Press release on IOTC’s Open Forum

“The relevance of Olympic Truce nowadays: are there ways to effectively apply it?”

The House of Hellenes hosted on Tuesday a highly informative open forum held by the International Olympic Truce Centre (www.olympictruce.org) with multi-international and multi-cultural guests. The discussion focused on whether and to what extent the concept of the Olympic Truce is relevant nowadays and how it can be effectively implemented.

The panel of speakers included:

- Willi Lemke, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on Sport for Development and Peace
- Lord Bates, Member of the House of Lords, former MP
- Hugh Dugan, Founder of the US Truce Foundation
- Fanny Palli – Petralia, Vice-Chairperson of the International Olympic Truce Foundation

Dr. Constantinos Filis, Director of the International Olympic Truce Centre, moderated the discussion that followed.

Apart from the panelists, among the dynamic audience were Tommy Sithole, Director of the International Cooperation and Development Department of the IOC, Isidoros Kouvelos, the Chief of the Greek mission in London Olympics and President of the International Olympic Academy, the President of the British Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, Mr Ikonomopoulos, representatives of the London Peace Network, Greek and foreign media.

Each of the speakers shared with the audience their views and personal experiences as members of the Olympic Movement.
Mrs. Palli – Petralia opened the discussion underlining that “Olympism has been closely linked with Truce and International peace. The best example is the landmark Olympic Truce resolution regarding the London 2012 Games which for the first time in history was signed by all 193 countries of the United Nations.”

Mr. Lemke added that the countries that have signed the Olympic Truce resolution but do not respect it, will be isolated and ostracized by the rest. He also proposed the issuing of a report that will assess the observance of Olympic Truce throughout the Olympic Games.

Lord Bates, who walked over 3,500 miles for ancient Olympia to London to raise awareness on Olympic Truce, referred to the immense power of sports and concluded that sport can serve as a platform for peace.

According to Mr. Dugan, we still need a lot of work to be done and while using sports as a tool to promote peace, we should, at the same time, use any diplomatic lever to make sure that Olympic Truce is observed.

Summing up the results of the discussion, Dr. Filis commented that Olympic Truce is not an armistice, not a pure political process. It is directly related to sports and, in a sense, it can be considered as a (soft) power to achieve socio-political goals through the promotion of sport ideals. It is within this framework, that we are familiarizing post-conflict societies with the benefits of peaceful coexistence, particularly through joint sports activities.

All speakers agreed that creating a Culture of Peace should be the ultimate objective. At the end of the event, IOTC presented its new video and the soprano Anastasia Zannis performed the famous Beatle song “Imagine”.

For further information please contact:

Mrs. Eleni Pavlou at press@olympictruce.org

Or visit www.olympictruce.org