

**Welcome greetings from the Mayor of Rethymnon, Mr. George Marinakis,  
at the ceremony for the proclamation of Rethymnon as "The European City  
of Wine for 2018"**

Dear Colleagues, Representatives of member countries of the European Wine  
Town Network,

Dear fellow citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen

With great pleasure welcome to Rethymnon our partners, representatives of  
the member countries of the RECEVIN European Cities Network. A network  
that, for 18 years, has actively supported its purpose of establishing reliable  
links, through targeted actions and initiatives, between countries and groups  
of cities that carry a strong tradition of wine, which is reflected in their  
historical path, in their manifestations of culture, in their social and  
interpersonal relationships, in their economic development, in the shaping of  
the local physiognomy and specificity of their birth places.

The relationship between the Greeks and the wine is historically confirmed  
and goes back centuries. It is unquestionably proven by the archaeological  
finds - written texts and references or ancient vases, wall paintings, etc. -  
which were brought to light by the archaeological excavation and are  
exhibited in the Museums of the whole world.

The relationship of the Cretans, however, with the wine, is even stronger,  
more substantial and deeper. On our island, we have findings of systematic  
4,000-year-old vine cultivation. According to Homer, Cretan wines enjoyed  
international recognition in his era. At the Museum of Eleftherna, the visitor  
can see a special grape vase display on burial ceremonies.

In the Minoan era, the Minoan seafarers, who developed, an  
incomprehensible for their time, international trade, transported products of  
Cretan land to all the ports of the Mediterranean and to Egypt.

During the long period that Crete was under the domination of the Venetians, the annual exports of excellent quality wine, consisted of thousands of barrels.

The past century, when Crete, as well as Greece, has been cruelly tested by the Second World War, but also by a number of internal, political and social upheavals, which have caused a major blow to wine exports, thanks to the power of family units, the tradition of winemakers stayed alive.

So, it is an undeniable fact, that the relationship between the Cretan people and the wine has remained timeless, stable and rigid in terms of its intensity and quality. The wine, accompanies every expression of life, here, in Crete. It is connected with our religion, traditions and customs that we inherited from our ancestors, our everyday habits. Wine is our constant companion in sorrows and joys, family and friendly tables, celebrations, public events, our personal moments, our professional activity, the whole spectrum of our social activities. It is part of our existence, it is a symbol of composition, continuity, coexistence, harmony in our relation with the earth, the natural environment and the people.

In addition, in a Tourist Municipality like ours, the promotion of the benefits of wine to human health and economy, its multiple uses in gastronomy and, above all, as an integral part of the well-known for its beneficial properties, Cretan diet, is a priority for us.

That is the reason we accept, with joy and pride, the distinction that Rethymno received as a "European City of Wine 2018".

In the proposal of our candidacy, we depicted only a part of the actions we support relating to wine, such as the Cretan Diet Festival, the Feast of Saint George the Methyst, as well as the systematic presence and active participation of the local winemakers and businessmen of Tourism, in international and domestic meetings and exhibitions that focus on Wine, etc.

As a city that invests in extroversion and the continuous acquisition of know-how, Rethymno and its Municipality, shares the agony of the new generation

of our winemakers, winegrowers and viticulturists, who try and seek with their knowledge, their vision and their strong will, to pursue consistently and proficiently, in a constantly changing world, the modern developments, to exploit the new technological means, to upgrade the quality of the produced product and to offer the world the opportunity, to experience and enjoy, the delicious richness of the varieties of Cretan wine, with respect to each consumer 's preferences.

With these thoughts, allow me to assure you that we will respond to this honor, with all the available means and sources. Above all, with our human potential, the agencies and services involved in the production and distribution of wine, the public and private collectives dealing with the whole range of management of this precious product, the wine producers of Rethymno, Crete, the rest of Greece and the countries and cities of Europe who participate in the Network.

Here and now, with your approval and assistance, our dear guests and partners, we build the successful continuation of a partnership that was inaugurated with the establishment of the European Wine Network. We are giving the honest promise that this cooperation will be enriched with the exchange of know-how, with the acquaintance of the cultural specificities that make up the identity of each region - Member of this Network, with the establishment of relations based on friendship and respect which are the safest guarantees for the social and economic welfare of our lands.

And with the invocation of a familiar Greek phrase of the Psalm of the Prophet and King David, "Wine delights the heart of man," I invite you to allow the wine to join us in this common developmental effort. I warmly wish you to enjoy your staying in Rethymno, and to have the opportunity to meet the richness and beauty, both natural and human, of this place. I hope that we will often be given the opportunity to meet often in co operations on actions that we will organize, due to our pleasant obligation to serve the goals of the Network, as a European Wine Town. Thank you.