 2014: 406).

Therefore it is possible to sum up how parliamentary institutions engage in international affairs in the following ways: 1) in foreign policy making through the input of national parliaments; 2) by conducting parliamentary diplomacy; and 3) by establishing and empowering (inter-)parliamentary bodies, often as part of international, usually regional, organizations (Malamud and Stavridis 2011: 101). “IPIs can be broadly defined as international institutions of a parliamentary nature, whose members are elected or appointed by legislatures or electorates in order to represent them” (Cofelice and Stavridis 2014: 145). In a document dated 24 January 2019, the IPU (2020) lists no less than 130 IPIs in the world today, in what is only an indicative catalogue.

It is equally important to stress that the very setting up of an IPI, its institutional growth, but also its daily proceedings, all represent parliamentary diplomacy in action (from that perspective, on the specific case of Kosovo in the South-East European Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly, see de Vrieze 2016).

The literature (for recent overviews, see Stavridis 2017; 2019; Ferrero 2019) identifies parliamentary inputs in world affairs as being “more flexible” in nature, as well as more informal, often based on personal links via socialization and regular contacts. Additional means include specialized parliamentary committees, delegations or conferences of all sorts and types, involving a multi-layered set of institutionalized or loose inter-parliamentary arrangements (Jancic 2015). The next section will focus on the case of Greece.
2. The Greek context: the international relations of the VOULI

There is very little research on the subject, especially in English. Most studies (in Greek) on the international relations of the Vouli date back to the early 2000s (Karabarbounis, Mastaka and Dalis 2004; Karabarbounis 2005), and are therefore very much out of date. Moreover, they are rather descriptive, and often confuse EU affairs with FP (Kontiadis and Spyropoulos 2011) – this aspect is particularly annoying because it fails to take into account the fact that intra-EU relations are “no longer the same as relations with third countries as they have nowadays been ´domesticated´” (Spence 2009: 257). In other words, these policies no longer represent foreign policy proper. In addition, the wider literature on the Vouli stresses that there is usually only “cosmetic parliamentary control of draft EU legislation” (Sotiropoulos 2015: 340). And, also that, more generally speaking, the Vouli’s role is “fairly marginal to that of the government”. Besides, due to strong interest groups, many “policy measures often fall into the abyss of a deep implementation gap” Sotiropoulos (2015: 336-337).

As far as the International Relations of the Vouli per se are concerned, information available on its own website distinguishes between three categories: [i] their EU dimension, [ii] parliamentary diplomacy proper, and [iii] the international activities and visits of the Vouli’s President, Vice-Presidents, and Committees.3 Thus, the first category mainly deals with intra-EU affairs, and the third one with Protocol-led issues. But both of them contain important international characteristics – hence their being listed under the Vouli’s international relations: for instance, under EU, there is a specific reference to the many European Regional Conferences and Partnerships, including the Union for the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (UfM-PA), or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC).

3 For details, see APPENDIX 1.
As far as the second category is concerned – formally entitled “International Parliamentary Diplomacy & Activities” –, it is subdivided into three sub-headings:

- International Organizations
- Greeks Abroad
- Friendship Groups.

The second sub-category (Greek Abroad) will be considered in detail below. Just to mention that as far as the “International Organizations” category is concerned, they refer to Greek MPs participation in parliamentary assemblies of international organizations like NATO, the OSCE, and of course the IPU which could be described as the parliamentary arm of the UN – although this is in fact not totally correct, hence the existence of a campaign for a “United Nations Parliamentary Assembly”.4 Finally, there are currently “77 Friendship Groups in the Hellenic Parliament [with] bilateral contacts and relations with parliaments in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia-Oceania”.5

3. The WHIA: why? How it functions? What it does? Why is it important?

The Greek Diaspora (ὁμογενεία/ Omogenia6) is important for Greece (its home population is just under 11 million). It is estimated “that the number of Greeks living outside Greece and Cyprus are around 7 million. Around 3 million of them live in the US, 700,000 in Australia, 400,000 in the UK, 400,000 in Germany and around 300,000 in Canada. Smaller Greek communities exist in South America, mainly in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, in several other European countries (Sweden, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Netherlands) and other places throughout the world”.7 In addition, there is now a new electoral law that will allow (most)8 Greeks living

---

4 See en.unpacampaign.org/.
7 www.hellenism.net/greece/greek-culture/greek-diaspora/.
8 There are still some restrictions which mean, for instance, that the current author will still have to travel to Athens to vote.
abroad to vote in Greek elections without having to travel to Greece – which is the norm right now. Although this discussion falls beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to mention it as it represents an electoral issue and also because due to the sheer number of Greeks living abroad they may change an electoral result, provided of course there is a coherent result in favour of a specific party or ideology.

