



Education Sessions

Speakers

Ministry of Tourism - Greek National Tourism Organization

Despina Diamantakou, *Head of Strategic Planning Directorate*



Despina DIAMANTAKOU is Head of Strategic Planning Directorate of the Greek Ministry of Tourism, where her primary duties include working on strategic planning of national tourism policy within a regional, European and international framework of cooperation. She is a top graduate of the National School of Public Administration where she trained as a specialist in Tourism Economy and Development. Previously she graduated from the Politics and History Department of the Athens Panteion University, with scholarship to attend lessons in Paris I, Sorbonne University France. She holds a Master Degree in International and European Affairs from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Despina is a multilingual executive of the Ministry of Tourism for the last ten years with broad experience in human resources issues and strategic/operational planning of public institutions.

The Ministry of Tourism and the G.N.T.O. will share an overview of what Greece offers its visitors. Cultural tourism and beach tourism are the most widely known aspects of the country's tourism sector, and yet there is so much more to explore in Greece: gastronomy, sports and active holidays, on land or at sea, discovering the Christian monuments and history of Greece, relaxing at a historic spa with natural thermal spring. 365 days a year, Greece has something to offer.

Region of Crete

Michalis Vamiedakis, *Commissioner of Tourism*



Michalis Vamiedakis was born in Crete on 1971. In 2002 he establishes "Deltanet Travel" a Destination Management Company, based in Crete, having a wide spectrum of branches all over Greece and Cyprus, maintaining until today the position of Chairman of the Board and CEO. The company represents market leader tour – operators from the main European source markets, such as Germany, France and others.

In 2013 he starts his involvement in the hospitality segment, establishing "Vita Hotels" that is managing major resort hotel properties in Crete.

In 2014 he's elected as a Member of the Regional Council in Crete and is appointed by the Governor, Mr. Stavros Arnaoutakis, as the Commissioner of Tourism, responsible for the implementation of the tourism strategy, as well as for the promotion of the tourist product of the island.

- *"Crete is a jewel glistening in the Mediterranean Sea. It is the cradle of European civilization, lies in the southern frontier of Europe. The proud and hospitable Cretan people are famous for their culture, innovative spirit and nutritional habits. Crete combines the new alongside with the old and the ancient with the contemporary history. It is one of the most popular Greek tourist destinations!"*

Michalis Vamiedakis will introduce the countless tourism offerings on the largest island in Greece. Famed for its fabulous food, Crete also offers wide, sandy beaches, a mild climate almost year-round, golf and water sports, cruise ports, archaeological sites and much more.

Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau

Eliza Tsolakou, *General Manager, Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau*



Mrs Tsolakou has developed her career in Marketing Management in various multinational companies, developing strategic marketing plans and promotional campaigns for various sectors and well-known brands. She expanded her career as an Account Director in advertising and PR where she managed significant projects in event production as

well as in creating campaigns and sponsorship programs for several non-for profit organizations in diverse business sectors. Her solid experience in marketing and her multicultural understanding has led her career path to destination marketing for the wonderful city of Athens.

Athens: One City, Never Ending Stories... Eliza Tsolakou will introduce the city of Athens. Increasingly popular as a city break and MICE destination, Athens has much to offer beyond the important historic sites of Western Civilization. A vibrant city with countless venues for entertainment, beaches and water sports, world-class hotels and easy transportation, Athens has something for all ages and tastes.

Helexpo

Dr Kyriakos Pozrikidis, *Managing Director of TIF-HELEXPO, the national exhibition agency*



Kyriakos Pozrikidis was born in Thessaloniki on 14.06.1965. He is a graduate of the School of Economics of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and holds a post-graduate degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Wales. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Macedonia and his dissertation was titled 'Perceivable success factors and expected impact of World Expositions (EXPO): The case of Thessaloniki'. He has also authored a post-graduate dissertation titled 'Exhibitions as a Marketing Tool', a historical album titled 'Magical Pictures' on the history of Thessaloniki International Fair since its founding, the books "Fair Stories" and "How to participate at International Fairs", one comic "Dethistas" and one educational game "CITY GAME – Thessaloniki" concerning the history of Thessaloniki. Dr. Pozrikidis has also participated in dozens of studies on trade fairs and congress tourism, he writes articles for numerous trade exhibition and congress publications, he has organized and delivered speeches at colloquiums on exhibition and congress policy, at training courses and conferences in Greece and abroad.

Kyriakos Pozrikidis has served as a member of the Board (1995 – 1998) and as President (1998 – 2000) of the European Tourism Trade Fairs Association. He is a member of the Board (2012 – today) of the International Fair Union (Union des Foires Internationales) and he is a member of the European UFI working team (Regional Chapter Europe). He is also the President of the Central European Fairs Alliance – CEFA. He is a certified member of the International Association of Professional Exhibition Organisers (IAEM). He held the position of Project Manager during Thessaloniki's candidacy for the World EXPO 2008 and served as a Board member of HELEXPO SA; from 2007 to 2010, he served as the Executive Board Member of TIF SA and has been honoured by the Hellenic Tourism Organisation for his contribution within the framework of the International Forum on Congress Tourism. He currently serves as Managing Director of TIF-HELEXPO, the national exhibition agency.

2018 is the year of strengthening the relations between Greece and the U.S.A., and the 83rd Thessaloniki International Fair, organized by Helexpo, is formally the "Star-spangled exhibition", as U.S.A. is the honored country.

