



PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE

National Strategy on **Cyprus Diaspora**

2023-2028





PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE

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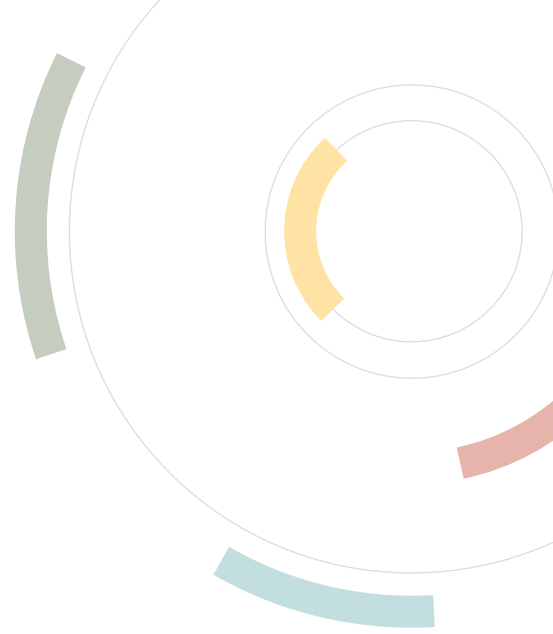
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Address by the President of the Republic

Our Diaspora, as an integral component of our homeland, has always been a bright beacon of Hellenism around the world. Our Expatriates, as a whole, by maintaining unbreakable ties with their birthplace, are the bearers of the timeless principles and values of our history and culture, as well as the pillar of preserving our identity and national consciousness.

The Greek Cypriot expatriates, having set as guiding principle in all of their actions, the conscious, selfless and generous devotion to their homeland, assisted our homeland decisively so that it could go through critical moments in its history and stand on its own feet, contributing the most to the progress and prosperity of our island.

At the same time, in addition to this timeless offering to our homeland, for which we feel grateful, they managed to progress, to come a long way in their professional lives, and be acknowledged as a dynamic and productive group of people in their countries of residence. In parallel, by collaborating with the local communities, they developed a strong and active presence in the cultural, social and economic scene, gaining their appreciation and respect. It is in this context that they are recognised as a solid network of strengthening our interstate relations and of exercising international influence in favour of our national interests.

It is crucial that the new generation, in which we invest, filled by the same feeling of genuine patriotism, continues the great work, the multifaceted action and important contribution of the members of the Diaspora to our homeland.

It goes without saying that the support and cooperation of expatriates has been a source of strength for the current Government, in order to deal with the crises that our country has faced in recent years.

Considering the Hellenic Diaspora being among our main priorities, our first concern, as evidenced by the targeted policy that we have adopted, has been the undivided and diverse support of any action, as well as fulfilment of any request, aiming at serving the particular needs of our Diaspora.

Moreover, in strengthening and expanding the good cooperation with the entire Diaspora, we consider the bilateral and trilateral cooperation, that we have developed with other states on diaspora's issues, being of utmost importance.

In seeking to enhance the mutually beneficial, two-way relationship with the Hellenic Diaspora, the Office of the Presidential Commissioner, competent for issues related to oversees Cypriots, was entrusted with the drafting of the National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora.

The present edition records on its pages, the main pillars, guidance, and aims of this Strategy, focusing, in order, on the Cypriots of Diaspora, the organisations and federations, the new generation of Diaspora, our culture, the Cyprus problem, international partnerships, and repatriates. In this regard, this holistic framework of policy on Diaspora constitutes an essential tool in the hand of the organised bodies and of every single expatriate.

Given the remarkable and substantial work produced so far, ensuring, in every possible way, the effective implementation of this Strategy remains a primary pursuit and strong wish.

We owe this to all of you, our compatriots, who exemplary honour your homeland, your origin and Hellenism at large.

Nicos Anastasiades



Address by the President of the House of Representatives

Cyprus Diaspora, the most vibrant and authentic part of our culture, functions as a "lung" abroad, since it has always been a dynamic and active part of the "body" of Cypriot Hellenism. Despite the adverse conditions that the first generations of Cypriot immigrants had to face in their host countries, and in spite of the spatial and temporal distance weighing on them since then, they have maintained unbreakable ties with their homeland and, at the same time, ingrained their love for Cyprus in the younger generations of expatriates. Moreover, in addition to their struggle to preserve their national and cultural identity while providing for their families, they have become active promoters of the interests of Cyprus abroad, tirelessly raising awareness for the Cyprus Problem, and acting as ambassadors of our national goals in important decision-making centres. As a result, they stand out as invaluable pillars of the foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus.

The revised National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora – tangible proof of the paramount importance attributed by the Republic of Cyprus to the role of our Diaspora– aims to strengthen and deepen the relation of our expatriates, especially the youth, with Cyprus. Furthermore, it aims to adopt a policy that responds both to the various challenges that Cypriot expatriates experience in their countries of residence and activity, and to the role that the Republic of Cyprus is called upon to play within the new geostrategic framework of the Eastern Mediterranean region, as well as of Europe.

This edition issued by the Office of the Presidential Commissioner is intended as an important guiding tool for the implementation of the revised National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora by the relevant Governmental Authorities, as well as a means of awareness for anyone interested in the policies of the Republic of Cyprus towards its Diaspora.

Annita Demetriou



Address by the Archbishop of New Justinian and All Cyprus

It is with heartfelt emotion, I am forwarding the present edition on the "National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora", sending to all expatriate children of our island - wherever they may reside or live - the cordial greetings of our paternal love.

Dear expatriate Cypriots, deep feelings of emotion, admiration and gratitude flood our souls, whenever we communicate with you. Feelings of emotion, as we always see you as our brothers, who for various reasons were compelled to leave the "maternal arms" of motherland Cyprus for a better future. Feelings of admiration, because in the foreign countries you were in, you fought hard and emerged as a very considerable force of Hellenism, in all areas of life -scientific, political, business, social, etc.

Rest assured that our love and our hearts lie with you. Our paternal advice is to always remember that, today, Cyprus is the cradle of our people's ideals. Our semi-occupied island is a School of Freedom, a School of Justice and a School of Vindication! She will save us, if of course, we fight and save her first!

Your regular visits to Cyprus, especially with your children, to experience together the Christianity and Greek identity of this Island of Saints and Martyrs, will maintain and strengthen your unbreakable bond with your homeland.

This will be achieved, through your visits to our holy pilgrimages and our ancient monuments. Visit with your children our sacred "Imprisoned graves" and convey to them the fighting spirit of our hanged youths, who faced the gallows singing the national anthem and church hymns. Go with them to the "Tomb of Madeonitissa" and experience with them the heroic spirit of "dying for the love of your homeland" (*«Θνήσκειν ὑπὲρ φίλης Πάτρης»*) of our hundreds of heroes.

In this way, your timeless connection with Cyprus is forged, and the national and religious survival not only of your own generation, but also of your children and the generations to come is ensured, despite the challenges that your conscious way of upbringing faces due to the influences of the numerous and powerful foreign peoples.

Rest assured that the struggle to neutralise the dangers that our survival on this island, which is Greek from the depths of its history and Christian for two thousand years, faces, constitute a daily concern and worry. It needs to be understood that this fight is not just ours. It is yours as well, because it is a struggle for the entire Hellenism.

Do not forget that if Cyprus is lost, then your own roots will also be cut off and it will take a much harder struggle to survive among the populous peoples you live with. That is why, our Motherland and its beloved freedom must be a priority among the values that we should seek, both in our private and public lives.

We all share a sacred duty - leadership and people, natives and expatriates - to vigorously fight for the liberation of our semi-occupied homeland. And let's not be intimidated by Attila's armament. God, through the sacred hymn of our Church, assures us that: *"some glory in chariots, and some in horses: but we will glory in the name of the Lord our God. They are overthrown and fallen: but we have risen, and have been set upright"* (Psalm 19, 8-9)

With these burdensome but also optimistic thoughts, we cordially welcome the present edition, and we hope that God's love will soon permit us to savour the "delicious fruits" of our struggles for our much-desired freedom.

Supplicant before God

Archbishop of Cyprus Georgios



Address by the President of the World Federation of Overseas Cypriots (POMAK)

As President of POMAK, the World Federation of Overseas Cypriots, I welcome the recording of the National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora by the Republic of Cyprus. The recording of the revised strategy will help to deepen even further the relationship between the people of Cyprus and the Greek Cypriots expatriates.

Expatriates all over the world have diachronically contributed to the formation of an organised diaspora, by consolidating and preserving our identity, morals and customs through the learning of the Greek language, the cooperation of member federations of POMAK with their Greek Orthodox communities, the actions of our youth (NEPOMAK) and the coordinated efforts of POMAK and PSEKA to ensure support whenever needed. Undeniably, there is another Cyprus, beyond Cyprus borders, and despite that we live far from the land of our ancestors, our semi-occupied homeland remains always in our hearts and thoughts.

Since 1930s, Cypriot Hellenism has been forced to seek better living conditions, beyond the borders of our small homeland, due to heavy taxations imposed by the colonialists, resulting in difficulties and poverty. A second wave, this time as refugees because of the illegal Turkish invasion and occupation of 1974, multiplied the presence of Cypriot expatriates in all corners of the world. Awaiting the coveted return to our homes, villages and cities, our compatriots “created” temporary homes, which for 48 years and more, continue to exist.

Even though almost five decades have passed since the illegal Turkish invasion and occupation, the Diaspora has never stopped contributing to our common struggle for freedom, the reunification of Cyprus and its people, the withdrawal of the occupying troops and the return of all refugees.

At the same time, our Diaspora has evolved from first generation immigrants to a more established and integrated second, third and fourth generation. Cypriots all over the world fly the Cypriot flag high and make us proud with their various successes, in business, science, public service and countless other fields. With the skills they developed, they have excelled worldwide as pioneering doctors, talented entrepreneurs, worldwide-acknowledged artists, and even as public officials in higher positions in their states of permanent residence, thus enlightening with their way the rest of the world about what Cypriot Hellenism is.

We consider it of utmost importance for our Diaspora's outreach to have a broad appeal. However, we know that certain themes have repeatedly come up to bring us closer to our roots, such as continuing traditions, language, dance, enthusiasm for learning and the opportunity to visit Cyprus. I am delighted that this is reflected in the National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora.

Despite our preoccupation with our jobs, families and the societies in which we live, our commitment to achieve a free and united Cyprus has always been steadfast. For decades, the initiatives, the events, the conferences, the demonstrations, the meetings with various politicians at the decision-making centres of the United Kingdom, America, the European Union and beyond, have been organised almost entirely by volunteers who have dedicated their personal time and financial resources.

We must reflect on how we can transform the activities of POMAK, PSEKA and our member federations so that they become even more professional and, crucially, more sustainable, in order to create the foundations on which the next generations of our Diaspora can continue the tireless work that has been preceded by our expatriates.

I hope that the revised National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora will be the starting point of this collective effort, to bring our compatriots in Cyprus even closer to the Cypriots overseas and to pass on the love we have for our great island to the future generations that will be called to take the baton to continue this struggle.

Andreas Papaevripides



Address by the President of International Coordination Committee – “Justice for Cyprus” (PSEKA)

Dear Friends,

PSEKA, the International Coordinating Committee Justice for Cyprus, was founded in 1976 with the mission to reach out and unite non-Cypriot organisations of Diaspora on behalf of the struggle of the Cypriot people for freedom and justice.

Before trilateral agreements were fashionable, PSEKA was sponsoring trips to Athens, Jerusalem and Lefkosia bringing a united front with the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish organisations. PSEKA presented a united front with the Armenian National Committee and joined forces with Amnesty International to create American legislation on the missing.

PSEKA welcomes the support of national and international organisations, AHEPA, AHI, ANCA, HALC and coordinates with POMAK and Cypriot federations in every country. After 48 long years of occupation and division, our national strategy should be enlightenment and education of public opinion.

The recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia provides a unique opportunity to bring pressure to bear on all freedom loving organisations to support our struggle. Our national strategy was and still is to educate and provide enlightenment.

The status quo is unacceptable!

The work goes on,

The hope endures, and

The dream of a free and united

Cyprus will never die!

Philip Christopher



Address by the President of the World Organisation of Young Overseas Cypriots (NEPOMAK)

On behalf of NEPOMAK, the World Federation of Young Overseas Cypriots, I welcome the revision of the National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. I believe that this strategy can be a valuable tool, and help to take the thriving relationship between Cyprus and its Diaspora to the next level.

Our Diaspora has formed a remarkable sense of community and well-established identity over the decades. Despite living far from Cyprus, we have kept the island in our heart, visited when possible, and continued to celebrate our culture and traditions. Our Diaspora was formed by people who left the island due to poverty and lack of opportunity, or as refugees tragically torn from their home due to Turkey's illegal invasion and occupation in 1974. Since then, we have proudly maintained our identity and built Cypriot communities around the world.

New roots may have been planted, but the Cypriots of Diaspora have kept Cyprus firmly in their hearts and minds. Our Diaspora has grown from first-generation immigrants to a more established and integrated second-, third- and fourth-generation. Cypriots around the world excel in business, science, public service, and countless other fields. Diaspora Cypriots have become pioneering doctors, talented businesspeople, world-leading artists, and even senior government officials. The Diaspora can act as a bridge, carrying Cypriot culture, history and identity to the rest of the world.

As we look to the future, we should recognise that diasporas evolve, and that there are many different experiences of being an overseas Cypriot. It is, therefore, important that our Diaspora has broad appeal and continued relevance. Nevertheless, we know that some themes have been repeatedly shown to bring us closer to our roots, including continued traditions, language, dance, an enthusiasm to learn, and the opportunity to visit Cyprus. I am heartened that this is reflected in the National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora.

Despite being a relatively small Diaspora, we can take pride in our shared experiences and our unwavering focus on achieving a free, united Cyprus. For decades, the Cypriot Diaspora has depended almost entirely on volunteers who have dedicated their own time and resources. Going forwards, we should reflect on how we can make this more professional and sustainable to ensure that the next generations of our Diaspora can continue the historic work that has come before them. We should also do more to study our Diaspora, and similar diasporas, so that we can learn best practices and better understand how diasporas evolve over time.

Once again, I welcome the revised National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora as an important framework for bringing the Cypriot Diaspora even closer to Cyprus and making the most of the powerful and deep-rooted bonds between the Diaspora and the island.

Christos Tuton



Foreword

by the Presidential Commissioner

My fellow Cypriots,

It is with deep emotion and great satisfaction that I preface this edition, which constitutes a rather useful account of our revised National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora. Our own people who, regardless of which country they chose as their second home, live, and breathe sharing the same visions and the same hopes for our homeland.

There is a whole other Cyprus abroad with an important and timeless presence over the years in all issues that trouble and concern our homeland.

The revision of the National Strategy is imperative, since the profile of Cypriot expatriates has changed, as the fourth and fifth generation has taken over from the previous generations.

Their role and capabilities are crucial for our homeland. Therefore, it is necessary, in this context, to formulate a flexible, modern and up-to-date policy that will respond to these capabilities and look into the future.

