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ANNUAL REPORT

Inclusivity

Unleashing the power of diversity

 29 - 30 September 2022  Nicosia, Cyprus



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2nd Day > Welcome Speeches

Dubravka Suica.....	102
Asma Khan.....	105
Stelios Kympouropoulos.....	110
Kleanthis Koutsoftas.....	113

2nd Day > Discussions

Fireside discussion on Citizens' Participation in a democracy.....	117
Fireside discussions with young Cypriots.....	119
European Year of Youth.....	123
All about fertility.....	130
Benefits of attracting international tech companies.....	134
Participatory Education: Reforming, Transforming and Advancing Education in an Evolving World	138
Inclusiveness through innovation and entrepreneurship actions	151
Inclusive growth and the future of work.....	155

Working professionals going back to education	159
--	-----

Mobilising Business and Finance against Modern Slavery	162
---	-----

Fireside discussion on compassion, understanding and empathy.....	166
---	-----

There is No Plan(et) B: youth activism in the fight against climate change in Cyprus and Greece.....	171
--	-----

Digital education for/and inclusion.....	180
---	-----

Circular Economy.....	185
--------------------------	-----

Blueprint: The Evolutionary Origins of a Good Society.....	191
---	-----

Side Events.....	194
-------------------------	------------

Sponsors & Supporters.....	197
---------------------------------------	------------



The Cyprus Forum is an independent non-profit conference, which aspires to be a leading annual meeting of political leaders from Cyprus and abroad, as well as prominent figures from the public and private sectors, the business world, the media, academia and civil society.

The Cyprus Forum has managed to become an institution in the Cypriot public debate and to strengthen the redefinition of policymaking in Cyprus. Our ultimate goal is to improve and promote sustainable and socially responsible policies in Cyprus, but also in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean.

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1st DAY

► WELCOME SPEECHES

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CYPRUS FORUM HAS NOW BECOME AN INSTITUTION

CONSTANTINOS PETRIDES
MINISTER OF FINANCE

ON BEHALF OF

NICOS ANASTASIADES
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, stated that the conference has now become an institution, placing at its centre, as the goal of the organisers, the fruitful dialogue and the activation of civil society.

In his welcome speech at the opening of the Cyprus Forum 2022, read out by Finance Minister Konstantinos Petrides, President Anastasiades said that the conference has created new perspectives in terms of policymaking and finding creative solutions to important issues of wider public policy and the main social problems and challenges facing the international community.

This year, the general theme of the conference is the concept of inclusivity, he said, a concept that focuses on the pressing need to provide equal access and opportunities to all people, as well as the elimination of any discrimination and intolerance.

An objective that was the vision and was set as the highest priority of our government, considering it an obligation to build for the present and to bequeath to future generations a genuine and inclusive rule of law and welfare, President Anastasiades said.

A state that is sensitive, that safeguards and promotes human rights, that adequately responds to the demands of all citizens, and that is capable of providing practical assistance to their needs.

To this end, he noted, “we took a holistic approach, adopting radical reforms but also a series of national strategies and innovative actions” and referred to the institution of public consultations, which was established, making citizens co-formers in our policy-making and not mere addressees of decisions.

He said that as a result of the targeted policy we have adopted and are implementing, we managed to achieve breakthroughs including gender equality, reconciliation of work and family life, ensuring equal access to education and health services, supporting the elderly and citizens with disabilities or developmental disorders.

Most importantly, he noted, the implementation of the “Cyprus - Tomorrow” Plan, through 56 reform provisions and 74 investment actions, is the culmination, the completion of the work that has begun, “but also the bequest of the Government for a modern European State, to all citizens, every Cypriot”.

In his welcoming speech, the President also referred to the efforts regarding the reunification of Cyprus, stressing that the highest priority was and remains finding a solution that will ensure the peaceful coexistence of the two communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and full respect for all the religious groups of the island, Armenians, Maronites, Latins.

“This is the deepest meaning of our efforts: Through a persistent but creative negotiation process to make our country a truly sovereign and independent state, a state of peaceful coexistence and co-creation,” he said, “a state, completely free from the occupation troops, invasive rights and dependencies on third countries. A state in which democratic institutions, human rights, the principles and values of the European ideal and the United Nations will be implemented and respected.”



CONSOLIDATION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AS A PROMOTER OF INCLUSIVENESS

ANNITA DEMETRIOU
PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Trying to achieve the goals of inclusive democracy through parliamentary action is often in dire straits and sometimes may seem particularly arduous work, said the President of the House of Representatives, Annita Demetriou, underlining that she has made it her priority to highlight and consolidate the House of Representatives as a promoter of inclusivity.

In a video-taped speech at the Cyprus Forum, Ms. Demetriou said that it is our duty “to persevere and vigorously continue to move forward together –institutions, competent bodies and civil society – in the best interests of society and citizens, which requires the elimination of inequalities, respect for diversity and equal access to democratic processes.”

Ms. Demetriou said that the theme of this year's Forum fully coincides with the vision of the House of Representatives for society. “It is for this reason that I have made it my priority to highlight and consolidate the House of Representatives as a promoter of inclusivity, which, as a broad term, sometimes seems an elusive goal,” she said.

She noted that “a parliament that promotes inclusiveness leaves no one behind. As a legislator, she does not exclude anyone nor does she discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, able-bodiedness, peculiarities, economic status and different religious or political beliefs.”

“She enacts laws and holds the government accountable, taking into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the most vulnerable and those who are discriminated against. The Parliament also reflects the diversity of the communities it represents in its institutional practices”, she noted.

She said that “In order to achieve these objectives, as Members of Parliament, we must ensure inclusivity in all parliamentary procedures in the exercise of our legislative and supervisory mandate. This concerns, for example, how parliaments implement and ensure gender mainstreaming, contribute to the formulation and adoption of gender-sensitive budgets, interact with young people and promote human rights through their legislative work”, she said.

She underlined that “it is the responsibility of parliaments to ensure that in the production of legislative work and in the exercise of parliamentary scrutiny they listen to, take into account and convey the views of all citizens, and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable these different views to be incorporated into parliamentary procedures.”

Ms. Demetriou stated that “in the context of healthy interaction with civil society, the House of Representatives is increasingly making use of new technologies and social media, which facilitate and promote communication and dialogue with citizens in real time.”

“The upgraded website of the House of Representatives provides direct access to legislative and wider parliamentary work, while the operation of a Press Office strengthens the channels of communication with civil society. An important role is also expected to be played by the Foundation of the Parliament, which is to be established soon in the

House of the Citizen”, she noted.

She said that “as far as the legislative work is concerned, the House of Representatives, in close cooperation with stakeholders, has promoted a series of legislative measures to combat discrimination on the basis of gender, in order to promote equal opportunities and the unhindered participation of women in decision-making centres.”

Ms. Demetriou said that “a leading example of effective claiming and successful cooperation between all affected stakeholders is the recent enactment, last July, of the establishment of femicide as a delictum sui generis with a relevant amendment of the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and for Related Matters Law of 2021.”

She said that “the most extreme form of gender-based violence is becoming visible, both in the legal context and more widely in society. The ratification and introduction of the Istanbul Convention, the first internationally legally binding instrument to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, was an extremely important step towards tackling gender-based violence. In addition, with relevant amendments to the Criminal Code, sexism, online sexism and harassment have now been criminalised”, she added.

Ms. Demetriou said that “despite our efforts, much remains to be done, as the road to achieving what inclusive democracy stands for remains long and difficult.”

She added that in terms of the goal of combating gender discrimination, both parliamentary parties and the state have a specific role to play in finding a way to constitutionally enshrine quotas. “Moreover, linking the budget to equality policies is another measure that can make a decisive contribution to achieving the goal of real inclusivity, as it will ensure the horizontal implementation of equality policies by the entire government apparatus,” she mentioned.

She stressed that “the role of the new generation is particularly important in these efforts. We must ensure the active and meaningful participation of young people in the effort to build a truly inclusive society.”

“It is our duty to create the right conditions that will enable the younger generation to actively participate in shaping both the present and the future. In this context, eliminating phenomena of apathy, disdain and indifference to politics and the commons must be our priority”, she said.



UTILISING THE WEALTH OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

YIANNIS THOMATOS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF DELPHI ECONOMIC FORUM

vWe have no choice but to utilise all the wealth offered by the various manifestations of human existence, said Yiannis Thomatos, Executive Vice President of the Delphi Economic Forum.

Speaking at his welcome speech, Mr. Thomas said that “this is the 3rd year that we are in Cyprus as the Delphi Economic Forum and we are very happy about it, because we have the opportunity to work with an amazing team.”

“The Oxygono organisation with which we work very well are the best partners we could have in our activities here in Cyprus.”

Mr. Thomatos pointed out that “another reason we are happy to be here is because the special weight of Cyprus is such that it essentially obliges us to be here to expand our presence. The Delphi Economic Forum is now in its 8th year of presence. It has established itself as one of the most important policy fora in Southeast Europe.”

“Our activities apart from the annual conference in Delphi, where more than 5 thousand people gather in total during these four days, we organise regional conferences in the southeastern Mediterranean, in Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia and Bulgaria and of course in Cyprus and at the same time, gathering knowledge and experiences and creating a network in these regions. We are organising a very important conference for the third year in Washington DC, and our presence in Brussels, which in any case, are considered to be decision-making centres, is about to start.”

“So”, the Executive Vice President of the Delphi Economic Forum pointed out, “Cyprus, a cultural and energy hub, with a long and bitter history, a place of contrasts, challenges and a place with huge prospects, is a place where I think the Forum very much wants to be and that is why our goal is for Cyprus Forum to have its own importance and to develop in its own perspective.”

Mr. Thomatos said that this year's Cyprus Forum is dedicated to inclusion and diversity. “We have no choice but to utilise all the wealth offered by the various manifestations of human existence. We sincerely believe in the idea that there are forces, creative forces in every society, groups or categories of people who, if they can gain access, acceptance, tools and opportunities, can be an essential part of the solution to the problems we face.”

“This conference proves this in practice,” he said, “both in its wide-ranging themes and in the diversity of the exceptional guest speakers. We believe that such an effort can lead to mutual understanding and the overcoming of divisions. Our goal is to create common spaces. And we think that there is no more symbolic place than Cyprus for such a project.”

Concluding, the Executive Vice President of the Economic Forum of Delphi thanked the sponsors because without them it would not have been possible to hold this conference, and the knowledge partners, the knowledge partners who managed to create a very important program with 170 speakers.



LET US NOT ABANDON DEMOCRACY, LET US FIX IT

NICOLAS KYRIAKIDES
FOUNDER OF CYPRUS FORUM

Let us not abandon democracy, let us fix it, said the founder of the Cyprus Forum Dr. Nicolas Kyriakides, expressing at the same time the certainty that as most societies once made the transition from kingship to representative democracy, at some point they will make the transition to participatory democracy.

In his welcoming speech, Mr. Kyriakides said that “the Cyprus Forum is now in its 3rd year and for the first time it is taking place in two days, with more than 170 speakers and more than 40 speakers from abroad.”

“We can now say that it is the biggest policy production conference in Cyprus.”

Mr. Kyriakides stressed that “the Cyprus Forum will not raise issues of political conflict every year, but will bring interesting suggestions and commitments from politicians, technocrats, academics, and activists who promote and exert pressure on decision-making centres.”

“The general theme of the 3rd Cyprus Forum is Inclusivity. The first year it was Policy-making Redefined, and last year Towards a sustainable horizon. This year we wanted to set the tone for inclusiveness and inclusivity. We want to push in our own way for the Cypriot society to become more open and socially just.”

The founder of the Cyprus Forum pointed out that “this year's conference will discuss a multitude of issues that concern Cypriot society and, by extension, policy production”.

“One of the innovations of this year's conference is the assignment of all discussions to renowned organisations and research centres, with the result that all discussions take place on a scientific basis and also favour the continuation of the effort to implement the recommendations of each organisation separately. For example, the European Commission Representation, the European Parliament Office, the University of Nicosia, CYENS, CMMI, PRIO, CIM, the LSE Hellenic Observatory, ELIAMEP and the World Bank.”

Dr. Nikolas Kyriakides underlined that “it is noteworthy that one of the main objectives of this year's event is the further involvement and participation of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, with discussions on practical issues that concern both communities”.

Regarding the practical implementation and promotion of the Forum's conclusions, Mr. Kyriakides said that “we are working together with the Centre for Social Innovation in the Cyprus Quality of Life Index, its purpose is to study through various tools whether there has been progress or deterioration in various areas that concern Cypriot society such as health, transparency, access to the labour market, diversity, etc. As every year, we will create the publication with the conclusions of the conference which will include the key points of all discussions.”

In addition, Mr. Kyriakides said that “this year we inaugurated the so-called side events in Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos, but also in some other places in the area of the Municipal Theatre, which we want to be transformed on the days of the confer-

ence into a large venue of the Cyprus Forum.”

The founder of the Cyprus Forum stressed that “we are constantly complaining about politics. Let us not abandon democracy. Let us fix it. Crises are not going to stop. Corruption cannot be eliminated. But our institutions can be made stronger so that our democracy can withstand any failures in electoral processes and appointments. Technocrats, universities, activists can come closer to producing policy, to contribute constructively and to control it.”

“I am certain that as most societies once made the transition from kingship to representative democracy, at some point they will make the transition to participatory democracy. The problems are so complex that elected representatives cannot handle everything. They need the people.”

In conclusion, Dr. Nikolas Kyriakides thanked the Presidency of the Republic for placing under its auspices the Cyprus Forum for yet another year, the partners from the Delphi Forum, the sponsors (Unicars, Cryos, Remedica, Petrolina, Philip Morris and Amdocs) without whom the conference would not have been possible, as well as the numerous supporters and all the speakers.

Finally, he announced the dates of next year's Cyprus Forum, which will be on Friday and Saturday, September 29 and 30, 2023, focusing on the word “Transparency”.



EUROPE CANNOT BE WHOLE AS LONG AS CYPRUS REMAINS DIVIDED

ROBERTA METSOLA
PRESIDENT OF THE EU PARLIAMENT

As the only way forward for Cyprus, Roberta Metsola described the need to have a single, sovereign, European state, a bizonal, bicomunal federation on the basis of Security Council resolutions, in a video message, at the opening of the Cyprus Forum.

The President of the European Parliament underlined that Europe cannot be truly whole as long as Cyprus remains divided. She pointed out that every effort must be made to restore trust and find workable solutions by building trust between the two communities.

Regarding her recent visit to Cyprus, Ms. Metsola, highlighted that she had the opportunity to attend constructive meetings on issues that concern European citizens at this critical time.

Referring to her visit to Kyrenia and the opportunity to see the sealed-off city of Famagusta, she said that she managed to realise how anachronistic this division has become. "Cyprus will always be in my heart not only because I am a proud citizen of the Mediterranean, but because we understand each other, we know the potential of Europe, we know that we must be united, and we know that we are better, stronger and safer when we act together", President Metsola highlighted.

She also described the history of Cyprus as an important example of resilience, that is, as one can overcome insurmountable difficulties and come out stronger from them.

Ms. Metsola noted that Cyprus is not distanced from Europe, neither will Europe be distanced from Cyprus.

In her speech, commenting on the ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Ms Metsola indicated that if there is a moment to react and be united against those who seek to destroy what we have built, it is now.

"Our joint actions will determine how we move forward and consolidate the European construction", she said, noting that Cyprus plays a fundamental role in protecting and defending European values and the European way of life.

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THE CHOICE OF A MUTUALLY AGREED SETTLEMENT OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM IS FADING

COLIN STEWART

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND HEAD OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS (UNFICYP) AND DEPUTY SPECIAL ADVISER OF THE SECRETARY – GENERAL (DSASG) ON CYPRUS

The UN Special Representative to Cyprus, Colin Stewart, expressed his concerns that the choice of a mutually agreed settlement of the Cyprus problem, a formula for the reunification of the island on both sides, is fading.

Mr. Stewart pointed out that at the moment there is a political deadlock in relation to the Cyprus problem, while the positions of the two sides are very far apart, since they cannot even agree on what the talks will be about, but also on the conditions for returning to the negotiating table.

"I do not think this impasse is necessarily insurmountable in the medium term, but realistically I do not see much prospect for talks before the upcoming elections on the island and in the region next year", Mr. Stewart said.

"And after this election, we may find ourselves in a new context, better or worse. It is impossible at this point to predict that", he said.

He also noted that "while there is an unfavourable prospect for talks soon, there is something much more fundamental at stake right now: I am extremely concerned that the option of a mutually agreed settlement to the problem – in other words a formula for reuniting the island acceptable to both sides – is fading away and will not be available for much longer."

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative made important references to the work of the bi-communal technical committees, indicating that they are the foundations of bi-communal achievements that will lay the foundations for future talks. He also stressed that the technical committees and the CBMs are neither a substitute for the talks, nor a distraction from such talks, however, they are not the way to the talks.

Mr. Stewart also said he was working intensively with representatives of the two leaders to complete a wide range of joint initiatives that would not only benefit Cypriots across the island but would also create an important path towards settlement talks. He also pointed out that "official trade across the Green Line will double by the end of the year." In addition, he pointed out that "the division of the island is growing and the integration of the North by Turkey, especially economic, necessarily means less interdependence between the two sides on the island. And interdependence is the adhesive that can keep the island together." He also stressed out that if current trends continue, the idea of a mutually agreed solution will very soon become unsustainable.

Time, he said, is running out and we cannot afford to wait until the next time the two sides are ready to talk. He also mentioned that economic pressure in the north and the growing economic division between the two sides on the island also breed resentment and lack of trust between them.

"I hear from many Turkish Cypriots that they are unhappy with the current trend, but they do not see any alternative. Providing an alternative from north and south would be a major step – perhaps the most crucial step – towards reviving hope for a comprehensive settlement", he suggested.

The economic inequality between the two sides of the island, he said, creates all kinds

of adjustment challenges that make a settlement agreement another major challenge, while at the same time boosting the movement of all kinds along the buffer zone, which is a serious problem for both sides.

“For all these reasons, the unfavourable economic situation in the north undermines the prospects for a settlement. It does not help, as some people continue to believe, to move the north towards a settlement”, he said.

The Special Representative expressed the conviction that the majority of Cypriots want the division of the island to end but lose hope. And when populations do not yet have any enthusiasm for a settlement, it is hard to imagine political leaders making a deal on their own initiative.

He also said that “it is for this reason that it is so crucial and urgent to rebuild the bonds between the two sides – through active, frequent interactions, between all segments of society and all sectors of the economy. For there to be any hope of a final settlement, Cypriots need to learn to live together on the island.”

In this context, he said, any interaction – even when shopping – is better than no interaction at all. When people interact, myths and walls collapse. Misconceptions and taboos are put aside. Greater mutual understanding is the foundation for building trust, and without trust, there can never be a sustainable solution, he said.

“Many Cypriots tell me that there is no problem between the people of both sides. The problem is on a political level, but democracy is never perfect, and elected politicians cannot turn a deaf ear to the wishes of their constituents, especially if those wishes are strongly felt”, he said.

He also suggested that “nothing brings people together faster and more intensely than economic interest. Expanding trade and business links, and securing the infrastructure to support them, is the surest way to restore confidence in a solution.”

Mr. Stewart said he was working intensively with the representatives of the two leaders to complete a wider range of joint initiatives that would not only benefit Cypriots across the island but would also create an important path towards settlement talks.

Regarding the economic initiatives, the Special Representative noted that they are working on expanding trade, through the Green Line Regulation, removing barriers to banking between the two sides, addressing insurance problems and decongestion at crossing points.

He also added that there is a direct mutual interest in increasing trade and that both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who shop find some goods cheaper and more attractive on the other side.

In addition to the official proposals made by both sides, Mr. Stewart suggested exploring the possibility of a common ground for dealing with the migration that affects both sides of the island, while examining the possible development of a photovoltaic park in the buffer zone for the benefit of both communities, at a time when energy supply

prices are sharply increasing.

"We are jointly addressing environmental issues on the island, issues that know no borders even though the dividing line on the island is known as the green line, and we continue to support cross-community activities that focus on women and young people," he said, adding that "a remarkable amount of progress is being made in this context".

He also noted that "official trade across the green line will double by the end of the year, including the first processed non-animal foods such as olive oil, tahini and carob syrup. Crossing points are becoming more efficient and less of an obstacle."

He said that "on their own initiative, the unions on both sides based on the needs for labour in the south and the available workers in the north have so far provided income to approximately 500 families."

He added that there have been successes in a wide range of areas from health, culture, policing, to waste management, while sport has too much potential.

"Many areas where achievements have been made in recent months have gone through the work of the technical committees created by the leaders of the two sides and are currently working on more than 20 other initiatives," Mr. Stewart said. However, there are people – on both sides - who worry that these committees are simply consolidating or normalising the status quo.

On the contrary, he said, the intercommunal technical committees are building the foundations of bi-communal achievements that will lay the foundations for future talks. Technical committees and Confidence-Building Measures are neither a substitute for talks nor a distraction from political talks. It is however the way to the talks.

"Each of these initiatives will have a positive impact on the lives of Cypriots on both sides of the island. But even most importantly, each initiative will provide a small piece of positive experience, create a small amount of goodwill. Thus, piece by piece, the way will be created a way to a mutually agreed settlement of the Cyprus problem. But we do not have much time" he concluded.

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COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTING DIVERSITY

HELENA DALLI
EU COMMISSIONER FOR EQUALITY

A society that promotes the inclusion and integration of people of different backgrounds enjoys the fruits of creativity and innovation that different ideas, cultures and civilizations offer to it, said European Commission Equality Commissioner Ms. Helena Dalli in her speech at the Cyprus Forum.

“Societies and workplaces that embrace diversity benefit in many ways. They are enriched through a dialogue between different cultures and traditions. A diverse pool of talent in the workforce drives creativity and innovation. To get there, everyone must have equal rights and opportunities, to fulfil their ambitions”, Ms. Dalli said.

She continued by saying that “that is why I am committed to fighting discrimination, promoting diversity and building a Union of equality. A true Union of Equality means equality for all in all its senses.”

The Equality Commissioner of the European Commission stated that the Commission has already adopted a number of key strategies to achieve this goal.

The strategies concern:

- the gender equality strategy,
- the action plan against racism,
- the EU strategic framework on Roma for equality, inclusion and participation,
- the strategy to combat anti-Semitism,
- the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, and
- the Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“The strategies include actions to mainstream equality and non-discrimination across EU policy areas. And by using a two-pronged approach, we make sure to take into account the different aspects of people's personal characteristics and identities”, Ms. Dalli said.

“I called on Member States to develop and implement strong ambitious national equality frameworks and to work with EU institutions to combat discrimination. Later this year, the Commission will propose legislation to strengthen the role of equality bodies in strengthening the institutional dimension of equality policy”, the Commissioner added.

She highlighted that “rules and strategies alone are not enough. As major drivers of change, we also rely on business support. The Commission continues to promote diversity and inclusion as well as the national Diversity Charters through the EU Platform for Diversity Charters. Almost 14.400 companies, covering more than 17 million employees in 26 Member States, have signed the Charter and are committed to promoting equality and diversity in the workplace. I am pleased to see the intense participation of the Cypriot Diversity Charter in the Cyprus Forum.”

Helena Dalli added that “during this year’s annual European Diversity Month in May, I encouraged organisations to develop links with NGOs, public organisations, other businesses and civil society, as you do today. I hope you are all with me in May of 2023. I also hope to see Cypriot candidates for the European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity

Award in 2023.”

In conclusion, Ms. Dalli said that “cities and regions play an important role in encouraging and investing in equality, diversity and inclusion. The Award is an opportunity for Cyprus to demonstrate what you are doing to promote inclusion and create a society without discrimination.”

1st DAY

► DISCUSSIONS



SMART CITIES IN THE METAVERSE

DR. OLGA SHVAROVA, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER CYENS
ANDREAS PANAYI, KINISIS VENTURES
CONSTANTINOS YIORKADJIS, MAYOR OF NICOSIA
DR. PANAGIOTIS CHARALAMBOUS, V-EUPNEA MRG LEADER, CYENS
DISCUSSANT: GOGO ALEXANDRINO, PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISOR,
RED WOLF PR & ADVERTISING AGENCY



Technology is constantly transforming every aspect of our lives, from healthcare, mobility, food, etc. It also manages to change the way we do everyday tasks. A simple bet of this era is the interconnection of the real data of a city in the era of the Metaverse.

Cities are a very important field of innovation and research, which was addressed by the discussion under the title “Smart Cities in the Metaverse” organised as a knowledge partner by the CYENS Centre of Excellence in the context of the work of the Cyprus Forum.

As it was noted by the participants, smart technologies are creating a revolutionary approach to how people approach their daily activities in cities. They referred, each from their own experience, to Nicosia's connectivity efforts as a smart city with Metaverse.

Nicosia Smart City

During the discussion, the “Nicosia Smart City” initiative was presented extensively, with the participation of both the Mayor of Nicosia and the scientists who participated, its connection with Metaverse and the possibilities it offers.

For his part, the Mayor of Nicosia initially praised the importance of the location of the CYENS Centre of Excellence, in the historic centre of the capital on the border with the buffer zone. This will make a decisive contribution to the implementation of the strategy for its revitalisation, through the investment of state resources and European funds.

Cities, he pointed out, are an extremely useful vehicle that states and governments can invest in and formulate effective policy through science and achieve significant results. In addition, both Centres of Excellence and Universities should have a role and connect with cities to transfer research knowledge through innovation to startups, contributing to the economy and the exercise of scientific diplomacy.

Regarding the CYENS Center of Excellence, Mr. Yiorkatzis noted that it is an extremely comprehensive scientific centre that responds to the conditions of the new era. Through scientific innovation and research, they build collaboration and trust in all actors in cities and communities. It is important, he said, to move smart cities into the Metaverse era.

Transition from smart to virtual cities

Dr. Olga Shvarova, in her position, said that the smart city and the Metaverse environment are two different things that overlap through a common ecosystem with its base in artificial intelligence. Augmented reality, she noted, is at the heart of CYENS research as an idea to adopt a virtual environment that embodies lifestyle in a real city. Metaverse could therefore be seen as a transition from smart to virtual cities. One of the important objectives of governments, she said, is to identify ways they can use to improve citizens' quality of life and enhance their participation in policy and decision-making.

She also explained that when we refer to the term “Metaverse” from the point of view

of research, it concerns an algorithmic way of governance through which more positive results will be produced than traditional ways. However, it makes sense to raise concerns about the risks and impacts of surveillance technologies that were rapidly developed in the post-pandemic period.

Therefore, Ms. Shvarova pointed out, the emergence of the Metaverse platform is a blessing, but it is also a significant risk that policymakers should be aware of. They should not simply embrace the enormous potential it offers in order to increase citizens' interaction with a digital city. They should assess the consequences and empower citizens, through informed decisions, on how to use Metaverse technology in their daily activities.

iNicosia Project: The digital twin of Nicosia

As far as the technology behind Metaverse is concerned, Dr. Panagiotis Charalambous explained that it is a matter of merging the physical with the digital world. Essentially, researchers want to integrate information systems into the physical space where people live with respect for the environment and the urban space.

CYENS, through the strategic cooperation with the Municipality of Nicosia, utilised infrastructure and data for the implementation of smart technologies aimed at improving the quality of life for those who interact with the urban environment. The iNicosia project implemented by the CYENS Centre of Excellence, part of which was presented during the discussion by Dr. Charalambous, managed to combine research teams with similar expertise and a variety of tools such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data Analysis, Virtual Reality, etc.

In brief, Dr. Charalambous, in his presentation, explained that iNicosia is a digital twin of the city that integrates all available data sources into a real-time 3D model. Through urbanisation and simulation, users of the digital twin can observe the conditions of the city in real time.

It is important, he stressed, for researchers to understand the relationship between humans and the environment through the collection of data that will be placed in different parts of the city, where, for example, they will be able to record temperature, dust concentration, traffic, people, etc.

This is a huge amount of data, as he said, that will then need to be managed and processed, which is a challenge for researchers to innovate by developing new methods. However, it is important, as he said, through the methods of learning through data, as they are developed, to have the appropriate respect for the privacy of citizens, through the anonymisation of the process.

Investments in new technologies

On the part of investors in new technologies, Andreas Panagi, when asked to comment on the view of investors towards the vision of developing a Metaverse environment, referred to the developments over time and how they affected his own professional development, likening the data to the evolution of Metaverse. He also referred to the

evolution of “google second life” and avatars, technologies that are constantly gaining ground. He said that investors should turn to these technologies and their evolution to Metaverse second life.

Use of digital currency

Ms. Shvarova, when asked to comment on the scientific actions around Metaverse, stressed that researchers deal with urban digital twins by examining processes, functions and interactions in the urban space. In addition, there are two main digital aspects of urban digital twins that capture the city, buildings, streets and structure. There is an effort to model the population within the city and the traffic flows. She also added that the use of a digital currency that would interact with the city's environment is being considered at an early stage, which could help process payments between the two communities.

Improving quality of life, creativity and progress

Commenting on what was important during the discussion, the Mayor of Nicosia highlighted that it is important that both Universities and Centres of Excellence that conduct research, in order to become competitive, should have the prospect of state aid programmes and institutionalised private investments. In fact, he gave the example of corresponding European Centres of Excellence and the significant resources at their disposal for conducting research.

In conclusion, through the multidisciplinary collaboration of the Municipality with the CYENS Centre of Excellence for the creation of iNicosia, Nicosia aims to become a reference point for the improvement of the quality of life, creativity and progress for local authorities, residents, visitors and people involved in scientific research.



**Constantinos
Christofides**

Candidate
President of the
Republic of Cyprus

WE NEED TO REWARD EXCELLENCE

“FIRESIDE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUNG CYPRIOTS”

DR. XENIA MISOURIDOU, LECTURER IN STATISTICS AND MACHINE LEARNING,
FORBES 30 UNDER 30

DISCUSSANT: DR. CONSTANTINOS CHRISTOFIDES, PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS,
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

A person who excels abroad, Dr. Xenia Miscouridou, lecturer in Statistics and Machine Learning, together with the academic Dr. Constantinos Christofides, analysed the issue of public education and how new talents can be brought out through it. Dr. Miscouridou's name is on Forbes magazine's "30 Under 30" list and based on her own course she talked about how everyone could have similar successes.

Mr. Christofides asked the question, how can the public school multiply its examples, as in the case of Ms. Miscouridou.

"I finished like you said in public school and then I went on to England. Following my passion, my talent. It is of key importance, and as a society we need to promote and reward excellence, which is multidimensional, as are humans and their abilities. It is very important for how to push the boundaries of knowledge," she said.

For her, the school's role is to stimulate the interest of students so that they want to discover their interest. "To expose children to environments, to have interdisciplinary projects, interdisciplinary workshops in school, to get to know people, to have people talk to them that will inspire them. "To have this kind of interaction", she highlighted.

Ms. Miscouridou commented that everyone should rely on education and that the public school today can develop students' abilities. When she was asked what needs to be changed, she said: "Starting from the school, this is the easiest. The school must attract students in order to have interest and cultivate their talents. It must correspond to the current state of technology in our society. Be properly equipped, be friendly, if you wish, to the student. Then, there is the matter of teachers. They need to follow Differentiation Teaching, the teaching model which meets all levels of students. That is, at any moment it can cover both the weak student and the strong, because you cannot condemn either one or the other. Abroad, this is achieved with the help of an assistant teacher in the classroom. The profession of the teacher is supported so that they can cope, because they have a multi-speed classroom."

She also spoke about the all-day school, through which talents can be cultivated, since more time is given. "There has to be deepening, in the field or in the discipline. The solution is more hours. There should be this broad education. Therefore, what is needed is more time", she commented.

When asked by Mr. Christofides on how schools in Cyprus should be run in relation to London, Ms. Miscouridou said: "In London there are public, private and intermediate schools that partly follow the instructions of the ministry. On whether we should have some autonomy in our schools, probably yes, there are several advantages. The point is that they should also have their own funding. There are other issues until that happens."



THE VISION OF THE THREE MAIN CANDIDATES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

“ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES”

ANDREAS MAVROYIANNIS, CANDIDATE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

AVEROF NEOFYTOU, CANDIDATE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

NIKOS CHRISTODOULIDES, CANDIDATE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

DISCUSSANT: ANDREAS KIMITRIS, JOURNALIST, NEWSCASTER AT PIK-CYBC

The three main candidates for the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus, Andreas Mavroyiannis, Averof Neophytou and Nikos Christodoulides, had the opportunity to develop their vision for Cyprus over the next five years at the Cyprus Forum.

Through their positions, they set the tone for their governance proposals on important issues that concern society, such as the Cyprus problem and bi-communal relations, education, the modernisation of the state and the treatment of corruption, as well as the migration issue.

The three candidates were asked to answer specific questions raised by the panel's coordinator, Andreas Kimitris, within a set time limit, while the candidates referred to the substance of the issues, developing specific political positions and suggestions.

The five-year vision

When asked "how do you envision Cyprus in the next five years," Andreas Mavroyiannis said that the next five years are full of challenges for our country. "The question that arises is whether we will continue with the same recipes or whether we will have a change. For me, what the majority of society wants is change." He added that "in order to change things, we need to change the ethos and the style of governance and if possible, we need to achieve this from now, from the pre-election period."

He continued by saying that change "must come from us, as public figures, to function modestly and humbly and aim to serve our country. To have as our flag transparency, accountability, the fight against corruption at all levels. What is needed, especially at critical times, is the support of society against high prices and, of course, a development that respects the environment and is fairly distributed to citizens. Change also means a peaceful and secure future, and this will come with a solution to the Cyprus problem."

In turn, Averof Neophytou said that none of the attendees wants not to have the best vision, the best program, however, as he underlined "to ensure the future, we need to ensure what we have so far". He noted that today we live with an aggressive Turkey, which we have never seen so aggressive since 1974. He also referred to the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis, noting that everyone expects this winter to be the most difficult since World War II. And he stressed that with efficiency and experience we must address the risks.

"We cannot be writing essays", he then suggested, noting that "we have to go through a minefield safely" while in conclusion, he sent the optimistic message that "this country has proven in difficult times that it turns crises into opportunities".

Nikos Christodoulides stressed that his vision for the next five years includes the creation of hope and prospects for young people and the middle class. He argued that young people today are at risk of having fewer opportunities than their parents had. He added that "the middle class over time in all countries is the backbone of the economy and society" and explained that "in recent years all the crises we have been through have primarily hit the middle class." "We should focus on the middle class, which has shrunk in recent years."

In conclusion, he said that “a vision without a solution to the Cyprus problem does not exist. The current situation is unacceptable, the status quo is unlawful, and we have before us an EU that reacted to the invasion of Ukraine, and we must use this to solve the Cyprus problem, always in the context of UN resolutions.

Cyprus and cooperation between the two communities

The three candidates then submitted their positions on the Cyprus problem and the cooperation between the two communities, answering the question of how the relationship between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities can be cultivated and exploited in the efforts to solve the Cyprus problem.

Averof Neophytou said that “I want to reunite my country around the agreed and clear framework described in the UN resolutions.”

He added that “as Greek Cypriots we want to get rid of guarantees and occupation army. We want security. The Turkish Cypriots want security as well, but they want to know that we will not decide for them. The Greek Cypriots do not want the Turks to decide through the Turkish Cypriots. He claimed that “The accession of Cyprus to NATO will provide security.”

He also claimed that “It is not enough for the two communities to reconcile. Turkey plays an important role and I think we should use Natural Gas and the energy sector as a weapon to move the talks forward.

When asked to comment on Turkey's provocations, he argued that “Ankara and the leadership of the Turkish Cypriots know that the two states will not succeed. But there is something worse, which is the integration of the occupied territories in Turkey”. “We want strong friends and I insist that we stop balancing between two boats”, he concluded.

For his part, Nikos Christodoulides noted that “before I answer, three assumptions must be made”: First of all, he said that “neither we nor the Turkish Cypriots believed in the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. Many saw it as a transition.” He went on to say that “after 1974 we had to invest in the Turkish Cypriot community and in particular in those who are in favour of the BBF”, while he argued that “the will of the Turkish Cypriots for a solution on the basis of the agreed framework is not sufficient to solve the Cyprus problem, as long as Turkey exists”.

He stressed that the European Union “offers all the safeguards for the rights of every citizen of the country and its toolbox is very powerful and should be used to achieve a solution. Concrete action must be taken.”

When asked to comment on the view that the Turkish Cypriots benefit from the rights offered by the RoC, but at the same time they want the security that Turkey offers them, he said that he does not share this view, since the fact that Turkey controls the occupied areas also affects the Turkish Cypriots.

In turn, Andreas Mavroyiannis argued that “what is absolutely necessary is to regain the

trust of the majority of Turkish Cypriots", noting that "several actions must be taken, since only diplomatic manoeuvres are not enough".

