



## DESMOS

INTERNATIONAL LINK  
OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SCOUTS  
LE LIEN INTERNATIONAL  
DES SCOUTS ORTHODOXES

## DESMOS COMMITTEE MEETING MONASTERY MILESEVA, SERBIA January 27-29, 2006

### M I N U T E S

The DESMOS Committee Meeting was held in the holy environment of the Monastery Mileseva, in Serbia, Serbia-Montenegro. The host of the Meeting was His Holiness, the Episcopo of Mileseva, **Filaret**, member of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

#### Present:

<b>Marko Petrovic</b> , outgoing Desmos Vice-president	Serbia-Montenegro
<b>Christos Papageorgiou</b> , outgoing Desmos Secretary General	Greece
<b>Maher Sahlieh</b> , outgoing Desmos Treasurer	Palestine
<b>George Bahow</b> , Desmos Committee member	Israel
<b>Christos Marneros</b> , Desmos Committee member	Cyprus
<b>Tanja Golubovic</b> , Desmos Committee member	Republic Srpska (B&H)
<b>Zoran M. Petrovic</b> , Desmos Committee member	Serbia-Montenegro
<b>Lazar Apostolov</b> , Desmos Committee member	Macedonia (FYRO)
<b>Naaman Shahada</b> , Desmos member-country representative	Israel
<b>Zipora Iskandar</b> , Desmos member-country representative	Israel

#### Apologies:

<b>Ioannis Tzen</b> , outgoing Desmos President <i>(due to the professional obligations)</i>	Greece
<b>Georges Abboud</b> , Desmos Committee member <i>(due to the visa problems)</i>	Lebanon



## The initially proposed Agenda:

1. Address by the outgoing DESMOS President, Mr. Ioannis Tzen
2. Address by the outgoing DESMOS Vice President, Mr. Marko Petrovic
3. Report of the outgoing Treasurer, Mr. Maher Sahlyeh
4. Report of the outgoing Secretary General, Mr. Christos Papageorgiou
5. Minutes of the 4th Desmos Conference, Tunisia 2005
6. Report on the preparatory activities for the 2nd Inter-religious World Scout Symposium (meeting in Geneva, December 2005)
7. Elections and constituting of the new Desmos Committee
8. Considerations of the new Desmos President on the future of Desmos
9. Administration issues
10. Discussion on the Orthodox booklet project, by Dimitrinka Todorova, Bulgaria
11. Discussion on the production of Desmos information and promotional material (leaflet, calendars, newsletter, badges, etc.), by Dimitrinka Todorova and Christos Papageorgiou
12. Discussion on the development of the Desmos web site
13. DESMOS assistance in relief of people affected by natural disasters, Mr. George Bahow
14. Discussion on future events:
  - Common activities on the borders between Desmos country-members (Thinking Day)
  - Training on Spiritual Dimension in Scouting in Serbia-Montenegro
  - EuroJam, Orthodox mass, workshops on Orthodox iconography and architecture
  - 2nd inter-religious Symposium in Taiwan, May 5-8, 2006, "Together for Harmony and Peace"
  - The next Desmos Committee meeting

Considering the fact that the outgoing Desmos President, Mr. Ioannis Tzen, could not take part at the Committee meeting, due to professional engagements, it was suggested that the initially proposed Agenda item Ad. 1 be skipped.

The outgoing Desmos President, sent his address by fax in the meantime, so the integral text of his address is included in the Minutes of this Committee meeting (Appendix 1)

Due to the absence of Dimitrinka Todorova, the item Ad. 10 and Ad.11, will be presented by Christos Papageorgiou.



**Monastery Mileseva  
Serbia**



## Ad. 2 - Address by the outgoing DESMOS Vice-president, Mr. Marko Petrovic

The outgoing DESMOS Vice President, MARKO PETROVIC, welcomed all the Committee members gathered in the Holy environment of the Monastery Mileseva and thanked them for the efforts and funds invested in this trip in order to come to Serbia and contribute to resolving of the important DESMOS issues.

