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Building structures for Intercultural Integration in Cyprus

1st Paphos Region Intercultural Network Meeting

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Introduction on Intercultural Cities

The 1st Paphos Region Intercultural Network meeting was launched on the 14th of December 2021 in virtual mode. The representatives of the Mayor of Paphos Mr. Phedon Phedonos, Mrs Andri Christodoulidi Tsartsali and the Paphos' Police Commander Mr Nicos Tsappis, Inspector Savvas Savva addressed the meeting and spoke of their support for the newly formed network. The Mayor of Pegeia, Mr Marinou Lambrou, has once again firmly confirmed his support for the regional network [Intercultural integration in Cyprus Intercultural Cities / Cités interculturelles](#). Mr Michalis Beys from the Ministry of Interior also gave a speech at the meeting, highlighting how the project's goals align with the ministry's agenda.

The over 35 participants came from a broad network within the city departments, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Neapolis University, the civil society, representatives of different local and regional organizations, labor unions, businesses along with civil servants, individuals and volunteers. They are interested to contribute to the city's intercultural goal and are willing to encourage other city's departments and citizens to do the same.

The journey started with a brief introduction of the program, its deliverables and implementation by Mrs Irena Guidikova, Head of the Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Division, Council of Europe.

Konstantina Sokratous, Director of CCIF Cyprus reinstated the goals and the expected results from the network. In short, we discussed the potential framework of Intercultural Cities Program (ICC) that we wish to implement in order to achieve inclusion and foster diversity. The human and social development will be a positive reference point for public policy. She pointed out the strengths of ICC programme which are based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, with a strong appeal for research and impact assessment and a long-term horizon (beyond the timetables of a program) that enables sustainable changes in the policies of the participating cities. The regional networks have multidisciplinary and multilateral approaches, involve a large number of actors in cities to ensure the effectiveness and the sustainability. It is supported by the Council of Europe that increases its scope and political commitment.

Diversity advantage, benefit, good-practices on Intercultural Integration

Dr Katerina Konstantinides-Vladimirov, Inspector of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport & Youth presented in brief, how Intercultural Education is promoted in the educational system of Cyprus through **policy objectives** which foster social inclusion. She provided examples of policy objectives and explained how they may direct to social inclusion pointing to develop students as respectful, democratic and active citizens, empower the non-homogeneous society and the Educational system for Emotional School and Teacher Leadership.

Consequently, Mr Nenad Bogdanovi gave a detailed description of all that diversity has to offer to our society. He provided new ideas and ways in which we can achieve a smoother integration based on his past experience with ICC. All of the ideas gravitated towards the importance of interaction, participation, education and antidiscrimination policies.

Open-ended discussion

The participants had the opportunity to engage in an open-ended discussion, expressed their views as to the meaning/concept of “multiculturalism” and its benefits/effects on the local society and they have further suggested ways on how participants could be involved in the efforts to create inclusive structures and social cohesion in our city, either as part of an organization / body or as individuals including the level of commitment that is required to achieve such goals. The discussion was facilitated and overseen by Dr Maria Papapolydorou, volunteer in CCIF Cyprus.

The participants pointed out the importance of interaction, participation, the fight against discrimination, focus thematic discussions and the role of education. They expressed their readiness to support the efforts of the network and suggested ways we develop inclusive societies and level of commitment.

Workshop

The participants have also participated and expressed their views during the workshop which was focused on various topics pertaining to multiculturalism/inclusion/diversity in the form of question-discussion. The workshop, helped us reflect on our own opinions, degree of knowledge about the subject, the INDEX review, the pilot discussion and the development of a draft strategy. The workshop was conducted and facilitated by Mrs Christina Marsellou, LLB, volunteer at CCIF Cyprus. Few examples of the questions and subsequent discussion can be found below:

Have you noticed if there has been a significant change in the composition of the city population in recent years?

The question aimed to help us reflect on the importance of structures related to intercultural integration. Cultural diversity is undoubtedly a global phenomenon which needs the attention of every community in order to reduce conflicts and promote personal growth through increased tolerance.

Which are the largest migrant/minority groups in your city?