Religious Tourism

Dino Roussos, *President of Aristotle Travel*



A Greek native whose parents come from the beautiful Greek island of Santorini. After graduating from high school, Dino attended the University of Piraeus for three years studying Business Administration. Then he served in the Greek army for 27 months and was stationed in Turkey working for NATO forces. He then continued his studies at the Abilene Christian University in Texas in economics, Biblical archaeology and Theology and received a BA in business administration and a MA in Theology from ACU. He is a professional tour guide in Greece and has led many groups in European countries as well as in Israel, Egypt, Jordan and many more. He also gives lectures on archaeology, history and theology within Europe, Russia and the US. He met and married his wife Debbie and they have three children and five grandchildren.

Dino Roussos established 'Aristotle Travel' in 1989. It is one of the best Incoming Tour Operators in Greece specializing in Biblical- Religious Tours as well as Educational programs and field trips for schools and Universities. Aristotle Travel is an active member of the Hellenic Association of Travel Agents (HATTA) and the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA).

Dino Roussos will outline the rich possibilities Greece offers for tours that explore Christian monuments and history. Follow in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul for an introduction to religious tourism in Greece.

Yachting Tourism

Diogenis Venetopoulos, *Vice President Variety Cruises*



Diogenis Venetopoulos is the Vice President of Variety Cruises since 2017. He joined the company in 1999, first as a Port Engineer Assistant; then as Port Captain, and as a Sales Manager before serving the company as the Managing Director for two years, between 2010 and 2012. Mr. Venetopoulos holds an MSc in Maritime Operations Management from the SBE – Shipping and Business Education. He speaks Greek, English, and German.

Greece is a unique place on this planet which offers everything a visitor could wish for, ideal weather all year round, plenty of sunshine, Archeology, History, beautiful landscapes, endless beaches with a unique turquoise sea, great cuisine and Greek Filoxenia (hospitality). If one

takes all the above into consideration together with the fact that Greece has the 10th longest coastline with 16,000 km and 4,8000 islets and 1,200 islands it really is the ideal destination for Sailing/Yachting/Cruise holidays. I will try to explain the various segments of the Greek Nautical Tourism which is the largest expansion possibilities in the Greek Travel business.

Cruise Tourism

Leslie Peden, *President, North America – Celestyal Cruises Inc.*



Leslie Peden serves as President for Celestyal Cruises in North America. Peden is a time-honored travel professional with 30+ years of success in cruising, tour operations, air and rail travel, including a proven track record serving in senior management and executive roles for such acclaimed cruise related companies as Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, Virgin Holidays Cruises, and Island Cruises -- now TUI. In his role, Peden is responsible for promoting Celestyal Cruises to drive business growth and market share as the brand continues to launch distinctive seven-day, all-inclusive cruise opportunities throughout the Aegean and beyond, including the recent introduction of the only mainstream cruise product that overnights in the iconic Greek Islands of Mykonos and Santorini, as well as new cruise itineraries that re-introduce Istanbul in Turkey and high-demand destinations such as Egypt and Holy Land that will commence in 2019.

Leslie Peden presents the varied opportunities offered by cruise tourism in Greece. A sector with some important developments in recent, this is a sector with rich growth potential.

TWELVE – www.dodekatravel.gr

Niki Smirni, *CEO & Founder of TRAVELGEMS.com*



A high caliber marketing strategist with more than 20 years of experience in international Service and FMCG industries. Being a team leader with a “mission accomplished” personality, Niki has a long track record of successful marketing stories and innovative projects with Greek and multinational companies.

Niki has been active in the tourism industry the last two years and she strongly believes that the tourism industry needs innovation and that “the one size fits all “doesn’t work for the travel industry. Niki’s motto is: “DREAM with your heart, DO with your mind NOW”

- *“Greece as a 12month destination can offer experiences for different travelers. Find out how 12twelve initiative promotes the experiential travel all over Greece and how 12twelve endorses travelgems which is an automated virtual concierge designed especially for the b2b market and promotes only Greece at its best in all focusing in personalized services and in experiential travel”.*
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Niki Smirni will focus on TWELVE, an initiative to highlight hidden treasure destinations and activities in Greece that take you off the beaten track to new experiences.

Edible Greece: Why Travelers should come to Greece to eat!

Diane Kochilas, Host of “My Greek Table” TV series



Greek-American celebrity chef Diane Kochilas is the host of “My Greek Table”, a national public television series in the U.S. She is consulting chef at Committee restaurant in Boston, owner of the glorious Greek Cooking School on the Blue-Zone island of Ikaria, and the award-winning author of more than 10 books on Greek cuisine. She divides her time between Greece and New York City.

Diane Kochilas will introduce the Greek cuisine and its identity. Greece is blessed with a wealth of “natural gourmet” products, that come from the land or sea and that have a long history.

Region of South Aegean

Marieta Papavasiliou Vakiani, *Vice Governor of Tourism, Sports & Culture*



She has attended and graduated from the Venetokleion High School of Rhodes, Greece.

She studied civil engineering at the Aristoteleio University of Thessaloniki. She continued her studies at the Pittsburgh University (PITT) USA. Furthermore, she strengthened her knowledge in finance through special courses at the Kapodistrian University of Athens.

From 1990 till today she is Vice President to her family business Blue Bay group of hotels.

In September 2014 she was elected member of the Regional Council of the South Aegean Region .From 2014 till 2017 she holds the position of the Vice Governor of Tourism.From 2017 till today she holds the position of Vice Governor of Tourism ,Sports and Culture in Region of South Aegean. She is the president of “Rhodes Marathon” and member of USTOA.

She is married and has two children.

Dazzling white villages, golden beaches and clear azure water are just the start of what these islands have to offer. Each island has a character all its own and all offer a plethora of opportunities for relaxation, sightseeing, adventures and gastronomical pleasure – with a backdrop of stunningly beautiful beaches.