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**Revival of the Classical Olympiad**  
**in Olympia:**  
**A prerequisite for the maintenance of the**  
**Olympic Ideal**

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## Introduction

Greece has an unmatched wealth of ancient theaters and stadiums, which although they are the cultural heritage of Hellenism, of humanism and humanity, are experiencing, with certain exceptions, the absolute abandonment and loneliness.

This situation can and must be reversed by reviving the Classical Olympiad triptych: sport – politics – culture. In this way, athletic and artistic infrastructure that we inherited from Antiquity, will gain new perspectives, will be reused in events in the program the revival of the Classical Olympiad and will be restored along with anthropocentrism at the heart of sports, political and cultural affairs of modern societies, thus giving the Olympic ideal, politics, culture and democracy their true content.

## The Olympic Games of Antiquity

In the Antiquity of the Greek humanism and contrary to global theocracy, the organized Olympic Games were the most important of all Greek and International Games. At the same time they were the greatest sporting and religious celebration in honor of Zeus.

Apart from their athletic and religious character, the Games had political content as well. This is because during the Games political discussions were also organized every year in the three sanctuaries of ancient Greece, that Delphi, the Isthmus and Nemea, and every fourth year at Olympia. In this manner the Greeks did politics and diplomacy.

The fame of the sanctuary of Olympia was spread throughout the Greek world and flourished as a center nationwide, in which the Greeks had the opportunity to communicate with each other, exchange ideas, form opinions, to teach and to be taught. The Olympics highlighted the ethnic, cultural and spiritual unity of the ancient Greeks. During the games hostilities ceased, exalting them into the Panhellenic symbol of peace and unity.

In the historical evolution of mankind, the Olympic Games were held for the first time in 776 BC in Ancient Olympia and were held every four years during the summer months (July-August). They lasted five days and included the following sports: road racing, Wrestling, Boxing, Pankration, Chariot and the pentathlon, which consisted of the sports: road racing, Jumping, Fighting, Discus and Javelin.

They were conducted at the Stadium, the Palestra and the Hippodrome in front of thousands of spectators from all the cities of the known Greek world. The winners were crowned with a wreath of wild olive branch, the kotinos, and enjoyed special honors from their homeland. The participants followed common sporting rules, which were established for the conduct of the games.

They were abolished in 393 AD by decree of Emperor Theodosius, when the Byzantine Empire was at the height of theocracy. Thus, an entire athletic culture of the Greek anthropocentric movement with its extensions, which lasted 1,169 years, vanished.

## The modern Olympic Games

In 1896 revive in Athens the Olympic Games only in terms of their athletic part, in the form of international sports competitions, following the actions of Demetrius Vikelas and Pierre de Coubertin.

In the first modern Olympic Games, that took place with great splendor in the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, participated 295 athletes from fifteen countries. The sports included in the competition were both part of the ancient Olympic Games as well as the then modern athletics. Thus, with the new athletic data, the Olympic spirit, the spirit of sportsmanship, peace and humanism did not stay in its native Greece, but spread around the world. In 1936 the lighting ceremony of the Olympic flame in Olympia was revived, and its transfer to the stadium where the Games would take place by means of torchbearers was introduced.

After the revival of the Olympic Games there was a continuous modernization of sports, which gradually removed them from the Olympic athletic tradition. At the same time, significant are the economic, social and political dimensions they indirectly received through the years. In the hundred and more years of their existence they have gradually acquired gigantic proportions and evolved following the dynamic growth of the athletics and the socioeconomic and political conditions in the modern era. In this way the Olympics have become the most important sports event of mankind, in which thousands of athletes participate from almost all countries of the world and are watched by billions of viewers. However, the evolution, gigantism and commercialization of the modern international Olympic Games take place at the expense of the Olympic ideal. We have now been removed from the Olympic ideal; we have lost the values of tradition.

**Professor Dr. Pantelis Georgogiannis  
and 92 freshmen students  
of the Department of Primary Education  
of the University of Patras  
who signed this text**

**propose:**

### **The revival of the Classical Olympiad in Olympia**

We believe that the modern Olympic Games can acquire over time a more healthy value-basis, if they reconnect to their 1,196 years' tradition. The organization of the Classical Olympiad in Olympia may act as a counterbalance of their evolution, with the following objectives:

1. To project the original Olympic ideal,
2. To contribute to the establishment of the Olympic ideal measure,
3. To be a counterpart of values for the general development of modern international Olympic Games and
4. To be the forerunner of the modern international Olympics organization.

