

# GREECE

## Recent activities (July 2013 – November 2014)

### Education

1. *September 2013:* On Wednesday 17th September 2014, the travelling version of the exhibition “**Synagonistis: Greek Jews in the National Resistance**” was inaugurated at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki. The exhibition was realized within the framework of a mutual program of co-operation with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Athens and presents photographs, documents, letters, proclamations, resistance newspapers, original artefacts, weaponry and other relevant material which will be presented to the public for the first time. The exhibition is accompanied by a bilingual catalogue, while director David Gavriilidis has produced a documentary film, which explores this subject engaging people, places and events. The permanent exhibition is also accompanied by specially designed educational programs for schools. [Source: *The Jewish Museum of Greece*, [http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities\\_dynamic/news/item/121.html](http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities_dynamic/news/item/121.html)]
2. *January 2014:* On January 22nd a **Memorandum of Cooperation between the General Secretariat of Religion of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religion and the Jewish Museum of Greece** was signed in Athens. The aim of the memorandum is to promote cooperation between the contributing parties in issues that concern Jewish religion, the history of Greek Jewry, their cultural traditions and preservation thereof, their general contribution to the broader Greek society and to the struggles of the Greek nation, the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust. Combating antisemitism and racism, training educators in teaching about the Holocaust in Greek schools, organizing activities which promote greater sensitivity among citizens on these issues, as well as the provision of scientific advisory support by the Jewish Museum of Greece to the General Secretariat of Religion on issues regarding the research or the programs or capacities of the Jewish Museum of Greece in general, are also included in the same Memorandum.
3. *January 2014:* on January 26<sup>th</sup> the Jewish Museum of Greece, on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, organised a free educational programme entitled “*The Holocaust of the Greek Jews*”, based on its permanent exhibition and personal testimonies, aimed at adults and children aged 11-15 years old. It also organised screenings of special documentary films and personal testimonies inside the museum.
4. *February 2014:* The eleventh educational seminar run by the Jewish Museum of Greece and entitled ‘*Teaching about the Holocaust in Greece*’ was held at the Cervantes Institute in Athens on 1-21 February. The seminar was for primary and secondary school teachers and was conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Religion. [Source: *The Jewish Museum of Greece*, [http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities\\_dynamic/news/item/93.html](http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities_dynamic/news/item/93.html)]

5. *June 2014:* On June 23rd and 24th the twelfth seminar on Holocaust Education organized by the Jewish Museum of Greece took place at the Department of Environmental Technologists of the Technological Educational Institute of Ionian Islands, at Minotou – Giannopoulou street, **in Zakynthos**. The seminar had been designed for primary and secondary school teachers and was conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Education & Religion. The historical presentations on Monday 23rd June were open to the public. [Source: *The Jewish Museum of Greece*, [http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities\\_dynamic/news/item/112.html](http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities_dynamic/news/item/112.html) ]

## Remembrance

1. *November 2013:* On November 18<sup>th</sup> the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation (IRWF) presented the “**Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Medal**” to the President of Greece, Karolos Papoulias. The ceremony took place at the Presidential Palace in Athens. Receiving the award from the Foundation’s chairman, Eduardo Eurnekian, and its founder, Baruch Tenenbaum, President Papoulias said that it was an honor for him and the Greek people. President Papoulias said that human rights and democratic freedoms are being tested in an unacceptable manner and repeated the statement he made in July 2013 when he visited Auschwitz saying that “**those who deny this sacrifice of thousands of European citizens cannot be a part of the European family**”. Papoulias also referred to the Jewish community in his hometown of Ioannina that perished in Nazi concentration camps during WWII. In a touching moment, Mr. Papoulias met with Greek Holocaust survivors Rosa Aser-Pardo, Iosif Ventura, and Eftychia Nahman, and the people who saved them Lydia Theodoraki-Dimaki, Evangelia Kypraiou, and Katia Mavrogeorgiou-Aggelopoulou. [Source: *Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece*, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=501:president-of-the-hellenic-republic-karolos-papoulias-receives-the-wallenberg-centennial-medal&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=501:president-of-the-hellenic-republic-karolos-papoulias-receives-the-wallenberg-centennial-medal&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41) ]
2. *December 2013:* On December 9<sup>th</sup> a high ranking European Jewish Congress delegation visited Athens and in a meeting at the Prime Minister’s Office presented Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras with an award “in recognition of his courageous leadership in protecting tolerance and human rights”. [Source: *Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece*].
3. *January 2014:* The Prefecture of Attica and the Jewish Community of Athens, jointly organized a series of events in Athens on January 27th, to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The central event, entitled “**We will beat racism. Together.**” was held at the Pallas Theatre and featured the participation of government officials, members of Parliament and the political parties, officials from the Armed Forces, dignitaries of the Church, ambassadors of states, local government officials, representatives of various organizations and, last but not least, survivors and a large public audience. The central speaker of the event was the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection, Nikolaos Dendias,

