

Bid for EMEA Regional Meeting Venue 2019

Democrats Abroad Greece

Athens, Greece

October 10-13, 2019



Meeting Organizer/Contact:

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Introduction

When Barack Obama visited the Acropolis on his visit to Greece, his last overseas trip as President, he reflected:

“On my last overseas trip as president, I finally had the opportunity to visit Greece and take in the beautiful history of this country. Standing at the Acropolis, in the birthplace of democracy and the democratic values we hold dear as Americans, you gain perspective on the importance of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people – and how people, no matter what nation we belong to, will decide the kind of countries we will be, the ideals we’ll keep reaching for, and the values that will define us.”

Democrats Abroad Greece will be honored to welcome our colleagues from throughout the EMEA Region to Athens, the birthplace of democracy, a fitting venue for the work at hand. We are energized, mobilized and ready to go.

The City

Ideally located at the crossroads of Europe, Middle East and Africa, Athens is the perfect location to host a regional meeting. In the last couple of years, Athens consistently makes the grade as one of the top European cities to visit. It’s a vibrant international city with archaeological sites and world-class and specialty museums, all within walking distance. Athens streets are filled with life and energy; one can’t help feeling it as one walks around. Our venue is in the heart of the downtown shopping district. Nearby is the highly popular Plaka area with a wide choice of tavernas, cafes, and international restaurants, surrounding the Acropolis. The new Acropolis Museum, considered one of the top 5 museums in the world, is just opposite the ancient hill. Also within 200 meters is Syntagma (Constitution) Square, the Parliament and the entrance to the National Gardens. At the bottom of the street is Monastiriki, the Athens Flea Market. And nearby is the hip Aghia Irini area with trendy sidewalk cafes and restaurants, offering food from around the world. Not far away are the vibrant neighborhoods of Gazi, Psyrri and Keramikos, gathering places for good food, trendy bars and clubs, with some of the best street art to be found in Europe. A short hop on the metro to the tram gets you to the beaches, cafes, restaurants and boardwalk of the Athens Riviera. The average October temperature in Athens is 23 degrees high/15 degrees low. Pack your swimsuit.

A weekend is simply not enough to see it all! If you choose to extend your stay, DAGR volunteers can help you plan a one-day, three-island cruise; or a one-day bus tour to the spectacular sites of Delphi, Mycenae, Epidaurus or the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion. Or plan to spend a day exploring the treasures of the National Archaeological Museum. Stay longer, take the metro to the last stop in the port of Piraeus and hop on a ferry to the island of your dreams.

Transport – Getting Here

Airport: Direct flights from all major cities in Europe, Africa and the Middle East to Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport.

Train: TrainOSE offers rail connection to various Balkan countries.

Coach: KTEL bus lines run between Athens and all port and airport cities in Greece.

Sea: Ferries from Ancona and Brindisi, Italy, provide coach transport from the Patras port to Athens. Yacht dockage is available in Piraeus and other coastal ports.

Transport – In Athens

The best way to get around the city is on foot. Everything is within walking distance of our suggested venue. Nearby is access to Metro train, tram to the south coast, city buses and trolleys. A ticket good for 90 minutes on all public transport will cost you 1,40 euros. A 24-hour ticket costs 4,50, and a 5-day ticket can be had for 9 euros. Taxis are plentiful and cheap. Rental cars, which are reasonably priced, are not necessary for this event.

Travel to and from the airport from central Athens is economical and easy:

Taxi – 35 euro fixed rate (plus charges for luggage)

50 euro fixed rate – midnight to 6 a.m. (plus charges for luggage)

Metro – 10 euros (trains leave from Syntagma every 30 minutes)

Express Bus (X95, Airport-Syntagma) – 6 euros

Security

Large-scale street demonstrations were an issue several years ago, but things have been quiet since, and anti-American sentiment is even further in the past. Small-scale protest marches are part of the fabric of city life; these happen every once in awhile and tend to be small and peaceful expressions of civic concerns. Athens has a reputation for being one of the safest cities in Europe. As in all large cities, travellers need to take standard precautions to protect their personal effects against pickpockets. If this bid is accepted, we will advise both the Greek police and the US embassy security staff, and will update with them throughout.

Proposed Hotel/Conference Venue in Athens

We propose the Electra Metropolis Hotel, which currently has availability for our dates but is not holding rooms until we confirm. It is a certified green hotel and follows all environmental protection regulations.

We have also included **alternative room prices only** from their sister hotel the Electra, located 3-4 blocks away, as it offers a more affordable 4-star option for those attendees who wish to stay there.

All following prices are in Euro.

<p><u>Hotel Rooms Option 1:</u></p> <p>Electra Metropolis Hotel (5-star) 15 Mitropoleos St., Syntagma Sq., www.electrahotels.gr</p>	<p><u>Hotel Rooms Option 2:</u></p> <p>Electra Hotel (4-star) 5 Ermou St., Syntagma Square www.electrahotels.gr</p>
<p><u>Cost of Rooms</u></p> <p>The following rates have a 10-room minimum.</p> <p>Classic Single Room: 205</p> <p>Classic Double or Twin Room: 225</p> <p>(Rates include American Buffet Breakfast and all taxes)</p>	<p><u>Cost of Rooms:</u></p> <p>The following rates have a 10-room minimum.</p> <p>Single Room: 140</p> <p>Double Room: 160</p> <p>(Rates include American Buffet Breakfast and all taxes.)</p>