He pointed out that we need to rebuild what we call "organic conditions of peace", which goes through strengthening the state with bi-communal activities and cooperation among young people, as well as taking new initiatives.

"We must create a Turkish Cypriot affairs office, which will have the responsibility of monitoring and coordinating issues concerning the Turkish Cypriots," he said.

At the same time, he argued that "the majority of Turkish Cypriots are interested in reunification, but we need to show them that there is such a choice. That is why we need to find those tools that will tilt the balance in favour of reunification", concluding that he believes that "this is not difficult".

Their positions on education

Regarding the issue of education, Nikos Christodoulides said that he considers education as one of the most important pillars of the state.

He noted that first of all an emphasis is needed on the development of students' skills and critical thinking. He also stressed the need to link education with the economy, while he argued that we should place more emphasis on technical education. Additionally, he highlighted the need to start career guidance for children from an early age. Also, he noted the need for continuous training and evaluation of teachers, as well as self-assessment of students.

When asked to comment on whether he is in favour of all-day school, he said that he fully believes in all-day school, but we must be honest with the world about the difficulties, namely that we want 4 and 5 state budgets to implement it, while he argued that it is better to start as optional and then make it mandatory.

Andreas Mavroyiannis said that he is clearly in favour of the all-day school, arguing that the cost is not as high as some believe and that education is an investment, adding that "under no circumstances should teachers bear the cost. The aim is an all-day public-school that is a standard of quality and a model of society. We want a more experiential, innovative, inclusive and non-discriminatory school that promotes critical thinking and develops each student's skills."

He advocated a revision of school hours, the possibility of school feeding and argued that there should be a two-hour period with special carers, so that students leave the school reading, which will solve many problems.

In turn, Averof Neophytou pointed out that in Cyprus there is a good level of education, which we can raise higher, noting that students should go from knowledge, to skills, to critical thinking, to teamwork and above all to achieve mutual respect. Through mutual respect, he continued, delinquency and bullying are combated.

He said that he is in favour of all-day school, while he argued that career guidance in

schools should be done by employers and chambers.

Modernisation of the state and the fight against corruption

The next topic of discussion was the issue of modernising the state institutions and the fight against corruption, with candidates being asked to answer the question “how do the bonds between the executive and independent officials break”.

Andreas Mavroyiannis responded that “there is a need for progressive modernisation of the state to break the umbilical cord, which connects institutions with people, politicians and situations and does not benefit the flourishing of institutions.”

“It is necessary to create sound administration,” Mr. Mavroyiannis argued, noting that “it is not difficult to achieve it if there is political will and determination. He stressed that institutions must not only be seen, but above all they must be independent. He also pointed out that the administration, as it operates today, is for the benefit of the few, stressing that everything must change significantly and that institutions must be independent in order to work for the needs of society.

Nikos Christodoulides said, in turn, that modernisation and reconstruction of the state are directly intertwined with change in society. He spoke of necessary holistic moves and building a culture of transparency.

He also stressed the need for reforms and the need for technological transformation. Nikos Christodoulides also said that it is necessary to implement judicial reforms and that a court decision cannot take eight to ten years to be taken.

Averof Neophytou argued that the reforms “are identical to the policies of DISY”. “We have a constitution and structures of 1960, where the balance and controls were between the communities. In 2022 we want a state with full transparency and accountability.”

He also pointed out that “there is no President elsewhere, who is elected and appoints all bodies and institutions”, explaining that for this reason he raised the issue of constitutional review, while stressing that “we must enter into dialogue, without terms and conditions, in order to create a modern effective state with transparency”.

The burning issue of migration

The panel also discussed the burning issue of migration. The three main candidates were asked to answer the question “what needs to be done to manage the problem effectively”.

Averof Neophytou said that initially the separation of political refugees should take place, for whom, since they are entitled to stay in Cyprus, integration programmes should operate.

He argued that in order to address the problem we need to reduce the inflows with the proper supervision of the green line, with a fence that can be not only physical, but also

electronic, with drones, with the 300 hired policemen.

He stressed that bilateral agreements on repatriation should also be made, referring to his recent visit to Congo.

When asked if he was in favour of the fence, he said: "It does not have to be physical, but it can be technological. We have to make sure not to create problems to local residents, while stressing that the control of the inflows is a requirement of society.

On his part, Andreas Mavroyiannis said that "there are serious problems, and their solution must be in relation to respect for human rights." He also referred to the long period required for checking asylum applications, noting that the procedure should last a few weeks at most, while he argued that there should be repatriation procedures from then on, because whether we believe it or not there are procedures that work against us."

"Fences and barbed wire do not solve problems," Mr. Mavroyiannis argued, noting that he would remove the fence if elected.

Nikos Christodoulides said first of all that "I want to start, because I see ambassadors from the EU in the audience, from the fact that the Union will be judged by this issue". He argued that "if we want to tackle the problem, the first thing we need to do is to address the reasons why these people leave their countries", while secondly, he stressed that "the Republic of Cyprus cannot bear such an unbearable burden", referring to "necessary solidarity". He also stressed that there must be a separation in order to be able to meet our international obligations.

He also pointed out that applications, which are clearly well-founded, have to be examined and that we have to find a way to avoid being an attractive destination. He also said that the solution of the issue is the concentration of all the services of the state, under the Deputy Ministry of Migration, to immediately address the current problems, while subsequently, as he said, the Deputy Ministry will not need to exist.

Concluding, on the issue of erecting a fence, Mr. Christodoulides noted that "I do not believe that neither the 300 policemen nor the fence will solve the problem. I am in favour of continuous evaluation. Every policy needs to be constantly evaluated. The Ministry of Interior should give us evidence of whether the fence brought results."



THE FUTURE OF ELECTRIC MOBILITY IN CYPRUS

“ELECTRIC MOBILITY”

YIANNIS KAROUSOS, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS & WORKS

CHRISTIANNA DIOGENOUS, CEO UNICARS

DINOS LEFKARITIS, EXECUTIVE MANAGING DIRECTOR (CEO), PETROLINA

DISCUSSANT: MANIANA KALOGERAKI, CORRESPONDENT OF HELLENIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION AND ATHENSNEWS AGENCY IN CYPRUS

The future of electrification in Cyprus was discussed at the Cyprus Forum 2022 by the Minister of Transport, Yiannis Karousos, UNICARS CEO Christianna Diogenous and the Executive Managing Director of Petrolina, Dinos Lefkaritis, under the coordination of journalist Maniana Kalogeraki.

In his initial statement, Transport Minister Yiannis Karousos stated that 1,343 electric vehicles have been registered or ordered so far, exceeding the targets for 2022. As Mr. Karousos said, we need to reach our targets for the climate agreement and in this direction in 2021 the General Policy Framework for the Promotion of the Use of Electric Vehicles was promoted and approved, which aims for 25% of new vehicle registrations to be electric by 2030 and for this percentage to increase to 100% by 2035.

He added that, in the objectives of the general framework, for 2022, 1036 new vehicle registrations were foreseen to be electric to achieve the above target, while 1343 vehicles have already been registered or ordered, achieving the target of the year by 144%.

An important component of the private sector in the development of initiatives

For its part, UNICARS CEO Christianna Diogenous underlined the important role that private initiative will play in green mobility since the public sector cannot implement a particularly complex project with multiple challenges and conditions. The electric mobility sector, she said, involves rapidly evolving technologies, a fact that the private sector has both the experience and the know-how and the expertise to offer this knowledge and the skills needed to evolve.

Speed and flexibility in procedures, she said, is a very important component and the private sector is not limited by bureaucratic procedures or political decisions, so it can move faster and bring results, always within a regulatory framework.

He also noted that the implementation of a green mobility plan requires infrastructure with long-term planning that the public sector at some point may not be able to support and justify these infrastructures that the private sector will be able to support. Environmental and social responsibility is needed, she stressed, and now this data is a priority to private companies, and they are accountable if they do not implement it.

Ready for the Challenges of the Future

Referring to the challenges for PETROLINA in the coming years, Mr. Lefkaritis noted that in recent years the company has ceased its activity in the oil sector, shifting its activities to the energy sector.

PETROLINA has created a working group that monitors the various developments that are happening around the world and is moving forward. It has founded three different companies. PETROLINA Energy is active in the field of photovoltaic parks, PETROLINA Electric which, with permission from RAI, since 1st October is an electricity supplier. The 3rd company is PETROLINA Solar, which deals with the residential and industrial installation of photovoltaics. For the record, Mr. Lefkaritis said, this company started with 1.5 people and currently employs 32 people. PETROLINA, he said, accepts the challenges of

the green growth era and will be here for many years.

Infrastructure development framework for the transition to green mobility

The Minister explained that under the general framework for completing the infrastructures needed to make electric mobility technology sustainable and affordable, the development of recharging infrastructure with 1000 charging stations by 2026, in publicly accessible areas, is being promoted with a grant scheme of 4,000,000 euros, and it will launch very soon.

In addition, Mr. Karousos stated that new official vehicles purchased by the state will be purely electric or partially electric with the aim of having 100% of new purchases be electrically powered by 2030.

When asked how consumers welcomed the new reality of electric mobility, Ms. Diogenous noted that initially interest seemed to be particularly high. However, she observes that the expression of interest is far from the real interest and the consumer's ability to switch to electric mobility.

She noted that public education on green electric mobility is needed in order to be able to know without confusion the relevant terminologies for what an electric car is. She also commented that when a relevant state fund was given, the public rushed to register and then to carry out the relevant market research and then to be informed, which created confusion and delay in the allocation of funds. Consumers who take the next step in green electric mobility should be ready, have the right thinking and have decided that they will embrace this technology and be aware of the challenges that exist.

Public Charging

Ms. Diogenous raised the issue of public charging of vehicles, which is a major obstacle to the transition to electric mobility. For its part, UNICARS said, one of the important moves it has made in recent years has been to invest in its own, private charging network across the island, publicly accessible by all car brands without exception.

The strategy of transition to electric mobility has been, since 2013, at the heart of UNICARS' study of what can be done in Cyprus. At the moment, Ms. Diogenous stressed, it is the only technology that can lead us to the green transition. There will certainly be other technologies in the future.

"Charging stations, even through private initiative, are a particularly important element. We are committed to expanding this network, which currently exists in seven locations in Paphos and Limassol," she said.

The future of petrol stations

Responding to the question of the transition of petrol stations to the new reality, Dinos Lefkaritis noted that it will not be difficult, since the existing infrastructure exists. However, he said, the licensing procedures should be accelerated.

Referring to the current situation of petrol stations, Mr. Lefkaritis pointed out that there are not only petrol stations that offer petroleum products. Several of them have a café or a mini market. In these cases, there is no need to rebuild the infrastructure since it already exists, and fast-charging stations can be installed in them.

He stressed that PETROLINA, for its part, is at an advanced stage in terms of installing chargers, however the procedures are bogged down in bureaucracy, despite the excellent cooperation with both the Transport Minister and the services, are clearly a matter of regulations.

Regarding the charging technology, Mr. Lefkaritis noted that at the moment there are chargers that take 15 minutes to carry out a charge, expressing the belief that there will soon be greater development of the technologies.

Ms. Diogenous noted that Cyprus, due to its short distances, has the privilege of being covered by the 400 km margin that a charge reaches. She said that for the past 1.5 years she has been driving exclusively in an electric vehicle, pointing out that 400 kilometers is enough to cover anyone's daily life by charging once a week, unless they will travel outside the city.

Mr. Karousos said that in the context of the financial incentives, the two annual calls for the first phase of the subsidy scheme, the electric vehicle subsidy scheme as well as the plan for scrapping and replacing old polluting vehicles with purely or partially electric vehicles have been approved and are already being implemented. Electric mobility will be seen everywhere. Both in public and private transport. The bet in Cyprus will be won through transport.

Regarding UNICARS' next goals, Ms. Diogenous noted that it adopts a green growth model, as a general strategy of the company, going beyond everything that concerns the conventional car.

UNICARS, she said, in addition to expanding its charging network, it is studying the field of alternative fuels and the digitalisation of its services, in an effort to shift to sustainable mobility.

For his part, Mr. Lefkaritis, analysing the next goals of PETROLINA, referred to both the financial crises that our country faced and managed to regenerate itself, as well as the historical course of the company from 1946 up to the 3rd generation that gradually takes over the company and contributes to the realisation of the vision. The challenges exist, he stressed, and the company's petrol stations also offer alternative fuels and will not stop operating

Scooter legislation

When asked to answer a question about the legislation on scooters, Yiannis Karousos said that after consultation the law was passed by the Parliament and has been implemented with some exceptions which will apply in 3 months and our country is now one of the countries that have a law on scooters and personal mobility.

Now, he said, there is a speed limit of 20 kilometers, mandatory use of helmets and users will be able to move on cycle paths or pedestrian streets or squares if the local authority gives its approval and to be able to move on roads with a limit of up to 30 kilometers.

Also, there are inspection specifications for rent, as provided by law. It is the local authorities who have the power to control and supervise the devices. Some complaints have already started, he said.

In conclusion, the Minister stated that it is with satisfaction that he sees citizens increasingly interested in switching to alternative fuels, while already the use of electric vehicles has yielded positive results both in saving money by using them and in reducing pollutants.

In her closing remarks, UNICARS' CEO pointed out that if we want to move quickly forward, we need to work together to move towards green mobility and address the challenges.





DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

“DIVERSITY & INCLUSION BY BUSINESSES - THE CASE FOR LGBTQI+ EQUITY”

PRODROMOS PYRROS, ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC POLICY ADVISER,
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

MARIANNA HADJIANDONIOU, GROUP HR DIRECTOR PARIMATCH
TECH, SECRETARY OF THE BOARD CSR CYPRUS

ELLI MATSOUKA, CONSULTANT & EXECUTIVE COACH, CYHRMABOARD
MEMBER

CHRISTIANA IERODIAKONOU, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN
MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

DISCUSSANT: COSTA GAVRIELIDES, DEI EXPERT, ADVISOR TO THE
PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS ON MULTICULTURISM AND DIVERSITY



Diversity in the workplace for many years, was a momentous issue that was sidelined and often considered taboo. In 2022, workplace diversity and the importance of including people of different backgrounds and sexualities began to take the place it deserves on the agendas of companies and organisations.

Equality of individuals and their inclusion in a group that makes them feel welcome and valuable in their workplace, as well as the ways to achieve this result, was the theme of the panel “Diversity & Inclusion by businesses – The case for LGBTQI+ Equity” at the Cyprus Forum 2022.

Inclusion in the workplace

Opening the discussion, Mr. Costas Gavrielides, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Cyprus on issues of Multiculturalism, Acceptance and Respect for Diversity, wondered “why should someone stay here, why should they stay in a company, something that keeps them there, how do we make people welcome and valuable?”

Responding to his question, Ms. Marianna Hadjiandoniou, HR Director of Parimatch said that “at Parimatch-tech, the goal in the Human Resources department is to make our company a preferred employer. Starting from this to say that for me personally, you cannot be positioned as a company, to say I am the employer of preference without having some policies, procedures and strategies through which you can include these individuals and groups. That was the beginning of the company.”

Ms. Hadjiandoniou continued, “I work with a team in which everyone is young, so for me it was easier to build these processes as part of it. We saw the recruitment process, how it is done, how it is the right way, how by taking CVs, we can see objectively that there will be no discrimination.”

Asked by Mr. Gavrielides about the results of their work and whether people come to the company, Ms. Hadjiandoniou replied that this has to do with what culture we are building, “That is, we are a company with open goal policies, we can have a discussion, we embrace diversity and in so many of our activities. For example, the company events will always invite people with their partners, no matter who they are. Only from this small step you can embrace the people that belong to these groups.”

Dialogue and addressing challenges

Addressing Ms. Elli Matsouka, Executive Coach, expert in Organisational Culture and Corporate Prosperity, Mr. Gavrielides asked her to share her own experience with the subject. Ms. Matsouka said that “in Cyprus business there is a willingness, an appetite to deal with issues of diversity and inclusion. This was also shown by a survey we ran last year, under the auspices of the European Human Resources Association as well as the Cyprus Human Resources Association. This research revealed that when companies in Cyprus were asked whether diversity and inclusion pertain to some of their existing priorities, they were ranked fourth among 32 priorities. So, there is a willingness to deal with these issues.”

She added that “If we see now, empirically, through my role as a consultant, how this

mood translates within companies, we will see that it translates to supporting women and other less privileged groups and not so much LGBTQI issues. To give an example, in many cases there are also quantitative targets for the participation of women as senior managers. Rarely and in very measured cases will we see companies have a similar goal for LGBTQI people. So, we see that there is still taboo around this issue when it comes to businesses, even though diversity and inclusion are important.”

Ms. Matsouka continued by saying that “that is why, as a Cyprus Human Resources Association, because we have also identified this need, we are running and supporting various activities around it to help companies open up dialogue and acquire the tools to be able to manage these issues which are still taboo. Surely such examples are good to be heard so that other companies can get involved. Therefore, we also support the Diversity Charter, which is a platform under the initiative of the European Union, and another project co-funded by Allies, both of which aim to support diversity and inclusion in the workplace.”

Mr. Gavrielides added that “as far as the diversity charter is concerned, we should say that we see companies entering and registering on the charter. Cyta was the first, and it would be good to see other companies too. There is a good critique on this as to the extent to which some policies are added and how this charter is progressing. A company simply registering to the charter and where that leads and what the next step is for these companies.”

State interventionism

Addressing Mr. Prodromos Pyrros, Adviser to the Economic Bureau of the Prime Minister of Greece, he said that “you come here with a different background from the office of the Prime Minister of Greece. What is being discussed is how the government itself should come to help along this path. We saw a different policy which only in terms of rights, LGBTQI people would come and just say that there is discrimination, and we need to intervene in a different way. Which do you think, from the government's point of view, could have been that way? Should there be something away from discrimination, or should we just talk about discrimination?”

Responding, Mr. Pyrros said that “I think there are two main reasons why we should deal with it a little more. One is the need to protect human rights and LGBTI rights are human rights, to combat discrimination, homophobia, transphobia that exist in all countries, whether to a greater or lesser extent. So that is the one thing we have to do, and that is in itself a good reason to implement policies that increase inclusion. But it is not just this.”

“We should not do this for the LGBTQI people themselves but also for our own society and economy”, Mr. Pyrros said. “Much more so today than at any other time in history, the strength of a country depends on how strong and empowered the people living in it are. And if we have citizens who can be inclusive, without unnecessary obstacles to reach their full potential, this is what we all gain from. We win both financially, and we win as a society. So, I believe that this should also play a role in policymakers and in those who, in one way or another, can contribute to the improvement of the environment for LGBTQI people and overall, because not only LGBTQI people are discriminat-

ed against, we have a number of categories of people.”

Action Plan

When asked to comment on whether there are policies advanced by the Greek government, Mr. Pyrros said that “we started this around 2020, on the initiative of Alexis Pante-lis, who is the head of the Prime Minister's Legal Advisers and is also an LGBTQI activist and he, with whom we were trying, in consultation with the Prime Minister, to propose a policy. At some point, the Prime Minister himself said to do this correctly. To establish a committee, with experts, members of LGBTQI organisations, academics and government officials, to record all the issues we face in Greece. Such a committee was established in March 2021 under the chairmanship of Mr. Linos-Alexandros Sicilianos, who was the former president of the European Court of Human Rights. We worked intensively for about three months and this committee came up with a finding which covers all the key issues and guidelines which in turn was transformed into an action plan and we set specific goals that ministries should achieve in a certain period of time.”

“I am glad that a year later we have more than 17 actions that we have implemented since the ban on conversion therapies, from the lifting of the blood donation ban that we had for MSM and for men who have sex with other men to other issues that touch on the core and work issues such as for example the subsidisation of transgender people or better employers who will hire transgender people, something very important because within the LGBTQI community there are people who are more excluded than the rest. With a set of policies, we want to gradually move things forward. We still have a long way to go but I think we have not done a little in a year”, Mr. Pyrros concluded.

The research findings

Giving the floor to Ms. Christiana Ierodiakonou, Assistant Professor in Management at the Department of Business Administration and Public Administration of the University of Cyprus, Mr. Gavrielides asked what research presents, at least in the workplace, about the treatment of the LGBTQI community.

Ms. Ierodiakonou replied that “the literature in general, especially in the business sector, because in order to see concrete results in the workplace, it is more modern, more recent. You said in your introduction that we do not usually talk about these things, and so do our businesses. In other words, we are not talking, and, by extension, it is reflected in our research. But we now have enough research on diversity in general for different groups and for LGBTQI people in particular. We now know that the research proves that only positive results can be achieved if we actually take actions to integrate all individuals, as long as it is done correctly.”

“There is research”, she continued, “not so much from Cyprus, but we will start, and we have created a small community that is engaged, that does document advantages on multiple levels. For individuals themselves, first and foremost, who are able to live and work like other individuals in society and, by extension, in our society, it is mirrored because transgender people in particular have the highest risk among social groups of living in poverty.”

She added that “if I am going to talk specifically about organisations, there is a business case for diversity. The greatest benefit that organisations have is creativity. Diversity enhances innovative thinking, creativity, we infuse organisations with new thinking, and it improves the name of organisations as employers, it is a way of addressing the general problems of organisations to attract and retain staff because it improves their image and the composition of our workforce reflects our society, namely they can much better understand their customers and their needs”.

The taboos need to be broken

Taking the floor again, Mr. Gavrielides said that “what was discussed before. This change that is coming. The issue of LGBTI people should be discussed, because there is a huge taboo on whether we can come to talk about LGBTI issues. I feel much more comfortable talking about disability issues, children and women and we forget that at least for LGBTI people so far this taboo has been created with a story, it just needs to be broken. But we see that it is breaking.”

“The change that Marianna mentioned about millennials is that people who come up with different ideas and now take more managerial positions. So, this change can also be seen in the workplace and if the companies themselves are not ready to accept it, I believe that at some point these views will be obsolete”, continued Mr. Gavrielides.

“I always say that if the top layers in the organization are sceptical about opening up and discussing openly. And that is why human resources are needed because they are essentially like the United Nations, that is, we listen, and we convey. Millennials come ready within organisations to bring things up, discuss them, and listen to suggestions, and we need to be open to listening. Beyond that, we need to have CEOs who are open to accepting and listening to them and adopting them”, Ms. Hadjiandoniou added.

“If I go back to when we started 15 years ago and where we are today, the change is huge. But that does not mean we do not have a long way to go”, she concluded.

Ms. Elli Matsouka also agreed with the above statement, adding that “the challenge is even greater because on the business side we are at a time when there are too many generations in the same workplace. Thus, there is also a generational gap that we need to recognise in order to be able to manage it properly.”

Internal human resources training

Mrs. Matsouka gave an example when “in the context of a training they had with a senior, who expressed his concern and at the same time his disagreement about a couple of the same sex who were in the same workplace and an incident occurred through which this relationship became known, and an uproar was created. And the senior himself expressed his disagreement with the LGBTQ community. This couple then decided to leave the company. This gap exists and it is good to discuss and give the right platform for these discussions to take place and to be handled not with criticism because there is often criticism of different opinions. They need proper handling, to be understood, to be discussed, to see where these prejudices come from, how they affect and what impact they have on the company and on the individual itself so that

this proper handling can be done.”

“Therefore, we are talking about an internal training of human resources, but this can also be done to higher executives so that there can be understanding,” Mr. Gavrielides said, adding that “I am of the opinion that in general there should be a space where someone can come and talk and there are no wrong positions. In my experience ill-intentioned positions were relatively few. The majority of these positions are that, if I start and I am okay and we can be clear that we are talking about LGBTQI people, questions start being asked that they did not know where to ask. So, if we have the space where this is done, it is extremely important. This is also where the role of the company itself to change its culture.”

“Suppose we say a company starts today and I see that there are people who want to move forward with diversity and inclusion, but maybe not so easily on LGBTQI issues. How do we start this dialogue?” Mr. Gavrielides wondered.

Business Case and safe environment

Taking the floor, Ms. Elli Matsouka stressed that “the first thing I would say is to create the business case. There is the literature, there is the research, successful cases should come from competitors and other companies. Often articles and publications from links in the company's domain can be used. These should be used to build the right mindset from above because it is very important to involve and engage the management. And Marianna is right that these issues start from human resources, but if they are left only to HR, how far they can move forward is limited. Thus, it is very important to build the business case and gain the trust of the management. This is the first important step.

She continued by saying that “the second step is to start creating a safe environment, as we said before, of a platform where discussions can take place, various things can be asked, and in order to achieve this, there are different ways that these can be done, such as several groups in which questions can be asked about issues of diversity and inclusion. A dialogue should take place in a safe environment and through this process, allies are won who will support this effort in a company.”

“To be able to create this safe environment which is extremely important for individuals themselves to see that if they say something, they will be heard and someone will do something,” Mr. Gavrielides added. “If there is an incident in the workplace where someone comes to me and says something personal because of sexual orientation. How will the company deal with it? In this safe environment you feel more comfortable”, he added.

“Creating a culture of trust in an organisation is a long-term goal for the company. It takes commitment and strategy from the organisation and the right standards from the management. The Greek prime minister himself came here and asked that it is done properly. This makes a big difference to an organisation. Clearly, pressure can be created from the lower layers of the organisation to perform these actions and movements. But the culture to be built, it also needs a little enforcement, training, measurements, people to understand that they have a responsibility. So, if we are not at the point

where we share this respect for other people as a personal value, then we should know where we need to draw a line on what we do and do not do, what we say and do not say”, said Ms. Christiana Ierodiakonou.

“For our own research we carried out in Cyprus in the framework of the research program we had, we did many interviews with LGBTQI people, the biggest issues did not have to do with clear discrimination or inaccessibility. Of course, we had not talked to any trans people. The main issue was everyday life. The fact that we start discussing about it and that we feel it is a bit politically incorrect to speak out directly against LGBTQI people, what it creates is an indirect discrimination and this is what people experience in their everyday lives. And it may not be expressed through hiring or promotion, but it is expressed through the language that we and our colleagues or the people who are in charge use, through the way these individuals are treated, the derogatory comments and looks. The feeling that their personal lives are being commented on without them having given the right. It is at this level of interpersonal relationships that these people are being driven to, where daily work life was becoming so difficult that they were either led to absences from work or resigning”, he added.

But policies are needed because they want to feel protected and to make up for the state's shortcomings. When there are no state policies and some issues are not institutionalised, organisations have a tremendous opportunity to competitive advantage by offering such benefits and policies”, he said in the end.

“There is an issue”, Mr. Pyrros said. “That is, there is a very interesting survey by the Fundamental Rights Agency that, for example, in Greece, 49% of LGBTQI people have not disclosed their sexual orientation to a single colleague. Only 8% says it to everyone. Also, another issue that we are facing, and it is more of a concern because I do not have an immediate solution, in large companies, in one way or another, things are moving in the right direction. Things get harder as the size of the business gets smaller, that is, as we move to medium-sized, small and micro enterprises. How we deal with this issue is a good question. That is where the prime minister, for example, or someone high up coming out and on the one hand clarifying his position and implementing specific policies can have some broader impact on the workplace in those businesses as well”, he concluded.

Corporate responsibility and staff diversity

Conveying the questions of the audience, Mr. Gavrielides asked the speakers how a company can deal with an otherwise good employee who is sceptical or negative towards LGBTQI people?

Ms. Marianna Hadjiandoniou said that “there certainly are and always will be, and I think that is acceptable to all of us. Our responsibility is to educate, to talk and not to put them under the table. It is very important to educate people and talk openly about these issues and if someone within an organisation is sceptical or has a different opinion, it is certainly respected, and we listened to it as long as it is delimited, and that is why we want the policies and the appropriate procedures. On what you are allowed to say, how to say it, not to offend your colleague. We have to be very strict in the HR part about what we allow and what we do not allow.”

"We are starting with these policies that need to be implemented properly and not just be there. But there should also be room for discussion", Mr. Gavrielides pointed out. "If they come to discuss through the groups created within a company about specific issues, such as LGBTQI people, and they feel they cannot discuss them in-depth within the company, at least they need to discuss them through the group and the individuals themselves can feel a sense of support," he said.

Taking the floor, Ms. Elli Matsouka said that "for example, several companies have included in the staff evaluation system some expected behaviours, including respect for diversity, for which it is clearly expected that all staff will respect diversity. It may not only be clear on the issue of LGBTQI people, but at least the company makes it clear that it expects these behaviours and puts them in a structured process".

"We also need to see how we deal with diversity in the workplace. If everyone hired is straight men, for example, the company will end up only being straight men, it automatically loses the diversity that could exist in the company. We see how the company itself can change practices in the way the workforce demands it, to be more open to respect for diversity and try to implement it", Mr. Gavrielides added.

"It goes beyond traditional forms, that is, we get a résumé, and personally many times I may not even see a photograph, whether it is a man or a woman or even a date of birth. This information is no longer able to influence the decision. We are a betting company and yet departments such as marketing, have a large percentage of women. Why should I say, or judge, or choose straight men for example", Ms. Hadjiandoniou said.

"You may be choosing them unconsciously. It does not mean that they only necessarily want straight men, but along the way the choice is being made in a way that does not recognise diversity and what other people could offer", Mr. Gavrielides said.

Taking the floor, Ms. Ierodiakonou said that "on the issue of recruitment, indeed the structure of an interview can make a difference. The review of the biographies is now blind. Most companies use technology, it is an algorithm now, if you meet the basic qualifications you pass. But the composition of the panel can make a significant difference. Prejudices are not held by one group against another. It is not men against women and straight against gays. The prejudices of many individuals are unconscious, implanted through the way we grow up, we are educated, we are not aware of them. We think and want to be open, we have no conscious intention of discriminating against anyone and of course our prejudices do not mean that they lead to discriminatory behaviour. Most importantly, and one of the good practices we see in the companies that have moved forward with inclusion, it is mandatory for all individuals in the organisation to be educated on unconscious biases, once a year."

"On this point, let me say that the private sector is one thing, and the public sector is another thing, and there must be corresponding policies as there are problems there too. In Greece, we are now running among the actions I mentioned earlier, a large training program for civil servants and at the same time we have included a program in the Recovery Fund on issues of diversity, which will include the LGBTI dimension", Mr. Pyrros concluded.

Cyprus Forum.

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CYPRUS AT THE HEART OF A REGIONAL ENERGY MARKET

"CYPRUS AT THE HEART OF A REGIONAL INTERCONNECTED ENERGY MARKET. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?"

MARIOS PANAYIDES, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

JAN PETTER NORE, FORMER DIRECTOR OF GAS STRATEGY IN THE NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF OIL AND ENERGY, FORMER CHIEF ENERGY ANALYST IN THE NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF HYDRO RUSSIA

CONSTANTINE TALITIS, ASSOCIATE RESEARCH SCIENTIST IN ENERGY PLANNING AND ANALYSIS, CYPRUSINSTITUTE

NICK SPYROPOULOS, FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, ALMA ECONOMICS

CHRISTINA OLYMPIOU, SENIOR ECONOMIST, ALMA ECONOMICS

MARIA LIAPI, ECONOMIST, ALMA ECONOMICS

DISCUSSANT: CLEOPATRA KITTI, FOUNDER, THE MEDITERRANEAN GROWTH INITIATIVE

Knowledge
Partner:



The need to transition the Cypriot energy model to a green interconnected energy model, along the lines of the Scandinavian countries and especially Norway, was placed at the centre of a relevant thematic section of the Cyprus Forum, organised in cooperation with the PRIO Cyprus Center.

The panel discussed two recently released studies: the study funded by the bilateral funds Norway-Cyprus entitled “Cyprus Green Pivot in a regional market based interconnected market” and the study of the Cyprus Institute in collaboration with other international scientific and academic institutions for COP27 “Large Economic benefits from Regional Energy Cooperation in the EMME region as identified by Cyl's Energy Modelers”.

A multidimensional strategy is needed

In his speech, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Energy initially stressed the importance of this issue in the current period, where due to the energy crisis and the war in Ukraine, EU members are looking for specific projects as proposals for alternative energy sources, noting that Cyprus with its present and future findings can export natural gas. At the same time, he referred to climate change, which has a significant impact on our lives, as well as the fact that the EU through the Green Deal is at the forefront of efforts.

He further stressed that for the transition of Cyprus' energy model towards green energy, a multidimensional strategy is needed, which aims at strengthening the security of imports and reducing the isolation of Cyprus, empowering consumers in the energy market, providing incentives to encourage the development of a green initiative and the use of new regulations and technologies.

With natural gas playing an important part in the 2030 Agenda for achieving sustainable development, Mr. Panayidis stressed that we can use our strategic relations with the countries of the Eastmed Gas Forum to engage in the discussion by designing alternative energy sources. In this context, he underlined that the Euroasia Interconnector is an important project that will help Cyprus escape from energy isolation and which is the result of hard work, with significant funding from the EU and included in the recovery and resilience plan “Cyprus of Tomorrow”.

At the same time, he argued that the Eastern Mediterranean region has become more productive and more persistent in achieving the goals of the green transition, noting that Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Egypt have made significant steps towards exporting renewable energy sources, while the three (Cyprus, Greece, Israel) have much to gain from the implementation of the Euroasia Interconnector

He also praised the implementation of the RePowerEU project, which can make Europe more competitive and independent by providing sustainable energy for all, adding that at the same time we need to implement new technological methods to achieve the zero emissions targets by 2050.

Key points and differences between Cyprus and Norway

In turn, Alma Economics economist Maria Liapi, speaking about the current energy model of Cyprus, said that it uses largely conventional energy sources in the energy mix and only 15% are renewable sources, while Cyprus is energy isolated. She also added that Cyprus ranks 7th in the EU in terms of electricity prices.

She further stressed that the Euroasia Interconnector is expected to reduce the isolation of Cyprus and help the independence of the region, the flexibility and the use of more renewable energy sources in the energy mix.

She then made some comparisons between the energy model of Cyprus and Norway and introduced some key points into the discussion.

Regarding renewable energy sources, Ms. Liapi pointed out that in Norway the main source of energy is hydropower, which is largely not based on weather conditions, while in Cyprus, as she said, the main source of renewable energy is solar, which depends on weather conditions, which affects the amounts of energy. She also pointed out that in Norway there is a possibility of storing energy, something that is now lacking in Cyprus. Regarding connectivity, she explained that Norway is associated with other European countries while Cyprus is expected to be associated with the Euroasia Interconnector.

In addition, regarding cross-border trade, she explained that Norway participates in a common market with other countries and the Nordic countries are associated with the rest of Europe, while on the other hand Cyprus has no plan for cross-border trade.

Conditions for transition

For her part, the economist Christina Olympiou presented the conditions for a transition to a green interconnected model, as revealed by the study “Cyprus Green Pivot in a regional market based interconnected market”, which are:

1. connectivity, which is promoted through the Euroasia Interconnector,
2. speeding up the availability and development of energy storage, which is necessary to increase the use of renewable energy sources;
3. completing the liberalisation of the energy market and decentralisation of shareholders;
4. transparent, easy and fast licensing of electricity from renewable sources,
5. transparency in the energy market e.g. in the Nordic market a common European algorithm is used to calculate prices and
6. cross-border trade ensures low prices and energy security.

Ms. Liapi explained that Cyprus faces significant challenges for the transition to a green interconnected energy model, since it is a small country, with limited energy suppliers compared to other countries, it is also an island so connectivity costs more and is more difficult to achieve technically, while geopolitical tensions make it difficult to achieve the same level of connectivity as the Nordic countries.

She stressed, however, that despite the challenges, the advantages will be many and transformative for Cyprus, since the utilisation of RES will achieve the least emissions, with benefits both for the energy security of supplies and for the reduction of energy

costs for each consumer.

The need for regional coordination on energy planning

Subsequently, Dr. Constantine Taliotis from the Cyprus Institute said that “as part of the Cyprus climate change initiative, we realised that there is a lack of regional coordination on climate change actions and long-term energy planning. We have therefore decided to analyse what the future holds for energy sources in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East region.”

He explained that “we wanted to see what would happen if there was increased inter-connectivity and how it would help to increase the use of renewable energy in the region and therefore taking into account 17 countries and developing 4 different scenarios, we came up with policy proposals and in particular the need for regional coordination on energy planning.”

He pointed out that through the study we can identify projects that will help countries on the one hand to become exporting countries and on the other hand to import green energy at low cost, stressing that this needs a clear regulatory framework to attract investors not only for green active connectivity but also for the use of RES.

In conclusion, he argued that connectivity is a method of cooperation and is to the benefit of the countries in the region.

Norway to be a source of inspiration for Cyprus

Petter Nore, Director and Head of Division at the Norwegian Development and Cooperation Agency, elaborated on the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis as well as the Nordic energy model.

After stating that the war was related to the world's gas shortage, he presented two energy scenarios for the future.

