



**ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΤΟΠΙΚΗΣ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ
" ΘΩΜΑΣ & ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ ΠΑΠΑΝΙΚΟΣ "**

Σαρδίνια, Επαρχία Βάλτου, Ακαρνανία, Νομός Αιτωλοακαρνανίας
Τηλ.: 210-36.34.210 Φαξ: 210-36.34.209 Email: itap@itap.gr URL: www.itap.gr

Sardinia, 27 July 2017

Welcome Speech by Thomas Gregory Papanikos to the 5th Annual
Meeting in Sardinia 27 July 2017

Dear Friends,

As the President of our Foundation, I would like to welcome all of you to our small village, Sardinia, for our 5th Annual Meeting. Since 2013 we have had the pleasure of organizing this annual meeting in order to discuss issues that concern very small localities such as this one where you are today. The subject of this year's meeting is

**The Future of the Village in a Global World: International
Experiences and Assessments**

We have six speakers from five different countries to talk to us about different themes but with the common underlying factor of regard for the future. This future is shaped first by exploiting the potential of new technologies, but at the same time by looking at what other localities around the world do to shape their own futures.

Thus, today's program reflects these two important issues. It is nicely balanced between the two issues of technology and practice.

All of ITAΘAII's initiatives satisfy our mission to give opportunities to friends from different countries to visit and see our village. We would like to make our village known with the hope that this will help us to develop in the future, including whatever that may imply. Thus, ITAΘAII's founding mission is to make this area known to as many people as possible by inviting them to visit the area of Akarnania. The annual meetings in the village of Sardinia serve this purpose. The area of Akarnania and particularly its traditional villages, like Sardinia, have not been affected by the booming Greek tourism of the last half-century. The purpose of these meetings is not to promote such development.

On the contrary, the future of the area lies in doing what has been done for thousands of years but with the added benefits of new technologies and international experiences. The aim of this combination is to promote productivity without undermining the natural beauty of the area, which is its essential characteristic. Unlike other areas of Greece, this area is rich

in clean waters, fauna and flora. It combines the natural beauty of forests (including oak forests) with the unparalleled beauty of the Ambracian Gulf.

I would like to close by reading an excerpt from an article by Rufus B. Richardson published in 1901 in the American Geographical Society:

“Since I took my first hasty glimpse of Akarnania and Aetolia in 1894, that region has drawn me powerfully, and I have made four other visits there, more careful and of longer duration than the first, the peculiar charm which I felt at first strengthening its hold upon me with each fresh visit. It is a neglected corner of Greece. Not one in five hundred of the strangers who visit Greece think of paying it a passing visit”.

Rufus B. Richardson (1901, p. 31) “Akarnania and Aetolia” Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1901), pp. 31-35.

I wish you a nice time and hope to see you again in our future meetings, possibly the next one in 2018.