



Athens, 30 March 2016

## PRESS RELEASE

The Mayor of Athens, Yiorgos Kaminis, and the Representative of UNHCR in Greece, Philippe Leclerc, announced today the agreement reached between the Municipality of Athens and UNHCR regarding the temporary accommodation of refugees.

The Municipality of Athens, through the **Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)**, has taken on the implementation of the accommodation scheme to rent 200 apartments to refugees. It makes provision for the accommodation of up to 6 beneficiaries (tenants) per apartment and alternation between beneficiaries. The scheme will host up to 3,000 beneficiaries in total - asylum seekers including (EU) relocation candidates (relocation scheme).

The Mayor of Athens, Yiorgos Kaminis, noted that this agreement is yet another great contribution of the city of Athens to the management of the refugee crisis, adding that the municipal authority of Athens will continue to work to ensure humane living conditions for refugees and in parallel ensure that the city is functioning in an orderly manner.

Mr. Kaminis pointed out that, already since August 2015, the municipality of Athens has conceded a site for the establishment of a model accommodation facility, more specifically that of "Elaionas". From the 14 acres initially provided for the "Elaionas" facility, it was expanded to 24, in December 2015, and a few days ago a decision was issued by the Municipal Council to expand it to 37 acres. The Mayor of Athens reminded that since the summer of 2015 the municipal radio station Athens 984 is transmitting two daily news bulletins in Arabic, as well as that an information leaflet was printed in collaboration with the Greek



Post Office, which was distributed on Lesbos island in coordination with local authorities.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative in Greece, Philippe Leclerc, mentioned that in compliance with international standards and based on its experience, UNHCR will select and forward the applications of beneficiaries who wish to be included in the relocation scheme that fulfill the prerequisites (legal, health, etc.). “The Municipality of Athens is the first city with which UNHCR is cooperating to provide temporary accommodation to refugees,” stated the Representative of UNHCR in Greece. He also emphasized the critical role played by the capital of Athens in the management of the refugee issue. “These people have endured great hardship to reach Greece and need to be supported at all aspects,” said Leclerc, stressing that “some will depart but others will remain in the country.” He praised the solidarity shown by the Greek people to refugees, highlighting the need for cooperation between the different municipalities and the civil society.

The Deputy Mayor responsible for Migrants and Refugees, Mr. Lefteris Papagiannakis, pointed out that the collaboration of the Municipality of Athens with voluntary and non-governmental organizations is innovative and fruitful. A very characteristic example was how the situation in Victoria square was smoothed over.

The apartments that will be rented will be at least 60 square meters and will all have the necessary certificates (i.e. energy performance certificate). “ The **Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)** of the Municipality of Athens will be the contracting party stated in the apartment lease,” said the company’s Managing Director Mr. Alexis Galinos. While describing the agreement in more detail, he stressed that the rent will not exceed 400 euros per apartment.



The presentation of the agreement and the press conference that followed right after were attended by the mayors of Nea Smyrni Stavros Tzoulakis, of Zografou Tina Kafatsaki, of Tavros-Moschato Andreas Efthimiou, and of Agios Dimitrios Maria Androutsou, who also participate in the accommodation scheme and made a call to apartment owners to provide their apartments as well as to the neighboring to Athens municipalities.

### **Scheme provisions**

The invoices for public utilities' services (water and power supply) and shared maintenance expenses will be paid by the Company (ADDMA), through scheme funds. The 200 apartments will be equipped with furniture (beds, table, and chairs), home and electrical appliances.

The employment of a specialized staff has been foreseen, that will monitor daily the living conditions of the beneficiaries and ensure that the apartments remain in good condition.

An Apartment Regulation will be put in place, describing in detail the rules regarding hygiene and the behavior of beneficiaries among themselves and towards the other tenants of the apartment building. Competent company employees will monitor daily whether these rules are upheld in relation to the obligations of the beneficiaries during their stay. If someone does not comply, he/she will be removed from the apartment.

### **Additional services provided to the scheme's beneficiaries:**

Provision of food through pre-paid cards or vouchers for super markets. About 90 euros per month correspond to each beneficiary.



Provision of hygiene items through pre-paid cards or vouchers for super markets. Each woman will receive 10 euros per month, each man 5 euros per month, every child and vulnerable social groups 15 euros per month.

Provision of support by specialized staff (interpreters, social scientists, etc.) that will provide guidance to the beneficiaries on how to manage their daily lives.

Provision of cards for public transport.

The Municipality of Athens will take on, when necessary, the provision of social-medical services as well as practical help (i.e. clothes) through its existing services (City of Athens Reception and Solicarity Center/KYADA, municipal health clinics, etc.)

For supplies, apartment owners or real estate agencies wishing to participate in the scheme, as well as recruitment procedures for the scheme, there are relevant announcements on the webpage of the Municipality of Athens [cityofathens.gr](http://cityofathens.gr), as well as the site of ADDMA [www.developathens.gr/relocation](http://www.developathens.gr/relocation).