Marko was speaking about the strengths and weaknesses of The Link.

Speaking about strengths, Marko pointed out great Desmos achievements at the world level, where Desmos gained the consultative status with WOSM, very good relations with other faith organizations in Scouting that consider Desmos as respectable partner and Desmos participation at world and regional events, such as world scout conferences European scout conferences, world scout jamborees and EuroJam.

Speaking frankly about weaknesses, Marko emphasized the financial problems and lack of support of most of NSOs, but also lack of commitment of certain Committee members in the previous period, knowing that some of them never showed up and never did anything for Desmos, although they accepted the Desmos tasks. Marko said Desmos needs the committed people and we need to work more seriously on the issue of human resources in the forthcoming period.



Marko reminded that a number of very important events will be organized on the world level, in which Desmos should be present in a pro-active way.

The celebration of Centenary of Scouting with the World Scout Jamboree which will be organized in UK in 2007 is definitely the most important event in which Desmos must take part. After a very positive experience of EuroJam, it will be the opportunity to make the additional step forward and present Desmos in an appropriate way.



A couple of months before the World Scout Jamboree, there will be the European Scout Conference in Slovenia, where Desmos must participate as well and then in 2008 we have the World Scout Conference in Korea.

Equally important is Desmos participation at faith-organizations events and the closest one is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interreligious Symposium, which will be held this year, at the beginning of May.

But, we must not forget – Marko said – the Desmos activities we need to organize in Desmos member-countries and between the Desmos member-countries. It is something that should offer our youth the possibility to get in touch with the spiritual dimension in Scouting in a practical manner. It is something that should enable exchange between Desmos member-countries and make them closer to each other. It may be the positive impulse for certain inactive Desmos member-countries and a sort of mechanism to motivate them and get them back.

Closing his address, Marko said it was a pleasure and a challenge working in the Desmos Committee over the past six years and more than that, in the initial phase, when he had the opportunity to work together with Christos Papageorgiou, Costas Tsantilis, George Hourdakis and other friends on establishing the Link.

Marko emphasized that he remains on full disposal of Desmos, and ready to work for the cause and development of The Link.

### **Ad. 3 – Report of the Treasurer, Mr Maher Sahlieh**

The outgoing Desmos Treasurer, MAHER SAHLYEH, expressed his thanks to the Scout Association of Serbia-Montenegro for the organization of this meeting. Maher said he feels sorry to leave the Committee after a number of years of engagement, but he emphasized that the commitment remains and that he is ready to invest new efforts and support Desmos whenever needed.

Maher informed the Committee that he actually did not have the opportunity to perform this duty in a usual way, because of the fact that Desmos had no income and no funds whatsoever in the previous period. But, he also pointed out that the financial issue is very important and that the money is actually indispensable for any serious work.

CHRISTOS MARNEROS reminded that at the Committee meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, it was agreed to examine the possibilities to register Desmos as NGO and said that President Yiannis Tzen and Maher Sahlyeh accepted the task. However, there was no feedback and we still do not know the situation in this regard.

MAHER SAHLYEH informed the Committee that after the Sofia meeting he made the concept-paper and sent it to Yiannis Tzen, but he never got the response.

The Committee agreed that it is quite an expert issue and that a relevant response should be requested from someone dealing with legal matters concerning NGOs. Also, considering the consultative status that Desmos has with WOSM, the issue should be carefully inquired in order not to make a wrong step.

CHRISTOS PAPAGEORGIU informed the Committee about the interesting experience of Greece, where the “Friends of Desmos” Club has been established in Athens and is expected to start working the next month. It's a good way to raise the funds in Greece and perhaps a good idea for the others to try to establish it in their countries as well.

