



Order of
Saint Andrew
the Apostle

Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

ARCHON ALERT

ARCHON LEADERSHIP RETURNS FROM BRUSSELS, STRASBOURG AND VIENNA FIGHTING FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ON BEHALF OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

April 11, 2006 – An Archon delegation led by National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, MD returned from week-long meetings in Brussels, Belgium, Strasbourg, France and Vienna, Austria fighting for the religious freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the United States under the leadership of Archbishop Demetrios of America, continue to bring the issue of religious freedom for the spiritual center of world Orthodoxy to the decision makers and power brokers of the European Union, while simultaneously advocating Turkey's integration into the EU Community.

The delegation was guided throughout the week of meetings by the Ecumenical Patriarchate's representative to the European Union Metropolitan Emmanuel of France and while in Vienna, by Metropolitan Michael of Austria. The US State Department fully supported the mission and prior to departure Dr. Limberakis and Archon Spiritual Adviser Fr. Alexander Karloutsos met with Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza in Washington.

In Brussels, the headquarters of the EU, the delegation which included Fr. Karloutsos and Legal Counselor Christopher Stratakis met on April 3rd with key officials of the Enlargement Committee including **Christos Katharios**, Head of Division, Responsible for Enlargement, Council of the European Union; **Vassilios Kaskarellis**, Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of Greece to the European Union; **Fuat Tanlay**, Ambassador of Turkey to Belgium; **C. Boyden Gray**, Ambassador of the U.S. Mission to the EU; **Margaritis Schinas**, Head of Cabinet of EU Commissioner Markos Kyprianou; **Christian Danielsson**, Head of Unit Responsible for Turkey's integration into the EU and Ambassador Dr. **Michael Weninger**, Group of Policy Advisers, European Commission. While in Brussels, Turkish TV journalists, **Güldener Sonumut**, Chief of the Brussels Bureau NTV Turkish Channel and **Cansu Çamlıbel**, Brussels Correspondent, covering European issues interviewed Commander Limberakis. The interview aired in Turkey while the Archon delegation was in Europe.

While in Strasbourg, France, where the European Parliament holds its plenary sessions; European Parliament Vice President Antonios Trakatellis (and brother of Archbishop Demetrios) arranged meetings on April 4th with **Stavros Lambrinidis**, Vice Chairman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs; **Nikolaos Sifunakis**, Chairman of the Committee on Culture and Education; **Ioannis Varvitsiotis**, Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs; **Elmar Brok**, Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee Security and Defense Europe and **Camiel Eurlings**, Member of the European Parliament and EP Turkey Rapporteur.

April 5 and 6 were spent in Vienna, where the delegation met with Austrian government officials, including **President Dr. Heinz Fischer** and **Parliament Speaker Andreas Khol**; the Ambassadors to Austria from the U.S. **Susan McCaw**, Greece, **Theodoros Sotiropoulos**, and Turkey; **Selim Yenel** Apostolic Nuncio Dr. **Edmond Farhat**; and representatives from Greece and the U.S. to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, Helsinki Commission), an independent forum of nations which exchanges ideas and makes recommendations on international human rights.

In between meetings the group attended a Presanctified Divine Liturgy at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Austria, followed by dinner at the Griechenbeisel Restaurant hosted by Metropolitan Michael.