

# CALL OF INTEREST

## Excursion to Athens & Peloponnese

4-11.9.2014

### ATHENS



### PYLOS



### OLYMPIA



### EPIKOURIOS APOLLON



### MESSENE



### NAFPLIO



## Dear AIACE members,

As decided by the administration Council of the AIACE INT. in PORTO, as an experiment next year the Assises will be organised differently, while in 2015 it will again be the 'classic' formula.

So in 2014, the General Assembly will be in Brussels (on 11 June 2014), while the travel and social part will be a trip to Peloponnese (Greece) from 4 to 11 September 2014.

You are cordially invited to bring also your friends members or not of AIACE if they wish so.

We will be expecting you,

Richard Hay

Président AIACE Internationale

Despina Vamvakidou

President AIACE Greek section

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## Dear Friends,

After our successful Congress in Thessaloniki and our excursion in Crete, many people asked for a visit to Peloponnese and now it is happening – as part of the experiment about the "Assises" in 2014.

Let us first say some words regarding the excursion, describe the region of Messinia, and provide some useful information about our accommodation and what we are going to do there.

Following the General Assembly of AIACE which will take place in June 2014, our excursion will take place in September, considered as one of the best periods for visiting Greece. Peloponnese has typically Mediterranean climate, the weather is good, and it is warm enough with the daylight hours still lasting long.

**Messinia** in Southwest Peloponnese is a region boasting one of the highest biodiversity levels in Europe. The unique habitat of **Gialova Lagoon** is magnificent, where herons and flamingos make spectacular landings each year. A wetland of enormous value, Gialova is protected in the framework of Natura 2000. This is where the pink flamingos come to spend the winter, staying from autumn until spring. The Lagoon is protected from the wind, thanks to the **island of Sfaktiria** (total length 4,5km) serving as a giant breakwater.

Today on the island visitors can see **the tomb of Prince Paul-Marie Bonaparte**, Napoleon's nephew, who fought in the Greek War of Independence and was killed while cleaning his gun aboard the Hellas off to Spetses in 1827. The **Palace of "the wise old" Nestor**, described by Homer in the Iliad, is found near **Pylos**, the second biggest town in the region after Kalamata. The site is the most well preserved Mycenaean Greek palace discovered.

And then **Ancient Messene**. Many battles have been given for taking the control of the region. But the real jewel is the archaeological site, not only for its undisputed

historical value but also its sheer size. It is a place where you can get a sense of what an ancient Greek city-state looked like. The whole area is a proof of a culture with an advanced level of technology. Ancient Greeks knew about hoisting machines, how to multiply power by mechanical means, how to cut the stone and its properties. For a relatively quick visit, we will need at least two hours!

Extensive excavations have been carried out as well as some remarkable restoration work which allows visitors to form a vivid picture of **the Sanctuary of Asclepius**, the very well preserved Ecclesiasterion and of course the impressive stadium and gymnasium. But equally impressive are the techniques used for water management, including a stone aqueduct and irrigation system.

And then the hotel where we are going to stay while in Messinia! **Costa Navarino** is a newly built 5-star hotel situated in a breath-taking seaside landscape in Messinia. It is mentioned in the Forbes List and competes internationally to be included among the 10 leading hotels in the world. We have obtained very good prices though, if we have a participation of at least 80 persons.

The resort features groups of low rise residencies built using native stone, inspired by traditional Messinian rural homes, which lie in perfect harmony with the long sandy beach and pristine hillside setting. It's environmentally responsible philosophy is driven by a genuine desire to promote Messinia while preserving its natural beauty and heritage. A "green hotel", stretching along a magnificent 2km waterfront, where the coast in the evening is closed, so as to preserve the Turtle Careta-Careta species to lay their eggs.