Answers to this question helped bring awareness of the cultural/ethnic challenges of Paphos, especially relating to conflict resolution and the creation of a safe environment for all. It was crucial to acknowledge that greater challenges tend arise when the minority groups belong in particular categories that differ greatly from the local culture, often referring to past conflicts, leading to greater discrimination against the concerned group (Christians- Muslims, Islamophobia, or historical conflicts/Cyprus-Turkey).

Does your city organize events and activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport that aim to encourage people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds to interact?

The answers showed how much aware is the city of the cultural diversity and whether actions have been taken to promote interculturalism in the past. An intercultural city also benefits immigrant / minority groups by helping them feel accepted and understood but also helping the locals realize that their differences are much smaller than they feared and that they actually have much more in common than they imagined.

Are any elected members of your city's municipal council foreign-born or dual nationals?

The answer to this question helped us see if immigrants / minority groups have already found a way to participate in city decisions by their representative and promote their interests. A negative answer would mean that the city needs to motivate the participation of foreign-born or dual national as this will have positive influence on the way that locals see the migrants (ex. xenophobia) and on the decision making (smoothing out inequalities – stronger protection of human rights). Fortunately, in Paphos we have started having people from different countries in our municipalities.

At the end of this meeting do you feel more comfortable with the idea of an intercultural city and how does this make you feel?

The answer to this question aimed to help us understand whether the main obstacle of achieving an intercultural city is the fear of the unknown itself and not the fear of connecting with people that have different cultural and religious backgrounds. The more familiar we become with other cultures, the more ready we are to accept it. The key to success is communication and this is exactly what an intercultural city represents.

Closing Remarks

The 1st Paphos Region Intercultural Network meeting ended successfully, concluding the following key points discussed:

- What is Intercultural City Program;
- What are the goals and the expected results;
- How intercultural education has a main part in this;
- What are the potentials of multiculturalism and the advantages of diversity and how different people experience cultural diversity;

The Next Steps

The Network will proceed with focus group discussions placing immigrants, TCNs, refugees and asylum seekers in the center by giving them space to raise their voice and express their views as well as with consultation meetings with stakeholders on network terms, reference and their adoption of the network. It will be followed by the completion of the Index questionnaire for Paphos and the research for the baseline overview of integration policy and cohesion in the region. The network will proceed by identifying the main issues and topics that need to be addressed and the launch of the next meeting of the network.

Appendices

Appendix I – Meeting Agenda

16:30-16:35	Formal opening , Konstantina Sokratous, Director of CCIF Cyprus
16:35-16:40	Address Mr Phedon Phedonos, Mayor of Paphos, represented by Andri Christodoulidou Tsartsali, Municipal Officer
16:40-16:45	Address Mr Nikos Tsappis, Paphos Police Command, represented by Inspector Savvas Savva
16:45-16:50	Address Marinos Lambrou, Mayor of Pegeia
16:50-16:55	Address Michalis Beys, Civil Registry and Migration Department, Ministry of Interior
16:55-17:10	Introduction to the Intercultural Cities Programme Mrs Irena Guidikova, Head of the Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Division, Council of Europe

17:10-17:20	Introduction on the goals and expected results from the work of the Networks, Konstantina Sokratous, CCIF Cyprus
17:20-17:35	Intercultural Education: policy objectives fostering social induction, Dr Katerina Konstantinides-Vladimirou, Inspector of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport & Youth
17:35-17:50	Open-ended discussion, the meaning and potential of multiculturalism, ways we develop inclusive societies and level of commitment. Dr Maria Papapolidorou, CCIF Cyprus
17:50-18:00	Break
18:00-18:15	Diversity advantage, benefit and good-practices on Intercultural Integration Nenad Bogdanovic
18:15-18:35	Workshop, INDEX review, pilot discussion on a topic of interest and development of a draft strategy. Christina Marsellou, CCIF Cyprus
18:35-18:45	Closing remarks

Appendix II – List of Attendees

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Ccif Cyprus	Lawer, Volunteer
Neapolis University Pafos	Professor of European Law & Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Migration Information Centre Paphos	Social worker
Member of Cyprus Parliament, Paphos	Secretary
Social volunteer association of Emba	President
Public Kindergarten	Headmistress
ΚΕΚΑΠΠΑ Δήμου Πέλλας	Παιδαγωγός
Neapolis University Pafos	Student
Private Practice	Psychologist

