

French Foreign Minister bestows Dr. Kasoulides with 'Officer of the Order of Legion of Honour'

The Chairman of EuroAfrica Interconnector Strategic Council awarded France's highest decoration

Nicosia, September 11, 2018 – Dr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Chairman of the Strategic Council of the EuroAfrica Interconnector and former Foreign Minister of Cyprus, has received the highest decoration awarded by France – *Officer of the Order of the Legion of Honour*.

The award was bestowed on Dr. Kasoulides by France's Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves le Drian during an emotional ceremony at the French Ambassador's residence in Nicosia, in the name of the President of the French Republic, as "a real friend of France".

Praising the Cypriot diplomat's role in strengthening the ties between France and Cyprus, le Drian stressed his "faith in our country, its language and values, and the spirit of cooperation with which you work with my predecessors in Quai d'Orsay."

The French Minister, who concluded an official visit to Cyprus with the ceremony, also referred to Dr. Kasoulides' earlier years as a student in Lyon and his influence from the student uprising in May 1968, as well as his political career in Cyprus.

Le Drian pointed out that Dr. Kasoulides actively contributed to Cyprus' accession to the European Union in 2004 and that he was a tireless and committed supporter of the reunification of the island through dialogue between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

He said that Dr. Kasoulides also left his own imprint in Cyprus politics, involved in the establishment of the Democratic Rally (DISY) party and conveyed a standard of political ethics initially as a Member of Parliament, twice as Foreign Minister and as a Member of the EuroParliament.

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Receiving the award, Dr. Kasoulides said that he accepted it on behalf of all Cypriots who studied in France and who have contributed to the promotion of Francophonie and French ideals in Cyprus and the region, as well as the traditional friendship between France and Cyprus.

"During my years in France, I was not just a student of medicine, but I also absorbed by the republican spirit, which is unique in France and the French Revolution, which has guided me throughout my life," Dr. Kasoulides said.

"It is a great honour for us, as well as all of Cyprus, that through this award, the very important political, cultural and diplomatic work of Dr. Kasoulides has been acknowledged, and at the highest level, both for the small island of Cyprus but mainly because of his vision of being part of the greater family of the European Union," said EuroAfrica Interconnector Project Director, George Killas.

"His profound career and presence in the international political sphere for the past several decades has left its unique impression and is of great importance to all of us."

Dr. Kasoulides is Chairman of the Strategic Council of the EuroAfrica Interconnector, the official project developer of the 2,000MW electricity interconnector between Egypt and Europe, through Cyprus.

Dr. Kasoulides, has served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1997 until 2003 with President Glafcos Clerides, and again from 2013 to March 1, 2018, under President Nicos Anastasiades. In 2003, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kasoulides oversaw Cyprus' EU integration process. He was a member of the Cyprus House of Representatives, Cyprus Government spokesman, and Member of the European Parliament from 2004 until 2013, and held various European Parliament committee positions, including as the head of the Foreign Affairs Working group.

Dr. Ioannis Kasoulides is the recipient of a number of honours, including Commander of the Order of the Phoenix of the Hellenic Republic, Commander of the Order of Merit of the Hellenic Republic, and Commander of the Order of Xirka of Malta.



France's Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves le Drian bestowing the award of 'Officer of the Order of the Legion of Honour', France's highest decoration, to Dr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Chairman of the Strategic Council of the EuroAfrica Interconnector and former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cyprus

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