

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos and all of us at the Foundation, it is a great pleasure and honor to be present at today's ceremony for the delivery and commissioning of the new EKAV aircraft. This is our second time here, at the Elefsina Air Base. Four years ago, two Beechcraft King Air 350 aircraft and two Augusta Westland 109 Trekker helicopters, also part of an SNF grant, landed at this base within a month of each other. Back then, we were in the midst of the pandemic and following strict protective measures. We are particularly pleased that this time around the circumstances are better and that we are able to celebrate this great day in a more human and personal way. Today our smiles are visible, not hidden under masks.

Our support for the procurement of a total of five aircraft—three airplanes and two helicopters—to strengthen the capabilities and effectiveness of the National Center for Emergency Care (EKAV) air ambulance services is part of the Foundation's Global Health Initiative (GHI), our largest initiative to date, totaling more than \$1 billion. Our grant to support EKAV was part of our original plan back in 2018, when the Initiative comprised six individual grants, including the creation of the three new hospitals in Thessaloniki, Komotini, and Sparta. I am bringing this up, with no intention of belaboring the point, more to give you an order of magnitude, as the Global Health Initiative now includes more than 80 individual grants around the world.

In any case, this particular grant, which has been expanded in the process, was, as I mentioned, part of our initial plan and fully aligned with our mission to contribute to strengthening Greece's National Health System from one end of the country to the other in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health, which we thank. From the outset, our thoughts were focused on all our compatriots who live on remote islands and in remote parts of our country and who may be hours away from the nearest health facility. And we all know that in emergencies, every minute is crucial and critical to the outcome.

Our grant to strengthen EKAV's air ambulance services, as the data confirms, has had a real and measurable impact—literally in human lives. During their first four years of operation, the four aircraft have carried out nearly 3,000 patient air transports throughout Greece.

As most of you already know, for the implementation of the grant, we worked in close collaboration with the Hellenic Ministry of Health, which owns the aircraft; EKAV, which uses them on an everyday basis; and the Hellenic Air Force, which assists in their flight operation. Through our close cooperation, we feel that we have shattered the myth that cooperation between many stakeholders is difficult to achieve.

We would like to thank all of you and each of you individually, also for hosting today's event, especially the 112th Combat Wing and its Commander, Hellenic Air Force Brigadier General Efthimios Simitzis.

In closing, we would like to thank our everyday heroes—Air Force pilots, flying doctors, rescuers, and nurses—and wish them all the fortitude they need in their work!