

**Speech by Mr. Theodore Vassilakis, President of Aegean Airlines, at the Closing Ceremony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aegean Airlines ProAm**

Dear Minister,  
Dear Members of Parliament,  
Dear General Regional Secretary,  
Dear Prefect(s),  
Dear Mayor(s),  
Dear Chairman of PGAs Europe,

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening!

First, I would like to congratulate the Professional winner of the individual game and the 6 winning teams of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aegean Airlines ProAm for their performance, as well as all the participants for their impeccable contribution in the conduct of a high standard tournament. I hope that all golfers have tasted unique personal & golfing moments in our land.

I feel particularly proud for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-in-a-row successful conduct of an international golf event. A golf event that works towards the diffusion of the image of our country as a golf destination with state of the art facilities and remarkable beauty.

One of the main goals back in 2006, when we were organizing the first Aegean Airlines Pro-Am, was the enforcement of the awareness of the Crete Golf Club, the diffusion of Crete as a golf destination, both seen as strategic steps towards the development of the tourism in Greece.

This year, I feel that our efforts are rewarded, that our goals are met. 176 golfers from 12 countries are here to prove it and so are the representatives of local and international media.

Aegean Airlines Pro-Am is the only golf tournament in Greece which is organized under the support of the PGAs of Europe, while the support offered by the PGA of Greece and the Hellenic Golf Federation has been vital.

I can assure you that my personal goal, as well as the goal of the Group of Companies that I represent is and will always be the support of every region with new golf courses and facilities, either with the organization of international tournaments or with the support of any kind of golf events.

We estimate that 16 golf courses will be built in our country within 5 years by daring investors. However, there is no clear legal framework yet established. Consequently, such a legal framework is according to our opinion a rather necessity.

At this point, I would like to refer to specific financial parameters of the golf industry in Europe. It is estimated that golf directly contributes to European Economy 15.4 billion Euros, with 6.300 golf courses and 4.1 million registered players. Around 83 golf courses are built yearly in Europe, with average cost of 4 million Euro per course. If you do the maths, 333 million euros are invested yearly, while it is estimated that almost a respective amount is spent yearly for the improvement and the upgrade of the exciting golf facilities.

Since all who share the love for golf, do not fall short of love for their fellowmen, allow me to say that the Organizing Committee of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aegean Airlines Pro-Am, respectful of the heavy legacy of the ancient Greek athletic spirit, will offer a substantial part of the proceeds to the efforts of the Special Children's Center "Zoodochos Pigi", a non-profit, non-governmental organization providing services to mentally retarded or autistic children, in Heraklion.

Please allow me, once more, to express my warm thanks to our valuable sponsors:

**Costa Navarino,  
Alpha Bank,  
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Maris Hotels,  
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the Athens International Airport “Eleftherios Venizelos”,  
Coca Cola – Avra Active Cup,  
VACAR SA – Saab,  
the Region of Crete,  
the Municipality of Heraklion,  
Vourakis Jewelry,  
Semeli Winery,  
Clinique,  
Eurest,  
Automotive Solutions LTD,  
Esquire magazine and last but not least,  
the Greek Radio and Television ERT.**

I thank them all dearly and hope to have them with us at the 4<sup>th</sup> Aegean Airlines Pro-Am, in 2009.

Closing, I would also like to express my whole-hearted thanks to all those who enthusiastically embraced the “3<sup>rd</sup> Aegean Airlines Pro-Am”, contributing, with their dynamic presence, the success of this year’s organization.

Even stronger and even more mature, we will continue our “game”, with the confidence of getting closer to the “whole” for the well-deserved “1<sup>st</sup> place” of golf in the hearts of all Greeks.

Let us not forget that golf, besides being a sport, it’s a way of life.  
See you next year, at the “4<sup>th</sup> Aegean Airlines Pro-Am”.