

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 10, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to applaud your recently announced plans to travel to Greece on November 15, 2016, as part of an international trip that also includes Germany and Peru. We thank you and your Administration for your consistent dedication to the Greek economic recovery and believe that your visit will serve to solidify confidence for our Greek allies and the world that the U.S. government will continue to support Greece through the challenges it faces today. As co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, we firmly believe that the U.S. relationship with Greece is vital. We are strongly committed to ensuring that the partnership between our two countries remains strong. In that spirit, we respectfully ask that you consider the following topics in your discussions with President Prokopis Pavlopoulos, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, and other high-level Greek officials.

Debt Restructuring and U.S. Special Envoy

A strong Greek recovery is undoubtedly in the best interest of the U.S. As Greece continues to reform its economy, we urge you to continue to encourage Eurozone leaders to consider a debt restructuring that will foster economic growth. We also ask that you consider appointing a special envoy or representative to lead the U.S. government's engagement in Greece's economic recovery.

Over a year ago, Eurozone leaders were forced to respond to Greece's impending default on its debt to the IMF and its European creditors. To avoid a Greek exit from the Eurozone, which would have had devastating repercussions for Europe and the U.S., the parties negotiated a bailout package and aggressive set of reforms to overhaul the Greek financial system and allow the country to regain fiscal stability. Over the last several months, the Greek Parliament has made steady strides in passing and implementing such reforms to reduce government spending and increase revenues.

For nearly seven years, the Greek people have suffered from an economic recession and a high rate of unemployment. We appreciate the comments that you, Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew, and others have made in support of debt relief for Greece, as the IMF has characterized the country's debt as unsustainable. Greece should have an opportunity to restructure its debt in an effort to

support more economic growth and further stabilize its financial situation. We believe a designated envoy would best enable coordination between various agencies in support of this goal, as well as the goal of a stronger Greek economy.

Additional Foreign Investment Opportunities

Foreign investment is an important component in Greece's economy that has been largely missing in recent years. We urge you to consider and discuss other ways to attract foreign investment to Greece that builds upon some steps your Administration has already taken. After many months of consultation with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), we were encouraged when the agency declared that it will consider investment proposals for projects in Greece with high development potential, despite its relatively high income per capita compared to other countries in which OPIC typically operates. OPIC's policy clarification has been met with enthusiasm by the Hellenic community in the U.S. and abroad. We hope you will discuss additional steps the U.S. and its international partners can take to support foreign investment in Greece, such as increased cooperation on trade or engagement in Greece's growing energy sector.

Assistance with the Refugee Crisis

As you discuss the refugee crisis, which has put significant strain on Greece's resources especially as the country simultaneously manages its financial woes, we hope you will recognize generosity Greeks have demonstrated during this significant inflow of refugees and reaffirm the U.S. commitment to provide technical support to the Greek authorities. During the largest migration of refugees since World War II, Greece received over 850,000 refugees in 2015 and 170,000 so far in 2016, with hundreds more arriving every day. Greek authorities as well as the Greek people deserve recognition for their sincere efforts to welcome a large volume of refugees at their shores. In October 2015, several Hellenic Caucus members joined us on a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson asking that the U.S. provide Greek authorities with technical assistance to effectively manage and monitor the flow of refugees. We appreciate that Administration officials have made several visits to Greece, including to the Greek Islands, and we are hopeful that level of cooperation and support will continue.

Condemn Threatening Turkish Rhetoric and Support Cyprus Reunification

Finally, we urge you to make clear that the U.S. condemns the provocative rhetoric by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan towards Greece and discuss actions to stabilize this critical region, including the reunification of Cyprus that the U.S. has consistently supported. President Erdogan recently claimed that the Greek Islands in the Eastern Aegean Sea are Turkish territory. These comments violate the provisions of the nearly 100-year-old Treaty of Lausanne, a peace accord that established Turkey's modern-day borders, and are unfortunately in line with past assertions and actions taken by the Turkish leader that threaten Greece's sovereignty. The U.S. must make clear that there simply is no legitimacy to President Erdogan's claims and strongly support efforts to stabilize the Eastern Mediterranean region, which must include the complete removal of Turkish troops from the northern third of Cyprus.

Again, we commend you for your decision to visit Greece in the coming days. We appreciate the opportunity to share with you the issues that concern the Hellenic American communities we are privileged to represent. Thank you for your consideration of these important matters as they relate to our relationship with Greece.

Sincerely,



CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress



GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress