



## **Navarino Environmental Observatory (NEO)**

### **Scientific experts call for an urgent transition to the New Climate Economy for sustainable development**

**Athens, 3 May 2019** – The challenges and opportunities emerging for a new economy in light of climate change, as well as proposals to promote innovation for sustainable development, were at the core of a seminar held at the Academy of Athens, which was organised by the [Navarino Environmental Observatory \(NEO\)](#) and the **Swedish Embassy** in Greece.

The event, which was held under the auspices of the Presidency of the Hellenic Republic, was honoured with the presence of **HE The President of the Hellenic Republic Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos** and **HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden**.

At the seminar entitled "**Challenges and Opportunities for a New Economy in the Context of Climate Change: Promoting Innovation for Sustainable Development**," the Greek Deputy Minister for the Environment Socrates Fotmelos, the Ambassador of Sweden to Greece, Charlotte Sammelin, as well as state representatives, local government, prominent members of the Academy of Athens, civil society, banking and wider private sector executives attended a series of thought-provoking sessions featuring distinguished speakers from Greece and Sweden.

The seminar focused on opportunities arising from climate smart investments promoting Europe's 21<sup>st</sup> century low-carbon development.

The speeches highlighted integrated management of natural resources to achieve sustainable development and the role of innovation, entrepreneurship and investment in global climate change.

With the strong growth rate of the world's population and rapid urban development alongside unpredictable climate change, it is high time to focus on the opportunities that the new climate economy offers and step up efforts to pursue political initiatives and attract investment.

In past 70 years, urban population has more than doubled, reaching 4.2 billion. There are cities that exceed 40 million inhabitants, four times the population of Greece or Sweden respectively, while every day a new Stockholm and every month a new Athens emerges.

Meanwhile, since 2000, 19 out of the 20 years with the highest temperatures have been recorded - with 2018 being the fourth warmest year in the world since 1880. It has been unanimously agreed that in a rapidly changing climate, science plays a crucial role by providing the basis for fruitful cooperation between research-society-state-business. This basis is necessary for informed decisions and strategic choices, as well as to achieve sustainability objectives. Challenges are undoubtedly increasing, as the opportunities do too. NEO exists and works to this end.

*"The efforts by Achilleas Konstantakopoulos and his colleagues (which are inspired by the late Vasilis Konstantakopoulos) continue to yield great results. A significant collaboration between the private sector, the University of Stockholm and the Academy of Athens takes place for the first time in our country,"* said **Antonis Kounadis, President of the Institute of Biomedical Research of the Academy of Athens.**

The **TEMES SA President Achilleas Konstantakopoulos**, said *"Our continued investment and support to NEO verifies our strong belief that investments in sustainable tourism are part of the solution for a better future, in-line with the UNWTO, who states that tourism can become a major driving force towards sustainable development. In a rapidly changing world, where climate pressure, economic uncertainty and social instability pose imminent challenges for the future, this kind of cooperation is essential in the effort to redirect our course towards a more sustainable future. As a company we believe that business through innovation and new technologies have the need and the means to lead this required transformation of our economy, while institutions like NEO through science-based interventions, stakeholder engagement and education can guide it towards sustainability"*.

**Stockholm University President Astrid Soderbech Widding** said: *"Stockholm University hosts a number of research stations, of which the northernmost is Tarfala up in the Arctic, and the southernmost NEO, in Messinia. Climate, seas and environment is a profile area of research at Stockholm University, be it around the Baltic Sea or the Mediterranean – there are indeed many connections to be made between the two. We strongly believe that excellent international research cooperation is crucial in order to realize the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. We also believe that regional and international cooperation need to go hand in hand, and that Europe, from North to South, needs to join forces in tackling the global challenges related to issues of climate and environment. Finally, we are convinced that a close cooperation between science, society and policy is absolutely necessary in order to be able to realize our own goals with NEO, today, tomorrow and within an even wider network of engaged communities"*.

The [Navarino Environmental Observatory \(NEO\)](#) began its operation in 2010. Today, it has become a world-renowned research centre in the field of climate change in the Mediterranean with 9 partners from Greece, Europe and America, more than 60 publications in reputable scientific journals, participation in 8 international workshops and 7 doctoral dissertations. Within the framework of NEO's activities, more than 100 open discussions have been held with the local community and courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level, and more than 2,500 interested, students and researchers have visited the **Navarino Natura Hall**.

**TEMES** is a premier destination developer and operator in the high-end tourism and real estate sector. Costa Navarino, its flagship development, is one of the largest tourism investments in the Mediterranean. Costa Navarino's philosophy is driven by a genuine desire to promote Messinia, while protecting and preserving its natural beauty and heritage. Based on solid financial foundations, the development will ultimately comprise five resort areas covering a total area of 1,000 hectares with 5-star hotels, quality facilities, residential real estate and four world-class golf courses. The Group also owns a majority stake in an iconic landmark hotel in the center of Athens, managed by Hilton.

**For more information:**

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