

Media in Cyprus: role and responsibility

Friday-Saturday 21-22 April 2017, <Venue TBC>

Background

As the current Cyprus Talks reach a crescendo and with ‘ominous’ clouds on the horizon threatening to derail the momentum towards a second referendum, Cypriot academics, scholars and intellectuals from both sides of Cyprus’s divide were twice brought together for a series of dialogical workshops to take stock, review, and assess on how an imagined solution would effect, and/or deter, the politics of change and continuity. Titled ‘Are we there yet? Or A Last Chance at Reunification? Problems and Prospects for a Settlement in Cyprus’, and ‘Tackling the Hard Issues: Security, Guarantees, Territory and Property’, the dialogue workshops were facilitated by the Centre for Dialogue, sponsored by the Cyprus Academic Dialogue and hosted by the University of Nicosia on 18th May and 22nd October 2016 respectively.

In order to encourage openness and the sharing of information, the workshops were conducted according to the Chatham House Rule,¹ and dealt with the Cyprus conflict and peace process, including its domestic ramifications and the role of other players. In both instances participants welcomed the innovative approach and encouraged their continuation during this very important year.

¹ Specifically Chatham House Rule stipulates that: “When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.” See, www.chathamhouse.org/about/chatham-house-rule (accessed 06/06/2016).

Objectives

To explore, in an interactive way, the prospects for dialogue between Greek and Turkish Cypriots opinion makers and shapers affected by the Cyprus conflict with a forward looking demeanour. More specifically, to:

- (1) Identify areas of mistrust or misunderstanding on the one hand, and the values on which mutual respect can be based on the other; and,
- (2) Promote opportunities for co-operation and joint activities and contribute to greater social cohesion in Cyprus.

Overall, the aim is to guide the dialogue towards a **hopeful vision of the future rather than dwell on the past** (important as that may be). The key question, and variations of it, preoccupying the dialogue should be: **how do Cypriot opinion makers and shapers see Cyprus in 5-10-15 years down the track**; and by Cyprus we are equally interested in how they see Cypriot society and the various relationships that form it as much as its political expression.

Proposal

Given the current intensity of the Cyprus Talks, it is proposed that the 3rd Cyprus Dialogue Workshop should focus and involve, both as participants and as subject matter, the media in Cyprus as an instrument for change and continuity. What is suggested is to invite journalists, editors as well as media proprietors, from various mediums (electronic, television, radio, print and social) across Cyprus's political spectrum from both communities to join the Cyprus Dialogues to discuss and canvass various questions and challenges pertaining to the obstacles and prospects for the way forward in Cyprus. The dialogical workshop will seek to engage, equally, those with harder political dispositions towards the current talks as well as those who are supportive.

Format:

Dialogue Welcoming Dinner (Friday, 21 April 2017, 7.00pm+): – Participants, organisers, and sponsors will share a meal in an informal, friendly and relaxed environment.

1st session (Saturday, 22 April, 10.00am-1.00pm) will bring together 10-12 leading Greek and Turkish Cypriot media personalities to converse about the role and responsibility of the media in Cyprus in ushering a fairer, peaceful and secure future.

Lunch (1.00-2.00pm).

2nd session (2.30-5.00pm) – facilitators, reference group and designated participants will reflect on the morning’s session and explore the prospect of forming a bicomunal Cyprus Media Dialogue working group to promote closer communication, exchange and understanding between the island’s various media outlets.

Date:

Friday-Saturday, 21-22 April 2017

Coordinating Committee:

- Nicos Peristianis
- Yücel Vural
- Michális S. Michael

Reference Group

Ms Esra Aygin
Ms Soula Hadjikyriakou

Facilitation: Dr Michalis S. Michael

Proposed Venue:

- Hotel in Larnaca-Nicosia-Limassol to be confirmed.

Proposed Budget (in Euro€): (updated: 15/02/2017)

Activity/item	Costs €
Melbourne-Larnaca return Economy ticket (1 person: M Michael-facilitator)	1,100
Coffee for 20 participants x €6	120
Lunch for 20 participants x€15	300
One night accommodation for 15: x€75	1,125
Dinner for 15 participants x€20	300
Taxis	55
Total	3,000

Dr Michális S. Michael

Centre for Dialogue

17 January 2017 – amended 15 February 2017

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