Ministry of education	Teacher
Private practice	Clinical Psychologist, Psychotherapist
Neapolis University Pafos	Special Teaching Staff
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport & Youth	Inspector of Secondary Education
Neapolis university	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Public Kindergarten	Teacher
Pafos Municipality	Municipal Officer
Gymnasio Agiou Theodorou	Teacher
CCIF CYPRUS	Volunteer Financial Administrator
Municipality of Pegeia	Mayor
CCIF Cyprus	Director
Hotel	Guest Relations
Freelance tourist guide	Volunteer CCIF
Learning Attitude School	Director
Elementary school of Paphos	Teacher
Town hall of Geroskipou	City Councilor
Council of Europe	National Coordinator
Social volunteers' association	President
National Guard	Officer
Λαογραφικός Όμιλος Κτήμα'	President
Ministry of Agriculture	Environmental engineer
D Elementary school of Paphos	Teacher
Motivation in Arts (MiA)	President
POLICE	Inspector
Ministry of Education	Teacher

Ministry of Education	Teacher
Mihub	Psychologist
CCIF Cyprus	Social worker, volunteer
CCIF Cyprus	Local coordinator
Ministry of Education	Secondary school Teacher, Member of CCIF Cyprus
Hospital of Paphos	Regional President of Paphos district of Cyprus nurses and midwives' association
Ccif Cyprus	Immigrant, Mentor
CCIF Cyprus	ESC Volunteer

Appendix III – Addresses

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΥ CCIF Cyprus, Κας ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΑΣ ΣΩΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ

Παρότι συχνά νεφελώδης, ο ορισμός ενός συστήματος δίνεται ως το σύνολο των στοιχείων που αποτελούν, στοιχείων που αλληλοεπιδρούν για την επίτευξη ενός ή περισσότερων στόχων, μετασχηματίζοντας μια είσοδο σε μια έξοδο μέσω διαδικασιών. Έτσι μια κοινωνία, μοντέρνα ή όχι, πολυπολιτισμική και μη, μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ως ένα σύστημα του οποίου οι συνιστώσες είναι τα όντα που το αποτελούν. Κάποιες από τις διαδικασίες της κοινωνίας, οι οποίες μετατρέπουν τους υπάρχον

πόρους σε αποτέλεσμα είναι προκαθορισμένες από εμάς τους ίδιους, καθώς κάποιες άλλες λειτουργούν ερήμην μας. Συνεπώς μέσω του Ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος διαπολιτισμικών πόλεων, ο οργανισμός CCIF Cyprus και οι διάφοροι εταίροι έχουν ως στόχο τη διερεύνηση βέλτιστων διαδικασιών και δράσεων οι οποίες θα μεταβάλλουν τα υφιστάμενα στοιχεία της Κυπριακής κοινωνίας με τέτοιο τρόπο ώστε το αποτέλεσμα να είναι μια ευέλικτη πολυπολιτισμική σύμπραξη, η οποία θα προωθεί την ενσωμάτωση ποικιλομορφίας. Η νέα εκδοχή λοιπόν – ας την αποκαλέσουμε *κοινωνία 2.0* – θα εντάσσει, θα προάγει και θα ενδυναμώνει τα νέα μέλη της, ανεξαρτήτως του εάν πρόκειται για άτομα με μεταναστευτικό υπόβαθρο ή όχι, μέσω μιας βελτίωσης δεσμών μεταξύ των κοινοτήτων υποδοχής και των νέων μελών. **Έτσι, λέξη κλειδί αποτελεί η συνέργεια**, καθώς και η **συνεργασία για τη δημιουργία και** υποστήριξη εταιρικών σχέσεων μεταξύ των βασικών φορέων ενσωμάτωσης.

