

Heraklion Deputy Mayor's Statement on the 10th anniversary celebration of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

“The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is celebrating its 10th anniversary. This event is an excellent opportunity to highlight the significant and global contribution of the network. The Member States can benefit from its guidance, inspiration, initiatives, publications and policy documents, to utilize their learning potentials and achieve local development and growth. Nowadays, democratic countries are guided by the perception that Education must follow the new trends and fields and should be recognized as a universal human right for all citizens, regardless of age, nationality, religion, gender, educational level and financial capabilities. Thus, as educational needs are constantly expanding, the most suitable methods are sought, the utilization of innovative programs, but also the mitigation of educational inequalities in societies. In this direction, UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities carries out an important mission.

Heraklion, applied and became a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) in October 2016. With the valuable support of the National Greek Committee for UNESCO and the undivided support of many local learning organizations and volunteers, we aim to achieve prosperity, progress and development for all citizens.

"Lifelong learning", in our Municipality is an ongoing learning process field, which is essential for the society and the local economy. Through lifelong learning we can achieve self-empowering, local development and social inclusion. Developing learning opportunities for all, is the only path to sustainability and inclusion. We are fully aware that Education, as an important social good, must be accessible to every person and should remain in the core of our policy making decisions. Such an important social good ought to be protected and enhanced.

In 2019 our city was among the 10 winners of the UNESCO Learning City Award. Receiving the award was a great honor and recognition of our efforts and our commitment to become a learning city. Furthermore, an encouragement and motivation to mobilize all stakeholders and to ensure equal and open access to a variety of educational-cultural-social and business experiences for all.

Today, more than ever, people need skills, values, behaviors to evolve and develop throughout their lives, to participate fully in society and to contribute to the creation of sustainable future for everyone.

The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is a valuable driving force, which is instrumental in addressing and mitigating educational and social inequalities. We have deep acknowledge and appreciation for this partnership, guidance and support.

On the occasion of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, we would like to congratulate all those who were inspired and carried out this ecumenical effort and hope for many more years of fruitful collaboration and the amplification of the network”.

Ms Stela Kalogeraki – Archontaki

Heraklion Deputy Mayor of Education and Lifelong learning