He explained that the first scenario is the dominance of geopolitical thinking at the expense of climate thinking, which will lead to the use of fossil fuels rather than green energy, that is, what we see today and results in a lack of political stability and trust.

The second most positive scenario, he said, is the long-term transition to a new green future, which will lead to new geopolitical data away from dependence on Russia.

He expressed confidence that Russia would not win the energy war, although it may take time for Europe to respond properly. He estimated that initially the energy world will be dominated by geopolitics, there will be greater motivation for finding and transporting natural gas. The green transition will happen, but later than we had hoped.

Regarding the Nordic energy model, he explained that “Cyprus cannot copy it, but we can share our experiences”.

He stressed that northwestern Europe has perhaps the most integrated transnational

energy system in the world while Norway has 17 electricity interconnections and 7 gas pipelines and it was the state that began in 1992 the formation of the market, now a model for Europe.

He then provided data on the interconnection of the energy market in Norway. He was of the opinion that:

1. this is a win-win situation from an economic point of view,
2. saves investments to meet peak requirements,
3. leads to an increase in the provision of security,
4. helps to green Europe,
5. increase the use of the energy system in northern and western Europe, and
6. it promotes flexibility in change.

He added that 90% of the electricity generation is public in Norway, since there is a successful natural gas pipeline system, with a capacity of 30% of Europe's needs. He stressed that the manager is state-owned and that there is transparency and a good legal and regulatory framework.

In conclusion, he expressed the belief that Cyprus will succeed, but later on, after explaining that the consequences of the war need to be dealt with first or perhaps at the same time, stressing that Norway can be a source of inspiration for Cyprus.



PROSPECTS FOR PEACEBUILDING THROUGH SPORT

“SPORT AND PEACEBUILDING”

SOPHIA PAPAMICHALOPOULOS, IOC YOUNG LEADER, FOUNDER OF
«WINDS OF CHANGE»

NESRIN YUCEULAS, PHD STUDENT, FORMER VOLLEYBALL PLAYER
ANAGENNISI DERYNEIA FC

OKAN DAGLI, AUTHOR OF «TOGETHER IN FOOTBALL»

STEPHANIE NICOLAS, PROGRAMME COORDINATOR, PEACEPLAYERS
CYPRUS

AZIYADE POLTIER-MUTAL, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA

DISCUSSANT: ARNAUD AMOUROUX, UN OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER
TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON CYPRUS



The prospects for peacebuilding and cooperation between the two communities on the island were examined by the participants in the discussion titled “Sports and Peace Building” organised by the United Nations Delegation in Cyprus, under the coordination of Arnaud Amouroux, partner of the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus.

Firstly, Arnaud Amouroux noted that sport provides a unique opportunity to build bridges of networking and cooperation between people. Sport, he said, speaks the universal language that all people can understand.

The United Nations delegation on our island strives to build bridges, encouraging cooperation and interaction between the members of the two communities throughout the island.

Certainly, he said, sport is not the golden ratio that can give the solution to all problems and face the challenges, however, it can be an important tool that can improve the climate and create better conditions for the future.

“The power of sport manages to build a healthier life and to be a platform that offers opportunities for young people and children to meet, interact and learn from each other in conditions of mutual understanding. In the long run, strong relationships and friendships can be built”, he said.

Participants in the discussion, drawn from four popular sports such as football, volleyball, basketball and sailing, referred to their personal journeys in sport and their belief in the role they can play in building peace on our island. Moreover, they talked about the opportunities in the past, present and future, both in Cyprus and abroad, while they also shared their thoughts and suggestions on how the case of cooperation between the two communities could go forward.

Sport has the power to change the world

Dr. Sofia Papamichalopoulos, a former sailing athlete, member of the Cyprus Olympic Team and founder of the “Winds of Change” team, referred to her personal journey in sports, underlining the important role it played in her personal development and the life lessons she learnt.

Through this journey, she had the opportunity to understand the power of sport to change the world. Having the opportunity to experience the Olympic Games, she saw that beyond the Olympic Games, beyond the competitive part, the values of diversity, inclusion, solidarity are included.

Another important lesson she learned through sports was the first bi-communal experience she had the opportunity to live at the age of 16, managing to expand her horizons. Soon, through these lessons, she understood how she can bring the two communities together. Twelve years later, when she saw the athletes of North and South Korea competing under a common flag at the Olympic Games, a highlight for the Olympic Movement, she was reminded of how sport can unite two communities in conflict. Then she posed the question to herself. What could she do in her home

country to build peace through sport?

Two years ago, she was chosen among other young people to become an IOC Young Leader by the International Olympic Committee, to create her own project through sport, which will fulfil the United Nations goals for peace and sustainable development.

Similar youth projects focusing on different goals have been implemented in other countries. In Brazil, for example, favela basketball promotes gender equality and multicultural education. There are, she said, many examples of how the power of sport can change the world.

Referring to the “Winds of Change” group, Sofia Papamichalopoulos noted that it is a bi-communal group sailing together on the island. It brings together young people from 18 to 30 years old without necessarily having any previous experience through workshops and sailing lessons.

The aim of these courses is to manage to cross the island together through sailing, building a common peaceful future as a means of inspiration to come together to interact and understand how the process of peace is built between them through the power of sport and how they can bring the two communities together. We believe that people can bring peace through these opportunities and that is what we are trying to give. Opportunity. Above all, we try to empower them to challenge them to come together. Interaction and friendship

Nesrin Yuceulas comes from Famagusta, a former player of Anagennisi Deryneia, during her studies in the UK she continued to participate in similar groups and to see many different people of different nationalities interacting with each other.

When she returned to Cyprus, she received a proposal from Anagennisi Deryneia to join the team. There she realised that there are Cypriots who speak Greek and Turkish. But they are all Cypriots with common habits that resemble and have common reactions. Her father, she said, comes from Louroujina and the residents there speak both languages of Cyprus. In her team as a player, she never felt like a stranger and built strong friendships, both with her teammates and with the coach of the team.

"Together in football"

Okan Dagli, a writer and activist, has written several books, including one titled “Together in football”, which is about the collaboration of footballers from the two communities bringing to light inspiring stories.

When he returned to Cyprus in 1993 as part of an investigation, he sought out players from the two communities who played together in the past either in a national team or in other Cypriot teams before the separation due to the war.

He referred to two Turkish Cypriot brothers who played in the past in Anorthosis, a team that is fairly characterised for its nationalist views. But they were supported as much as the Greek Cypriot players and were honoured very much.

They were an example of how football could bring the two communities together away from nationalism and fanaticism in the years when the island is far from the prospect of peace.

Okan Dagli said that football can play an important role for the future of our island. There are talented athletes all over the island. Sport can be a dialogue between politicians. Political power has not succeeded. Sport can be influential. Teams of the two communities in recent years have competed and proved that they can.

Peace and cooperation

Stephanie Nicholas of Peace Players referred to the objectives of the project she represents, stressing that it is a Non-Governmental Organization, which began its activity in Cyprus in 2006 with the aim of bringing the two communities together through basketball and the values of peace and cooperation. Today, Peace Players manages to include not only children from the two communities, but also children of refugees, asylum seekers and other minorities, aged 8-18, through many cooperation programmes and opportunities for children and young people to get to know each other through sport and interact with each other.

Stephanie spoke about the actions of Peace Players over the past 15 years and the challenges. For several years it was the only bi-communal organisation with teams in many parts of the island. They invite everyone to participate in the programmes. We see this effect in the young people who started with us in 2006 and are now coaches. For us it is a great success.

Sport and sustainable development

Aziyade Poltier-Mutal, a spokeswoman for the UN office in Geneva, said the United Nations uses sport as an important tool for cooperation. We recognised, she said, the power of sport for sustainable development goals. In the past, sport has been at the heart of the UN General Assembly's decisions. Today, one of the main goals is peace sports, as a network of cooperation and priorities.

In conclusion, Aziyade Poltier-Mutal noted that the examples of good practices for building peace through sport are too many. Sport can bring together all stakeholders to create more networking, more mutual appreciation and the opportunity for dialogue with hopeful messages for the future.





THE IMPACT OF THE “FIT FOR 55” LEGISLATION PACKAGE ON THE CYPRUS ECONOMY

“THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE «FIT FOR 55» LEGISLATION PACKAGE ON THE CYPRUS ECONOMY”

PANOS THEODOROU, DIRECTOR, ASSURANCE | ESG & SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES, DELOITTE

ALEXANDROS JOSEPHIDES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL/MARINE MANAGER,
CYPRUS SHIPPING CHAMBER

IOANNIS EFSTRATIOU, DIRECTOR, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION DIRECTORATE, SHIPPING DEPUTY MINISTRY

MARIA KYRATSOUDI, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ABS

GEORGE PARTASIDES, INDUSTRIAL EXTENSION OFFICER A',
MINISTRY OF ENERGY COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

DISCUSSANT: ELIAS YFANTIS, SENIOR SCIENTIST, CMMI

Knowledge
Partner:



CYPRUS
MARINE &
MARITIME
INSTITUTE

The impact and effects of the “Fit for 55” on the Cyprus economy, and mainly through the marine industry, had the opportunity to analyse the speakers of the panel. The discussion was organised by the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institution.

The Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI) established the Cyprus Decarbonisation Hub which works on research on alternative fuels and innovative technologies for decarbonisation. Recently a paper on the effects of fit for 55 has been published presenting a software that supports its estimation and quantification.

“When we started working on Fit55 at the CMMI we did not expect that the developments would make it so interesting,” said Elias Yfantis, CMMI, who referred to the European Commission's package of measures aimed at reducing emissions in Europe.

“The goals are ambitious. And we should start with two factors. We have an explosion in energy prices and we have an incident, we have a war, both of which have caused tremendous disruption to markets and trade. Especially in energy”, Mr. Yfantis said during his introduction.

The need for a green transition

Mr. Panayiotis Theodorou, Deloitte, referred to the effects of climate change. “This period apart from those two that have happened (war and increases in energy prices) we have seen catastrophic events. The important thing is to act now. On the subject of war, the important thing is that we should not depend on authoritarian regimes. On the inflation side, I believe this was caused by the increase in fuel. Prices show the necessity for the green transition. It is a fact that all these contribute to the fact that Fit55 will accelerate. It will certainly be a key legislative framework, Fit55 together with others, that will accelerate the transition.”

He also said that there is a classification of green activities, there is a dynamic and there is a possibility of raising funds that can finance programmes. “I think Cyprus will be financially and technologically ready to meet these plans, so it is important to expand the network to look at internal and external needs in order to strengthen our shipping industry,” he said.

Compliance with regulations

Asked whether some parts of the legislative framework may be altered along the way, Ms. Maria Kyratsoudi, ABS explained that “there are some legislative parts that are not finished, and consultations are still taking place. They are somewhat technical. Limits have been set. There is an energy crisis that has been exacerbated by the war. This is not taken into account and we move forward. In order to alleviate the situation, the EU has announced new measures to be autonomous. It sets ambitious goals in order to achieve these limits.”

Ms. Kyratsoudi also noted that there are some solutions for some aspects, and some solutions that bring us closer to compliance with the regulations, but for now these solutions are expensive, as biofuels for example.

Europe will reach its goals

Mr. Alexandros Josephides, Deputy Director General/Marine Manager, was asked if there is an increase in coal imports in Europe and if there are retrograde steps. "We are acting as carriers. Unfortunately, the invasion of Ukraine has interrupted the flow of Natural Gas and we understand that Europe will try to meet its energy needs with materials that can be consumed. So yes, there is an increase and perhaps it will bring Europe back to efforts to implement the policy it wants. However, I believe that this increased use of coal will gradually decrease, because we are seeing European states looking for and testing other forms of energy production. Over the next five to six years, we will not be able to avoid coal", he said.

He added that the shipping industry is going to have a significant benefit as natural gas will not be transported through pipelines but by ships. As he said, the manufacturers of these ships that will be able to transport natural gas will have a profit and there will be no need to import coal. "Shipping and ships will benefit. In time, and gradually, Europe will be able to become independent of Russian natural gas supplies, and so in a few years I hope that Europe will be at the stage where it can reach its goals", he said.

Motivation to Lead

George Partasidis, Industrial Extension Officer A', Ministry of Energy, said that what the Ministry is examining is "how the goals are being prepared and how they emerge from the consultations with the various member states. There is plenty of consultation. It is important that where we are most technologically advanced, we put more emphasis on the remaining targets when technologies such as hydrogen mature. When we have a plan, we will help the investors as well. There are some mechanisms in Europe that are not responding as they should in time and especially now with the crisis."

As he said, it would be good for each country to take its own measures to some extent and as Europe it should have the mechanism to provide the flexibility, something that Cyprus is asking for, so that member states can take some initiatives. "The game is changing, and we are entering the next decade and the cost of energy will not include last year's technologies. This gives an incentive and whoever can lead will have an advantage especially in the interconnected countries", he said.

Regarding the independence from Russian natural gas, Mr. Partasidis said that this cannot be achieved overnight. That is why we need coal and other technologies as a transition, so that Europe can make use of its own resources, including those in Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, etc., so that we can become self-sufficient as Europe. This is something that all Member States must strive for, despite the extra costs. The money will remain within Europe and will thus be recapitalised and can be used for other investments. Gradually, we will have hydrogen and methane technologies", he explained. For Cyprus, he said that the main problem is energy storage, but overall, there is optimism as the 2020 targets have been exceeded.

On his part, Mr. Ioannis Efstathiou, Director, Safety and Environmental Protection,

Directorate, Shipping Deputy Ministry, said that “in Cyprus shipping, there are two aspects, in relation to Cyprus as a maritime state and in relation to Cyprus with more extensions in the economy. We should not look at the ephemeral, we have to look at what is coming in the coming years. We need to adapt. Legislators should take a pragmatic approach. We need to find ways to get to the main decarbonisation target. It is a matter of international survival and each of us must contribute.”





EUTHANASIA IN CYPRUS

"EUTHANASIA IN CYPRUS"

PROF. PIERRE MALLIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE BIOETHICS RESEARCH PROGRAMME, MEDICAL SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
ALEXANDRA ATTALIDES, MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DISCUSSANT: CONSTANTINOS PHELLAS, SENIOR VICE RECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF NICOSIA

Knowledge Partner:



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UNIVERSITY of NICOSIA

Recently in Cyprus, the social dialogue on the issue of euthanasia is under way. A dialogue that has led to the realisation that the legislation of specific acts is necessary. Euthanasia remains a taboo subject, with its advocates and opponents. People over time have tried to extend life expectancy by trying to offer prolongation at the inevitable stage of death.

Today, however, there is a need for many people with chronic diseases to find a decent way out of the ordeal of their illnesses and chronic pain.

The Reality of Death

Opening the discussion on the issue of euthanasia at the Cyprus Forum 2022, Mr. Constantinos Phellas, Senior Vice-Rector of the University of Nicosia, said that “the recent announcement of the issue of euthanasia in Cyprus forces us to deal with the reality of death. Demographic, cultural, social and economic factors are entering into the effort to understand and the greatest truth, to confront the greatest fear of life that lurks in every texture of human existence even in the 21st century with its miraculous scientific and technological achievements.

“Does this spectacular development of the technology sciences bring about and measure changes in the attitudes of modern society and the health sciences towards patients with imminent death? We have deconstructed the taboo of death. The reality of society today is intensely coloured perhaps even more intensely by a denial to receive the pain and suffering that characterise the surrounding circumstance of death. “Societies today prioritise avoiding death rather than reducing unnecessary suffering at the end of life, resulting in too many people dying around the world in an ugly way.”

He continued by saying that “Based on the above, death today can also be considered a failure. There are of course other factors that contribute to the lack of preparedness of people to discuss soberly the issue of the end of life. Accepting the reality of death is a universal struggle. Can our century create the illusion of the possibility of extending the life span? However, technology does not help to overcome the fear of death. In the last 10 months, the social dialogue on the issue of euthanasia has been ongoing, which has led to the finding that the legislation of these acts is imperative”.

Need to start a sober dialogue

Speaking to Alexandra Attalidou, Member of the Parliament of the Movement of Ecologists - Citizens' Cooperation, Phellas asked why he believes the time has come to decriminalise euthanasia.

“For me, it is the case of the death of an English woman and the arrest of her husband,” Ms. Attalidou replied. “I learned that this woman was suffering from an incurable disease. Her daughter called me from England crying, to tell me that her father loved her mother very much, but she was suffering a lot and begging him to help her die. This prompted me to look again at this issue personally because I have had an opinion for years.”

“I believe in euthanasia as a person, because for me my whole life is determined by

death itself and how each person dies. For me, euthanasia is linked to many things. It is a philosophical issue, of course, it is sociological, it is political, it is legal and there is no legal framework in Cyprus. That is why, taking the decision after this “murder”, since the husband is currently accused of murder, I submitted a matter of discussion to the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament and the discussion began”, Ms. Attalidou continued.

“As you know, the National Bioethics Commission of Cyprus has also investigated this issue. I think it is good that the dialogue has started. It is a very controversial topic, and everyone's positions are focused on values. There are religious people who believe that their life belongs to God and therefore he will decide on their exit. There are also a lot of people, and from statistics I have read all over Europe and other parts of the world, a very high percentage of people believe in euthanasia”, she said.

“Thus, I think the dialogue should be opened, everyone should speak soberly. France itself is currently starting a dialogue which will take some time to arrive at a legal framework. Some European Union countries approve of passive and auxiliary euthanasia, some simply euthanasia, and I think it is time for Cyprus to take a stand”, Ms. Attalidou said.

Conservatives and Liberals

Addressing Pierre Mallia, President of the University of Malta School of Medicine's Bioethics Research Programme, Mr. Phellas asked to describe the case of Malta and what his thoughts are on Cyprus' efforts to legalise euthanasia.

In response, Mr. Mallia said that “the debates on euthanasia have somehow gained momentum, just before the elections last February. We had a number of TV shows and conferences. After the election, things calmed down a bit, but I am certain it will start again. Before the elections to the Bioethics Committee, we came out with a document for the government and the opposition party to give in some way, not our opinion for or against euthanasia, rather how it should proceed.

“Unfortunately,” Mr. Mallia said, “I see that in a lot of these sensitive debates, people do not have all the information and they have not done enough to have that information. That is why there are two extreme groups, conservatives who may not want euthanasia and liberals who may want euthanasia and who may not understand each other properly and may not see the common ground that exists”.

He continued by saying that “my profession is a doctor, but I am now a full-time professor at the University of Philosophy and Pharmaceutical Bioethics and Human Rights, and I spend a lot of time understanding these problems. I try to find common ground by avoiding making a decision or a choice and it is not so easy because until people get used to criticism from both sides because it is not only the effort to be neutral, but it has to be understood by both sides.

Deep down, I come from a conservative family, and when I became a doctor, euthanasia did not even exist in medicine nor was it being considered. It comes from the Greek era for the Hippocratic oath, that is, it is written thousands of years ago. Today,

euthanasia, if you look it up in a dictionary about 100 years old, means dying in debt. Today it has changed and it means giving someone a mixture which is being vaccinated to them, or they vaccinated themselves with it, and that looks like direct murder”.

“I believe”, the professor continued, “that there are several things that are not understood. I appreciate the fact that there are people who wish to be euthanised if they find themselves in a specific situation such as a form of cancer or a neurological disease in which a ventilator is needed or someone who is paralysed from the neck down or someone who is in a coma”.

Death with Dignity

“I was looking in Greece and I found a 2013 survey in which the situation has changed. Most people were against it and now in 2022, quite a few people are in favour. The Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Irene Charalambidou, said that euthanasia should not be considered as a choice between life and death but as a choice between a painful torturous death or a death with dignity. These are the reasons against euthanasia, that is, there will be no choice between the two because if these are the reasons given, not only in Cyprus, when we review, that is, because we want euthanasia and the answer is I do not want a painful death, I do not want to delay death, but I want a good death. Everyone wants a good death, but this is a failure of the medical system and maybe we will have time to explain, and this is the meaning of palliative care, this is advanced care planning” she added.

She then stressed that “I have the right to refuse treatment, I do not want a respirator for the rest of my life. I want something that will give me comfort, palliative care to allow me to die”.

At the same time the professor said that “there are issues with euthanasia that can be addressed, but on other issues such as painful death, excessive suffering, these are issues that can be addressed even in the present moment, perhaps there should be clarification of the law, but they give someone morphine because it hurts a lot until they are well, even if it reduces life by a few days from a moral point of view, and in most Christian religions I guess even Orthodox ones, this is not considered euthanasia. The law keeps us safe. Relatives might say, for example, that my father died because of the last dose of morphine you gave him. This is the cure for pain, not to kill the patient.”

Individual freedom and choice

Taking the floor, Mr. Phellas said that “we often talk about a good death, but I believe, and I want to hear your views on this issue, it must be called a proper death. What is right for everyone, for the patient? To allow death with dignity. At the end of the day, in a liberal democracy, we cannot allow attempts to impose how people should live. Why does society have to dictate that people die?”

Ms. Attalidou responded by saying: “I think that first of all we have to ask the question why would someone want to die? Normally, I think one person does not want to die, we all have the feeling of life. For a person to want to die means that life has no meaning for him anymore and life has no meaning for various reasons. First, there is the issue of

pain. A person who has an incurable disease and suffers immensely, I think it is inconceivable for the rest of society to tell him that you must stay there and suffer.”

She continued by saying that “professor is right that palliative medicine can help, but without getting to the point where all people have palliative medicine which means living the end of their lives without pain, I find it inconceivable to impose on others if they want to not continue the pain. There are other cases, and I will mention the French director, Jean-Luc Godard who lived in Switzerland and decided that he wanted to end his life because as he said it made no sense. Because every individual's life has a meaning, that is, a person who moves, who does what pleases him, who has friends and lives a normal life, his life has meaning. A person who can be in bed in his loneliness forever, may have no meaning in life. If your body ends up being a body that others handle and you cannot control its functions, it is also about the dignity that everyone feels.”

“I personally think that just as there is no proselytism, that is to say, the prohibition of forcing one to belong to a religion, should not be the decision of the whole of society in the sense of imposing the view, especially the religious view on the rest. That is why we started discussing it in parliament and we want to put a legislative framework in place”, Ms. Attalidou added.

After all, a liberal democracy is based on individual freedom and choice. I believe that if someone, having complete clarity and the ability to think and decide, for example, ask not to return to life, or not to want to get in a coma and depend on machines or in the event of a terminal illness and exhaust all medical issues, to end life there. I can do it because I love my family very much and I think they do not have to go through this whole process for months. I think it is very personal to leave life. We do not control our entry into life, but at least we must have control of our exit”, she concluded.

Loneliness and mental disorder

Taking the floor again, Mr. Phellas said that there is a discussion about them asking for euthanasia, who may suffer from depression or some kind of mental disorder. The promotion or legalisation of euthanasia is the solution proposed by society to loneliness and mental disorder, the Senior Vice-Rector of the University of Nicosia wondered.

Replying to his question, Mr. Pierre Mallia said that “I am trying to understand both sides on this issue. I can understand that there are situations in which a person does not want to continue to live in one place because it is irreversible, they are confined to bed, and they need special care and they may not have a family and they feel lonely. Under these circumstances, one has the right to euthanasia, not on moral grounds but on legal grounds.”

“However,” the professor continued, “on the other hand, there are two points. In one, for example, in case of pain, it should not be a reason for euthanasia because the pain can be managed. Relieving pain through morphine can lead to death, and this may not be the result it was intended to be, but at least the person is dead. We are all going to die and whether we can control our death is debatable. Up to a point, we

all fear death and we all want to go to heaven if we believe in it, but we do not want to die. In some cases, people say whether you die in your sleep or faint and die while you are walking are the best scenarios. But what if I live to be 90 and depend on other people and cannot enjoy life? Or someone who may have dementia or someone who suffers from a mental disorder?"

"It is interesting and there were TV debates in Malta and a lot of people say there are certain conditions for euthanasia. Like an incurable disease, but not if there is depression. I personally find this problematic because if we are talking about rights everyone should have them. If we are talking about the question of when someone should die, then everyone should have this right. I agree that there should be specific parameters such as in the Netherlands euthanasia is legal for people suffering from an incurable disease. But we have to remember that there were also people who suffered from chronic depression and there was no possibility of treatment" he highlighted.

Referring to the issue of dignity, Mr. Mallia said that "dying with dignity is good and no one wants to see someone die suffering and this is seen in extreme situations, such as war. In order not to see someone suffering in a war, morphine is injected so that they can die immediately."

"The dignity of man is on a different level, on a more human spiritual level. For some people this is valid, but for some it is naive and stupid", he continued.

"What I can say is that I have seen relatives with dementia, and you see them in the last six months of their lives not being cared for enough, without dignity, and you feel sorry for them. But we do not know what is going on in their minds. My aunt was quite happy when she saw our faces, but now she sees us and yes there are feelings, but the mind is like a black hole. I think it is the care we give these people that determines exactly how they feel. Of course, they do not want dementia, but I do not know how it will be", the professor concluded.

The legislative framework in Cyprus

Referring to the draft law being prepared in the House of Representatives, Mr. Phellas said that there are very strict safeguards, so that the acceptance of the people around this issue is high.

Taking the floor, Ms. Alexandra Attalidou, Member of the Parliament of the Movement of Ecologists - Citizens' Cooperation, said that "first of all, I believe that a public dialogue should be launched. These issues cannot be resolved with 56 Members voting for something. We are not experts. The experts are the scientists, the philosophers. We must listen to what the scientific world says, the views of the citizens and accordingly we will be positioned in the bill on passive euthanasia because the other euthanasia is done for many years by doctors."

"As the professor said", Ms. Attalidou continued, "a large dose of medicine can be given to stop the suffering and die. I know examples from my own family. My grandmother, who died at the age of 46 from cancer, had terrible pains and in the last months of her life, she did not understand what was going on around her. My grandfather, who never

got sick in his life, reached the age of 96 and in the last stages of his life, when we asked him how he was doing, he said "I am tired, I am tired of this life, I want to leave". "I think the parameters should be there and they should be strict, but the state that wants to impose certain things on its citizens should be able to provide all citizens in their old age or illness with what we call dignity. One cannot say, you will die alone in poverty, without having the medicines you need and support to cope with your life, while someone who may have the income will go through the last stage of his life much more easily. Thus, the state, when it imposes things, it should make sure that those who are in pain will have palliative medicine and those who are alone will have care.

Dialogue is opening up, citizens need to say their views, submit them and be informed about the issue, what is happening in other countries, to know that the legislative framework will be very strict, as for example someone who is depressed will not be able to be euthanised because the medicines that exist can help greatly. Therefore, there needs to be dialogue until we get the right legislative framework through which people maintain their dignity and have euthanasia that means good death", he added.

Correct information is necessary

Continuing his statement on the public dialogue, Mr. Pierre Mallia said that it "costs and sometimes there are political parties and countries, not to mention Cyprus, that want to exploit specific groups that have a large number of people and therefore a large number of votes in order to provide them with what they want without public dialogue. This is very dangerous because ethical issues, when we talk about ethics, which is not only emotions, but must be supported by rational thoughts that come from the information we receive."

He continued by saying that: if we do not have this information, we cannot make an informed choice. This choice must reach not only large countries or political parties or churches or liberals, but it must reach more marginalised people. This costs a lot of money because you have to target these people, organise conferences in their own environment which they can understand because at the end of the day I have the right to life. Yes, of course, but I also have an obligation to live my life well. But rights do not come out of the blue. These things are given to us by the state, by the world, by society. Some rights are universal, as the philosopher Emmanuel Kant said, all over the world believe that killing is wrong, but not euthanasia. For society to be able to give us this right, it must be understood otherwise morality becomes a matter of voting."

"A multidimensional and multidisciplinary issue", Mr. Phellas said in the end. "The process of death must be understood as a relational and a spiritual process rather than a mere physiological event. And as a matter of choice in the search for the right death, in conclusion a broad analysis of euthanasia as a question and as a choice, can contribute greatly to the understanding of death by allowing through the activation of the individuality of the community, the utilisation of the remaining time of the patient's life based on his own truth", he concluded.



THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

ANDREAS THEOPHANOUS, PRESIDENT OF THE CYPRUS CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

AMBASSADOR MATTHEW BRYZA, BOARD MEMBER, JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION

DISCUSSANT: EVIE MITSIDOU PHILLIPS, ASSISTANT EDITOR IN CHIEF, CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY

Knowledge Partner:



The impact of the conflict in Ukraine in the Eastern Mediterranean was discussed at the Cyprus Forum by the President of the Cyprus Centre for European and International Affairs and Head of the Department of Political Sciences and Administration of the University of Nicosia, Dr. Andreas Theophanous and former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador Matthew James Bryza, with the Assistant Editor in Chief at the Cyprus News Agency, Evie Mitsidou Phillips moderating the discussion.

In the relevant section, the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean region and the actions of the key actors were discussed in detail, while suggestions were made towards addressing the tension and achieving constructive synergies in the region.

Proposal for a de facto delimitation of the EEZ of Cyprus - Turkey

Dr. Theophanous said first that events, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, are causing tectonic changes in the international system. As regards Europe in particular, he explained that the conflict in Ukraine leads to more instability, less security and less progress.

Speaking about the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean region, Dr. Theophanous put on the table a proposal for a de facto delimitation of the EEZ of Cyprus - Turkey, which could help reduce tensions in the region and promote energy cooperation.

Regarding the Eastern Mediterranean region, he pointed out that Turkey is trying to maintain relations with all the parties to the Ukrainian conflict, despite the strong anti-Russian stance of the US on the issue, while Greece on the other hand chose to strengthen relations with the US and there was a serious limitation of its relations with Moscow. At the same time, he said, Cyprus followed the EU's policy with consequences on its traditional relations with Russia, while the US lifted its arms embargo.

Taking these developments into account, the Professor expressed the conviction that the US and the EU would like to see the utilisation of Eastern Mediterranean energy resources for regional and European use, while the US superpower would also like to see the reduction of Turkey's energy dependence on Russia. Referring to the possibility of new efforts for a solution to the Cyprus problem, Mr. Theophanous said that talks could resume after the 2023 elections in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. Meanwhile, he highlighted that "it is important to try to de-escalate tensions that can be dangerous" and he argued that "it is regrettable that there is no restraint in either Turkey's rhetoric or actions."

He argued that "it is time to think about an evolutionary process". "I think we could have a de facto delimitation of the EEZ between Turkey and Cyprus", he noted, adding that "we could have energy developments and energy utilisation, with benefits for all parties involved". In this context, he explained that "such a package of an evolutionary process could address the issue of Varosha, on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions, and we could also see some additional CBMs on the island".

"Such positive developments in Cyprus could pave the way for a de-escalation of tensions between Greece and Turkey and the promotion of pragmatic solutions in this

regard as well," he added, noting that support from the US, EU and UK would be necessary.

At the same time, the Professor stressed that the developments in the Ukrainian issue lead to the necessary revision of the role of the United Nations and that an effort should be made to promote "a climate of respect for international law" and also to avoid the policy of "double standards". In this context, he said that the West has imposed very strict sanctions on Russia but has never promoted similar measures against Turkey for its attack on Cyprus.

Responding to a relevant question, he said that "I would have been more pleased if the EU had shown more sensitivity towards Cyprus, which is a member state of the EU", recalling at the same time that Ukraine is not a member state of the EU.

He also noted that it should be understood that it is not only Turkey, which can play a mediating role in the war between Ukraine and Russia, adding that the US, Berlin and France can also talk to Moscow.

Dr. Theophanous stressed that in order to reduce tensions and take steps forward for the benefit of all sides in the wider region, it is necessary to demonstrate political leadership by all parties concerned, noting, inter alia, that if Turkey recognised "the sacred right of the Republic of Cyprus to exist then I believe there would be many steps of cooperation."

Two key consequences on the Eastern Mediterranean

Two were the most significant consequences on the Eastern Mediterranean since the war in Ukraine, according to former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador Matthew James Bryza, who now lives privately in Turkey.

The first, according to him, was the loss of Russia's influence in the region. In particular, he referred to Russia's policy in Syria, which has now been "paralysed", since the country "simply does not have the military forces to demonstrate its power here in the Eastern Mediterranean and not even in the South Caucasus". The second main consequence was, he said, "Turkey's commitment to the goal" and referred to Ankara's initiatives to act as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine.

"My friends in Washington and Berlin are very angry that Turkey chose not to take part in the sanctions program, but also, I think, are relieved by the fact that Erdogan has kept a channel (of communication) open", he said.

Responding to a question about Turkey's balanced position in the conflict, he reiterated that the country has taken a stand against Russia by providing Ukraine with lethal weapons. He claimed in particular that Recep Tayyip Erdogan "was clear in his criticism of the invasion, in his insistence on restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine. He has been consistent in providing lethal weaponry to Ukraine, as TB2 drones are responsible for the deaths of many Russian soldiers and sailors, because they played a big role in the sinking of the Black Sea Fleet's flagship".

He also recalled that Ankara “played a key role in mediating the grain deal, which allowed 25 million tons from Ukraine to reach global markets and avoid famine.”

Responding to a question about Turkey's strong rhetoric and whether Cyprus should be concerned, the former US diplomat assessed that Erdogan believes that he is “playing defence”, that “he is overreacting, emotionally, he feels betrayed, and his rhetoric is extreme”.

However, he assessed that there was no threat to Cyprus from Turkey despite the increased rhetoric on its part. “I think there is no threat to Cyprus. Erdogan's eyes are not on Cyprus”, he argued, noting that “Cyprus for the Turkish President is something that needs to be managed”. “Erdogan has decided in favour of a two-state solution and has moved on,” Mr. Bryza added.

Erdogan's foreign policy emphasises the effort to end the war in Ukraine and manage the chaotic situation in Syria with 300 million refugees and a civil war that is still ongoing.

Asked to comment on the potential energy supply of the EU from the Eastern Mediterranean, he said that over time, he is certain that there will be natural gas, which will be piped from Israel to Egypt, liquefied and transported to Europe. He even expressed the view that “there is commercial scope for a pipeline from Israel and Cyprus to Turkey and then to Europe”, adding, however, that this “would be politically impossible now”.

He also referred to the possibility of an electricity interconnection between Cyprus and Europe via Turkey, in order to fully exploit Cyprus' potential on Renewable Energy Sources. “Turkey is connected to the EU electricity grid and Cyprus could end its isolation in electricity if it reaches an agreement with Turkey on its interconnection”, he added.

In conclusion, he pointed out that since August 2020, when the Greek and Turkish frigates collided, there has been no exploratory activity in the Eastern Mediterranean. “All Turkish research ships have returned and are either in ports or in the Black Sea”, a reality, which according to Erdogan, is an indication that he wants de-escalation.



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Quality of

CYPRUS QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

DIMITRIS HADJISOFOCLI, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER, CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI)

DR. KATERINATHEODORIDOU, DIRECTOR, R&D AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT, CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI)

The Cyprus Quality of Life Index was presented by Dimitris Hadjisofocli, Managing Director and Co-Founder of the Center for Social Innovation and Dr. Katerina Theodoridou, Director, R&D and Project Management, Center for Social Innovation, which aims to improve the quality of life in Cyprus and invites all parties to contribute to this end.

The Center for Social Innovation is an organisation that deals with systemic social problems, Mr. Hadjisofocli said. “Whatever falls within this framework, we want, we have the know-how, we have the scientists to be able to analyse the specific issues, and find solutions, for the world to have a better life”, he explained. Mr. Hadjisofocli, explaining where the index came from, said that “Many organisations like us, and our strategic partners and public bodies are taking actions. From there we get some feedback from the people affected. We fix some things, but we do not have scientific measurements of what the impact of our actions is. The Index will do just that. It will measure various factors and the impact they have within our society.”

For her part, Ms. Theocharidou said that “we are making this effort to find the definition and what quality of life means in Cyprus, and to find the measurable variables each year in order to find this Index.”

The Index will be announced each year with a view to its utilisation by all decision-makers, hoping that the policies and strategies developed will be in the interest of a better society where all citizens will have the opportunity to improve their quality of life.

Ms. Theocharidou presented the 14 aspects of the social and professional life of citizens that will be included in the Index. These aspects are Health, Gender Equality, Social Justice, Corruption, Environment, Education, Labour Market, Participation in Political Life, Economic Prosperity, Social Responsibility, Media Freedom, Digital Access, Digital Literacy, Economic Literacy. The aspects were selected based on the relevant literature and are also identified with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations in 2015.

“It is the aspects that we believe that when we measure them, we will be able to come up with an index, which will indicate the quality of life in Cyprus. But in order to have a barometer, we did a survey of 1000 people in Cyprus”, Ms. Theocharidou explained.

As she said, through research the issue was the impact on people's lives based on the 14 aspects. The survey also showed the degree of satisfaction with these themes.