As noted above, the Vouli dedicates a full section of its international activities to “Greeks Abroad”. First, there is a Select Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad in the Vouli which consists currently of 33 Greek MPs. This Committee maintains contacts with the Greek foreign ministry, the World Council of Greeks Abroad, the WHIA, the General Secretariat of Hellenes Abroad, as well as the SAE (World Council of Greeks Abroad). That is to say, that there are several institutional arrangements to promote relations between the Vouli and Greeks Abroad.

As for the WHIA itself, “it was founded in August 1996 by a Greek government initiative. WHIA aims at helping parliamentarians of Greek descent, who are members of legislatures in countries where Greek is not an official language, work together, exchange views on issues of mutual interest and help build strong and friendly relations between the Hellenic Parliament and parliaments in their respective countries. (...) There are currently 226 WHIA members (132 active and 94 honorary) elected in 26 countries. Members include Prime Ministers, Presidents, Ministers, MPs and Senators of Greek descent in various assemblies and governments all over the globe”.

As WHIA is an association and not a standing parliamentary assembly, the number of its members is somehow fluctuating, especially as to how many are active at any given point in time. There is also due to the fact that “[t]he membership of WHIA includes full and associate members. Full members are persons of Greek origin who are current elected members of legislatures in non-Greek speaking countries. Full members have the right to participate and vote at the WHIA General Assembly held every two years in Athens, Greece.” But associate members are “former elected members of such legislatures and elected legislators who are the partners of a person

---

10 Another similar example would be Moldova, especially since many of its citizens also hold a Romanian passport.
11 www.whiapadee.com
12 Vouli website, emphases added.
of Greek origin”. Thus, on the WHIA website the total number is neither 226 nor 132 as noted above but 90 (excluding Greeks and Greek-Cypriots) which can explain these discrepancies. Currently, the Governing Board consists of a President (Australia), 2 Vice-Presidents (USA and Canada), and representatives from the USA, the EU, Canada, Australia and one “non-EU”, namely Zimbabwe. The figure of 90 WHIA members from the website is broken down as follows:

- 44 from the USA;
- 19 from Australia;
- 8 from Canada;
- 5 from Albania;
- 4 from Switzerland;
- 2 from the UK;

And, one each from Hungary, Romania, Sweden, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

This is not surprising as the WHIA is actively calling for more members: “Any current serving legislator elected to any Legislature in the world is eligible for membership. If you believe you are eligible to join and do not appear on the list below please let us know - we are always keen to expand the reach of Hellenism across the globe”.

4. The 12th WHIA General Assembly held in Athens in July 2019

In terms of what the WHIA does, the paper turns now to the agenda and topics of that particular session in order to offer an illustration of its activities.

“39 WHIA members participated in the 2019 General Assembly. There were 13 other Observers also Delegates from the Cyprus Parliament as well as Philhellene Legislators from South Carolina and Victoria Australia. Of the 39, there were 2 Greek

---

13 Vouli website, emphasis added.
Cypriots. 31 were current elected Legislators and others were Former legislators who are entitled to attend the GA if they make their own way to Greece”.

The WHIA delegates arrival in Athens coincided with the very day of the early elections called for by the Tsipras government (7 July 2019), thus no doubt offering plenty of “live” Greek politics experience for the non-Greek parliamentarians. The following day, the agenda included the official launch of the event, with the participation of Foreign Minister Terence Quick, as well as that of Ms Monica Cummins (Public Relations Officer of the US embassy in Athens in representation of the US Ambassador), and the Cypriot ambassador to Athens (Mr Kyriakos Kenevezos). The main topic of that session was “strengthening Greece´s economic and geostrategic role in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans”.