### **Ad. 4 – Report of the outgoing Secretary General, Mr Christos Papageorgiou**

CHRISTOS firstly presented the short history that preceded the establishing of Desmos, mentioning the activities that the World Scout Committee started back in 1996, in Oslo, and the work of the Interim Committee that resulted in the Founding Assembly. Christos pointed out the role of the people that were involved since the beginning like Costas Tsantilis, George Hourdakis, Marko

Petrovic and others. He also explained difficulties he was facing and the scope of engagement he had to assume, working most of the time with very few people ready to contribute in a concrete way. However - Christos said – the results are worthwhile since Desmos is nowadays a recognized and respected Link in the world of Scouting but also out of Scouting. Desmos established excellent relations with ICCS and IUMS and is considered as a real partner in joint efforts aiming to improve the spiritual dimension of Scouting and remind to one of the basic principles of Scouting “Duty to God”. Desmos is now visible and present in different ways, without pushing and imposing, seeking appropriate ways to present to the children the idea of Orthodoxy. Christos gave the example of activities at EuroJam when 700 pieces of wooden plates were offered to scouts for painting icons, thus making the Desmos Workshop very successful. He pointed out that we need to thank the organizers. He also reminded that we have to think about the World Scout Jamboree in 2007 and try to repeat the EuroJam experience and make it even more successful, for which we need volunteers among Desmos members.

Christos presented the review of all the events related to the spiritual dimension in Scouting on the world level in previous period and emphasized the most important issues. He also informed the Committee members about the initiative of building the small Orthodox chapel in Gilwell Park.

Closing his Report, Christos reminded that we need to thank all the Desmos activists that helped us realize our projects and activities in previous period and supported the suggestion of CHRISTOS MARNEROS that Desmos should express special gratitude to His Holiness The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartolomew the 1<sup>st</sup>, for understanding and cordial support.

#### Ad. 5 – Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Desmos Conference, Tunisia 2005

The outgoing Desmos Vice-president, MARKO PETROVIC, informed the Committee that the Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Desmos Conference is completed.

One hard copy of the Minutes was distributed to all Committee members, as well as the electronic version burned on the CD ROM, which also contains the PowerPoint presentation prepared for display in the plenary at the World Scout Conference in Tunisia, in September 2005, and which was warmly welcomed by the World Scout Conference delegates.

The presentation was performed during the Committee meeting.



#### Ad. 6 - Report on the preparatory activities for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter-religious World Scout Symposium in Taiwan (Geneva, Decemebr 2005)

CHRISTOS PAPGEORGIU informed the Committee meeting about the outcomes of the preparatory meeting held in Geneva, in December 2005. He emphasized the importance of the event for future development of the spiritual dimension in Scouting and good relations between faith organizations within WOSM.

Christos said it would be good to have as many Desmos Committee members as possible in Taiwan and invited the Committee members to make efforts in order to take part at the Symposium and contribute to better visibility of Desmos.

Christos provided and distributed to all present Desmos Committee members a copy of the Symposium material.

## Ad. 7 – Elections and constituting of the new Desmos Committee

The 4<sup>th</sup> Desmos Conference, held in Tunisia on September 4, 2005, as usually before the World Scout Conference elected the new Desmos Committee members with the term of service starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

It is the duty of this Committee to elect among the Committee members the President, Vice-president and Treasurer and to appoint the Secretary General.

The chairman of the Committee meeting, Mr. Marko Petrovic called for nominations for the position of the Desmos President.

C. MARNEROS proposed the candidate from Greece, the outgoing Secretary General **Christos Papageorgiou**, explaining how much Christos did for Desmos so far since its founding, pointing out his commitment, personal sacrifice and huge efforts invested for the cause of Desmos.

Since there was no other proposal, the Chairman of the Committee meeting called the Committee members to vote on the proposal of C. Marneros.

The Committee voted:           6 (six) votes in favor of the proposal  
  nobody against the proposal  
  no abstentions



**CHRISTOS PAPAGEORGIU was unanimously elected on the position of Desmos President.**

The chairman of the Committee meeting then called for nominations for the position of the Desmos Vice-president.