“It raises some questions, like, if something has a big impact on our lives but does not have a big degree of satisfaction, what are the things that affect it? We as a scientific team will have to answer these questions”, she said.

The next steps for the Center for Social Innovation are to set up a scientific team, so that the 14 aspects of social and professional life can be examined in more detail through data collection from various stakeholders and interviews with policy makers. The aim, Ms. Theocharidou said, is to present the start of this index and next year at the next Cyprus Forum to present the latest data with the index being higher.



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LOCAL PROBLEMS ARE INSIGNIFICANT IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CRISIS

"FIRESIDE DISCUSSION ON CYPRUS"

DR. NOAM CHOMSKY, PROFESSOR OF LINGUISTICS EMERITUS MIT / FATHER OF
MODERN LINGUISTICS

DISCUSSANT: YIOTA DEMETRIOU, JOURNALIST

The great challenges facing Cyprus of tomorrow were analysed at the Cyprus Forum by the world-renowned American Professor Dr. Noam Chomsky, answering the questions posed by journalist Yiota Demetriou. Dr. Chomsky stressed that local problems, such as local conflicts, are insignificant in the face of the Damocles' sword of climate crisis, which threatens the existence of life on the planet, warning that there is only a small margin for action.

Lifting of arms embargo in Cyprus

When asked initially about the importance of the lifting of the arms embargo on Cyprus by the US, he replied that in his opinion it will probably not have much effect, since there is no real defence issue, arguing that “Cyprus is facing much more serious problems than the local problem of the conflict with Turkey”.

He cited a report analysing the prospects for the Middle East region, which shows that by the end of the century, global warming will be twice as fast in the Middle East as in the rest of the world. He added that “by the end of the century, temperatures in the region will have risen by 5 degrees Celsius”, making the region unbearable.

Speaking about the effects of climate change in the Eastern Mediterranean, he noted that according to new studies by 2050 the sea level in the region will have risen by one meter and by the end of the century by 2.5 meters. He warned that “the Middle East has now surpassed the European Union and India in greenhouse gas emissions, and the region is a major producer of fossil fuels that are destroying us.” He stressed that what is happening in the region is extremely important and can destroy human life in the near future, indicating that “everything else is unimportant. All local problems will disappear.”

The Cyprus problem

Regarding the Cyprus issue, Dr. Chomsky expressed the view that a political solution to the issue is possible although there is no easy answer. “It will take will on both sides to reach a compromise”, he said.

He argued that at the moment another important issue is the growing threat of nuclear war, which is making headlines at the moment, while a serious problem, which is intensifying, is being identified in the Pacific region, with the US provocations to Taiwan.

“There are not many reports of this, but it is a very serious threat that the United States is increasing its provocations to Taiwan.” He added that on 14 September, the Committee on External Relations almost unanimously adopted a resolution, which could become law, calling for the abandonment of the One China Policy, which has kept the peace for 50 years. He explained that this resolution essentially turns Taiwan into a NATO partner, increasing weapons from the US, including it in military exercises, which is a real blow to China.

He even sounded a warning bell that “if this becomes law, we will have another war breaking out in this region, which means a potential war between nuclear powers that will destroy everything very quickly. This is the situation that prevails.”

He argued that therefore we see that not only the two communities in Cyprus must find a way to compromise and reach a settlement, but also the great powers. Speaking also about the necessary will, which is also needed with regard to the actions that can be taken towards finding a solution to the Cyprus problem, Dr. Chomsky suggested that there should be a popular organisation within Cyprus and within the two communities. "People need to realise that they have to come together, the problems we face have no borders", he highlighted. "Now we are faced with the question of whether we will save organised life on earth, a question that has never arisen in human history", he underlined, adding that "in Cyprus communities must organise themselves internally, connect and reach a solution." He gave the example of Germany and France, forces hostile for centuries, which in 1945 began to become allies in Europe.

He stressed that there is a narrow window for action, but there are feasible proposals that can be implemented. He noted that: "There is not much time, but the means are there. With 2-3% of GDP there can be actions to overcome the crisis. But it must be done soon."

In conclusion, he sent an optimistic message, which stems from the attitude of young people on the issue of climate change. "There is hope for a better future if you look at what young people around the world are doing, organising climate riots. Young people are committed to doing things that need to be done to save us", Dr. Chomsky said to point out that "the people of our generation must listen to them and respond to the challenges. It is a matter of choice."



TRANSFORMATIVE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF CYPRUS

**“TRANSFORMATIVE SCENARIOS: REFLECTIONS ON
COLOMBIA’S PEACE TRAJECTORY AND PRESENTATION
OF FUTURE OF CYPRUS INITIATIVE”**

JUAN MANUEL SANTOS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA
MUHIT INCE, ENTREPRENEUR/BUSINESSMAN

MARCOS ZAMBARTAS, ENTREPRENEUR

DISCUSSANT: MILLE BOJER, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF REOS
PARTNERS



The former President of the country and Nobel laureate Juan Manuel Santos presented the efforts of reconciliation in the conflicts in Colombia at the Cyprus Forum on the occasion of the effort to create “transformative scenarios” for the future of Cyprus by a bi-communal group. The main aspects of this bi-communal initiative, which explores the various transformative scenarios for the future of Cyprus, were also presented during the discussion.

Possible scenarios for Cyprus

Mille Bojer, Founder and Director of Reos Partners, initially presented the initiative of a bi-communal team to create “transformative scenarios” for the future of Cyprus, noting that “transformative scenarios” are an effort of 36 people, 18 Greek Cypriots and 18 Turkish Cypriots, of all ages and different professional profiles, to create possible scenarios for the future of Cyprus. He added that this group has worked very hard over the past 4 months through 3 meetings and explained that “transformative scenarios are not proposals, nor forecasts, nor negotiating positions, but persuasive, possible stories that can happen in the future and contribute to peace and mutual understanding.”

He pointed out that the method used in the said project is the “transformative scenarios” approach, which was “born” through the transition from apartheid, 30 years ago in South Africa, when for the first time different groups from across the political spectrum came together in order to develop different scenarios for their country. He noted that Juan Manuel Santos (who was not then Colombian president) was proposed by President Nelson Mandela to try to implement a similar initiative in Colombia. Thus, he was one of the pioneers of the process of transformative scenarios, which took place in Colombia in 1995 and 1996, under the name “Destino Colombia”.

Mr. Bojer also said that after the presentation of the four transformative scenarios that emerged from the work of the 36-people group, these scenarios will be put in the light of the necessary constructive dialogue. He also expressed the hope and belief that they will be just the beginning of a great effort, since through the discussion, people may think of other scenarios for the future of the island.

At the Cyprus Forum, two of the participants of the project on the future of Cyprus, entrepreneurs Marcos Zambartas and Muhit Ince, spoke about their experience and then asked questions to former Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos.

Entrepreneur Muhit Ince, who deals with the trade of Cypriot products throughout Cyprus, explained that his involvement in this particular effort gave him the opportunity to envision the future of Cyprus, “the future of our children”, expressing optimism for the future, which stems from the fact that people with different profiles were able to work together.

For his part, the entrepreneurial winemaker Marcos Zambartas expressed the conviction that it is very important to communicate with actors of the political elite, as the latter “needs our own input”, while stressing that we need to be active as citizens and at the same time to empower other citizens to become active as well.

How South Africa's history contributed to Colombia's peaceful future

In turn, Juan Manuel Santos, former President of Colombia, pointed out that he was inspired by the whole effort from South Africa, stressing that his contribution to achieving peace in the country was important. In particular, he said: "I was advised by Nelson Mandela, he told me how useful it was for him to bring together people from different backgrounds and undertake this exercise."

He explained that at the time, in the mid-1990s, Colombia was one step away from being declared a "failed state" and that it was very difficult to gather and bring together people from different conflict groups. However, as he said, when he started the whole effort and asked them to come together and cooperate, it became possible, since for the first time, people, who until that moment were trying to kill each other, began to discuss something together, which, as he explained, helped to develop empathy and therefore the dialogue began.

Mr Santos went on to say that the scenarios that emerged as a result of this exercise, although not aimed at it, ultimately predicted what exactly happened in Colombia over the next 20 years. "It is amazing that they became a reality, it was not an exercise in forecasting, but that is what happened," the former Colombian president said.

He also pointed out he had held a similar exercise on the global war on drugs, which he argued that it had failed, noting: "we are not better, but worse today." He explained that they tried to change the paradigm for the war on drugs and in 2012 they started discussing possible alternatives. He referred specifically to the similar exercise they conducted with Panama and with various governments and actors, noting that the exercise was so successful that it was presented to the UN General Assembly and adopted in a resolution. He said it was a very politically sensitive issue and that things had finally evolved in the way that had been discussed in the scenario with Panama in 2012.

He even stressed the importance of the project of "transformative scenarios", stating that he is a witness to their usefulness. "It was the first seed that was planted both to solve the war and to change the example in the war on drugs", he said, adding that he hoped it would be as useful for Cyprus as well. He also noted that in peaceful negotiations there is a fundamental decision: "where do you draw the line between peace and justice", arguing that it is difficult to make generalisations, since each case is different. Speaking about the negotiation process, he stressed the importance of putting victims at the centre of the negotiations, as well as their rights to justice, truth, compensation and non-repetition. "That was the heart of the negotiations," he underlined.

Referring to the "Transitional Justice" implemented in Colombia, he noted that the perpetrators are not imprisoned, but are sanctioned to compensate the victims. Initially, he said, he thought that the victims would be reluctant to accept it, but eventually they accepted it, since, as they said, they did not want others to suffer, in the same way that they themselves suffered.

Conclusion and peacebuilding

Asked what the difference between peacemaking and peacebuilding is, he explained that peacemaking is simply agreeing on what will happen, while on the other hand peacebuilding is much more difficult as a process, because it takes a lot of time, patience and perseverance to heal wounds “to convince people to forgive.”

He also spoke about the importance of the truth, which he stressed is “fundamental” in this process, “even if it hurts many times”, stressing in this context that it is extremely important to set up a “truth commission”. He explained that in Colombia, with the Truth Commission, many were critical, yet the Commission helped to reconcile and build peace.

Asked about the skills and competences that a good leader should have, he referred to the conclusions of the exercise on how to approach the whole process. Specifically, he said that opinions should be expressed without personal attacks, with trust, with respect to time and the right to express others, with precision and clarity, not repetition of ideas, with kindness, confidentiality, discretion and sincerity. “But the most important thing for a leader”, he said, “is to be empathetic, to be able to put oneself in the place of others”. “This will help bridge the differences,” he said.

He also spoke about the importance of the persuasiveness of the fact that the solution will be better and beneficial for everyone, that is, that everyone will benefit if there is an agreement. “Citizens, businessmen, politicians have different reasons, but everyone will benefit and that will lead to consensus”, he explained.

He also referred to the value of dialogue, describing it as the “most powerful weapon”, which must be maintained, and a great effort must be made to be constructive. He also expressed the conviction that all conflicts can be resolved. “We need the political will and to create the conditions for a successful dialogue that will lead to consensus”, the former Colombian president noted. In conclusion, he referred to the importance of communication, highlighting the risk of polarisation through social networks, fake news and media manipulation.





THE TRUTH COMMISSION IS THE SEED FOR PEACE

"THE IDEA FOR A TRUTH COMMISSION"
ACHILLEAS DEMETRIADES, LAWYER

Achilleas Demetriades spoke about the creation of a Truth Committee, which will be the seed for Peace, highlighting: "let's plant it and see it grow".

Mr. Demetriades sent the message that we must focus on the future, which takes into account the intercommunal unrest, the Turkish invasion, but mainly the missing. As he explained, "I got the idea for the Truth Commission from Desmond Tutu when he had visited Cyprus."

He also said the missing are the starting point for a Truth Commission. "There are 975 families on both sides waiting for their loved ones to return. These people deserve a choice in this matter. It is not enough to know whether they are alive or not", he underlined, adding that "they need to know what happened to them, whether their bodies exist and a tomb to honour them".

He said that since 1981, the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) was established by mandate of the UN General Assembly. Its mission is to search, exhume and deliver the bodies to the families. However, he added, it offered no explanation as to the cause of death, the circumstances of the disappearance, or actual information to the families.

Today, the fate of 775 Greek Cypriots and 200 Turkish Cypriots is unknown. The relatives of the missing persons have the right to be informed about the fate of their relatives, " he said and suggested that the Truth Committee in Cyprus be set up on the model of Nelson Mandela, with a differentiation of the terms of reference of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP), which has been carrying out excavations and identification of remains found either in the occupied or in the free areas for years.

Mr. Demetriades referred to "Transitional Justice" and said that there are more than 40 Truth Committees in the world, the most famous of which is South Africa. "Nelson Mandela led his country through a Truth Commission, and so did President Santos of Colombia," he said.

"We need a balance between peace and justice", he said, adding that the way forward was only truth, peace and reconciliation.

His proposal is to upgrade the CMP into a bi-communal Truth Commission, where people can come, express repentance, provide information and in return secure immunity from prosecution. "This agreement is the balance between peace and justice, to help society move forward in the future," he said.

He said that the dilemma of exchanging truth for immunity does not exist, as it has been decided since 1990, since the CMP operates on the assumption that there will be no criminal prosecution on either side of the Green Line for people who give information.

He also pointed out that it is about establishing the truth and not about punishment, adding that the internal regulations for the functioning of the Commission should ensure that truth and remorse are the exchange for amnesty, a matter that has already been agreed between the leaders of the two communities since 1990.

In order to move the project forward, Mr. Demetriades suggested that it can be done through NGOs on both sides. Then it should be addressed to the relatives of the missing, as they are more affected by the issue. Then we must turn to civil society and the political process, Mr. Demetriades concluded.



SMART TECHNOLOGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE

“INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE”

ANDREAS STAVROU, ASSISTANT MANAGER, EAC

TRANSMISSION SUBSTATIONS DEPARTMENT

ROGIROS TAPAKIS, DEPUTY SPOKESMAN, CYPRUS

TRANSMISSION SYSTEM OPERATOR

LENOS HADJIDEMETRIOU, RESEARCH LECTURER, KIOS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

DISCUSSANT: MARKOS ASPROU, RESEARCH LECTURER, KIOS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE



The energy sector is one of the most important challenges in the world, especially at this juncture. In particular, for the European area, since 75% of greenhouse gas emissions are due to the energy sector. In addition, the energy sector is undoubtedly one of the biggest imprints on climate change, the environment and health.

Transforming the energy sector is one of Europe's critical priorities, which has set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 with a view to achieving climate neutrality by 2050. Moreover, the energy sector is at the heart of the European Green Deal and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, Cyprus as a member state of the European Union with various actions is trying to achieve the objectives through a climate neutral economy.

In the framework of the 3rd Cyprus Forum, Dr. Rogiros Tapakis (Deputy Spokesman, Cyprus Transmission System), Andreas Stavrou (Assistant Manager, EAC Transmission Substations Department) and Lenos Hadjidemetriou (Research Lecturer, KIOS Research and Innovation), under the coordination of Markos Aspros (Research Lecturer, KIOS Research and Innovation Centre of Excellence), discussed the issues of the integration of smart technologies and how they can enhance the energy sustainable future of Cyprus.

Penetration of renewable energy sources in the electricity market

In his initial statement, Dr. Tapakis pointed out that Cyprus is isolated from the European electricity network, as there is no interconnection and therefore demand is satisfied by local production and vice versa. There is, he said, space to achieve the goal of renewable energy penetration in the electricity market, giving examples of sunny days in Cyprus where high percentages of production from renewable energy sources could be recorded.

In addition, he said that one of the challenges Cyprus faces for 2030 is the development of photovoltaic installations at 1000 megawatts, almost tripling the existing infrastructure, since it currently reaches 370 megawatts. The production of wind energy with the wind turbines is also in the plan.

Last year, he said, the average load reached about 600 megawatts. Therefore, the question is who will use the produced energy from photovoltaics, since at the moment there is no way to store the energy, nor connectivity with other countries to channel it. This, he said, is the great challenge for the electricity system operator, how to control the energy that is not needed to be able to maintain the stability of the system.

Furthermore, he pointed out, it should be remembered that conventional production is a prerequisite for maintaining the voltage and frequency of the system and ancillary services, which is another challenge for the penetration of renewable energy sources.

Traditionally, Dr. Tapakis noted, the flow of energy, occurred from production to consumption, from the transmission system to the distribution system through the medium and low voltage. What has been observed over the last 1-2 years is that

there is a negative flow of energy from the amount of consumption, from the distribution system that returns to the transmission system and again to the distribution system.

Simply put, Dr. Tapakis stressed that we need a complete redesign of the energy transmission system in order to achieve the 2030 targets. In addition, storage technologies and interconnection efforts need to be developed, which will be the future of the electricity production and distribution system.

In addition, in mid-October, it is planned to run a secondary transmission system in order to identify any problems in the new management system, which will also allow the extraction of important information for the market.

Dr. Aspros said it was really impressive that we envisioned tripling renewables, but at the same time it was “terrifying” that the changes were already ahead of us. It seems that the role of EAC is a key factor in the energy industry and will contribute significantly to the green transformation of the electricity system.

Electricity transmission and storage systems

For his part, Andreas Stavrou (EAC) referred to the cases of citizens or investors who have or apply for a license for photovoltaic installations in rural or land or in areas where the grid is not strong enough to manage and store the energy produced. Previously, he said, the backbone of the system was the Vasilikos and Dhekelia stations where the electricity load was channelled to the urban center of the capital. Now, either there are already installations, or there are pending applications for investments in photovoltaic installations in the mountainous area of Troodos or in other mountainous areas where the network for example is 66 KV instead of 100 or 132 KV.

There are, he suggested, two ways to solve the problem. Either in traditional or modern ways. In traditional ways, the Dhekelia and Vasilikos stations can be decongested, where an amount of energy can be transferred. In modern ways, storage modes should be created, where strategically they should be created in substations of areas where high electricity congestion is created. The market, he said, needs incentives and investment not only in the electricity transmission system but also in storage.

In addition, Mr. Stavrou referred to the issue of energy storage and smart power devices that can be used to relieve congestion and change the flow of electricity that can be installed in places that can strengthen the system for production from renewable energy sources. The disadvantage, however, is the cost and the way to prove that this is the solution that is worth using.

He also noted that energy demand management is a top priority in all European fora. Consumers should be able to meet the needs of the network in relation to the signals emitted by the market. Since, he said, both the EAC and the private companies that began to make their appearance, sell energy as retailers, they should invoice the cost of energy at regular intervals.

An important point, he said, is that power system operators can monitor the power

grid. He referred to the cooperation between EAC and KIOS where together they installed ICT units at various points in order to monitor the flow of energy production and transmission for evaluation and rapid response purposes. The aim of this effort is to evaluate the largest installation of renewable energy sources, especially in the field of storage.

Dr. Asprou stressed the need for the academic community to play a decisive role in the green transition for Cyprus.

New and smart solutions for a green energy transition

Dr. Lenos Hadjidemetriou emphasised that the academic world has an important role to play in the green, digital and smart transmission of energy. However, the question arises as to how to establish a link between the academic world and the energy sector.

As far as the academic community is concerned, it should first and foremost understand the problem and through high quality research proceed to innovative actions to transform the methodology into solutions. What the KIOS Research Centre is trying to do, he said, is to maintain a strong and long-term partnership with key energy sector stakeholders in Cyprus, including EAC, CERA and others involved in energy issues.

Through this collaboration, he noted, we are able to understand the problems, challenges and needs of the industry, and then we can move on to provide tailored smart solutions that will address the challenges. This is one way in which the gap between industry and academia can be narrowed.

Therefore, through this cooperation we can introduce and shape new and smart solutions to enable the green energy transition through the combination of know-how, theoretical tools and advanced monitoring and analysis techniques, control and optimisation methods or even techniques based on artificial intelligence.

As a result of the research, it is simply a methodology that can potentially contribute to the green transition. On its own, he noted, the methodology can do nothing. The question, he said, is how to transform the standard methodology that has been tested in a simulated environment into the real environment.

Moreover, he noted, there are significant success stories in Cyprus where academia and industry have worked together effectively to enable this smart transition. An example is the work carried out by KIOS in cooperation with the EAC where it has upgraded the metering infrastructure to substations of the Authority and through it develops new, intelligent methods to promote the monitoring and control capabilities of the electricity production system.

Through this project, the information obtained is integrated into a digital platform which centrally will help operators of electricity generation and distribution. In the long term this will be able to support renewable energy production.

Another important example in the energy sector is the issue of storage through the development of energy storage systems through KIOS collaborations, where sophisticated control, optimisation and forecasting techniques have been incorporated in order to enable the cost-effective operation of the storage system that can support the EAC electricity grid and allow for greater integration of renewable energy sources.

Smart meters, electric mobility and safety

Referring to the issue of electricity billing used by consumers, he noted that smart metering is the key to opening up the energy market. EAC will soon have 400 thousand new smart meters at its disposal. This will give data to both private investors on energy issues and consumers on what is happening with their home or business electricity consumption.

With this data, he noted, several young people, perhaps through KIOS, will be able to create an application that consumers can monitor and regulate the energy consumption of their facilities, minute by minute. This will help the public understand the value of energy storage. Communities with a positive energy profile are promoted at European level and will be able to manage their own energy. For this to happen, they naturally need meters to be able to monitor production and consumption

At another point, Dr. Roger Tapakis, referred to the challenge of electric mobility. We are a little behind in Cyprus, he said, but the 2030 target is quite high and will change the data of energy demand from the system.

He also pointed out that if we take into account the simplistic approach, domestic consumers at night will charge their vehicles at home, which will be a challenge with negative results for the system. If there are charging stations or provision for vehicle charging during the midday hours where the efficiency of photovoltaic energy sources is highest, then this will help the system to function properly between supply and demand. Smart energy management can be a very important key to the transition to electric mobility.

Finally, Dr. Lenos Hadjidemetriou referred to the safety issues in the production network that should be taken into account regarding the green energy transition. He said new technologies should be introduced with increased security measures that can detect any malicious attacks or energy thefts that could cause a negative impact on the system.



MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

“MISINFORMATION, FAKE NEWS AND DISHONESTY: LIVING IN A POST-TRUTH WORLD”

DANIEL A. EFFRON, PROFESSOR OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR, LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

DISCUSSANTS: MARIA FTELLEHA MARKIDOU, HEAD AND CO-FOUNDER LIFE CHANGING IDEAS

PETROS PANTZARIS, HEAD OF FRAUD MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, CYTA

Knowledge Partner:

**LIFE CHANGING
IDEAS**

In an excellent presentation about his own conclusions on disinformation and fake news, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at London Business School Daniel A. Effron, in the context of the Cyprus Forum, on a theme entitled “Misinformation, Fake news and Dishonesty: Living in a post-truth world.

The discussion was moderated by Maria Ftelleha – Markidou, Head and Co-Founder of Life Changing Ideas, who in her introductory speech stated that “Live Changing Ideas is a series of inspiring business talks, hosting the same of the world's greatest minds to talk about business, inspiration and transformation, helping you and helping companies stay ahead. I would like to introduce you to Dr. Daniel A. Effron who is an expert on misinformation, fake news and malignancy and will share with us the causes and consequences of misinformation in society and the business sector.”

Experiments on right and wrong

Dr. Daniel A. Effron began his presentation by stating that “as a social psychologist, for the last 15 years, I have been designing experiments through which people can understand right and wrong and how much they reflect on ethics. For years, I have carried out these experiments to understand how people think about the ethics of spreading bad news”.

As he explained, misinformation is everywhere these days. “We are surrounded by dishonest leaders and political campaigns that develop alternative events. We are surrounded by fake news that we see on social media. This misinformation can be harmful”.

As far as misinformation is concerned, Dr. Daniel said that according to experts, we live in a post-truth society, in which people are not obliged to share the same reality or agree with certain facts. “The law of malice says that people can believe anything,” he said.

The post-truth society

Then, in an attempt to explain the term of the post-truth society, he stressed that it has three characteristics: the political polarisation, the fact that there are leaders who support alternative realities and the technologies through which bad information can be spread almost immediately.

“But why is this dissemination of bad information? It is not only that people sometimes believe in misinformation, but also that they overlook it. In other words, even if they do not believe it, they come to the conclusion that it is not that morally problematic. This is something that should worry us because if some people think it is okay to spread bad information, even if they do not believe it, then those who spread it are not so responsible or they can still say that some information is wrong and take measures to fight it”, he noted. We need, he said, to understand the moral psychology of misinformation - that is, when people think it is morally acceptable to misinform when they do not believe the information.

The Three Reasons for Misinformation

In an attempt to explain the research he has conducted in recent years, Dr. Effron shared the three reasons that misinformation is spread in a post-truth society through the perspective of moral psychology.

Political polarisation

Explaining his first speech, he said that a post-truth society tends to be more politically polarised. From a psychological point of view there is a concern why people overlook misinformation, which fits with their policies, even if they do not believe it. That is, even the fact that they recognise that it is wrong, if they like it because it promotes the political agenda, does not matter so much.

He cited as an example an experiment in which 400 Americans, half of whom were Republicans and the other half Democrats, were presented with eight lies linked to political issues, half of which matched their own political beliefs, and the other half matched the political beliefs of the other political party. One of the lies given to democrats was that police violence is the leading cause of death for young black men and women in the US, given that democrats are more concerned about minority issues. As for the Republicans, one of the lies they were given was that Joe Biden had stopped all deportations because it best suited their political views. At this point Dr. Effron said it became clear to participants that the statements they were given were all false. The bottom line was that most people think it is immoral to lie, which they know is wrong. At the same time, if people have a lie that matches their opponents' political beliefs, they think it is bad enough, that it is immoral enough to tell the lie. But if it fits with their political beliefs, they do not consider it immoral. That is an important difference.

Subsequently, Dr. Effron posed the question of why people tolerate lies that fit their political beliefs. At this point he proceeded to describe an incident.

"A few years ago, I wrote an article for the New York Times. One reader, Tom from Texas, wrote that every week his entire family receives an email from a cousin containing all sorts of news that supports a specific political agenda, and all of that news is clearly false and easily debunked by doing even a cursory search online. Tom put up with it and sent an email to his cousin asking him to stop sending fake news to the family. What did his cousin do? Of course, he continued to send fake news to the family, but in all the emails there was a clarification saying that the email was not real. It is exactly what I did my research on, namely that people believe that lying is literally true, as a given, they have no basis in reality, they have the impression that there is a greater truth, a more general idea which may be true or even have a dose of truth. This may explain why people justify lies that can fit their political beliefs. If lying fits with their political beliefs, even if they do not believe it, they say okay, the general idea is true".

Taking a second example, Dr. Effron referred to a campaign involving the UK and Brexit involving 350 million pounds of funding in the European Union. The UK statistical authority said it was a clear misuse of official statistics. The unbiased auditors said it was not 350 million pounds. The economic consequences of Brexit will far outweigh the number they are considering. "That is a lie, we did not send 150 million pounds a week, but you can see two levels of untruth. There is the literal truth that the literal claim was £350 million a week to the EU, but the general idea, the essence of the statement is that

they were sending too much money to the EU. If you were in favour of Brexit, you could say that lying fits with political beliefs. I think the general idea is true, we sent a lot of money to the United Kingdom, I know it is a lie, but I do not mind, I do not think it is morally problematic. In some preliminary experiments we have found evidence that this process is true in both the US and the UK amid a variety of political lies”.

He explained that one reason misinformation is spread in a post-truth world is because “we are politically polarised”, noting that “people can more easily tolerate lies that fit their political beliefs. Another reason is that people think the essence of misinformation is truer if it fits with their political beliefs, and finally, research participants agree that misinformation is wrong, but may disagree on morality when it comes to spreading misinformation. These findings highlight the limits of fact-checking. Even if you convince people that the lie is wrong, they believe that fact-checking may not interest them because they say the general idea is true”.

Distortion of Reality

Dr. Effron also referred to the second reason that misinformation spreads in a post-truth society, saying that this concerns leaders who approve of alternative realities.

At this point he gave two examples, one business and one political.

“In terms of business, you may know that Elizabeth Holmes, former CEO of Ferranose, raised more than \$700 million for her company based on a lie. She falsely claimed to have invented a technology that could perform hundreds of medical tests. In her company they could understand or have a good reason to suspect that lies were told, both small and large. Why did they think that was okay? There are many reasons, but I would like to highlight Holmes' philosophy and leadership. In an interview, she said that as a leader, she had to believe that she would fail at least 1,000 times before she could do that, but she would succeed at the first thousand times. “What Holmes is doing is making us imagine that although this technology is not working, at some point in the future it might”.

The second example concerned the Trump Presidency in the United States and the lie that was spread about the inauguration of Donald Trump himself and the people who found themselves in it. “The next morning in the New York Times and other major media, two photographs were published side by side, one of them eight years ago at the inauguration of Obama, which clearly had a larger number of citizens. It is important to see how the Trump administration responded when its lie was exposed. They said the inauguration could have been greater if the weather had been better or could have been greater if security had not been so limited. What the government was calling on us to imagine is that the lie could have been true if the circumstances had allowed it”.

These examples, as Dr. Effron said, “are two different ways of imagining alternate realities, that is, the way certain things could be done and the way they ended up”. In other words, people do not get so annoyed with lies if they imagine that these could be truths in the past, if circumstances were different, or they might be truths in the

future if things worked out in a certain way.

Dissemination of misinformation

Moving on to the third and final reason for the dissemination of misinformation in a post-truth society, he said that this is information technology.

Dr. Effron then explained that “In such a society, technology increases misinformation, which seems less immoral after a repeat viewing. Fake news is spreading at an alarming rate in social media. According to a study that looked at fact-checked news stories, fake news stories spread faster and more in the media than true news stories. This was because fake news attracted more attention and evoked more emotion than real news. So fake news is easier to get caught up in, and that is because it matters that the same person sees this misinformation over and over again”.

The concern, as Dr. Effron said, is that when fake news becomes so familiar that it provokes less moral outrage and moral condemnation. On that basis, they again conducted some experiments. In one of them, they took 800 Americans by showing them some fake news articles about American politics, 12 in total. They were given six headlines which they saw four times each. Then there was a delay of four to five minutes and participants rated all 12 headlines of which half I saw four times at the beginning of the survey and half also saw them for the first time. “The question was, do people rate headlines differently just because they saw them five minutes earlier? An important point in this research is that we told the participants that all the headlines they had seen that day were fake. It turned out that they believed us because they replied that it did not matter that they saw some headlines earlier”.

On that, the Professor noted that “repeated exposure to the same fake news articles seems to be less ethical. And we should be interested in these criticisms of how immoral they are because they predict people's intentions in behaviours in different ways. In these experiments we saw that if one sees the same fake news articles multiple times, not only do they think it is less immoral to spread them, but they tend more to share them. If a friend of mine posts something on social media, I press the like button to express my approval, and that is a little scary”.

These are the three reasons why bad information is spread. “In such societies, we are inundated with misinformation and seeing it many times, we become emotionally alienated.”

Training and cross-referencing information

As noted by Dr. Effron, according to the World Health Organization, we are living through an epidemic of misinformation. We need some new tools to fight this epidemic. Typically, the tools we rely on are training and cross-referencing information. That is, let's teach people skills for digital literacy to help them recognise the truth from fake news”.

When it comes to pre-bunking, he said, there have been studies about it, which means you find the lies that are going to circulate, and you tell people the truth and you tell

them they are going to hear lies at some point, but they do not believe it. These tools work quite well but are based on basic assumptions, but we need to think ahead. These tools assume that people want to share content that is true, but they do not because they believe misinformation. They want to teach people to do a better job of separating fact from fiction.

Strengthening critical thinking

“One tool that I recommend, in addition to the basic ones, is for people to think more carefully about their moral values. I agree that most people want to share real content, but sometimes they tend to share wrong content that they know is wrong. They tend to because they support the political agenda they like, or because their friends approve of it, or because it is funny, or because it is provocative. The problem is that the environment in which we make decisions about what content to share, the feeling that comes to mind is that logically it is okay. Still, if you can convince people to use their brains instead of their instincts to think more carefully about how much they care about honesty, maybe they can stop sharing as much misinformation”, he noted. Proof, as he noted, that ethical thinking could reduce the spread of misinformation. “As I mentioned before, fake news seems to be less immoral if it is seen several times. But this is not the case if you tell people to think before they make moral judgment, before they decide how moral or immoral a news story is. So, if you tell them to take some time, think more carefully, and write down some reasons why they think something is moral or immoral to share, then it eliminates that effect. Second, people are more prone to sharing fake news if it fits their political beliefs, as I said before”.

“What I recommend is more ethical deliberation, that is, more thinking about moral values as a tool against misinformation. How can we convince people of more ethical deliberation? We are still working on it. An easy message for today to all of you is to think before you share. The environment of social media is shaped in such a way that it leads us to use our instincts instead of our minds. We do not think carefully. So, remind yourself to take some time and before you share something, think about it. Is it right to share it? Will it cause harm? Won't it somehow be without sincerity?” he stressed.

The second proposal is to the social media companies. “I would love for them to design interventions to get people to take some time and think about whether something is right for them to do. Facebook and Twitter are already piloting these interventions. What users are essentially asked to do is to calm down and think about whether something is true. I would like them to go one step further in order to encourage users to think”.

The third proposal is more about people in business. “I teach ethics to managers around the world so that they have a model of ethical thinking in decision making. People do not want to look immoral in front of their bosses or subordinates or group members, so they keep their moral concerns to themselves. I am concerned that this is also the case in post-truth societies, that people do not talk enough about honesty and morality. I think a first step for leaders in business society, and beyond the ethical debate model, to think more about ethics and show others that it is not always obvious what is right and wrong, but the difficulty of thinking about it is important. I would

like to see more of a presentation of this ethical debate, and that starts with the leaders”.

Fraud and misinformation in Cyprus

At this point the presentation of Dr. Efforn. Then there was a discussion with Mr. Pantzaris who is in charge of CYTA on fraud and misinformation on a daily basis.

Asked what the biggest challenge is, Mr. Pantzaris said that some people try to convince users through calls, pretending to be doctors or technicians of CYTA or Microsoft, for example, to reveal their credit card information. This is done, as he pointed out even through a simple text message or email, and citizens believe that they have won the lottery they never played or inherited property they did not know so as to click on a link that leads them to fake websites through which they again request the provision of credit card information. This has disastrous consequences.

At the same time, Mr. Pantzaris noted that such incidents happen a lot during the year without immediate reactions. Money losses for both users and companies can reach millions, even in CYTA alone, he noted, while stressing that misinformation and attacks on social media can cost the industry billions. “Prejudicing is probably the best defence that translates through training customers to be more careful not to believe anything and to use their brains”, he noted.

2nd DAY

► GREETINGS



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DUBRAVKA SUICA

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEMOGRAPHY, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**THE CONFERENCE ON THE
FUTURE OF EUROPE SOWED THE
SEEDS FOR A MAJOR CHANGE IN
THE EU**

The edifice of the European Union is a democratic space that transcends ages, borders, cultures and histories and we have the moral duty, this space to protect it, the European Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica noted.

In her statement, Commissioner Šuica referred to the particular attention that should be paid to the influence of the extremes of the political spectrum, both from the left and from the right. Recent election results, he noted, are a strong warning, which is why we should “act now and unite at all levels in order to build democratic resilience from within”.

Although the European Union, she pointed out, faces a number of challenges, there is still much to be done and it will be implemented. Commissioner Šuica referred to her experience in leading the work on the Conference on the Future of Europe, where citizens had the opportunity to debate each other in an inclusive, safe and transparent public space. “I have always insisted that citizens be at the centre of the process”, she underlined.

During the work of the “Conference on the Future of Europe”, proposals were heard that include the ambitions of 800 randomly selected citizens who took the time to discuss the future European Union, in which they would like to live and work, she suggested, while the European Commission is working on the proposals of the Conference, in view of the Work Programme for 2023.

In addition, Commissioner Dubravka Šuica referred to the recent speech by President Ursula von der Leyen on the state of the European Union, which set the framework for the Commission's programme for the year 2023. The President, Commissioner Šuica said, mentioned a number of important actions that respond directly to citizens' proposals, and this shows that our engagement with citizens is not limited to elections, but goes deeper.

She also stressed that “the Conference on the Future of Europe sowed the seeds for a significant change in policy making at the European Union level, despite the fact that it coincided with an unprecedented health crisis that caused adjustments.”

Democracy, she said, cannot be stopped for a pandemic and it had to be ensured that citizens retained their space for consultation, voice, input and contribution. She added that, while the pandemic was in recession, another crisis had arisen. “The war has raised its ugly head on our continent once again. In stark contrast to the Kremlin's aggression, the citizens who participated in the Conference took the initiative of solidarity with Ukraine”.

“I will always remember the brave Ukrainians who spoke at the plenary of the Conference last March. They were given the necessary safe space to be heard”, she said. However, she added, we are not finished yet as Europe's energy supply faces a number of challenges.