For golf lovers, a par 72 Dunes Course is available designed by Bernhard Langer in association with European Golf Design, venturing into olive and fruit groves and a long a small river with fantastic sea and inland views. A fully equipped golf academy and practice facility as well as the 3.500m<sup>2</sup> Dunes Clubhouse are included among its facilities. Another par, the Bay Course, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., along the historic bay of Navarino gives the opportunity to players to savour the sublime sea views. Both these courses are operated by Troon Golf, the world's leading luxury-brand golf management company.

You are cordially invited to bring also your friends if they wish so. Please, let us know by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September your intentions on participating in the Excursion. This is very important for reserving an adequate number of rooms at the hotel for next year. The full programme will be published soon and the site will be imminent for communication.

As in the previous years, ARTION Conferences & Events has undertaken to organise a rich cultural and social programme. Please have a look **and inform us on your intentions for participation by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September the latest.**

Join us to explore magical Peloponnese together!

Despina Vamvakidou

President of AIACE Greek section



## **Draft Programme**

### **4 September 2014, Thursday**

Arrivals Athens

Airport Welcome and private transfers

Check in hotel: Divani Apollon Palace & Spa Athens

19.30 Welcome reception

20.30 Dinner

### **5 September 2014, Friday**

08.00 Breakfast at hotel

10.00 Visit at the Acropolis museum

13.30 Lunch

15.30 Athens City Tour

17.30 Return to Hotel & Rest

20.00 Free Evening

### **6 September 2014, Saturday**

08.00 Breakfast and check out

09.00 Departure for Pylos

13.00 Arrival at The Westin Resort Costa Navarino

13.30 Lunch at Hotel and rest

17.00 Optional tour in the resort

Free evening

### **7 September 2014, Sunday**

08.00 Breakfast

09.00 Visit to Olympia Stadium & Museum

13.30 Lunch at Olympia

Free evening

### **8 September 2014, Monday**

08.00 Breakfast

09.00 Temple of Epikourios Apollo & Lunch or

Visit to Pylos & lunch

Free Evening

### **9 September 2014, Tuesday**

08.00 Breakfast

09.00 Visit to Ancient Messene & Museum

13.30 Lunch

19.30 Traditional Greek Evening

### **10 September 2014, Wednesday**

08.00 Breakfast & Check out

09.00 Departure to Athens

11.00 Visit to Nafplio

13.30 Lunch

16.00 Return to Athens – Divani Caravel

Free Evening

## **Introducing Athens & Peloponnese**



## Athens

"The Greek capital is undergoing a radical period of urban renewal that did not stop with the 2004 Olympics. The magnificent Acropolis, crowned by the iconic Parthenon temple, rises above the city, watching the sprawling modern metropolis evolve. Athens is now a conspicuously wealthier, more sophisticated cosmopolitan city".

## Peloponnese

"The Peloponnese (pel-o-pon-ih-sos) is the stuff that legends are made of. Numerous myths were born and borne out here – it is where many a Greek god or hero strutted their stuff (and aired their bodies). Today this region is far from a fable. It boasts historical sites, with classical temples, Mycenaean palaces, Byzantine cities, and Frankish and Venetian fortresses"

Lonely Planet



## Acropolis Museum - Athens city tour

To start with, there will be a visit to the new Acropolis Museum. The Museum of the Acropolis, completed in 2007, lies on the foot of the Sacred Rock of the Acropolis, in a peaceful neighborhood, full of history. The Acropolis Museum has a total area of 25,000 square meters, with exhibition space of over 14,000 sq.m., which has been located on the Hill of the Acropolis. It's one of the most prominent sites in Athens, both for its rich interior with masterpieces of ancient sculpture, as well as its unique architecture and location.

And then enjoy a tour of Athens, combining many of the cities principal modern and classical sights. This tour includes an overview of the modern city and striking contrasts to the remains of its glorious past. Drive by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the Parliament House on Constitution Square, the Panathenian Stadium (site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896). See vistas of the Presidential Palace (former Royal Palace), government buildings and elegant homes. Drive along Panepistimiou Avenue and view the Catholic Cathedral, the Academy, University, National Library and Omonia Square. In contrast, we visit the Roman Temple of Olympian Zeus and the crowning beauty and glory that Athens was, the Acropolis with its many monuments atop its rocky base, including the awesome Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike and the Erechtheion with its Porch of Maidens.

