

## CORFU 1994-2019: 25 YEARS FROM THE ACCESSION AGREEMENT

(Marios Roussos)

Ladies and gentlemen,

Twenty five years ago, during the third Presidency of Greece in the European Union, some agreements were signed on this island that would determine the future of the whole of Europe. Three countries, **Sweden, Austria** and Finland would join the Union. In a union that **was** being recreated at the same time through the Maastricht Treaty.

All of this is **surely** known to you, you may **even** remember **the personalities, some of them present here today**, who signed this agreement of accession, or recall the atmosphere of those days.

**The days** when the EU had made its first steps toward the Eastern Mediterranean **Sea** and Scandinavia. **It was** a period of enlargement, where the term “European” **was meant** to embrace more and more peoples. Maybe more or less different from each other. However, this diversity did not prevent the European family from working together, coping with their problems, and eventually develop.

Who would have imagined that the six founding member-States would become 28, given the Cold War and the recent history? That **Sweden**, Austria, Finland and Greece would **share** a single currency?

Personally, I feel fortunate to have the privilege of living and studying in an environment that has been created by this trans-national cooperation, and, frankly, I am surprised when I encounter people questioning all these benefits or taking them for granted and claim that they can still exist independently of the European Union. But even more, I am saddened by the fact that a country chooses to leave behind the common past that **has united** the Europeans for 60 years.

If I **could** speak on behalf of my generation, I would like to say that I **wish for** people **to** respect this story and not let other factors, limited in national borders affect our judgment. **On the contrary**, I wish we think and act for the common interest of this community.

No matter what happens until October, I would like to see an active European Union. That will know how to respond to crises, how to evolve and deal fairly with all its member States.

I wish **for** the EU **to** continue to **seek** solutions to the migratory crisis, the climate change and the unprecedented unemployment **rate** for young people, by supporting us in **our** first professional steps. **Without, however**, forgetting all these values that distinguish it.

I also hope to see **the impossible become possible** and **to have** a European Union proposing effective solutions for the current issues and create an optimistic future for all of us.

Thank you for your **kind** attention!