<p><u>Conference Meeting Costs</u></p> <p>The following are discounted costs based on an F&B minimum of 70 people per meeting day and minimum 20 rooms reservation. In any other case there will be a rental fee of about 800 euros.</p> <p>Meeting Room Daily Rate (fits up to 120): FREE OF CHARGE</p> <p><u>Includes:</u></p> <p>LCD projector, screen, flipchart, one table mic, one wireless mic, podium or panel.</p> <p>Wi-Fi Internet access: Free of charge</p> <p>Dedicated internet line, speed 20 Mbps.</p> <p>Line type: Leased line dedicated direct internet access via fiber optic.</p> <p>Additional A/V costs: Dedicated technician daily rate: 220 eu.</p> <p>TV screens: can be arranged at add. charge.</p> <p>Note: Breakout sessions can take place in the main meeting room area.</p>	
<p>Coffee break from 7 eu./person</p> <p>Continuous coffee break (3 refills): 14 eu./person</p> <p>Standing Lunch Options: Ranging from 25-36 per person</p> <p>Beverage Package from 8.50/person</p>	

Other Accommodation Options

In addition to luxury accommodations at the main venue option, other 5-star hotels such as the Grande Bretagne Hotel, are close by. The Athens Hilton is a short taxi ride away.

A wide selection of moderately priced hotels, in the 4- and 3-star category, is within walking distance. Within the last few years, downtown Athens has seen a boon in new hotel openings. From the comfortably Spartan (and inexpensive) to the super-chic, there are literally hundreds of hotel options available in the city center and around the Acropolis to suit the needs of every wallet. Recommended - but by no means an exhaustive list - include:

PLAKA HOTEL - 7 Kapnikareas & Mitropoleos
 ADONIS HOTEL - Voulis & Kodrou 3, Plaka,
 NIKI HOTEL - 27 Nikis Street,
 ATTALOS – 29 Athinas St.
 BYRON HOTEL Athens - 19 ByronosStr,
 HOTEL NEFELI - Iperidou 16 & Ag. Chatzimichali 2
 PHAEDRA HOTEL - Cherefondos 16 & Adrianou Str.
 ADAMS HOTEL - Cherefondos 6 & Thalous Str.

Airbnb offerings are highly active here. Look in the *Syntagma, Plaka, Monastiraki, Thision, Akropoli, Makriyanni, Koukaki, Mets and Pagrati* neighborhoods.

A few home-stays can also be arranged.

Organization and Local Support

This bid has been managed by DAGR Events Chair, Nikki Fellouris. Nikki is a former advertising/marketing professional.

If this bid is accepted, Nikki will be the principal liaison, working with a committee including CC leadership and Athens and Thessaloniki Chapter leadership, and Fundraising Chair managing volunteers. Steve Medeiros, DAGR Chair, in his previous professional position, has organized 15 international conferences and over a hundred workshops for educators, and brings this experience to bear on our organization committee's work.

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Volunteer Support

Having recruited and managed a team of 90 volunteers for the 800-guest Obama Inaugural event here in 2009; and teams of 50 volunteers for Election Watch events and very successful GPP's in 2012 and 2016, DAGR is confident of fielding at least 40-50 dedicated volunteers to assist in various capacities, during both the preparation period and the meeting weekend.

Registration table

The Registration Table volunteers will be supervised by our DAGR Secretary, who will work with EMEA staff to assure a smooth sign-in process and distribution of the event welcome package. Our venue contains a good-sized entrance area outside the conference room that can easily accommodate a successful registration process.

WebEx

Our meeting venue is fully equipped to support all of our web-ex needs. (See bid specs above.) Our IT support volunteer, who now hosts all our WebEx meetings, will train a team of 5-6 volunteers to work with EMEA staff to make the web-ex experience a positive one for all of our on-line participants.

Technical

In addition to venue tech staff, we will gather a team of volunteers from IT/tech departments in local American and international schools and universities to support tech needs during the event.

Assistance to attendees

We are well covered, including members with recent/functional knowledge of transport options, local ombudsman support, emergency services, and walking tours. One group of volunteers will be dedicated to providing individual assistance as needed to attendees.

Welcome Package

Because of the shipping time/expense for promotional items from north-central Europe, DAGR has developed economical local printing and production options for a wide variety of items, including table cards and name tags.

Assembly of the welcome packet will involve both independent printing of event specific materials as well as a collection of freely available maps and brochures for meeting attendees. Additional materials brought by other CC's and caucuses can be slipped into the packet or distributed separately.

The welcome package will, of course, contain an appropriate Greek souvenir.

Welcome Reception

DAGR looks forward to hosting a reception before dinner on Friday evening (our expense). We plan a 'typically Greek' fare, with local beverages and canapes (mezadakia). We are considering a

number of options, including a “Grand Walk” of the monuments of Athens at dusk; a traditional theater or musical event; perhaps a wine-tasting party or Greek dancing lessons. We are still exploring the possibilities. We can also work with other caucuses or committees that may wish to sponsor events. There is a wide range of venues in the area which cater both to individual parties or group bookings.

Saturday Night Dinner

There are several rooftop restaurants in Athens with impressive view of the Acropolis. We have booked a couple of options, depending on the estimated number of attendees. One option is the **GH Attikos Restaurant** by the Acropolis hill. It offers quality Greek dishes with an exceptional view of the Parthenon and seats about **100 - 110 people**. Dinner menu, including house wine and dessert, from **35 euros per person**.

Should we need to accommodate a larger crowd, our second option is the **MS Garden** rooftop restaurant with maybe the best Acropolis view in the city, right in Monastariki Square, which seats about **150 people**, with prices to be determined based upon the selection of the menu we decide upon.