Through our experiences and also our close cooperation with the federations and organisations of our Diaspora over the years, we have proceeded with the Revised National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora.

The main pillars of this Strategy cover the entire range of opportunities offered to our expatriates, especially in terms of promoting our national problem, but also with an eye to developing even closer ties with the homeland across all sectors.

In particular, the utilisation of the organised groups of the Diaspora, as well as, of the scientists, academics, doctors, and entrepreneurs of our Diaspora, lie at the heart of our strategy.

We pay particular attention to our young generation of expatriates, to that youth, who are to be the future leaders of our Diaspora. We seek their further engagement with the parochial and state events taking place in the states they live in, but also, a closer contact with their roots and their traditions.

The contribution, cooperation, the voice and practical support of all organised groups of our Diaspora have proven to be vital to our national interests across time. After all, they are Cyprus' best ambassadors abroad.

In the same vein, we consider bilateral or multilateral collaborations with other countries on Diaspora issues as a necessary diplomatic tool for the promotion of common goals and collective interests in important decision-making centres abroad.

The cooperation we have developed with the Greek Government is, of course, crucial. It aims at better coordination and partnership between Cypriot and Greek Diasporas, with the potential, the influence and the assets of Hellenism as a whole acting as a springboard for further joint actions.

Such actions aim, among other things, at preserving our common national identity, customs, traditions, religion, as well as at promoting Greek Language and Culture Studies in the countries of residence and activity of the Cyprus Diaspora.

The repatriates, as well as the provision of all necessary information for their smooth reintegration in our homeland, constitute an integral part of our Strategy on Diaspora.

We are grateful for the contribution of our Diaspora and in particular of its organisations, with which we seek even closer cooperation, as their role remains foremost and particularly important to our efforts. This they have proven repeatedly over the last few decades. We take pride in the fact that our Diaspora's organisations have sustained the light of Hellenism shining over the consciousness of national identity in foreign lands, keeping the eyes of every Greek soul open and vigilant.

Photis Photiou



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Introduction

The connection of the Republic of Cyprus with Cypriots anywhere in the world is not subject to temporal or spatial restrictions. The Greek language, civilisation, culture and long history do survive within every Cypriot whose soul beats to the rhythm of his/her homeland.

Every single Cypriot expatriate carries a piece of Cyprus within. As long as this piece persists, the relation between Centre and Diaspora will remain unchanged. Thus, our ultimate goal must be to preserve and treasure it.

Throughout the first decades of the Republic of Cyprus, and especially after the Turkish invasion, the decisive role of the Diaspora in promoting the interests of Cyprus and its wider prosperity has been amply demonstrated and verified.

We cannot but be moved by the unparalleled dedication and steadfast devotion of Diaspora Cypriots towards their homeland, which they have supported and continue to support in every way and by all means.

At the same time, as a State, we express our admiration for every Cypriot who succeeds and excels in his/her state of residence and internationally. After all, Cypriots of Diaspora have always been an elite part of Cypriot Hellenism as our best and most effective ambassadors abroad.

For a small state like Cyprus, with less than one million citizens, Diaspora is a great asset. It is therefore incumbent upon us to maintain, deepen and strengthen the island's relationship with its expatriates.

The role and potential of the Diaspora were recognised early on by the Republic of Cyprus. The first President of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop

Makarios, shortly after the Turkish invasion, decided to establish a Service for Cypriot Expatriates, which became operational in January 1977, under the Ministry of Presidency. In 1981, the Service was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following a decision of the Council of Ministers. Since October 2016, the Service for Overseas and Repatriated Cypriots has been transferred to the Presidency under the supervision and responsibility of the Presidential Commissioner.

The transfer of the Service under the responsibility of the Presidential Commissioner corroborates the central position of Cyprus Diaspora in shaping the country's political agenda. At the same time, it is a token of recognition of the collective work performed by Cypriot expatriates.

The Service for Overseas and Repatriated Cypriots is the connecting link between Cyprus Diaspora and Cyprus. It ensures constant and close contact with Cypriot expatriates, contributing to the preservation of our identity, traditions and culture in their countries of residence and activity. At the same time, it actively assists expatriates with problems and needs that may arise from time to time.

The utilisation of the potential of Cyprus Diaspora and the wider Greek expatriate community is an imperative need. Constant political, social and economic challenges faced by our country crucially require the active support of organised groups within our Diaspora.

For these reasons, it is not surprising that the further strengthening of the role and the importance we attach to our expatriates remains a central and solid part of our policy.

Nonetheless, we live in a critical time in history, faced with a huge challenge. The conditions and circumstances in which Cypriots of the Diaspora live today are rather different from those back in the 60's and 70's. The fourth and fifth generation of immigrants, who were born and raised abroad, is slowly taking the lead from the first generations of expatriates, who had spent a significant part of their lives in Cyprus.

Additionally, the profile of Cypriot expatriates has changed from mostly manual workers to highly educated professionals in the tertiary sector.

In tandem with the advancement of science and technology, new challenges and opportunities are emerging that require revision and modernisation of current practices.

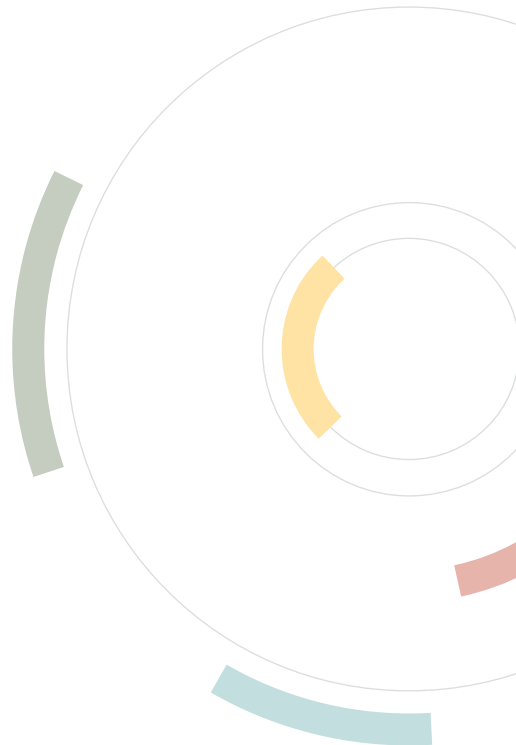
The reality described above highlights the need for a policy that will not adhere to the past but will be looking to the future; a policy that is flexible, modern and up-to-date, leading to the creation of a meaningful relationship between Centre and Diaspora.

In light of the above, the revision of the existing **National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora** becomes more than necessary. The revised National Strategy is called upon to draw on the accumulated experience of years and, responding to the new realities and conditions, to plan a clear and comprehensive framework for action.

Moreover, the National Strategy constitutes a detailed and comprehensive effort to set out the broader vision, objectives and individual actions of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner concerning the Diaspora.

Hence, the Strategy traces the broader policy framework but also the specific pillars of action through which the central objective, which is the connection of Cyprus with its Diaspora and the utilisation of this relationship for the benefit of both parties, is expected to be achieved.

Prior to engaging with the 6+1 main pillars of action, we define the "Cyprus Diaspora" concept, which rests at the heart of the Strategy, before defining the rapport between Centre and Diaspora as a dynamic, evolving and above all mutual relationship.



“

As a Federation we have three goals:

- *To advocate for a just and viable solution to the Cyprus issue, in line with UN Security Resolutions, that will end the Turkish occupation.*
- *To undertake initiatives, with our member organisations, to maintain our language, culture and traditions in the UK.*
- *To advance and promote our thriving UK-Cypriot Diaspora.*

The Federation's activities are focused on advancing these goals – whether that is the lobbying work we do in Parliament, or the cultural and community initiatives that we undertake.

