28/05/2009

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW ARISTOTLE ONASSIS PRIZE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CITY OF HAMBURG

On May 28 2009, City Mayor Ole von Beust, City Senator for the Environment, Anja Hajduk, and Onassis Foundation President, Anthony S. Papadimitriou, announced the future awarding of "Aristotle Onassis Prize for the Protection of the Environment" in Hamburg City Hall.

This new prize is endowed by the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation and is to be awarded in Hamburg every two years, carrying an award of EUR 250,000.

The prize will award persons or organizations for "outstanding contributions towards protecting and improving the environment, including the long-term economical use of energy". The prize will acknowledge either completed or promising ongoing projects, ensuring their successful completion with the economic support of the prize. Persons involved in political parties or initiatives politically centred will not be evaluated, whereas priority will be given to scientific projects within the framework of the EU.

The first "Aristotle Onassis Prize for the Protection of the Environment" was bestowed in November 2010.

City Mayor Ole von Beust commented: "Our efforts to protect the climate, resources and the environment are increasingly respected by countries other than Germany. With the "Aristotle Onassis Prize for the Protection of the Environment", we are now seeing a major international environmental prize coming to Hamburg for the first time. The internationally-constituted Committee, under the chairmanship of City Senator for Urban Development and the Environment, Anja Hajduk, is outstanding, from the Hamburg viewpoint, in recruiting Dr. Michael Otto and 'ZEIT' journalist Christiane Grefe alongside international scientists".

City Senator Anja Hajduk added: "In view of the massive challenges of climate change and the environmental policy, the "Aristotle Onassis Prize for the Protection of the Environment" comes at just the right time. It aims to publicise outstanding research and projects in this area and to offer solutions. The new environmental prize will be a further advertisement for Hamburg's competence in relation to protection of the environment and the climate."

Anthony S. Papadimitriou, President of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation stated: "The Onassis Foundation and the City of Hamburg share a bond which goes back to the period when the undisputed leading shipping personality of the 20th century, Aristotle Onassis, was expanding his business. Among his pioneering initiatives in the early 1950s had been the order for the construction of a series of tankers in German shipyards, thus offering this industry the significant opportunity for revival and growth. In present time, both the Onassis Foundation and the City of Hamburg share as a priority the concern for major issues concerning the protection of the environment. For those reasons, we were already looking at Hamburg as a potentially suitable venue for the awarding of the "Aristotle Onassis Prize for the Protection of the Environment". What rapidly convinced us was the major efforts being made by Hamburg to link together urban development, climate and environmental protection. Our prize is genuinely at home."

The International Prize Committee comprises the following members:

- **Ms. Anja Hajduk,** Senator of Urban Development and Environment
- **Dr. Anthony Papadimitriou,** President of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation
- **Mrs. Christiane Grefe,** journalist (Die Zeit)

- **Prof. Petros Koutrakis, Ph.D.,** School of Public Health, Director of the Exposure, Epidemiology and Risk Program, Harvard University
- **Dr. Mojib Latif, Ph.D.,** Professor at the Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences
- **Dr. Michael Otto, Hamburg entrepreneur,** President of the WWF in Germany
- **Prof. Michael Scoullos, Ph.D.,** Professor of Environmental Chemistry, University of Athens
- **Mrs. Christine von Weizsäcker,** biologist
- **Ms. Jacqueline McGlade,** Managing Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA)

******

The City of Hamburg with a population of about 1.8 million is Germany's second largest city and has an integrated and participative planning strategy and a strong commitment towards a "green" vision. As a result, after a competition among 35 candidate cities, the City of Hamburg has earned the prestigious title of the European Green Capital 2011. **Hamburg always seeks green answers to metropolitan challenges and has innovative ideas on how to share experiences and best practices as the European Green Capital of 2011.** Between the "green" practices of the city, the following are highlighted: As far as massive energy savings is concerned, the climate protection goals are ambitious as they include reduction of CO2 emissions by 40% by 2020 and by 80% by the year 2050. Annual energy savings of some 46,000 MWh is a major achievement for such a big city.
The city also supports an excellent public transport network and has also achieved high environmental standards and good performance levels in terms of cycling and public transport indicators. Almost all citizens have access to optimal public transport within 300 meters of their given location.
The city has set very ambitious future plans which promise additional improvements.

******

The Onassis Foundation has offered major grants to environmental projects in Greece and, between 1989 and 1999, has awarded prizes to personalities and entities for their contribution towards the protection of the environment. Among others, the laureates include the Goulandris Museum of Natural History (1990), Greenpeace International (1991), Maurice Strong-Secretary-General to the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1993) and the International Maritime Organisation (1997).

The protection of the environment has always been a main and sensitive issue for Olympic Shipping and Management S.A., the shipping company of the Onassis Group. On June 4th 1982 the Union of Greek Shipowners and the Pan-Hellenic Seamens Federation signed the declaration of voluntary commitment and formed the non-profit, nongovernmental organisation "Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association" (HELMEPA). Its main and only scope was the protection of the sea environment. The same declaration was signed by Christina Onassis too, who had been a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Greek Shipowners since February 1982.

The Onassis Group is represented since then in the Board of Directors of HELMEPA and, having a very long experience in training, was instrumental in establishing since October 1983 HELMEPA's seminars for all Greek Seafarers covering mainly procedures and practices related to safety at sea for the protection of the sea environment as well as for the strict compliance with all National and International Regulations. The Greek Seafarers and the Shipowners responded enthusiastically to this very worthy effort.

Olympic Shipping and Management S.A. had realized that the main cause of all work accidents is the weakness of human factor and in order to face its negative consequences, decided to apply aviation philosophy, style and strict safety standards and procedures, known as “airline concept” to the maritime education and training.

After a training course preparation of the officers that lasted over 4 years and consisted of seminars, simulators, new manuals and checklists where all the new processes and operation phases of ship management were described, Onassis Group applied in 1982 the “Airline Concept” in the oil-tankers and dry cargo ships of its fleet.

This was a world pioneering measure that the Onassis Group applied first so as to improve further the safety of the ship, the crew, the cargo and the sea environment, fourteen years before IMO imposed internationally the application of the new Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping of seamen (HTCW) in 1995 and the application of the International Ship Management Code (ISM) in 1998. Beside the above, Olympic Shipping and Management S.A. implements and is officially certified under the ISO 14001 standard.