The newly elected Desmos President, C. PAPAGEORGIU proposed the candidate from Israel, the Committee member **George Bahow**. Christos said he is fully confident that George Bahow, with his commitment, sense of responsibility and serious approach would correctly perform the duty of Desmos Vice-president and he warmly recommends George Bahow to the Committee.

Since there was no other proposal, the Chairman of the Committee meeting called the Committee members to vote on the proposal of C. Papageorgiou.

The Committee voted:           6 (six) votes in favor of the proposal  
  nobody against the proposal  
  no abstentions



**GEORGE BAHOW was unanimously elected on the position of Desmos Vice-president.**

The chairman of the Committee meeting then called for nominations for the position of the Desmos Vice-president.

The only candidate nominated by C. PAPAGEORGIU for this position was **Christos Marneros**, the Committee member from Cyprus.

The short discussion indicated that the Committee members are fully confident C. Marneros would correctly perform the duty of Desmos Treasurer if, hopefully, Desmos starts getting funds for its work, considering the fact that the engagement of C. Marneros in Desmos Committee so far was pro-active and serious.

Since there was no other proposal, the Chairman of the Committee meeting called the Committee members to vote on the proposal of C. Papageorgiou.

The Committee voted:           6 (six) votes in favor of the proposal  
  nobody against the proposal  
  no abstentions



**CHRISTOS MARNEROS was unanimously elected on the position of Desmos Treasurer.**

The chairman of the Committee meeting then said that the Committee needs to appoint the new Desmos Secretary General and called for nominations for this position.

The only candidate nominated by C. PAPAGEORGIOU for this position was **Marko Petrovic**, former Desmos Committee member from Serbia-Montenegro.

C. Papageorgiou explained the role of Marko Petrovic in establishing the Link since the beginning, in the Steering Committee, at the founding Assembly in Penteli Monastery in Athens and later on, as the Committee member. The newly elected Desmos President said for him personally Marko would be a good associate and the Committee would get a good Secretary General.

Since there was no other proposal, the Chairman of the Committee meeting called the Committee members to vote on the proposal of C. Papageorgiou.

The Committee voted:           6 (six) votes in favor of the proposal  
  nobody against the proposal  
  no abstentions



**MARKO PETROVIC was unanimously appointed on the position of Desmos Secretary General.**

The Committee concluded that the tasks of Desmos request full engagement of all Committee members in the forthcoming period and that, due to certain important events we should take part in, we need to strengthen the team that assists the Committee work.

Therefore, President C. Papageorgiou proposed **Naaman Shahada**, member-country representative from Israel, as the candidate for the position of Assistant Secretary General. Christos Papageorgiou said Naaman took part in many events where Desmos was invited, being very active in the previous period. The President expressed his expectations the Secretary General would thus get indispensable assistance, needed in the situation when Desmos is facing numerous important activities.

Since there was no other proposal, the Chairman of the Committee meeting called the Committee members to vote on the proposal of C. Papageorgiou.

The Committee voted:           6 (six) votes in favor of the proposal  
  nobody against the proposal  
  no abstentions



**NAAMAN SHAHADA was unanimously appointed on the position of Assistant Desmos Secretary General.**

Having in mind that the world of Scouting is facing in the forthcoming period a number of important events, in which Desmos should take part in a pro-active manner, and in that regard the need to



increase Desmos visibility and have a serious approach regarding the public relations issue, the Committee discussed the idea to appoint Desmos PR Commissioner.

The Committee member, ZORAN M. PETROVIC proposed as the candidate for this position the former Desmos Treasurer, **Maher Sahlyeh**, considering loyalty and commitment, as well as his professional skills.

This nomination was supported by the Secretary General MARKO PETROVIC, who pointed out the efforts Maher has invested so far for the benefit of Desmos and said Desmos would certainly get additional quality by appointing such person on the position of PR Commissioner.