Christos Karaolis,
National Federation of Cypriots in the United Kingdom

”

A. Mapping “Cyprus Diaspora”

“Cyprus Diaspora” consists of all Cypriots who have left Cyprus to settle abroad permanently or who have lived for many years abroad, as well as their descendants, regardless of whether they have official Cypriot citizenship or not. The transition from the first generation of Cypriot immigrants to the second and third generation, and currently to the fourth and fifth generation, does not imply the loss of existing ties with Cyprus. As long as they carry within them a piece of Cypriot identity, language, culture and civilisation, they are considered part of Cyprus Diaspora.

The National Strategy is addressed to the thousands of Cypriots who have been forced to immigrate, either due to historical circumstances - British rule, community unrest, Turkish invasion - or in their quest for a better future.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that there is another Cyprus abroad, since according to estimations, the number of Cypriots living abroad exceeds 800,000. Cypriots of Diaspora have come together to form organised groups, creating important islets of Greek and Cypriot culture, but also local organisations in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand, Greece, Canada, South Africa, Rest of Africa, and Rest of Europe.

Most expatriates left their homeland without money, without degrees and without even speaking the language of the country where they intended to settle. However, they worked hard and managed to prosper in their state of residence. They have distinguished themselves in the fields of letters, arts, sciences, trade, business and in many other areas.

They have formed organised communities, founded schools and churches, established associations and organisations; through it all, they managed to maintain their unbreakable ties with Cyprus and to preserve their identity as well as to pass on these values to their children and grandchildren.

Although, as mentioned above, there are estimates regarding the quantitative mapping of Cyprus Diaspora, we cannot safely determine their exact number. Therefore, our efforts must be focussed on the qualitative mapping of Cypriot expatriates. In the past, actions were taken in this direction, albeit to a limited extent.

Undoubtedly, lack of precise data affects our efforts to develop a fully effective policy and action framework. Hence, one of the pillars of the National Strategy includes, among other things, the need for a quantitative and qualitative recording of the Cypriot Diaspora.

In this regard, the establishment of the online platform for the registration of Cypriots living abroad, which is expected to be operational soon, is deemed essential.

Moreover, actions for the scientific collection of material regarding the history of Cypriot migration, the actions and activities of Cypriots abroad and their types of organisation worldwide are already in place. These efforts contribute to the mapping of the Cypriot Diaspora and are expected to substantially encourage its historical study and enable the formulation of a more effective policy.

B. The Republic of Cyprus and “Cyprus Diaspora”: A two-way relationship

The relationship between Centre and Diaspora is one based on mutual support, trust and communication. It is a dynamic and reciprocal relationship, grounded on a continuous dialogue that aims at the achievement of common goals as well as wider prosperity. Besides, maintaining the ties between Centre and Diaspora is only meaningful if our expatriates feel that they stand to gain from this relationship.

In this context, the Service for Overseas and Repatriated Cypriots of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner is working tirelessly to remain on the side of our Diaspora. Various actions include:

- ▶ Assist Cypriot communities abroad in their efforts to preserve our language, culture and identity in their countries of residence.
- ▶ Organise regular visits for Cypriot expatriates to Cyprus and support youth programmes.
- ▶ Encourage Cypriot entrepreneurs abroad to invest in Cyprus and promote Cyprus as a business and financial centre.
- ▶ Organise local, regional and international conferences to discuss matters related to our Diaspora and their connection to Cyprus.
- ▶ Assist in solving problems that concern Cypriot expatriates and repatriates, in cooperation with the competent Ministries and Government Services.
- ▶ Support events and activities related to the Cypriot tradition, history, culture and language.
- ▶ Encourage research on the history of Cypriot Diaspora.
- ▶ Dispatch informative and other material on Cypriot history and culture to organisations,

associations, libraries and schools of Cypriot Expatriates, but also on current affairs that are of interest to our Diaspora.

- ▶ Develop bilateral and trilateral cooperation with other states for the promotion of common interests to important international decision-making centres, as well as for the coordination of cultural activities.
- ▶ Launch the online platform for recording Cypriot expatriates and for bringing them closer to their roots.

Furthermore, the Office of the Presidential Commissioner remains a permanent assistant to Cyprus Diaspora, supporting and coordinating efforts to promote and resolve any problems they may face, for instance, in applying for, issuing or renewing Cypriot passports and IDs.

In fact, in order to improve communication with expatriates and solve bureaucratic problems, the creation of the “Cyprus Diaspora Hotline” is scheduled with an eye to more effectively meeting the needs of our expatriates.

Similarly, Memoranda of Understanding and of Cooperation have been signed with universities to facilitate the conduct of research and to record the views of expatriates on various matters, in order to actively engage our Diaspora, especially the new generation.

In turn, Cypriot expatriates have actively supported and continue to support their homeland and its people in any challenge, whether political, social, or economic.

Their support often amounts to financial assistance, promotion of national interests in important interna-



tional decision-making centres and to the general promotion of Cyprus.

Illustrative examples of such assistance are the moral and material support provided consistently since 1975 by the Cyprus Children's Fund based in America for the benefit of children and young people of Cyprus and of Cyprus Diaspora; the promotion of our interests in relation to the Cyprus problem, the tragedy of the missing persons, and the preservation of our cultural heritage through picketing, demonstrations, events and letters to the governments of third countries.

Additionally, in many instances, organised groups abroad and prominent Cypriots of our Diaspora have coordinated and made contributions to the people of Cyprus for their relief during difficult periods.

In recognition of the long-standing and practical support of our expatriates, the establishment and operation of a museum dedicated to the Cypriot Diaspora has been decided.

Moreover, in recent years, the presentation of honorary awards by the President of the Republic of Cyprus to expatriates who have distinguished themselves through their work and contribution to the homeland, has been established.

It must be noted that the Diaspora does not only assist the Centre but also Cypriot expatriates themselves. In other words, the mobilisation and coordination of the Diaspora is also beneficial to Cypriots abroad. As history has proven and personal experiences and testimonies of our expatriates confirm, it is not uncommon that Cypriots expatriates should be the first willing to help their compatriots abroad when in need.

Despite close cooperation and continuous contact between Centre and Diaspora, there are still areas that need to be improved, problems to be addressed and requests to be met. These gaps are addressed by the present National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora.



“ The primary goals of the Federation of Cypriot American Organizations are the preservation and promotion of Greek Cypriot culture in the United States of America, the promotion of our national problem and the repatriates.

The broader vision is to create a community centre where through various programmes it will help preserve our traditions and customs. Also, the census launched by the Cypriot Federation of America will contribute to creating a strong voice of Greek Cypriots that will advocate for various issues troubling Cyprus, and promote Cyprus around the world. It is similarly important to develop closer ties with other Diaspora communities, expand our social media outreach and work with local Consulates of Cyprus to encourage Cypriot-Americans to apply for the Cypriot citizenship.

Kyriacos Papastilianou
Federation of Cypriot American Organizations



C. The Pillars of the National Strategy on Cyprus Diaspora

The ultimate objective of this National Strategy is to consolidate, preserve and strengthen the two-way relationship between the Centre and Cyprus Diaspora. The pillars of the National Strategy on Diaspora constitute the main axes that the organised efforts and actions of the Republic of Cyprus shall follow in order to bring the aforementioned goal to fruition.

These key pillars are complementary and overlapping. Inevitably, actions towards the achievement of one goal has a positive impact on the other ones. Their relationship is not hierarchical, nor does the fulfillment of one effectively presupposes fulfillment of the other. Coordinated and parallel action in all directions is both necessary and inevitable.

The pillars of the National Strategy are the following:

- ▶ 1. **Cypriots of Diaspora**
- ▶ 2. **Federations and organisations**
- ▶ 3. **The new generation of Diaspora**
- ▶ 4. **Our culture**
- ▶ 5. **The Cyprus problem**
- ▶ 6. **International partnerships**
- ▶ 6+1. **Repatriates**

The first three pillars concern actions that aim at highlighting the importance of specific groups of the Diaspora. The first pillar includes the quantitative and qualitative recording of Cyprus Diaspora and proposes actions to achieve a more active involvement of the Diaspora in the internal affairs of Cyprus. The second pillar underlines the role of global and local organisations, whilst the third pillar is dedicated to the importance of Diaspora youth.

The fourth pillar emphasises the crucial role that our cultural identity plays as a means of ensuring the continuation of the relationship between Diaspora and Centre. The fifth pillar is concerned with the Cyprus problem which has been the trigger for a more active engagement with Cyprus Diaspora.

The sixth pillar deals with our bilateral and trilateral international partnerships that lay the foundations for the establishment of a strong political framework. Last, the additional pillar is dedicated to the repatriated who decide to return to their homeland, bringing with them their experiences and knowledge.

All these pillars make up a holistic political framework that renders the Centre-Diaspora relationship sustainable and effective.



“ *The promotion of our national problem as well as enlightenment are the two primary objectives of the federations of Cypriots expatriates. The cooperation between our federations with other organisations and other organised schemes of our Diaspora is also one of our main objectives. At the local level, the promotion of the Cypriot tradition, the solution of problems faced by our repatriates as well as the management of issues of concern to the young generation are included among the priorities of our federation.*

Nestoras P. Nestoros,
Cyprus Federation of Rest of Africa

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1. Cypriots of Diaspora



The first pillar is dedicated to our Diaspora as a whole, but also to Cypriots of Diaspora as individual personalities. It includes quantitative and qualitative recording of Cypriots abroad, the aim of harnessing the skills of Cypriot scientists, academics, entrepreneurs, but also the need for more active engagement of our Diaspora in the internal affairs of Cyprus and in the formulation of the National Strategy.

Firstly, the quantitative and qualitative recording of Cypriot expatriates is more necessary now than ever. Outlining the general profile and range of our

Diaspora is a prerequisite for the formulation of a National Strategy that will be contemporary and effective.

The quantitative recording will indicate the countries in which the majority of our expatriates are concentrated. In this way we can, on the one hand, enable our international federations and organisations to reach out to these communities and organise them; or, alternatively, if need be, to set up a new local organisation. In addition, the recording may reveal the need for new bilateral or trilateral cooperation with countries where significant numbers of Cypriots are gathered in order to improve the living conditions of Cypriots abroad.

The qualitative recording aims at an “acquaintance” with Cypriot scientists, academics, entrepreneurs, artists and professionals whose work has led them to excel abroad and become the best and most effective ambassadors of Cyprus.

We expect that by recording Cypriots abroad, we can make better use of their expertise, knowledge, ideas and experiences for the benefit of both them-

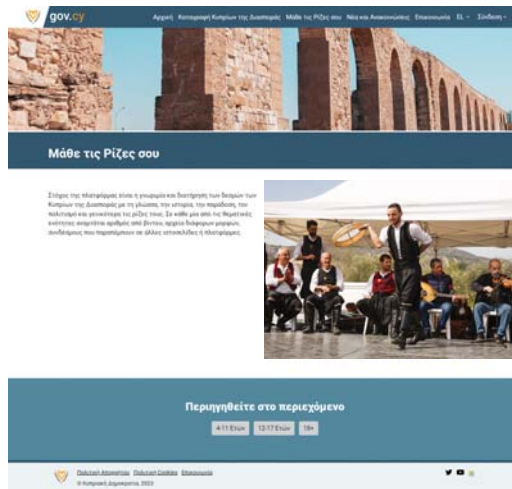




selves and Cyprus. They will be able to contribute actively to the promotion of Cyprus in general, as well as to its economic, social and cultural development. Moreover, they too will benefit from this process as they will have the opportunity to promote their work or even gain access to professional opportunities and collaborations.

In this context, the dialogue and contacts between professionals abroad and at home should be strengthened in order to enable the development of collaborations, the exchange of ideas and know-how and a discussion of common concerns and challenges. In this way we expect that the expatriate factor will be put to full use for the benefit of all concerned.

Finally, the "acquaintance" with the Diaspora and the launch of a continuous and multi-level dialogue will facilitate the recording of the needs and peculiarities of the Diaspora. At the same time, Cypriots of the Diaspora will acquire a more active role in shaping the national strategy and particular actions, and therefore become part of the process.



Awareness of the wide range of our Diaspora, its diversity and its needs will make the Centre's actions more targeted and timelier, allowing the full utilisation of the Centre-Diaspora relationship. Every community abroad, every age group even, has its own peculiarities and must be treated accordingly. Actions should therefore be accordingly adapted and developed in order to reach the desired results.

To this end, the Office of the Presidential Commissioner has decided the materialisation of a significant project, which is both a governmental commitment and a request of the expatriates: the creation and operation of an **online platform** for the registration of Cypriots of Diaspora. Through the platform, Cypriots will be able to provide information on a voluntary basis regarding their area of residence, their profession and their marital status. This is the first organised and coordinated effort to officially record our Diaspora.

This platform complements the efforts made at a local level by our federations and organisations,

which from time to time have tried to register Cypriots either based on their state of residence or on their professional status.

With the creation of the **Registry of Cyprus Diaspora**, we will have the opportunity to get to know, among others, prominent Cypriot scientists, academics, businessmen and professionals who excel abroad.

In addition, the Registry of Cyprus Diaspora will be a useful tool with multiple benefits for our federations and organisations, as it will enable them to act in a more targeted way.

Besides that, actions such as the annual World Conference of Overseas Cypriots that takes place in Cyprus, the bimonthly issue of an electronic newsletter with headlines from Cyprus and the actions of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner, the launch of cooperation between networks of doctors established for Cypriot citizens abroad, such as Greece and the United Kingdom, are undoubtedly steps towards the right direction and should therefore be continued and expanded.



Objectives:

- ▶ Promote and encourage the registration of Cypriots of Diaspora with the platform.
- ▶ Encourage direct involvement of the Diaspora in the professional, business and economic sectors of Cyprus through the creation of a clear framework where Cypriots everywhere can be brought up to date and receive information about opportunities in Cyprus.
- ▶ Organise annual or bi-annual events and conferences at an international level, with emphasis on businesses, where the participation of Cypriot professionals abroad and at home will be encouraged to develop interpersonal relationships and professional collaborations.
- ▶ Enable Cypriot professionals to receive guidance, meet and connect with their Cypriot colleagues from around the world.
- ▶ Establish platforms or fora for facilitating the networking of professionals such as doctors and lawyers, to whom Cypriots can reach out when abroad.
- ▶ Encourage the development of professional networks.



“ Our vision is to become the channel, the bridge connecting the Cypriots of Diaspora in Canada with Cyprus. The love of the Greek Cypriots of Diaspora for democracy, freedom, ideals and values that have been passed from generations to generations, have contributed to Canada’s multiculturalism and vibrant society and provided our youth with a creative environment that encourages them to take pride in their heritage.

Christine Amygdalidis,
Cypriot Federation of Canada

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2. Federations and organisations

Our organisations and federations are an integral part of our National Strategy but also a crucial actor in its implementation. They constitute a bridge of communication between the Centre and our Diaspora, but also the best fora of coordination and organisation of Diaspora Cypriots. Inevitably, they play a decisive role in gathering and organising Cypriot expatriates, but also in promoting actions.

