



## PRESS RELEASE – CROSS SWIM 2023

### ExcellenSeas SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Just like every year, the team of Pastra Cretonaxiosa, is again preparing for the annual cross swim in honor of the excellent students of the small distant Greek islands.

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 during September 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The purpose of this highly symbolic initiative is to raise public awareness in order to financially support the work of the "ExcellenSeas" scholarship program.

This year's race is dedicated to the victims of the recent fires and floods and especially to the students of these areas.

The team's mission scheduled for 2023, concerns a cross-swim during which the distance of 40 kilometers is going to be covered, from Naxos to Schinoussa. The distance will be covered by the members of the swimming team who are going to swim in the form of a relay race.

The swimmers participating in the cross swim are: Evgenia Giannini, Sotirios Pastras, Apostolos Tsagkarakis, Evangelos Zourbakis, Konstantinos Michos and Vasileios Maroulis.

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

The ExcellenSeas program began 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 HELLENIQ ENERGY, INTRASOFT International, Eugenia Giannini and Associates Law Firm, Athens International Airport, Grant Thornton, Aegean, Attica Group, Ertif Verwaltung Photovoltaics Ltd, Boston Consulting Group, MGCode, Sofren N.Y., MOTODYNAMICS, TEMES, SETE, Ionian Enterprises, ELLAKTOR Group, Electra Hotels, SANI Resort, ERGO Insurance Group and more. 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 (7.000 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 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, one 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 34 scholarships during the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 to students from islands like Astypalea, Kastelorizo, Meganisi, St Stratis, Nisyros, Chalki, Psara, Kasos, Donousa, Lipsi 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 to 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 the students who are starting their own personal path in science.

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) .