

Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou, the first woman to be elected as President of the Hellenic Republic

On 22 January Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou became the first woman to be elected President of the Hellenic Republic, succeeding Prokopios Pavlopoulos. She was elected in the first round of voting by 261 votes, a very large majority since the *Vouli* (parliament) has 300 members. To be elected in the first ballot, a candidate must receive the votes of two thirds of the members, i.e. 200 votes. This strengthened majority is intended to encourage candidates capable of achieving a broad consensus.

"This is an important day for the Greek Republic. Parliament has elected a remarkable jurist, a consensus personality, who symbolises the transition to a new era and who embodies unity and progress," said the head of government Kyriakos Mitsotakis (New Democracy, ND).

"The time has come for Greece to look to the future," said the Prime Minister, who had been criticised for appointing only two women to his government a few months ago. *"We have to be honest, Greek society is still marked by discrimination against women, but this is now changing, starting at the top of the State,"* he added. Greece ranks last in Europe in terms of gender equality according to the European Gender Equality Index (EIGE).

"Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou has always vigorously served justice, the protection of individual rights and the religious neutrality of the state. Her election will reward the progressive values she defended as a judge", said former Prime Minister

(2015-2019) Alexis Tsipras (Coalition of the Radical Left, SYRIZA), who appointed Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou to the presidency of the Council of State, a post she was, again, the first woman to hold in Greece.

Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou said she *"aspires to a society that respects the rights under our Constitution, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights"*. She wants *"to create a climate of security and justice in society"*.

Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou, 63, was born in Thessaloniki. She graduated in constitutional law and environmental law from the National and Capodistrian University of Athens and the University of Paris 2-Panthéon Assas. She has spent her entire career at the Council of State, where she joined in 1982 as a Deputy Judge. She became vice-president of this institution in 2015, and three years later she was appointed president. She has become known for her *"revolutionary legislation in favour of a fair balance between environmental protection and development,"* said Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou has been President of the Hellenic Society of Environmental Law since 2015. In the early 2000s, she also supported the abolition of the mention of religion on identity cards and the possibility for children born to foreign parents and having completed the majority of their schooling in Greece to obtain

Presidential election in Greece

22nd January 2020

citizenship. Finally, in 2018, the President of the Council of State informed parents' associations that had lodged complaints against the presence of immigrants in Greek schools that the integration of refugee children into schools was "*legal and necessary*".

The presidential office in Greece is honorary. By depriving the head of State of the right to dissolve parliament, the 1986 constitutional revision left him with only a representative role. Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou will be sworn in on 13 March.

You can read all of our publications on our site :

www.robert-schuman.eu

Publishing Director : Pascale JOANNIN

THE FONDATION ROBERT SCHUMAN, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France , Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani