

Η Ανακοίνωση Τύπου από τον κ. Εμμανουήλ Κόμηνο ΑΜ, Press release from Emanuel John Comino AM:

Η ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΗ ΤΥΠΟΥ, την οποία λάβαμε από τον κ. Μανώλη Κόμηνο (ΑΜ) Πρόεδρο της πρώτης Διεθνούς Επιτροπής Αγώνος για την Επιστροφή των Γλυπτών του Παρθενώνα, αναφέρεται στην πλησιάζουσα συμπλήρωση δεκαετίας από την έναρξη λειτουργίας του Μουσείου της Ακρόπολης και στα όσα πρόσφατα έγιναν και αναμένεται να γίνουν, προκειμένου αργά ή γρήγορα το όνειρο της επιστροφής των κλαπέντων γλυπτών εκεί που ανήκουν!

ΓΝΩΡΙΖΟΝΤΑΣ ότι η συνέχιση του αγώνα είναι πλέον καθήκον των νέων γενεών καταχωρούμε την σχετική ανακοίνωση κατωτέρω στα αγγλικά!

Γ. Τσερδάνης

Press release from Emanuel John Comino AM:

Chairman and Founder of the International Organising Committee – Australia - for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles (IOC-A-RPM), Vice Chair of the International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures, (IARPS).

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the opening of the new Acropolis Museum, it is an appropriate time to review how far we have come in campaigning for return of the Parthenon Marbles. When I established the IOC-A-RPM in 1981, it was the first group outside Greece to campaign for their return. Back then the British used to argue that there was no place to display all of the Parthenon Marbles in Athens. This is an argument they can no longer use. I remember the Greek Minister for Culture, Melina Mercouri, very well. She helped begin the modern movement for return. I met with her when she came to Australia in March 1983, and she encouraged me to do whatever I could to support the new British Committee for the Return of the Parthenon Marbles. She really raised the profile of this campaign and I will never forget her. We can never thank her enough.

Over the last 43 years I've carried out an ongoing program of talks and lectures all over the world, for community groups, schools, universities, conferences and many more.

Some of the work has involved writing books and pamphlets. In the digital era, we maintain an active presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and through the IOC-A-RPM website. IOC-A-RPM has directly organised, and helped organise, three international conferences on the Parthenon Marbles in the last seven years (2012, 2013 and 2015). In April of this year we were in Athens for the International Conference on the Parthenon Sculptures, by invitation of the President of Hellas HE Prokopios Pavlopoulos.

It was a great honour, not only to speak at this conference, but also to be elected as the Vice Chair of the International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures, (IARPS) following the conference. There is still much work ahead of us, and there is no single or simple strategy for securing return of the Parthenon Marbles. Sometimes people suggest the way forward is taking the United Kingdom government to court. Our view is that this is a dead end, with slim chances of success. Litigation has also been rejected by Greek governments of all political persuasions.

I have spoken with three Greek Ministers for Culture, from three different political parties.



They all gave me the same answer, Greece is not interested in going to court only in seeking return diplomatically, politically and through UNESCO. We support Greece's position. If the strategy changes, we will continue to support them.

Greece has already achieved much diplomatically. Every three years the UN General Assembly adopts a Resolution entitled 'Return or Restitution of Cultural Property to the countries of origin'. It is introduced by Greece and is an important tool in Greece's Cultural Diplomacy. The Resolution encompasses restitution of the Parthenon Sculptures. It was last adopted in December 13th, 2018.

UNESCO is another important area of Greece's cultural diplomacy. Parthenon Sculptures are an important focus of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP). In May 2018, the ICPRCP called upon Greece and the UK to reach a settlement of this long-standing issue, taking into account its historical, cultural, legal and ethical dimensions, while recalling that the

Acropolis of Athens is an emblematic monument of outstanding universal value, inscribed in the World Heritage List.

When we consider the diplomatic and political possibilities there are many. Educating public opinion is the key. Knowledge of the issue has already led to a huge shift in world opinion and now sees a majority of people in many countries, including the UK, favouring return.

Support for return is most obvious amongst the so called millennials. One man Petros Papadopoulos has been addressing crowds and calling for return of the Parthenon Marbles, inside the British Museum. On June 20 singer-songwriter Héllena Micy will be releasing the song The Parthenon Marbles (bring them back), to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the opening of the new Acropolis Museum. Here is a link to the artwork for her song and numerous alternative photos.

There is great scope for creative use of the arts in the campaign as Héllena's work reveals.

For further comment contact Emanuel Comino on 0418204466.