

Strategic Regions and European Policy The Case of Crete

Conclusions, scenarios and policy priorities

Chania, 6–7 July 2026

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Organised by

Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation
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In the service of democracy, peace and development

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ACADEMIC AND EDITORIAL EDITING

Georgios Vourlakis, Head of Development and Programmes, Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation

FUTURE LAB DESIGN AND COORDINATION

Georgios Plevris, Head of Strategic Planning and International Cooperation, Office of the Minister of Environment and Energy

The titles and affiliations of speakers reflect the positions they held at the time of the Political Academy (July 2026).

This publication provides a synthesis of the proceedings of the Political Academy. The views and proposals presented herein do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the organising institutions. The Future Lab scenarios were developed as tools for strategic reflection and should not be interpreted as forecasts of future developments.

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The [Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation](#), in partnership with the [National Research Foundation “Eleftherios K. Venizelos”](#) and the [Hanns Seidel Foundation](#), held the inaugural **Political Academy, “Strategic Regions and European Policy”** in Chania, Crete, on 6–7 July 2026.

The Academy is a new initiative for young professionals and researchers, designed to explore how major European policy choices take shape at regional level. Its distinctive premise is that policy challenges cannot be understood in isolation: security, energy, sustainable development, climate resilience and demographic change may be addressed separately in policy debate, but in strategic regions they intersect, interact and shape one another.

Crete was chosen as the starting point precisely because it offers a particularly clear setting in which these interdependencies converge and come sharply into focus.

Over the course of two days, 34 participants engaged in dialogue with policymakers, representatives of local and regional government, academics, journalists and policy experts, examining how strategic choices are shaped and tested by the specific conditions under which they must ultimately be implemented.

The Academy was deliberately structured to move beyond conventional policy discussion. The thematic sessions began with the challenges of the present; the synthesis of those discussions identified a set of cross-cutting policy priorities; and the Future Lab extended the conversation into alternative futures.

Eleven participants took part in this participatory strategic foresight exercise, developing four scenarios for Greece in 2036 around two critical dimensions: **economic development** and **social cohesion**.

These scenarios were not conceived as forecasts. Their purpose was to broaden the scope of strategic reflection: to consider how economic, technological, social and institutional change might interact under different conditions, to identify emerging risks and opportunities, and to test the robustness of present-day policy choices across markedly different future contexts.

The Political Academy is therefore built around a progression of thought: from understanding the present, to recognising interdependencies, to preparing for alternative futures. It seeks not only to examine individual policy challenges, but also to illuminate the points at which they converge and where policy design encounters the complexity of implementation.

For the [Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation](#) the Political Academy reflects an outward-looking agenda, bringing historical knowledge and the Foundation's political archive into dialogue with policy learning, contemporary public debate and strategic thinking about the future.

Future editions are planned to take place in other strategic regions of Greece, exploring places where European policy choices encounter distinct regional conditions and where the relationship between strategic ambition and effective implementation becomes particularly visible.

Explore the Political Academy 2026

At a glance

The key ideas and findings of the Political Academy are visually depicted in the infographics below.

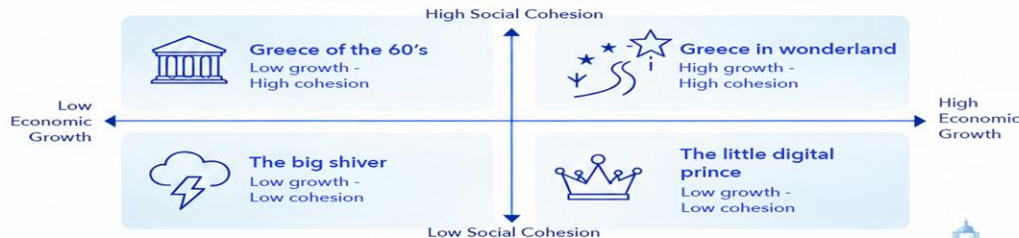


WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THE REPORT

5 Policy Priorities

-  **1** Strategic autonomy with social cohesion
-  **2** Energy transition with grids, storage and institutional capacity
-  **3** Tourism sustainability centred on quality of life
-  **4** Climate crisis and human mobility as interconnected challenges
-  **5** Crete as a testing ground for integrated European policies

4 Scenarios for Greece in 2036



The report **does not predict the future**. It prepares for it.
From strategic foresight to the choices of the present.