Η **συνέργεια** είναι όταν το αποτέλεσμα του συνόλου είναι μεγαλύτερο από το άθροισμα των ατομικών τμημάτων, προσφέροντας επομένως μια μεγαλύτερη απόδοση πάρα εάν το κάθε τμήμα ενεργούσε ξεχωριστά. Για να μπορέσουν δύο άτομα ή αντικείμενα να βρεθούν σε συνέργεια, εξυπακούεται η σύγκλιση τους καθώς και η ανάγκη ανεύρεσης ενός κοινού στόχου εκτέλεσης για την επίτευξη ενός ίδιου αποτελέσματος. Ως εκ τούτου, ο CCIF Cyprus στοχεύει στη δημιουργία ενός δικτύου, όπου η **ένωση διαφορετικών γνώσεων και δεξιοτήτων των μελών του θα συμπράξει στην αποτελεσματική επίτευξη της τελικής πρόθεσης του προγράμματος** διαπολιτισμικών πόλεων, μέσω μιας συνεργασίας, μιας σύμπραξης διαφόρων προσπαθειών, καθώς και μιας ατομικής αλλά συμπληρωματικής συμβολής η οποία θα μας αφήσει συλλογικά ισχυρότερους ως προς ένα βαθμό αλληλεπίδρασης.

Κωνσταντίνα Σωκράτους

Research Assistant, Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience
University of Florida

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΗΜΑΡΧΟΥ ΠΑΦΟΥ κ. ΦΑΙΔΩΝΑ ΦΑΙΔΩΝΟΣ

Με ιδιαίτερη χαρά βρίσκομαι μαζί σας και θέλω να ευχαριστήσω τους διοργανωτές, την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και τον Οργανισμό CCIF CYPRUS, για την πρωτοβουλία τους και την ευγενική τους πρόσκληση στη διαδικτυακή αυτή συνάντηση του Δικτύου για τις «Διαπολιτισμικές Πόλεις».

Ο διακηρυγμένος στόχος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για γνωριμία και ανάπτυξη της κατανόησης μεταξύ των λαών, για προώθηση της ειρήνης, της συνεργασίας και της φιλίας, για την εξάλειψη των προκαταλήψεων και των ρατσιστικών συμπεριφορών, θέτει ενώπιόν μας μια από τις μεγαλύτερες προκλήσεις που έχει να αντιμετωπίσει η σύγχρονη κοινωνία στην αυγή του 21^{ου} αιώνα: Να διασφαλίσει δηλαδή την απαραίτητη ισορροπία ανάμεσα στην ανάγκη για διαφύλαξη και ανάδειξη της εθνικής ταυτότητας των λαών και στην ανάγκη για ειρηνική και δημιουργική συνύπαρξη διαφορετικών εθνικών ομάδων και κοινωνιών.

Ωστόσο, για την υλοποίηση του μεγάλου αυτού ευρωπαϊκού οράματος χρειάζεται να γίνουν ακόμη πολλά. Τα προβλήματα που προκύπτουν από την αύξηση των μεταναστευτικών ρευμάτων προς την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, τα ζητήματα που αναφύονται από την πολυ-πολιτισμική σύνθεση των σύγχρονων κοινωνιών, αλλά και το θέμα των διακρίσεων και προκαταλήψεων που εξακολουθούν δυστυχώς να υφίστανται πολλές ομάδες του πληθυσμού, είναι φαινόμενα που οφείλουμε να αντιμετωπίσουμε με τόλμη και αποφασιστικότητα.

Ιδιαίτερα στην Πάφο, που η ραγδαία ανάπτυξη των τελευταίων χρόνων έχει επιφέρει σημαντικές διαφοροποιήσεις στην πληθυσμιακή της σύνθεση λόγω της μαζικής εγκατάστασης μεταναστών από τη Μέση Ανατολή και την Αφρική το ζήτημα της διαφορετικότητας και των κοινωνικών ή εθνικών διακρίσεων καθίσταται ιδιαίτερα επίκαιρο και πολυδιάστατα σημαντικό.

Δεν επιτρέπεται βέβαια κινδυνολογία, αλλά ούτε και αδιαφορία ή εφησυχασμός. Με συγκεκριμένες δράσεις και καινοτόμους πρωτοβουλίες, με ρεαλιστική αντιμετώπιση και σωστή προσέγγιση, όλοι οι οργανωμένοι φορείς, αλλά και οι ενεργοί πολίτες, έχουμε υποχρέωση να εγκύψουμε στο πρόβλημα και να δώσουμε, έγκαιρα και αποτελεσματικά, τις ενδεδειγμένες λύσεις.

Μέσα από το Πρόγραμμα Διαπολιτισμικών Πόλεων (ICC), οι πόλεις έχουν αποδείξει ότι η διαφορετικότητα μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί ως μέσο, διευρύνοντας τα κοινωνικά και οικονομικά οφέλη για ετερογενείς κοινότητες και ελαχιστοποιώντας τις δυνητικές αρνητικές συνέπειές της.