The second day dealt first with “renewed geopolitical and strategic challenges for Hellenism”, with a number of WHIA delegates intervening. Earlier, Dr. Christine Warnke of Capitol Hill Consulting Group had talked about ways to reinforce the political role of women of Greek origin. The Greek Parliament President Nikolaos Voutsis also addressed that particular session.

The final day included a session in the Vouli on “how to reinforce links between the Greek legislative branch and its counterparts in the world”, before a meeting of WHIA delegates with the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos, took place in the Presidential Building. This was followed by a WHIA session on how to face wildfires and other emergency situations. Two MPs from Australia talked on this issue. It is important to note that the year before a huge fire killed over 100 people in Mati, a popular holiday resort situated only 30 kms from Central Athens.

In the afternoon, a visit to the Hellenic National Defence General Staff (known as GEETHA in its Greek acronym) took place. Its Chief of Staff, General Christos Christodoulou addressed the delegates. Later on, a session on “what direction for Greece after the 2019 elections” was also organized on the last day of the 12th WHIA

---

15 The author would like to thank Australian politician John Pandazopoulos, currently WHIA Honorary Secretary-General and former WHIA President (2009-2015) for information directly provided upon email request by the author (8 February 2020).

General Session, that is to say only 3 days after a change of government following the victory of the New Democracy party after 4 years of a Tsipras administration.

There were several cultural events, including dedicated lunches and dinners, for instance at the Acropolis Museum restaurant. It is also worth noting in particular a dinner held at the Nautical Club of Piraeus organized by the “Propellers Club”\textsuperscript{17}. This is important if only because in 2015 Greece’s merchant fleet is the first in the world in terms of tonnage, be it under Greek flag or a flag of convenience (\textit{Lloyd’s List}\textsuperscript{18}).

Thus, the 2019 General Assembly discussed various topics and adopted five resolutions\textsuperscript{19}:

First, the session expressed “its full support for the bipartisan Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 introduced by United States Senators Bob Menendez and Marco Rubio”. It refers to the trilateral partnership between Greece, Israel and Cyprus. Under the same heading, the resolution also supports the call to lift the US prohibition of arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus.\textsuperscript{20} The resolution also calls for the need to block “the transfer of F-35 aircraft to Turkey for as long as Turkey continues with plans to purchase the S-400 air defense system from the Russian Federation”. Moreover, it supports “additional Foreign Military Financing assistance for Greece and additional International Military Education and Training assistance for both Greece and Cyprus”.

Second, on the question of Cyprus’s Exclusive Economic Zone, the 2019 WHIA General Assembly:
“(a) Calls on the government of the Republic of Turkey to immediately cease all illegal exploration and other activity inside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Cyprus;
(b) Further calls on the Turkish government to immediately recognise the Republic of Cyprus and its EEZ;

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} www.propellerclub.us/aboutus/history.
\item \textsuperscript{18} www.lloydslistintelligence.com/.
\item \textsuperscript{19} The full text of the resolutions is reproduced in APPENDIX 2.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Decided in 1987, it was thought at that time that it would help facilitate a solution to the division of the Island.
\end{itemize}
(c) Further calls on Turkey to immediately facilitate meaningful discussions to reunite Cyprus in accordance with United Nations resolutions so that all peoples of Cyprus may benefit from any discoveries within the Cypriot EEZ; and
(d) Calls on the international community, including the United Nations and the European Union to take strong action against Turkey, until such time as the Turkish government recognises the EEZ of Cyprus and commits to fully respecting the well-established international legal rights of the Republic of Cyprus within its EEZ.”

Third, the 2019 WHIA confirmed the need to reopen the Theological School of Halki which it defined as “the pre-eminent theological seminary of Orthodox Christianity”. This resolution also “[c]ongratulates the United States Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, for his recent comments urging the government of the Republic of Turkey to immediately re-open the Halki seminary”.

