

## **Gyaros: From the past isolation, to the vision of tomorrow**

*Island of exile, place of torture, heart of the CYCLADES LIFE program CYCLADES LIFE. An unknown side of Gyaros will be discovered through the exhibition "Gyaros: The isolation of yesterday, to the vision of tomorrow" from 18 February to 30 March 2017 in the exhibition halls of the Vafopouleio Cultural Center. The photo exhibition, curated by Thanasis Kottas is co -organized by the Association of Exiles (SFEA), WWF Greece, the Municipality of Thessaloniki and the Vafopouleio Cultural Center. The entrance is free.*



Natural breathtaking scenery, unique species threatened with extinction, an island haunted by human pain. This is a small preview of the exhibition "Gyaros: from the past isolation, to the vision of tomorrow" that will take place in Vafofouleio Cultural Center of Municipality in Thessaloniki. The island of the Northern Cyclades was a site of exile for more than 22,000 Greek people who were detained and tortured for their beliefs.

Except being a historical monument, since 2013 Gyaros is also the "heart" of the environmental project CYCLADES LIFE, which aims to create a novel marine protected area around the island of Gyaros together with the societies of Syros and Andros, with respect for the environment and the human activities.

The island became part of the Natura 2000 Network of Protected Areas in 2011 thanks to a This island with this great history has joined in the European ecological network for the protected areas Natura 2000 in 2011 thanks to a unique and unknown, to many, colony: approximately 12% of the global population of the endangered Mediterranean monk seal lives at the beaches and the partially submerged caves of the island.

This unknown northern side of the island is in contrast with the historically tormented southern side where the prison buildings are located. Thousands of exiles were tortured and suffered on this island, which was an exile from the Roman years until 1974, ending a sad chapter in Greek history.

The unique combination of nature and history that are hidden in the Aegean Sea will be discovered by those who visit the photographic exhibition "Gyaros: from the past

isolation, to the vision of tomorrow” that is co-organized by WWF Greece at Vapopouleio Cultural Center of the Municipality of Thessaloniki together with the Association of Exiles (SFEA) 1967-1974. The endless Aegean blue and the inaccessible caves that are being used of Mediterranean monk seals are smoothly combined with black-and-white photographs of prisons, sketches of prisoners and unique testimonies of the people who lived in the prisons of Gyaros in this exhibition.

The opening of the exhibition will take place on Saturday, 18 February, at 19:00. The orchestra of Vafopouleio Cultural Center will perform opuses of writers and musicians of that period. The entrance is free.

**You can watch the relevant video here:**

[https://youtu.be/J3eaLeA\\_jPg](https://youtu.be/J3eaLeA_jPg)

**More information:**

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The CYCLADES LIFE project is being implemented by WWF Greece together with the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Decentralized Administrative Authority of the Aegean, the Development Corporation of the Cyclades SA, the Harokopio University of Athens, MOM/Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Monk Seal and the Italian Institute Tethys.

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