

30TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE EUROPEAN GROUP OF PUBLIC LAW

GEORGIOS E. PATOULIS*

Your Excellency Mr. President of the Hellenic Republic,

Honorable guests,

Distinguished professors of Public Law and Legal Studies,

Highly-esteemed international visitors of our Athens and Attica,

Honorable members and collaborators of the European Group of Public Law,

IT IS a special honor for me to attend with you the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the pioneering route of the European Group of Public Law, an organization which stands out as a jewel on the European legal scene and, simultaneously, constitutes the European Scientific Council of the European Public Law Organization - EPLO.

As a country, we are honored to hold this anniversary ceremony, since this *Group comprising top European jurists, university professors, high-ranking judges and public officials, which has tremendously contributed to the development of European Public Law for three decades, was created and has its seat in Athens, here where the globally known Attic Law was established and implemented and here, where, 2500 years after, but 30 years ago, the pioneering foun-*

* Regional Governor of Attica

ders of the European Group of Public Law have laid the foundations for the development of the Public Law of the European Union.

The contribution of the European Group of Public Law also in its capacity as the European Scientific Council of the European Public Law Organization to the *promotion of Legal Thinking* and, in that connection, to the modernization of the *democratic function of the Institutions of public governance*, is indisputable and internationally recognized.

Undoubtedly, the scientific work produced until today by the European Group of Public Law is of vital importance for the *national upgrading of the role of the Local Government*.

From this podium, to which I am deeply honored to have been invited today, *and on behalf of the Local Government* of the country I warmly thank you - *on behalf of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)* but also now *on behalf of the Region of Attica* - for your continuous legal input through the scientific opinions, advice and information interventions of the Council on the serious issues that we face in our efforts *to reform the country* and fight against any inadequacies and *weaknesses of the Local Government*.

We are still confident that the European Group of Public Law also in its capacity as the European Scientific Council of the EPLO will firmly provide us with their legal assistance and support *in the way towards the necessary reforms of the Local Government* which shall relate to the competences, the resources, the organization of the Local Government and its relations with the other levels of public administration.

Reforms that will have to aim to the *decentralization of competences* from the central and decentralized administration *towards the regions* aiming to the strategic state, the multilevel governance and the democratic planning.

Decentralization *based upon the principles of subsidiarity*, of partnership and of accessibility in the provision of services to the citizens and enterprises.

Decentralization that *guarantees interoperability*, effectiveness in the provision of services and profitability in the use of resources.

Your legal contribution will be highly useful in our struggle towards reforms that target the reinforcement of *the financial autonomy* of the municipalities and the regions, *the improvement of governance* and *the functional modernization* of the 325 municipalities and 13 regions of the country, the upgrading of the staff of the Local and Regional Authorities and the status of the elected representatives.

The high level of your legal intellect is for us more than valuable and assists our efforts to carry out reforms for the *improvement of the supervisory and monitoring Institutions* of the *Local and Regional Authorities* and the *establishment of effective internal control functions*.

Your prestige, legal importance and wisdom, your leading international esteem, your precious experience and your innovative work are *invaluable tools both for Legal Discipline* as well as *the institutions of democratic governance*.

We thank you for your uninterrupted contribution to the development of European Public Law through research, comparative studies and the interaction of the Legal Thinking that you have been producing for three decades with the participation of more than 70 countries of the world.

We are looking forward to furthering our common path and to your legal assistance within the framework of the Local and Regional Authorities, and personally I am looking forward to pursuing our cooperation from any institutional position I may have, aiming always at transparency, human rights, education and the upgrading of the Local Government of the country.

Happy Anniversary to the European Group of Public Law with many precious and creative years and the wish that it pursues its innovative action in Greece and at the international level and its active contribution to the development of the European Law, the cultural dialogue and the values of transparency and humanism.