Chania
6-7 July 2026



ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ
«ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΣ Κ. ΒΕΝΙΖΕΛΟΣ»
Χανιά



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In depth

Read the **full Political Academy 2026 Report**, including the five cross-cutting policy priorities that emerged from the discussions, the methodological approach of the Future Lab, the four alternative scenarios for Greece in 2036, and the main findings from the participant evaluation. The full report is available in Greek.

The Academy agenda is included in the Appendix. Please note that speakers' titles reflect the positions they held as of July 2026.

Read and download the full report in [Greek](#).



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«ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΣ Κ. ΒΕΝΙΖΕΛΟΣ»
Χανιά



POLITICAL ACADEMY

Strategic Regions and European Policy:
The Case of Crete

Date : 6 - 7 July 2026

Location : Chania, Crete

National Research and Studies Foundation "Eleftherios K. Venizelos"
(Stavros S. Niarchos Hall), Eleftherias Venizelou Square, Chalepa, Chania



DAY 2: Tuesday, 7 July

- 9:30 • Arrival
- 10:00-11:00 • **Climate Crisis and Human Mobility in the Eastern Mediterranean**
Moderator: **Georgios Vourlakis**, Head of Development & Programmes, Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation
- **Dimitris Keridis**, New Democracy Parliamentary Spokesperson, Professor of International Relations at Panteion University, former Minister of Migration and Asylum
 - **Manos Karagiannis**, Professor of International Relations, University of Macedonia & Department of War Studies, King's College London
 - **Giannis Vourdoupas**, Chemical Engineer, NTUA, MSc, PhD
- 11:00-11:30 • Break
- 11:30-13:00 • **Interactive Strategic Planning Workshop (Future Lab)**
Georgios Plevris, Head of Strategic Planning and International Cooperation, Office of the Minister of Environment and Energy
- 13:00-13:30 • **Conclusions**
Georgios Vourlakis, Head of Development & Programmes, Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation

DAY 1: Monday, 6 July

- 10:00 • Arrival and registration
- 10:30-11:00 • **Welcome remarks**
- **Anna Kamarioti**, Director General, Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation
 - **Georgios Koukourakis**, Director General, National Research and Studies Foundation "Eleftherios K. Venizelos"
 - **Tzoni Kapellou**, Director, Hanns Seidel Foundation Greece & Cyprus
- 11:00-12:00 • **Eastern Mediterranean: Geopolitical Challenges and Europe's Strategic Priorities**
Moderator: **Vasilis Nedos**, Diplomatic and Defense correspondent, Journalist and Columnist at Kathimerini newspaper, PhD in European History
- **Dora Bakoyannis**, MP for Chania, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, Vice President of the Greek Delegation to the Council of Europe
- 12:00-12:15 • Break
- 12:15-13:15 • **Energy Transition and Strategic Autonomy**
Moderator: **Georgios Plevris**, Head of Strategic Planning and International Cooperation, Office of the Minister of Environment and Energy
- **Nikolaos Kalogeris**, Deputy of Regional Governor of Chania
 - **Panagiotis Simandirakis**, Mayor of Chania
 - **Michalis Zervakis**, Rector, Technical University of Crete
 - **Dimitris Kollias**, Energy Strategy Advisor, EU Climate Pact Ambassador, Former Advisor to the Deputy Minister of Energy 2023-2025
- 13:15-14:30 • Lunch
- 14:30-15:30 • **Sustainable Development and Tourism**
Moderator: **Dimitris Michelogiannis**, Special Advisor to the Regional Governor of Crete on Sustainable Local Development
- **Kyriakos Kotsoglou**, Thematic Deputy Regional Governor of Tourism, Region of Crete
 - **Tasos Aloglou**, Deputy Mayor for Finance, Municipality of Chania
 - **Georgios Tsinas**, Strategy and Communications Advisor
- 15:30-16:00 • **Conclusions / Q&A**
Georgios Vourlakis, Head of Development & Programmes, Konstantinos K. Mitsotakis Foundation

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