

## Culture minister on EU ministers' council in Rome, return of ancient coins by Italy

ROME (ANA-MPA/ T. Andreadis)

Greece's Culture Minister Constantine Tasoulas stressed the significance of the informal EU culture ministers' meeting held in Turin in statements to the ANA-MPA here on Wednesday, as well as a ceremony in which Italy returned 80 ancient coins to Greece.

"The importance of today's informal culture ministers' meeting in Turin was not determined only by the daily agenda but also by the emphasis given by all the colleagues - including Greece - to the Italian EU presidency's proposal, which continues implementing an idea of the Greek presidency that preceded it. The idea that culture could be considered in the EU as a source from which growth and jobs may arise," he said.

He stressed that this aspect of culture had been overlooked and was absent from the agenda for revising the Europe 2020 strategy.

Tasoulas said he referred at length to this issue, presenting a study commissioned by the Greek culture ministry that demonstrated, with numbers, the social and economic impact of investment in culture. This showed that the multiplier in the case of a cultural investment was 3.4, meaning any investment would yield 3.4 times the same amount in revenues. As an example, he said the culture ministry's investments in recent years, amounting to 512 million euros, had yielded an economic and social result of 1.6 billion euros.

Earlier, the minister reported, the Italian Culture Minister Dario Franceschini had presented him with 80 coins - 79 silver and one copper - that had been confiscated in Venice in 2008 as items illegally exported from Greece. This was the first time the EU directive 93/7 had been implemented, as revised during the Greek presidency, which facilitates the handling of illegal movement of cultural goods.

He said the Italian government had accepted the request from Greek authorities and through the cooperation of the two culture ministries and the Italian police, the cache of coins dating from the 5th to 2nd centuries B.C. - most of them from the Halkidiki area - was now returning to Greece.