Commissioner Šuica went on to say that the cost of living is rising every day and people are feeling the pressure to make a living. “To overcome these crises together, we must

fully engage with them”, she said.

Dubravka Šuica reiterated that now more than ever, citizens should be able to have an inclusive, safe and transparent public space where they can contribute to policy making, in particular in these times of misinformation. She also said that in order to build trust, proposals of the Conference are monitored and implemented, while the contribution of the citizens seals the legitimacy of the process.

The Commissioner also referred to the New Pact on Migration and the proposals on mental health that are citizens' initiatives, noting that they have already been proposed by the Commission and now the European Council and the European Parliament are invited to approve them. Some of the proposals put forward by citizens, she said, can be implemented by the European institutions. However, she said, other proposals require a more in-depth reflection or even a change of circumstances in some cases.

She also stressed that participating in elections every four or five years cannot be enough for democracy and that is why communication is a component of citizens' participation. To this end, she said that on 2 December, together with the European Parliament and the Council, a feedback event will be organised with citizens.

“With the aim of creating an ecosystem of democratic engagement, the online relationship with citizens will be improved through the portal. “Have Your Say”, we want to provide a hub where citizens can easily participate, provide information and receive feedback”, she said.

“Thanks to the courage of European citizens to come together and discuss their common future, European democracy will never be the same again. The European Union needs the vision, the commitment to the participation of all its people, of all generations, to build a better future, a better democracy”, she concluded.



ASMA KHAN
CHEF, RESTAURATEUR, COOKBOOK AUTHOR DARJEELING EXPRESS

OPEN YOUR HEART AND SHOW THE LIGHT

The struggle of a woman of colour, immigrant, Muslim, and a woman to lead one of the world's greatest Indian food cuisines is a story that is both shocking and inspiring. The blows from the different kinds of people who looked down on her were repeated.

But when “there is darkness and your foot is covered in blood from the thorns you have trodden on, open your heart and let the light set fire to your ribs and as you burn show the light to them so that they know where the thorns are and not tread on them.”

Speaking about her struggle, chef Asma Khan says: “I always thought you should follow one of Martin Luther King's most inspiring comments that if you are a black preacher, get out of the church and preach outside the church. I have always loved the opportunity to go out and speak to a different audience. Because from my accent one can understand that I am from both the west and the east. I have lived more in the Britain than I have lived in India. I moved to Britain right after my arranged marriage”.

“The first thing that struck me is that when white people came and lived in India, they were called expatriates. But people like me who moved to Britain called us immigrants, economic migrants. People asked me if I was a refugee, especially when I dressed the way I dressed. I want to point out one important thing which is fundamental. We are all migrants, and we are all refugees because the first home we all had was in our mother's womb. Who still lives in that house where he was born? Many of us do not live there. We left for various reasons such as finances, for love, for education. This is how life goes on”, he said.

“But labelling people and the violence that comes through them, in Britain unfortunately the far-right press is obsessed with a certain number of people arriving by boat, a very precarious journey. The word refugee has now become abusive”, she said.

“You are probably wondering why a chef talks about these things. I wanted to see what it was like to be a woman, a Muslim, an immigrant and a chef in Britain. There are not many, and it is a pretty secluded place. Netflix and “Chef's Table” were mentioned earlier. This was a turning point because no one from the UK was ever involved and when the episode aired many people said I dispelled all sorts of misconceptions that people had. My first reaction was that I did not want to be in a place where it dispelled any misunderstandings. All I wanted to do was tear down the whole building. This is something that I want all of us to think about because a black symbol person has succeeded and yes, we are representatives of people, of women”, she added.

She went on to say: “I refused to go to conferences and tell them who else was on the panel. Because the idea that there was a context to being invited and thinking that this is diversity, no, it is not”.

“It is the public person and the private person and all of you have the power because what you can do is change the lives of the people around you. Put your hand around a person, no matter who they are, if you feel they are isolated. This is something that people think they cannot do. When I turned 50, I went to Northern Iraq, opened a cafe for the Yazidi survivors of ISIS. I went back and a lot of people who said well-done did something really good and what I was thinking was that I did it because I was connected. To a certain extent, we can all do this. You can start with your relatives, your mother,

your family, your colleagues and you can move on", Asma Khan said.

"Representation is important. It is not just the colour of my skin, my Muslim name, my identity. This is for humanity. The fact that no one knew my past and how I can deal with violence and they were asking me to leave, to go home", she said.

"That is not happening to me anymore because I am recognisable, but it happens to others who look like me, and that kind of hatred is difficult to understand, and there are a lot of people who can teach you how to hate. For example, young children tell Asian children that they stink, that your food stinks. How did they learn that and when they grow up, they line up with others to eat Chinese and Indian food. But in that moment, as children, they ruined the lives of the other children who said those words", she added.

The chef continued: "You stink, your food stinks, that is what I come from. This is where all my worlds collide. I am a constitutional lawyer, and I understand how important it is to use the law to protect yourself, but I understand the law cannot do enough. You can belong to the LGBT community, be whatever you want and have equal rights, but reality is not like that. That is where the change has to take place, and that is why I started cooking because I realised that food and culture can be easily separated".

Giving an example of profound discrimination, the chef said: "In America they love tacos and I found that in New York you can find them everywhere, but they built a wall to keep out Mexicans. You cannot eat my food, you cannot wear my clothes, you cannot listen to my music if you do not accept me. My food is part of my DNA, it runs through my veins, but you get it so easily. Yes, chicken tikka masala is the most popular food in Britain. Indian food is everywhere. But ask the Indian families how they were treated, the fear they have. When I saw that there were a lot of white drunks I got scared and left. My food is the most popular and we are the best, everyone loves to eat our food".

"This is where discussions are needed", the chef continued. "I am very politicised, I talk to everyone in my restaurant, which is unusual, and I tell everyone how sad it is, you have been waiting to eat in my restaurant, you are the captive audience, and you have to sit down and listen to me until the food comes and it will not come until I am done. That is my choice. I used my skills, my reputation, my ability to feed people, to cook briar. I use all of this as an opportunity to have a conversation about food, which is the bridge to my host state. I am an immigrant, so the nation that allowed me to have a quick escape is an unusual restaurant".

"I am unfortunately at the moment the only Indian woman the sole founder of all Indian women's cuisine in the world. There are no other restaurants where there are only women's cuisines. It is shocking when you take a step back and see in the East, from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka there are women cooking at home. The patriarchy decides what everyone eats, but still, when it comes to money and the label of being a professional, they are all men. There is a saying in my culture that basically means that the chicken you eat at home is on a par with the lentils. They do not talk about chicken and lentils, there is a difference in price. Chicken is sophisticated, expensive, shiny. Lentils are like beans and rice, they are simple and basic. In fact, they are talking about my hands, about your mother and grandmother, about the idea that the food of your

mother and grandmother is so loved and appreciated because it is free”.

“Why don't you see that older women are cooking in the kitchen when that is the food we all grew up with. It is not the food you eat, it is not the food that impresses, but it is the food that healed and built you. And yet we are nowhere, we do not have power and I do not “shoot” at the men who cook our food, I mean to some extent, but I think this idea that you go to cooking school and you cook something that you do not recognise, you cook a food that is easy to produce in bulk, that is on the production line, that you cook to impress, and behind the walls of my kitchen there is equality, there is actually literally equality even when it comes to wages, but we do not know what is going on behind the walls. There are hardly any women around”, she said.

Referring to the hospitality of women, chef Asma Khan said that “they play a role of the beautiful woman who is at the reception, or you find them as confectioners, because women are skilful and patient and they are in the cold kitchen. You will not find them in positions of power, they are not the ones who dictate what happens and for this reason they cannot protect other women. The kind of bullying and harassment that occurs in kitchens is shocking. If that happens outside the kitchens, that person 100% will go to jail. Touch without consent, sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape. Touching without consent is harassment, that is the legal interpretation”.

“We must all know that there is no equality. On the surface it may be the same. The BBC went to court for paying women less than men for the same job. It is abhorrent that they should go to court”, Khan said.

“The idea that some people in India have, especially in the east, that all women in the west are equal. No. It is much more cunning and polite and sophisticated”, she said.

“When it comes to power, we are not there yet, and one thing I realised is that you have to build partnerships. Women need to work with other women and compassionate men. Men are important, it is not us and them. I had a lot of help setting up my restaurant from men who came to me and told me that I reminded them of their mother and there was nothing they could do for her. Do something for your mother now if you are lucky and she is still in your life, otherwise growing up is shocking”, the chef added.

“Discrimination works on many levels, not just skin, faith. I do not run the same race as a white man in the UK, but I also do not run the same race as a white woman. As a woman of colour, an immigrant, and a Muslim, I carry cultural baggage that no one else has. This is my work. I carry this baggage because I am who I am and then I have obstacles that take me back”, she continued.

“I am here today because I won. You know there are obstacles and where they are. If you are not running in the race which is full of obstacles, you have the responsibility to remove the obstacles for those who have to jump them. I think this is where the change can take place. Only you for the person next to you, change their life, open the doors and keep them open until they pass. You do not have to do anything huge. All I wish is to inspire some of you. You do not fail because you have someone by your side”, she said.

In conclusion, the chef said, "I would like to end my speech with a poem. This is the motto of my life, the last verse of the poem says if you walk alone in the storm and every house of yours has closed its doors and there is darkness and your foot is in the blood of the thorns you stepped on, open your heart and let the light set fire to your side and as if you are burning show the light to them so that they know where the thorns are and do not step on them. That is what motivates me every day. I wanted to share this poem with you because many of you will have these moments where you can be the light for others. And as night is not endless, the day will always come. There are people in dark places, you can be the one to show them the light. You can be the change. What I can tell you is that what I have accomplished in my life, the strength of all my kitchens with only women, many of whom have experienced violence, is where I feel strongest. When I can help someone else".



STELIOS KYMPOUROPOULOS
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, EPP

**THE FAMOUS SAYING “NOTHING
FOR US WITHOUT US” TURNS
INTO “NOTHING WITHOUT US”**

In previous decades, societies considered accessibility to be the key to protecting the rights of people with disabilities, said New Democracy MEP Stelios Kypourouopoulos, noting that this perception led to the creation of various structures used exclusively by people with disabilities. This practice, he explained, contributed to the segregation of people with disabilities from society at large, causing racism and a violation of fundamental human rights.

Mr. Kypourouopoulos stressed that although accessibility remains particularly important, it should always be applied in the context of the prospect of inclusion. In fact, he gave several examples, suggesting that entering a building from a “special” accessible but invisible, back door to a building, working in a protected, separated space from other colleagues, education in a special school for children with disabilities, transportation with special, accessible means of transport, living in separate, accessible areas or homes, may offer a comfortable living, but make people with disabilities invisible to societies.

Globally, he said, the disability movement has turned to demanding the integration of people with disabilities, while stressing that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focuses on this point. Starting with the United States and then Europe, over the last 20 years efforts have been intensified to make the integration of people with disabilities a priority, however, it is still not a priority for Greece, Cyprus and other countries in southeastern Europe.

Mr. Kypourouopoulos stressed that this is due to the fact that there is a significant shortage of people with disabilities and their representative organisations in political decision-making centres. He noted that in countries that are lagging behind in the implementation of the disability rights, the discussion is focused on medical and charitable models, while the only acceptable discussion should be on human rights or the social model of governance of people with disabilities.

Inclusivity should start with decision-making, however difficult it may be for non-disabled people in politics to accept. But when it comes to the rights of people with disabilities, it is the people directly involved, through their own organisations, who should have the first and last say in any decision-making process. “The famous saying “nothing for us without us” turns into “nothing without us,” he said.

People with disabilities, the MEP noted, are well aware of all the obstacles that deprive them of fundamental human rights. They are the ones who know what needs to change and what improvements need to be made to make their daily lives better. “We do not need experts to tell us our rights. We need the experts and governments to support us by proposing appropriate ways to improve or change the laws that concern us”, he said. The necessity of the participation of people with disabilities in decision-making is mentioned in every paragraph of the new European Disability Strategy, as well as in the UNCRPD, Mr. Kypourouopoulos underlined, stressing that the member states, to a certain extent, are aligned with this data, creating working groups with the participation of organisations of people with disabilities. However, in most cases, he said, these working groups have only an advisory role in the decision-making process.

Speaking about the positive example of Greece, Mr. Kypourouopoulos said that during

the term of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the first National Action Plan on the rights of people with disabilities was created, through various working groups, with the participation of people with disabilities. In addition, the European Parliament is called upon to find the appropriate way to make this advisory capacity more binding. From the podium of the Cyprus Forum, MEP Stelios Kypouropoulos stressed that the European Union must work at three different levels in order to successfully implement the integration and inclusion of people with disabilities through their participation.

In order to make sense of the participation of persons with disabilities, the appropriate instructions to be given to its Member States should be established.

It is important to raise awareness in the wider society so that they are ready to accept that people with disabilities are the ones who should decide and have control and choices for their lives.

Finally, it is equally important to empower people with disabilities.

In southeastern Europe, he notes, people with disabilities lack the confidence to participate and exercise the necessary control over political decision-making. In addition, they lack the necessary experience to be effective in such processes because of their interaction with the wider society, demonstrating how inclusion affects every aspect of their lives.

It is particularly important, he stressed, that the empowerment of people with disabilities begins early in life. Inclusive education could be the Holy Grail of this effort, since all children, without exception, are our future.

The MEP shared personal experiences with attendees, stressing that more people should get involved in politics, strengthening his own effort to realise his vision in the European Parliament “We must unite our voices”, he said.

We need to improve the accessibility of the European Parliament, which is at a good level, but it is not as effective due to the lack of MEPs with disabilities. The European Parliament cooperates with the European Disability Forum and the European Independent Living Network, etc., but the nature of these organisations is purely advisory. “Many people with disabilities I know have stopped their efforts after being tired of explaining for many decades to people without disabilities that they are responsible for making the final decisions about their lives. It is really difficult to have to prove every day that we have rights, that we know our rights and it is our choice how we implement them”,

In conclusion, Mr. Kypouropoulos noted that inclusion is the key to a society where people with disabilities will live equally, enjoying their fundamental human rights. “Inclusion is more than a series of laws, a mandatory structure, or a percentage of mandatory participation. Inclusion is a way of thinking that we should adopt in every aspect of life. Thus, our societies will be more just and free of prejudice for all, not just for people with disabilities. And this is the only way for the EU to evolve”, he concluded.



KLEANTHIS KOUTSOFTAS
PRESIDENT OF THE YOUTH BOARD OF CYPRUS

CREATING A LONG-TERM VISION FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION

The President of the Youth Board of Cyprus, Kleanthis Koutsoftas, referred to the issue of digital education for a more inclusive society in his speech at the Cyprus Forum.

Firstly, he stressed that “the various education systems around the world have come under unprecedented pressure, particularly during the lockdowns of previous years, during which we have lived through the pandemic. Through the difficulties that have arisen, the entire planet has been forced to find alternative ways to operate. And all this has been achieved through the valuable help of technology”.

He also argued that “the digital transformation has brought radical changes to society and the economy, which are increasingly affecting everyday life, and as the pandemic has shown, an education and training system fit for the digital age is vital.”

He then stressed that “the pandemic has made the need for higher levels of digital competences in education and training but has also led to a growing number of existing challenges and inequalities between those with access to digital technologies and those without, in particular, disadvantaged people, and has also revealed a number of challenges that education systems have to face”.

“Therefore,” he said, “building a national digital education ecosystem has also been a priority for the Cypriot government and the public service. He underlined that “Cyprus, by participating in the National Recovery Plan, is accelerating the digital transformation of education”, while stressing that “such reforms are necessary for an open and inclusive society and for a dynamic digital economy”.

However, as he argued, “the question remains: is this really a digitised form of inclusive education?”, while stressing that at the Cyprus Youth Board we believe that the benefits of digital reality are multiple for the development and education of young people”.

In this context, he explained that, through its programmes, the Agency is trying to convey the idea of digitalisation to young people but also to bring them in contact with it.

Specifically, he referred to the Makerspace program, which is an innovative space, which follows the successful example of similar spaces operating in the world and provides young people with access to high-level and state-of-the-art equipment for the development of prototypes and the implementation of their business ideas.

He made extensive reference to the event “Future of Makerspaces in Education” during which a panel discussion took place between the doctoral students of CUT, dealing with education issues and Makerspace.

During the event, as he pointed out, the various opportunities and challenges related to the integration of learning methods, which are in line with the standards of Makerspaces in primary, secondary and tertiary education, were discussed.

Specifically, as he said, the opportunities and challenges of digital education were analysed:

Regarding the opportunities, it was noted that it is a very important opportunity to have a problem-oriented approach to learning, which is drawn from the educational models and pedagogical approaches abroad, the advantages of Makerspaces in education were analytically mentioned, such as the strengthening of 21st century skills, namely critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, problem solving, etc., while the importance of exposing students to new opportunities, innovation and ingenuity, as in the Makers movement, was discussed.

Regarding the challenges, it was noted that there are issues as to the motivation of teachers to approach and redefine the curriculum of education, as well as the objectives of the courses to be consistent with the rationale and strategy of Makerspace. The discussion suggested that teachers may not be motivated to bother doing so, as long as how they teach and how effective they are is not recognised or evaluated. It was also mentioned that there are no resources in primary and secondary education to set up such spaces as a Makerspace and operate. The fact is that even if higher education has the resources, the procedures are time-consuming and complicated. Finally, it was discussed that there is not the necessary pedagogical and technical support for teachers to be able to meet the expectations and pedagogical approaches required to create a Makerspace in a school or university.

In addition, as Mr. Koutsoftas said, the Youth Information Centers of the Youth Organization during the pandemic conducted Digital Skills Workshops: Let's Go Digital, while continuing to conduct digital skills workshops to bring young people closer to digital technology and education.

He also mentioned that the Youth Organization operates the program "The STEAMers" based on the international standards of S.T.E.A.M. Centers. The program offers workshops in Robotics, Programming, Film Making, Photography, Graphic Design, Creative Writing, Music, Theatre and Art, based on digitalisation.

He added that with regard to the Erasmus+ programme there is a digitised database, which contains more than 178,000 summaries of different projects from which one can draw ideas.

Concluding, he stressed that "these changes require a strong and concerted effort by all actors to support education and training systems and meet the challenges while creating a long-term vision for the future course of digital education."

2nd DAY

► DISCUSSIONS



INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE

“FIRESIDE DISCUSSION ON CITIZENS’ PARTICIPATION IN A DEMOCRACY”

DUBRAVKA ŠUICA, VICE-PRESIDENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND
DEMOGRAPHY, EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DISCUSSANT: MICHALIS MOUTSELOS, UCY



The important role that young people have to play in civic life has been demonstrated by the European Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica.

In particular, in a discussion that followed with Michalis Moutselos, Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the Department of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Cyprus after her greeting, Commissioner Dubravka Šuica discussed, inter alia, the pandemic and the climate crisis, as well as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its consequences. At the same time, she referred to the urbanisation and the demographic problem in the EU, due to the ageing of the population.

In conclusion, the Commissioner praised the importance of the European Year of Youth 2022, noting that the participation of young people is of utmost importance. In fact, on this issue, she said that her motto is that decisions should be “not for you without you.” She also recalled that 2023 will be the European Year of Skills.



DISCUSSING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

"FIRESIDE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUNG CYPRIOTS"

ELENI CHARITONOS, FIRST CYPRIOT ANALOG ASTRONAUT, SPACE
GENERATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SGAC)

ATAMAN KINIS, MUSIC COMPOSER & RESEARCHER

DISCUSSANTS: CHRISTODOULOS A. PROTOPAPAS, CEO OF HELLAS SAT

MELTEM BURAK, CONTENT CREATOR, POD PRODUCER, PROJECT OFFICER

The need for a Cypriot space agency and the role that music can play between the two communities of the island were raised by Eleni Charitonos and Ataman Kinis during a discussion at the third Cyprus Forum.

Cyprus space agency

Analog astronaut Eleni Charitonos pointed out the need to create a Cypriot space agency, such as those with corresponding countries abroad, during her discussion with the CEO of Hellas Sat, Mr. Christodoulos Protopapas.

As she explained, Cyprus is ready for the next step in order to have its own Space Agency, giving opportunities in the future and why not, to carry out a real mission in space.

Analog astronaut Eleni Charitonos explained to the public her status, saying that just as there are astronauts doing missions in space, there are corresponding analog astronauts doing missions on earth, because there are neither the funding nor the opportunities to conduct research at the desired levels. Analog missions, she said, have existed since 1969 when NASA was trying to send the first missions into space. So, they began making their first missions to Earth, to places that could simulate features from other planetary bodies, such as Mars and the moon.

In addition, Eleni Charitonos presented to the participants of the Cyprus Forum, experiences from the missions she took part in, as well as the conditions in which she was called to live and work at a research level, highlighting the importance of training on earth in order for analog astronauts to find the methods and ways to carry out a mission to space.

Asked by Mr. Christodoulos Protopapas to answer for the funding of her participation in analog programmes, Eleni Charitonos thanked the Deputy Ministry of Research and Innovation and personally Mr. Kyriakos Kokkinos for the support she received to realise her dream. In addition, in the last program in which she participated, she had the financial support of Deloitte and Medochemie, two companies that are always next to young people.

Moreover, in presentations and speeches she gave to young people, conversing with them, Eleni Charitonos found that there is a need for more dissemination of opportunities that young people have in different sectors. She had the opportunity to talk to young audiences about the space sector, through which she had the opportunity to learn a lot and to pursue her dreams through her academic career. What is needed, she pointed out, is the dissemination of opportunities and the encouragement of young people.

In conclusion, Eleni Charitonos pointed out that these discussions between young and more experienced professionals are important, stressing that the cooperation between the two parties will learn that a lot in young people the experience of elders and young people will have the opportunity to put issues on the table.

Finally, Mr. Christodoulos Protopapas said that in his election program, he has a clear

reference to the creation of a space station, as he described it as the “Cyprus NASA” for real space missions from Cyprus to exist in the future. In fact, he said that the cost ranges from 20 to 30 million, by the standards of the European and Russian Space Agency.

Opportunities for cooperation between the two communities

As part of the discussions with young Cypriots, Meltem Burak talks with award-winning composer and researcher Ataman Kinis about his experiences and views on the role music can play and the opportunities for cooperation he can create between the two communities of the island.

Ataman Kinis is the winner of the Montreal Film Scoring Competition for 2021 and a researcher on maqam music issues and its effects in Cyprus. He maintains a particularly strong bi-communal activity from a very young age, which also affects his artistic and research activity.

His distinction in the Montreal Film Scoring Competition was seen as a springboard for broadening his skills and an opportunity to network with other people.

Regarding the division of the island and how it affects music and creation, Atman Kinis replied in the affirmative, stressing that especially in the northern part of the island it is harder for young people to find opportunities to spread their music. We cannot easily co-create, he said, and this certainly has an impact on both sides.

He also expressed the belief that artists can use their arts to send a message of unity and influence through the music industry. In addition, he noted, the cooperation is a means for the two communities to discuss the current situation and how it affects young people. Many young Turkish Cypriot artists go abroad to study and choose to stay and live there, because here it is difficult to face the realities as they are formed.

Asked to give the advice and suggestions he would give to policy makers, he suggested that they should try to understand the conditions and give opportunities to both musicians and all kinds of artists.

“It is important”, he said, “that through these opportunities the two communities can be brought closer together and work together. To strengthen the empathy and the sharing of the experiences of the people of the two communities, through festivals, collaborations, etc. We need to cultivate the element of empathy. Our traditional music is common. We can work together, make music and contribute constructively to the dialogue”, he said.

Ataman Kinis noted that at EU level, policymakers should empower and inspire people to participate. As far as musicians and artists are concerned, they should participate in exhibitions in public. Perhaps the funds, he said, are the answer to aiding artists both in Cyprus and in other countries.

Concluding, Ataman Kinis said that both as an artist and in his capacity as a researcher, he would like to do something for his community that promotes cooperation between

the two sides. He would like to continue his research on the arts and music of Cyprus, believing that cooperation is the way forward.

His immediate goal is to finish his PhD and develop partnerships. He would like to teach students Cypriot music, both in Cyprus and abroad, through the influences of Greek and Turkish music.

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EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH

“EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH”

COSTAS MAVRIDES, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT GROUP
OF THE PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALISTS AND
DEMOCRATS

CHRISTIANA XENOFONTOS, EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

MARIA KOLA, PRESIDENT OF THE CYPRUS YOUTH COUNCIL, DATA
ANALYST

ALIYE TAYGUN, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER, OXYGONO

AHMET AKSUNLAR, PEACE ACTIVIST

DISCUSSANT: THEA PIERIDOU, PRESS OFFICER AT THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT OFFICE IN CYPRUS

Knowledge Partners



The future belongs to the young. A “cliché”, but with a fair dose of truth as today's youth are tomorrow's leaders and tomorrow's society. The way we treat young people and the tools we offer them will play an important role in the subsequent course of important issues of the world.

To have a better, greener, digital and technologically advanced future, we need to give young people the necessary opportunities to create and thrive.

Referring to the European Year of Youth, Ms. Thea Pieridou, Press Officer at the European Parliament office in Cyprus, said that the aim is “to empower and strengthen the importance of European youth so that there is the potential for a better future, greener, inclusive and of course digital. The discussion will take place on the challenges and opportunities faced by Cypriot youth.

Challenges must have global solutions

Speaking about his role as a member of the European Parliament, Costas Mavrides, MEP of DIKO, said that “recently, we had a conference on the future of Europe in which citizens from all over the European Union directly expressed their views on the future of Europe. There are disappointments and of course among the youth who have expectations, but I have noticed a change in recent years which gives me great hope. Some 15 to 20 years ago, few invested their expectations and their future in the European Union. Today, more and more citizens, especially young people, expect and demand from the European Union to act in specific ways and to influence and manage their daily lives”.

“With that in mind, I will go one step further,” Mr. Mavrides said. “Today we live in a world where challenges must have global solutions, or at least a minimum of multilateral solutions. That is why in the global world and the challenges from climate change to international trade, the economy, labour, human rights, democracy, the challenge especially recently and the geopolitical instability both in our region and the periphery of the European Union, created an environment in which the EU has a key role to play”.

In summary, Mr. Mavrides stressed that “the role that the EU must play, I will emphasise the following. All these goals work, digital change, international trade, the economy, all these goals are well achieved or to some extent, we need to ensure the geopolitical role of the EU. Without stability, security, peace in our region, inside and outside Europe, I believe that greener and inclusive societies cannot be achieved”.

Concerning youth, the MEP said that “for Europe to have a future, young people and older people like me have to believe it, we have spent much of our lives with a weaker Europe, and it is up to today's youth to take over. I will share a personal experience in which there have been times when the EU has acted in a surprisingly good way. Sometimes it let us down. What is the good way in which the EU has acted recently? I am referring to the way we acted in the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. I am a member of the EU's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, and I am aware of the negotiations to achieve the 750 billion euro package, to create rules and a large part of this package to be distributed, not in the form of a loan, but

as a lending. These are not easy tasks if we include the fact that we are 27 Member States and, in many cases, we need unanimity”.

“This was a very good example for the future of Europe”, Mr. Mavrides said. “Firstly, my political group, the Socialists and Democrats - and I am proud of it - supported from the outset that young people should do their paid internship. Secondly, and this is also a personal conviction, as a political group we were discussing the need for a minimum wage structure for the whole of Europe. Recently, as you know, all these major debates have reached a point where we now have a Member State that has no minimum wage, now it has an obligation to determine. And as much as I consider this important, it positively affects vulnerable groups, young people, women and other groups. Of course, many can be quite critical and expect more, but it is a two-sided coin. We expect a lot but at the same time Europe has a process of evolution and I hope with your participation and with such discussions, we can all become wiser and contribute to an amazing project called the European Union”.

Unpaid internships

Maria Kola, President of the Youth Council of Cyprus, said that “the last point Mr. Mavrides referred to is practices without payment and the minimum wage. My question concerns practices without payment. Starting with the decision of the European Commission on Human Rights, which establishes that gaps in Belgian legislation allow young people to exploit free labour as a practice without payment. It was a case in which the European Youth Forum took to court. The European Youth Forum has won the case and we are now trying to exclude the practice without payment in all European countries. The European Parliament voted in favour of the decision which calls for the exclusion of practices without payment.

Discussions have also begun in our Parliament, as an initiative of a project of the Youth Parliament. We are at a stage where we have started consultations with all stakeholders to change this legislation. The question is how will the European Parliament ensure that policies are created in the Member States on unpaid internships and how will you work with European youth as our representative body at European level, as well as with other EU institutions to achieve the best possible outcome in all the Member States of the European Union?”

In response, Mr. Mavrides said that “regarding training on practices, there are legal issues that need to be resolved but it is both my political opinion and my political group's view that as an EU institution, the European Parliament must be exemplary for all other employers not only in terms of salaries but also in terms of employment. And I know that there are many times in the European Parliament that do not make us very proud, but at the same time we learn from our experiences and improve and try to use it again as an exemplary occupation for the rest of society”.

Involvement of young people in policymaking is essential

Addressing Mr. Mavrides, Christiana Xenophontos, elected member of the European Youth Forum from 2020, said “as mentioned above, this is the European Year of Youth. One of the most important issues we have touched upon so far was and is the partici-

pation of young people, and when we refer to this, we do not just mean the electoral process or voting or the consultation process that the majority of policy makers have decided to have with young people, but we mean a full participation of young people in policymaking from the beginning to the end.

As young people we like the feeling of cooperation on policies and this has an impact on our own participation, on how active we choose to be on a political level. It is astonishing that the average age of MPs in Europe today is 50 and only 5% of MPs are under 30. We naturally expect young people to feel represented, which is a bit odd. How can you, as a Member of the European Parliament, ensure that the forthcoming European elections will be attended by young people as well as by young candidates and young women, which is essential today?"

Responding, Mr. Mavrides said that "the participation of young people in elections is a very important issue and perhaps it is not only an issue in Cyprus but also in other Member States. Through European societies there is a developed anger or a developed frustration that our democracies are not as free as they appear to be but are sometimes trapped by special interest groups, such as the banking sector, for example. It is a great duty for people, especially me, in the Committee on Economic Affairs, to fight and prove that we are trying to find a balance between economic interests, entrepreneurship, growth and employment and at the same time social rights and social inclusion. This is not an easy job, but at least there is a belief in the past of the Socialists and Democrats".

"In Cyprus, those who communicate with me through social media, especially young people, I take the opportunity to urge them to be more involved in politics and especially to participate even with their own candidacy. Where I can help, I will be there for them. Sometimes humorously, if I ever retire from politics, I can be hired as a mentor to some young people", he added.

Turkish language in the EU

Ahmet Aksunlar, European Youth Ambassador, said: "It is a great honour for a Member of the European Parliament to listen to young people. On 26 September, all Member States of the European Union celebrated the European Day of Languages. Speaking about the difficulties and opportunities for young people in Cyprus, what is your opinion about the Turkish language which is not a European language? Is this not the way to remove young people from the equation in Turkey? One of the fundamental principles of youth is multilingualism which aims to communicate with citizens in their own language. However, as a young Turkish Cypriot, I do not have the privilege to do so, even though I am as European as you are. My question is what is your opinion on this issue and at the same time what are your efforts for a solution?"

The only thing I know about this issue is that a few years ago a proposal was made by the President of Cyprus and the answer from the then President of the Commission was that this is a matter that will be decided by the Council and then there was no positive response from the Council. I do not know more about this, and it is certainly not easy procedurally. There are political issues in the middle."

"I recently gave an interview to a Turkish Cypriot media outlet and argued that there should be ways for the Turkish Cypriot community to participate under the European roof. And I agree that you are no less European than anyone else. The euro can be an economical way to serve the interests of both communities and the European Union itself", Mr. Mavrides added.

Strengthening and empowerment of women

Aliye Taygun, Head of International Relations, Oxygono, said: "As a young professional in Cyprus I faced challenges but there have been times when I have been lucky and seized many opportunities in different areas of my work. In addition, participating in such work also provides me with a networking opportunity, which I deeply appreciate.

On the other hand, there are still many young, educated women who suffer from a lack of access to similar opportunities and yet their voices and opinions are not heard. It is therefore important to make an effort to raise awareness of this issue and to give women more rights to employment throughout the island. Mr. Mavrides, I would like your opinion on what action needs to be taken to strengthen and empower women in Cyprus".

In response, Mr. Mavrides said: "I know that the European Union is trying hard to promote this issue and I will give two examples. The one is the board authorises the EU so by 2024 or 2026, executive and non-executive members must include at least a certain percentage of women. With this change in the social environment, I do not think so".

Referring to examples, Mr. Mavrides said that "some female officers in the National Guard were discriminated against because they were women. I did not get involved in the matter itself, but I supported their right at European level, just as I would have supported the right of every vulnerable group against discrimination. Unfortunately, although it is a mandatory EU directive to eliminate such discrimination against women, even in Cyprus we say much more in public than in practice".

"However, I also see steps forward. Let us not be disappointed. It is a social struggle that takes years and even decades and I believe that women deserve much more than they have so far", Mr. Mavrides concluded.

When young people are united, much can be done

Speaking at the event, Aliye Taygun said: "I believe that when youth are united, a lot can be done. One example is the environment. In 2022 we experienced several fires all over the island. Every time, youth organisations are ready to cooperate and help. In terms of fundraising, these organisations do not have a lot of funds, they manage through the fundraising to raise enough money. On this, I would like your opinion on what can be done so that these organisations can get more support in fundraising for urgent matters?"

Strengthening the voice of young people

Speaking about the issue, Ahmet Aksunlar said that "on the occasion of the fact that 2022 is the European Year of Youth, it was understood that many public and private

institutions strengthen the voice of youth and encourage their participation in societies. We saw so many politicians in Cyprus and abroad warmly approaching the youth, something we had never seen before. How can this be a constant practice and a priority?"

Creation of influence detection test

"I will remain in the participation of the youth," Ms. Xenophontos said, "because as young people, we are influenced in the long term by the policies and choices made by our leaders today and we live more the consequences of the decisions of the past and the present.

It is important that worthy voices are heard about our experiences and that is why the European Youth Forum from the beginning of this year, we are referring to our members for this year's legacy to be the introduction of the trials of European youth. And whether these trials will be appreciated for their influence. Any new legislation and policy will be appreciated, and we will know what influence they have on young people.

For example, if the assessment shows that there is potential for influence on young people, then young people in general and young specialists and youth organisations should be consulted. In other words, when new legislation on entrepreneurship is proposed, for example, it would also be compulsory to consult young people. If a negative impact on a specific group of young people is identified through impact assessment or consultation, then appropriate mitigation measures should be taken before launching the new law or policy.

Creating a youth test with these simple steps would also ensure a concrete follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe and represent a real legacy for the European Year of Youth and will also continue what we have heard in recent weeks from the President of the European Commission about ensuring that future generations are at the heart of the EU decision-making process. I would therefore like to hear your views on this European test and whether you are in favour of it or whether it is believed that such a tool will have a real impact if there are policies created by young people for young people".

In response, Mr. Mavrides said that what she mentioned was "an amazing idea. These are all issues we can build on and I expect to see you again in the upcoming European elections and I hope we can build on your dreams for a better Europe and a better Cyprus".

Mental health and youth

For her part, Ms. Kola said that "I will refer to something that exists and is important, no one was talking about it but now almost everyone is talking about it. Immediately after the pandemic, the most important issue is mental health issues and how everything, including the pandemic, affected young people, not only in Cyprus but also around the world. According to data from the Cyprus Youth Council, young people face issues with their mental health.

She went on to say that “at the European level we see a lot of awareness campaigns happening but what is happening at the national level, especially now that we have this data and we see that the plans that existed for this issue, actually stopped working. As a young person, we do not have the help that was freely given. We saw that the government took a few steps forward with some tools during the pandemic, but they targeted specific population groups. But what about the young people who are unemployed or suffer from coronavirus and all these issues that they have to face every day and the pressure from society for what young people should do?”

In response, Mr. Mavrides said that “whether to a large or small extent the competences of the Member States and the European Union through its institutions and especially through the European Parliament, we are trying hard to raise the issue that a unified European response is always better for the management of these issues. The best and most recent example was the management of the pandemic. Were mistakes made? Yes. Did we react and act too late? Yes. But in the end, we came together and acted like Europeans through a European response”.

“No member state would be better off acting independently in relation to the pandemic. Many times, when we discuss these issues when we form directives or even regulations, we are faced with a dilemma. When we try to create something that fits everyone, then many Member States react negatively and reject it. If we have a more relaxed way that will still suit everyone, then we tend not to be effective. It is a burden of responsibility, most often on the governments of the Member States, to take the structure and resources provided by the EU, and to act on their own in a responsible way to serve the interests of citizens. For example, in establishing a framework for resilience at European level, there has been a battle to make social housing as an area for Member States available through this facility. Portugal received more than €5 billion. Euro, Spain more than 1 billion 514.8 million Euro. Do you know how much money Cyprus has asked for? Not a single euro”, Mr. Mavrides continued.

