

New York City Returns Ancient Sarcophagus



Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., announced the return of an ancient marble sarcophagus fragment to the Hellenic Republic during a repatriation ceremony attended by the Consul General of Greece in New York, Dr. Konstantinos Koutras, and ICE Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”) Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge Brett Dreyer.

“I thank our partners for their commitment

to ending the trade of stolen antiquities, and today, I am gratified to return another treasured artifact to its rightful owner, the Hellenic Republic and people of Greece” said District Attorney Vance.

Consul General of Greece, Dr. Koutras stated: “On behalf of the Hellenic Republic, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the District Attorney of Manhattan, Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., for his contribution to this achievement, as we proudly accept a part of our heritage.”

The Repatriation Ceremony followed the recovery of the Artifact, which was stolen and smuggled abroad in the 1980s.

Six Greeks Inducted to U.S. National Academy of Engineering



The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) has elected 84 new members and 22 foreign members, among them 6 Greek researchers (3 in each category). Individuals in the newly elected class will be formally inducted during a ceremony at the NAE’s annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 8, 2017.

Congratulations to:

1. Leonidas Guibas: Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, computer science department, Stanford University. Recognized for contributions to data structures, algorithm analysis, and computational geometry.
2. Dimitris Katsoulis: Senior research scientist, Dow Corning Corp., Midland, Michigan. Recognized for foundational contributions to the characterization and creation of novel silicone resins, gels and elastomers, and catalysis for organosilanes.
3. Ioannis Yannas: Professor of polymer science and engineering, department of mechanical engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Recognized for co-developing the first commercially reproducible artificial skin that facilitates new growth, saving the lives of thousands of burn victims.
4. Georges Hadziioannou: University Professor Classe Exceptionnelle, Laboratoire de Chimie des Polymères Organiques, Université de Bordeaux. Recognized for foundational discoveries and insights enabling the development of polymers with advanced functionality and performance.
5. Joseph Sifakis: Professor, School of Computer and Communication Science, École Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne. Recognized for co-inventing model checking and for contributions to the development and verification of real-time and embedded systems.
6. Constantinos Vayenas: Professor, department of chemical engineering, University of Patras. Recognized for fundamental studies on electrochemical modification of catalytic activity leading to the industrial design and use of new promoted catalysts.

WATER COLLECTION, R+D, AND INNOVATION

Speaking to the Athens-Macedonian News Agency (ANA), Assistant Professor Athanasios Papathanasiou from the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) chemical engineering department outlined his efforts to create a cheap, synthetic “ultrahydrophobic”—or super water-repellent—surface, that is capable of collecting moisture even from the mist.

Since 2009 he has led a team investigating ultrahydrophobic materials, through the European Research Council-funded program ‘Hydrofakir,’ seeking to create surfaces with fully controllable ‘wettability’ that alternate between hydrophobic and hydrophilic behavior. Taking inspiration from the surface morphology of lotus leaves, the team reproduced the appropriate “micro-spikes” on which water droplets can rest, like a fakir on a bed of nails, preventing their absorption. The ERC will fund the follow-up program Hydropho-Cheap for the next 18 months, which builds on the results of ‘Hydrofakir’ to develop affordable applications of its findings for commercial use. Papathanasiou told ANA that Hydropho-Cheap aims to either build a machine that produces such ultrahydrophobic and water-repellent surfaces, or else to create such surfaces to order for third parties. He hopes to take out a patent and use the results in collaboration with companies in Greece or abroad. In addition to collecting water, Papathanasiou said there were two more practical applications for his material: in shipping to reduce hydrodynamic friction, and in biomedicine to create surfaces that allow a better biochemical analysis of blood droplets. In the second case, he said, in the future it might be possible to create small disposable devices for blood tests, such as measuring blood sugar.

Carnegie Mellon University—Enrolling at 10!

William Maillis is the nine-year-old son of Greek Orthodox Priest Peter Maillis and little William has a knack for learning things fast. Father Maillis realized his son was special when he was only five-years-old as he could recite the English, Greek, French, Spanish and the Hebrew alphabets.

Since then, the now nine-year-old has graduated from Penn-Trafford High School is set to transfer to Carnegie Mellon University next year at the age of ten.

CORRUPTION PERCEPTION

Greece’s performance in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index worsened last year, with the country rising to 69th place, from 58th the previous year, out of 167 countries. The least corrupt country in the survey was Denmark, with 90 points, and the most corrupt Somalia, with just 10 points. The vice president of TI’s Greek office, Angelos Syrigos, called on political parties to offer specific ideas such as boosting transparency in appointment of top judges.

U.S.-Greece Agreement

On January 19 the Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos and the Ambassador of the USA, Geoffrey Pyatt signed the Bilateral Greece - US agreement on improving international tax compliance and implementation of FATCA (Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act), and the Memorandum of Understanding between the two sides.

This agreement and the existing Electronic Banking Transactions and Tax Returns monitoring system are said to be powerful tools of the Greek tax authorities to combat tax evasion and identify undeclared income.



More Natural Pesticides

Although fast and effective for plant growth, chemicals pesticides entail potential risks for human health, animals and the environment. About 45% of food we consume contains pesticide residues with 1.6% exceeding legal limits, according to

the European Food Safety Authority. MEPs want to promote the use of more natural pesticides and to simplify and speed up the approval process. Check our video for more information.

MEPs adopted a resolution calling on the European Commission to draw up proposals to fast-track the evaluation, authorization and registration of low-risk pesticides. So far only seven active substances classified as “low risk” alternatives have been approved for use in the EU.

“We are talking about organisms, viruses, bacteria, nematodes that have to go through a process of certification, which is not only very long, but also very expensive,” said Italian EPP member Herbert Dorfmann, member of the agriculture committee and one of the eight authors of the resolution that was adopted.

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Learnable—Learn web development
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Code School—Learn to code by doing.
www.codeschool.com

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Treehouse—Learn HTML, CSS, iPhone apps & more.
<https://teamtreehouse.com/>

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One Month—Learn to code and build web applications in one month.
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EMIRATES LUNCHES NEW YORK-ATHENS ROUTE

Emirates announced it is launching a new daily service from Dubai to Newark Liberty International Airport, via Athens, starting March 12.

Emirates’ new Dubai-Athens-Newark flight will also provide a year-round non-stop daily service between the United States and Greece—a service that has not existed since 2012.

