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1315ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ ΜΝΗΜΕΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΠΟΘΕΣΙΩΝ

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ HELLENIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE COMITÉ NATIONAL HELLENIQUE

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TO:

1. Minister of Culture and Sports, Mr. Konstantinos Tasoulas
2. Vice-Minister of Culture, Mrs. Anzela Gerekou
3. Secretary General of Culture, Mrs. Lina Mendoni

ANNOUNCEMENT

Subject: The archaeological site of Nemea's ancient stadium under threat of suspension of operation

For the second time in the last year, the archaeological site of Ancient Nemea Stadium is threatened to close its gates to the public. Last fall, in light of the pending trial of whether to permit 7 temporary guards of the archeological site to remain to their posts or not, the greater issue of the lack of funds for employment security personnel to museums and archaeological sites across all of Greece was brought forth. At the time, the threat to lock the archaeological site and the museum of Nemea, called for the interventions by the Hellenic ICOMOS, the Association of Greek Archaeologists, the Municipality of Nemea and many other agencies and organizations. In October 2013, in view of the Greek Presidency of the European Union, the authorization was granted for more than 700 guards and general clerical positions for the museums and Ephorates across all of Greece, marking an auspicious start for the New Year.

Today, just before the end of the presidency and while the tourism season has already begun, the archeological site of the ancient stadium of Nemea, one of the most important monuments in our country, is once again threatened with suspension of operations and being closed to the tourists. The stadium, with its vaulted passageway which is the oldest undisputed dated example of its kind throughout Greece, receives annually thousands of visitors. In the stadium of Nemea, under the initiative of Professor Dr. Stephen Miller, revived in recent years (1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012) the ancient games of Nemea: A unique type of event in which more than 87 countries from all the continents have participated, attracting global cultural interest, with beneficial impact for the region and country, itself. The Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games has already started organizing the next Nemead 2016, in which the Hellenic Federation of Pangration Athlema will also participate. In October 2013, for the first time after antiquity, Pangration was practiced at the stadium of Nemea.

In Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and Isthmia, the most famous sporting events took place in antiquity. Of these, today, the stadiums of Olympia and Nemea are better preserved; thus, the potential closure of the site of the stadium of Nemea certainly would constitute an undesirable prospect.

On 13 June 2014, the members of International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Bureau visited the site of Ancient Nemea. They were given a tour, by Prof. Dr. Stephen Miller, at the ancient stadium and were

briefed on the history of the excavations, the projects behind the enhancement of space, and the attempt to revive the games. The President of ICOMOS, Gustavo Araoz, as well as all the other members of the Bureau (Kristal Buckley, Gideon Korren, Benjamin Mouton, Laura Robinson and Guo Zhan) greeted with great enthusiasm the initiatives and the work of the agencies of the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the local government, the director of the excavations Prof. Dr. Stephen Miller and the members of Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games, noting how effective was the role of synergy for the international promotion of the monument.

Two days later circulated the rumor that the archaeological site of the stadium of Nemea will remain closed indefinitely due to lack of security personnel, despite the conscientious efforts of the local Archaeological Service.

The Hellenic National committee of ICOMOS expresses its deep concern about the possibility of visitations to the ancient stadium of Nemea to cease. It calls upon the political leadership of the Ministry of Culture and Sports to arrange for the removal of any obstacles to ensure the traffic to one of the most splendid monuments of our country with archaeological, historical, social, athletic and symbolic value.

For the Hellenic National Committee of ICOMOS

The President



Dr. Athanasios Nakasis



The Secretary General



Vasileios Palantzas