“So sometimes we expect actions from Europe, but it is also the initiative of the member states to act”, he said.





CYPRUS TO BECOME A FERTILITY SHELTER

“ALL ABOUT FERTILITY”

THALIA CHRISTODOULIDOU, TOURISM OFFICER, CYPRUS DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM

SAVIA ORPHANIDOU, MEMBER OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

NICOS ZOTTIS, M.D. OBSTETRICIAN-GYNECOLOGIST

SOPHIA PARASKEVA, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

SAGHAR KASIRI, DIRECTOR OF EUROPEAN OPERATIONS FOR CRYOS

INTERNATIONAL

DISCUSSANT: ELENI ANTONIOU, WRITER, BLOGGER, PODCASTER

The need for further information and the creation of a strategy for the development of fertility tourism, as well as the improvement of the regulatory framework, was the focus of the round table discussion entitled “All About Fertility”, in the framework of the 3rd Cyprus Forum.

Development of fertility tourism

In the first part, in a presentation, Cryos International's Director of European Operations, Saghar Kasiri, said that based on World Health Organization data, 15% of couples face infertility issues that are either related to reproductive diseases or due to other factors such as age, smoking, stress, poor nutrition. In addition, it is estimated that 48 million couples and 185 million single people face infertility issues worldwide. In the last forty years, more than 8 million children worldwide have been born through assisted reproductive technology. Furthermore, sperm and egg donation is a very effective option for couples facing infertility and gamete banks play an important role in this.

Saghar Kasiri also referred to the development of fertility tourism, stressing that the European space is the largest market with a revenue share of 50.1% in 2018. More than 80,000 cycles of egg donation have taken place in recent years. In addition, the revenue from egg donation treatment in Spain alone is well in excess of EUR 300 million, not including the revenue from tourism.

He also stressed the importance of the cost of treatment, the lack of donors in the countries of origin, the success rates, as well as the regulatory rules or restrictions that a country may have such as the prohibition of donation, the anonymity of donors.

Cyprus, she said, has all the necessary characteristics for the development of the fertility tourism sector, both due to its geographical location and due to its climate and the appropriate infrastructure and regulatory rules that are in line with the EU Directives on Quality and Safety Standards for Human Tissues and Cells.

“Cryos International, as the first independent sperm and egg bank in Cyprus, provides high quality sperm and eggs, adhering to safety, testing, processing, storage and distribution standards.”

Regarding the development of fertility tourism, the Tourism Officer of the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, Thalia Christodoulidou, noted that in the past some targeted actions were taken to promote medical tourism. However, the development of tourism is at an early stage.

The efforts of the Deputy Ministry are being made jointly with the Cyprus Health Services Promotion Board. Due to the pandemic, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism has not taken any promotional actions in recent years for the development of specific sectors of medical tourism in Cyprus. In the coming period, the Deputy Ministry plans to launch a targeted promotion of specialised therapies in specific markets, including fertility treatments, aiming at the development of fertility tourism.

Lack of necessary information

In the second part, during the discussion, the obstetrician-gynaecologist Dr. Nicos Zottis said that there is insufficient information on fertility issues, especially for young people. As he stressed, in matters of information, both the Ministry of Health and the scientific community have an important role to play.

The MP Savia Orphanidou, in her own position said that in the past she took the initiative to create an information campaign, as she had realised this gap identified in the information on fertility issues. In a debate held in the Human Rights Committee in Parliament, it was determined that those responsible for information issues should be the Human Reproduction Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

In addition, she stressed the importance of informing both doctors, IVF clinics and patients, taking into account examples of good practices from other countries

Ms Kasiri pointed out that there is no proper information from doctors to patients, as well as from the gynaecological society to its members. She added that it is very important that these procedures are done by doctors to fertility specialists and that women are aware of their choices. At the same time, she recommended lowering the age limit to 30 years, where egg quality is better and quantity greater.

Egg cryopreservation

Referring to the ways of preserving fertility, either for medical or social purposes, Ms. Kasiri pointed out that the cryopreservation of sperm and eggs gives the opportunity to men and women to have children later in life. She also stressed that Cyprus is the only country that provides a subsidy to women over 35 for egg cryopreservation for social purposes.

When asked about the decision of the Ministry of Health to set the subsidy limit for egg cryopreservation at 35 years, an age where fertility begins to decline, Ms. Orphanidou said that the decision was made by the Ministry of Health based on research done in the US, UK and Europe and underlined that if there is a medical reason, women can receive the sponsorship earlier. Regarding the issue of the development of fertility tourism, Savia Orphanidou stressed that the Ministry of Health should work closely with the Deputy Ministry of Tourism to develop fertility tourism, taking into account the economic benefits that will arise.

For her part, Sofia Paraskeva, shared with the attendees her own fertility experience and the “journey” of egg cryopreservation. She noted that she accidentally discovered that her fertility began to decline, while she had a lonely and emotional experience, as she had not received the appropriate information on this issue, nor on the process itself. In this course, she said, she found too many women that are facing the same problem, stressing that it is a huge issue that needs further information.

Changes in legislation are necessary

Dr. Zottis pointed out the lack of information of foreigners about the services provided

in Cyprus and underlined the need to promote services. In addition, another inhibitory factor is the issue of donor anonymity that exists in Cyprus, as people from abroad may want to come to our country for fertility treatment, but want a non-anonymous donor, pointing out the need for a change in legislation, following the example of Greece.

Changing the legislation on the existence of anonymous and non-anonymous donations in Cyprus will enable children coming from non-anonymous donors to learn information about their genetic background and to contact the donor at the age of 18.

Ms. Orphanidou added that changes to the legislation are also expected in Cyprus following recommendations of the Medically Assisted Reproduction Council to the Ministry of Health, while at the same time stressing the need to create a donor archive of gametes.

Saghar Kasiri, Director of European Operations at Cryos International, said that there is a need to improve the regulatory framework, strengthen information campaigns and develop the appropriate strategy for Cyprus to become a “fertility shelter”.



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BENEFITS OF ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL TECH COMPANIES

"BENEFITS OF ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL TECH COMPANIES"

ANGELE GIULIANO, EIC AMBASSADOR, MANAGING DIRECTOR ACROSSLIMITS

PETR VALOV, FOUNDER & CEO, EXNESS

STAVROS DRAKOULARAKOS, GENERAL MANAGER PHILIP MORRIS CYPRUS

EVGENIOS EVGENIOU, CHAIRMAN, INVEST CYPRUS

DISCUSSANT: FABIO MARIA MONTAGNINO, HEAD OF INNOVATION &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP, THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE



The attraction of international tech companies has represented a key policy to create thriving economic ecosystems over the past thirty years. Tech companies represent anchors in smart and specialisation of economies, as their presence creates an ecosystem of knowledge-based SMEs and start-ups and a better attitude towards innovation.

Successful countries have combined their supply of exceptional human capital and infrastructure with focused incentives and tax exemptions. However, global geopolitical conditions are changing rapidly and the relocation of key and critical technology companies, as well as their supply chains, is affected by conflict and decoupling policies that offset economic advantages. How are attraction policies and corporate strategies going to address the new international situation? How will other factors, such as the evolution of labour and capital markets, create new opportunities and threats? The panel was called “Benefits of attracting international tech companies”. Fabio Maria Montagnino, Head of Innovation & Entrepreneurship at the Cyprus Institute, raised the key question of the discussion on attracting companies to Cyprus and what they leave behind when they leave. “These two dimensions I think are really connected because the way a country is approached allows us to know that it is moving in one direction and it leaves something more in terms of impact and more in terms of engaging people here”, he said.

What makes a country attractive

Stavros Drakoularakos, General Manager of Philip Morris Cyprus, opening the discussion, said that this is the first time he has taken part in such a panel, and the reason is the transformation of the company. “Ten years ago, I do not think he would have been on this panel because Philip Morris, as you know, was a tobacco industry, but today we identify ourselves as a technology and science and service company, and the reason for that is that we have invested nearly \$9 billion over the past ten years to make sure our transformation works”, he explained.

As to what makes a country an attractive location for Philip Morris, Mr. Drakoularakos said that it is important to have a stable regulatory framework and strategic geographic location. However, it focused on three key areas that it considers important. “One is talent both in terms of hard skills. There are many generations of well-educated Cypriots who are here and available for a multinational that wants to invest, but it is not just hard skills. It is the types of knowledge, and the local culture of collaboration, the power of passion, the commitment of loyalty that are also really attractive to an employer”, he said. Second is the main partners they have here in Cyprus and third is that “the fact that it is not just a matter of now. Because no one comes in and invests for a month or a year, they want to see the course and where the country is going, and I think it was a few months ago when I was reading in the newspaper that in the next 10-20 years the Republic of Cyprus wants to become a sustainable business hub and commercial centre. That spoke to our hearts because sustainability, which at the end of the day that is the investment, and that is our whole strategy.”

We use Cyprus as a hub

Petr Valov, Founder & CEO of Exness, spoke about the company and the choice of

Cyprus, which here was given the opportunity to escalate. He believes that Cyprus should evolve from a tax hub to something more holistic, explaining his vision for the country that could become a Silicon Valley in the Mediterranean despite the challenges.

"I really believe in that, so there are many reasons why a company could relocate to Cyprus. One reason is to have a local market, but it is a very small reason because the local market is not that big right now. Especially in companies that do not really need the local market and are transferred for other reasons. Either they need a local job market, so local cities or they just need to have a good place to go, for example, like Singapore and Dubai buying up these kinds of companies. So, we moved here, and we use Cyprus as a hub. There are many benefits for Cyprus, not just for taxation. Cyprus was a place for holding companies and they do not need many people just a few Cypriots. It is also good to have jobs", he explained.

Mr. Valov, speaking about the future of Cyprus on the issue of attracting new companies, said that several companies want to be within Europe. Therefore, Cyprus, due to its geographical location and status, can offer this, as it is located within the EU and close to the Middle East. In addition, English is used, and the environment is good. The only problem for him is the lack of manpower in the local labour market. "Unfortunately, there are no locals in the labour market, and they will never exist. Let's be realistic, the population of Cyprus is small and even with the best education in the world there will not be so many specialists in the local market. So I really believe that Cyprus needs to focus on this part because these companies and these people are the main capital of any country in the world now", he said, adding that people place great value on the economy and great value on society.

Knowledge-based economy

Angele Giuliano, EIC Ambassador, Managing Director of AcrossLimits, briefly explained the role of the organisation, which indicates the needs of businesses in Europe and their needs to be able to scale and reach an international level.

"You know, we always say we are chasing European unicorns, which is very good. In Europe we are constantly competing with the Asian market and the Americans. But there is a small market failure rate, so we are good at startups, we are good at research, we are good at the knowledge-based economy", she explained.

For Cyprus, she said that in this context it is doing very well in terms of the European perspective and is trying harder. "What Cyprus is doing well is indeed investing in its talents, investing in its companies, but it is also trying locally to fund these fintech and other types of companies", she said.

Best place to live

"Let's look at the big picture", Invest Cyprus President Evgenios Evgeniou said in his statement. "First of all, Cyprus's economic growth strategy is currently based on a study done for the Economic Council and the Ministry of Finance with funding from the European Union and is a comprehensive strategy and action plan called Vision 2035. The vision or ambition, if you will, that lies at the heart of these strategies for Cyprus is to be

the best place to live, work and be active. Obviously, it is something very ambitious. Now, in terms of attracting investment, what is at the heart of our focus as Invest Cyprus is to attract highly skilled companies and talent to build a technology ecosystem, but potentially even beyond technology, pharmaceutical research and development companies and other highly skilled sectors” he explained.

Mr. Evgeniou also noted that Cyprus has traditionally attracted companies because of the good tax system, the Anglo-Saxon legislative framework, but the problem was in relocating people here. “The ambition or the goal is to make Cyprus even more attractive for the workforce to come to Cyprus is that these people have choices. We, as Invest Cyprus, are active in the promotion and attractiveness and sometimes companies ask for a bidding process between countries. “Obviously what they really value is to what extent they are welcome for their people to come, so we need to improve in that area and then we need to make sure that this ecosystem connects to the local community”, he underlined.

He also spoke of upgrading the skills of people here in Cyprus and modernising our education system.



ADAPTING EDUCATION TO AN EVOLVING WORLD

“PARTICIPATORY EDUCATION: REFORMING, TRANSFORMING AND ADVANCING EDUCATION IN AN EVOLVING WORLD”

DR. MICHAL MLYNÁR, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS

PROF. DR. NIYAZI KIZILYÜREK, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, GUE/NGL

DR. LUCY AVRAAMIDOU, DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN, NL

DR. KATERINA THEODORIDOU, DIRECTOR, R&D AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT, CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION-CSI

DISCUSSANT: DR. SOTIRIS THEMISTOKLEOUS, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT, CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION-CSI



In the year 2022, nothing is, and nothing can be static. Society is changing, technology is changing, the interaction of citizens with societies has changed.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, the market and education have changed dramatically. Many are looking for more flexibility in their work, and the way most companies work has changed. Within this ever-growing and changing context comes the debate on how education can evolve and be transformed as a means to provide a prosperous ground for citizen participation in decision-making and through other forms of participation.

It is commonly accepted that citizens are distancing themselves from traditional dominant policies and decisions. It is considered imperative to find a way to create educational policies and at the same time educational initiatives. Education based on new participation but at the same time taking into account citizens' expectations and the importance of democracy and inclusion.

Education can move forward

Referring to participatory education, about the need to reform, transform and promote education in an evolving world, the Director of Strategic Development of the Center for Social Innovation Dr. Sotiris Themistokleous, said: “on the first day of the Cyprus Forum, we heard the three main candidates for the Presidency of the Republic, focusing on education. To this day it is a cliché when there are challenges in society to go back to education and upbringing. We know that the interaction of citizens with societies has changed. The market and education have changed dramatically, and at a time after the coronavirus, many are looking for more flexibility, the way they work has changed, the way they interact with others has changed, but it has also changed with education. They all take their place in different ecosystems both in real life and virtual life and in cyberspace, everywhere. We live in a world where nothing is static”.

He added: “We are here to discuss how education can move forward and provide a platform for civic participation. Citizens rightfully ask to have an active role in decision-making and through other forms of participation such as social movements, social networks, social work and social policies. We see them moving away from dominant policies and decisions. We need to find a new way of co-creating educational policies and educational initiatives that are seen as a means of making informed decisions, more adaptable to change and of course aligned with inclusion, participation and democracy”.

“Perhaps we will discuss something like a new social contract on education,” Mr. Themistokleous said, “bringing education to a level that is in line with the rapid changes that are happening around us.”

“An education based on new participation, taking into account citizens' expectations and the importance of democracy and inclusion”, he added.

Decisions through the needs and desires of societies

“Today we have people on the panel who can discuss these things on a social and political level”, Mr. Themistokleous continued, asking Dr. Michal Mlynar, UNICEF Vice-President of the Executive Board, how UNICEF succeeds in taking into account in their decisions the voices of the people, realising that participatory education is implemented through inclusive education, exclusive decision-making with the participation of schools, communities, decision makers, academics, a wide range of stakeholders.

Dr. Michal Mlynar, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations and Vice-President of the UNICEF Executive Board, after thanking for the invitation, he said: “we need to go to the basics and see education as a fundamental right. Too often, we see education as something complementary, which can be delayed or postponed due to economic reforms or other social issues. We often forget that by delaying our actions and our investments in education, we are risking the future”.

Referring to the pandemic, Dr. Mlynar said: “it has taught us some lessons, and we need to make sure we have learned those lessons. We are not so good at learning these lessons unless there is a reminder that it is necessary. We need to make sure that no child is denied this fundamental right and with the challenges we have, whether due to challenges, environmental crisis, technological change, migration and even misinformation and the spread of fake news, it is imperative to transform the education system”. “Last week we held the World Conference on Education in New York over the course of four days. It started with the mobilisation day, which was led by young people, we continued with the solution day, led by civil society, and then it culminated with the high-level leaders' forum that really focused on the necessary transformations in education”, Dr. Mlynar said.

He continued: “I am not a statistician and I do not like statistics too much. I was a high school teacher and I taught foreign languages, but often we can see the statistics and there is a certain element which recently shocked me. A World Bank study found that 70 percent of 10-year-olds cannot understand a simple text today. At the same time, we risk losing \$21 trillion in potential gains over the lifespan, in present value, or the equivalent of 17% of today's global GDP, if we do not focus enough on education and if we do not ensure that not only do children and young people have universal and equal access to good quality education, but we are adapting education systems to current needs because - and this is the last piece of statistics I will mention - the population of young people between 10 and 24 years old is 1.8 billion, which 100 years ago was the entire global population”.

“Now we are faced with a situation in which we have brought a number of young people and we have a huge responsibility in this context, because if we do not assure them that today they have the educational opportunities, tomorrow they have the job opportunities and other opportunities that flow for them, then we will be in a very difficult position. We have a blueprint for this, and it is on the agenda of the 2030 Conference on Sustainable Development” Dr. Mlynar concluded.

Participatory education as a tool for promoting and achieving peace

Taking the floor, Mr. Themistokleous said that taking into account the previous UN

agenda for sustainable development, there were some signs of growth, hoping that the countries involved in this process will adjust their agendas in 2030.

Addressing Professor and MEP Ms. Niyazi Kizilyurek, Mr. Themistokleous said that “in many countries of the world, participatory education was used as a tool to promote peace and coexistence through the collective development of education narratives. Is this a model to promote and develop in Cyprus? I know there has been a lot of effort on many levels. Do you see a tangible way, a path that Cypriots could follow and apply participatory training methods all over the island?”

For his part, Mr. Niyazi Kizilyurek, before answering Mr. Themistokleous's question, expressed his desire to say a few words about education in a developed world but at the same time a broken world.

“Of course, I mean a world of wars, of crisis in ecology, of economic crisis, of migration. You might be wondering what all this has to do with education. Well, a lot. The question is what kind of commitment we want to have from our students, from our children. Racial beliefs, ethnocentric beliefs or a sense of empathy, a sense of belonging to the community of humanity and not to a nation, and that is the crucial issue in my mind. Is it at a level at which we need to rethink? Moving to a question of nation states and the role in education. Of course, the nation-states are ethnocentric and we are organising a philosophical education, we are leaving no room for societies because they want to dictate to societies a sense of identity”, Mr. Kizilyurek said.

Referring to Cyprus, the MEP said: “we are the paradise of nationalist obsessions when it comes to an idea of identity and exchange, lack of empathy, etc. We do not relate to each other, we learn enough about each other, but we talk a lot about each other without knowing anything. This is how criticism begins. Education systems in both communities are unfortunately far from any sense of empathy and understanding”.

“Beyond that, it is an ethnocentric education that leaves no room for a serious social environment. I greatly appreciate the concept of participatory education, I applied it when I was myself at the University of Cyprus. I worked with my students and learned from them. For example, I had each group of students write an essay presenting it and discussing it with me and learning from my students. We are all learning together. This is a very good thing”, Mr. Kizilyurek noted.

“In Cyprus there are two communities in which their people cannot see each other, cannot visit each other, cannot go to another school to see what is happening there and has of course the teaching of history which is always one-sided based on writers who understand history themselves. Thus, we have a serious problem and I think it is part of the Cyprus problem. Education in Cyprus has become part of the Cyprus problem and we have to overcome this and understand that it is unacceptable that there are Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students who do not know each other and do not see each other. How do you expect them to develop a collegiality, an activity or a learning, since they do not have the opportunity to talk to each other and get to know each other?”, the professor wondered.

Mr. Kizilyurek continued by stressing that “participatory education as a whole is something that minimises nation-states and forces societies to participate in it. This is very important because in many countries they deal with it because it is now in the 19th century and they no longer consider education as forming a national consciousness, but they see it as a development of a new society with critical thinking beyond anything else. In our country this seems to be far from being the case, and politicians have a large share of the blame for this. It is time to reform education in Cyprus, to move towards a concept of peace and reconciliation of education, and this is not only needed to bring societies closer together. Knowing that others have helped you to know yourself, you also need it for a healthy self-awareness”.

Taking the floor again, Mr. Themistokleous thanked Mr. Kizilyurek, characterising him as a positive person who works both with students and the European Parliament to bring all the communities of Cyprus together.

Education through technology and social media

“From both your and our work, we know that a lot of things happen outside the education system and a lot of young people interact to create new educational narratives through technology and social media, and that is a hope,” Mr. Themistokleous, Director of Strategic Development at the Center for Social Innovation, said.

Subsequently, Mr. Themistokleous, addressing Dr. Avraamidou, asked “Working in an academic institute and interacting with students and young people and with the vision of having open access to the sciences for education, do you see at this level the creation and formation of participatory education initiatives? Would you consider this kind of learning where students and especially those from marginalised groups will be able to participate in this process? Do you have any examples of your work?”

“I will start by giving you an example”, Dr. Lucy Avraamidou, Professor of Scientific Education and Communication and Director of the Institute of Scientific Education and Communication at the University of Groningen, said. “I have been living in the Netherlands for the last six years, a country with a colonial past, and I work mainly with marginalised communities. What I did with my research team was to curate an after-school programme that includes interactions between science, arts and technology. Our goal with this programme is for these communities to be able to ask the questions they want to raise about their local communities. For example, what is the quality of air water? This is a community that suffers a lot from earthquakes and that was a huge problem”.

“By bringing these communities together, we wanted to engage not only children but also parents and other members to work closely with scientists, artists and activists to provide answers to these questions which, in addition to their social reach, were more personal. This is important because it offers them a kind of representation in their learning, it offers them an opportunity to understand the value of science in their daily lives and to use it”, Dr. Avraamidou continued.

“Some important features of this programme are that it is co-created between teachers and these families and students as well. Another innovation is that the project takes place in an abandoned space in these communities that we curated together. This

removes barriers related to access or transportation. It is also free and multilingual. We call on students to bring their mother tongues, even though we do not always understand”, she said.

Dr. Avraamidou then said: “for me, the principle of this project and why it aligns with participatory education, starts from the premise that learning is intergenerational, so it is important to bring families. The second thing is that learning does not just happen in schools, and that is why I think schools are horrible places to learn anything because they are socially unnatural. So, we get the opportunity to create places outside of schools and facilities. The third aspect is that science is political, education is political, and knowledge is political. That is something we are trying to do with this project”.

“It provides a particularly impressive opportunity for inclusion, for re-examining questions such as who is involved in knowledge production, who decides on the curriculum. We have a lot to learn from local communities”, Dr. Avraamidou concluded.

Asked by Mr. Themistokleous when she will bring this program to our island, Dr. Avraamidou said that “I lived and grew up in Cyprus and I have only been abroad for the last six years. Later, I would like to talk about programmes that took place in Cyprus because this programme is inspired by another one that took place in Cyprus in 2008”.

Challenges and obstacles in implementing participatory learning processes

Subsequently, addressing Dr. Theodoridou, Mr. Themistokleous, asked, “You know that education is not only done through schools. It is a lifelong process regardless of space and time. From your experience in designing and implementing participatory learning processes, what are the challenges you face? I am sure many of us would like to be aware of these challenges in designing similar educational initiatives. How did you overcome them?”

Dr. Katerina Theodoridou, Director, R&D and Project Management, Centre for Social Innovation, said: “When we talk about participatory learning, we have the student, whether he is an adult or a student in a school, at the centre. It is imperative to move away from traditional teacher-centred approaches to lectures or simply predict that all information comes from the teacher. Focusing on the student then we try to see and match their needs whether they are in formal education or not, and we try to have a discussion in such a way as to give them the opportunity to learn through the learning process with the teacher”.

Referring to her experience, Ms. Theodoridou said that “through the work we do at the Innovation Center, we essentially work with a non-formal education. We work with programmes that deal primarily with adults, young adults, and marginalised people. What we are trying to do is design exercises that are based on their needs, we are trying to talk about challenges they face in their lives, and this is done while it is part of educational training programmes”.

Continuing, Ms. Theodoridou said that “we have small teams that work together, we

do mentoring programmes so that students can become guides and mentors and train with each other, to provide data to each other. This leads to learning at the kind of level of transmission that we want. We are also trying to engage other stakeholders that they may have through the specific issues such as NGOs, policy makers, parents if we are talking about young people or children in high school because we feel that they are also part of what needs to be done for participatory education to be successful”.

“I know that in science and mathematics it is easier to do this approach in such a way that we can see where we can go with the project-based approach, but it is very important to think about the humanities and social sciences and see how we can bring this participatory education to these areas as well. We also have community-driven projects. For example, there was a programme for green cities in which we took groups and planted plants on rooftops so that they would become part of a practical process. We try to have alternative approaches in order to give the student the opportunity to provide their own knowledge so that they learn from each other”, Ms. Theodoridou explained.

Regarding the challenges, Ms. Theodoridou stated that “the biggest one is that the generations are now changing in the sense that they are being taught because we are dealing with adults who were taught within a teacher-centred system and what they expect is the professor to have all the information. And they will go for training and everything will be given to them and that is a problem because you have to train and prepare these students so that they can function in a programme that is based on participatory education. So, that can be the biggest challenge, which is how to incorporate the training so that we integrate these training processes so that different students benefit”.

“We also need to take time into account, because when we talk about inclusive education and give equal opportunities to all students to deal in the same way always according to their needs, they need to be flexible with time. We need to be able to allow some time adjustment and flexibility so that each student can approach their learning at their own pace”, Ms. Theodoridou stressed.

The response of academics to the “wave” of participatory learning

“I can understand that one of the biggest challenges is teaching people how to learn, to participate” Ms. Themistocleous said. “I think there is a cycle of how things are going. With that, we will go back to Dr. Avraamidou. How open would you be to developing your courses with the wider community, your students, perhaps even the market and society. How do academics respond to this movement of democracy, that is more participation, more recognition of non-conventional forms of learning. Academics no longer hold the power of knowledge. How does this affect the academic community and how will they respond to it?”, he asked.

In response, Dr. Avraamidou stated: “I will tell you what has changed in the academic community over the last five years. There is a strong focus and momentum towards achieving the 2030 sustainability goals that are just eight years from now and that touch all aspects of life. Therefore, much attention is paid to interdisciplinary up to collaboration with industry, NGOs, science centres, museums, galleries, community environments and generally much more attention is paid to learning that takes place outside

the university. We see that not only in the kinds of curricula currently on offer, which are much more interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral, but also in the kind of research that is being done and is again much more interdisciplinary than it was five years ago and also has a greater social impact”.

Speaking from her experience, Dr. Avraamidou said: “I teach in a postgraduate program on science communication, and I teach a course called science and the public. My students are all graduate students, they come from different disciplines, mostly from science, but there are artists in the classroom. During the pandemic, given the urgent need to deal with public health, vaccinations and so on, we are engaged in designing a travel report for Covid, which travels mainly to the northern part of the country that is populated by under-served or high-poverty areas and communities that are usually not concerned with science or communities that have been marginalised by science”.

Explaining further, Dr. Avraamidou said: “Another thing we did, and this was part of the course, was to have students interview scientists from different fields and make short videos to engage the public with critical questions about the pandemic. But to do this, they worked with many different people, public engagement professionals, scientists, curators, community members and artists. We should not necessarily look for examples in other countries because there are many amazing initiatives and projects or examples of participatory approaches to education that take place in Cyprus and are organised by individuals, NGOs or local communities”.

“I think that served more of them, so to say, pockets of resistance to a broken educational and social system than anything else. I believe that a bottom-up approach alone will not do it. Thinking about the future, I think that for such a change to happen on a more substantial scale, we need a systemic approach that includes a top-down investment at the government level, at the level of the Ministry of Education, and that aims to redesign a very ethnocentric national curriculum as we as an evaluation and accreditation system need to formally recognise such practices”, Dr Avraamidou continued.

“Imagine the possibility of someone earning points if throughout the year they devote 100 hours to a citizen science project or a local community project or attend a summer robotics school and could transfer those credits to the University. I think this is going to be really groundbreaking and it is going to really transform education”, she concluded.

How close or far away from Europeans is the EU?

“Two important points”, Mr. Themistokleous continued. “The first is the moments of resistance we have lived through over the years working together on many projects and that there is hope. I agree with you that we are maximising them and finding a way to do them in a more organised way in a way that puts some real pressure on the decision-making level. The last point is about accreditation. In the last year there is finally an open discussion in Cyprus about how informal learning can be transferred as credits to universities or for people who want to return to education how they can use it”.

Addressing MEP and professor Mr. Niyazi Kizilyurek, Mr. Themistokleous said that at the European Union level “I think you hear many times that one of the biggest challenges of the EU is its distance from the citizens. Many of the decisions taken at this level are not related to any of us, and more specifically in areas such as education and society in general. As a Member of Parliament and representative of your citizens and constituents, and having an academic background, what change is proposed so as to increase participation in decisions at European level? How do you proposed that citizens have more say in this process but also have more of a say in the decisions you take in the European Parliament?”

Mr Kizilyurek said: “I want to remind you that the European Parliament is the only institution elected by the citizens. If we want to advise or delegate something to a committee, we will see that the member states decide mainly for themselves and if it can also happen for the common good, not the bad. But then we go to Parliament. First of all, let me say that Member States are deprived, even with a parliament, of full participation in decision-making”.

Further explaining, the professor said: “for example, one of our demands is to increase the role of the European Parliament in decision-making because we are elected by the citizens of the EU. Many times, what we decide in the European Parliament is not taken into account by the Commission. At this level, the gap is shown. There is tension between states and societies in the EU. We have a lot of discussions going on, we have this conference with the European Union, we want there to be more inclusiveness on the part of the EU and one solution is to strengthen the role of the European Parliament, because that is what citizens say when they talk about a direct role. We must overcome the fact that on the one hand I am a nation and on the other hand an EU citizen and see how the two can be combined because as European citizens we have two dimensions. We are citizens of the states but at the same time we are citizens of the EU. It is not always a harmonious relationship and how we should develop a more European consciousness through which we fight for the common good. I do not underestimate the existence of states, but it no longer has that much power”.

“There needs to be a consensus that strengthening the European Parliament is not enough and more societies should be involved. For example, we celebrated the European year of young people, and we want young people to participate and discuss their own problems, to propose solutions to them and not for us to talk about young people. As in politics, so in education, common understanding touches upon very sensitive issues. On the one hand it brings democratisation something that touches on issues of power, you come into tension with structures of poverty. This is also happening in the academic community. If you tell a professor that his teaching does not have to be focused on him, that is, behind a chair and just talking, it is a kind of weakening of power” Mr. Kizilyurek explained.

“Yes, we want more participation from societies at all levels but for this to succeed and be realistic, without strengthening the role of parliament, we will not fundamentally address the lack of democratic legitimacy”, he stressed.

“This is extremely important and thank you for referring to the role of civil society and by being part of this sector we can confirm that we are all working together at EU level

to make civil society work properly. The EU is helping with this through funds and initiatives and the EU must take advantage of what it is trying to promote. Bringing together civil society at the European level. This is done quite well but it is not exploited," Mr. Themistokleous said.

Technology as a tool for creating educational initiatives for marginalised groups

Giving the floor to Dr. Theodoridou, Mr. Themistokleous said "the process of digital transformation affects everyone. We know that the Social Innovation Center uses technology to promote social inclusion and participation in many of our jobs. I would like to ask you if you are using technology to create educational initiatives for marginalised groups such as migrants, women and young people? What kind of technology is being used?"

Dr. Theodoridou said that "certainly during the coronavirus period we saw that we cannot exclude technology from education. In the past we used to say that we have to use technology where it can add value, and that is true. However, when we face a pandemic and we need to think about how to integrate technology in a fast way so that we do not lose two to three years of learning, you need to come up with more collaborative approaches when it comes to the technology being used."

He went on to say that "one of the priorities of the Centre for Social Innovation is to design programmes that will help people who are marginalised, who are not given equal opportunities in education. We mainly design e-learning programmes that we try to be accessible on mobile, because mobiles are now part of our lives, they are more collaborative with the use of google docs and blogs, essential tools with which students can collaborate with each other in order to have a result that they can present and through this process they learn".

"In terms of our preferences", Dr. Theodoridou continued, "we believe that blended learning is most beneficial to these special population groups because they value so much and benefit from face-to-face teaching. So, we try to design blended learning programmes where we have a first session with immigrants or young people, and we have a debriefing session at the end. We have collaborative e-learning programmes where they take charge of their learning, with confidence; all the material is there, but we try to use videos and other material that will be engaging and also beneficial for all the learning styles that we are trying to reach".

"We also need to be aware of their needs and the time they have available to devote to it so that we try to meet their needs and how they can benefit from this experience", he concluded.

"The examples of technology that you have given are extremely important because we really believe that technology can take the local element to the global element", Mr. Themistokleous added.

What will change in education in the future

Addressing Dr. Michal Mlynar, Mr. Themistokleous wondered “how is a political and social change achieved globally? Coming from organisations like UNICEF, how do you see the future and the way we perceive education changing? What challenges do you see in this process to change the way we look at the development of education, the development of curricula, the learning process that will affect the global?”

Dr. Mlynar said there was a focus “on participation and participatory education and it is very critical. This is how we see it, whether in a global perspective or at UNICEF. Education is probably the most important of all the Sustainable Development Goals, because when we succeed in education, other areas in terms of gender, equality or various other opportunities and other areas can succeed too”.

“About 10 years ago, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon invited Malala to participate for the first time in the UN General Assembly and sat on the balcony observing the leaders' dialogue. The good news is that they have come a long way since then. It is not enough for young people to simply observe the leaders' dialogues. Today we see young people participating directly in the dialogues and we have invested enough so that young people are part of the discussions. Colleagues also referred to the importance of having young people participate directly and it is a way of learning for us if we participate in these dialogues. This is the only way to move forward. Young people must be a part of decision making and solutions”, Dr. Michal Mlynar continued.

“We have just set up a youth office at the United Nations which was on our common agenda with the Secretary-General. Through the office we will be able to properly supervise and coordinate the various aspects of young people's engagement. It is now a reality that youth activism and youth leadership are there”, he highlighted.

“When it comes to climate, young climate activists have shown us how to move forward. Recently at the Glasgow conference, it was obvious that leaders cannot ignore these voices of young people and must not only listen to them but also take advantage of them and react properly”, he said.

“Part of the initiatives on our common agenda is to focus more on creating rules to counter the spread of fake news and negative propaganda. That is a huge challenge for us. The United Nations needs to be a centre of norms, to be an organisation that creates criteria that will help in these matters. Of course, a balance has to be struck. The pandemic has shown us that the use of digital technology, including Social Media, is essential because it supports important opportunities and digital learning, and solutions are there. At the same time, we need to balance properly and equip our young people and children with the skills so that they can discern and set priorities so that they are not prone to various negative trends”.

Dr. Michal Mlynar then stressed that “it is this focus of people that is needed to support the participatory processes. Of course, there is also the collaboration because neither the governments nor the Ministries of Education can achieve something alone. We need to ensure that the private sector is also involved because they can often provide the right solutions, resources and initial opportunities to equip young people with the necessary skills. We see a huge and developed gap in technical skills and vocational training that young people do not have”.

“But I would like to add local and regional authorities in each of the countries because mayors or governors can offer better solutions than governments. We also focused on the United Nations, namely that mayors, governors, local and regional authorities should play a greater role in global debates. Also, this is a lesson from the pandemic because if we look at what was happening during the pandemic, citizens do not expect from governments immediate solutions but from a more local level. Whether this was about solutions for health, society or education. Of course, we cannot simply decentralise at local and regional level without giving it to mayors, etc. with the right tools, rules and finances. There are also other local leaders who need to be included and essentially be the conscience of the local common good”, he continued.

“The partnerships and the Sustainable Development Goals promoted by the United Nations are something that we all appreciate here, and we are working towards”, Mr. Themistokleous added.

Questions from the audience

Reading questions from the audience, Mr. Themistokleous asked the speakers how we will overcome the hostile discourse in Cyprus and what is the role within and outside education and religion in all societies? For technology, overcoming the division of territory and taking a free space in the virtual world, and for engaging with marginalised people, such as refugees and migrants, in this special educational process.

Taking the floor, Mr. Kizilyurek said that “as far as the hostile speech is concerned, let us let people coexist and let the young people get to know each other instead of talking against them, let us talk, let us meet some people. It is no coincidence that the UN Secretary-General insists on telling both sides about young people and that they should come to Cyprus together.

Exchanges in schools, exchanges in memories are definitely an education and we can do a lot about it. But we need to see and talk to each other instead of imagining others. Of course, religion is a big issue, but it also has to do with how you approach religion. In all religions we know that there is love for others. Religion can also contribute to reconciliation, but of course it is also war, as we see all over the world, so it depends on what interpretation you give to religion.

