**Statement by the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Constantine An. Tassoulas: "Today's Greece can inspire the most modern and remarkable potential in art"**

On the occasion of the announcement of the Contemporary Art Cultural Programme 2021 at the former Public Tobacco Factory – Hellenic Parliament Library and Printing House, the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Constantine Tassoulas made the following statement:

«During the landmark Peace Conference held by the victors of World War I in Paris, Greece made not only territorial claims, but also took the opportunity to present an image of the country – aside from one of tradition and history – to the eyes of the international art-loving audience of the French capital. On 2 September 1919, at the renown La Boétie art gallery in Paris, the then Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos inaugurated an exhibition of 200 paintings and sculptures by the “Omáda Téchni” (Art Group), an association of young Greek artists of the time who were linked to the avant-garde and Modernism.

Associating the exhibition with the successful political and diplomatic processes of the Peace Conference had to do with the feelings of confidence and renewal which, at that time, were blowing through Greece’s political and artistic landscape.

One century later, Greece now looks back celebratorily and reflectively on the 200 years since the successful revolution of 1821 against the Ottoman Empire which led to the creation of the Modern Greek State.

The Hellenic Parliament, which has represented the Greek people since 1844, participates in these events in various ways. Publications, conferences, research projects and exhibitions have already begun and will culminate in the anniversary year of 2021.

This initiative of knowledge and honour has again, as in 1919, its artistic aspect. With the pioneering organisation NEON we are co-organising a cultural programme of contemporary art that aims at something similar to the exhibition of 1919 at 64 Rue la Boétie, to highlight how Greece, its history and its prospects inspire the contemporary, domestic and international avant-garde.

At the monumental site of an old Tobacco Factory which today houses the priceless Library of the Hellenic Parliament, a dialogue of messages and understandings will be held between artists and the public.

This artistic event is inspired mainly by the Greece of today; it is organised by a partnership between the private and public sector, and it is addressed to a public that will freely shape its own interpretation.

In an unexpectedly bizarre and prolonged pandemic era, art can and does liberate. In this same way, the message that today’s Greece can inspire the most contemporary and remarkable potential of art is also liberating.

This is how Greece, besides its irrefutably inspiring past, can also establish an inspiring present and future».