who stressed the need to raise awareness and rally all social and political, local and European stakeholders to the battle against the ideology and manifestations of racism. The renowned English actor **Jeremy Irons**, attended the event and read parts of two books (Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel’s “Night” and Primo Levi’s “If this is a man”), while popular singer Maria Farantouri sang parts from the “The ballad of Mauthausen” (poetry by Iakovos Kampanellis, music by Mikis Theodorakis). This year’s event also featured the presence of students from various secondary schools, who managed, in a touching way, to convey their thoughts and feelings about their visit to Auschwitz in 2013, on an initiative of the Ministry of Education. Isaac Mizan, an Auschwitz survivor with number 182641 on his arm, the Prefecturer of Attica, Ioannis Sgouros, the President of the Jewish Community of Athens, Minos Moissis, the Ambassador of Israel, Arye Mekel, and the Vice Chairman of the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece, prof. Manos Alchanatis, also addressed the audience at the event. The day included the laying of wreaths at the Holocaust Memorial in Athens by representatives of the government, the Parliament, the political parties, the Armed Forces, various embassies and the Prefecture, the Mayor of Athens, resistance organizations, Holocaust survivors, and Jewish Communities and organizations from Greece and abroad. [Source: *The Jewish Community of Athens*, [http://www.athjcom.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=91:holocaust-remembrance-day-in-athens-2014&catid=19:frontpage-news](http://www.athjcom.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=91:holocaust-remembrance-day-in-athens-2014&catid=19:frontpage-news)]



4. *January 2014:* Other events on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day included: In **Thessaloniki**, the Region of Central Macedonia and the Jewish Community of the city organized a ceremony on 26 January at the Holocaust Memorial in the presence of representatives of the state and local authorities, of diplomatic missions and many citizens. The ceremony included a memorial service by the Rabbi of the Jewish Community, speeches by the Minister of Macedonia-Thrace, the Ambassador of Israel, the Governor of Central Macedonia, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, the President of the Jewish Community of the city and the President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary of State for European Affairs at the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Michael Roth. Finally, pupils of the Jewish Community’s primary school placed flowers and the official guests laid wreaths on the Holocaust Memorial. Also in Thessaloniki on 29 January the Italian Cultural Institute and the Jewish Community organized a special event, which included a speech on the Jews of Thessaloniki and the Italian presence in the city. In **Larisa**, on 23 January the Jewish Community of the city organized on a ceremony at the city’s Synagogue in the presence of all local authorities, while wreaths were laid at the Jewish Martyrs Square. On 28 January a special event was organized at the schools of the city and the greater area of Larissa. In **Volos**, a ceremony which included speeches by government members and local authorities, as well as the laying of wreaths was organized by the Region of Thessalia and the