Pylos

Pylos, one of the most important prehistorical settlements, the base of the King Nestor according to the legends.



bring you back to Mycenaean period reigns King War, in Pylos, Nestor. Visit the rooms of the King



Pylos is a pretty little town in a magnificent setting between the beautiful Bay of Navarino and the surrounding hills. Large cargo ships are usually at anchor in the bay and small fishing and pleasure boats in the harbor. Across the bay, almost forming a lake, is the island of Spakteria, where the Spartans were besieged by the Athenians in 425 BC.

A journey through time and space will the prehistorical era, the 13<sup>th</sup> BC, the of the Trojan war. When in Mycenae Agamemnon, the leader of the Trojan according to the legend, reigns King palatial complex of Nestor, see the and the Queen and experience the

unique feeling of a trip in the remote Greek past.

## Olympia

Visit Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games, the place where the ancient Olympic Games were held, a religious and athletic international centre of the ancient world. See the columns of the huge temple of Zeus, the dedication of the Macedonian king Philip II, walk around original buildings where athletes trained themselves and experience the unique feeling of racing inside the ancient stadium. See the altar of the temple of Hera, the exact place where the torch of the modern Olympic Games is lit every four years and the place from where it begins its journey throughout the world. Enjoy inside the museum best preserved statues of the pediments of the temple of Zeus, the grace of the original statue of Hermes of Praxiteles, the original helmet of Miltiades from the battle of the Marathon. See the place from where everything started, feel the connexion between the spirit and the body, realize the connexion between the past and the present.



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### THE MUSEUM

The Archaeological Museum of Olympia, one of the most important museums in Greece, presents the long history of the most celebrated sanctuary of antiquity, the sanctuary of Zeus, father of both gods and men, where the Olympic Games were born. The museum's permanent exhibition contains finds from the excavations in the sacred precinct of the Altis dating from prehistoric times to the Early Christian period. Among the many precious exhibits the sculpture collection, for which the museum is most

famous, the bronze collection, the richest collection of its type in the world, and the large terracottas collection, are especially noteworthy.



#### THE STADIUM

The stadium of Ancient Olympia was a holy place for the ancient Greeks, where all the sport activities were held dedicated to the god Zeus. Originally, the stadium was constructed in such a manner that spectators could view the events from the slopes of Mount Cronion. But the stadium was gradually moved further east, and eventually it was placed outside the temple of Zeus.

## Temple of Epikourios Apollo



Visit the unique temple of Apollo, a monument included in the World Heritage of Unesco. The location as well as the temple itself are breathtaking. Standing at the top of high mountains at a height of 1130 m, it is one of the best preserved temples of ancient Greece, unique for its architectural features. Designed brilliantly by the architect of the Parthenon, Iktinos, at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> BC, it captivates the attention of the visitor from far way with its impressive dimensions and its unusual orientation. “Of all the temples in Peloponnesse (...) this may be placed first for the beauty of the stone and the symmetry of its proportions”.

Due to extreme weathering conditions, that prevail during wintertime in the area its material has deteriorated considerably. In its current state it presents many severe structural damages: foundation deformations, stone-blocks fractures in the steps, and tilts of the columns. In 1985 an antiseismic scaffolding was erected on the temple to prevent the epistyles from falling and to increase the stability of the tilted columns. In 1987, the monument was covered with a protective canopy, for protection from damage for as long as required to realise the restoration project that was being planned. The real restoration began in 2001. The European Regional Development Fund co-financed the first part of it.



