

Press Release

The Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Konstantinos Gavroglu, and the Secretary General for Religious Affairs, George Kalantzis, participated in the ceremony bestowing the title of “Righteous Among the Nations” on the family of Constantine Giannitsis who rescued the family of Asher Moissis during the Occupation in Greece. The event was organized by the students of the Athens College and took place at its premises.

The Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs highlighted the fact that the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Embassy of Israel has changed the approach on such events by giving to secondary school students the responsibility to organize them. The Music School of Alimos organized such an event for the first time and then the 2nd Middle School of Elefsina, followed by the 1st High School of Chania. In that way, events about true stories of special people who have risked their own lives and those of their families in order to rescue our fellow citizens of Jewish faith during the dark period of the Occupation have become part of the education process teaching sublime values of our civilization. As Minister Gavroglu pointed out, “there is a need to strengthen acts and ideas safeguarding democracy against the poison of fascism and of racism which have appeared again throughout Europe”.

In his concluding remarks, the Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs announced that in the context of covering the needs for planning and implementing actions and initiatives on combating anti-Semitism, the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs has adopted the working definition of anti-Semitism as it was set out at the Plenary meeting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on May 26, 2016 with the active participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

It is to be recalled that by Resolution B8-0383/2017 on combating anti-Semitism (2017/2692 (RSP)), the European Parliament, inter alia, “[...] *calls on the Member States and the Union institutions and agencies to adopt and apply the working definition of anti-Semitism employed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)*”.

Secretary General Kalantzis noted that adopting the working definition of anti-Semitism is historically significant and that it is a particular honor for the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs to be the first General Secretariat to adopt it.