



## 2009 State Visit to Greece

At the request of the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, will make a **State visit to the Hellenic Republic**, from **October 29 to 31, 2009**, during which she will be accompanied by her husband His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond.

"We are visiting Greece in a spirit of solidarity, as its population has suffered a great deal lately because of devastating wildfires and the fallout from the financial crisis. My husband Jean-Daniel Lafond will be joining us in the Hellenic Republic—, Greece, —the cradle of democracy and beacon of the Olympic spirit. We will visit Olympia, where the Olympic dream was born, and Athens, where we will take part in the ceremony to pass the Olympic flame to Canada in honour of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games taking place in February and March 2010. This ceremony will help make the upcoming international gathering of sports and culture a reality, and it is with great emotion and enthusiasm that we look forward to this event." stated the Governor General.

While visiting the Hellenic Republic, the Governor General and His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond will attend the official ceremony in which the Olympic flame will be passed to the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, at the Panathenaic Stadium, in Athens. Their Excellencies will listen to young Greeks during a dialogue and to the cultural milieu on the occasion of an *Art Matters* Forum. The State visit will also highlight Greece's and Canada's commitment to bringing peace and security to Afghanistan.

A delegation of Canadians representing a variety of fields—including diversity, arts and culture, civic engagement and youth—will interact with their Greek counterparts as well as play an active role in Their Excellencies' meetings with civil society. Information about members of the Canadian delegation will be available at [www.gg.ca](http://www.gg.ca).

State visits by a governor general play an important role in Canada's relations with other countries. They are the highest form of diplomatic contact, and they mark further developments in bilateral relations and exchanges among peoples.

## STATE VISIT TO THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Thursday, October 29  
Athens, Greece**

### **11:30 a.m. - Official welcoming ceremony with military honours**

The Governor General and His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond will be officially welcomed to the Hellenic Republic during a ceremony with military honours at the Presidential Palace.

The Presidential Palace is the official residence of the president of the Hellenic Republic. It previously served as the Royal Palace until the abolition of the monarchy by referendum in 1974.

*Presidential Palace, Athens*

### **11:40 a.m. - Meeting with the President of the Hellenic Republic**

Their Excellencies will meet with His Excellency Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic, and Mrs. May Papoulia to discuss relations between Canada and Greece. An expanded meeting with the official delegation will follow.

*Presidential Palace, Athens*

### **2 p.m. - Luncheon hosted by the Government of the Hellenic Republic**

The Government of the Hellenic Republic will host a luncheon in honour of Their Excellencies' visit to Greece.

*Athens*

### **6 p.m. - Olympic Flame Handover Ceremony**

Their Excellencies will attend the Olympic Flame Handover Ceremony at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens. During the ceremony, the Governor General will witness the handover of the Olympic Flame by the Hellenic Olympic Committee to the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC).

*Panathenaic Stadium, Athens*

### **9 p.m. - State dinner hosted by the President of the Hellenic Republic**

His Excellency Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic, and Mrs. May Papoulia will host a State dinner in honour of Their Excellencies.

*Presidential Palace, Athens*

**Friday, October 30**  
**Athens, Greece**

**10 a.m. – Wreath-Laying Ceremony**

The Governor General will lay a wreath at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier in Athens.

*Constitution Square, Hellenic Parliament, Athens*

**10:15 a.m. - Meeting with the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament**

Their Excellencies will meet with the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament.

*Hellenic Parliament, Athens*

**11 a.m. - Youth Dialogue on youth engagement for a better society**

Their Excellencies will host a Youth Dialogue, entitled “Building for Social Change: Youth Engagement for a Better Society”. The discussion will bring together young Greeks from Athens’ various neighbourhoods, universities and performing arts schools, as well as members of the Canadian delegation. They will then explore the ways in which Canadian and Greek youth can bring positive change to their communities and to broader society. The Governor General will deliver a speech on this occasion.

*Technopolis, Athens*

Participating delegates: Courtney Bragg, Kevin Walker.

**4 p.m. - Public *Art Matters* forum by His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond**

His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond will host an *Art Matters* public forum. Joining him will be Mr. Chris McDonald, Executive Director of Hot Docs International Documentary Film Festival, and Mrs. Nelofer Pazira, filmmaker, author, journalist and human rights activist. On this occasion, both the Governor General and His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond will deliver speeches.

*Ianos Bookstore, Athens*

Participating delegates: Chris McDonald, Nelofer Pazira.

**8:30 p.m. -Canadian cultural event hosted by the Ambassador of Canada to Greece**

Their Excellencies will attend a cultural event hosted by Her Excellency Renata E. Wielgosz, Ambassador of Canada to Greece, during which Canadian pianist and composer Alain Lefèvre will perform.

*Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens*

**Saturday, October 31  
Olympia, Greece**

**11 a.m. - Visit to Ancient Olympia Archaeological Site**

Their Excellencies will visit this historical site, which is the birthplace of the Olympics.

*Olympia Site, Olympia*

**12:30 p.m. - Visit to Archaeological Museum of Olympia**

During a visit, Their Excellencies will discover the impressive remains of this ancient site.

*Olympia Site, Olympia*

**1:30 p.m. - Tree-planting ceremony**

To commemorate the 2007 forest fires that devastated the region of Olympia, Their Excellencies will plant a tree as a symbolic gesture to regenerate the area.

*Olympia Site, Olympia*

**2:30 p.m. - Luncheon hosted by the Mayor of Olympia**

In honour of their State visit to Greece, Their Excellencies will attend a luncheon hosted by His Worship Georgios Aidonis, Mayor of Olympia. The Governor General will deliver a speech on this occasion.

*Hotel Antonios, Olympia*