

Power speaks Greek on five continents



From Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Congo to Tatarstan, Argentina, Brazil, and Australia, more than 220 politicians with Greek origin have been chosen in local parliaments or senates and many of them have managed to reach high positions and are holding minister positions. The US politicians with Greek origin are the largest in number – 56 out of 126 from all over the world. 94 lost their positions in the elections, which took place not too long ago.

The first try to count the Greek Diaspora started in 2004, after which the World Hellenic Inter - Parliamentary Association was created. At least once a year all politicians with Greek origin come back to their "home country," as they call Greece. "On the last world congress in Athens we discussed problems, which are connected to Hellenism, the

Macedonian and Cyprian topics, the genocide and the guardianship over the Patriarchy in Istanbul," says the chairman of the Union Mr. Dimitris Yanaros, who is a senator and a deputy chairman of the local parliament in Connecticut.

Usually, on those meetings immigrated politicians are trying to help Greece with the creation of trade and economic ties with their countries. But as a result, when they face the monster called "Greek bureaucracy," every good intention turns into the next unsuccessful talk, which renews on the next meeting.

In every Australian State, there is at least one representative of the Greek community and some have even reached "minister" positions. In the countries from the former communist bloc, there are many

Greek politicians, mostly in Georgia and Russia, where the Diaspora has big presence. Peculiar are the cases with Ukraine and Rumania, where politicians with high ranks disclose their Greek origin and connect themselves with the World Hellenic Inter - Parliamentary Association.

Kostas Vatzkalis is a rare case, because he managed to climb up to his position of deputy minister of Australia. He arrives there as an immigrant in 1982, when he was 27 years old. He says: "What's important are the man's abilities and not the origin and connections." The fact that his origin did not stand in his way to make a political career is also noted by the Justice Minister and Industrial Relations of Australia John Hadzisterios, and the Industry Minister of Canada Tony Clement.

Abducted children to stay

A MELBOURNE woman who abducted her two young children from Greece and brought them to Australia has been told by the Family Court that she does not have to return them to her Greek husband.

The woman had been living in Greece with her husband and children and had come to Australia for medical treatment after being injured through repeated domestic violence. She decided to stay permanently, feeling it was unsafe to return.

Although the woman acted unlawfully, the Family Court in a rare ruling found that she did not have to return the children to Greece on the grounds that there was a "grave risk" they would be exposed to harm.

The woman was born in Australia and moved to Greece as an adult. She married a Greek man 10 years ago, and their two children were born and raised in Greece. No one involved in the case can be identified for legal reasons.

A Family Court spokeswoman has confirmed that the ruling was very rare.

The woman's lawyer, Sally Nicholes, told The Age her client had been seriously injured by her husband's repeated violence. He denies ever being violent to her or the children.

She returned to Australia with the children for a temporary visit in late 2007 and says that she told her husband of her intentions, but he claims no knowledge of the plan.

A few weeks after they arrived in Australia, he lodged an application under the Hague Convention for the children to be returned to Greece. The convention aims to stop parents moving children from one country to another without the other parent's consent, and to ensure those wrongfully retained are returned home. Usually the Family Court would have ordered that the children be returned to Greece, as required by the Hague Convention. But the court exercised its discretion against making the order after being presented with evidence from a

Greek legal expert that police in Greece did not adequately protect domestic violence victims.

The court also took into account that the woman may have been imprisoned for breaching Greek laws if she returned.

An Australian doctor said she had developed "positional vertigo" as a result of repeated beatings to her head – a medical condition characterised by sudden episodes of vertigo and nausea.

"We argued that if she got one more blow to the head of the same force, she would die," Ms Nicholes said. "The doctor's evidence was that her injuries were consistent with being beaten to the back of the head, which is what she alleged."

What makes the woman's case rare – and where other women in similar circumstances claiming domestic violence have failed in court – is that she successfully argued that in Greece she would not be adequately protected against domestic violence.

Ms Nicholes said the woman claimed that she had gone to Greek police for help, but they said they could do nothing to help apart from speak to her husband. "She went to the police, and each time they didn't actually assist her," she said.

The Family Court made the order before Christmas, but it had not been publicised because of the prospect of an appeal. But that appeal has not been lodged.

Former Family Court chief justice Alastair Nicholson said the case was rare because it was difficult to argue that countries with similar legal systems could not protect people from domestic violence.

"The assumption is usually that the country will deal with what's complained of," he said. "However, where you have direct evidence that that's not the case, then the interpretation of the convention is certainly open."

Mr Nicholson said the Hague Convention did have discretion when it came to "grave risk", but the question was how that risk was interpreted. "It's a very unusual case and I think in most cases that wouldn't apply, but by the sound of it, it seems like a proper result," he said. The woman and her children are now living in Melbourne.

Article from THE AGE

Minas Coroneo will be awarded for his pioneering work on the "Bionic Eye"



Chapter Ippokratis of AHEPA NSW Inc has decided to issue two awards for outstanding achievement in medicine. These awards are kindly sponsored by Mr. George Thomas.

The first award is for outstanding achievement by a medical professional in his or her chosen field. This year the inaugural presentation will be awarded to **Professor Minas Coroneo, Ophthalmologist for his pioneering work on the "BIONIC EYE"**.

The second award is directed to a final medical graduate, of Greek origin, who has shown a high standard in personal development and academic achievement. This year the inaugural prize will be awarded to Dr Chris Fessa a University of Sydney medical graduate.

We take this opportunity to invite you to attend this inaugural annual even which will take place at 6:00 pm on Sunday, 15 March 2009 at the 'Grand Roxy', at Botany Bay Seafood Restaurant, 128 The Grand Parade, Brighton-Le-Sands. The cost per person is \$75.00 which includes dinner and drinks.

Please call for ticket reservation or to form a table - Effie kallimanis 0414 223 489, Irene Anestis 9556 1560, George Lianos 0408 000 025.

Sincerely
Chapter Ippokratis Committee