Ως Δήμος Πάφου έχουμε πλήρη επίγνωση του αποφασιστικού ρόλου που καλούμαστε να διαδραματίσουμε. Θέλω να σας διαβεβαιώσω ότι ο Δήμος Πάφου έχει την βούληση να στηρίξει ηθικά και να ενισχύσει υλικά κάθε προσπάθεια που συμβάλει στην αποδοχή της διαφορετικότητας και στην ευημερία όλων ανεξαιρέτως των δημοτών μέσα από την παροχή ίσων ευκαιριών και ισότιμης αντιμετώπισης σε όλα τα επίπεδα και σε όλους τους τομείς .

Είναι με αυτό το πνεύμα, που χαιρετίζω τη σημερινή μας διαδικτυακή συνάντηση και την πρωτοβουλία που αναλαμβάνετε., Η πρωτοβουλία αυτή στέλνει πιστεύω το αισιόδοξο μήνυμα ότι οι πολίτες μπορούν και θέλουν να παραμερίσουν τις όποιες διαφορές και, στο πλαίσιο της μεγάλης ευρωπαϊκής οικογένειας, να οικοδομήσουν μαζί ένα ευτυχισμένο μέλλον απαλλαγμένο από διακρίσεις, προκαταλήψεις και ρατσιστικές συμπεριφορές.

Εύχομαι καλή συνέχεια και κάθε επιτυχία στο έργο σας.

Σας ευχαριστώ.

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΣΤΥΝΟΜΙΚΟΥ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΗ ΠΑΦΟΥ κ. ΝΙΚΟΥ ΤΣΑΠΠΗ

Dear Friends,

I would firstly like to thank the organizers, the European Commission, and the CCIF (Cross-Culture International Foundation Cyprus) for inviting The Police to the First Paphos Region Intercultural Network Meeting

It is with great pleasure that I address this Network meeting on behalf of the Paphos Divisional Police Commander Nikos Tsappis, and that the place I like to call home has been selected to be a member of the project: "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus'.

The migratory phenomenon is multidimensional, multilevel, and complex. It is a phenomenon of societal evolution, economy, politics, and culture. The police cannot remain indifferent to this occurrence given that our main purpose is the safety of all our citizens.

At present, Paphos has welcomed several thousand foreigners with different social, religious, and cultural backgrounds. That is why the Police must acknowledge the importance to assist in compiling the new data of a new multicultural society.

CYPRUS has to fulfill the most difficult objective, which is the acceptance and involvement of immigrants in our homeland as it is the only country within the EU that in proportion to population has accepted the largest number of immigrants who are looking for a safer, brighter and better future for themselves and their families.

The police have the will to support and enhance every effort that contributes to the performance of diversity, the well-being, and security of all citizens regardless of the provision of equal opportunities and equal treatment at all levels.

I believe that the state must find and implement ways of tackling diversity that allows for human and social development. Among them are actions to safeguard human rights and the rule of law.

The police should take advantage of some courses to its members for a better adaptation to the society of the diversity in which they serve. That is to be, members of police take guidance on how to apply policing principles, design new processes, protocols, structures and specialized units, with a view to effective the difficulties that perhaps inherent in the diversity, order to a peaceful coexistence.

This will increase the feeling of trust within our institution. Additionally, with this implementation, the Police would understand the diversity of its new members better.

On behalf of the Police, I want to assure you that we will respond with enthusiasm, zeal, and a sense of duty towards the challenges that emerge through an intercultural society.

Inspector Savvas Savva

Appendix IV – Communication & Visibility

Key journalists from local and national media organizations disseminated the 1st Paphos Region Intercultural Networking meeting at local and national press and at the CyBC “proino dromologio”:

- a. [Cyprus News Agency CNA\(ΚΥΠΕ/ΚΠ/ΘΚΕ\)](#)

- b. [Cyprus News Agency Facebook announcement](#)
- c. [Cyprus News Agency 2nd Facebook announcement](#)
- d. [Facebook event announcement \(visibility > 500 views\)](#)
- e. [Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation \(CyBC\)](#)