Our ambition is the classic Olympiad to be the measure of moral values and recharging of the Olympic Spirit in the modern Olympic Games.

### **Content of the classical Olympiad**

As has already been mentioned, at the Olympic Games of Antiquity were held three types of events: athletic, political and religious. In today's globalized world the revival of the athletic part of the classical Olympiad must be accompanied by the realization of respective political and cultural events.

#### ***Athletic part***

The athletic part of the classical Olympiad will include the events of classical times mentioned above and the Marathon race. In the revived classical Olympiad, in contrast to ancient times, will have the right to participate athletes from around the world, both men and women.

Before the commencement of the classical Olympiad the lighting ceremony of the Olympic flame will take place in the Stadium of Olympia, where it will burn throughout the duration of the games. The flame will be carried by means of torchbearers in all the ancient stadiums, palaestrae and racecourses of modern Greece (eg Messina, Rhodes, Delphi, Dodona, Isthmia, Philippi, etc.) and areas of the Mediterranean where there is a corresponding infrastructure from

Hellenism of the classical era (Marseilles, Southern Italy, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Egypt, etc.), where the qualifying matches will take place, with the consent of the respective countries.

The finals will be held in Olympia, following the ritual of the classical era. With the announcement of the winners their crowning with the kotinos will take place and commemorative medals will be granted.

### *Political part*

The political events will take place in the existing ancient theaters in the form of conferences with participation from all over the world. Their aim will be exercising global diplomacy, the formation of strategies for the operation and democratization of the political systems, as well as the conservation and development of world peace and humanism.

### *Cultural part*

On the other hand, cultural events will be an international meeting of all the cultural hues of today's globalized society. They will also take place in ancient theaters of Greece and other countries where there is an infrastructure since antiquity, under the auspices of the municipalities where the theaters belong, in collaboration with voluntary movements.

The classic open theaters in Greece that can meet the demands of these events and can be used to carry them are, among others, the theatres of: Epidauros, Dodona, Herodium, Elis, Messina, Nicopolis, Philippi, Delphi, Patras etc.

### *Closure of the classical Olympiad – Delivery of the Olympic flame*

The classical Olympiad will precede the modern international Olympic Games and its date of realization will be derived from the date of the modern Olympic Games. During the closing ceremony the Olympic flame will be delivered to the respective representative of the country and the city that will host the modern Olympic Games, in accordance to the existing ritual, in order to begin its long journey to humanity.

## **Expectations from the revival of the Classical Olympiad in Olympia**

We consider that the revival of the Classical Olympiad in Olympia at all stadiums and theaters of the classic antiquity, will be will be multi-beneficial to humanity.

We expect that the implementation of the triptych athletics, politics, culture will would be beneficial mostly to:

1. Olympism and the Olympic Ideal.
2. the modern Olympic Games, as the Classics Olympics are their primary starting point and their counterpoise.
3. peace by implementing the ideals of the Olympic Truce
4. humanity, because among other things the people of the world and especially the young will have the opportunity to come into direct contact with the history of anthropocentrism, Olympism and Hellenism.
5. our country, because it will intensify its relations with neighboring countries.

Mankind today needs the existence of a politics and culture center, as opposed to the power centers that operate worldwide. With the revival of the triptych of the Classical Olympiad, Greece covers every aspect of this need, since it will become, except for an athletic, a world center of diplomacy and culture as well.

That is why we invite you to join and actively support this initiative by voting the petition for the revival of the Classical Olympiad and communicate the proposal to those you consider appropriate.

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In order to fight for the revival of the Classical Olympiad in Olympia, we request for your active participation with your signature at <http://www.classicolympics.eu> and its further promotion.

Thus we will contribute to the enhancement and promotion of the Olympic ideals and the restoration of Hellenism, humanism and democracy in the international spotlight.

Prof. Dr. Pantelis Georgogiannis



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