Fourth, WHIA 2019 calls on the new Greek government to deliver one of its election commitments, namely, “to enable eligible Greek citizens who are registered to vote and who are living aboard to exercise their right to vote at the next Greek general election from the places where they live and work, without the necessity to return to Greece”. As noted above, this change in the Greek electoral system has now been agreed.

Fifth, the Athens event makes a special reference to the Greek minority in Albania which it describes as “a strong and vibrant Hellenic community within the Republic of Albania”. In particular it calls on Albania to respect all civil and human rights of all its minorities, especially its Greek one. Finally, it “[c]alls on the European Union to prioritise and safeguard the rights of minorities in Albania, including the Hellenic minority, as a pre-condition to any ascension talks between the European Union and Albania”.

Sixth, WHIA’s resolution on Life Preservation Accord “calls for the Victorian and Greek governments to establish a Life Preservation Accord to share knowledge and personnel to prevent, fight and help recovery and reconstruction from wildfire”. This

---

21 Albania says there are 60-80,000 ethnic Greeks whereas Greece puts their numbers up to 300-500,000.
is a specific reference to that important issue in both countries where important wildfires often take place, as for instance the already mentioned July 2018 Mati disaster in Greece.

**Conclusions**

What does the above tell us? The WHIA appears to be a parliamentary forum that discusses most important issues for Greek foreign policy. In particular, those that require support from big powers, such as the USA. In other words, under cultural parliamentary diplomacy, the Vouli is promoting Greek foreign policy priorities. Thus, it is important to stress how important it is for Greece to receive public support from a parliamentary body that not only calls for the need to respect Cyprus’ EEZ but also demands that Turkey recognize the Republic of Cyprus. Similarly, it is significant - even if only symbolically - to call for Albania to protect the rights of its Greek minority when an Albanian MP participates in that event. Even more so when that resolution makes this issue of minority rights protection “a pre-condition to any ascension talks between the European Union and Albania”. So, the first conclusion is that the WHIA acts as a diplomatic forum – which is a key function of parliamentary diplomacy.

The study also confirms that cultural diplomacy is also about geopolitics and other international conflicts. It is yet another element in the vast panoply of diplomatic means now available in what is a global parliamentary system.

Which raises another important issue: are there too many IPIs right now, especially for small(er) countries like Greece, Cyprus or Albania? For instance, Greece is a member of 13 IPIs dealing with the Mediterranean, out of the 23 considered [a] preliminary survey. Just to compare, Turkey or France belong to only 10 each in spite of being demographically or economically, let alone politically, much bigger (Stavridis and Cofelice 2017: 20). In this complex inter-parliamentary set-up, is it time to try and rationalize it, perhaps by grouping several existing IPIs? For instance, the 2019 WHIA resolutions include a reference to the trilateral energy arrangement between Greece, Cyprus and Israel. There exist two more such initiatives which link
Greece and Cyprus with, respectively, Egypt and Jordan. All three of them possess their corresponding inter-parliamentary arrangements (Smyrnioti 2019). Would it be possible to merge them into one not only to facilitate human and time resources but also to help promote diplomatic relations between all countries involved, which is what parliamentary diplomacy is all about?

There is no doubt that parliamentary diplomacy represents now an important dimension in the international system. Greek parliamentary diplomacy is also developing. No doubt further research is needed on the subject. It is hoped this study will bring it to the attention of a wider public.

References


APPENDIX 1: Vouli’s International Relations

Int’l Relations

1. European Union

Committee on European Affairs
Interparliamentary Cooperation within the EU
European Parliament

European Regional Cooperation Conferences and Partnerships include, among others, PAM (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, EMPA (Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly), PABSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation Parliamentary Assembly), SEECP (South Eastern European Cooperation Process), AII (Adriatic-Ionian Initiative) etc.