The World Federation of Overseas Cypriots (POMAK), the International Coordination Committee – Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA) and the World Federation of Young Overseas Cypriots (NEPOMAK), as well as our national federations in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand, Greece, Canada, South Africa, Rest of Africa and Rest of Europe, have contributed significantly across all sectors through their long-standing work, and we are grateful for that.

An essential part of the role played by our world organisations and federations is the coordination of actions to promote the national interests of Cyprus, especially in relation to the Cyprus problem.

At the same time, they constitute a strong channel of communication between expatriates and the Centre. Their members have the opportunity to share their concerns and to communicate them in a structured way to the Government of Cyprus in order to seek for solutions.

Moreover, they promote and represent the interests of Cyprus Diaspora before the government of their country of residence, upgrading their position in the local society.

Furthermore, they have a decisive role in organising national, cultural, social, political, educational and humanitarian events aimed at preserving the cultural identity of our Diaspora, but also at raising



awareness of important political issues facing Cyprus. Through these cultural events, Cypriots are brought together whilst being encouraged to preserve their cultural identity.

Also, during trying times, our federations and organisations have successfully coordinated efforts for financial, moral and other assistance to Cyprus.

Our organisations, especially NEPOMAK, also give the floor to the youth, which is a key part of the National Strategy and a prerequisite for the sustainability of the relationship between Centre and Diaspora. Through various programmes, they give youth abroad the opportunity to forge ties with Cyprus. At the same time, they become a channel of communication of the Centre's actions to the young generation.

The Office of the Presidential Commissioner is in constant contact with world federations in order to coordinate actions but also to learn of the concerns and problems faced by our Diaspora and to try and tackle them.



At the heart of the relationship between the Office and the federations lies the annual organisation of the World Conference held in Cyprus. In this context, the organisations and the Centre coordinate with each other and take joint decisions on initiatives and actions that need to be adopted, especially with regards to the promotion of our national interests in important decision-making centres abroad. Additionally, our organisations and expatriates have the opportunity to be informed by officials of the Cyprus Government about various developments and discuss issues of concern.

The role of local organisations in Egypt, Lebanon, Italy, Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries, other European countries, and the Gulf countries is equally important since with their actions they support the work of our world federations and organisations, or even rally Cypriots in areas beyond the reach of world federations and organisations. These organisations undertake works of charity for the benefit of Cypriots all over the world, whilst being the guardians

of our cultural identity and traditions, and supporters of our national interests.

All this goes to show that the voice of organised groups of the Diaspora is vital in our endeavours for a more extensive and effective connection between Centre and Diaspora. There is no denying their contribution is already overarching. Nevertheless, we must remain vigilant in sustaining their excellent work.



Objectives:

- ▶ Intensify the dialogue between Centre and federations/organisations by establishing more frequent contacts so that the messages the Cyprus Government wants to promote to its expatriates can be better conveyed.
- ▶ Improve communication with local organisations for better coordination and development of more targeted actions.
- ▶ Modernise the way our organisations operate so that they can become more efficient.
- ▶ Revise and enrich actions to better integrate technology and social media to make them more accessible to young people.
- ▶ Enrich the composition of organisations to better reflect the diversity of modern Cyprus Diaspora.
- ▶ Organise more social and cultural events on a regular basis.
- ▶ Encourage the access and influence of our federations within key decision-making centres abroad, with better guidance from the Centre, in a carefully planned manner, whilst maintaining cross-party consensus and, above all, with a view to pursuing our national interests.





“The interconnection and coordination with the other federations strengthen the global action of the Cypriots of the Diaspora to inform and raise awareness of the public opinion in the countries where we live and also to influence the Governments and parliamentarians in promoting the interests of Cyprus.

George Syllouris,
Federation of Cypriot Organisations of Greece

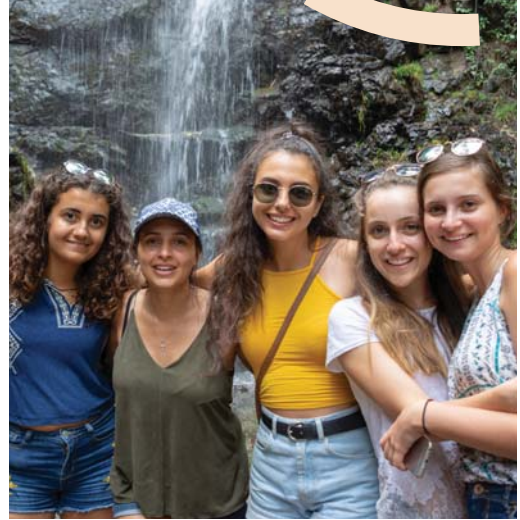
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3. The new generation of Diaspora

At the heart of the National Strategy lies the young generation of our Diaspora, who will be called upon to undertake the continuation of the work currently carried out by Cypriot expatriates. The new generation constitutes the present and the future of Cyprus Diaspora. After all, we cannot talk about Diaspora without contemplating the new generation. Our youth can take up leading positions both within our parishes but more importantly in the governments of their countries of residence, and from these positions they will be able to promote the interests of Cyprus.

Therefore, it is necessary to continue and intensify actions to bring the young generation closer to the tradition, culture, civilisation, history and language of Cyprus.

In order to achieve this goal, a comprehensive approach and coordination of actions is required at a domestic level, with the cooperation of the competent bodies and services of Cyprus, but also internationally, through continuous cooperation with global and local organisations of Cyprus Diaspora.



It is indispensable that any formulated policy respects the particular conditions in which the new generation of our Diaspora is growing up. Most of them are young people who have not lived in Cyprus-in some cases they have never even visited Cyprus-and to a large extent they have been assimilated by the local society where they live. Therefore, we need to deal with this particularity and find the way to cultivate love for Cyprus, without having the youth feeling that they have to change or deny the country where they reside and enjoy citizen status.

It is within this specific context that all actions intended to bring our young generation closer to their Cyprus roots, language, tradition, culture and history should be pursued.

In recent years, the actions focussing on the young generation have been intensified. Youth participation in national and cultural events is encouraged more and more. Special emphasis has been placed on language through the provision of distance-learning programmes and courses.



In this regard, Memoranda of Cooperation have been signed with universities in Cyprus for the development of programmes and the organisation of events focussed on the youth with the aim of bringing them close to their roots, history, culture and civilisation. The programmes include Greek language lessons, Cypriot history, even traditional dances and traditional Cypriot cuisine.



In addition, scholarships are offered by universities in Cyprus, exclusively intended for our expatriates to study in Cyprus, as well as scholarships for young people who want to pursue Greek and Cypriot studies at universities abroad.

NEPOMAK, through excellent initiatives such as the NDCP (NEPOMAK Discover Cyprus Programme) and NCCT (NEPOMAK Cypriot Culture Tour Programme) enables Cypriots abroad to visit Cyprus and learn more about the culture, history and traditions of the island. It is also a great opportunity to meet and connect with their compatriots from all over the world and build lifelong friendships. These initiatives are subsidised and supported by the Cyprus Government and the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Similarly important actions are the organisation of events with a contemporary content where issues of interest and concern to the youth are discussed and where young people can exchange views and connect.



The significance of the young generation for the purposes of the National Strategy is undeniable. Therefore, it is necessary to develop specific and innovative actions that will set out to bring young people closer to the Centre and to each other. Through these actions, the aim is to stir up the interest of young people in getting further involved in Diaspora federations and organisations as well as in the internal affairs of Cyprus.



