



Greece selects song for Sakis Rouvas on 18th February

The Greek national final in which Sakis Rouvas will present three songs will be held on 18th February in the Athinon Arena in Athens, Greek broadcaster ERT confirmed our colleagues of Esctoday.com. Just like last year, the show will be hosted by the Maggira sisters. The audience and televoting will pick the Greek song for Moscow.

Greece was the first country to announce its representative for the Eurovision Song Contest 2009 in July last year. Sakis Rouvas will take part in the Eurovision Song Contest for the second time in Moscow. Together with Maria Menounos, the Greek singer also hosted the Eurovision Song Contest 2006 in Athens.

Sakis Rouvas was internally selected by Greek broadcaster ERT. In the Greek national final scheduled for 18th February Sakis will perform three songs written by Dimitris Kontopoulos. The audience and a professional jury will pick the Greek entry for the Eurovision Song Contest 2009. On 11th February Sakis Rouvas will present the three songs to the press.

Greek painting exhibition in Melbourne

Melbourne -- The exhibition "Ambassadors of Modern Greek Art - Three generations of painters" was inaugurated at the Greek Museum of Melbourne on Monday. On view are works by 26 painters representing three generations of artists with a notable presence in Greece and abroad over the past 50 years. The exhibition is 90 percent funded by the Greek ministry of tourism.

Honda Accord Euro named car of the year

The Honda Accord Euro has won Australia's most prized motoring award being named Wheels magazine's car of the year. The car was declared the best new release of 2008 with the judges saying it delivered an exceptional package of driver satisfaction, passenger comfort and all-round user-friendliness.

The judge started with 35 eligible models, shortlisted 18 for a week of final evaluation including tests at Ford's You Yangs proving ground near Geelong.

"Dynamically, the Honda Accord

Euro is outstanding," Wheels editor, Ged Bulmer said.

"It has satisfied our exhaustive criteria better than any other contender and the judging panel has referred to the vehicle as Euro sophistication at just 60 per cent of the price." The judging panel tested the finalists according to a range of criteria including function, technology, efficiency, safety, and value.

The final shortlist of cars included the Honda Accord Euro, BMW X6, Chrysler Grand Voyager, Jeep

Cherokee, Lexus LX570, Volvo XC70, Audi A4, Volkswagen Tiguan, and Mazda 6. The cars to make the final four were the Accord Euro, Audi A4, Volkswagen Tiguan and the Mazda 6.

"In terms of efficiency and environmental impact and in terms of technology, the Honda Accord Euro was found to be a cut above when compared to other contenders," Mr Bulmer said.

The Wheels award is Australia's longest running motoring prize with the first magazine's first car of the year named in 1963.

Rob Hulls moves to help jailed writer Harry Nicolaides

ACTING Premier Rob Hulls will help a Melbourne writer jailed for insulting the Thai royal family, saying the punishment was "quite extraordinary".

The Government is now in talks with federal authorities and

lawyers over the plight of a Melbourne writer Harry Nicolaides, 41.

Nicolaides was jailed for three years for defaming, insulting or threatening the Thai royal family in his 2005 novel Verisimilitude which sold only 10 copies.

Mr Hulls said his office had been in contact with lawyers involved in the case and the Department of

Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to lend assistance.

"I, like many other people, was very concerned to hear about this particular matter," Mr Hulls said today.

He said it was "quite extraordinary" that a person had been convicted and jailed over a fictional book which had sold no more than 10 copies.

Mr Nicolaides pleaded guilty to criminal charges of lese-majeste in Bangkok yesterday to reduce his sentence.

He plans to appeal to the royal family for a pardon so he can be freed and return to Australia.

"I've made some inquiries as to what assistance I may be able to give in relation to that matter but my understanding is that discussions are still taking place in relation to that plea," Mr Hulls said.

Nicolaides's parents have spoken of their shock after he was jailed last night for offending the Thai monarchy.

They told the Manningham Leader this morning they were "devastated".

Nicolaides has been sentenced to three years in a Thai jail for offending the country's royal family.

The 41-year-old has been languishing in a Thai prison since August 31, when he was charged with lese-majesty - defamation of the Thai monarchy.



Nicolaides, a Chiang Mai-based university lecturer and freelance writer, was charged in relation to a paragraph in his 226-page fictional book, Verisimilitude, which referred to the personal life of an unnamed member of the Thai royal family and was deemed offensive.

The former East Doncaster High School student pleaded guilty to the charge at a Bangkok court hearing yesterday.

The judges sentenced Nicolaides to six years in prison, reduced to three because he pleaded guilty.

Nicolaides's desperate family - elderly parents Despina and Socrates and brother Forde - are considering applying for a royal pardon.

Mrs Nicolaides has previously told the Manningham Leader about the squalid prison conditions her son describes in letters home.

Capturing the moment

In light of today's inauguration of Barack Obama, we wanted to share with you the cover of the The Nation magazine (a leading liberal leaning magazine). The image was drawn by Greek American John Mavroudis.