We talked about education in general, but we have to ask who will train teachers because either in participatory education or in technology, there has to be more training of teachers”.

For her part, Ms. Katerina Theodoridou said that “research has shown that when there are classes in which you simply provide information, most of them will disappear. When the student is included, it means more attention, interest and motivation. Of course we want to use techniques that have to do with self-reflection, guidance, with something that triggers an inner interest in what is taught in the classroom.

On the issue of no one being left behind, I think it is important to focus on marginalised populations who do not have equal opportunities to participate in the basic education that is offered, and this is where civil societies must come in, so that they can communi-

cate and provide something to these people that is useful, beneficial and meets their needs. One of the best ways to reach them is what I mentioned before with blended learning which goes along with the time they have available and is applied in their chaotic schedule”.

“Let us take a look around this room and think about which bodies or identities and which voices are represented here. And then think about those bodies, the identities and the voices that are missing”, Dr. Lucy Avraamidou said. “What social group is not here with us today and why. Who is participating in this panel right now, what voices are here and why. And I think this is the first step in imagining a more participatory and social future. In particular, for education, I think that in order to contribute to imagining this future, the first step is to redefine what educational success means by focusing on the pedagogies of resistance instead of on the pedagogies for the economy. To do this, educational institutions need to stop obsessing over neoliberal paradigms and rankings. Instead, they should invest and bring about social change”, she concluded.

Taking the floor, Dr. Michal Mlynar said, “first of all we have to be really inclusive. We often talk about wanting to be inclusive, but we do not fully understand what that means. Of course, it includes migrants, in the case of Cyprus young people from both communities, who create opportunities for engagement because education is a very powerful tool for building peace, for reconciliation, for building the future. Therefore, this is something that needs to be taken into account.

Second, we need to empower teachers. They must not be left behind. We cannot expect to have new results and new opportunities without empowering our teachers and giving them the additional opportunities they might have never had, because these things do not happen on their own or automatically. So of course, I completely agree with this particular point.

Third, by harnessing the digital revolution, digital skills and finally by investing more. When I say investing, it does not simply mean in financial terms, but there are different ways in which our education systems need to be invested more fairly and more efficiently. An example from Slovakia a few years ago we once had a very successful finance minister who was described as a reformer and in fact today is a special adviser to the Prime Minister of Ukraine on important reforms, which is also a very important framework. At some point, he was offered the post of Minister of Education. It was not a coincidence. We had to look for creative solutions in such contexts as well. We must be bold in such situations. So I will leave you with some extra food for thought in this context”.





OFFERING INCLUSIVE SERVICES

"INCLUSIVENESS THROUGH INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACTIONS"

ANDRIA ZAFIRAKOU, 2018 GLOBAL PRIZE WINNER, BEST TEACHER
IN THE WORLD ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE (AIR)

DR. ALEXANDROS YERATZOTIS, POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCHER AT
THE SOFTWARE ENGINEERING INTERNET TECHNOLOGY (SEIT)
LABORATORY, UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

DR. MICHALIS NEOPTOLEMOU, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REMEDICA GROUP
NATALIA KOUHARTSIOUK, CENTRE & PROJECT MANAGER, NGO
SUPPORT CENTRE

CHRISTINA ACHILLEOS, HEAD OF ERASMUS+ UNIT, GRANTXPRT CONSULTING
DISCUSSANT: DR. CELIA HADJICHRISTODOULOU, FOUNDER AND MANAGING
DIRECTOR, GRANTXPRT CONSULTING



Through innovation, technology and new ideas, businesses and entrepreneurs can offer inclusive services for every member of society. The speakers of the panel “Inclusiveness through innovation and entrepreneurship actions” come from a group of experts, and each has contributed in a different way with their positions aimed at improving the social framework in an inclusive way.

Gender equality is a necessary foundation

Dr. Michalis Neoptolemos, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Remedica Group of Companies, opened the discussion with reference to Mahsa Amini's death in Tehran, Iran, while in custody, possibly due to police violence. The death of which sparked mass demonstrations around the world.

“Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but it is also a necessary foundation for a sustainable and prosperous world”, he stressed, adding that “We, as an employer, aspire to remove everything that hinders women's participation, and we want to be a change agent for the country by reducing the gender pay gap”. “In our group, women hold 51% of the leadership positions”.

As he noted, in Remedica, women are encouraged to move forward in their careers, and look for roles they would not have thought of before. “We provide every assistance to new mothers, helping them to have balance in their professional lives and their family. We also have a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of harassment”.

He underlined: “We want our staff to feel that they are part of Remedica and not just used and exploited.”

Individuals should feel valued

The discussion started with Greek Cypriot Andria Zafirakou, who received the award of the best teacher in the world in 2018. She said she was happy to return to her place of origin, Cyprus, but still lives and works in a state high school in one of London's most deprived areas and is also the founder of a charity called “Artists in Residence”.

When asked how she achieves the integration of students with different backgrounds, Ms. Zafirakou replied that in general it is not clear what this word means for the classrooms. “Unless, as teachers, as parents and as leaders, we step into the shoes of others. And the way to do that is to invite them to talk and listen to their stories”, she commented. She also explained that there is a difference between quantity and quality in what is given. “It is very good that we give everyone equal opportunities, but are they qualitative? Individuals should feel valued”, she said, adding about the ways this can be done: “It is simple. Do you, teachers, know your children? Do you know where they come from? What do they experience at home? As teachers, are we professionally prepared to teach people who have traumatic experiences? Do we teach the same as we did 20 years ago? In a multicultural society, all of this will continue to evolve”.

Education is at the heart of everything, and Ms. Zafirakou commented on how schools can develop relevant skills for society's ever-evolving demands. “We can always do better. We have just come out of the pandemic, and now is a very special period, where

we will not look to find where there are gaps but to see where we should put young people ahead. If we do what we did years ago, it will not work. The question is not what teachers and professors can do, but what leaders and governments can do. They tell us what to teach. We do not have as much autonomy as you think we do", she said. Young people, as she said, have passion, and opinion on all issues, and they have dreams about what the world should be like.

Inclusiveness is essential

Christina Achilleos, Head of Erasmus+ Unit, GrantXpert Consulting, said she was quite excited to participate in the Cyprus Forum as she was given the opportunity to talk about innovation and entrepreneurship, "especially about how we will achieve inclusivity through our European programmes", as she said.

"At the heart of the design of European programmes, there are tools to help people and private individuals create innovative ideas for social wellbeing. Thus, inclusiveness on that basis is essential. When designing these programmes, applicants must demonstrate how they will address inclusiveness", she noted. She further commented that in most of the programmes, the majority of innovators and entrepreneurs, there are indicators and conditions for inclusivity. "It is very important to mention that European funding provides a solid foundation for the creation of new businesses. And in terms of innovation, entrepreneurs create an idea with a significant impact by solving social problems. Therefore, we can say that European programmes directly promote inclusiveness for a more sustainable and inclusive society".

On how to have the greatest impact through the European programmes, Ms. Achilleos said that "the answer to this is to continue to develop new innovative programmes in such a way that we will include more social groups".

Part of a larger community

Natalia Kouhartsiouk, Centre & Project Manager, NGO Support Centre referred to the Centre's work in Cyprus. "We offer civic participation and active participation of citizens in society through community networking events for capacity building", she said. When asked if there are mechanisms in place to support NGOs in Cyprus, she said: "For me the participation of citizens is a very important point to start the dialogue on ideas. It's basically educating people to care about a cause. Either from formal or informal education". She also added that "When you see people caring about a cause, their point of view, and how that impacts societies more generally, then you have a better chance of engaging them even more, and when they have an innovative idea, of working together. For this reason, social participation is very important to us".

She stressed: "We want people to see themselves as part of a larger community."

Everyone has the right to experience technology

On his part, Dr. Alexandros Yeratziotis, Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Software Engineering Internet Technology (SEIT) Laboratory, University of Cyprus, spoke about

the creation of A.G. Connect Deaf Limited, a social media offering accessible communication and educational mobile applications for deaf users. He said the problem he and his brother had identified, which led them to create the platform, was the lack and limited number of technologies that were available to deaf people. "What we are trying to do is to allow the listener – they may be friends, family - to have a way of communicating with the deaf. We can translate from sign to alphabet and vice versa. We also see that it has an educational application for someone who wants to learn sign language", he said. "One of the things we do is we do mobile apps and the other is we participate in research and innovation programmes that focus on our part. We also have an online store where we have products to promote our message and the importance of sign language. We are trying different ways to do it", he explained.

He also said that by the end of 2022, the new version of the application is expected to be published with more content, and new tools. "Everyone has the right to experience technology in their own language. So deaf people should use technologies in sign language", he concluded.





INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

“INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE FUTURE OF WORK”

ZSOLT DARVAS, BRUEGEL

DUYGU GÜNER, BRUEGEL

DISCUSSANT: IOANNIS TIRKIDES, BANK OF CYPRUS

Knowledge
Partner:



CYPRUS
ECONOMIC
SOCIETY

The participants of the panel analysed the development of employees' skills, in a context of rapid technological development and what the future of work can be, without exclusion, entitled "Inclusive growth and the future of work".

As the moderator of the discussion, Mr. Ioannis Tirkidis (Bank of Cyprus) said, it is a complex and controversial subject, as it contains disruptive technology, where things like the Internet of Things, robotics, cloud technology and artificial intelligence are observed.

"At the same time, over the last 30-40 years we have seen developments that are not as favourable as we expected, for example, we see a slowdown in economic growth or a slowdown in productivity growth in the economy and a distorted income across the entire labour sector. At the same time, income inequality has increased", said Mr Tirkidis.

Automation can create jobs

Opening the debate and presenting the key questions, Zsolt Darvas (Bruegel) stated that the future of work is indeed what will determine the lives of many people and the political decisions of governments to make the various transitions, and which will have a big impact on the lives of many people.

As he explained, "there have already been many changes in the world of work. What you need to know, for example, is that the main factors are globalisation, technological change, demographic change, environmental change and all of these factors have had a significant impact on the way we work today".

Mr. Darvas raised three questions in order to understand the world of work today. First, how new technologies affect or change the nature of work; second, what is the impact on incomes and the distribution of work; and thirdly, what best explains the differences between the US and the EU in terms of the labour market and inequality.

He said through his presentation that incomes have been declining in recent decades, but some countries have recovered. Income inequality continues to rise in many countries.

He also analysed the automation in the workplace and how it affects the distribution, but also the factors that benefit or not from automation. For example, automatic changes in payrolls for various tasks or changes resulting from automation in the form of work. In some cases, he clarified, automation can create jobs.

Skilling-reskilling-upskilling

In her own presentation, Duygu Güner (Bruegel) referred to the major issue discussed mainly by the younger generation such as digitisation, automation and robotics. "This new emerging technology is changing the nature of jobs and we cannot really predict the course. Therefore, we see that the ways that jobs change are very fast and very unexpected", she said.

As she said, it is not only routine tasks that change, but the content and location of the task, the tools used, the skills needed to perform them. “We see that there is a need for risk reduction and upskilling. What we are seeing, however, is that the education system is not really able to meet the needs of labour demand, therefore it is failing in some areas to provide sufficient knowledge in the labour market”, she stressed.

Ms Güner also notes that with the emergence of new technologies one option would be jobs in services that we could protect so far could be relocated to third world countries where wages are lower.

Moving on to her presence, she referred to Skilling and analysed the terms Reskilling and Upskilling. “Both are very similar terms and are related to learning new skills, but there is a significant gap between the two words. Upskilling involves learning relevant new skills to supplement and complement existing work, so it is in the present. On the other hand, Reskilling refers to learning new skills to replace existing skill sets. It is like investing from the beginning and then enabling people to really change. Therefore, Reskilling implies learning new skills to replace the existing skill set, but it is still cost-effective than trying to find people with the skill set in the labour market”, she said. She stressed that these two concepts are vital tools for creating a recycled workforce in the future and for making the labour market work better.

Going further in her presentation and analysing data from surveys, she said that it is impossible to predict how technology will evolve in the future and therefore it is not possible to know what kind of skills will be needed. “Even in the relatively near future we cannot have very good predictions about what to expect, this attaches more importance to creating a culture of learning and actually makes learning the number one skill needed in the job market, and therefore we have to make sure that people are willing to learn new things”, she noted.

She also commented that this is not always easy, especially for low-educated people, but “if you want to change the labour market in such an inclusive way, learning is one of the first skills we need to have. We have to find a way to provide it and make work a game again”.

At another point she referred to the people who receive the training and as she said, they are not the ones who really need it. She explained that those who are already better qualified receive more education than, for example, those who are long-term unemployed or have received half of their education in their lifetime and fall into digital illiteracy.

She added that similar trends can be observed in salaries, the type of contract due to gender and also the size of the company. “We have education, but current education is actually widening the socio-economic divide rather than closing it.” Other constraints on deepening skills or acquiring them are time and money constraints, as “many people are unable to afford to spend part of their income on education but there is also a lack of awareness of training opportunities.”

Needs identification mechanisms

Emphasising again the unknown that the future can bring, Ms. Güner reiterated that the mechanisms that will constantly identify the skills needs should be built and fed into the education system so that training on emerging skills is constantly available. “We also need to find ways to involve these vulnerable groups more in education. The current process is not working, so we need to find creative ways to keep them up to date”, she noted.

Concluding, she said that on the one hand, skills training opportunities should be offered and on the other hand, there should be more mobility from workers in search of new skills, and in particular the working groups that are most affected where most do not really know or are not committed to retraining because they do not see any benefit from this investment. Employers can change their recruitment practices and invest in existing staff, creating a clear career path within the company.



PROFESSIONAL WORKERS RETURN TO EDUCATION

“WORKING PROFESSIONALS GOING BACK TO EDUCATION”

ANNA K. TOULOUMAKOS, ASS. PROFESSOR IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY,
PANTEION UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL SCIENCES

PATRICK WERQUIN, PROFESSOR, CNAM

DR. TERPSA CONSTANTINIDOU, DIRECTOR OF HIGHER
EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH

DISCUSSANT: DR. YANGOS HADJIYANNIS, CEO, CYPRUS
INSTITUTE OF MARKETING

In a dynamic and highly competitive labour market, it is necessary for professional workers to keep up with developments and therefore the training of executives is of utmost importance.

As established professionals at the Cyprus Forum have analysed, the framework in Cyprus should be redesigned to meet the needs of working professionals returning to education, while we should move away from the concept of a higher education that targets only the school's young graduates.

The theme highlighted that the needs and desires of professionals returning back to education are radically different and therefore all stakeholders need to create an ecosystem that strengthens the proposal for lifelong learning.

Skills exploration programme and micro-credentials

First of all, Dr. Terpsa Constantinidou, Director of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, said that the Department of Higher Education, in the framework of the Recovery and Competitiveness Plan of the Cypriot Economy, has launched a programme, which explores the course of higher education graduates, the skills graduates need to have and the need for reclaiming and upgrading skills. Dr. Constantinidou explained that the results will be used for better educational decisions and for the design of programmes in the context of higher education.

She highlighted that the aim is to end the gap between the skills they possess and those they need to conquer. "Through the study we will examine what graduates are doing and see what skills they have acquired, relevant to their curricula, while at the same time we will investigate what the labour market needs, not only in Cyprus, but also at a European level. We will proceed with comparing the data with those of European countries and deliver the results to higher education institutions and other bodies in order to provide short programmes for reskilling and upskilling", Dr. Constantinidou said.

She also explained that it is a dynamic research that will continue year after year, while stressing the need to create a school mentality that promotes the dynamic that the individual may need to readjust and change professional direction.

At the same time, she said, emphasis will be placed on micro-credentials, which are evidence of the learning outcomes acquired by the learner, after a short learning process, which was evaluated in a transparent way. It is noted that micro-credentials are awarded after the completion of short self-contained courses or training modules, which take place in person or online (or in a mixed form).

Emphasis on soft skills

For her part, Dr. Anna Touloumakou, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, said that it is interesting that in countries with advanced qualifications, there are shortages of persistence skills, which are soft skills. She explained that so-called soft skills are related to behaviour and are harder than we think to master, as there is a lot of intra-subjectivity.

“There are a lot of things that we have to take into account, a lot of challenges that we have to face in order to move forward in designing the right programmes that help people to adapt to the labour market,” Dr. Touloumakou said.

She stressed that the first degree offers the individual a solid way of thinking as a scientist, but at the end of the day other things lead to success, so we should not stabilise what grades are needed for success but emphasise building an overall profile of the individual.

At the same time, referring to the need for companies to invest in their employees, Dr. Touloumakou cited as an example her experience in a training centre, in which a programme was organised, where social corporate responsibility and the need for education together coexisted. As stated by Dr. Touloumakou, for example, if they found that an employee lacks leadership skills, they would create a programme within the framework of corporate social responsibility and provide him with time at work in order to work on the specific project.

She concluded by saying that we need to find ways “outside the box.” She underlined that when we design programmes trying to bring work and education together, it is better to explore not what grades are needed, but to keep in mind the qualities and characters of the people who succeed, since we will never be able to keep up with the pace at which the labour market evolves.

Supportive ecosystem for professionals

On his part, the coordinator of the panel Dr. Yangos Hadjiyannis, CEO of the Cyprus Institute of Marketing, stressed the need to create an ecosystem that supports professionals who decide to return to school.

He also underlined that it is absolutely necessary to strengthen vocational guidance in schools, which helps children to “marry” the needs of the labour market with their skills.

At the same time, he referred to the need for companies to invest in their employees, not only financially, but also by providing them with the necessary time they need.



MOBILISING BUSINESS AND FINANCE AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

"MOBILISING BUSINESS AND FINANCE AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY"

VALIANT RICHEY, OSCE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND
CO-ORDINATOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

DANIEL THELEKSLAF, PROJECT DIRECTOR FAST INITIATIVE (FINANCE AGAINST
SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING)

MICHELLE BREWER, UK JUDGE TIMEA E. NAGY, CEO, FOUNDER, BEST SELLING
AUTHOR, AWARD WINNING GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVIST, SURVIVOR LEADER

NIKI CHARILAOU, MANAGER FINANCIAL CRIME & SANCTIONS
COMPLIANCE AT BANK OF CYPRUS

DISCUSSANT: KATERINA STEPHANOU, MODERN SLAVERY
COMPLIANCE CONSULTANT, CEO, STEP UP STOP SLAVERY



Modern slavery is the most serious human rights violation of our time, and it is a financially motivated crime that generates more than \$150 billion a year from the exploitation of more than 50 million people worldwide. Modern slavery cannot be eradicated without the committed and active commitment of the business and financial industries. The panel was called “Mobilising Business and Finance against Modern Slavery.”

Katerina Stefanou, Modern Slavery Compliance, Consultant, CEO, Step Up Stop Slavery, asked the main question of the discussion. “Many of you would ask from the title of the panel, what does business and finance have to do with modern slavery? The answer is everything. Trafficking and slavery are motivated by economic benefits”. The panel speakers had the opportunity to analyse and deepen the central role played by the financial industry in the fight against slavery and human trafficking. At the same time, they talked about the practical steps that banking institutions can take to eradicate this crime.

Real and meaningful steps

Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator, opened the discussion by talking about the work of the OSCE and the guidelines the organisation has drawn up to combat slavery.

As he said, actions in this area mean that businesses need to strengthen their code of ideology, implement due diligence in their supply chains. “If they have risk management systems, they will be able to identify cases of exploitation, they will be able to prevent them and eliminate them”, he said.

Regarding banks, he said they have enough reasons for the banking sector to take measures and eliminate the phenomenon. Mr Richey briefly referred to the Agency's recommendations on the financial sector. Firstly, the Chief Executives of the financial institutions should actively deal with the issue; secondly, they should act proactively; thirdly, trafficking in human beings should be included in the National Risk Reports. Fourthly, many countries only cooperate with the authorities, they have experience and should be included in the policies. Fifth, we need training.

The economic aspect of human trafficking

For her part, Timea E. Nagy, CEO, Founder, Best Selling Author, Award winning Global, said that it is through these kinds of discussions, such as those at the Cyprus Forum, that she is inspired to continue her work. She spoke about her own story, where due to the financial difficulties she and her family faced, she was forced to go to Canada to work. However, the company that got her the job was part of an international human trafficking organisation.

She believes that a lot of progress is being made on the issue of modern slavery and human trafficking, however, “We need to understand one thing. Helping the victims of human trafficking is more than right. We have to do it financially. Based on research we did in Canada, every time a person is victimised, it costs \$785,000”. The organisation has assisted more than 400 victims throughout its operation.

She also pointed out that governments do not understand the importance of helping victims or intervening in such cases.

Connecting modern slavery and finance

Daniel Theleklaf, Project Director FAST Initiative (Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking), speaking on the basis of his own experience, said that trafficking in persons is often presented in reports as something vague that does not directly affect citizens.

The authorities, as Mr Theleklaf said, have failed to identify at least part of this revenue and return it to the beneficiaries. Based on UN targets, all countries are committed to eradicating slavery by 2030. "But today we have to say that we are a long way from achieving that goal. In contrast, the pandemic, conflict and climate change have reignited the situation and in the last five years the number of victims has increased from 40 to 50 million. This should worry us a lot", he highlighted.

"All this," he underlined, "has convinced us that tackling these crimes with the police alone is insufficient. The financial sector is a lever where the global economy can move". Through his own work, he has identified three connections between modern slavery and the financial sector. First, money from slavery is put into banking institutions. Secondly, the financial sector invests in companies that profit from exploitation. Third, financial inclusion can help prevent individuals from becoming victims.

The tools of banks

Niki Charilaou, Manager Financial Crime & Sanctions Compliance at Bank of Cyprus, spoke about how the banking sector can examine whether transactions may be linked to criminal activity. "In cooperation with MOKAS, warnings are issued that act as a guide for banking institutions, with everything we have identified in advance, so that these cases can be identified and reported to the authorities. In this way there is more evidence of criminal activity and in this way the banking sector can offer help and prevent human trafficking".

As Ms. Charilaou said, banking institutions promote financial inclusion and work in this direction. "We have adapted our procedures so that we can serve even the most vulnerable citizens who need to open a bank account. We had enough help from the Central Bank of Cyprus", she said. She even referred to the people who came to Cyprus from Ukraine with minimal documents and how the bank helped these people to open an account.

Serious penalties for businesses

Michelle Brewer, UK Judge Human Rights Activist, Survivor leader gave her own take on the legal side, and what the legal consequences are or should be for companies that might be – perhaps unknowingly – involved in labour exploitation. "Human trafficking is something that affects us all globally and it is very important that we share and process all the knowledge to build on it. The legal consequences for businesses that through their actions are involved in a human rights violation or for some reason have a connection because of a business partner are quite serious."

Ms Brewer briefly referred to three cases where there were breaches in companies where their way of operating violated human rights.

The first case involved a clothing company in Pakistan where in 2012, 258 workers died in a factory fire. "A few years later, one of the victims and three family members filed an action in Germany. The case was dropped because it was filed much later. But what happened, due to public pressure, was a trial for the company, and compensation of about 5 million euros to the victims. And that was because the company's reputation was at stake", she noted.

The other two cases concerned cases in the United Kingdom, one was a civil case and the other a criminal case. The first involved a small business, which brought workers from Lithuania to work on chicken farms. "The workers took the company to court and won because their rights were violated. "But there are two other important points that are being raised. At first it was a small business and the civil courts in the UK and what they did was to hold the directors to account personally. The second was to incur aggravating damages, that is, they not only paid the salaries they owed, but also an additional 20%", she said, adding that the Civil Court had identified criminal offenses related to modern slavery and from there the case proceeded to higher legal layers.

The last case concerned a business bringing people from Pakistan to work as waiters and cooks. Upon their arrival in Britain, all their documents were taken by the owners of the business. According to Ms Brewer, and on the basis of the testimonies submitted to the court, these people were forced to work 13 hours a day and for very low wages.

Ms Brewer concluded by saying that the debate is moving towards accountability in cases where human rights are violated by companies.





THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF EMPATHY

"FIRESIDE DISCUSSION ON COMPASSION, UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY"

PAUL BLOOM, PROFESSOR, SCHOLAR, WRITER

DISCUSSANT: STEVEN SEQUEIRA GOUVEIA, PHD, POSTDOC RESEARCH FELLOW MINDS, BRAIN IMAGING AND NEUROETHICS UNIT

Compassion, understanding, empathy. Emotions that put the person in the shoes of their fellow human being in order to be able to better understand the situation the other person is in. Emotions that we traditionally tend to believe can lead to a better society, where, by understanding the way our fellow human beings think and feel, we can “walk in their shoes” trying to identify solutions to the negative situation they are in.

Against empathy

Yale University and Toronto University professor Paul Bloom, in his book on empathy, introduces a radical way of thinking about empathy and how it can lead individuals, societies and the world to make wrong decisions that are likely to cause more negative than positive in the end.

Discussing with the professor, Steven Sequeira Gouveia, Postdoctoral Researcher opens the discussion, telling Mr. Bloom: “in your book against empathy, we learned that benevolent emotion, like empathy, can cause some good deeds, but it can also be the root of very bad moral decisions. Can you tell us how this can be problematic on political issues like racism or frivolity?”

Mr Bloom said: “My book against empathy is a cautionary tale of how moral sentiment which seems perfectly respectful, powerful and positive can take us by storm. And thus, I focus on empathy, which is kind of putting yourself in someone else's shoes, feeling what they are feeling. You can imagine that it is a wonderful morality that motivates us to help people and motivates us to make a difference and in some cases it does, but empathy has its problems, one of those problems is that we naturally feel compassion towards those who are close to us, towards those who speak the same language as us, towards those from the same country, who look like us who have the same skin colour.”

“There are many experiments which show that this is also from common sense that we appreciate somewhat. Therefore, this could be forced racism and fanaticism and for certain biases in aid”, the professor added.

Global poverty

“Do you think your ideas about empathy and rational empathy can also have a positive impact, for instance, on global poverty?” Mr. Gouveia asked.

“Yes, it can, because it suggests that if we rely too much on our emotions and instincts when making these decisions, we risk not helping people who need more help”, the professor replied.

“Your compassion, care and empathy are naturally driven by the people in your neighbourhood, the people you know, your friends, your family. So many charitable donations go immediately to these causes, and these may be people who really need help, but the problem is that, because of the bias of compassion, we do not direct them to global causes, to people who really need help much more than we do, than our friend and family. I think a careful look at the limitations of our moral feelings could help us realise that we need to do better, to use other processes, to be more reasonable, to be more distant”.

"That would imply that we would need to know relevant data and information, right? But we know that most people do not want to make an effort to think rationally. What do you think we can do to improve this kind of very human way of thinking about, for example, donations and global poverty?", Mr Gouveia asked.

"You are absolutely right", Mr Bloom replied. "This way of thinking does not come naturally to us. I am positive for different reasons. The movement known as effective altruism, which explicitly strives to drive people into their money, is increasingly present in the United States and Europe. I think we can, through cultural changes and individual changes, learn to bypass those feelings. An example of this is racism where we have natural racist prejudices, but we know enough, usually most of us have this way in interactions. No politician would explicitly appeal to racial prejudice".

"This shows that we can actually bypass some natural inclinations, so I would like to think that this could happen more generally", the professor added.

Ethical and political decision-making

Taking the floor again, Mr. Steven Sequeira Gouveia said that "we have a lot of evidence from the ethics of psychology in general that shows that we, human beings, are in fact very biased and influenced by random factors that should not be relevant to moral and political decision-making."

"How do you think we can combat these problematic characteristics of people? Do you think, for example, that we can use artificial intelligence to overcome some of our prejudices and irrational ways of thinking?", he asked the professor.

"One thing I would not advise is the idea that if we just know about them personally, we can get rid of them. It never works that way. Knowing about your own racial prejudices, for example, does not make you any less racist. Often these things are disguised by consciousness, often difficult to monitor. I think what we do best is, and this is a strange thing to defend, but I want to defend the bureaucratic process, often, if we have procedures in place, we put mechanisms in place to say what we should do, to do it without reference to some kind of our own biases, we can do it better", Mr. Bloom replied.

He added: "I can imagine some kind of Artificial Intelligence helping along these lines. Some kind of artificial intelligence surveillance situation, for example. These are the people who need help the most. These are the reasons why most of the people make a difference and so it would not be affected, but they are prejudices that you and I would have."

"I actually read a paper on attractiveness biases in student grading, and you are a professor, and I teach at a university, too. The results were that there is indeed an attractiveness bias, but during the pandemic, the devices were lower because the students were not using the camera. Through video we can always ask students to disconnect their camera, but in a normal university classroom environment, how are you not affected by these prejudices?" Mr. Gouveia asked.

"It is a wonderful metaphor", Mr Bloom said. "I have also heard that in most cases, waitresses who are more attractive get a better tip, and after the pandemic because people wear masks, that is no longer the case. When you see people, we assume they are attractive. I think we have to somehow have the equivalent of activation for a campus. The equivalent of everyone wearing masks when it comes to making these important decisions, so I think there is some appeal to what you have proposed, which uses artificial intelligence as a solution. Artificial intelligence, as everyone knows, since its own problems require depending on the way it is trained, but I think we can do a better job of making a machine ignore the colour of the skin".

The pleasure of pain and the search for meaning

Referring to the professor's new book, "The Sweet Spot - The Pleasure of Pain and the Search for Meaning", Mr. Gouveia said that "it is that suffering and not just enjoyment is also essential for a happy and meaningful life. Could you tell us a little more about that?" Mr. Bloom replied, "My book is a defence of what you might call motivational pluralism, which is that we want a lot of things. So, people want pleasure, but we also want to be good, we want to be moral, we want meaning, some of us want transcendence. One of the amazing things that comes out of this is that for these things to happen, it is often important to suffer with as much pain, anguish, anxiety as we might need to. There is no way to have a meaningful experience that really matters because of some degree of stress, effort, and risk. If it is easy, it will not be very meaningful. Even pleasure is not as opposed to suffering as you think. There are many ways in which we enjoy pleasure, such as spicy foods or hot baths, or intense exercise, which involve suffering. The brain is wired that discomfort and pleasure do not have to be opposite extremes, and sometimes they could help each other".

"My education was in philosophy in a field which is influenced by neuroscience", Mr. Gouveia said. "I would like to ask you what some direct influences in philosophy are or from specific philosophers in your work?"

"I do a lot of work in the field of ethics and have always been influenced by Adam Smith and a very wise philosopher with very sensitive boundaries of sentimentality and rationality. As for my more metaphysical views, I have been very influenced by Derek Parfit and his ideas about change over time. But when it comes to pleasure and suffering and the meaning of life, I draw inspiration from many people, but I have sometimes been influenced by people outside of philosophy. I was very impressed with the economist Tyler Cowen who had a lot of interesting things to say. I like the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah who also influenced my work in a number of ways", the professor replied.

"How can ethics in psychology in general help governments create more effective, inclusive and public policies in general?", Mr. Steven Sequeira Gouveia asked.

"I know a lot of people say that psychology can save the world, and a lot of us psychologists say that because we can make a lot of money, get invitations to talk on a great day, and people listen to us. I know what psychology can tell us and I do not think we should be confident in what we find. I think both my own work and that of my colleagues, and I suggest that we should be cautious about developing our emotions when we make a

decision”, Bloom said.

“In a more general context, psychology offers remarkable tools that matter because they can empirically test public policies and ideas from various governments”, he concluded.



YOUNG PEOPLE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

"THERE IS NO PLAN(ET) B: YOUTH ACTIVISM IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IN CYPRUS AND GREECE"

CLEOPATRA KITTI, ELIAMEP SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR

LYDIA AVRAMI, ELIAMEP RESEARCH FELLOW

OTHON KAMINARIS, ELIAMEP JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

SPYROS SPYROU, PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY, EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS

ELENI THEODOROU, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS

DISCUSSANT: KEVIN FEATHERSTONE, HELLENIC OBSERVATORY DIRECTOR, ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS PROFESSOR OF CONTEMPORARY GREEK STUDIES AND PROFESSOR OF EUROPEAN POLITICS

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Climate change is undeniably here. We are now living through climate change and feeling it in our daily lives. The temperature is rising, the summers in Cyprus are getting longer, the winters are getting shorter and the “dividing lines” between the seasons have deteriorated to a great extent. The Mediterranean, home to half a billion people, is undergoing dramatic changes, while forecasts for the future of the Mediterranean – and the planet – are gloomy.

Changes in the climate involve changes in people's lifestyles, changes in the fauna and flora of areas, changes in resources, water and food production. These in turn bring about other changes and other problems.

The problem is here, and we have pointed it out. What remains now is for the necessary actions to be taken immediately to slow down and – hopefully – avoid rapid climate change, both in the long term and in the short term.

Paradoxes of the problem

Opening the discussion, Kevin Featherstone, Director of the Hellenic Observatory, said: “We are here to discuss the important issue of climate change in the context of the responsibilities that young people in general and young activists have both in Cyprus and in Greece”.

Mr Featherstone said climate change presents a number of paradoxes. “First of all, according to the definition, it is an existential issue that must unite us all around the world. But in reality, it seems to divide us. It divides us into assessments of the nature of climate change and the initiatives we need to take. Not all divisions have been overcome.

Second, climate change is essentially a matter of intergenerational justice, yet we see young protesters calling climate change normal. But what about climate change initiatives, especially here in the Eastern Mediterranean, and how do young people respond?”

Responding to Mr. Featherstone's question, Ms. Kleopatra Kitti, Senior Political Advisor of ELIAMEP (Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy), said that their programme “deals with the connectivity of the region. Climate change, as you said, is an issue that can both unite and divide and is a big part of our programme, namely, how to mitigate climate change in order to deal with the conflict but also to create partnerships.

“We are now living and feeling climate change, it is an indisputable reality. The Mediterranean is a global warming hotspot. The recent union for the Mediterranean reports that the region is warming 20% faster than any other region in the world, meaning that by 2040, the region will face an extreme warming of 2.2 degrees Celsius. What does this mean? Rising temperatures have an impact on access to resources, clean water and food production, which creates migration and conflict”, Ms Kitty stressed.

She added that “Another factor that we forget to estimate is that the Mediterranean

is home to 500 million people, a number as large as the internal market of the European Union but it is the least connected region in the world. Considering how connected Southeast Asia is to China, or North America to South America, the Mediterranean is at the forefront of Africa but is the least connected to the other sides. This means that it becomes a resource border of either conflict or migration. What we see is that we want a Mediterranean Green Plan through which several partnerships and problem solutions will be built”.

Common ground for cooperation

Ms. Kitty said: “There are three recommendations on how we can find partnerships. One aspect relies on the development of funds to build the infrastructure for solar and wind energy. We are in southern Europe, at least let us see how we can use EU infrastructure funds to create more interconnections. The Eastern Mediterranean is an emerging energy market, but we are not there yet. So, the way in which we build institutions to manage common resources is one, whether it is for renewables or gas. Europeans are looking at this model of the Nordic Northern Reservoir, Europeans have built the clean reservoir model, Cyprus or the eastern Mediterranean could look to see how we can replicate this model of infrastructure resources of institutions”.

“The other perspective depends on the common potential for predicting climate change, whether it is fires or floods, food shortages or weather events, or water pollution, or exploring the eastern Mediterranean we might have gas or oil spills, which are things that do not recognise borders. So how will we deal with them if we do not have the institutions and cooperation structures”, Ms. Kitty added.

“The third aspect is capacity building. How we learn together, looking at other areas, not just learning from each other, but how we learn from other areas together. Building our own regional capacity, respecting the specificities of our region. So education, but not just among young people, but among everyone, among society, among policy makers, among businesses”, she said.

“Climate change does not stop and until we understand that because something has worked in the past, it will not work today and that generations now shape the future, they have more say than we have”, Ms. Kitty said.

“Arsinoe” programme

Ms. Lydia Avrami, Scientific Associate of ELIAMEP, said that their presentation “has to do with the Arsinoe programme and the youth assemblies on climate change organised by “ELIAMED” last year and we will organise the next years in Athens”.

“It is a four-year programme, sponsored by the European Commission, coordinated by the University of Thessaly and involving 21 partners from 15 European countries and this programme includes both research and information actions and activities to create pathways for resilience and innovative policy measures and proposals and solutions to climate change across Europe.”

“We organised two youth gathering simulations with the participation of high school

and university students and a training seminar for trainers with the participation of secondary school teachers. We follow a bottom-up and community-based methodology and more specifically provide scientific knowledge and the necessary background adapted to the needs of the target group so that they can do research on their own maps and existing policies identifying local environmental problems and vulnerabilities and then meet so that a saving of local green roads is made at regional level”.

