

Queen's birthday celebration 2019 in Athens, Greece

On 19 June, British Ambassador Kate Smith CMG welcomed friends and colleagues to celebrate the 93rd birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

In her welcoming speech, HMA Kate Smith spoke about the principles and values honoured by the British people that Queen Elizabeth II stands for, emphasizing how dedication to duty, belief in freedom, democracy and the rule of law, are shared values on which the longstanding and strong bilateral relations of Greece and the UK are drawn upon.

This year's celebration was dedicated to the 80-year presence of the British Council in Greece and its contribution to building friendship and collaboration between the two countries.

Referring to the British Council, and the course it has carved out throughout eight decades, the Ambassador stated:

In these eight decades, without exaggeration, the ties of both Greeks and Britons on personal, academic, and professional levels would not be so strong and fertile without the key contribution of the British Council. Not only in Greece but throughout the world, the British Council brings together hundreds of thousands of people through culture, science, the arts, and, of course, the language of my country. And through all this, it accomplishes something more: it creates bonds, opens up horizons, cultivates interest and – dare I say – the love between our two countries.

The Ambassador also made special mention of the re-establishment of the Chevening Scholarship Program, in cooperation with the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, announcing that, this year, two scholarships were awarded for postgraduate studies in the UK and that the program will continue next year.

As is customary, the speeches were followed by the National Anthems of Greece and the United Kingdom, which were performed by the Greek Navy Light Orchestra. The Ambassador then proposed a toast to the President of the Hellenic Republic and to her majesty Queen Elizabeth II and proceeded to the cutting of the Queen's birthday cake.

The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the new Jaguar I-Pace. Guests were able to explore the I-Pace, the new Jaguar Land Rover all-

electric vehicle which was designed and built in the UK along with a Greek contribution; that of Greek engineer, Alexis Michaelides, who was part of the engine design team and who like many other Greeks, studied and pursued his career in the UK.

We are very proud of the large number of extremely talented and innovative Greeks who either work in the field of university research or transfer their knowledge to British businesses. Their presence and contribution are enormous. We recognize this and hope that the experience they are now gaining in the United Kingdom will also benefit Greece, either through bilateral collaborations or through their return to their homeland when they decide to go.

Throughout the evening, guests enjoyed traditional British delicacies, such as fish and chips, and bangor and mash as well as other excellent dishes and drinks with thanks to top British brands that sponsored the event: Severn & Wye Smokery – Imperial Salmon House, Beefeater by PERNOD RICARD HELLAS, Unilever, UNIBRAU, Cutty Sark, Kir-Yianni, Fever Tree by Karoulis SA, Green Bay & Co, 3E Hellenic Bottling Company, Douma Vital Farm and Ledra Foods

Prominent British and Greek businesses were also well represented: RTDeco, Lloyds Register, Trans Adriatic Pipeline, HSBC, BP, Reed Smith and Coral Shell.