Since there was no other proposal, the Chairman of the Committee meeting called the Committee members to vote on the proposal of Zoran M. Petrovic.

The Committee voted:           6 (six) votes in favor of the proposal  
  nobody against the proposal  
  no abstentions

**MAHER SAHLYEH was unanimously appointed on the position of Desmos PR Commissioner.**



## **Ad. 8 – Considerations of the new President on the future of Desmos**

The newly elected President, Christos Papageorgiou, expressed his gratitude for the confidence of the Committee members that trusted him with this crucial post and promised to continue to serve Desmos' mandates investing all his ability, energy and strength

The President acknowledged DESMOS' worldwide respectability and indicated that its being one among the three faith organizations that share a consultative status with the WOSM, is a fact to be certainly considered in future planning.

DESMOS needs to extend its members, but also needs its present members to be active in order to succeed in motivating Orthodox Scouts. The solution rests in organizing significant activities and events. This requires highly committed people, ready for serious engagement. DESMOS' future depends almost entirely on such devoted people.

It is vital that DESMOS has a substantial presence both in the international as well as the local era. With regard to the former, it suffices to note just a few of the upcoming international events that could further increase DESMOS' international influence: the World Scout Jamboree (2007), Centenary of Scouting activities, the European Scout Conference in Slovenia (2007), the World Scout Conference in Korea (2008), etc

Organizing local activities that may motivate scout associations in DESMOS' member-countries to contribute to the development of the spiritual dimension in Scouting, is another important part of future planning, and it should be dealt with the utmost care.

Financial issues are also very important for DESMOS. We need to find the appropriate funding structure that may ease the way towards the realization of the Committee's inspiring decisions. A possible solution would consist in founding 'Friends of DESMOS' committees in as many countries as possible. This is only happening in Greece at the moment, but other country-members might follow this example. Potential donors and sponsors are to be sought as well. Finally, our Public Relations policy should be ably structured and turned more effective.

The President, Christos Papageorgiou, expressed his confidence that in all the above, he will be greatly as well as constantly assisted by all DESMOS Committee members.



## Ad. 9 – Administration issues

The Committee agreed that Desmos needs to increase the efficiency of its work and in order to make it possible it is necessary to share the efforts and responsibility, delegating certain tasks to certain Committee members.

The Committee decided to delegate the responsibility for the Middle-East Desmos member-countries: Jordan and Palestine to **Maher Sahlyeh**, as Desmos coordinator for those countries. He should follow the situation in those two countries, act as the liaison person between those countries and Desmos and try to organize common activities. MAHER SAHLYEH accepted the task.

Considering the particularity of the Balkan region, the Committee decided to delegate the responsibility for Desmos member-countries in this area to the Committee member **Zoran M. Petrovic** from Serbia-Montenegro, as Desmos coordinator for this area.

ZORAN M. PETROVIC accepted the task and added that we really need to have a serious approach facing a number of important events on world and regional level.

ZORAN M. PETROVIC, suggested that Desmos needs the official stamp and the official flag of The Link. The Committee member from Republic Srpska.

TANJA GOLUBOVIC, accepted to discuss the flag issue with scout friends from her association that might eventually help and make the flag for Desmos.



## Ad. 10 – Discussion on the Orthodox booklet project

The President, CHRISTOS PAPAGEORGIOU, explained the importance of such publication for our Link. Christos said that the other faith organizations, like ICCS and IUMS have lots of publications presenting their Links and the most important issues of their religions implemented in Scouting. To start with something – Christos said – we should produce, for instance, the Scout Promise in relation to our Orthodox faith. But, we have to do it in an appropriate way, in a simple manner understandable to a broad membership and able to attract and retain their attention. Christos reminded that great efforts have already been done by Dimitrinka Todorova from Bulgaria, but the job has not been completed, since the material was too large and needed to be reduced and adapted to our needs. We can use the material, but we have to make additional efforts to tailor it in accordance with Desmos membership needs.

ZORAN PETROVIC said we should consider the possibility to engage our own resources in Desmos member-countries, explaining that we do have relevant people in our associations and we should, first of all, ask their assistance. Zoran accepted to get in touch with certain members of the Scout Organization of Serbia that could possibly help in this matter.

The Committee members agreed that the entire Committee should contribute to achieving positive results on this issue in shortest possible delay. The Committee will exchange ideas in e-mail communication.

## Ad. 11 - Discussion on production of Desmos information and promotional material (leaflet, calendars, newsletter, badges, etc.)

The Committee agreed that the issue of information and promotional material is very important for Desmos visibility within and outside The Link.

CHRISTOS PAPAGEORGIU said the initial efforts have been made in order to produce the first leaflet, which proved to be worthwhile. Marko actually designed it and printed it on his office PC equipment, in order to have at least something to present and offer during EuroJam in UK. It was a good job, but we can make it even better and different. This should be now the concern of Maher, in his capacity of Desmos PR Commissioner.

We need to realize the calendar as well. Maher already accepted this task in Sofia and it is now also part of his competence. The calendar should be prepared for the 2007, Centenary of Scouting. Maher might also use the results of work of Ion-Iulian from Romania who already made the design option for the Desmos calendar and they can cooperate on this issue.

Regarding the Desmos NewsLetter, the Committee agreed that it's a very useful way to communicate the most important info to NSOs Desmos members. It can be issued once in two months or at least twice a year, for a start.

The Secretary General should prepare the notice for Desmos member-countries suggesting they should send the information and materials to Maher, who would then work on it and adapt it for the needs of the NewsLetter.

## **Ad. 12 – Discussion on the development of Desmos web site**

Desmos Secretary General, Marko Petrovic, informed the Committee members about the problems regarding the Desmos web site.

Marko said that the progress in this matter is blocked in this moment, because Ivan Kolovos from Bulgaria, who registered on behalf of The Link the domain DESMOS.INFO and who is the only one technically authorized for the domain transfer, did not respond e-mails for quite some time.

On the other hand, the former scout from Serbia-Montenegro who nowadays lives and works as IT specialist in Belgium definitely accepted to offer free-of-charge hosting on his server and he is waiting for the domain transfer.

Marko said that Desmos has been waiting already too long for the official web site and that we need to fix the problem urgently. Marko said he will continue working intensively on this issue, but he expects assistance and inputs of the Committee members regarding the basic elements needed for the web site design.

Marko informed that the DESMOS.INFO domain registration fee paid for the previous period expires in April 2006, and that we need to find the way to make the payment for the next one-year period.

The President accepted to deal with this issue.

Marko will keep informed the Committee members about the progress.

## **Ad. 13 – Desmos assistance in relieving people affected by natural disasters**

CHRISTOS PAPAGEORGIU pointed out that the idea on Desmos involvement in relief of people affected by natural disasters launched by George Bahow is something very important, something that fits into Desmos philosophy and makes part of the very essence of Orthodoxy. Assisting people in need is a humanitarian activity, which we should all join. We have to give something back to the community – Christos said. Scouting nowadays means much more than having a scout camp and traditional scout activities. Scouting also means solidarity, between scouts but also towards other people worldwide and Desmos must contribute to the solidarity with people in need.

The Committee members supported President's point of view and warmly supported the idea of George Bahow. It was suggested to establish sort of an e-mail Forum on this issue. The Committee also agreed that George Bahow should prepare a concrete Action Plan, which would enable Desmos realize such activities in practice, when needed.

## Ad. 14 – Discussion on future events

- **Common activities on the borders between Desmos country-members (Thinking Day)**

The experience gained last year, when the cross-border events were organized by Greek and Bulgarian scouts on the occasion of The Thinking Day, was estimated as highly positive.

The Committee members agreed that each association of Desmos member-countries should try to organize an event like that, together with associations in neighboring Desmos countries. The Committee members accepted to work on it in the countries they come from and to exchange on the issue with the countries they cover on behalf of The Committee.

It was also agreed that Desmos should prepare and issue the badge specially for that event.

- **Training on Spiritual Dimension in Serbia-Montenegro**

Secretary General, Marko Petrovic, informed the Committee about the progress on the matter of Training on Spiritual Dimension in Serbia-Montenegro. Marko said that there are now two quite certain options regarding the venue of the Training, one of which is the Monastery Mileseva, where this Committee meeting is organized. The **Episcope Filaret** himself confirmed the doors of the Monastery are open for Desmos members and said that Desmos is welcomed to organize the event in Mileseva. The other option is the Holy complex of Soko Grad, in Western Serbia, close to the border with Boasnia-Herzegovina. There is a general approval for the venue, but the discussions with **Episcope Lavrentije** are yet to be completed, hopefully with the positive outcome. The Committee members agreed that Marko and Zoran should continue working on the issue and inform the Committee about the final option as soon as possible, in order to launch the first call and get the feedback from Desmos member-countries.

The possible term of the Training could be: August 24-27, 2006.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Interreligious Symposium in Taiwan, May 5-8, 2006 “Together for Harmony and Peace”**

Desmos President, Christos Papageorgiou, informed the Committee in details about the forthcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Interreligious Symposium in Taiwan. Christos distributed the reference material to all Committee members and explained once again the importance of the Symposium and the need to have Desmos represented at the event. He suggested that the Committee members consider their participation and do their best to realize it.

The Committee members agreed about the importance of Desmos presence at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interreligious Symposium.

- **The next Committee meeting**

The Committee members agreed that the decision on the Desmos country, host of the next Committee meeting has to be postponed, since it is necessary to inquire the possibilities of the associations considered as potential candidates. The decision will be brought later on, during this year, through e-mail exchange of the Committee members.

It was, however, agreed, that the Committee meetings should be organized in future in spring time (April / May), rather than in winter time.



## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

### Reception in the Ministry of Science and Environment of the Republic of Serbia

During their stay in Belgrade, Desmos Committee members were welcomed in the Ministry of Science and Environment of the Republic of Serbia. Assistant Minister, Mr. Cedomir Suljagic, received the Desmos delegation in his premises in the centre of Belgrade and spent one hour in conversations with the Committee members. Since Mr. Suljagic was a scout himself, he was keen to find out more about Desmos and its place and role within WOSM.



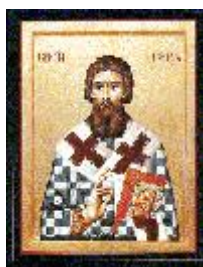
Members of the Desmos delegation presented The Link, pointing out the most important elements of Desmos history, philosophy and plans for the future.

**Visit to the Special Academy  
at the Belgrade Orthodox Faculty of Theology, on the occasion of St. Sava Day**



Considering the fact that January 27<sup>th</sup> is by tradition broadly celebrated throughout Serbia-Montenegro as St. Sava Day, one of the special events was organized at the Belgrade Faculty of Theology. The Desmos delegation had the opportunity to take part at the event.

**St. Sava, Archbishop of Serbia**



The son of Stefan Nemanja, the great Serbian national leader, he was born in 1169. As a young man he yearned for the spiritual life, which led him to flee to the Holy Mountain, where he became a monk and with rare zeal followed all the ascetic practices. Nemanja followed his son's example and himself went to the Holy Mountain, where he lived and ended his days as the monk Simeon.