2. Int'l Parliamentary Diplomacy & Activities

2.1. International Organisations

- NATO Parliamentary Assembly –NATO PA
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
- Inter – Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)
- Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO)

2.2 Greeks Abroad Putting in place strong communication channels with the seven million Greeks (Hellenes) who live in 140 countries abroad is one of the Parliament’s priorities. The ad hoc Standing Committee on Greeks Abroad is an all-party institution, highly active in the field, which teams up with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Council of Greeks Abroad, WHIA and the General Secretariat of Hellenes Abroad, to build stronger relations between Parliament and the various Organizations of Greeks abroad.
2.2.1. Select Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad

The Parliament establishes a Select Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad, which at the current regular session consists of 33 Greek MPs. The Select Committee keeps track and follows up on problems and issues that Greeks abroad face, helps preserve philhellenism and the Greek language—mostly for the benefit of youth, promotes Greek culture and national causes in cooperation with and through the support of Greeks Abroad and participates in a series of events that various Organizations representing Greeks Abroad host.

The ad hoc Standing Committee on Greeks Abroad promotes and improves relations between Parliament and Greeks all over the world, coordinates Parliament activities with those of the World Council of Greeks Abroad, elaborates on issues regarding Greeks Abroad and looks for solutions while fostering close working relations with members of foreign legislatures who are of Greek descent.

On issues about Greeks Abroad, Parliament cooperates with associations of Greeks abroad, the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad as well as SAE (World Council of Greeks Abroad)

2.2.2 WHIA

The World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association is a non-partisan political association which was founded in August 1996 by a Greek government initiative. WHIA aims at helping parliamentarians of Greek descent, who are members of legislatures in countries where Greek is not an official language, work together, exchange views on issues of mutual interest and help build strong and friendly relations between the Hellenic Parliament and parliaments in their respective countries. WHIA works with SAE in terms of tackling issues touching on Hellenes abroad (cultural and political affairs, combating xenophobia and racism) and its Governing Board may take part by invitation in SAE (World Council of Hellenes Abroad) General Assembly sittings. WHIA works closely together with the Select Permanent Committee on Hellenes Abroad, as well as with political parties and MPs in the Hellenic Parliament. There are currently 226 WHIA members (132 active and 94 honorary) elected in 26 countries. Members include Prime Ministers, Presidents,
Ministers, MPs and Senators of Greek descent in various assemblies and governments all over the globe.

2.2.3. **SAE** The Hellenic Parliament closely follows the proceedings and work of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE).

2.3. **Friendship Groups**
By virtue of a President’s formal decision, MPs may request, in writing, the setting up of parliamentary Friendship Groups which include members of all Parliamentary Groups.

Parliamentary Friendship Groups aim at enhancing parliamentary diplomacy at a global and bilateral level while promoting Greek views on issues of national and international significance.

Parliamentary Friendship Groups are an international institution, practiced by all parliaments and propped up by the statutes of IPU aiming at closer relations between the various Parliaments.

The 77 Friendship Groups in the Hellenic Parliament establish bilateral contacts and relations with parliaments in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia-Oceania.

Friendship Group contacts and sittings aim at closer cooperation with foreign parliaments while promoting Greek views and ideas on matters of global significance. They also promote issues of national concern and encourage stronger international partnerships.

3. **The President - International Activities and Visits**
**Vice Presidents- International Activities and Visits**
**Committees' International Activities and Visits**
APPENDIX 2 - Resolutions of the 12th General Assembly - July 2019
(http://www.whiapadee.com/resolutions/)

Resolutions passed at the 12th General Assembly of WHIA held in Athens in July 2019 were as follows:

**Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnerships**
That the 2019 WHIA General Assembly expresses its full support for the bipartisan Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 introduced by United States Senators Bob Menendez and Marco Rubio that:

- Allows the United States of America to fully support the trilateral partnership between Greece, Israel and Cyprus;
- Lifts the prohibition of arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus;
- Impedes the transfer of F-35 aircraft to Turkey for as long as Turkey continues with plans to purchase the S-400 air defense system from the Russian Federation;
- Authorises additional Foreign Military Financing assistance for Greece and additional International Military Education and Training assistance for both Greece and Cyprus.

Further, the General Assembly directs the Governing Board of the WHIA to continue its endeavours to support the passage of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 through the United States Congress.

**Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone**
That the 2019 WHIA General Assembly:

(a) Calls on the government of the Republic of Turkey to immediately cease all illegal exploration and other activity inside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Cyprus;
(b) Further calls on the Turkish government to immediately recognise the Republic of Cyprus and its EEZ;
(c) Further calls on Turkey to immediately facilitate meaningful discussions to reunite Cyprus in accordance with United Nations resolutions so that all peoples of Cyprus may benefit from any discoveries within the Cypriot EEZ; and
(d) Calls on the international community, including the United Nations and the European Union to take strong action against Turkey, until such time as the Turkish government recognises the EEZ of Cyprus and commits to fully respecting the well-established international legal rights of the Republic of Cyprus within its EEZ.

Theological School of Halki
That the 2019 General Assembly:
(a) Recognises the Theological School of Halki as the pre-eminent theological seminary of Orthodox Christianity;
(b) Reaffirms its previous support for the immediate re-opening of this important theological seminary; and
(c) Congratulates the United States Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, for his recent comments urging the government of the Republic of Turkey to immediately re-open the Halki seminary.

Voting rights for Greeks living abroad
That the 2019 WHIA General Assembly calls on the newly elected government of Greece headed by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to deliver on its election commitment to enable eligible Greek citizens who are registered to vote and who are living aboard to exercise their right to vote at the next Greek general election from the places where they live and work, without the necessity to return to Greece.

Greek minority in Albania
That the 2019 WHIA General Assembly:
(a) Recognises the existence of a strong and vibrant Hellenic community within the Republic of Albania;
(b) Calls on the government of the Republic of Albania to respect the civil and human rights of all minorities in Albania, including the significant Hellenic minority;
(c) Calls on the newly elected Greek government to provide meaningful support and assistance to the Hellenic minority in Albania in partnership with the community leaders of this minority and in co-operation with WHIA members in Albania; and
(d) Calls on the European Union to prioritise and safeguard the rights of minorities in Albania, including the Hellenic minority, as a pre-condition to any ascension talks between the European Union and Albania.
*Life Preservation Accord*

The World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association calls for the Victorian and Greek governments to establish a Life Preservation Accord to share knowledge and personnel to prevent, fight and help recovery and reconstruction from wildfire.
The Jean Monnet Papers on Political Economy

The Jean Monnet Papers on Political Economy is an initiative of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence of the University of the Peloponnese that is co-funded by the European Commission. The initiative started as a joint project of the Jean Monnet Chair on EU Integration and Policies (Department of Economics) and the Jean Monnet Chair on EU Relations with Less Developed Countries (Department of Political Science and International Relations) of the University. The Papers are free-access publications appearing in the website of the Centre (http://jmcegovernance.wordpress.com). A limited number of hard-copies are distributed to university libraries. The copyright of the papers belongs to their respective authors.

Co-editors:
Professor Asteris Huliaras, e-mail: huliaras@uop.gr
Professor Panagiotis Liargovas, e-mail: liargova@uop.gr

Editorial Committee:
Emeritus Professor Panos Kazakos, University of Athens
Emeritus Professor Panagiotis Tsakalogiannis, University of the Peloponnese
Dimitris Bourantonis, Athens University of Economics and Business
Professor Napoleon Maravegias, Athens University of Economics and Business
Professor Georgios Pagoulatos, Athens University of Economics and Business
Professor Dimitris Chryssochoou, University of Athens
Professor Konstantinos Magliveras, University of the Aegean

Deputy Editor:
Maria-Eleftheria Galani, Special Teaching Staff, University of the Peloponnese

EU - Middle East Series

The EU-Middle East Series focuses on the various aspects of EU interactions with the Middle Eastern region. Academics, young scholars and researchers who work on EU-Middle East relations are invited to present their early work. The series are part of the Jean Monnet Network on EU-Middle East relations ‘EUMENIA’, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. All papers should reach, ideally, 5,000 words and should follow the Harvard reference system. Authors should include an executive summary and a 70 word short bio. All submitted papers undergo a rigorous peer review process. The editors maintain final discretion over publication of all papers. Submissions: info@eumenia.eu

Copyright and Note
Copyright of the JMPPEs belongs to their respective authors. The European Commission’s support for the production of these publications does not constitute an endorsement of their contents which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Culture and geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean: Greek parliamentary diplomacy and the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association (WHIA)

21/2019

THE
JEAN
MONNET
PAPERS
ON
POLITICAL
ECONOMY