# Ancient Messene



Messene is a significant ancient city in terms of its size, form, and state of preservation, and still has much to offer. It possesses not only sanctuaries and public buildings, but also imposing fortifications, and houses and tombs. It enjoys, amongst other things, the advantage of never having been destroyed or covered by later settlements, and is located on an unspoiled inland site. Visit and walk around the ruins of an ancient city. The archaeological site of Messene provides you with the unique feeling of visiting the different parts of an ancient city

of the 4<sup>th</sup> BC and experiencing the urban space of the antiquity. You will have the chance to see the ancient theatre, recently restored and reused for modern events, the stadium for the games, the sanctuaries, the gymnasium and other buildings from different historical periods of the city, proving the continuous inhabitation of the place.



## THE THEATRE

The first monument one encounters on the way from the Museum to the archaeological site is the theatre. The theatre was used for large scale assemblies of political character.

## THE AGORA – TEMPLES OF ZEUS SOTER AND POSEIDON

Fragments of a balustrade slab of local sandstone faced with poros, with a representation of winged thunderbolt of Zeus set in a lozenge-shaped border are connected with the Agora and the temple of Zeus Soter, whose statue is mentioned by Pausanias (4.31.6)



The Stadium and Gymnasium count among the most impressive and well preserved building complexes of the site.

Pausanias represents the Asklepieion as a museum of art works, mainly statues, rather than the more usual sanatorium for sick patients. It was the most conspicuous site in Messene and the center of the public life of the city, functioning as such alongside the nearby Agora.

## Nafplio



Nafplio was the first capital of Greece, and beauty, culture, history and tradition characterize this wonderful city. It is one of the prettiest towns in the Peloponnese with a beautiful setting and an understated elegance and charm that are stressed in the attractive narrow streets of the 'old town' that meander timelessly behind the picturesque waterfront. Neoclassic houses, charming streets, wooden balconies with cascading flowers, Turkish fountains and colorful Constitution (Syntagma)

Square with its fascinating mosques and outdoor cafes, all contribute to the lovely ambience here. The views from the waterfront include the Bourtzi, a small castle built by the Venetians in 1471 that sits in the middle of the bay and, overlooking the town, the impressive Palamidi Castle, built by the Venetians around 1714 AD surveys the whole area.

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## Other programmes



For those wishing to extend their stay, other programmes will be also available at Costa Navarino, Kalamata, Delphi, Monemvasia and the Greek islands.

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## Hotels

### The Westin Resort Costa Navarino

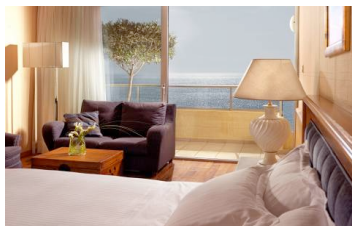


Costa Navarino, the prime destination in the Mediterranean, is located in a breathtaking seaside landscape in Messinia, Greece.

The Westin Resort Costa Navarino located next to the Ionian Sea coastline of The Dunes Beach, features 445 rooms and suites, inspired and designed by old Messinian mansions that spring from nature and create an ambiance of genuine hospitality. Most of the rooms enjoy unobstructed views of the Ionian Sea, individual infinity pools and a smoke free environment. Eat well with local produces in any of the venues available at the resort and enjoy menus from International, local Greek and Italian flavors to Lebanese and Pan-Asian.

Including two signature golf courses – The Dunes Course and The Bay Course – Costa Navarino has been established as the new luxury golf destination in Greece, offering extensive golf facilities in a wonderful sea and olive grove landscape

