

Dear colleagues, dear friends

We made it! The EPSA11 is somewhat bruised, but fine. It is bruised because Greece is wounded. You all know about the Greek crisis. We live in it. There is dispute about the causes of the crisis. I have my own views—unabashedly left-wing—about these causes. But I will spare you of them. For no matter what the causes are, the effects are well-known. The living standards of the working population of Greece are falling at an unprecedented rate. Unemployment is rising by the hour. The structure of the welfare state is being torn to pieces. Taxes are being raised as if there is no tomorrow and the recession is here to stay. The supposed remedy of the Greek crisis—relentless austerity—is not working for the majority of Greeks. On top of that, the Greek higher education went through a massive reform which, in the midst of severe spending cuts, is destined to render it less democratic and more authoritarian.

The decision to hold the EPSA11 conference in Athens was publicly announced in our last conference in Amsterdam, in October 2009. This is exactly when Greece started to go downhill. Back then, we could not even dream of what would lie ahead for all of us. But the more we started to realise that the plight of our country would deteriorate dramatically, the more we became determined to organise a successful conference. For us, the EPSA11 is not just a major conference of a major European Association. The EPSA11 has been an act of defiance—intellectual defiance. There is another Greece and we very much hope you see it here in action. There isn't just the Greece of bankruptcy and the debt and the deficit and the much-discussed bailout. There is the Greece of hard work, of intellectual integrity, of ideas. Philosophy means a lot to all of us who are present in this room. Philosophy is about intellectual flourishing and we very much hope that this conference will be conducive to this flourishing.

We worked very hard for this conference. But it would not have been made possible without your generous support—through your registration fees; and without the support of the University of Athens and of two enlightened cultural foundations based in Athens. In the end, we overtook all difficulties but the air traffic controllers' strike—which I am sure has just causes. Some participants, despite our and their best

efforts, could not fly into Athens for the conference. This is a great disappointment for us. The consolation is that the vast majority of the participants is here. Your determination to come, the heartening messages you've sent us, have been a great honour for us; an unfailing source of encouragement. It is also, I think, a vote of confidence to philosophy of science in Greece.

We want to thank you wholeheartedly for being here. We want to welcome you to ailing but fighting Greece and to promise you that, during the days of the conference, we will do our best to ensure that you have a great time, both intellectually and socially.

Philosophy has come home and we are sure you will all feel at home here in Athens.