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24 April 2026

Pefkos City Hotel
Limassol

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Panel Discussions
April 24th, 2026 at Pefkos City Hotel

08:30-09:00

Registrations

Welcome Addresses

09:00-09:05 Nicolas Kyriakides, Executive President & Founding Member, Cyprus Forum

09:05-09:15 Yiannis Armeftis, Mayor of Limassol

09:15-09:20 Evangelos Akylas, Vice-Rector of Financial Planning and Development,
Cyprus University of Technology

09:20-09:25 Kieran McCarthy, Member, Committee of the Regions (recorded)

09:25-09:30 Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat (recorded)

09:30-09:40

Presentation of the Local Government Survey

This presentation will outline the findings of a recent survey conducted by IMR, for a second consecutive year, assessing public perceptions of local government in Cyprus following the implementation of the recent reform. It aims to track changes in satisfaction levels, identifying areas of improvement as well as emerging challenges. By capturing citizens' views on service delivery, responsiveness, and overall effectiveness, the survey provides an evidence-based snapshot of whether the reform is meeting its objectives or falling short in practice.

Marina Pastou, Research Manager, IMR/University of Nicosia™

09:40-10:40

Decentralisation or Dependence? Local Government Finance in Cyprus in a European Context

Local government reform in Cyprus promised stronger municipalities and a shift toward greater decentralization. Yet the degree to which local authorities enjoy genuine financial and

administrative autonomy remains an open question. With an upcoming evaluation under the European Charter of Local Self-Government, Cyprus has an opportunity to reflect on whether its system aligns with European principles of local democracy. This panel will bring together mayors from the country's largest cities and representatives of the Ministry of Interior to discuss the realities of municipal financing, the balance between central oversight and local independence, and how Cyprus compares with other European systems of local governance.

Panelists

Antonis Economides, Head of Local Government Directorate, Minister of Interior

Charalampos Prountzos, Mayor, Nicosia Municipality

Yiannis Arneftis, Mayor, Limassol Municipality

Andreas Vyras, Mayor, Larnaca Municipality, President, Union of Cyprus Municipalities

Andreas Kitromilides, President, Union of Cyprus Communities

Moderator: Michalis Socratous, Director, Union of Municipalities

10:40-11:50

Reform or Redistribution? The Role of District Local Government Organisations in Cyprus's New Local Government Framework

The recent local government reform in Cyprus has introduced the District Local Government Organisations as key pillars in the new governance architecture, reshaping the distribution of powers between central government, municipalities, and district-level authorities. While the reform aims to improve efficiency, coordination, and service delivery, questions remain regarding the clarity of responsibilities, the interaction between EOA and municipalities, and the practical implications for critical functions such as building permits and the management of dangerous buildings.

Panelists

Constantinos Yiorkadjis, Chairman, Nicosia District Local Government Organisation

Angelos Hadjicharalambous, Chairman, Larnaca District Local Government Organisation

Giannis Tsouloftas, Chairman, Limassol District Local Government Organisation

Charalampos Pittokopitis, Chairman, Pafos District Local Government Organisation

Christos (Pieri) Zannettou, Mayor, Ayia Napa Municipality

George Nikolettos, Mayor, Paralimni – Deryneia Municipality

Sofokles Sofokleous, Mayor, Lefkara Municipality

Moderator: Nicolas Kyriakides, Executive President, Cyprus Forum

11:50-12:40

Powering Cyprus Locally: Biogas, Organic Waste and a Smarter Grid

This panel discussion will explore how biogas can realistically contribute to Cyprus' energy transition by turning municipal and agricultural organic waste into local, reliable power while navigating a challenging gas and electricity market. The panel will critically examine why biogas projects in Cyprus have struggled to prove profitable so far, highlight key success factors and lessons from projects that stalled or failed, and discuss what needs to change in pricing, regulation, market design, and governance for viable biogas investments to emerge.

Panelists

Dr Tedd Moya Mose, Senior Executive Consultant, Morphosis Group

Dr Ioannis Vyrides, Associate Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, Cyprus University of Technology

Charalampos Theopemptou, Member of Cyprus Parliament, Chair of the Environment Committee

Moderator: Andreas Kazamias, Board Advisor, Morphosis Group

Knowledge Partner: Morphosis

12:40-13:30

Pay-As-You-Throw: Local Implementation and the European Path to Sustainable Waste Management

The transition toward a circular economy requires new approaches to how waste is generated, managed, and financed. Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) schemes, already implemented in many European countries, aim to incentivise waste reduction by linking municipal fees directly to the amount of waste households produce. As Cyprus explores the potential of PAYT, municipalities face important choices regarding system design, public acceptance, and alignment with European Union environmental objectives. This panel will examine how PAYT works in practice, what lessons can be drawn from European experiences, and how local governments can use such mechanisms to promote more sustainable waste management.