- Jewish Community of the city at the Holocaust Memorial on 26 January, in the presence of many officials and citizens. In **Ioannina**, the Region of Epirus, the Jewish Community of the city, the Gani Foundation and the Municipal Cultural Centre organized an event on 27 January, which included speeches and a concert. On the same day, the Governor of Epirus and the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina organized a Press conference in the city, where they referred to the message that they wished to deliver by organizing the above-mentioned event.
5. *January 2014*: The awarded-winning documentary film by Vassilis Loules “Kisses to the Children” was presented at the M. Kakogiannis Foundation on 25 and 26 January on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. It tells the stories of five Greek-Jewish children who were saved by Christian families during the German Occupation, five “hidden children” who lived in total silence.
  6. *January 2014*: High-level representatives of the Greek Parliament participated in the events organised at the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp on 27 on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. **During the events, the Greek Members of the Parliament met with 59 of their Israeli counterparts and participated in a historical inter-parliamentary meeting with representatives from the Parliaments of Israel and 11 European countries.**
  7. *January 2014*: Speaking at the European Parliament in Brussels at a ceremony marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day and addressing an audience of 500 dignitaries and guests, including Jewish leaders from across Europe and Israel, **Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras**, whose country held the rotating presidency of the EU in the first semester of the year, referred to the importance of remembrance and the importance of the lessons learnt from history. *“Today, one hundred years after the First World War, when dozens of millions of Europeans lost their lives in battle, and seventy years after the atrocities of the genocide and the Holocaust, we have turned those horrific nightmares into a bright vision; and this vision into a reality: United Europe, our Europe, which has become the world champion of respect for freedom, democratic rights and human dignity,”* Samaras said. European Jewish Congress (EJC) President M. Kantor praised Samaras and the Greek government for clamping down on Golden Dawn party, saying: *“The Greek government’s fight against the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party is an example of the defense of democracy which we hope to see replicated across the continent wherever those engrossed in hate, racism and xenophobia seek to utilize the democratic system to further their dark aims.”* [Source: Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=508:holaust-remembrance-ceremony-at-european-parliament-in-brussels-&catid=51:2009-05-26-11-05-45&Itemid=87](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=508:holaust-remembrance-ceremony-at-european-parliament-in-brussels-&catid=51:2009-05-26-11-05-45&Itemid=87)]
  8. *March 2014*: Events marking the passage of 70 years since the deportation and Holocaust of the city's Jewish population were held in **Ioannina** from 28 to 30 March. Exhibitions, talks, film screenings, religious services in the synagogue

and musical events featured strongly on the well-furnished, three-day program. The events were organized in conjunction with the Municipality of Ioannina, the Municipal Cultural Centre of Ioannina, the University of Ioannina, the Jewish Museum of Greece; and the Jewish Community of Ioannina; and were held under the auspices of the Canadian Embassy and the Embassies of the 22 countries that make up the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Events reached their height on Sunday 30 March 2014 with protest messages against racism, antisemitism and xenophobia. The keynote for the third day of events was set by Auschwitz survivor, Stella Coen, when she said, "Thank you," to the Canadian Ambassador, whose idea it was to mark the anniversary of the Holocaust in Ioannina, and also to light **561 candles** for the city's children and adolescents whose young lives were brutally ended in the Nazi crematoria. A memorial service was held in the Holy Synagogue at 10.30 in the morning for the 1850 victims from the Romaniote Jewish Community of Ioannina. A program of music kindly arranged by the Hungarian Embassy made a fitting complement to the service. Immediately after this, pupils from the city's junior and senior high schools, with candles in their hands, formed **a human chain** round the castle in memory of the children from the Jewish community who suffered and died in the death camps. Ambassadors from the countries that make up the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance** and members of diplomatic missions lit the candles. Then wreaths were laid at the Holocaust Memorial by foreign ambassadors, including those from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Germany, Austria and Hungary, as well as representatives of the Jewish Communities of Greece. The program of events came to an end with music in Mavili Square. The Philharmonic Orchestra of the Municipality of Ioannina played Mikis Theodorakis' ballad, *Mauthausen*. [Source: *The Jewish Museum of Greece*, [http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities\\_dynamic/news/item/105.html](http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities_dynamic/news/item/105.html)]

