

Thousands of e-Cards Sent to Greek PM Asking for Climate Change Action

More than 3,000 Greek citizens have responded to a WWF call over the past four days by sending their Prime Minister, Kostas Karamanlis, a WWF e-card asking him to take an active part in the global efforts to fight climate change. The WWF e-card sent to the Greek Prime Minister by over 3,000 Greek citizens.

In the card is a projection of what Thessaloniki, Greece's second biggest city, could look like around the middle of this century if action is not taken to stem global warming.

The senders also ask the PM to show the necessary political will during the next UN Climate Conference, in Poznan, Poland from 1-12 December 2008, where world leaders will be called upon to decide a 60-80 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions.

"Greece is a country which can develop sustainably

based on clean energy and low greenhouse emissions," said Demetres Karavellas, Director of WWF Greece.

"Our country is capable of responding to the challenge of climate change, given the right vision and the political will and given that the policies and measures are in place."

The e-card action follows a new WWF Greece report prepared by Ecofys confirming that Greece can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions within the range proposed by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change for the year 2050. The study, "Solutions for climate change: a low carbon vision for Greece in 2050" defines a CO2 emission reduction of up to 67 per cent by 2050.



It says the energy and construction sectors can help achieve the lion's share of the reductions and cut emissions by up to 93 per cent by 2050. In addition, renewable energy sources could generate 58 per cent of all power in 2050 while increased energy efficiency would result in more than half the envisaged emission

reductions. EU Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas prefaced the WWF Greece report stressing that: "This is one of the most important reports that have been completed to date, presenting actions that a country like Greece could take in order to contribute in the common effort to combat the world climate challenge."



Renowned Greek auteur Theo Angelopoulos (R) awarded Abdorreza Kahani the Golden Alexander for best feature film during the closing ceremony of the 49th International Thessaloniki Film Festival on November 23, 2008. (Mehr)

Iran's "Over There" wins Golden Alexander at Greek Film Fest

Iranian black and white "Over There" by Abdorreza Kahani grabbed the "Golden Alexander" at the 49th International Thessaloniki Film Festival, Greece.

The awards were handed out to the winners in a ceremony held on Sunday and Kahani received the Golden Alexander (37,000 euros) for the best feature film of the festival.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Kahani expressed satisfaction over winning the award and attributed his award to the civilizations of Iran and Greece.

"When the Greek renowned director Theo Angelopoulos handed me the award, I said that I was not expecting to win the prize. But I am so happy now," he remarked.

"The crew was always complaining about why the film did not have permission to screen in Iran, but then they also became excited upon hearing the news. The jury selected the movie because of its unique structure and theme," he added.

"Over There" features the story of an old man, who has to make a trip to the United States in order to extend his residency. Mazdak Mir-Abedini, Shahrzad

Sokhansanj, Mana Rabiei, Jafar Tavakkoli, Babak Vali, Mehran Ahmadi, and Solmaz Seddiq Afshar are the main cast members of the movie.

Other winners were also selected by the jury of the International Competition Section headed by Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje in a ceremony held on Sunday.

The Special Jury Award "Silver Alexander" went to "Pescuit Sportiv" (Hooked) by Adrian Sitaru, a joint produc-

tion of Romania and France.

The Best Director Award went to "Celina Murga" for "Una Semana Solos" (A Week Alone) from Argentina.

Ioana Flora and Maria Dinulescu shared the Best Actress Award for "Pescuit Sportiv" and the Best Actor Award went to Sid Lucero and Emilio Garcia for "Selda" (The Inmate.)

Additionally, the Artistic Achievement Award went to Zabolcs Tolnai, for Ffvenysra (Hourglass,) a joint production of Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro.

The Human Values Award went to "Teza" by Haile Gerima from Germany.

The Woman & Equality Award also went to "Snijeg" (SNOW) by Aida Begic, a joint production of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Germany, France, and Iran.

The 49th edition of the festival ran from November 14 to 23.



Monastery accounts raise more questions

Details of the Vatopedi Monastery's 31 bank accounts suggest that it was involved in the companies that bought some of the property it was given as part of the land exchange deal with the state, which is currently being investigated by a parliamentary committee.

The Mount Athos monastery's banking transactions are currently being studied by MPs as part of the probe and, according to leaks over the weekend, they indicate that 64 properties in and around Thessaloniki and a building in the Olympic Village in Athens were sold to companies in which Vatopedi was a shareholder. The latter property was sold for 41 million euros, plus a 9-million-euro "endowment." A Cypriot company, Rassadel, which acted as an intermediary in the deal, also had shares in the company that bought the Thessaloniki properties.

Deputies are examining the link between the monastery and Rassadel amid claims of illegal transfers of money.

The firm that bought the Thessaloniki properties was co-owned by Thanassis Papistas, the businessman who last week presented a DVD to the parliamentary committee, which he claimed showed he was being blackmailed by the partner of a lawyer who had previously given evidence that was potentially damaging to the government.

The growing complexities of the case and the continuous revelations that implicate the monastery have become a cause for concern for the head of the Church of Greece, Archbishop Ieronymos.

"This issue has really hurt us and we are all anxious to see how it turns out," he said in an interview with Sunday's Eleftherotypia. But he added that critics who are calling for a separation of the Church and State are reacting too quickly.