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Greece, Hoping For a UN Seat, Invites Envoys

By Robert Kroon p.2
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GENEVA —The government of Greece has sent formal invitations to all 188 chief delegates at the United Nations for a free, one-week visit to Greece, including a cruise in the Aegean, for themselves and their spouses.

The show of hospitality coincides with Greece's bid for a rotating seat on the UN Security Council, which will be decided by a General Assembly vote in October.

On Jan.1, Portugal and Sweden will end their two-year terms as nonpermanent Security Council members from the grouping representing Western Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Canada, the Netherlands and Greece are seeking the seats being vacated by Sweden and Portugal. The nations of the Western European grouping could not agree on a selection, so the lobbying is on.

Such campaigns are not new to the United Nations system.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Norwegian prime minister who is the new director-general of the World Health Organization, last year visited dozens of Asian and African capitals, whose votes would be needed to win the WHO contest.

Greece's hospitality gesture has raised some eyebrows.

"This is an unprecedented and questionable twist in UN campaigning style," said Peter van Wulfften Palthe of the Netherlands permanent UN mission in Geneva. "The Netherlands will decline Greece's invitation."