Objectives:

- ▶ Acquaint our young generation with Cyprus through hospitality programmes, exchange visits, internships and academic programmes.
- ▶ Expand and strengthen the Memoranda of Cooperation with universities in Cyprus for the provision of scholarships to Cypriot expatriates to study in our academic institutions or to attend distance-learning programmes related to the Cypriot and Greek culture.
- ▶ Advertise and promote more effectively the various programmes offered, through social media and through our organisations.
- ▶ Strengthen the use of new technologies to facilitate communication with young people.
- ▶ Encourage the involvement of young people in events taking place within our communities abroad, as well as contact and acquaintance with Cyprus, learning the Greek language, history and culture.
- ▶ Pursue a more active synergy with local institutions that deal with youth issues such as the Youth Board of Cyprus, and also investigate the possibility for drawing funds from the European Union to support programmes and actions.
- ▶ Establish a Registry specifically addressed to young people.
- ▶ Promote actions to enable youth interconnection among either students or young professionals.



“ The preservation and promotion of our morals, customs and identity in general, was the trigger for my involvement in the federation. My vision for the federation is to contribute to our national problem, to keep the relations of the expatriates with the motherland alive and to support the good cooperation of respective Governments with the Cypriots of Diaspora.

Andreas Savva Demetriou,
Cyprus Federation of South Africa

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4. Our culture

Our language, history, culture, traditions are fundamental characteristics of every Cypriot. These are the traits that connect Cypriots around the world, so their preservation and strengthening is not only important, but necessary. Our cultural identity is a constituent element of Cyprus Diaspora, which is why it receives a special mention in the context of the National Strategy. Only through the cultivation of the Greek and Cypriot identity will our Diaspora continue to exist.

It is not only the Cyprus Government and world organisations and federations that have assumed an important role in promoting our culture, but also the Church itself, by constantly sustaining these efforts.

To preserve our identity, learning the Greek language is of primary importance. The value and significance of the Greek language is reaffirmed by the establishment of the 9th of February, the day of commemoration of the national poet Dionysios Solomos, as the International Greek Language Day.

The International Greek Language Day provides a first-class opportunity to raise awareness among Greeks everywhere, but especially among the new generation of Diaspora, so that they can comprehend the greatness and richness of the Greek language. It is indispensable that the young generation continue to learn and use the Greek language, so that they can carry on the work of Diaspora organisations.

Promoting the learning of Greek within our Diaspora is a goal of the highest priority in order to avoid the complete assimilation and cultural alienation of Cypriots abroad.

Because of the great importance of the Greek language, the Cyprus Government with the cooperation of the Greek State promote a series of Greek teaching programmes especially for our expatriates.



To this end, Memoranda of Cooperation have been signed with universities and other educational institutions for the provision of short-term, long-distance Greek language courses, at various levels, for adults and minors.

These programmes also cover other aspects of culture, such as modern Cypriot history, traditional dances and even general information on Cypriot culture, customs and traditions.

Part of this endeavour is the creation and operation of the "[Learn Your Roots](#)" platform, addressed to Cypriots of Diaspora from preschool age, with the aim of forging and maintaining ties with their language, history, traditions, culture and roots. Through the platform, our expatriates will be able to attend courses and study material on the Greek language, Cypriot history, traditional cuisine, traditional dances and our culture and traditions in general.

Furthermore, youth-oriented literary and student competitions are announced from time to time in order to cultivate interest in Hellenism, while strengthening cooperation and communication between student communities around the world.

Undoubtedly, organised groups of our Diaspora engage with happenings, festivals, concerts, artistic events, conferences, workshops and lectures in an effort to highlight the cultural heritage of Cyprus, to

strengthen love for the Greek language, but also to encourage the active participation of young people, so that they can stay close to their roots.

In addition to the above actions, in countries where there is a strong Greek Community, an attempt has been made to set up complete educational programmes. More precisely, in cooperation with the Greek Government and our parishes, we have managed to establish schools and educational missions providing free books, educational material and professional help from qualified teachers.

In fact, the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports offers a training programme for expatriate teachers teaching Greek as a second/foreign language, so that they can be informed about modern approaches to teaching Greek as a second/foreign language, also covering aspects of Greek history and culture.

The purpose of these schools is to provide a high level of education in order to develop Greek lan-

guage learning and to cultivate the national, religious and cultural identity among the children of our compatriots.

Evidently, due to the small size of Cyprus, these actions rely to a very large extent on the assistance of the Greek State for human resources and material, and for this we are grateful.

At this point, we must acknowledge the significant role that the church plays in the effort to promote our culture and preserve the national identity of our Diaspora. The church has always been an exponent of this collective effort due to its reach, its structure and the solid relationship it has developed with Greek expatriates through time.

Undertaking various actions, the church has contributed to the education and training of the expatriates, and to Greek language learning, while being a forum and a way of contact between expatriates. After all, where there is a church, there is community and participation of the people.



In addition to its religious duties, the church carries out social, charitable and educational work, actively supporting both Cypriots abroad and the Centre.

All this shows that the value of our culture is timeless and priceless. Only through the preservation of the cultural identity of our Diaspora will the "Cyprus Diaspora" survive. Therefore, we must strengthen and intensify our actions as much as possible, in full cooperation with our organisations and with institutions such as the church.

Objectives:

- ▶ Upgrade the role of our schools and modernise them in order to attract Diaspora children; improve their organisation, building facilities, and use of modern technological means.
- ▶ Increase opportunities for experiential education of young people. Only by "experiencing" Cyprus, will young people love and appreciate their roots and their cultural identity.
- ▶ Promote and encourage the participation of our expatriates in various programmes offered, especially in relation to the Greek language.
- ▶ Enrich actions promoting our culture with the assistance of technology and social media.

“

Expatriates are another Cyprus abroad. In order to maintain their cultural identity, they rely on three basic principles that they have to adhere to in the countries where they live: Their religion, language, tradition, culture and customs. Moreover, it is necessary to maintain frequent contact with their homeland. The youth must get to know the country of origin of their ancestors and maintain contact with the centre. That is why our organisations promote these through organised communities.

**Michalis Christodoulou AM,
Federation of Cyprus Communities of
Australia and New Zealand**

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“ As organisation, we set as primary objectives the promotion of the Cyprus problem, the enlightenment of public opinion and the exercise of influence on the decision-making centres of the European Union. In order to promote these interests, we seek and maintain close cooperation with organisations of other important communities such as the Federation of Armenian and Jewish organisations. We believe that constant communication, exchange of information and cooperation between the Federations of Cypriots expatriates is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of our objectives.

The preservation of our cultural identity, the strengthening of the relations of our members both among themselves and with our homeland, the continuation of the teaching of the Greek language, the solution of practical problems faced by our compatriots in their country of residence as well as the issues that concern the new generation are included in the agenda of our activities and are of great concern to our federation.

Evagoras Mavrommatis,
Federation of Overseas Cypriots Rest of Europe

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5. The Cyprus problem

The Cyprus problem is and will continue to be a point of reference for any type of National Strategy for as long as the current political situation shall persist. The nearly 50-year occupation of a significant part of our territory by Turkish troops, more than 800 missing persons, the enclaved, our damaged, looted and abandoned cultural heritage are permanently on the agenda of our National Policy on Diaspora.

After all, the Turkish invasion and occupation had imposed the need for a more structured and coordinated turn of the State towards Cypriot expatriates.

It had been established ever since that our Diaspora in general and, more particularly, our world organisations have a very important role to play in raising awareness internationally about the Cyprus problem and the humanitarian problem of missing persons.

Through political contacts, conferences, picketing, marches, events, announcements and letters they

have promoted our national positions and interests in important decision-making centres in order to, among other things, exert pressure on Turkey to permit access to military files and militarised regions to determine the fate of our missing compatriots.

