



23-04-2025 Educational Visit to the Regional Unit of Imathia and awards Ceremony for the winning students in the 2024–2025 Student Competition “Asia Minor-Pontus: Memories”

On April 9-11, 2025, an educational visit to the regional unit of Imathia took place as a reward for the winners of the Student Competition for the creation of a historical narrative and poster on the theme "Asia Minor-Pontus: Memories", co-organized by the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, and the Chair of Pontic Studies at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The competition, held for the first time during the 2024–2025 school year, involved students from Attica, Thessaloniki, and Kilkis, with winning entries from the following schools

Historical Narrative Awards:

- American Farm School of Thessaloniki: Yurpan
- 2nd Experimental General High School of Kilkis: Roads of Uprooting – The Journey of refuge and hope
- 2nd Experimental General High School of Kilkis: My Name is Loukas – The Story of my great-grandfather

Poster Awards:

- Day High School of Lykovrysi: Carte Postale – Dedication
- 1st General High School of Evosmos: Blurred Hope
- Greek-French School of Kalamari: Uprooting

Honorary Mentions for Historical Narratives:

- 4th General High School of Aigaleo: The shadows of the East

- Hellenic College of Thessaloniki: Spring
- E. Mantoulidis Schools: Struggle for Survival

Honorary Mentions for Posters:

- 4th General High School of Palaio Faliro: Unforgettable Homeland
- 1st General High School of Sykeon: Romania, though it Passed...
- 1st Vocational High School of Aspropyrgos: The Mother

During the visit, the award-winning students and their accompanying teachers were given a guided tour through the traditional neighborhoods of Veria' s old town, the Byzantine churches in the "Little Jerusalem" of Macedonia, and the unique treasures of the city's Byzantine Museum. A particularly memorable experience was the visit to the Holy Monastery of Panagia Soumela, a symbolic site for the Pontic Greek community.

On the afternoon of Thursday, April 10, at the Holy Monastery of Panagia Dovra, following a guided tour of the Paulios Treasury, the award ceremony took place where the children were awarded by the Most Reverend Archimandrite Athinagoras Birda, Protosyngelos of the Holy Metropolis and representative of His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon of Veria, Naousa, and Kampania, by the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theoklitos Mentis, Secretary of the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, and by the representative of the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs.

That evening, His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon of Veria, Naousa, and Kampania hosted a dinner for the awarded students and their accompanying teachers.

The trip to Vermio was a unique experience for the students, who, along with all participants in the competition, demonstrated the dynamics of Greek schools, the creativity and sensitivity of the younger generation, and the value of historical knowledge and memory.

The General Secretariat for Religious Affairs warmly thanks the co-organizers of this competition, the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece and the Chair of Pontic Studies at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. It also congratulates the supervising teachers for guiding and supporting their students throughout this effort. The success of these students gives hope that future generations will make their communities and families proud.

The General Secretariat for Religious Affairs is committed to always supporting the educational community in the promotion of knowledge and culture.