9. *March-May 2014*: As part of the program of events marking the passage of 70 years since the deportation and Holocaust of the Jewish population of Ioannina, the Jewish Museum of Greece presented the exhibition ***The Jewish Community of Ioannina. A Journey through Time***, working with the Public Art Gallery of Ioannina which hosted the exhibition. The exhibition was designed to throw light on the traditions and culture of the Romaniote Jewish Community which flourished in this corner of Greece. It draws on material from the collections and photographic archives of the Jewish Museum of Greece dating from the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. It also includes a number of engravings, which illustrate the explanatory texts in the exhibition. Each section of the exhibition relates to a different aspect of life, some of those aspects being religious customs, synagogue architecture, everyday life, costume, worship in the home, community organisation, life at work, education, language, arts and letters. As well as investigating issues such as history and race, the exhibition also looks at the social dimension, placing emphasis on the time of Joseph Eligia, his life, works and deeds. By means of this exhibition, the Jewish Museum of Greece presented both the people of Ioannina and the guests from other countries with a clear picture of the life and work of Joseph Eligia, the great

poet from Ioannina. It also let them see the face of the local Jewish Community through the ages, outlining a hitherto little known aspect of the city's multi-faceted past and present. The exhibition ran until the end of May 2014. [Source: *The Jewish Museum of Greece*, [http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities\\_dynamic/news/item/105.html](http://www.jewishmuseum.gr/en/activities_dynamic/news/item/105.html)]

10. *May 2014*: The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki unveiled a **Holocaust memorial** in a ceremony on 22 May in order to commemorate the city's Jewish community, which was persecuted during the German occupation. The monument was designed by the president of the University's Fine and Applied Arts Department, Xenis Sachinis. Present at the ceremony were the Israeli Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zeev Elkin, the University's rector and deans, the Israeli ambassador in Greece, Arye Mekel, the president of the Israeli Community of Thessaloniki, David Saltiel, the mayor of Thessaloniki, Yannis Boutaris, the regional governor of Central Macedonia, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, and the director of Foreign Affairs Ministry's International Relations office, Thanos Kotsionis. [Source: *Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece*, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=521:holocaust-memorial-unveiled-at-university-of-thessaloniki&catid=33:2009-04-30-08-28-32](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=521:holocaust-memorial-unveiled-at-university-of-thessaloniki&catid=33:2009-04-30-08-28-32) and *tovima.gr*, <http://www.tovima.gr/en/article/?aid=591732>]



11. *May 2014*: The programme of events entitled '*Days of Remembrance for the Jews of Veria (1943-2014)*' was held in **Veria** from 16th to 18th May, in memory of the 460 Jewish people of Veria (Macedonia), among them 150 children, who were taken in May 1943 to Thessaloniki by the Nazis and then, on 8th May, were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau as 'rail dispatch No. 15' and every one of them was put to death. The programme was organised by the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS) in conjunction with the Secondary Education Authority of Imathia, and had the support of the European Jewish Fund and *oltre il muro* blog. The participation of children from Grade six of the 4th Primary School of Veria was particularly vital and moving, as was that of pupils from the city's 5th Senior High School of Veria. [Source: *Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece*, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=522:holocaust-remembrance-events-in-veria&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=522:holocaust-remembrance-events-in-veria&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41) ]

12. *July 2014*: Zakyntian Jews from Athens, Israel and America met on the island of their birth at a moving event of tribute and remembrance organized by the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KISE) in conjunction Jewish people originally from **Zakynthos** (Zante). The event was the unveiling of two inscribed marble plaques and it took place at the island's Jewish Cemetery on 13 July. One of the plaques is dedicated to the seventy or so Zakyntian Jews who were living on Kerkyra (Corfu) and in Chania (on Crete) at the time of the occupation; a fact which resulted in their being among the six million victims of the Holocaust. It is

