Washington, DC (November 1, 2011) – U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, issued the following statement after the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) General Conference approved the Palestinian Authority's request for full membership:

"This irresponsible action by the UNESCO damages the peace process and is a hindrance to negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. I'm pleased that the United States has immediately cut off funding for UNESCO in response to their short-sighted decision. We will continue to stand by our ally Israel during this tumultuous time in the Middle East, and oppose the Palestinian Authority's attempts to undermine the peace process."