### Divani Apollon Palace & Spa Kavouri Athens



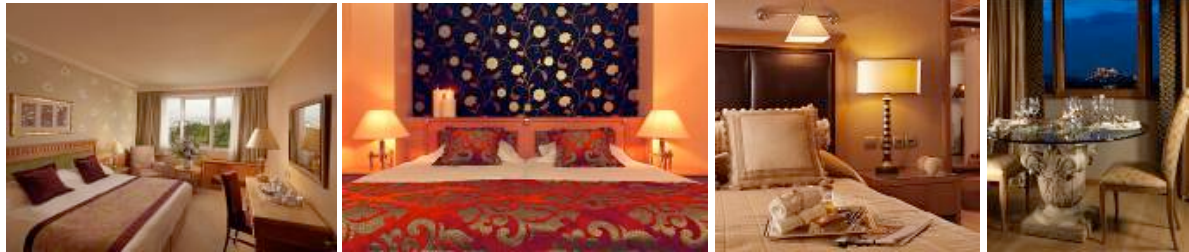
The Divani Apollon Palace & Spa is a luxury hotel situated in the exclusive area of Vouliagmeni on the Athenian Riviera, Greece. Enjoying a spectacular beachfront location, just 18 km from Athens city centre, the Divani Apollon Palace & Spa was the first hotel in Athens to become a member of the Leading Hotels of the World and it is also awarded with the Five Star Diamond Award.

Superior Rooms feature large windows, all with fully equipped balconies and beautiful views to the Saronic Gulf. Measuring 30 m<sup>2</sup>, superior rooms are equipped with a sizable work area, a special sitting room area and a king or twin beds. These rooms are decorated with designed fabrics, chosen to match the stylish light oak furniture, and tasteful paintings. The spacious marble bathroom has a deep soaking tub with exclusive



bathroom amenities. All rooms offer the latest in technological amenities and high speed internet wireless and wired with default speed 50mbps. Smoking, special access and interconnecting rooms are available upon request.

### **Divani Caravel Palace & Spa Athens**



Divani Caravel Hotel is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World. The central hotel in Athens offers luxury and style in the heart of Athens. Ideally located just minutes away from Constitution square, just a short walk from the fashionable Kolonaki district with its boutiques, famous cafés and restaurants, as well as from all major cultural points such as museums, galleries, theatres, our luxury hotel in Athens is the ideal base from which to visit the key attractions of the beautiful historic city.

All our Superior rooms offer direct dial telephone with voice mail, ISDN lines and data port with Fast internet access, Cable and satellite TV, Individual climate control, Mini bar, 4 radio channels, Electronic key card locks, Hair dryer, Electronic Safe, Soundproof windows, Fireproof doors.



## PRE - REGISTRATION FORM

This is a non-bidding expression of interest. Confirmation of your participation will be required by 28 February 2014 requiring an advanced payment. Details of the full programme will be available soon at the website [www.aiace-assises-europa.eu](http://www.aiace-assises-europa.eu).

### A. PRE - REGISTRATION DETAILS

Title:	Mr.	Mrs.		
First Name:		Family Name:		
Maiden Name:		Former European Institution:		
City:		Address:		
Post Code:		Country:		
Tel:		Mobile:		
E-mail:		Fax:		

### B. ACCOMPANYING PERSONS \*

First Name

Family Name

Ms. / Mr.

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\*Please contact ARTION Conferences & Events if you have more than one accompanying person.

## C. PACKAGE DEAL

### **Package Price per person in € (min group of 80 pax)**

Person in double room: 1.135,00 €  
Single room supplement: 475,00 €

### **The Package includes:**

- Welcome service at the Athens International Airport and private transfer from and to the Athens Airport by taxi or minivan on arrival and departure
- Accommodation in 5\* hotels in Athens & Peloponnese with rich buffet breakfast
- Official Guide throughout the programme French or English speaking
- All excursion programmes as analysed in the programme
- Museum entrances
- Luxurious coach transfers throughout the programme
- Six lunches with menu and drinks
- A welcome reception & dinner
- A Greek night with dinner, music & dancing

### **The Package does not include:**

- Tips for the coach & the guide
- Personal expenses
- Dinners & drinks, when there is no dinner mentioned in the programme

I'm very interested in participating in the Excursion Programme	
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Date:

Signature: