



## **PRESS RELEASE – CROSS SWIM 2021**

### **ExcellenSeas SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Pastra Cretonaxiosa swimming team, same as every year - in order to raise awareness in society and to financially support the ExcellenSeas program – is preparing to swim the annual cross-swim again, honoring the excellent students of the small borderline Greek islands.

This year, the team's swimming mission included a swimming course of about 5 kilometers in the region between Thymaina and Fournoi which will take place in honor of the local students who are forced to go to school by boat on a daily basis, as well as in memory of deceased ex-Mayor of the island, I. Marousi, the work of whom, has been of great importance for the locals.

This year's cross-swim, which will take place under the auspices of HE the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mrs. Katerina Sakellaropoulou, is going to happen within the framework of a two-day event co-organized with the Municipality of Fournoi between 15-16th of October 2021.

As part of the event's program, there will be a presentation of ExcellenSeas and its work as well as one of the current scholars of the program, who is originated from the island, Mr. I. Papadodimas, will also be honored.

### **A few words for the ExcellenSeas Scholarship program**

The ExcellenSeas program begun as an initiative of the Pastra Cretonaxiosa offshore swimming team. The members of the team, while swimming long distances in various areas of the Greek seas and communicating with the local communities, have gained a direct perception of the special conditions and needs of the small remote islands of our country. For this reason, the team set as a goal of its swimming excursions to raise public awareness and raise funds, in order to provide financial support in the form of scholarships for students coming from these islands. Further, the team's swimming missions have been taking place under the auspices of HE the Presidency of the Hellenic Republic.

Starting in 2018, with the award of a scholarship to the only graduate of the High School of St Stratis island, the initiative evolved into a program supported by a wide range of companies and organizations, including Hellenic Petroleum (ELPE), Eugenia Giannini and Associates Law Firm, Athens International Airport, Grant Thornton, Aegean, ANT1, Holmes Place, Attica Group, Ertif Verwaltung Photovoltaics Ltd, Boston Consulting Group, MGCode, Sofren N.Y. These organizations and companies support the operation of the program and also undertake the particular scholarships for one or all of the scholars' years of studies.

The vision of the ExcellenSeas program is the development of the local communities in the borderline islands through the academic and professional progress of the young people of these islands. In particular, the aim of our initiative is to reward and support excellent students in these islands, who have been accepted to universities, but need support to meet the financial needs of their studies. Thus, through targeted financial support (6.000 euros/year) and advisory guidance, under the auspices of the Scientific Committee of the program, we award scholarships that cover the entire range of university studies. The program also provides to the scholars the opportunity to participate in short-term internships in order to gain professional experience, depending on their respective scientific field.

The Scientific Committee of ExcellenSeas is staffed by Professors of Greek and foreign Universities, as well as by personalities distinguished for their ethics and high academic and professional level. The key task of the Committee is the selection of scholarship holders and the close monitoring of their academic development. In addition, task of the Committee is also the provision of valuable consulting work in the next stage for the students' lives, that towards their professional rehabilitation.

In addition, ExcellenSeas has already awarded 17 scholarships during the years 2018, 2019 and 2020, to students from islands like Astypalea, Kastelorizo, Meganisi, St Stratis, Nisyros, Chalki, Psara, Kasos and Fournoi, who are currently studying at several university faculties of our country's Universities. The support that scholarship recipients have received at both the advisory and financial levels - especially given the economic impact of the recent pandemic - is a key driver of their academic progress.

Our goal is to continue for the next years in order to contribute in the progress and the development of our borderline islands and in providing equal opportunities to the students coming from these islands.

Under the light of the above, the swimming team is getting prepared, in joy, for its next mission, with which it shall honor not only the students who are starting their own personal path in science and for whom the team has already been fighting on multiple levels, but also a personality who has been of the utmost importance for the region.

For more information on the scholarship initiative and framework under which our scholarships are provided, visit our website following the link: [www.excellenseas.org](http://www.excellenseas.org) .