Panelists

Kyriacos Xydias, Mayor, Amathounta Municipality

Pantelis Georgiou, Mayor, Kourion Municipality

Stavros Hadjiyiannis, Mayor, South Nicosia-Idalio Municipality

Joanna Constantinidou, Senior Environment Officer, Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture

Moderator: George Isaia, Executive Director, Cyprus Forum

13:30-14:00

Lunch Break

14:00-15:00

Civic Space in Action: Youth, Civil Society and the EU's Global Role

As Cyprus holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, strengthening civic participation and democratic dialogue becomes increasingly important. This discussion will explore how youth and civil society organisations can engage more actively in democratic processes, contribute to public debate, and promote European values such as democracy, human rights, and sustainable development. The session will also highlight innovative participation tools, including the EkfraCY digital platform, which enables young people to share ideas, take part in consultations, and connect with policymakers.

Panelists

Kyriakos Kareklas, Mayor, Athienou Municipality

Maria Miltiadou, Acting Executive Director, Youth Board of Cyprus

Loukas Lingis, Member, Municipal Council of Agia Napa & Young Elected Politicians Programme of the CoR

Christos Parmakkis, Youth delegate to the congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe and Member of the technical bicomunal committee on youth

Moderator: George Isaia, Executive Director, Oxygen for Democracy

Knowledge Partner: Oxygen for Democracy, EU Presidency Project 5 (EUPP5), ONEK

15:00-16:00

The Governance Gap: Planning Cyprus's Single Mobility Authority

Cyprus is at a critical crossroads. While the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) have been finalized, their implementation is hampered by a fragmented administrative structure. With three departments within the Ministry of Transport operating autonomously, urban planning falling under the Ministry of the Interior, and municipalities acquiring new powers without always having the necessary resources, the result is frequent gridlock. The discussion will aim to highlight the need to establish a Cyprus Mobility Authority. We will examine international examples of cities that have broken down silos and created supra-local bodies that centrally manage contracts, strategy, and technology, ensuring that citizens enjoy a seamless mobility experience.

Panelists

Yiannis Armeftis, Mayor, Limassol Municipality

Athanasios Kolyvas, Head of Technical Services at Strovolos Municipality

Loukas Dimitriou, Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Cyprus

Michael Lambrinos, President, Cyprus Association of Transport Planners and Engineers

Anastasia Korae, Vice-President, Friends of the Earth Cyprus

Moderator: Penelope Vasquez Hadjilyra, Public Affairs Officer, MaaSLab

Knowledge Partner: MaaSLab

16:00-17:00

The 15-Minute Limassolian: resilience and youth realities

How do young people experience their city, and what do accessibility, belonging, and resilience mean in the everyday lives of teenagers in Limassol? Through first-hand perspectives and dialogue, the discussion will explore how young people perceive urban space, navigate daily mobility, and imagine more inclusive environments, while reflecting on themes such as safety, public space, transport, social life, and the potential of the "15-minute city" to foster resilience, equity, and well-being.

Panelists

Orthodoxia Christofides, Lykeio Agias Fylaxeos

Nefeli Odysseos, Lykeio Linopetras

Chrisanthi Efthimiou, Gymnasio Agias Varvaras, Polemidia

Amina Shigabutdinova, Silverline Private School, Trachoni

Elettra Vismara, Silverline Private School, Trachoni

Moderator: Agni Gregoriou, Urban Planner & Designer, Research Associate, UPDU,
Department of Architecture, Frederick University

Knowledge Partner: Urban Planning and Development Unit, Frederick University

Workshops April 24th, 2026 at Pefkos City Hotel

12:00-14:00

Shaping Climate Justice Policy for Cyprus

This policy workshop by Friends of the Earth Cyprus will bring together civil society, community representatives, academics and decision makers to explore how climate policy in Cyprus can better respond to issues of justice, fairness, inclusion and social impact. Through guided discussion and collaborative working sessions, participants will identify key barriers, discuss opportunities for improvement, and contribute to the development of practical climate justice recommendations. The workshop will help strengthen dialogue across sectors and inform future policy discussions.

15:00-17:00

P.O.V. EkfraCY - Participation Of Voices through EkfraCY workshop

The EkfraCY workshop at the Cyprus Forum in Limassol will serve as an interactive platform to present the EkfraCY digital participation tool and engage participants in dialogue on youth participation in policymaking. Representatives from the Cyprus Youth Organisation (ONEK) and Oxygen for Democracy will take part in a panel discussion to showcase the platform and discuss

its vision for strengthening youth voices in democratic processes. A dedicated project booth will provide informational materials and digital access to the platform, enabling participants to explore its features and share feedback. The activity will also include networking with stakeholders and decision-makers, while the project team will hold a follow-up meeting to reflect on insights gathered during the Forum and explore how these can inform the further development of the EkfraCY initiative.