

**ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΑ ΥΠΟΥΡΓΙΚΟΥ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟΥ  
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΒΡΑΪΚΗ ΓΙΟΡΤΗ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ – CELEBRATION OF  
THE JEWISH HOLIDAY OF CHANUKAH  
ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΟ ΘΕΑΤΡΟ ΛΑΡΝΑΚΑΣ  
27.11.2013**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here with you in order to celebrate the holiday of Chanukah, the “Festival of Lights”.

First of all, please allow me to convey the warmest greetings of the President of the Republic, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, as well as his sincere apology that due to his presence in Brussels was unable to attend this event and once more, just as he had done so this past May, enjoy the friendship of the vibrant Jewish community.

A community which enriches with its unique history and traditions our multiethnic society, constituting a dynamic link between our two countries and a medium for further understanding and cooperation between our two peoples.

Today's event brings back in memory the years where Jews in Judea, now Israel, were forbidden to perform their most important religious practices. Although vastly outnumbered, religious Jews in the region took up arms to protect their community and their religion. After three years of fighting, the Maccabees victoriously reclaimed the temple on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah and set up the preparations of rededication.

In the temple they found only enough purified oil to kindle the temple light for a single day, but, miraculously, the light continued to burn for eight days. Likewise, the Chanukah festival serves as a reminder to all humanity of the victory of the light over darkness, purity over corruption and spirituality over materialism.

Your own celebration through the struggles and your hopes are no different from the struggle of the people of Cyprus. Our two nations share much in common. Both nations, while still facing adversities, remain strong, proud and united.

Regrettably, Cyprus continues to be separated by a dividing line that is a disgrace to all humanity. Turkey still deprives the displaced Greek Cypriots of their right to return to their homes and properties. Almost 40 years have passed since the two-phase invasion in July and August in 1974, that Turkey occupied the 37 percent of the sovereign territory of the Republic and forcibly expelled about 180.000 Greek Cypriots from their homes.

President Anastasiades has so often publicly reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to work tirelessly during his tenure in order to end the division of our country and unite its people, through a fair, viable and lasting settlement that will address the concerns of both communities and of all Cypriots. A settlement based on the principles of the High-Level Agreements reached between the leaders of the two communities, the relevant UN Security

Council resolutions on the Cyprus and fully reflecting the proper implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and the values and principles of the Union.

Unfortunately there is still a long way to go until we reach the desired outcome, a goal that will allow the resumption of a substantive dialogue between the leaders of the two communities and that will create well-grounded prospects for their successful conclusion.

We do hope and wish that the Turkish Cypriot side will adopt a more constructive, reasonable and responsible approach so as to satisfy the aspirations of all Cypriots, especially of the younger generations, to share our common European future together and live and thrive within our European family.

Tonight, as all of you come together to light the menorah, we are reminded to count our blessings and to share the belief that through faith, determination and commitment, we can work together to build a more conciliatory and prosperous future for all.

I do believe that the lighting of the Menorah brings to all of us the message of hope that soon the people of Cyprus will be able to celebrate the lighting of the flame of freedom in our island.

May the joy of Chanukah and the peace and goodwill of the season fill your hearts and inspire us to lead lives of compassion.

Happy Chanukah.