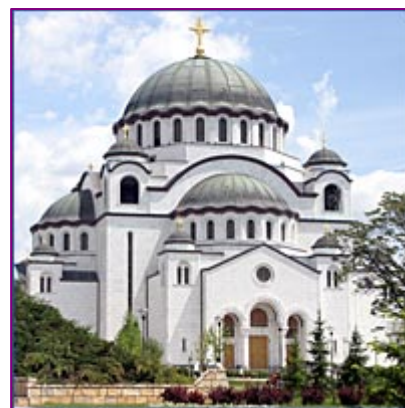
Sava obtained the independence of the Serbian Church from the Emperor and the Patriarch, and became its first archbishop. He, together with his father, built the monastery of Hilandar and after that many other monasteries, churches and schools throughout the land of Serbia. He traveled to the Holy Land on two occasions, on pilgrimage to the holy places there. He made peace among his brothers, who were in conflict over their rights, and also between the Serbs and their neighbors.

In creating the Serbian Church, he created the Serbian state and Serbian culture along with it. He brought peace to all the Balkan peoples, working for the good of all, for which he was venerated and loved by all on the Balkan peninsula. He gave a Christian soul to the people of Serbia, which survived the fall of the Serbian state.

He died in Trnovo in the reign of King Asen, being taken ill after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Theophany in 1236. King Vladislav took his body to **Mileseva**, whence Sinan Pasha removed it, burning it at Vracar in Belgrade on April 27th, 1594.

On the same place, in Belgrade, the big and exceptionally beautiful Orthodox church "St. Sava Temple" was built, gathering nowadays lots of people every day, especially on special occasions and feasts.

**St. Sava Orthodox Temple  
Belgrade**





## Meetings and exchange with His Holiness, Episcopo of Mileseva, Filaret

During the stay in the Monastery Mileseva, the Desmos Committee members had the opportunity to often meet and have an exchange with His Holiness, Episcopo of Mileseva, Filaret, the member of The Holy Synod of The Serbian Orthodox Church.



Episcopo Filaret offered excellent conditions for the Meeting and accepted Desmos Committee members in a warm and cordial manner.

He pointed out that the doors of the Monastery with all its facilities are open for Desmos members in future, and said he would be very glad to host Desmos activities in the forthcoming period.



Monastery Mileseva



The famous fresco "White Angel"



MESSAGE

Rome 27.I.2006

DESMOS  
c/o MARKO Petrovic  
BEOGRAD.

My dear Brothers,

It is with great emotion that I address to you my last salute as President of our Union, after a series of years at DESMOS.

During these years we had the opportunity to meet, as often as it was feasible, in different countries and to try and bring about our Christian and scout mission and duty around the world given the meager means we have at our disposal. Our objective was not to defend, promote and impose Orthodoxy, but on the contrary, to create an inter-Christian presence through the Orthodox faith. This would be in concord, mutual understanding and cooperation with other religions, united under a common belief in God and a common endeavor to improve world youth friendship, starting from the Scouts.

This common faith in Orthodoxy brought us together and made us realize that we are not alone and that there is a fabric of one faith in the supreme being. This faith empowered us to apply the principle "uniting the world through scoutism" for the benefit of the young people around the world – the most tender and pure part of society.

Consequently, this inter-religious cooperation encouraged us all to provide essential services, either through DESMOS, or through our international meetings where DESMOS was actively present.

My Brothers,

I would like to thank each and every one of you for the perfect cooperation that we had but also for your valuable contribution. I would especially like to thank Christos for his patience, courage and decisiveness in dealing with all issues. I wholeheartedly wish him to continue his productive activity in the future.

I would also like to thank our Patriarch who gave us his blessing from the first instance and also delegated a Bishop as a liaison with DESMOS. I could include all the names of the Executive Committee and express my gratitude for an impeccable presence, participation and cooperation.

Due to the official state visit of the President of the Republic of Greece, I will not be able to attend the meeting in Belgrade. Be assured, nevertheless, that spiritually I shall be there with you.

Given my forthcoming retirement on April 11, I assure you that, should it be required of me, I will contribute to DESMOS in any way.

I would like to extend to all of you my wishes for personal and family happiness and full fruition of your workings.

With sincere scout-brotherly love,

Yiannis Tzen