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The "Hestia" Onassis International Prize in Immigrant Integration and Human Development is bestowed on Medecins du Monde - Greece

PRESS RELEASE

On November 3, 2009, the "HESTIA"* Onassis International Prize in Immigrant Integration and Human Development was bestowed, during the closing ceremony of the Civil Society Days Forum, which was organized by the Onassis Foundation

The Prize was bestowed on the Humanitarian Organization "Médecins du Monde-Greece" for its initiative "Open Polyclinic" and was accompanied by a monetary award of €50,000

The **Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation**, during the closing ceremony of the Civil Society Days Forum 2009, bestowed the "***Hestia***" Onassis International Prize in Immigrant Integration and Human Development on the Humanitarian Organization **"Médecins du Monde-Greece"** for its initiative "Open Polyclinic", on November 3, 2009, at 7 pm at the Astir Palace Hotel in Vouliagmeni. The prize was awarded by the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Decentralization and Electronic Governance, Mrs. Theodora Tzakri.

The ongoing programme "*Open Polyclinic*" offers free medical and pharmaceutical care, as well as psychosocial support to groups of immigrants with limited or no access at all to the National Health System and social services. The "*Médecins du Monde-Greece*" workforce consists of volunteer specialized doctors, nurses, social workers and psychologists, Greek and immigrants, with the help of which, during the last 12 years, more than 150.000 immigrant patients from Iraq, Bangladesh, Africa, Iran, Bulgaria, Poland, Ukraine, and Albania have received medical care in the Polyclinics of Athens, Thessaloniki and Chania in Crete.

The "***Hestia***" Prize, accompanied by a monetary award of €50,000, was established in 2009, by the Onassis Foundation, in view of rewarding a remarkable social and pioneering initiative of immigrant integration and human development. With the Foundation's commitment, the prize will be also awarded at the two following organizations of the Civil Society Days Forum, which will take place in Mexico in 2010, and in Madrid in 2011.

On the occasion of the awarding of the Prize to "*Médecins du Monde-Greece*", Mr. Anthony S. Papadimitriou, President of the BoD of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, made the following statement: *"We are pleased that this year's prize is awarded to an organization of international repute, as well as proud that with the "**Hestia**" Prize we will be able to contribute to the further enhancement of its valuable work."*

The programme of "*Médecins du Monde-Greece*" was selected among 27 participating humanitarian organizations and NGOs from all over Greece. The candidancies were assessed by the six-member Prize Committee, consisting of Greek and Foreign Academics and representatives of Civil Society, chaired by (non-voting) Mrs. Marianna Moschou, Secretary General of the Board of Directors of the Onassis Foundation. Then, the five short-listed participations were graded by 20 members of the International Advisory Committee of the Civil Society Days Forum 2009.

The Chairperson of the Prize Committee, Mrs. Marianna Moschou said: *"We had many wsignificant participations for the "**Hestia**" Onassis Prize and the evaluation work was indeed difficult. It is our honour to contribute to the efficiency of humanitarian initiatives, which this year came from Greece, next year will come from Latin America and in 2011 from Europe."*

With this initiative, the Onassis Foundation verifies its irreducible interest and strong commitment to the vital social challenge of immigration.

***Hestia** – the ancient goddess of the hearth, domestic life and family. Symbolizes the new home and the new life that immigrants build in the host countries and the way in which the host countries integrate them in their public life.*

For more information concerning the "***Hestia***" Onassis International Prize and the Civil Society Days Forum of the 3rd Global Forum for Migration and Development, please visit www.gfmd2009.org or www.onassis.gr.

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