At the same time, through these actions, they have preserved the memory of the Cypriot community itself, whilst passing these messages on to the new generation, which will hopefully carry the torch forward.

The efforts and actions of organised groups within our parishes, led by our world federations PSEKA, POMAK and NEPOMAK, go hand in hand with the Government's actions to promote the Cyprus problem. The annual conferences provide a platform for coordination between organisations and the Centre.

Through international cooperation on issues of Diaspora, the Cyprus Government also endeavours





to raise awareness on the Cyprus problem and to find supporters of its positions in decision-making centres. Furthermore, through these partnerships, the exchange of experiences and know-how with countries that have faced similar situations, especially in relation to the tragedy of missing persons, is particularly useful.

Our efforts to tackle Turkish intransigence, defend the rights of Cypriot Hellenism, and promote the

Cyprus problem internationally in unison must be strengthened through joint actions planned according to specific policy guidelines.

Objectives:

- Encourage the further political involvement of Cyprus Diaspora, especially the youth, in the political life of their countries of residence so that they can promote the interests of Cyprus more effectively.
- Harness the skills of foreign personalities who maintain close relations with our parishes.
- Enrich the means with which our Diaspora will promote Cyprus's interests in decision-making centres and will attempt to raise awareness internationally.
- Intensify the coordination of federations and organisations with the Centre, so that their actions can become more targeted.



6. International partnerships

International cooperation on diaspora matters at a bilateral and trilateral basis is a key part of the National Strategy. These partnerships create a political framework that strengthens and facilitates the achievement of the actions included in the above pillars. They are beneficial to the youth, organisations, education, culture and business.

Undoubtedly, the Greek state is our constant ally in this effort. Cyprus and Greece have time and again faced similar challenges and concerns since we share common characteristics such as language, tradition, religion and history. After all, there is one Hellenic Diaspora and our goals are common.

Through this cooperation we have the opportunity to make our presence conspicuous internationally and to effectively expand the prospects and impact of our nation. Therefore, the need for coordination of the actions of Cypriot and Greek Diaspora cannot be stressed enough.



In this spirit, joint actions are being pursued, aiming mainly at preserving the national and cultural identity of our expatriates, strengthening their ties with the Centre, but also fine-tuning our actions when promoting national interests.

At the same time, Cyprus and Greece have built tripartite partnerships by signing Memoranda of Cooperation with states such as Israel, Egypt, Armenia and Lebanon. We have even succeeded in getting Diaspora issues included in the agenda of summit discussions. In addition, we have established bilateral partnerships with states such as Romania and Serbia.

These international partnerships allow us to share concerns, discuss common challenges on diaspora issues and to benefit from the know-how developed by other states whilst sharing the know-how we ourselves have developed all these years.

They contribute to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region, facilitate the collective and coordinated promotion of common goals but also national interests in important decision-making centres abroad. An illustrative example is the successful Cypriot-Greek-Jewish lobby in the USA.





Finally, through these partnerships, we give our Diaspora the opportunity to contact and connect with the Diaspora of other states (“people-to-peo-

ple contact”) with which we share experiences and challenges. In this way, Cyprus Diaspora will be able to meet and develop strong bonds of friendship and cooperation with the Diaspora of other states.

In the same context, in recent years we have developed programmes such as Educational Visits for Diaspora Youth, with countries such as Greece, Israel, Egypt, giving young people the opportunity to visit their homelands together.

All the above confirm the importance of this pillar. Therefore, the existing framework of actions should be reinforced with further initiatives to make it even more effective and beneficial to Cyprus and its Diaspora.





Objectives:

- ▶ Establish new bilateral and trilateral cooperations, especially with states where there is a significant number of Cypriots.
- ▶ Strengthen existing partnerships by planning joint cultural events and actions, but also by better coordinating the promotion of national matters and common interests.
- ▶ Exchange practices and ideas on the ways and actions adopted by other states to preserve the national identity of the younger generation.
- ▶ Focus our efforts on the connection of our young expatriates with youth from other countries through joint cultural events and organised visits.
- ▶ Strengthen cooperation between our students abroad.
- ▶ Support the holding of regional meetings on the importance of diaspora and migration in addressing challenges and opportunities for a more enhanced regional cooperation in the Mediterranean.
- ▶ Encourage the organisation of joint conferences in countries where our Diasporas are concentrated and promote cooperation between organised bodies.
- ▶ Strengthen people-to-people contacts, in particular networking of our entrepreneurs, academics, travel agents, doctors living abroad, so that through their synergies they will be able to help their homeland.

6+1 Repatriates

This last additional pillar concerns Cypriot expatriates from across the world who have returned or wish to return to their homeland. The Republic of Cyprus is always open and ready to welcome our Cypriot compatriots living abroad.

Repatriated Cypriots bring with them experiences, skills, ideas and knowledge that they have acquired in their countries of residence. Therefore, by returning and becoming active in Cyprus, they can help and enrich the local society, economy and culture.

The Republic of Cyprus is aware of the fact that in order to achieve the repatriation of Cypriot expatriates it is necessary, on the one hand, to maintain the unbreakable connection of the Diaspora with the Centre, and on the other hand, to prepare conditions in the interior so that their reintegration in the Cypriot society becomes smoother.

The first part, that of the Centre-Diaspora connection, is pursued through the various actions that have been

analysed above and which aim to keep our Diaspora, and especially the young generation, close to their roots. Additionally, the actions aimed at informing Cypriots of Diaspora about the political, social and economic framework that applies in Cyprus, as well as about any professional and investment opportunities that exist, are of particular importance.

The second part, that of smooth reintegration, is linked to how accessible and comprehensive the repatriation procedures are. In this context, the Office of the Presidential Commissioner has prepared a complete and detailed [Guide for Cyprus Diaspora and Repatriates](#), which lays out all the necessary facts and information that Cypriots of Diaspora should be aware of when deciding to repatriate. This Guide covers topics such as entry and stay procedures in Cyprus, medical treatment, work, tax framework, housing plans and education.



The contact between us, Cypriot Repatriates and the Diaspora is essential. With our return and activity in Cyprus we have the opportunity to enrich the economy, culture and society. Currently, thanks to social media, the voice of Cypriots becomes even stronger. Cypriot repatriates are the bridge to Cypriots in every corner of the world and can promote abroad our national cause, our right to a reunited island.

Kyriakos Tsolakis,
Federation of Repatriated
Cypriots



Objectives:

- ▶ Maintain the ties of repatriated Cypriots with their Cypriot identity.
- ▶ Adopt measures and actions for the smooth repatriation of Cypriot expatriates in the society of Cyprus.
- ▶ Enhance the means and ways, mainly through the use of technology, of informing them about the political, social and economic developments taking place in Cyprus.
- ▶ Revise the *Guide for Cyprus Diaspora and Repatriates* at regular intervals to reflect the current legal framework and procedures.



Epilogue

The National Strategy, in addition to providing a clear political framework for action, demonstrates the importance that the Cyprus Government attaches to its Diaspora. The Centre-Diaspora relationship, as mentioned above, is a dynamic and two-way relationship based on mutual support and reciprocal communication.

The revised National Strategy, as depicted in this document, is expected to yield the desired results and to respond to the challenges and demands of modern

Cyprus Diaspora. Moreover, it will provide the foundations for enriching the actions of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner, of Diaspora federations and organisations and of the Republic of Cyprus in general. However, due to the constantly changing nature of the Diaspora and the particularities of each Cypriot community abroad, the implementation of the Strategy must take these particularities into account. At the same time, the National Strategy should be reviewed and adapted when circumstances require.

