Honorable

Mr. President and Members of the Organizing Committee of the Conference,

Mr Vice Comissioner of the North Aegean Region,

Mr. & Mrs. Representatives of the Local Authorities,

Ladies and Gentlemen Professors,

Dear guests,

Good evening. Welcome to the Municipality of West Samos.

We are very pleased to host in our city, Karlovasi, the 11th Conference of Actuarial Science and Finance in Samos. Clearly, the credit for achieving the goal, to be chosen to organize this International Conference on our island, goes to the Professor Mr. Konstantinidis and of course the University of the Aegean, a vital part of our Municipality, of which we are proud.

We are proud because the University of the Aegean is far different from the other Universities of the Country, as it is not limited to its typical role of imparting knowledge nor to the narrow contexts of its academic community. It is a University - Network, with departments scattered in the island region of the North Aegean (Samos, Mytilini, Chios). Due to the particular conditions of insularity, this itself constitutes a difficulty, but at the same time a challenge, to which the University of the Aegean has responded exceptionally well, not only by giving life to our arid islands, but also by interacting with them and upgrading them.

We are proud of the scientific work of the University of the Aegean, which consistently and methodically develops new academic subjects and expands the courses of study, responding to the demands and expectations of students for studies of high scientific value. Clearly, by "scientific work" we mean both the teaching through which young scientists emerge, as well as research and innovation. In this way, it succeeds on the one hand in meeting the needs of both Greek and global society, and on the other hand, in guaranteeing, and in fact ensuring, an immediate prospect of professional rehabilitation and promotion for its students and graduates.

We are proud because it is competitive with other Universities both of the country and abroad. We are proud of the progress and successes of its students. We are particularly excited by the distinctions of its teaching staff - especially the teachers in the Departments of Samos - for their emergence as leading scientists on a global scale. For the highest evaluation of its programs. For the high ranking of the University in the list of both Greek Universities and the International Ranking of Higher Education Institutions. For its emergence among the pioneer Universities worldwide in the goal of quality education and sustainable development.

We are proud because the University of the Aegean is not only active within its academic community, but is in constant connection with the local community, taking initiatives and an active role in improving the quality of life of the residents. Because of its important work at the teaching, scientific, research and administrative level, the University of the Aegean transcends national boundaries, contributes to the protection of the planet and marks an upward trajectory in intercultural and internationalization actions.

For all these reasons, we consider the University of the Aegean an integral part of the Samian Society. Especially in our Municipality, the Municipality of West Samos, where the University has most of its building infrastructure, most of which have been granted by the Municipality. And this, of course, is the least our Municipality could do, which already cooperates and will continue to cooperate and support the University in every possible way and by all means.

It would be my omission at this point not to mention Evangelos Sidirourgos, former Mayor of Karlovasi in the years 1983-1990. During his incumbency the School of Sciences of the University of the Aegean was established in Karlovasi, a fact that was a wish, an effort and in the end achievement of many involved to reach this goal, which, by general admission, changed the shape of Karlovasi, creating infrastructure projects that gave it a development boost.

The wider environment of the Municipality of West Samos testifies its history and its rich cultural tradition. The city that hosts the School of Sciences, Karlovasi, according to the prevailing interpretation of the great Samian historian Epaminondas Stamatiadis, took its name from two Turkish words Karli – ovasi, which mean snowy plain. According to another interpretation, by the historian Evangelia Baltas, the toponym Karlis - Ovazi was attributed to the area due to the existence of a river with a similar name.

So Karlovasi, either as "snowy plain", or as "plain of the river Karklik ", formerly called "Neochori" and "Karlovasia", consists of 5 districts: Old Karlovasi, New Karlovasi, Middle Karlovasi, the Cove and the Port. It is located northwest of Samos and was built around 1550 by Samians, at the time of the desolation of Samos.

In liberal Karlovasi, the Karlovasi School was founded in 1781-1784 with a financial donation from the will of the enlightened Karlovasi Bishop Porphyrios Zebetis. The pioneering for the time of the school, which was later renamed "Porphyria School" in honor of its founder, served the same revolutions and shaped its leaders, among which undoubtedly the first Karlovasian Logothetis Lykourgos, who on May 8, 1821 proclaimed the Samian Revolution in Messaio Karlovasi. It should be noted that this year marks the 200th anniversary of the victorious outcome of the struggle against the Turkish-Egyptian fleet, on the dawn of the feast of the Transfiguration of the Savior, so as a Pansamian memorial, the temple of the Transfiguration was built in Pythagorion bearing the inscription "Christ saved Samos on August 6, 1824 » which is the emblematic rendering of the event.

A large part of the history of Karlovasi were the tanneries, which flourished between 1880 and 1930. For the first time the word "industry" is found in a municipal document earlier in 1863, in 1868 the tanneries request a tax reduction from the Hegemoniki of Samos, in 1890 the pre-industrial craft goes into industrialization with the construction of the first motorized tannery and in 1899 the the 1st association of tanners with the name "Brotherhood of Tanners The Prophet Elias". The tanneries processed leather from animals and made it mainly chamois, which they channeled into Asia Minor. There were about 50 tanneries with 300 workers, covering 25% of domestic production. World War II marked the beginning of the end of tanning.

Nearby Fourniotiko Rema there are ruins of the leper home that began to be built in 1887, ended in 1890 and operated until 1966, due to the many cases of the disease.

At the time of the Hegemony, Karlovasi was an important industrial, commercial and spiritual center of the Aegean. In 1890, it had 3,348 inhabitants, while it now counts around 7,363 according to the 2001 census.

In 1923, a refugee camp was established in Riva, as the Asia Minor disaster brought expatriate refugees to Karlovasi. Until 1960, Riva was the most prosperous area of Karlovasi, where most of the economic and social life of the city was concentrated. Tanneries, warehouses, shops, banks, mansions, cafes and entertainment centers made up a traditional industrial project. The retreat of the leather industry, but also the destruction of the beach by the northwest winds led to the decline of the area.

The Church of the Transfiguration of Savior in Potami, before the Waterfalls, is the most important and best preserved Byzantine monument of Samos, which has been declared a historical monument by Gazette since 1972. Its construction is placed in the 11th After Christ century, while it was probably founded in the 6th After Christ century, during the Early Christian Period. In Karlovasi there are many Holy Temples, which were unfortunately affected by the earthquake of 2020.

Today in the wider area you will find wineries and clearly the United Winemaking Agricultural Cooperative of Samos, olive mills, ceramic factories, organic products (aromatics, etc.). It is worth visiting the traditional housing estate of Palaio and of course the other Municipal Unit of our Municipality, Marathokambos, a Mediterranean traditional village, built amphitheatrically, with arches and narrow streets on the southern outskirts of Kerkis mountain, with a panoramic view, one of the most developing tourist centers of Samos, as it combines endless beaches, history and preserves a rich architectural heritage.

Hoping you enjoy your stay in our Municipality, and based on Plato's words "science creates bliss", we wish you every success in the work of your Conference.

Foteini Thalassinou

President of the Municipal Council of West Samos