

Opening address

By the

**Vice Rector of Athens University
Professor John Drakopoulos**

Thank you for your kindness of inviting me, today among you. I would like to thank you for your presence in Greece in an effort for a European and an International cooperation of Speleology in order to advance this science and the environmental protection of caves as well. The exchange of scientific opinions and knowledge as well as the bonding of speleologists are leading towards a real and human cooperation in order to achieve the realization of possible means on the development, evolution and the environment of these monuments of nature which are the caves.

In the 45 years of the Hellenic Speleological Society's life, the impact on the geosciences is undeniabale.

I would like to add my personal feelings as representative of the University of Athens, the first high education Institution of this country, in hosting in our premisses your International Congress. I am deeply moved by its purposes and I feel honored to be among you.

In the name of the University of Athens I would like to welkom the participants and extent congratulations to the Organizing Commitee under the able chairmanship Professor Dermitzakis.

In wishing you a pleasant stay in our country and hoping of save return to your countries, I declare the begining of the Fifth International Speleological Congress.