also an indirect reference to **the rescue of 275 Jews of Zakynthos**, made possible by the solidarity of other residents of Zakynthos with Metropolitan Bishop Chrysostomos and Mayor Loukas Karrer at the helm – the only rescue of its kind in the whole of occupied Europe. The other inscribed marble plaque within the confines of the historical Jewish cemetery is dedicated to **Moisis Fortes, the Jewish soldier of Zakynthos** who lost his life heroically in action on the Greek-Albanian front on 23 December 1940 when the Greek Army was making its victorious advance into Albanian-held territory. He was actually killed during the battle on Hill 1220, east of Kleisoura. The tribute to Moisis Fortes was simultaneously a tribute to all those who fell in the Greek-Italian War of 1940–1941. The plaque inscribed to the memory of Moisis Fortes was unveiled by his daughter, Mrs Glykeri Fortes-Gani, who had travelled from Israel with her family. [Source: *Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece*, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=536:the-unveiling-of-inscribed-marble-plaques-on-zakynthos&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=536:the-unveiling-of-inscribed-marble-plaques-on-zakynthos&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41)]

13. *August 2014*: Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris, who prevailed comfortably in May's local elections, winning 58.1 percent of the vote in the second round to secure a second term, **wore a yellow Star of David badge**, like the ones worn by Jews rounded up in the northern city during the Second World War, on Thursday 28 August for his swearing-in ceremony. Boutaris pinned the badge to his jacket amid protest by leftists against the presence of Golden Dawn MP Artemis Matthaopoulos on the municipal council. Protesters exchanged chants and insults with Golden Dawn supporters who sat in the opposite public gallery at the municipal council. **Boutaris' decision to wear the yellow badge carries significant symbolism as almost 90 percent of Thessaloniki's Jews were killed during the Second World War after being transported to Nazi German concentration camps**, leaving only some 10,000 survivors. Two days later, Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece warmly congratulated him on his highly symbolic initiative. [Source: *Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece*, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=538:may-or-of-thessaloniki-sworn-in-with-the-stra-of-david&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=538:may-or-of-thessaloniki-sworn-in-with-the-stra-of-david&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41) and *eKathimerini*, [http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/\\_w\\_articles\\_wsitel\\_1\\_28/08/2014\\_542455](http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsitel_1_28/08/2014_542455) ]

## Research

1. *December 2013*: Following discussions with GAIAOSE SA, the organization that manages the real estate property of the Railway Organization of Greece, and the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki signed on December 20<sup>th</sup> a Memorandum of Understanding for the development of a **Memorial Center on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research**, in an

area of 12.000 sq. meters at the old Railway Station of **Thessaloniki**. The ceremony was held in the presence of the Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, Mr. Michalis Chrysochoidis other local dignitaries. The development of a Holocaust research centre in city of Thessaloniki has been a long standing desire of our Community and the fact that the location GAIASE SA is providing is exactly the location from where 50.000 Thessaloniki Jews were deported to the concentration camps is a great symbolism. It is expected that the Holocaust Research Center will attract historians and researchers from around the world and become the driving force of development in the area and Thessaloniki in general. [Source: Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=504:agreement-signed-for-the-creation-of-a-holocaust-education-a-research-center-in-thessaloniki&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=504:agreement-signed-for-the-creation-of-a-holocaust-education-a-research-center-in-thessaloniki&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41)]

## Legislation

*September 2014:* After a long period of political debate, on September 9th the Greek Parliament voted for the **new antiracism bill**, which will replace law 927 into force in Greece since 1979. The bill under the general title “**Fight against Xenophobia**” conforms with the European Council Framework Decision of 2008 and it stipulates jail terms of up to three years and large fines for those who incite attacks against people based on their race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation. Similar treatment is foreseen for individuals who publicly deny genocides and other crimes against humanity that are recognised by the Greek Parliament and international courts. [Source: Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, [http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=539:announcement-for-the-voting-of-the-anti-racism-bill&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41](http://www.kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=539:announcement-for-the-voting-of-the-anti-racism-bill&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41)]