

## **Greek financial crisis and the upcoming conference**

Greece is going through an unprecedented financial crisis. Regardless of who is to blame (local and/or international political/financial elites backed by specific social/economic ideologies/strategies/interests), the crisis is affecting the lives of ordinary people through salary/pension cuts, heavy taxes, and enormous unemployment rates. Such conditions make people discontent and often desperate, leading to demonstrations, protests, and social unrest. We expect this year to be very difficult, as austerity measures are tightening, causing even further recession. As Greece is an EU member, it is hoped that the effects of the crisis will remain contained and that a viable solution will emerge.

We are confident that the upcoming ICMPC-ESCOM 2012 will be held successfully during July at a secure, convenient and most pleasant venue in the friendly city of Thessaloniki. We believe that the reasons stated below support this claim:

- The conference dates (i.e. middle of the summer holidays) guarantee a quiet environment in the city as the majority of people are away on holidays. Additionally, strikes are rare during the high tourist season.
- Thessaloniki is a relatively peaceful city; massive protests and troubles as presented by international media usually take place in Athens.
- The new conference venue (Porto Palace Hotel and Convention Centre) is just off the city centre of Thessaloniki in the quiet commercial port area. The initial University location at the centre of the city was more vulnerable to potential unrest.
- A result of the crisis is the lowering of prices of goods and services, which means better services can be provided for the same fee (already we intend to include light lunches for all participants without extra charge).
- We are in collaboration with ESCOM regarding our financial planning in order to guarantee that the budget of the conference is secure.
- Just before our conference, the ISME world conference is taking place in Thessaloniki from 15-20 July 2012. ISME is much bigger than ICMPC and is determined to hold their conference in Thessaloniki as initially planned (actually ISME, this year, had the largest number of submissions ever).

In an unstable local and international environment, we are doing our best to organise a most successful event. We are confident that participants will want to attend the sessions of the world's leading conference in music perception and cognition. We would also like to believe that for many participants, it may be a conscious gesture of solidarity and support to the majority of people of this country (that are not responsible for the crisis) to travel and participate at this upcoming international meeting in Thessaloniki.

We are confident that this conference will be a most rewarding and memorable experience for all participants.

On behalf of the organising committee

Emilios Cambouropoulos (Chair of ICMPC-ESCOM 2012)