“The aim of this activity is to provide scientific knowledge but mainly to promote dialogue, a social consensus among young people, offering young people the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in participatory decision-making processes and provide all the necessary tools and practical instructions. These simulation techniques can be applied in secondary education”, Ms. Avrami explained.

“The first youth assemblies held in May, it should be noted that they encouraged the participation of students from different regions of Attica with a different socio-economic situation and exposure to the risk of climate change. Participants had the opportunity to participate in preparatory activities, such as carbon footprint measurements, to understand how it contributes to climate change and how all schools are creating environmental teams to identify and map environmental problems, risks, vulnerabilities at the local level. So the proposal for climate change is to capture the consensus of the youth in Athens and now we will be presenting soon with Otto Kaminaris”.

Green Deals

Taking the floor, Mr. Othon Kaminaris, Scientific Associate of ELIAMEP, said that “I will present to you the green agreements that the two youth assemblies produced. So, Lydia has already told you that we had a variety of backgrounds in terms of exposure to the risk of climate change. It was very encouraging that both university students and high school students identified and recognised common challenges. These are the categories of the axis around which the two youth assemblies revolved. We have, for example, perfect overlap with transport and recycling or we have different aspects of the same issues in energy transition and green building. For example, all weather conditions and more specific aspects, fire protection and flood protection and the only difference is the education that stands out in the text of high school students.”

“In order to further disseminate the results of the project, we sent them in groups to the local authorities in Athens. So, we came up with these five pillars, climate neutrality, waste management, green regeneration, resilience and education”, Mr. Kaminaris added.

“Some more specific measures are indicative because in just four days the students put out about 15 pages of recommendations and measures. In energy transitions, the idea revolved around energy autonomy and self-efficacy, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Thus, some of the policy proposals were the installation of a small-scale renewable energy project, such as land-based and floating solar parks, or the establishment of energy communities or the production of our own energy”.

“Also in the green building we had some larger-scale interventions such as improving the energy efficiency of buildings and photovoltaic panel installations on rooftops and in the transport sectors we had some pretty smart ideas such as installing smart bulbs or lighting public spaces or installing mini photovoltaic panels on the lanterns to not draw energy from the grid lines. In waste management, students proposed a holistic approach and an integrated waste management system with some very innovative ideas for rewarding programmes for recycling, for example “pay as I pollute” is a program they presented to offset pollution and recycle with municipal fees or example “Find my bin” is a proposal to create a mobile application to find the closest waste bins depending on the material we want to throw away”, he explained.

Mr. Kaminaris added that “in green redevelopments, students consider it necessary to reform outdoor public spaces to create more green spaces and for this purpose provide financial incentives to citizens to create small gardens, what we call pocket parks, and green terraces as well as the expropriation of unused spaces for the creation of parks. Regarding resilience to the effects of climate change and other measures, they suggested that we need to strengthen our services and infrastructure in general, such as national fire departments. The first recommendation, for example, is to install smart sensors on trees in the forest to alert fire brigades in case of fire and for early intervention or the use of innovative materials in the construction sector. Also, the operation of public spaces for homeless and stray animals in times of adverse weather conditions or the creation of flood protection works and the systematic cleaning of rubble streams and drains. Of course, in Athens in particular, urban planning is problematic in many ways, so we need to modify it.”

Regarding the issue of education, Mr. Kaminaris said that “they proposed the introduction of environmental awareness and projects in school programmes that are completely absent at the moment and measures to reduce waste by reusing school books that are in good condition and transferring them from student to student instead of each student holding his own.”

“So, these are some of the measures proposed by the students which were very innovative and with a perspective on all these issues, they can capture the areas to which we need to draw attention as they are the common challenges recognised by the youth of Athens”, Mr. Kaminaris concluded.

Youth for Climate Change

For her part, Ms. Eleni Theodorou, Associate Professor at the European University of Cyprus, said: “We will share with you both myself and Spyros points from our research which took place in Cyprus. It was a qualitative project carried out between January 2020 and May 2021 on youth activism for climate change through the case study “Youth for climate change. It was funded by the A. G. Leventis Foundation and the Greek Observatory of the London School of Economic and Political Science”.

“Youth for Climate Change, is a youth movement founded in 2019, organised by young people in Cyprus to fight climate change and inspired by Greta Thunberg. It has maintained ties with the global movement ‘Fridays for the future’”, Ms. Theodorou said.

Subsequently, she said: “we explored how young people (aged 14 to 22) made sense of their activism and the ways and forms in which they organised and operated using qualitative methods such as interviews and observations.”

“Their main goal was to raise awareness and put pressure on politicians and adult-led society, considering themselves catalysts for change. They viewed the climate crisis as an existential issue that disproportionately affects their own and future generations. They attributed the climate crisis to anthropogenic change fuelled by the drive to maximise profit, as a result of the prevalence of a consumerist lifestyle driven by the capitalist economic system and as a result of decisions (or lack thereof) of a political structure prone to corruption by the business world both nationally and globally”, Ms. Theodorou added.

“They framed it as a matter of intergenerational justice as well as a matter of social justice, as it affects disproportionately different generations as well as different social groups,” Ms. Theodorou said.

“While criticising previous generations, they also called for solidarity between generations, recognising the multigenerational, multidisciplinary, multi-annual and diversity of the issue,” she said.

“Youth for Climate Change engages in various forms of social activism, including street protests, role-playing or silent protests, awareness-raising campaigns, gathering and disseminating scientific data, and organising environmental actions. Everyday activism, such as talking to family members and friends about the issue and adopting lifestyle choices they say are more environmentally friendly, such as recycling, veganism, reducing consumerism and energy consumption in their home”, Ms. Theodorou said.

“Youth for Climate Change has defined its discourse on climate change by focusing on environmental change and the challenges facing Cyprus and the region. They also recognised the need to adapt their strategies according to the specificities of the Cypriot socio-cultural context, for example by using the Cypriot dialect in their slogans, appealing to local cultural norms and values for the family”, she said.

At the same time, Ms. Theodorou explained that “it created a space and exposed its deficiency, in order to legitimise the voices of young people and allow youth to draw attention to social and political issues that may have been silenced by certain adult narratives, such as the naturalisation of climate change, the dismissal of youth which are characterised as childhood concerns”.

“She raised the issue of democratic participation and intergenerational alliance as well as moral temporal responsibilities. Although the effectiveness of their action is an open question, the emergence of such a local youth activist movement demonstrates the potential of social youth movements as global and local alliances are forged. Cypriot young people are involved in international initiatives to address the climate issue and want to play an active role in sharing the political future not only of Cyprus but also of the region and the world”, Ms. Theodorou said.

"We are grateful to the young people who participated in our study and would like to acknowledge the contribution of the project researcher, Dr. Georgina Christou", she concluded.

Mr. Featherstone stressed that "there are issues here in terms of the scope of change for policy change and as Cleopatra mentioned these issues here in terms of capacity and constraints. Cleopatra was excellent when she told us about the importance of the issue and the limitations. Let me begin by pushing you a little bit further in terms of thinking about the future and your optimism-pessimism. In particular, you had this wonderful idea that the magnitude of climate change in the region would logically cause something like a green plan. But at the same time, you emphasise the lack of institutions to support the kind of cooperation. There is a capacity issue and there may be a problem finding it. Looking ahead 10 years, you could see reasons for optimism that there could be some kind of progress when it comes to regional cooperation".

Solidarity between the two communities

Taking the floor, Ms. Cleopatra Kitti, ELIAMEP's Senior Political Advisor, said: "There are initial efforts if we look at the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, which is the beginning of an institutional forum where countries in the region work together to explore or share gas resources or ultimately trade and connect. So, this is the optimistic side. I think from a youth perspective I would really like to see more commitment to working together, in the ways that they know how to work together. I mean, technology knows no borders like climate change knows no borders. So, even if it is from small things like garbage-collecting projects on the shores of Mediterranean cities, whether it is a marine project or a civil society project, it is one thing. I know that we have NGOs in Cyprus that have done a project that worked on the coast of Cyprus. So, there are flashes of optimism and cooperation where there is imagination, leadership and mobilisation. We need more than that."

Addressing the speakers, Mr. Featherstone asked whether they see evidence that such an agenda will be able to build solidarity between the two communities of Cyprus.

Responding to his question, Mr. Spyrou said that "we have not seen any evidence of this. What we are seeing is young people trying to establish intergenerational solidarity to the extent that they are inviting older generations whom they hold partly responsible for what we have today and inviting them to join forces with them. We know that young people are actively trying to establish this kind of solidarity with the older generation because it is part of their agenda."

Mr. Spyrou explained that "this is a youth movement, so they want to preserve part of their identity as young people who have something different to say and who would not normally participate in formal political processes. Many of them, at least minors, do not have the right to vote, so the only way to express their political will is to participate in these social movements. Given also the topic of the forum a big question about the political participation of young people in decision-making that will affect their lives more than perhaps our generation. So even though we are talking about climate change, I think the issue is much bigger and we need to find ways to deal with it here in Cyprus. It happens everywhere, of course, but we have to find ways to involve young people in decision-making processes, especially in crises such as the one that, as you said, are of

an existential dimension. Young people have a lot at stake and have a complex vision and a very different from previous generations of what a sustainable world that is less human-centric and requires a lot would look like.”

Hellenic Observatory Director, Mr. Kevin Featherstone pointed out that there will not be many issues that link domestic youth activism so strongly with an international network, asking if this is important.

Mr. Spyrou said: “it helps Cyprus become less self-centred, I mean obviously there are local realities here and climate change is affecting us locally and we are just talking about the dust storms and all these new phenomena we are experiencing, the rise in temperature, the gradual desertification of the island. So there are local realities, but the issues are of course global and to the extent that young people are looking outward to cooperate with other countries and places. I think it is also a sign that young people are quite mature in understanding a future that is not just about us, only about Cyprus, and I think we need to support that and embrace it in many ways”.

The education system

Mr. Featherstone added: “As far as your own research is concerned, what I found interesting was that you speak very explicitly about intergenerational justice and your fieldwork included teacher discussion and teacher training on how to introduce climate change into the curriculum. It also included many interviews with students in schools”.

“I wonder what kind of contrasts or criticisms you may have received between one group as opposed to the other? In other words, did you get a sense of critical distance on the part of the school students from their teachers in such matters?”, Mr. Featherstone added.

The Scientific Associate of ELIAMEP, Ms. Lydia Avrami, replied that “in Greece it is quite interesting because it is exactly what we had in mind when we organised both activities for both students and teachers. The professors highlighted the socio-economic inequalities and how these even in our region vary both the exposure of students and citizens in general to the effects of climate change”.

“So, we see that they have extremely different perceptions and positions against climate change and how we can address this issue,” Ms. Avrami added.

“One of the main issues that emerged from our discussion with teachers and students is their low trust in local authorities and not just in the central authority. We can propose concrete measures, but what can local authorities do to address the risks of climate change and whether these policies will be effective in practice. So I think that so far it remains a key challenge, the implementation and I mean how citizens perceive the results of the policies implemented in Greece and in the field of climate change. But low trust in public authorities and stakeholder involvement are the main issue and the main obstacle. We must therefore give an incentive to prepare citizens and youth to become more active in this field”, Ms. Avrami concluded.

On his part, the Scientific Associate of ELIAMEP, Mr. Othon Kaminaris, said that “what I wanted to add regarding the teachers and the students is that mainly the students expected that they would be trained and would transfer some knowledge to the students so that they can act but also bring about change”.

“The students felt more connected, and indeed they would be the ones to bring about change. Thus, there was this little difference between them. For me it was a positive point because in Greece we have a clear gap in the participation of young people in decision-making in general. This was one of our most important goals when we had this idea that young people should formulate the decisions and situations in which they will live in the years to come.”



DIGITAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

“DIGITAL EDUCATION FOR/AND INCLUSION”

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ELENI MANGINA, PROFESSOR IN COMPUTER SCIENCE,
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SPORT AND YOUTH)

DISCUSSANT: ANDRIE DANIEL, EDITOR IN CHIEF AT
PHILELEFTHEROS GROUP



The use of technology as a means of achieving the goals of an inclusive education, which emphasises the individual needs of each student, was discussed in the context of the Cyprus Forum in cooperation with the CARDET institute.

Nowadays, technological tools offer enormous potential for teachers and students and can be a driving force in promoting accessibility in education. The changing realities and needs of modern life have made the development of digital skills and competences a priority of education systems and the pathway to digital transformation. A group of renowned experts and practitioners discussed the use of technology as a means of educational integration and critically examined the challenges and opportunities that technology brings to education. The speakers analysed how the different approaches and tools of digital education can be used to promote inclusion, as well as the necessary steps that are needed.

Deeply political issue that concerns the vision of the state

Dr. Michalinos Zembylas, Professor of Theory of Education and Curriculum at the Open University of Cyprus, after setting the framework around the concept of inclusive education, pointed out that it is important to first examine the historical development of the concept of inclusion in education, noting that an important milestone was the Salamanca Declaration by UNESCO. Since then, as he said, there have been many changes in the educational systems of the countries (such as in Cyprus with the “Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law of 1999”) to implement the vision for inclusive education.

He then pointed out that the researchers of the Council of Europe and the United Nations prove that we have a long way to go towards realising the vision of inclusive education and stressed the importance of realising that there is a difference between what we believe we are implementing and reality.

He explained that, for example, a very important pillar is the integration of children with disabilities in schools, with the researchers proving that education systems have the belief that children with disabilities have fewer abilities, a prevailing perception in Cyprus as well.

Another pillar, as Dr. Zembylas said, is the integration of children into what is considered “normality”, to which the rest have to adapt. “We need to understand when we talk about “normality” what it involves, how it respects diversity and what the consequences are for students with migrant biography, disabilities, etc.”, Dr. Zembylas stressed. “In Cyprus we have taken some important steps, but in the prevailing perception there is still the concept of “normality” to which the rest have to adapt, and I think it is a moral and political issue,” Dr. Zembylas noted.

He also stressed that, for him, the issue is not technocratic, but deeply political and concerns what is the vision of the state. In this context he explained that everyone is talking about Finland as an example because the country decided to invest in education and all political parties are joining forces in this direction.

“For me they would have to answer when the political system would be ready to

understand what “inclusion” means. If we do not politically agree on what kind of society we want, an inclusive society, discrimination will continue. If we do not have a vision, I think everything else is secondary. We have reforms all the time, but what counts is the result” Dr. Zembylas concluded.

We need a holistic approach, time and great effort

“We have to recognise that there is a lot to be done, but first of all I want to talk about the actions that have taken place in recent years” Dr. Elena Papamichael, First Educational Planning Officer, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, said.

She underlined that the Ministry of Education wants to implement integration policies, providing equal opportunities for all and preventing any exclusion and discrimination, while referring to specific policies implemented in recent years: In particular, she referred to the anti-racism policy, which has been launched in 2014 as a pilot project and has been expanded, in the policy text and action plan for children with migrant biography, in the program for special and general education, in the multitude of European funding programmes, which are based on integration and offer a multitude of practical tools for the implementation of inclusion.

She also noted that there are various programmes for integration and inclusion in schools, ACTION+ programmes, gender equality committees, while the Ministry of Education is part of the network against homophobia in education.

“We have various programmes that promote mental health and there are indicators of success”, Dr. Papamichael said, while making special reference to the “magine educational program”, which brought together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students.

Referring to the anti-racist policy of the Ministry of Education, she explained that it aims for schools to experience what inclusion means, recognising racist incidents, reacting to them and dealing with them.

She stressed that we face diversity in a wider context, while she argued that we need to help schools recognise differences in forms of discrimination, combat them and create an anti-racist culture

“The Ministry has taken some steps within the framework of its international obligations, but it is a first step in political recognition that we need a holistic approach, time, and great effort”, Dr. Papamichael concluded.

Positive developments from the use of technology

Technology brings people together, providing opportunities for families and children with different economic profiles, Dr. Eleni Mangina, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Dublin, said. Referring to the fact that 2.7 billion people had access to the internet in 2020, she expressed the belief that from a technological point of view we are ready to use the advantages of technology, which is growing at a faster rate than adult skills are being enhanced.

After expressing the view that the concept of normality does not exist, since we are all human beings, she expressed the strong conviction that technology can help all human skills if it is based on ethical values regarding personal data, explaining that there is a GDPR code that must be applied to technology.

She then gave the example of a programme implemented in Ireland with 117 primary school children diagnosed with ADHD, in which the significant benefits of technology on children's learning level were found.

She said that with the material of technological education the reading level of children, while it should have been similar to 9 years of age, was only at 5, but with the use of technological material it was possible to reach up to 11.

"In children with ADHD, students who do not concentrate easily and have difficulty in speaking, children with learning disabilities, we try to evaluate and improve their abilities", Dr. Mangina explained.

In addition, she noted: "We want to see the effects of the use of technology on Europe's children more broadly, noting that such programmes exist. In Europe more than 3000 children participate in augmented reality pilot projects and deal with the subjects of geography, reading geometry and positive behaviour in the school environment.

She then stressed that teachers must change their way of education, be educated about technological methods, while she expressed the conviction that the gap between teachers and students created by the knowledge gained from the new technological era will be gradually filled.

She also argued that we need to empower teachers globally because they have a lot of challenges to face, to learn to manage conflict issues, which requires skills, while, as she argued, the technological education of parents is also important.

Dr. Mangina stressed that at all levels of education, at a technocratic level, the system must be ready, both in terms of technological infrastructure, and in terms of teacher training, while she added that there needs to be cooperation between the state and researchers, collecting the scientific data that exist.

In conclusion, she expressed the conviction that in general there is a good level of education in Cyprus, but we need to follow the examples of the most advanced countries in the field.

The need to promote inclusion

"One of the main pillars of integration is inclusion," said CARDET Executive Director Dr. Charalambos Vrasidas. He referred to a workshop, implemented in the public sector, as part of the development of the national strategy for active citizenship and participatory democracy. As he said, a similar action was also implemented in the context of engaging with the development of the lifelong learning strategy, while he explained that as far as the strategy is concerned, a large part is related to digital

inclusion and adult learning, stressing that increasing adult participation is an essential part of the strategy.

Moreover, he noted that technological skills in Cyprus are at a lower level than the European average (19th out of 27 countries), while only 50% of Cypriots have digital skills. Speaking about the steps that have been taken, he referred to the implementation of a programme, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, which concerns adult education and which aims at training in three areas: the pedagogical approach, digital skills and the specialisation of adults with low level skills, who do not have access to all of them.

He explained that it was found that progress has been made, that many actions are underway, but what we are looking for is what is the role of the state, what is the role of scientific research because we often hear things that are not based on scientific findings.

He stressed that the role of technology in terms of digital education and connectivity is important in the effort to enhance integration.

When asked to comment on how the education system responded during the pandemic, he referred to a study conducted in Cyprus in public schools, which found that schools and teachers responded with a lot of effort on their part. He argued that in the first year of the pandemic there were several difficulties in terms of organisation, while in the second year there was a better response in terms of cooperation, noting that private universities were presented more ready than public ones.

In conclusion, he stressed the need for long-term comprehensive educational planning, noting that, for example, as regards the use of technology in schools, the supply of the necessary equipment is insufficient, since knowledge, skills and continuous re-evaluation are needed.





CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS THE RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

"CIRCULAR ECONOMY"

DR. GIORGOS DEMETRIOU, DIRECTOR OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY RESEARCH CENTER

GEORGES KREMLIS, PRINCIPAL ADVISOR TO THE GREEK PRIME MINISTER

ATHINA PANAYIOTOU, DIRECTOR GENERAL CYPRUS ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

DR. ANTONIS ZORPAS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT OPEN UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

ANDRI DEMETRIADOU, HEAD OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT AT CYPRUS EMPLOYERS & INDUSTRIALISTS FEDERATION

NICOLE PHINOPOULOU, LAWYER SPECIALIZED IN REGULATORY COMPLIANCE & #ESG

DR. MARK ESPOSITO, CO-FOUNDER OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY ALLIANCE AND NEXUS FRONTIERTECH

DISCUSSANT: JOYCE HALLOUN, PROJECT COORDINATOR, CIRCULAR ECONOMY ALLIANCE



The demand for change and the path charted by Circular Economy is a decisive answer to climate change and the serious environmental consequences we observe every day and on a global scale. The new situation requires a systemic change in the way we produce and consume, and such a change must be global in order to lead to a cultural adaptation with awareness and education for the general population and a special focus on upskilling and upgrading the active workforce.

The panellists discussed the impact of the Circular Economy on a global scale with a specific understanding of the Cypriot market. The speakers shared their ideas on how to influence various labour sectors and explored the opportunities offered by the Circular Economy and the requirements required by the global population to ensure equality.

Best Form of Production

Dr. Mark Esposito, Co-founder of Circular Economy Alliance and Nexus Frontiertech at his opening speech, laid out the key elements of the discussion, stressing that we should not only see Circular Economy as an important movement, but we should also see the reasons behind it.

“At the end of the day I am a trained economist and we have started to move to other levels where we look at the root causes rather than just the challenges we face on a daily basis. I would like to make it clear that the Circular Economy is by far the best form of production. If you have to choose between a linear production model and a circular one, we all know that the Circular Economy will not feel competition because it is a very efficient way of producing goods and services. But it is also a form of improvement in the present economy. So I am not only calling on you to improve the current situation but also to think again, a fundamental reset, creating such value, designed based on the needs we now have”, he said.

Lately, Dr. Esposito has been working on the debate about how the world is structured and how we could direct this change, which will bring a new reality. “How we truly engage and design activism and put it at the heart of the needs and context it takes to overcome the challenges of the 21st century. If we could design production and development models within our planetary boundaries, what would that production look like? If we redefine the economy to be more inclusive, if we rethink social mobility, how do our economies create green jobs, if we rethink structures, what will our world look like? These are the questions you have to answer”, he stressed.

Dr. Esposito invited the participants of the panel and the Cyprus Forum to discuss these questions and to think about another model, better designed and computerised which will be anthropocentric but in an environment that will enhance our abilities. “Circular Economy, ladies and gentlemen, is not just a movement designed around environmental standards. It is a paradigm shift. There we see a world without concessions, we see prosperity at the expense of the environment, where decisions are not only made in the short term, but also in the long term”, he said, adding that “if we are to leave future generations a fairer world, we should seriously think that our relationship with the planet cannot be problematic, nor platonic”.

Production of goods in a sustainable way

Nicole Phinopoulou, a lawyer specialising in regulatory compliance & ESG, was asked to give her own perspective on the question of what opportunities the Circular Economy offers to the financial sector based on ESG objectives and climate commitments.

“The Circular Economy is part of what we call sustainability and is essentially a Western economic model, whose goals are to produce goods or services in a sustainable way, reducing consumption and waste of our natural resources. This is something that everyone can support”, she explained.

She added that this economic model is how to deliver on states' commitments to the 17 UN sustainability goals. She even referred to the policies that the European Union has set for its Member States, based on the 2030 sustainability targets, so that everyone can participate and contribute. “We have seen this at all levels and in all Member States, but we also see it in our daily lives. For example, the plastic bags we have to pay for or the straws that change. They are steps to invest and produce other ways of sustainability under a Circular Economy model”.

Regarding Cyprus and the impact of the Circular Economy on the country's economy, Ms. Phinopoulou commented that the financial sector has an important role to play in the transition, with the only problem being financing and how a project can become an investment. “Thus, banks, other lenders and investors can raise awareness, and help people understand what circularity is, implement it so that they ask for it.” From then on, banks will have a major say in the financing of such projects. At the same time, she noted, the government should be involved as a shareholder, giving incentives to people who want to invest in these types of projects.

“In Cyprus we have some tools that are being implemented. There are plans in Cyprus, the Ministry of Finance, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism and others, have proposals and plans that support the transition to the Circular Economy”, she highlighted.

The role of consumers

“I believe that Europe is primarily taking action”, Dr. Giorgos Demetriou, Director Circular Economy Research Center, added: “This is the first time that we can say proudly that Europe is leading on something so important, and the Circular Economy is one of the topics where the European Union is leading, and other countries of the continent are following.”

Dr. Demetriou pointed out that the role of consumers in the Circular Economy is key to the whole equation as it is the driving force in everything. “This means that if consumers understand how the market works, how policies work, and how their purchasing power influences what is produced and consumed, and what their environmental impact is, then it is the only opportunity for economic policies and production to work together.” He added that an informed consumer has a greater impact on the chain of actions, in particular on the transition to the Circular Economy.

Mr. Demetriou also spoke about an inclusive approach to the Circular Economy, stress-

ing that the panel participants are from different sectors, who talk about the same subject from a different perspective. “This is exactly the inclusion we are looking for in the Circular Economy. Why does he demand that? Because the Circular Economy concerns several sectors.

Standards on a global scale

For her part, Athina Panayiotou, Director General of the Cyprus Organisation for Standardisation, stressed that standards are tools that help organisations to help consumers, help them define their processes.

“Since 2018 at international level, we have been developing standards for Circular Economy, standards that offer guidelines for business models, provide ways to measure context and how to base performance. We believe that standards are there not to reinvent the wheel individually, but by having standards on a global scale, it means that we will all approach the same issue in the same way. And that makes it fair, for industry, for government, for all shareholders and at the end of the day for consumers”.

Standards are the tools by which organisations of all kinds can achieve compliance. “At the international level, we are all working to set standards. But what we do is we listen to the local actors and what they want. To discover the gaps that exist”, she commented. She also talked about a new standard for Circular Plastics. “Most of you recycle, but the circular economy is not recycling. It is about reuse, production and more. But there is no standard for Circular Plastics, neither at the international level, nor anywhere, and we here in Cyprus have pointed out this need”, she said.

Implementation in all policy areas

George Kremlis, Senior Adviser to the Greek Prime Minister, spoke about the role of governments in the transition to the Circular Economy. “They usually say we have to maintain the circular economy, vertically and horizontally. Starting at the national level, in circular economic plans, moving to the regional level and then to the local level which should no longer be talking about smart cities, but about circular cities. The plans must be implemented at local level, which will testify to the circular economy and the transition. On a horizontal level, we need to maintain the circular economy in all policy areas. Starting with circular tourism, circular agriculture, circular energy and not all that”, he said.

As he said, in order to support this horizontal and vertical model, there should be appropriate legislation that will strengthen it, especially for environmental objectives. Mr. Kremlis also commented that “the challenge of Cyprus as an island for the implementation of the Circular Economy is huge and is far from the single European market. They need to recycle their own products. There is no recycling capacity in Cyprus and unfortunately in Greece there is limited recycling capacity, so I believe that we need the synergies at least between Greece and Cyprus as we are the closest, so to speak, countries within the European Union.

During the panel, a lot was heard about new skills, new jobs and the workforce is

actually facing a kind of fear of the employment situation. The question to Mr. Kremlis was whether Greece and Cyprus are indeed promoting circular jobs in an effective way. “Clearly this transition will create a lot of jobs and it will also create Eco Innovation - one of the other elements needed to grow new businesses. You need to start providing incentives. Without them nothing can be done. There are many funds in which the European Union provides 30 per cent of its budget. The circular economy is at the heart of this transition, so green jobs are there but of course they need to be supported through incentives”, he stressed.

In addition, he said, the economic model of the social circular economy must be developed. “Without the social dimension, it is prohibitive. We need public participation. From schools to households, we need the new culture of the circular economy”, he underlined.

Creating jobs

The head of the Energy and Environment Department of OEB, Andri Demetriadou, referred to the relationship that environmental protection and climate mitigation can have with job creation and the Circular Economy. “Several studies have shown that there is great potential for job creation, for example in the fields of RES, digital technologies. But the big picture is that existing jobs will be transformed and revised because they will become greener jobs. There will also be a shift of occupations from jobs that have a significant impact on the environment to more circular activities. In these cases, the key will be proper education and training”, she commented in a more general context.

Regarding Cyprus, she said that given the small market, there are preventive plans and strategies aimed at directing the future needs for jobs that will arise from the transition. Ms. Demetriadou also referred to the ways in which OEB takes action and supports businesses in Cyprus through their transition. “As an employer federation, we recognise that the green transition, among other benefits, also provides an overall economic boost and enhances the competitiveness and resilience of businesses. Therefore, we have placed the Circular Economy high on the agenda”, she commented and added that in addition to integrating the circular economy into basic business activities and services, OEB provides information to its members and take several initiatives in this direction.

“Our ambition and goal if you want is to find the appropriate mechanisms to further support even more businesses not only within the hospitality industry but also in other sectors of the economy through their journey towards circularity”, she concluded.

Circular citizen

In his statement, Dr. Antonis Zorpas, associate professor at the Open University of Cyprus, spoke of new thinking at an academic level. As he said, “when we talk about circular economy, we are not talking about waste. This is a mistake that academics make. What we are trying to do is solve a problem and educate the next generation to be able to react. In the academic world, what we are trying to do is not just to do fundamental research, but to explain what nature has been doing for centuries”.

Mr. Zorpas was also asked about whether the Circular Economy will be included in the curriculum of universities and schools in Cyprus. “What we are looking at in the circular economy is actually the multidisciplinary approach and synergies. What we are trying to develop is the circular citizen”.



THE EVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS OF A GOOD SOCIETY

"BLUEPRINT: THE EVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS OF A GOOD SOCIETY"

NICHOLAS A. CHRISTAKIS

STERLING PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL & NATURAL SCIENCE, YALE UNIVERSITY

The distinguished sociologist and physician at the renowned Yale University, Dr. Nicolas Christakis, spoke at the Cyprus Forum about the inherent goodness of man and the need we have to create societies.

“For far too long, in my view, the scientific community has focused on the dark side of our evolutionary heritage, the capacity for selfishness, fraud, tribalism, cruelty and violence, and the bright side has been deprived of the attention it deserves”, Professor Nicolas Christakis said in his speech, adding that “the human species has evolved to be good and to manifest wonderful qualities such as love, friendship, cooperation and teaching.”

He explained that the good qualities have overcome the bad ones, otherwise people would not have lived socially in the first place. He argued that we have developed not only to live in groups, but rather in a very special way, with a very special set of inherent abilities. He added that we manifest this social competence very early in life. “Many have argued, for example, that one of the primary functions of childhood play is simply to prepare us for life together”, the Professor pointed out.

The natural predisposition to socialisation

So, what kind of data can we use to ascertain the kind of socialisation that “comes naturally” to us, as well as the fact that we are well disposed to do it?

Dr. Christakis answered the question with references to the study of unintentional natural experiments, but also of communities of the 19th century, where people deliberately began to rebuild society, possibly in a new way. He also referred to examples from within the online world, but also other examples, such as Latin American prisons, miners trapped deep beneath the earth, and communities formed by displaced people in the wake of natural disasters.

He also spoke about the experiments he has carried out in his laboratory, creating temporary “artificial societies”. “Over 30,000 people participated in our experiments, allowing us to explore the deep foundations of social order”, he said, noting that “what he found was that there were some deep and fundamental principles that limit us to just one way, to be social.”

The constituent elements of society

He underlined that “the key competences that people have globally that characterise our societies and that we need in order to be able to form a functioning society are the following: identity, love, friendship, networking, collaboration, participation in groups, soft hierarchy and teaching. I call this the “social norm.” He explained that “these are genetically coded traits, shaped by natural selection, that we express among ourselves, not as isolated individuals. They are adaptively useful - even vital - for the creation of a society”.

Dr. Christakis stressed that “natural selection has shaped not only the structure and function of our body, not only the structure and function of our minds and therefore our behaviours, but also the structure and function of our societies. And these char-

acteristics are universal. They show up in every society”.

He then said that there are many applications of ideas about how we have evolved to create societies: “For example, we humans have begun to modify our social systems with artificial intelligence. Increasingly we will be adding machines (such as driverless cars) and autonomous agents (such as online robots) to our social systems. These machines will act in human ways, on a level playing field, as if they were human, in what I call hybrid systems”.

He argued that “these hybrid systems of humans and machines offer opportunities for a new kind of social artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence can act socially, or it can also really affect our social organism”. He also underlined: “my argument is that hybrid systems should respect the social norm, as we must work for a utopian, not a dystopian future”.

Moreover, he pointed out: “Our focus on the social origins of goodness (and the apparently good qualities of the society we were discussing) highlights something else: that most human virtues are social and result from investing in the lives of others. We do not care much if you love yourself, are kind to yourself, or are just you. We are interested in whether you manifest these virtues to others”.

The virtue of society

Finally, he concluded with a final idea, raising the questions: “What explains the general success of our species in cohabitation despite all our flaws and differences? How can we understand the goodness of the social world despite the evil?”

And he replied as follows: “In theology, this is known as a question of theocracy, that is, how God should be justified in the face of all evil in the world. I believe that accordingly we can focus on what we call “sociocracy”, which is the vindication of our confidence in the virtue of society, despite its numerous failures. It is in line with the Japanese aesthetic philosophy of wabi-sabi, highlighting the flawed beauty of natural and artificial things”. He noted that “it is not just pointless optimism. On the contrary, it is a recognition of the fundamental good that is within us”.

He concluded that “it is tempting to see human history as full of miserable misery and dysfunction. One can choose any century or millennium and find it horrifying. There was, of course, a dramatic inclination for the better, it happened in the 18th century with the arrival of the Enlightenment and its philosophical values and scientific discoveries. Life became longer, richer, freer and more peaceful. But we need not rely only on such recent historical developments to make the world a better place, since more ancient and more powerful and deeper forces are at work, pushing for the creation of a good society. In short, the arc of our evolutionary history is long, but it bends toward goodness”.



SIDE EVENTS

The Cyprus Forum in all provinces

One of the innovations of the third Cyprus Forum was the side events in Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos, but also in some other places in the area of the Municipal Theatre. Our goal was to interconnect the conference with all the provinces of free Cyprus, in order to promote it in the decentralised areas of the island.

The side events, which took place one week before the start of the conference, discussed issues related to:

The Future of Makerspaces in Education.

Larnaca

Stella Timotheou, Primary school teacher and PhD candidate at Cyprus University of Technology
Giorgos Pallaris, Campus Director of Cyprus College (Limassol)
Dora Constantinou, Academic Dean & Head of Computing Department Ctl Eurocollege (Private Higher Education Institution in Limassol)
Discussant: Andreas Papallas, Architect, Researcher at Cyprus University of Technology

The future of employment.

Nicosia

Presentations by Panayiota Constanti, DCC and Faika Deniz Pasha, Queer Cyprus
Anna Prodromou, PR, Communications & DEI Consultant; author of 'Women in Conflict Zones'
Marios Antoniou, Head of HR Alphamega Hypermarkets
Elina Kyratzi, Panayiota Kyprianou, Alphamega Hypermarkets, HR Department

Podcasting as a democratic alternative to information.

Nicosia

Constantinos Psillides (HistoriCon)
Kemal Baykallı (Island Talks)
Discussant: Andromachi Sophocleous (UniteCyprusNow)

Basketball demonstration by Peaceplayers

Nicosia

The Cyprus Quality of Life Index.

Nicosia

Demetris Hadjisofocli, Managing Director, Center for Social Innovation-CSI
Dr. Katerina Theodoridou, Director of R&D, Center for Social Innovation-CSI

The Green Line regulation.

Nicosia

Opening remarks: Colin Stewart, Special Representative/Head of UNFICYP, Deputy Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus.
Panelists:
Izzet Adiloğlu, Deputy Secretary General of Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce;
Jovanna Yiouselli, Officer, Department of International Relations and Economic Diplomacy at CCCI;
Natasha Rovo, Economist, World Bank
Oya Koçak Barçın, Programme Manager, European Commission
Discussant: Nicolas Kyriakides, Executive President, Cyprus Forum

The impact of basketball on young people's lives.

📍 Paphos

Leontios Tselepos, Round Table 7 Pafos
President, ex Board member of Cyprus
Sports Organisation

Dimitris Delichristos, Programme
Director, Atlantas Sports Academy

The aim to promote successful start-ups in Cyprus.

📍 Limassol

Theodoros Loukaidis, Director General
at Cyprus Research and Innovation
Foundation

Dr. Olga Shvarova, Chief Innovation
Officer at CYENS Centre of Excellence.

Dr. Marianna Prokopi - Demetriades,
Biotech innovator, Serial Entrepreneur.

George Vou, founder of
themightykitchen, and one of the initial
promoters of Startup Cyprus (tbc)

Dr. Nikolas Bakirtzis, Associate
Professor and Director of Andreas
PittasArt Characterization

Laboratories/STARC and Principal
Investigator of the ARTES project,
supported by Cyprus Seeds.

Dr. Vasos Vassiliou, Associate Professor
at the University of Cyprus, Principal
Investigator of IDS4IoT, supported by
Cyprus Seeds.

Discussant: Maria Georgiadou,
Managing Director, Cyprus Seeds



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Our motivation to strive for a better Cyprus grows stronger every year. The recent Cyprus Forum '22 has inspired us to envision a society that values inclusion, participation, and equality.

The key to success lies in collective work.

Thank you for being part of this journey!

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